



# International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

September 13, 2018

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

## Meeting location

The meeting was held at Peace Arch Port-of-Entry, Blaine, WA.

## Meeting attendance

**Bellingham, Port of** (John Michener); **Blaine Police Department** (Chief Allen Schubert); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Ryan Vanderstar, Chris Van Nes, Matt Jollymore, Tracy Letain, Brad Valentine); **Congresswoman Suzan DelBene** (Kaylee Galloway); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **Transport Canada** (Chris Hoff); **U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, Phillip Stanford, Craig Hope, John McPhail, Ken Williams); **U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]** (Sharleen Bakeman); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Tim McCall, Sayuri Koyamatsu, Cliff Hall); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Jaymes McClain, Melissa Fanucci)

## Current Event Updates

Brad Valentine reported that canopy restoration at the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] Douglas port-of-entry [POE] has completed. CBSA is redeveloping their commercial exit-control gates at the Pacific Highway and Abbotsford-Huntingdon POEs, which may cause a few delays. CBSA is also conducting a 5-year plan nationally – there should be updates for how the Cascade Gateway region will be affected by next meeting.

Tim McCall announced that he will be leaving the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]. IMTC's new point of contact for information technology at WSDOT will be Sayuri Koyamatsu. Mr. McCall reported that WSDOT has a work order for installing NEXUS lane loop detectors at SR 543 this September, after which the border wait-time information for Pacific Highway POE will be updated.

Jim Kohnke reported that the B.C. Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution regarding US-Canada border preclearance. The resolution will be discussed at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's upcoming Annual General Meeting in Thunder Bay, ON on September 22.

Blaine Police Chief Allen Schubert introduced himself and explained the need to close communication gaps between the Blaine Police Department and border inspection agencies.

Chris Hoff reported that most of the projects for Transport Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund [NTCF] have been announced. Most of the announced projects are supporting rail trade around Vancouver.

Hugh Conroy reported that the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] is conducting a household travel survey for Whatcom County. Half of the Whatcom County population will be invited to participate via mail-outs. Data gathered from the survey will help update WCOG's travel demand model. For the project, staff at WCOG are also working with probe data from StreetLight Data, which could be used in monitoring border traffic flows.

Melissa Fanucci reported that she is working on a cannabis communications plan with the Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI] on behalf of the Canadian Consulate in Seattle. The goal is to provide messaging that informs travelers that even though cannabis use is legal in Washington State and now Canada, cannabis cannot be transported across the border. Craig Hope suggested including cannabis-infused products in the messaging. John Dahm commented that in San Diego near the Mexican border, there is a billboard that details the cannabis restrictions. Ryan Vanderstar said that CBSA is also trying to figure out the right messaging on cannabis – right now the restrictions on crossing the border with cannabis are posted on the CBSA website.

Craig Hope reported that booth expansion and construction in the import lot at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] Pacific Highway commercial POE is being postponed. He also noted they are seeing some slight impacts due to the federal changes in tariffs with Canada, especially with Chinese steel.

John Dahm reported that US CBP is modernizing the lobby at Pacific Highway. US CBP is seeing more balanced border wait-times between the Pacific Highway and Peace Arch POEs. NEXUS appointments at the Birch Bay enrollment center are still happening frequently – as many as 150 appointments per day.

John McPhail reported that US CBP has developed a mobile app called ROAM (Reporting Offsite Arrival – Mobile) that private boat operators can use to report their arrival to the U.S. The app allows vessel operators to communicate face-to-face with CBP officers through their phone or tablet. Following a face-time interaction, US CBP will make the decision if they need to report in-person. Vessel operators can still call-in to report their entry into the country. US CBP is trying to get the word out about the ROAM app through pamphlets, press releases, and through communication at vessel events.

Ken Williams reported that US CBP officers from the Seattle field office are moving to the Peace Arch POE facility. Adele Fasano, the soon-to-be US CBP Director of Field Operations for the region, will move into the facility in November. Area port directors are already relocating with their staff. Staff of the Blaine Port Area, which manages all land border POEs in Washington, are mostly located at the Pacific Highway POE. Eventually, all Seattle field officers will be in Blaine, which will require expansion of facilities.

Ryan Vanderstar reported that senior officials from Ottawa will be touring area border facilities throughout the month. CBSA is seeing more traffic through the POE in Osoyoos, BC. Mr. Vanderstar also reported that along with the new cannabis legislation, the federal government is setting aside funding for education on the matter.

Brad Valentine informed the group that the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] has funding in place to complete their end of the crosswalk construction at the Pacific Highway POE.

## Data

### 2018/2019 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Survey – Review of preliminary summer survey data

Jaymes McClain reviewed the summer component of the 2018 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Survey. The project is managed by WCOG and the Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI] at Western Washington University [WWU].

Student research assistants from WWU interviewed cross-border motorists roadside at each of the four main POEs in the Cascade Gateway, gathering data on cross-border traveler characteristics. Some of the collected data points include: trip origins and destinations, trip purposes, frequency of cross-border travel, travel document types, border wait-time information sources, and GPS/navigation usage.

Mr. McClain reviewed some of the preliminary analysis. Of the motorists surveyed, 71 percent live in Canada and 29 percent live in the U.S. Canadian residents were most often crossing the border to go shopping, followed by purchasing gas as their primary purpose and recreating for the day. For American residents, they were most often crossing for a multi-day vacation, followed by visiting family and recreating for the day. Americans crossing through a Blaine POE were most often destined for Vancouver, followed by Surrey and locations outside of the Lower Mainland B.C. Canadians crossing through a Blaine POE were mostly destined for Blaine, followed by Bellingham and Seattle.

