



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Core Group Meeting Summary

July 27, 2017

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Surrey City Hall, Surrey, BC.

Meeting attendance

Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] (Dan Bubas, Brad Valentine, Matt Jollymore, David Lee); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Cliff Hall, Jay Drye, Timothy McCall); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock, Bonnie Onyon, Dave Wilbrecht); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson); **US Consulate Vancouver** (Mike Bradecamp); **British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Abid Sivic, Simon Leung); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **City of Lynden** (Heidi Gudde, Steve Banham); **Surrey Board of Trade** (Anne Peterson); **City of Surrey** (Douglas McLeod, Don Buchanan); **General Services Administration [GSA]** (Kristen Curiale); **SmartRail** (Kenneth Jones); **Citizen** (Gordon Rogers); **City of Langley** (Paul Cordeiro)

Current event updates

Bill Bullock reported that the city of Blaine is working on its Sweet Rd/Hughes Ave project. The intersection of Hughes Ave and Peace Portal Dr is being realigned for a better turning radius for trucks, and sections of Hughes Ave-Sweet Rd are being improved. Boblett St in Blaine was recently awarded funding for rechannelization, a project that will improve truck queuing just south of the Pacific Highway port-of-entry [POE]. Mr. Bullock also informed the core group that he has accepted a position with the city of Maple Valley, and this IMTC meeting will be his last.

Kristen Curiale said that the General Services Administration [GSA] exterior envelope prospectus project at Pacific Highway has been put on the president's budget. She is also working with Melissa Fanucci at the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] and the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] on the border pedestrian plan at Pacific Highway.

Michael Bradecamp announced that there will be a leadership change at the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver, BC. Katherine Dhanani will be taking over for Lynne Platt as the new Consul General, arriving at her position in September.

Jay Drye reported that the southbound lanes SR 539 just south of Lynden will be closed next week for repaving and smoothing. WSDOT will detour traffic to Birch Bay-Lynden Rd and I-5.

Brad Valentine explained that Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] is still following up on topics discussed at the May Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting. Regarding preclearance, CBSA has been at the table in discussions about ferry terminals in Victoria and ferry, cruise ship, and passenger rail terminals in Vancouver. Rocky Mountaineer is the most prepared to incorporate preclearance. Mr. Valentine also reported that some traffic lanes at the Douglas POE will be closed for a cooling project. In the fall, crews will be conducting canopy restoration at Douglas. In September, the FAST lane at the Pacific Highway POE will be closed in order to replace concrete slabs.

Gordon Rogers praised the IMTC's 20 years of work as well as Hugh Conroy's chairmanship of the group for the past 10 years.

Abid Sivic said that British Columbia now has a new government, but there are still pending leadership appointments for provincial agencies, therefore many projects are still in standby. He informed the group that the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] is enhancing its advanced traveler information system [ATIS] software with the booth status data feed being availed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]. The system will better account for US CBP's dynamic lane assignment and will provide better border wait-time reporting.

Dan Bubas said that the FAST-first system at CBSA's Pacific Hwy commercial crossing has been in place for months. Trucks still queue depending on their FAST status (one standard lane, one FAST lane), but all three inspection booths can be used by any commercial vehicle, with FAST-queued trucks being given priority by a signal. Mr. Bubas said that drivers are embracing the new system, and there seems to be less confusion at the POE in general. CBSA headquarters will be analyzing border wait times-savings of the new system. The large scale imaging facility at Pacific Highway is now operational, Mr. Bubas said, and is providing better quality imaging than what they had initially expected.

Ken Jones said that Washington State Governor Jay Inslee and Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have been promoting the idea of a high speed rail corridor through the Cascade Gateway. Mr. Jones advocated for protecting land for the potential rail corridor from development.

