



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

September 14, 2017

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Blaine Boating Center, Blaine, WA.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] (Lindsay Samson); **British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Abid Sivic); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Brad Valentine); **City of Blaine** (Dave Wilbrecht); **Office of Congresswoman Suzan DelBene** (Kaylee Galloway); **Office of Senator Patty Murray** (Ann Seabott); **U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, Craig Hope, J. Rene Ortega); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Miguel Gavino); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain)

Current event updates

Todd Carlson informed that group that the City of Blaine and the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] will come up with a design concept for I-5 exit 274 by December. They will conduct workshops for the design. Washington State Governor Jay Inslee vetoed the Exit 274 project in last year's state budget. Dave Wilbrecht explained that the exit 274 interchange justification report [IJR] cost roughly \$200k and that the exit improvement will most likely cost less than \$10MM.

Ann Seabott of Washington Senator Patty Murray's office explained that the U.S. Congress has raised the debt ceiling and avoided an imminent government shutdown. However, the government is only funded until December, so senators will have to reconvene soon for budgetary talks.

Kaylee Galloway of Washington Congresswoman Suzan DelBene's office noted that tax reform may be a higher priority right now in congress than infrastructure. She commented that Congresswoman DelBene's office appreciates IMTC feedback about how federal policies are affecting member agencies. The Congresswoman will be conducting town hall meetings in the Whatcom County area in the near future.

Abid Sivic reported that design of the Abbotsford-Huntingdon port-of-entry [POE] NEXUS lane as part of B.C. Ministry of Transportation's [BC MoTI] Highway 13 improvements is still in progress, and that they hope to go to construction next year. Regarding the U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] booth

status data integration with BC MoTI's southbound advanced traveler information system [ATIS], the software updates are complete and the whole system has been live since this summer. Mr. Sivic said they already see improvements in the accuracy of border wait-time reporting for southbound traffic at Peace Arch POE.

JR Ortega informed the group that next week US CBP will be submitting a news release regarding delays at the Sumas POE due to updates to the radiation portal monitors in both the passenger and commercial lanes. The port will still be open during this time.

Craig Hope explained that the new radiation portal monitors will have more sensors and will be more accurate, reducing the number of unnecessary alerts. With the hurricanes hitting the southern coast of the U.S., US CBP agents from the area will be helping out down south, including recruits coming out of training academy. US CBP has removed the cash collection component of inspections from the Pacific Highway POE. Other ports in the region are continuing to phase it out. Cash registers will stay in inspection booths for some months before they are taken out altogether. Commercial drivers will have to enter the port office post-inspection if they are still paying their fees in cash.

John Dahm said that next week he will be in San Diego at San Ysidro for a US CBP discussion regarding cross-border passenger vehicle solutions. In the next two weeks US CBP will be showcasing new technology to process cross-border travels in secondary inspection outside of the inspection facility from a handheld device. Mr. Dahm also commented that they have noticed an uptick in passenger traffic at Pacific Highway and a decrease at Peace Arch. The US CBP Ready Lane, which operates weekdays during select hours for travelers that have RF-enabled traveler documents, is being used 93 percent of the time by NEXUS card holders. Mr. Dahm suggested there could be a messaging error for the lane or many travelers simply do not have non-NEXUS RF-enabled traveler documents. Hugh Conroy explained that they outlined this issue in the RFID pilot business case that the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] generated 3 years ago. Mr. Dahm said he also met with representatives from Rutgers University who are contracting with US CBP to develop a 3D border crossing simulation model for Peace Arch, which they have done previously for the Bridge of the Americas in El Paso, Texas.

Miguel Gavino reported that WSDOT has finished their pedestrian path painting at Pacific Highway. They also recently installed advanced warning signs for recreational vehicles turning into the CBSA inspection facility. Todd Carlson added that WSDOT still needs to complete work on the barriers along the pedestrian path.

Melissa Fanucci told the group that WCOG organizes the intelligent transportation systems [ITS] architecture plan for the Whatcom County region, which includes a list of all ITS components. The national architecture has changed this year, so WCOG is updating its regional architecture. The 2017 IMTC Resource Manual is complete and will be sent to the printers soon. Ms. Fanucci also said that they are updating their interactive online data through Tableau and will have new query tools on the IMTC website.

Laurie Trautman informed the group that she will be attending a World Customs Organization conference in Tunisia. She will be one of the speakers and plans on talking about the RFID pilot project, FAST lane configuration, and other general IMTC projects.

