



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

April 19, 2018

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Douglas Port-of-Entry, Surrey, BC.

Meeting attendance

Abbotsford, City of (Purvez Irani*); **B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson, Cory Paterson); **Bellingham, Port of** (John Michener); **British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Simon Leung); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Dan Bubas, Dave Burnard, Daniela Evans, Linell Redmond, Chris Van Nes, Brad Valentine, Catherine Black); **Sumas, City of** (Kyle Christensen); **Transport Canada** (Chris Hoff); **U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm); **U.S. Department of Transportation [USDOT] Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]** (Michael Villnave*); **U.S. State Department Consulate General Vancouver** (Geoff Reid); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Cliff Hall, Timothy McCall); **Washington State Parks and Recreation** (Jason Snow); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Jaymes McClain, Melissa Fanucci)

**attended by phone*

Current event updates

Melissa Fanucci reported that the Whatcom Council of Governments did not get National Trade Corridor Fund [NTCF] funding for redeveloping the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse archive. WCOG will next apply for funding through the U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] to make their application for NTCF funding in the next cycle more competitive.

Jason Snow of Washington State Parks and Recreation reported that a crew is currently working on the sidewalk improvements at Peace Arch Park. They hope to have a sidewalk from the Peace Arch monument to U.S. Customs and Border Protection's [US CBP] facility completed in 2 weeks.

Laurie Trautman relayed an issue that some professors have been experiencing when crossing the border to speak at an event when an honorarium is involved. Because of confusion about what an honorarium is, the

border-crosser is usually sent to secondary inspection. John Dahm of US CBP explained that having a Letter of Introduction when planning to receive an honorarium payment is important.

Daniella Evans of Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] introduced David Burnard and Chris Van Nes, Chiefs of Traffic Operations at CBSA Pacific Highway and CBSA Aldergrove, respectively. She reported that northbound through CBSA ports-of-entry [POE] they are seeing more traffic as gas prices in British Columbia rise. CBSA has developed a communications plan for NEXUS with the help of the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]. They are gearing up for summer events at Peace Arch Park, including Hands Across the Border on June 10th.

Linell Redmond noted that CBSA has taken into account language barriers in their communications plan, thanking John Dahm of US CBP for the initial advice.

Chris Van Nes reported that CBSA recently reached out to local brokers and discussed the CBSA Aldergrove POE being open to all commercial trucks (previously permit-only). CBSA will have a booth at the upcoming TRUXPO trucking industry trade show in Abbotsford on May 11th and 12th to continue outreach regarding the Aldergrove POE.

Brad Valentine reported that CBSA is in the third of four phases regarding improvements to the canopy of passenger primary inspection booths at the Douglas POE. They are also in the second of three phases for the secondary inspection canopy. Crews are recoating the metal in the canopies.

Tim McCall reported that WSDOT intelligent transportation systems [ITS] staff in his office are getting trained to better understand the border environment. They have been monitoring long NEXUS waits at Douglas while canopy work continues and are trying to get travelers to cross at Pacific Highway.

John Dahm reported that US CBP is seeing a large increase in Canadian NEXUS travelers crossing through Blaine, especially for gas. They still aim to keep NEXUS waits below a 15-minute threshold. US CBP's Pacific Highway primary inspection expansion is going forward – they have a meeting with the General Services Agency [GSA] coming up. Mr. Dahm commented that the approach lanes will also be considered as part of the improvements.

Hugh Conroy updated the group on the agenda for the upcoming Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting, which will occur April 25th to 26th in Minneapolis, MN. The full agenda is attached in the meeting packet. In the research session, Mr. Conroy will do a presentation on the IMTC Border Freight Operations study, where he will compare commercial traffic using the FAST lane at Pacific Highway in 2009 and 2016. In reference to a slide showing inspection times for different commercial vehicle types, Dan Bubas explained that cars going through commercial are typically self-importers, which accounts for longer inspection times. The presentation also reviews the potential impacts to border-crossing fuel truck traffic at Pacific Highway to likely result from the opening of a new marine fuel terminal being developed on the Fraser River.

Vye Road/B.C. Highway 11 Project Update – *Purvez Irani, City of Abbotsford*

Purvez Irani reviewed the City of Abbotsford's Vye Rd-B.C. Highway 11 improvement project. Highway 11 will be widened from the border to Vye Rd, accommodating a southbound NEXUS lane that will start 300 meters south of the Vye Rd-Highway 11 intersection. Vye Rd will also be improved – an overpass will be built over the rail line between Riverside Rd and Highway 11 and a roundabout will be constructed at the intersection of Vye Rd and Riverside Rd. They plan to start design in August and begin construction in 2019. The project has received \$8.3MM from the Canadian federal government, with the remainder of the project costs being split evenly by the City of Abbotsford and BC MoTI.

