



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

November 16, 2017

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at the Whatcom Council of Governments, Bellingham, WA.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] (Lindsay Samson); **British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Abid Sivic); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Daniela Evans, Matt Jollymore); **City of Blaine** (Ravyn Whitewolf); **Consulate General of Canada – Seattle** (Gail Horak, Rob Kerr) **Office of Congresswoman Suzan DelBene** (Kaylee Galloway); **Office of Senator Maria Cantwell** (Joe Downes) **Office of Senator Patty Murray** (Ann Seabott); **U.S. Consulate Vancouver** (Mike Bradecamp) **U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, J. Rene Ortega); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Cliff Hall, Mike Koidal, Ron Pate (*through conference call*)); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain)

Current event updates

Matt Jollymore reported that there is ongoing construction at the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] Douglas port-of-entry [POE]. They are repainting the canopy, which is causing closures of 3 to 4 lanes at a time. There is more capacity for vehicles at the CBSA Pacific Highway POE and they are messaging this through the Advanced Traveler Information System [ATIS].

Melissa Fanucci announced that the IMTC meeting dates and country locations are set for next year. Specific locations are still to be determined.

John Dahm reported that U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] has observed a 12 percent increase in traffic at their Pacific Highway POE since tolls were removed from bridges in the Vancouver Metro area. In January US CBP will be closing both approaching bus lanes at the Pacific Highway POE in order to install heavy duty gates. They are reviewing options for a temporary approach route for buses.

Ann Seabott reported that the U.S. Senate has been passing continued resolutions to keep the government funded. December 8th is the expiration of most recent continuing resolution. She said Sen. Murray is hopeful

for an omnibus bill to be passed, setting up a 2-year funding cycle. The Federal Transit Authority [FTA] has made its Capital Investments Grants [CIG] project recommendations to Congress, however tax reform has dominated recent discussions.

Abid Sivic reported that the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] has been making progress in the design of the Hwy 13 widening north of the CBSA Aldergrove POE. The widening project will include addition of a NEXUS lane southbound should US CBP operate NEXUS at Lynden in the future.

Ravyn Whitewolf announced that Blaine Police Chief Mike Haslip has retired. A land deal between the City of Blaine and Yorky's Market is going forward with the goal of building a truck parking facility near the border.

Laurie Trautman reported that the Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI] at Western Washington University [WWU] has partnered with the University of Victoria [UVic] for a cross-border research fellowship. The fellowship offers scholars and policy professionals up to 6 months residency in Bellingham, WA (WWU) or Victoria, BC (UVic) to conduct cross-border research in the Cascadia border region.

Todd Carlson reported that the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] will be conducting a workshop in November with the City of Blaine and the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] to discuss traffic circulation in southern Blaine and design ideas for I-5 Exit 274.

Rob Kerr reported that the fifth round of talks regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] is underway in Mexico City, Mexico. Kaylee Galloway noted that Representative Suzan DelBene is on the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means and is receptive of feedback regarding the NAFTA renegotiations.

Joe Downes reported that there are votes today in the Senate Finance Committee around the tax bill that is currently being worked on. They anticipate that moving forward in the week following U.S. Thanksgiving.

Hugh Conroy presented outputs from B.C. MoTI's newly revamped border wait-time system after the Ministry integrated US CBP booth status data to improve reporting accuracy. When compared to in-field observations of border traffic delays, the new system appears significantly more accurate than the old, strictly loop-detector based system, especially during periods where delays were observed decreasing rapidly. The analysis did imply that there is still a lag between when delays increase rapidly and when that increase is recorded by the border wait-time system.

2017 IMTC Resource Manual

Melissa Fanucci brought a box of 2017 IMTC Resource Manuals for Canadian members to take back to their respective agencies. The data showcased in the manual available online through theimtc.com/data/. The manual itself is also posted online as a PDF.

IMTC project updates

Hugh Conroy informed the group that the IMTC Border Freight Operations study [BFO] is wrapping up this month. About \$30k in BFO funding will be returned to the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]. The

IMTC Dynamic Border Management project [BDM] will still be worked on through next year. Mr. Conroy said they are welcoming requests from agencies to use the discrete event simulation modeling for border-related data analysis tasks.

Canada's National Trade Corridor Fund (NCTF) expressions of interest and application

Melissa Fanucci explained that Canada's National Trade Corridor Fund [NCTF] put out a call for expressions of interest months ago. WCOG had submitted two expressions of interest: IMTC core funding and updating the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse. WCOG was invited to apply for NCTF funds for the Border Data Warehouse improvement, with the stipulation that 50 percent of the project's funds be a match from other sources. Ms. Fanucci said she will send out a feedback survey in the next couple months regarding the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse.

Ann Seabott reminded agencies to use their congressional connections as a resource for letters of support for grant applications.

Additional data sets requested

Hugh Conroy explained that WCOG is looking at cellphone/GPS probe data from companies like Google and INRIX for travel time and origin-destination analyses. They are looking at the availability of data and the transparency of the probe data sources.

Update on B.C. Highway 13 and B.C. Highway 11

Hugh Conroy updated the group that the funding is in place for the B.C. MoTI Hwy 11 project. Abid Sivic said that the recent elections in B.C. have delayed the Hwy 13 project, however it is still moving forward under the new government.

Update on I-94 processing initiatives – *John Dahm, CBP*

John Dahm explained that during peak travel times at the US CBP Peace Arch POE, the facility's lobby gets especially crowded. There were previous discussions about processing I-94 applications (which make up a large percentage of lobby traffic) offsite and upstream from primary inspection. Now, there is a website that applicants can use to begin the application process so that their in-lobby time is significantly reduced. There are also proposals to lengthen the I-94 admissibility period from 6 months to 1 year for landed immigrants and offsetting I-94 eligibility expiration dates from peak summer season to avoid lobby congestion. Mr. Dahm also explained they are working on a project where inspection officers with handheld devices can clear travelers in secondary inspection without having them enter the lobby. The handheld devices also have the capability for visiting foreigners to check-out of the U.S. using biometrics.