Lindsay Samson said that B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] representatives will be meeting with the B.C. Minister of Transportation next week to talk about infrastructure projects. The status of some of the current

projects are unknown given the change in government. Ms. Samson added that the Canadian Trucking Association will be part of a working group with CBSA to discuss Advanced Commercial Information [ACI] requirements and penalties and eliminating the exemption for empty trailers to submit a manifest.

Brad Valentine told the group that CBSA has been closing lanes at the Douglas POE for improvements. They will also be doing canopy restoration at the port through March. The bus passenger inspection space will be renovated at Pacific Highway – the old conveyor belts will be removed. Aldergrove Port Chief Bernie Pitura is retiring, and Shane Hainsworth will be his temporary replacement. Mr. Valentine also noted that CBSA went out for tender for envelope restoration to the Pacific Highway port facilities.

Hugh Conroy said that he is attending the Canadian Consulate's border ports and rail tour next week in Prince Rupert, BC.

IMTC funding update

Hugh Conroy updated the group on the 3-year funding strategy for IMTC. Committed funding sources include the WCOG region's allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant [STBG] funding, Federal Highway Administration's [FHWA] Strategic Highway Research Program [SHPR2], and WSDOT. Mr. Conroy also said they are anticipating a contribution from Vancouver International Airport [YVR]. The current funding commitments amount to just under 70 percent of the \$240k funding goal per year for 2018 and 2019.

Canada's National Trade Corridor Fund (NCTF) expressions of interest

Mr. Conroy said that he was notified that WCOG is eligible to apply for a grant from Transport Canada's National Trade Corridor Fund [NCTF] for IMTC core funding. WCOG has submitted expressions of interest for both IMTC core funding and updating the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse.

NCTF Expression of Interest for Border Data Warehouse 3.0

Melissa Fanucci explained that the existing Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse needs to be updated in order to handle the quantity of data from US CBP's booth status data feed. She has submitted an expression of interest to the NCTF to overhaul the front- and back-end of the website with the goal of making data extraction simpler and more user friendly.

Border Freight Operations study – various research findings

Summary of continued carrier interviews

Jaymes McClain summarized the findings from the four recent commercial carrier interviews he conducted over the past several months as part of the IMTC Border Freight Operations study [BFO]. He spoke with Cowden Gravel and Ready Mix in Bellingham, NW Shippers in Ferndale, Bronco Transportation Services in Langley, and G.A.S. Enterprises Ltd. in Surrey. The representatives of each carrier company gave their perspectives on border related issues in the Cascade Gateway region. Some common themes from the discussions include: desired improvements to US CBP's Automated Commercial Environment [ACE] system

interface; desired expansion of hours (especially in the morning) at the Lynden-Aldergrove commercial POEs; concerns about new e-log requirements and delays at the border that can cause drivers to reach their daily operating limit and have to sleep on the other side of the border from their house.

Mr. McClain said that these interviews, as well as the ones conducted earlier, will be summarized in a report that will discuss common themes among carrier operations in the region and their concerns about the border environment relative to their business operations.

Estimated impact of US CBP elimination of cash payments

Jaymes McClain presented his analysis of the impact of eliminating cash payments for US CBP commercial crossing user fees on commercial inspection- and border wait-times at Pacific Highway POE. Using data collected from the 2016 IMTC Border Freight Operations study, Mr. McClain queried the commercial goods movements that involved cash payments of user fees, including: the cash collection rates by POE in the region; the average difference in inspection time between cash paying vehicles and those that pay electronically; cash payment rates by vehicle country of origin; cash payment rates by vehicle types and commodity types.

Mr. McClain also modeled the effects of removing cash payments from the commercial vehicle stream at Pacific Highway. Using accumulated observed inspection times and breaking out inspections by cash payment and non-cash payment, he estimated that had all user fee payments observed during the BFO data collection effort not involved cash exchange, the accumulated inspection times would have been reduced by 9 percent. Mr. McClain also built a simple simulation model for analyzing the effects of cash payment elimination on commercial border wait-times, estimating that wait-times could be reduced by 18 percent if cash payments were eliminated.

A technical memo of the US CBP user fee cash payment elimination is available upon request.

