

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

February 19, 2015

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Douglas port-of-entry, Surrey, BC.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation [BC MoT] (Abid Sivic, John Schnablegger, Simon Leung); **B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Greg Kolesniak); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (David Davidson); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Matt Jollymore, Sean Averill, Brad Valentine); **City of Surrey** (Kristen Tiede); **SmartRail** (Kenneth Jones); **U.S. Customs & Border Protection [US CBP]** (J.R. Ortega); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **U.S. Consulate Vancouver** (Geoff Reid, Shannon Hogan); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **Transport Canada** (Chris Hoff)

Current event updates

Sean Averill commented that there will be an investment of \$440MM in border infrastructure to update 70-73 small and medium sized border crossings in Canada. Boundary Bay has been announced that it will be redeveloped. The remaining list of ports will be released later this month. Mr. Averill added that he doesn't anticipate more development happening in the Cascade Gateway with these funds.

Jim Kohnke commented that British Columbia just recently handed down a balanced budget. He also said the BC Chamber of Commerce is having meetings for policy resolutions for the upcoming AGM Conference in May.

J.R. Ortega commented that the newly opened Birch Bay NEXUS enrollment center has been processing 300 applications per day.

Todd Carlson commented that the legislature is in session in Washington State. There is currently discussion on a revenue package. The Senate's proposal, about \$15BN over ten years, would include a gradual 11.7 cent increase in the gas tax over about three years. One project that would be funded

by this is the widening of the Guide Meridian from south of Lynden up to the border, Mr. Carlson says.

John Schnablegger explained that the NEXUS lane extension project at Abbotsford-Huntingdon-Sumas is being held up because of an unresolved rail storage issue with the overall Hwy 11-Vye Rd project. It is looking like there may not be an interim solution to extending the NEXUS lane until the road is officially widened, Mr. Schnablegger noted.

Hugh Conroy commented that the next US Canada Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting is happening this March in Maine.

Mr. Conroy also mentioned upcoming workshops for a North American freight flow forecasting scenario study. The US Department of Transportation and consultants are doing outreach sessions with stakeholders in Washington, DC on February 23, then in Ottawa on March 11, then in Chihuahua a couple weeks after that. They are looking at modeling primarily freight flows, though passenger traffic will be looked at as well. Mr. Conroy noted that the planned IMTC commercial vehicle operations study aims to complement this longer term study.

Hugh Conroy said that the City of Bellingham is trying to extend a boundary from the border that allows for border communities to add 1 cent to the gas tax. The extension would be from the current 10 miles from the border to over 20 miles so as to include Bellingham. Todd Carlson noted that this creates problems because the boundary would also include such cities as Port Angeles and Sequim on the Olympic Peninsula, which are not located near land-border ports-of-entry and are largely unaffected by border-related traffic.

Mr. Conroy mentioned that the relocation of the Blaine Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System [VACIS] used to inspect rail also has funding identified in revenue package Todd Carlson described. The City of Blaine has continued to express concerns about VACIS related congestion and access issues, Mr. Conroy noted.

Kristen Teide commented on the transportation referendum in metro Vancouver, noting that though transit has been emphasized, the referendum involves transportation in general, such as road widening projects.

Melissa Fanucci commented on the booth status data feed that WCOG is receiving from US CBP and said they are working with IBI Group to archive the data. Because of the way the data is formatted, WCOG will be able to download data from the feed in bulk, but it will not be of the same functionality as is currently available from the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse. The ability to download the data should be functional by the end of March, Ms. Fanucci said.

Ms. Fanucci also said that the IMTC Resource Manual will hopefully be out in March. She has noticed some discrepancies in the volume counts for commercial trucks and buses going north and south through Pt. Roberts Boundary Bay port-of-entry. After a brief discussion with Matt Jollymore and J.R. Ortega of CBSA and US CBP, respectively, the discrepancy could be due to the methodology of counting those vehicles at that port, as the oversized lanes used to process buses and trucks do not have the same equipment for volume counts as the larger Cascade Gateway ports.

Project updates

Update on Lynden Aldergrove facility replacement – Brad Valentine

Sean Averill and Brad Valentine gave a presentation on the current status of the Aldergrove facility development, showing a slideshow of construction photos and post-construction rendered pictures. They said that construction could be complete by or before October.

The Advanced Traveler Information System [ATIS] is not operating at the moment at that port, but loop detectors will be laid in the roadway and ATIS will be functional upon completion of construction.

Sean Averill noted that there is room at the facility for the future expansion of northbound passenger vehicle processing booths. Conduits will be in place and ready for the future booths to be designated NEXUS or RFID-capable, should the need arise.

Greg Kolesniak suggested that the new Lynden-Aldergrove port could be a good option to send oversized and overweight commercial cargo transiting the border, as there are currently issues with this at Pacific Highway.

2015 CVO Study – update on scope and planning

Hugh Conroy updated the group on the planned 2015 Commercial Vehicle Operations study that IMTC is doing in conjunction with BPRI and in cooperation with US CBP and CBSA. The project proposal, included in the meeting's packet, was refined with the inputs of US CBP, CBSA, and Greg Kolesniak of the BC Trucking Association at a meeting on January 22. It was agreed at the meeting that the step-by-step time-stamping of operations done in previous studies is needed less this time and that the emphasis will be more on commodity information, manifest data and the like.

