



## International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Core Group Meeting Summary

June 14, 2018

Meeting packet available at: [theIMTC.com/meetings](http://theIMTC.com/meetings)

### Meeting location

The meeting was held at the Ocean Promenade Hotel in White Rock, British Columbia.

### Meeting attendance

- Catherine Black, Canada Border Services Agency
- Orlando Caridad, U.S. Customs & Border Protection
- Todd Carlson, WA State Department of Transportation
- Hugh Conroy, Whatcom Council of Governments
- Paul Dickinson, Abbotsford Duty Free
- Melissa Fanucci, Whatcom Council of Governments
- Cliff Hall, WA State Department of Transportation
- Gail Horak, Canadian Consulate Seattle
- Marvin Hunt, B.C. MLA Surrey
- Michael Jones, City of Blaine
- Brandon Hardenbrook, Pacific Northwest Economic Region\*
- Jim Kohnke, B.C. Chamber of Commerce
- Simon Leung, B.C. Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
- Tim McCall, WA State Department of Transportation
- John Michener, Port of Bellingham
- Bonnie Onyon, Mayor, City of Blaine
- J Rene Ortega, U.S. Customs & Border Protection \*
- Geoff Reid, U.S. Consulate, Vancouver
- Ray Segat, Vancouver International Airport Authority
- Peta Wolmarans, Vancouver International Airport Authority
- Brad Valentine, Canada Border Services Agency
- Michael Villnave, U.S. Federal Highway Administration \*
- Ken Williams, U.S. Customs & Border Protection

*\*attended by phone*

## Current Event Updates

**Tim McCall:** WA State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has developed a ramp and roadway report for Bellingham and Whatcom County. This will be available in the next few weeks.

**Orlando Caridad:** U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) implemented a remote kiosk at the Vancouver International Airport where passengers can get from a bus to their plane if they are in-transit. This will expedite passenger movements. The airport area for inspections is also being remodeled to expand in-transit space.

**Orlando Caridad:** 10,000 applications for NEXUS were submitted last month. NEXUS members going through YVR hit 40,000 passengers last month.

**Brad Valentine:** Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is still waiting to hear if National Trade Corridor Funding from Transport Canada is available for Pacific Highway port improvements. Regarding smaller projects, all the LED signage at the Canadian ports-of-entry across the Cascade Gateway are being replaced. Douglas is completed, Pacific Highway will get an upgrade this week, and Abbotsford-Huntingdon will be done next week. CBSA is also starting a re-fit project at Abbotsford-Huntingdon.

**Brad Valentine:** CBSA is nearing completion of a new marine container examination facility near Roberts Bank. If this group is interested, the project leads might be able to do a presentation for IMTC at a later date.

**Michael Jones:** The City of Blaine's Hughes Avenue connector will be under construction this summer. The City also received funding to update its IJR report for Exit 274, and this will hopefully also include a rail grade separation.

**Michael Jones:** Blaine is getting a new truck stop at the old airport location. The project is under contract with a private developer.

**Michael Jones:** The City of Blaine has a new police chief.

**Ken Williams:** Many of CBP's facilities were built prior to 9/11 and therefore cannot accommodate the number of employees now standard at ports-of-entry. Pacific Highway is currently under a study to look at expanding the facility. There is also a study being completed by General Services Administration (GSA) to assess adding lanes at Pacific Highway. Traffic volume has increased 47 percent since last May so this is a key issue now.

**Ken Williams:** There has been a significant change at eastern Washington rural ports that have seen significant reductions in volumes, especially in the evening hours. CBP is reviewing the hours of operation at all ports nationwide to make sure they are logical. The Ports of Metaline Falls and Danville will likely see reductions in the hours of operation.

**Ken Williams:** NEXUS traffic makes up 40 percent of volumes right now, and on weekends CBP has been opening up five NEXUS lanes to maintain the promise to keep NEXUS waits under 15 minutes.

**John Michener:** The Port of Bellingham is receiving inquiries about its trade zone areas. The Trade Zone 129 covers all of Whatcom County, but currently only BP operates in the zone.

**Gail Horak:** The Cannabis Act is moving quickly in Canada and it is expected to pass soon. Afterward the provinces will be given 9-12 weeks to implement procedures after the royal ascent. This will require coordination between Canadian and U.S. government agencies to make sure individuals understand that this change does not allow individuals crossing the border to carry cannabis across.

**J. Rene Ortega:** CBP is in early discussions to look at modernization for the Sumas and Lynden ports. They also need to address infrastructure upgrades for the port approach roads at Highway 13 and Highway 11.

**Hugh Conroy:** There have been a few conference calls discussing the GSA Pacific Highway southbound expansion study that is looking at increasing the number of passenger booths. This will also likely include a need to widen or reconfigure the approach roads and so they are talking with B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BCMOTI) about this. GSA is also interested in incorporating findings from the IMTC Pedestrian Plan in their study.

**Hugh Conroy:** Several new technologies are being studied by CBP to expedite the flow of individuals including facial recognition apps.

**Hugh Conroy:** The meeting packet includes an excerpt from the just-released Northern Border Strategy published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Ken Williams added that the CBP Commissioner spoke last week about the new northern border strategies and the priority to make sure staffing levels are high enough to open all booths. With a new port in Detroit and refreshed facilities along the southern border his priority is hiring. His second priority is technology implementation, and thirdly, fostering partnerships with foreign and local partners.