Blaine/Surrey Pedestrian Plan – Draft signage concepts – input

Melissa Fanucci passed out a draft sample of the Cascade Gateway Pedestrian Signage Plan. The document includes examples of signage formats and placement along the proposed designated pedestrian route at Pacific Highway POE. The goal is to have uniform signage in both directions of travel to avoid confusion. The document also includes potential sign locations and considerations for the Peace Arch POE pedestrian route.

Nov 7-8 TBWG meeting – summary

The Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting occurred November 7th and 8th in Calgary, AB. Hugh Conroy reviewed the meeting topics. Tom Oomen of Transport Canada [TC] is no longer co-chair of TBWG – David McNabb, the TC Director General for Surface Transportation Policy filled in at the meeting. Ken Petty of FHWA is still the U.S. co-chair.

The U.S. Department of Transportation [USDOT] is still discussing “mega-regions” in the U.S. – large regions that are most in need of transportation investment. Mr. Conroy said he again advocated at the meeting for the Cascadia mega-region to be considered a cross-border region as the Detroit-Toronto mega-region.

From the Bridge and Tunnel Operators presentation, it was noted that they are seeing less traffic in the East, and some speculate it may be due to growth in online shopping. At Peace Bridge in Buffalo there is an initiative called e-Gate where NEXUS travelers are cleared by an inspector through a video call, with the inspector able to process travelers from an offsite location.

The annual update to the Border Infrastructure Investment Plan [BIIP] is not happening this year since it is viewed as an initiative of former federal administrations. There is still interest at TBWG for coordinating each country’s border investment plans.

Mr. Conroy co-chairs the TBWG Policy subcommittee, and there he shared a one-pager on the requirements for being fully compliant with the U.S.’s C-TPAT and Canada’s PIP trusted trader programs. He said it is still unclear if efforts under Beyond-the-Border to harmonize C-TPAT and PIP are continuing.

IMTC has been working on a 3-year funding strategy, which is 75 percent achieved. There is also a long term funding strategy, and Mr. Conroy said that through TBWG they are trying to advocate for there being a better mechanism for both federal governments to fund regional cross-border planning efforts like the IMTC. Discussing strategies for the federal governments to establish funding programs for regional cross-border planning activities has been added to the TBWG action plan.

Nationally, US CBP is looking at non-invasive inspections [NII] where vehicles drive through a low-level scan similar to a Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System [VACIS] with the driver remaining in the vehicle. The goal is to make the scan occur before primary inspection.

On a side note, Hugh Conroy noted that at Peace Bridge, where they had a pre-inspection pilot that required the elimination of cash payments of inspection fees for southbound commercial crossings, there was a

resulting 20 percent reduction in border delays. This lines up with the estimated 18 percent reduction in delays that WCOG had modeled as part of the IMTC Ending Cash Collections at US CBP Ports-of-Entry technical memo.

US FHWA (with TC) – recent report on freight and passenger scenario planning for US-Canada & US Mexico borders

FHWA, with support from Transport Canada, recently finished a report on scenario based planning for both the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders. They divided up the borders into large regions drawn mostly around existing political boundaries. They forecasted out multiple decades of freight and passenger vehicle volumes based on several scenarios with various global political and economic conditions. Hugh Conroy reviewed some of the forecasts from the report. Of all the border regions, the BC-WA region is the only one showing a noticeable increase in passenger vehicle traffic from 1995 to 2014.

Timing and funding of a next IMTC cross-border travel survey

WCOG and BPRI have been discussing possibilities for a next Cascade Gateway passenger vehicle intercept survey in 2018 or 2019. The last vehicle survey was completed in summer 2013 and winter 2014.

Laurie Trautman noted that this survey would help analyze the effects of changing exchange rates on cross-border traffic and travel behaviors.

There was discussion regarding continued interest in surveying passenger vehicle travelers at the Pt. Roberts-Boundary Bay POE. Daniela Evans explained that the CBSA Boundary Bay POE is still slated for improvements under the new government. CBSA is also interested in observing cross-border trips involving parcels/e-commerce at Boundary Bay as well as Canadians crossing the Pt. Roberts-Boundary Bay POE specifically for the processing of immigration documents.

John Dahm expressed interest in observing the number of travelers crossing to renew their I-94 forms and how many people flag-poll (go to a U.S. border inspection facility for administrative purposes and immediately return to Canada without entering the U.S.). Mr. Dahm and J. Rene Ortega also expressed interest in gaining feedback from travelers regarding US CBP operations. Laurie Trautman suggested creating a simple website with a description of the passenger vehicle survey and a feedback comment section that surveyors can direct cross-border travelers to.

Discussion: IMTC in 2018 – near term emphasis areas, unknowns, planned work

Ravyn Whitewolf expressed interest in opening up more discussion regarding rail near Blaine and talks of a potential realignment of the railway away from the Canadian coast, especially as it pertains to a possible future train stop in Blaine.

Daniela Evans expressed interest in how CBSA's new large scale imaging at the Pacific Highway POE might be affecting commercial truck routing – are trucks avoiding the device and going to other ports?

Next steps on border master planning activities

A draft outline of the IMTC Border Master Plan was distributed at the meeting. The outline has been edited since the last discussion of the master plan. Hugh Conroy suggested that the plan could be mainly online similar to the website content WCOG staff created for the recent WCOG regional transportation plan update, Whatcom Mobility 2040.