Melissa Fanucci informed the group that Jason Snow at Washington State Parks will be getting bricks for the Peace Arch Park sidewalk gap elimination. She is also updating the resource manual, which will be done by end of summer. If agencies have any new border-related pictures, she asked that they be sent along for possible use in the manual. Ms. Fanucci is working on an online cross-border data spreadsheet for the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG], which lists all available updated travel and trade data for the U.S.-Canada border. The U.S. Border Data Warehouse is being phased out due to lack of funding, however the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse will continue to be maintained and will be updated when funding is available. Ms. Fanucci asked that IMTC members please take a survey on users' current use of the warehouse and what they would like to see in an update. The survey will be emailed out soon.

Brad Valentine said that CBSA and WSDOT are coordinating and should have their work towards implementing the Pacific Highway pedestrian plan done by the next IMTC meeting in September.

Heidi Gudde introduced herself as the new Planning Director at the city of Lynden.

Ann Peterson with Surrey Board of Trade explained that the Board is trying to be more engaged with regional committees like the IMTC. She thanked Melissa Fanucci for presenting data at a Surrey Board of Trade meeting in Spring.

Blaine City Councilwoman Bonnie Onyon informed the group of a new distracted driving law in Washington State, where using electronic devices or having a non-electronic distraction (like eating or applying makeup) while driving will now be considered a traffic violation.

Tim McCall said that WSDOT had made some adjustments to the border wait-time algorithms while the Douglas POE was undergoing improvements to ensure system accuracy. The algorithms will be adjusted back when work at Douglas is completed.

Simon Leung said that the new Minister of BC MoTI, Claire Trevena, visited the Ministry's headquarters last week. Ms. Trevena was formerly a journalist with the BBC. Mr. Leung noted that the Ministry will have the same deputy minister and generally the same administrative team.

Don Buchanan reported that the cities of Surrey and White Rock are getting funding to conduct a rail relocation study for the BNSF railway, which currently follows the coastline of Boundary Bay.

Hugh Conroy described a recent USDOT-funded trip he took to Kathmandu, Nepal to participate in a three-day workshop focused on improving regional cross-border connections. Mr. Conroy brought perspectives regarding the U.S.-Canada border. He also informed the group that political appointments at the U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] (Administrator and Deputy Administrator) are starting to be filled.

Celebration of IMTC's 20th Anniversary

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the IMTC's formation, Melissa Fanucci handed out IMTC lapel pins to meeting guests. Cake was also served.

IMTC Funding Update

Hugh Conroy presented a spreadsheet showing the IMTC's current funding status for the next three years. WSDOT has committed two annual installments of \$100k for 2018 and 2019. The Whatcom Transportation Policy Board approved three \$30k installments from the FHWA's Surface Transportation Block Grant program [STBG] for the next three years, a contribution they were willing to commit to after learning of the IMTC's coalition funding strategy. Additional funding confirmations are from FHWA through the Strategic Highway Research Program [SHRP2] and from Vancouver International Airport [YVR]. The current amount in committed funded for 2018 and 2019 is 70 percent of the IMTC's annual goal of \$240k for administrative costs.

In the long term, Mr. Conroy explained that he hopes to continue exploring opportunities for programmatic funding at the TBWG and that he will continue articulating the need for reestablishing a federal role in funding regional border planning, such as existed with the FHWA Coordinated Border Infrastructure program [CBI].

Current IMTC projects

Draft addition of RFID pilot project to the IMTC project list

Hugh Conroy brought up a discussion had at the previous steering committee meeting regarding the future of the proposed RFID pilot effort. The RFID pilot is an element of the IMTC Dynamic Border Management project and seeks to distribute RF-enabled traveler documents to frequent border-crossing Canadians who have not enrolled in the NEXUS program. Modeled scenarios have shown that border wait-time could be reduced drastically if targeted, high-frequency cross-border travelers used RFID documents instead of passports, which would speed up individual inspection times. A draft project description was included in the meeting packet. Mr. Conroy asked that members consider adding the RFID pilot (and an evaluation project to analyze the outcomes of the pilot) to the 2017 IMTC Project List.

The group unanimously agreed to add the RFID pilot project to the 2017 IMTC Project List.