There will also be a winter component of data collection, which will begin in February. All data collected in the field will be organized in a database and will be available to interested agencies. A report will accompany the database.

## Policy

### Review of U.S. Federal Highway Administration's Megaregions Initiative:

Hugh Conroy reviewed the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's [FHWA] National Economic Partnership Initiative, which defines geographic areas of interest that they call Megaregions – urban centers and their surrounding areas that are connected environmentally, economically, culturally, and have connected infrastructure. The Pacific Northwest/Cascadia Megaregion includes areas from central Oregon up to the Washington-British Columbia border. Mr. Conroy has advocated for including the Lower Mainland British Columbia in this Megaregion.

There are some funding opportunities through the initiative. Planning coalitions seeking to plan and provide performance metrics for these Megaregions can apply for funding up to \$250K. One specific category for funding eligibility is the sustainment of existing planning coalitions already engaged in similar work. Mr. Conroy submitted a funding application, jointly signed-off on by WCOG and WSDOT, on behalf of the

IMTC group to help ensure the continuation of IMTC's ongoing multi-agency planning efforts for the Cascade Gateway region.

## Operations

### Monitoring stalled truck incidents and mitigation strategies

Melissa Fanucci reviewed data collected in May, 2018 from CBSA and US CBP regarding commercial trucks stalling in primary inspection lanes at Pacific Highway. Trucks that stall at the border typically take an excess of an hour to be pulled out of an inspection lane, while in the meantime commercial processing capacity is reduced by up to 50 percent.

During the month of May, there was only one incident of a stalled truck southbound at Pacific Highway. Northbound, CBSA reported 13 incidents of a stalled truck, 86 percent which required a tow. During these incidents, the affected primary inspection lanes were blocked for an average of 1.5 hours and border wait-times reached an average of 45 minutes. It was noted that northbound, CBSA requires trucks to turn off their engines during primary inspection, which may cause a stall when trucks cannot restart their engine. Southbound, trucks can remain idling during inspection.

Potential solutions to delays caused by a stall are to allow idling during northbound primary inspection, have a joint tow truck on-site between US CBP and CBSA, or have an on-call agreement with near-border towing agencies.

### Cascade Gateway Traffic Impact Outlook

Jaymes McClain reviewed WCOG's capabilities for modeling different traffic and operational scenarios at the border with discrete-event simulation software. The software has been used in the past for analyzing the southbound commercial staging area improvements at Pacific Highway, backing up the RFID Business Case that was coauthored by WCOG and BPRI, and for analyzing US CBP's NEXUS lane usage during high-traffic volume days.

The simulation model that Mr. McClain has developed is informed by traffic data from US CBP and CBSA, booth status data from US CBP's VPC system, loop detector data from the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse, and data on traveler characteristics from the IMTC Passenger Vehicle Surveys. Using these inputs, the model can estimate the effects that specific traffic and operational scenarios may have on border wait-times and traffic throughput. Such scenarios include: increasing primary inspection capacity, increasing the NEXUS traveler population, and analyzing the system-wide effects of construction at one POE.

John Dahm reminded the group that US CBP is developing alternative scenarios for booth expansion at the Pacific Highway POE. He added that they may pursue more offsite biometric-collection options when the new Director of Field Operations comes in.

## Infrastructure

### U.S. Peace Arch POE – Pedestrian walkway improvements update

Melissa Fanucci announced that the pedestrian walkway connecting the existing sidewalk in Peace Arch Park to the US CBP facility is almost complete. Staff at Washington State Parks, who are laying the bricks for the pedestrian walkway, have concerns that the walkway is not ADA-accessible (accessible for persons with disabilities). The walkway terminates at the return-to-Canada access road, but there is no curb cutout necessary for mobility devices to continue on the designated path. The access road and surrounding land are owned by the General Services Administration [GSA]. Ms. Fanucci said they are still pursuing options to make the walkway ADA-accessible.

Melissa Fanucci reported that the BC MoTI Highway 13 widening project is starting. On October 1 they are improving the storm-sewer infrastructure on 0 Ave near the Lynden-Aldergrove POEs.

## IMTC Border Master Planning

### IMTC Five Year Plan (short range plan element as part of Border Master Planning)

Hugh Conroy explained that WCOG is developing the IMTC Border Master Plan to parallel the planning process that occurs at metropolitan planning organizations [MPO] (i.e. WCOG). They hope to post a consolidated version of the border master plan online, incorporating familiar plan components like the IMTC Purpose, Goals, and Strategies document and the annually updated IMTC Project List, as well as adopted performance measures that weigh the impacts of border-area projects.

Mr. Conroy said that as an element of the Border Master Plan, they are also developing an annually-updated 5-year outlook for trends and investment needs in the Cascade Gateway. Attached in the meeting packet is an outline and working draft of the IMTC Five Year Plan. The plan will look at trends in trade and travel demand, policy, demographics, and other area likes economic/social/environmental/technological and analyze their influence on operations and strategies over the next 5 years. Known or planned actions and investments in the next 5 years (either detailed in the IMTC Project List or in another plan) will also be outlined in the Five Year Plan document.

Mr. Conroy queried the group for any obvious trends in policy, demographics, and other areas in the Cascade Gateway. The group also discussed some of the known investments over the next 5 years, such as booth expansion at the US CBP Pacific Highway POE and the redevelopment of CBSA's facilities also at Pacific Highway.