**Hugh Conroy:** Streetlight is providing probe data for Whatcom County as part of its regional model update, but this will include elements that will be valuable for border traffic analysis. Summaries should be available in a month or two.

**Brandon Hardenbrook:** In Ottawa last week PNWER representatives met with the President of CBSA and confirmed he will be at PNWER's Spokane summit. They also met with Global Affairs Canada to talk about marijuana legalization. They are putting together a call with folks to discuss messaging to tourists that approach the border. Technology advancement will also be a session topic on July 23rd.

## Recap of IMTC work since last Core Group (Feb. 15)

**Melissa Fanucci:** A summary of meeting topics discussed over the past few months is available in the meeting packet.

**Hugh Conroy:** A focus on transportation operations was held in March and a summary is provided in the meeting packet. An issue being followed up on was the idea of a quick response towing service when trucks break down at primary booths. Both agencies started and continue to collect incident data to gauge how often this disruption happens to see if there's a business case for developing a standardized, quick response.

**Hugh Conroy:** CBP Headquarter technology staff have offered to come out and discuss the new PARE technology project.

**Ken Williams:** The benefit of ports-of-entry with bridge authorities is that they are able to implement pilot initiatives faster. Blaine has no financially interested partner so initiatives can be more challenging here. That said he is open to trying new ideas that improve the flow of traffic. For example, he would consider increasing Lynden traffic with e-manifest shipments if there was headquarters support.

## Update of IMTC Purpose, Goals, & Strategies

**Melissa Fanucci:** The Steering Committee suggested updates to the existing IMTC Purpose, Goals, and Strategies document. The Core Group approved these changes (see packet).

## Passenger Vehicle Study update

**Hugh Conroy:** The schedule for the summer surveying is in the packet. Original funding constraints removed bus and Point Roberts surveying elements, but thanks to additional funding from BCMOTI, WCOG, and the Border Policy Research Institute (BPRI) busing surveying is back on the schedule. The Western Washington University students doing the surveying have been vetted by inspection agencies. They have all finished their certified flagging course.

**Paul Dickinson:** The survey locations may miss travelers that are leaving the Duty Free. He suggested contacting him when they get to Abbotsford to assist if needed.

## IMTC Pedestrian Plan update

**Melissa Fanucci:** GSA is working on incorporating aspects of the pedestrian plan into their study at Pacific Highway. Also, at Peace Arch, WA State Parks is completing the sidewalk from the U.S. boundary marker to the GSA property. WCOG will be working with CBP to submit a request to GSA to make sure their portion of the sidewalk is ADA compliant.

**Brad Valentine:** CBSA will create a let-down at the end of the sidewalk southbound and will be adding a jersey barrier to help create a protected pathway for pedestrians as per the plan. This should be completed in the next month.

## Review of cross-border gasoline price and sales trends

**Hugh Conroy:** See IMTC issue review document in packet. Several trends are likely compounding to increasingly motivate B.C. residents to purchase gas in the U.S.

## NEXUS on variable message signs

**Hugh Conroy:** This is an issue that came out of the operations assessment in March. NEXUS wait times are now on northbound signs, and BCMOTI is looking to implement this southbound as well.

**Tim McCall:** There is a 1,200 foot gap between two of the vehicle detector stations (VDS) northbound at Pacific Highway, so WSDOT plans to add an additional VDS between just south of the border and the D Street off-ramp for more accurate wait time estimation.

**Ken Williams:** CBP is looking to pursue NEXUS enrollment mobile events at large sporting events such as at Seahawks games, where up to 20,000 season ticket holders are Canadians. Buffalo has a successful program like this at Buffalo Bills games. The idea would be to have a kiosk where people apply and can schedule for an interview at another game day. CBP has reached out to the Sounders, Mariners, and Seahawks but are looking for more contact information.

## U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) National Economic Partnerships for Innovative Approaches to Multi-Jurisdictional Coordination

**Hugh Conroy:** 14 megaregions were defined in 2015 by FHWA as logical places to focus on transportation challenges in the U.S. Our region was labeled Cascadia and stretches from Portland, OR to Vancouver BC.

**Hugh Conroy:** A week ago FHWA issued a call for Letters of Interest (LOI) in funding through the National Economic Partnerships (NEP) initiative, a relabeling of the previous megaregions initiative. Maximum awards of \$250,000 are available to 4-6 recipients. In the effort to keep IMTC funded for the next 2-3 years WCOG will be applying for IMTC funding. A description of the funding opportunity is in the packet.

**Hugh Conroy:** Letters of interest are due July 9. Funding requires 20% non-federal match. It has a quick turnaround. If the LOI is accepted a full application is due August 3rd. The project will have a 12-18 month performance period.

**Ray Segat:** U.S. federal resources have done most of the heavy lifting for funding the important work of IMTC in the past. The Vancouver International Airport has put funding in because its such a useful group and its important for Canadian companies and governments to contribute.

## Possible impacts from trade-policy changes on regional freight traffic

**Hugh Conroy:** Shared summary statistics of national and regional cross-border commodity flows to evaluate, at a high level, the share of steel and aluminum shipments: the commodities subject to U.S. tariffs scheduled to take effect in July.