Topic Focus – Border Municipalities

City of Surrey – *Douglas McLeod*

Doug McLeod presented the city's 16 Ave Corridor Study. The avenue runs from Surrey to Abbotsford parallel to the border and is an important east-west goods movement corridor for the region. The Highway 99 interchange improvement in 2012 prompted additional discussion and study regarding 16 Ave's role in the region. The corridor's importance is further highlighted by the future King Road connector project that will connect the eastern-most point of the contiguous 16 Ave corridor (King Road) to the Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 1) in Abbotsford. The avenue provides connectivity to all border crossings in the Cascade Gateway and is part of TransLink's Major Road Network (MRN). It currently connects Highways 99, 15 and 13. The corridor lacks multimodal infrastructure, as it is mostly a two lane rural road.

The 16 Ave Corridor Study is backed by a stakeholder group of interested local and regional agencies, such as the B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] and local chambers of commerce. About 13-14 percent of the traffic on 16 Ave is commercial trucks. Collision data shows that most accidents are rear-end related. The city of Surrey modeled different scenarios for the corridor to project future conditions: a two lane "do nothing" scenario, a two lane scenario with the added King Road connection to Highway 1, and a four lane scenario with the King Road connection. The outputs from the scenarios will help build strategies for improvements. From public consultation, safety while driving was identified as the largest concern. Mr. McLeod said that the city is waiting on moving forward with design and construction of improvements to 16 Ave until they get more complete collision data from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia [ICBC]. Funding for the 16 Ave improvements has been identified through the Gateway Transportation Collaboration Forum [GTCF].

Township of Langley – *Paul Cordeiro*

Paul Cordeiro said that 15 km of 16 Ave runs through the Township of Langley, most of it farmland. They have looked at specific intersections for improvement along 16 Ave as well as possible curve elimination around the Campbell Valley Regional Park. Due to the King Road Connector project, intersection improvements may need to happen sooner than later, Mr. Cordeiro said. TransLink, who manages much of 16 Ave, has approved improvements along the corridor, including some pullout bays for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP].

City of Lynden – *Stephen Banham*

Steve Banham presented to the group some of the projects occurring in Lynden. In 2009 SR 539 (Guide Meridian Rd) was widened through to just south of Front St in Lynden. The city is working with WSDOT on completing the widening from Front St north to SR 546 (Badger Rd), a project slated to go to construction in 2025. Riverview Dr, a connection just south of the Lynden Historic Business District, will be constructed next year. Line Dr in eastern Lynden is currently being reconstructed to accommodate for more residences and a new middle school. The Pepin Creek project looks to remove the ditches along Benson Rd, Double Ditch Rd, and the Guide Meridian and create a dedicated creek corridor between Benson and Double Ditch. Mr. Banham also said that the city is preparing for more industrial growth west of SR 539.

City of Blaine – *Bill Bullock*

Bill Bullock explained that the city of Blaine levies a once cent tax on each gallon of fuel bought in Blaine, which many Canadians contribute to. The tax revenue goes towards transportation infrastructure projects. He also noted that Amazon.com is the largest tax generator for the city. Blaine has many mailbox services that are largely used for mail-order by Canadian residents. Dave Wilbrecht explained that there are many goods that do not ship to Canada, or would otherwise take a long time to ship, therefore many Canadians use a mailbox in Blaine where they can ship their goods and pick them up by car.

Mr. Bullock also described some of the near-border infrastructure projects that the city of Blaine has worked on and has planned for the near future. In 2007 work was completed on the D Street overpass and SR 543 underpass just south of the Pacific Highway POEs. The overpass allows for the separation of local and border traffic and provides for more queuing capacity leading up to the border. There have been subsequent intersection improvements on SR 543, and Mr. Bullock discussed ongoing efforts to improve the corridor. One of the city's main priorities is the improvement of I-5 exit 274, which provides commercial trucks an alternative exit to the city and north county region and would connect them with Sweet Rd and access the eastern POEs. Other near term projects like the Hughes Ave improvements and Boblett St channelization are aimed at improving cross-border freight traffic flows.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM