



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

February 14, 2019

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at CBSA Douglas Port of Entry, Surrey, WA.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]: Amanda Pellam, Simon Leung

B.C. Trucking Association: Cory Paterson*

Bellingham, Port of: John Michener

Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]: Chris Van Nes, Tracy Letain, Matt Jollymore, Brad Valentine, Daniela Evans, Marcus Johnson

Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council: Jim Kohnke

U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]: Phillip Stanford, Craig Hope, Darren Elsby

U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]: Sharleen Bakeman*

U.S. General Services Administration [GSA]: Craig Keenan*

Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]: Todd Carlson

Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]: Hugh Conroy, Jaymes McClain, Melissa Fanucci

**attended meeting by phone*

Current Event Updates

Amanda Pellam: The sidewalk leading from the international boundary to CBSA's Pacific Highway facility is completed.

Phil Stanford: BC Highway 13 is being improved near the CBP Lynden port-of-entry (POE), including the construction of a water retention pond. A feasibility study for a Lynden port redevelopment is at 95 percent.

Todd Carlson: WSDOT is working with the City of Blaine on designing a road-rail grade separation at Bell Rd and Peace Portal Dr. The project's design is not yet fully funded but is being discussed in the Washington State legislature. The adjacent interchange improvement (I-5 Exit 274) is being pushed into the future as a separate project.

Melissa Fanucci: The 2019 IMTC Resource Manual is available. WCOG will not be mailing out Resource Manual booklets, however several will be brought to meetings.

Hugh Conroy: Last meeting, Cory Paterson discussed identifying towing company contacts that work with the Royal Mounted Canadian Police (RCMP) who could possibly respond to the truck stalling issue at CBSA's Pacific Highway commercial POE. An alternative scenario could be to tow stalled trucks a short distance (125 meters or so) to the secondary lot with CBSA-owned (or co-owned with CBP) equipment.

Cory Paterson: BC Ferries has their own towing equipment. Mr. Paterson will talk with them regarding their equipment and discuss with other agencies the kind of vehicles/equipment they use for towing.

Sharleen Bakeman: There are federal restrictions in the U.S. for how far one can tow a truck. There are also discussions of allowing triple trailer trucks in Washington, which are currently not allowed. Longer trailers could affect towing options.

Cory Patterson: The BC government only allows double trailers and only on specific routes by licensed drivers.

Hugh Conroy: There was discussion last meeting about interest in posting Abbotsford-Huntingdon commercial border wait-times on highway Variable Message Signs (VMS) as well as the need to repaint speed humps that lead to POEs in the region.

Amanda Pellam: Displaying commercial wait times on VMS may require a new or additional signage.

Hugh Conroy: In response to some interest in an anti-idling zone northbound into Douglas, Mr. Conroy drafted a layout of a potential anti-idle zone that mirrors the southbound anti-idling system. The southbound system allows drivers to shut off their engines while the queue in front of them dissipates. The draft layout is attached in the meeting packet.

Daniela Evans: The anti-idle zone signal lights and associated stop bar should not be placed any further south of Peace Arch Park – backed-up border traffic can cut off access to the NEXUS lane at the D St onramp.

Craig Hope: CBP and its officers are recovering from the furlough associated with the U.S. federal government shutdown. Many ongoing projects were stalled. Ms. Fasano, the new CBP Director of Field Operations (DFO) for the region, has settled into her office at the Peace Arch facility.

Darren Elsby: Mr. Elsby thanked CBSA for their support during the government shutdown. The NEXUS lane at CBP's Peace Arch POE is now open till midnight all days of the week (previously open till 2100).

John Michener: The Port of Bellingham is still looking to designate a part of the Bellingham waterfront as a foreign-trade zone (FTZ).

Chris Van Nes: CBSA is still seeing asylum seekers that cross the international boundary between POEs.

Marcus Johnson: CBSA is developing another mockup for the design of sliding doors at Douglas primary inspection booths. When they are installed, 2 to 3 booths will be closed at a time.

Brad Valentine: CBSA is doing RFID improvements for the remaining lanes at Douglas and Pacific Highway that still do not have it.

The long-term planning for the Pacific Highway port redevelopment is still being worked on. While funding has not yet been confirmed, the port is still in the first wave of CBSA POEs to be redeveloped. Redevelopment would likely start in the next 5 years.

Mr. Valentine has been doing some work related to the Cascadia Gateway Initiative's cross-border fiber project, which aims to build a fiber-optic network between Vancouver, BC and Seattle, WA.

Daniela Evans: The Canadian federal fiscal year ends on March 31. There are now two ministers that focus on the border, especially security and immigration. The CBSA president has 15 renewal initiatives underway regarding resources, infrastructure, security, and other elements.

Swoop Airline flights are coming to the Abbotsford International Airport and more Abbotsford-Huntingdon CBSA agents will be working at the airport to inspect international flights.

Jim Kohnke: In October there will be a by-election in Burnaby, BC.

Brad Valentine: CBSA purchased a corner lot near the Douglas POE which could be used in the future for booth expansion or another use. The house on the lot will be removed in the next 2-3 weeks, after which the lot will be fenced off and used for storage in the interim.