Evaluation of evidence for shifting time-of-day arrival patterns for cross-border trucks

Hugh Conroy presented data he compiled of quarterly commercial vehicle volumes through Pacific Highway, plotted as average hourly commercial vehicle arrivals to the port by day of week. The compilation included the four quarters of 2013 and 2015 and two quarters of 2017 to assess to any noticeable changes in arrival patterns to the border. Though there appears to be a general increase in commercial volume over time, there does not seem to be a noticeable shift in arrival patterns as observed from the US CBP and CBSA volume data.

Lynden/Aldergrove traffic routing

Hugh Conroy presented summarized analyses of commercial vehicle routing patterns through the Lynden-Aldergrove POEs.

Using commercial vehicle volume data from the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse from 2016, Mr. Conroy showed that 7-8 percent of border-crossing commercial vehicles in the Cascade Gateway used the Lynden-Aldergrove POEs.

Using origin-destination data from the 2016 IMTC BFO, Mr. Conroy estimated the breakout of commercial vehicles using the Lynden-Aldergrove ports as a direct route to where they were going and using the ports as

a diversion away from another port. The 2016 data shows that, of northbound traveling commercial vehicles crossing through Aldergrove, about 71 percent were headed to the eastern Lower Mainland (locations east of BC Highway 15), indicating these were likely direct routes. Of the 27 percent of vehicles headed to the western Lower Mainland (locations west of BC Highway 15), over half did not originate from the immediate Whatcom County jurisdictions of Lynden, Sumas, or Everson, indicating likely diversions from the Pacific Highway POE. Of southbound vehicles traveling through the Lynden POE, 52 percent originated in the eastern Lower Mainland (indicating direct routing) while 45 percent originated in the western Lower Mainland. Of those 45 percent, two-thirds were destined for locations not within the vicinity of the Lynden POE, indicating diversions.

Continued discussion of Peace Arch-Douglas & Pacific Highway pedestrian route improvements

Melissa Fanacci reported that the IMTC Blaine/Surrey Cross-Border Pedestrian Plan is completed and the report will be posted online once the stakeholders have signed off on it. CBSA and BC MoTI are slated to complete their portions of the plan for Pacific Highway by the end of the year or early next year. Ms. Fanucci said that WSDOT has bricks available for the Peace Arch Park pedestrian path, but the improvements and associated costs still need to be discussed with the Washington State Parks Department. The stakeholder group will also continue discussions on common signage used both north- and southbound.

Other current trends in data

Observable exchange rate effects?

In the meeting packet Mr. Conroy included a comparison of auto volumes through Blaine and the USD-CAD exchange rate from this year and last year. In 2016 (April-August) auto volumes stayed relatively even, as did the exchange rate. In May 2017 the value of the Canadian dollar relative to the US dollar began to steadily rise. This steady rise is mirrored in the auto volumes in 2017.

Upcoming WCOG external trip data collection (for Whatcom regional travel demand model)

Hugh Conroy informed the group that in collaboration with WSDOT and the Skagit Council of Governments [SCOG] WCOG will contract out the collection of traffic counts on highways at the entry/exit locations of Whatcom County and Skagit County. WCOG's goal is to provide better "external trip" data for its regional travel demand model. The agencies hope to use a data collection methodology that can provide insight into commercial vehicle origins and destinations as they travel through Whatcom County as well as capture general vehicle classification data. Funding for the project has been made possible by recently committed federal funds allocated to the Whatcom County region.

Upcoming TBWG meeting

The next Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting is November 7th and 8th in Calgary, Alberta. Hugh Conroy said that the agenda is currently being assembled. He plans to keep the working group updated on the IMTC's regional freight discussions as well as the RFID pilot.

Mr. Conroy also showcased the placemat graphic info sheet that he developed for TBWG explaining the requirements for using the FAST commercial lanes. The info sheet details what trusted trader elements are required from the vehicle driver, the carrier company, and the goods importer/customer.

Ann Seabott informed the group that \$500MM in U.S. federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery program [TIGER] grant funds are being released for eligible transportation infrastructure projects. Applications are due in October. She recommended reaching out to local representatives for letters of support if a local agency is thinking of applying.

Kaylee Galloway also announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation [USDOT] Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-Term Achievement of National Efficiencies [FASTLANE] grant program is now the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America [INFRA] grant program. Applications are currently open for the approximately \$1.5BN pool of funding. Small projects grants must be a minimum of \$5MM. The focus for INFRA grants is rural projects and projects in a position to proceed rapidly to construction.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am