In addition to the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA], the project will be receiving funding from BC MoT, Transport Canada, and BPRI, Mr. Conroy said. The project is budgeted for \$150k.

Students from Western Washington University will make-up the survey crew. Data collection will occur in the commercial booths, where students will record commodity and trip-characteristic information using laptops, and road-side as trucks approach the booths, where students will gather observable truck and carrier information on tablets. Carriers observed to be crossing most frequently will be contacted after the field effort to gather their input on current and future crossing behavior and expected trends especially due to infrastructure changes, Mr. Conroy said.

Greg Kolesniak expressed concern about the suggestion that trucks could be interviewed at a post-inspection weigh station afterhours to gather addition survey information, as this would create a delay for the carrier.

Hugh Conroy explained that the summer data collection effort will be repeated in 2016 to monitor any changes in commercial transportation on the network due to the fall 2015 completion of a full service commercial port at Aldergrove (northbound) and an anticipated metered arrival system put in place at Pacific Highway northbound.

Greg Kolesniak suggested giving the carriers a heads up about the follow up survey. He noted that the BC Trucking Association may be able to help provide contact information for carriers.

Hugh Conroy emphasized that the main product of this project will be the final database, which will provide long lasting and valuable information for partner agencies on both sides of the border.

Dynamic Border Management Project [DBM]

Presentation of booth data collected for this initiative – Jaymes McClain

Jaymes McClain reviewed the data collection effort undertaken by the BPRI to confirm baseline time increments for passenger cars being processed at the border. The project took place over 5 weekdays in December at Peace Arch, where a student crew studied both directions of traffic. The incremental time spans included how long it took a car to “roll up” to the booth, how long a car dwelled at the booth, and the amount of time between one car leaving the booth and the next car proceeding to the booth. These increments were recorded for cars in standard lanes, NEXUS lanes, and RFID Ready lanes with standard and NEXUS traffic being differentiated where possible in the Ready lane, Mr. McClain said. The data from this project is being used in the DBM micro-simulation model currently being worked on at WCOG.

Review of simulation model inputs and RFID scenarios

Hugh Conroy, giving background to the RFID scenario modeling, explained the discrepancy in NEXUS-card uptake as opposed to general RFID-documentation uptake. The former offers an immediate benefit to the traveler (a dedicated lane with an expedited inspection) while the latter offers more of a system benefit (decreased standard-lane wait-times overall due to RFID-document-processing requiring less document handling) with less of an immediately experienced benefit by the individual. Mr. Conroy said the reduced RFID-processing time, compounded over a large percentage of inspections, could dramatically reduce wait-times for the entire non-NEXUS population.

The processing time-increment data is being used in a micro-simulation model to build a business case for public investment in a large-scale distribution of RFID-enabled documents to frequent cross-border travelers who are not enrolled in NEXUS, Mr. Conroy explained.

Jaymes McClain reviewed the current status of the micro-simulation model. Input data for the model come from the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse, US CBP, and the BPRI's December data collection. Mr. McClain presented some preliminary output data that showed the effects that increasing amounts of non-NEXUS RFID document-holders have on lowering the border wait-time of a peak-travel day. Incremental increases in the percentage of the non-NEXUS population having RFID were shown to dramatically decrease border wait-times, with a population of as much as 50 percent RFID effectively eliminating standard-lane wait-times, according to preliminary model outputs.

Hugh Conroy noted that he will bring the discussion of RFID to the policy subcommittee session at TBWG.

The December 2014 Border Infrastructure Investment Plan Canada-United States – Review

Hugh Conroy gave an overview of the plan, an excerpt of which was included in the meeting's packet. The plan includes more than just the top twenty ports. There is also a new way of focusing on the most important ports for infrastructure investment by combining trade values and commercial traffic volume. Peace Arch was identified as having the most non-commercial vehicle traffic. The plan also started tracking Intelligent Transportation Systems [ITS] investments, which historically has been wait-time systems and not RFID technology, Mr. Conroy said.

Cascade Gateway Border Master Plan – Todd Carlson

Todd Carlson explained that the draft document included in the day's meeting packet has not yet been endorsed by the Minister and Secretary of Transportation of British Columbia and Washington State, respectively. The purpose of the plan is look beyond the Border Infrastructure Improvement Plan [BIIP], Mr. Carlson says, and make sure transportation infrastructure improvements are at the forefront of long term border solutions. The plan serves to solidify for the future the ideas of individuals who may come and go in the border environment, Mr. Carlson explained, and to be ahead of the curve in anticipating issues with border infrastructure. Funding is available for this plan, and a scoping process would be the next step, Mr. Carlson said. This rolling plan would also influence the BIIP.

Mr. Carlson said that they are looking for feedback and ideas regarding the plan. To comment on the plan, email Todd Carlson or John Schnablegger.

Meeting adjourned 11:30AM.