Cory Paterson: Mr. Paterson thanked CBP for helping the Canadian trucking industry with transponder-issuance issues caused by the U.S. federal government shutdown.

Sharleen Bakeman: Commercial trucks pay the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for a heavy vehicle use tax and must have proof of this payment to be properly registered. The IRS was closed during the shutdown, causing problems with commercial truck registration.

Hugh Conroy: In the meeting packet are figures on the number of vehicles crossing the border through Peace Arch and Pacific Highway by mode. Train crossings have nearly doubled in the last 10 years.

Current Project Updates

Passenger Vehicle Survey, Winter Wave

Jaymes McClain: The winter data collection phase of the 2018-19 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey began in February. Student research assistants from Western Washington University are intercepting passenger vehicles at the POEs in the region and are conducting questionnaires, gathering data on cross-border trips through the Cascade Gateway. Due to poor weather, there have already been a number of dates canceled. The research assistants will revisit any POEs missed towards the end of the project in March.

After the data collection is wrapped up in March, the data will be cleaned and organized, the records will be weighted to be more representative of the traffic transiting each POE, and the data will be available in Access Database format and online through Tableau data dashboards. A data collection report will accompany the data.

Peace Arch-Douglas & Pacific Hwy pedestrian signage plan

Melissa Fanucci: A 2019 update of the IMTC Blaine/Surrey Cross-Border Pedestrian Plan has been drafted that details what elements of the project have been completed and what is pending. A major part of the plan is homogenizing the signage on both sides of the border to help prevent confusion for pedestrians and bicyclists transiting the border in either direction. The plan is for all signage to be based on FHWA's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards. Because of the agencies involved and their respective land ownership around the POEs, each agency will likely need the contract for new signs individually with the planned designs.

Sharleen Bakeman: Because the brick path construction on the U.S. side of Peace Arch Park is a unique project being completed by Washington State Parks, it would be wise to look at maintenance options for the path in the long term.

Peace Arch-Douglas & Pacific Hwy traffic forecasting – discussion of next steps

Hugh Conroy: At the last IMTC meeting, WCOG staff presented outputs from the border area simulation model's application in the Peace Arch-Pacific Highway Traffic Study. The draft report is out and ready for feedback from agencies who may use this data or could have use for border simulation modeling. Other modeling scenarios are possible with the software and input data, such as NEXUS population forecasts or traffic routing scenarios.

Update on planning for March 21 Communications Protocol tabletop exercise

Hugh Conroy: The Communications Protocol tabletop exercise will take place on March 21 at CBP's Peace Arch facility, replacing the IMTC Steering Committee meeting. The next full IMTC meeting will be a Core Group on Thursday, April 18.

Anita Barr, the Emergency Management Coordinator for CBSA, is available to facilitate the tabletop exercise. This exercise will test the communications protocol with a mock traffic-altering incident near the border that would require coordination between agencies on both sides of the border.

Melissa Fanucci: The exercise would ideally have both participants (those "making the phone calls") and observers (staff of agencies).

IMTC Project List

Quick review of changes made based on discussion at January 17 meeting and discussion of remaining information needed

Hugh Conroy: WCOG's regional transportation plan project list is being updated this year. This is an opportunity to add IMTC Project List projects to the regional plan's project list. The IMTC Program funding is also being considered for the regional plan project list.

The draft 2019 IMTC Project List is attached in the meeting packet. The group reviewed highlighted projects in need of updating.

Consideration / discussion of a planning study focused on Lynden–Aldergrove and Sumas–Abbotsford Huntingdon - future road and port facility needs and expectations based on traffic, population, and land-use trends

Hugh Conroy: This proposed study would be focused on the forecasts and potential future needs at both the CBP and CBSA POEs at Lynden-Aldergrove and Sumas-Abbotsford-Huntingdon. At Lynden-Aldergrove, for example, variables to consider include permitting requirements, hours of operation, and inspection capacity as it relates to current and future traffic under different growth and origin-destination scenarios.

This study can be part of IMTC core work. WCOG staff would use currently available data and operational strategies to build forecasts and look at the different scenarios.

Todd Carlson: One component of the study could be the Guide Meridian and how it can handle increases in traffic into future, especially near Bellingham.

Hugh Conroy: The IMTC could form a subgroup and keep this project rolling in parallel to other projects and regular meetings.

IMTC Program Funding status/outlook

Hugh Conroy: The annual need for the IMTC Program core funding is \$240,000. In 2018, core funding was received from WSDOT, WCOG, FHWA, and YVR (Vancouver International Airport). Looking ahead, WSDOT has listed a \$200,000 funding level for IMTC in the yet-to-be adopted Washington State budget (for two fiscal years - \$100,000 each). It is hoped other partner agencies will also be able to contribute.

In the longer term, WCOG staff will continue dialogue with federal agencies via the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) about shared interests in programmatic funding opportunities for regional border planning.

April 18 IMTC Core Group Meeting

Melissa Fanucci: At April's IMTC Core Group meeting, discussion will include the IMTC Project List and the results from the tabletop exercise.

Update: The meeting will be held at Hazelmere Country Club in Surrey, BC.