Cory Paterson said that the B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] will work with the City and the Ministry regarding the design of the Vye Rd overpass. The route will need to support heavy haul trucks.

IMTC Purpose Goals & Strategies – quick refresh

Melissa Fanucci reviewed edits to the IMTC Purpose, Goals, & Strategies document. A draft is included in the meeting packet. The document was last approved by the IMTC Core Group in March 2016. The recent edits shorten the document and remove references to the Beyond the Border [BtB] Action Plan and Binational Infrastructure Investment Plan [BIIP], which were strategies of the previous federal administrations. Ms. Fanucci said she will take suggestions for edits up until June, when the Core Group will vote to approve the document.

BPRI Border Brief – considering the cross-border travel implications of upcoming legal cannabis in both Canada and Washington State – *Laurie Trautman, BPRI*

Laurie Trautman handed out the Border Policy Research Institute's [BPRI] Winter 2018 Border Brief, *Cannabis in Cascadia: Impacts of Legalization in the Region*. The brief discusses how legalization of cannabis federally in Canada, along with the current legalization of cannabis in Washington State, could affect the Cascadia region, especially as it relates to transporting cannabis across the border.

Cascade Gateway transportation operations strategies – review of conclusions from last meeting and next steps

NEXUS wait times listed on VMS?

The group discussed the possibility of listing the NEXUS border wait-times on the variable messaging system [VMS] in conjunction with the standard border wait-times.

Tim McCall noted that federal regulations prevent WSDOT from putting too much information on VMS signage. The border wait-time sign on I-5 in Bellingham already toggles between Douglas/Pacific Highway

and Aldergrove/Abbotsford-Huntingdon wait-times, so more information likely cannot be added at that location. The signage at the Loomis Trail Rd overpass on I-5 only shows Douglas and Pacific Highway wait-times, so there is potentially room to add NEXUS waits for these ports.

There was discussion about Google Traffic often reporting incorrect travel times across the border. Tim McCall explained that Google Traffic cannot differentiate between NEXUS and standard border crossers, therefore travel times of both types of travelers are averaged. This produces a travel time that is usually much less than the actual wait-time non-NEXUS travelers would experience at the border.

Quick-response stalled-truck repositioning/towing arrangements

The group discussed strategies for responding quickly to stalled trucks blocking primary inspection lanes.

Dan Bubas noted that the commercial vehicle backups caused by stalled trucks also affect passenger vehicles at Pacific Highway northbound. Backed up trucks can create congestion for all vehicles, local included, at I-5 Exit 275.

Daniella Evans explained that CBSA's union limits CBSA inspectors from pushing stalled trucks or cars because of the safety risk.

Dan Bubas suggested having a hotline for quick-response tow service. Tim McCall explained that the Washington State Patrol has revolving contracts with tow companies, where companies get a stipend if they clear a vehicle on request from the State Patrol.

Hugh Conroy suggested looking at the statistics for stalled vehicles at Pacific Highway and their ensuing effects on wait-times.

2018-19 Passenger Vehicle Survey

Planning and funding update

Hugh Conroy explained that due to funding shortfalls, WCOG is reducing the scope of the 2018 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey and will not conduct surveys at the Point Roberts/Boundary Bay POEs or bus surveys at Pacific Highway as planned.

Daniella Evans advocated for keeping bus surveys in the scope. Data on bus crossings through Pacific Highway would help in CBSA's development of a master plan for the POE. Laurie Trautman and Hugh Conroy agreed to keep looking for additional funding or make other changes to keep bus surveys in the scope.

Review of survey questions

Jaymes McClain reviewed with the group the questions and data points that surveyors will collect in the field from cross-border motorists. The line of questioning used in the 2013 survey, along with proposed edits and additions for the 2018 survey, is included in the meeting packet.

Mr. McClain explained that they want to expand questioning to more current topics without lengthening the duration of the survey. The survey forms will have several branching options – that is, the last several questions of one survey may be different than another. Over ten thousand records were collected in 2013, so a quality sample size is still expected if the survey branches in multiple ways.

The draft branching options include: travelers' use of the Advanced Travel Information Signs [ATIS], travelers' use of border wait-time and routing apps, and travelers' opinions on using other modes of travel to cross the border. Every survey will still collect data on origins and destinations and trip purposes.

U.S. BTS cross-border trade and vehicle crossing visualization tools

Hugh Conroy reviewed border performance metrics he developed that could be used as a tool for project prioritization. The metrics use outputs from the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse and average them by hour in a particular season or month. The metrics include median delay, average volume, a wait-time index (delay divided by volume), and cumulative wait-time (sum of the delay of all cars).

Hugh Conroy showed the group the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics' [BTS] newly renovated data archive. The annual and monthly border crossing/entry data are organized using Tableau dashboards. The border crossing rankings of which POEs have the most crossers come from this database.