

# Pre-Approved Cross-Border Travel in the Cascade Gateway

## Report 2: PACE and CANPASS Marketing Plan



**Prepared By:**



**CASCADIA**  
Cascadia Project  
Discovery Institute



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Report Goal

The PACE and CANPASS pre-approved cross-border travel programs which operate along the Washington State – British Columbia border provide assistance in alleviating at-border congestion, as well as allowing federal inspection agencies to focus on higher-risk vehicles and thus better utilize limited resources.

This report provides a specific action plan for marketing the PACE and CANPASS programs, with the goal of increasing participation in the two programs of regional frequent cross-border travelers.

This work is being performed under a contract with the U.S. Department of Transportation Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program. This report concludes the second in a series of tasks that includes:

### Pre-Approved Cross-Border Travel in the Cascade Gateway

Report 1: Market Research

#### **Report 2: Marketing Plan**

Report 3: Program Improvements Report

Report 4: Barriers to Joint Administration

Report 5: Recommendations for a Jointly Administered Program

## 1.2 Report Methods and Structure

The recommendations included in this plan have been developed to reflect the findings of the market assessment report completed by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). In *Pre-Approved Cross-Border Travel in the Cascade Gateway Report 1: Market Research*, WCOG analyzed demographic information on current PACE and CANPASS program participants and cross-border travelers, and conducted a marketing survey to identify potential participants.

Following the findings of WCOG's market assessment, this marketing plan focuses on both activity-based and geographic segments of the potential PACE and CANPASS market, targeting particularly those frequent travelers crossing the border either to shop or for recreational reasons. Potential users are defined as U.S. or Canadian citizens who cross the border at least six times per year.

The following plan delineates actions items to market PACE and CANPASS to target markets in the Lower Mainland, British Columbia (BC) and Whatcom County, Washington (WA) region.

## 2 Market Segmentation

Specific segments of the regional population can be targeted for PACE and CANPASS marketing efforts, based on the results of WCOG's market research. An effective marketing strategy will target these market segments either directly or at their destinations.

### 2.1 Activity-based Segmentation

#### 2.1.1 Shopping Travelers

Shopping was found by WCOG market research to be the primary reason for crossing the border, accounting for roughly 35 percent of all cross-border trip purposes.<sup>1</sup>

PACE and CANPASS information should be available at all major shopping locations, and stores and shopping districts could serve as partners in marketing activities.

#### 2.1.2 Recreation Travelers

29 percent of potential PACE and CANPASS users were found to be traveling for recreational purposes. A study conducted in 1995 by the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Highways (B.C. MoTH) found that 16 percent of southbound traffic crossing the border was headed to Mt. Baker. Recreation destinations, including ski resorts, golf clubs, casinos, and other locations which serve large numbers of cross-border clientele need to be focus points for marketing activity.

#### 2.1.3 Work-Related Travelers

Of those drivers interviewed, only 12 percent listed work-related reasons for crossing the border. The Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce will develop solutions for marketing to this demographic; however, marketing efforts will be concentrated on shopping and recreation locations.

### 2.2 Geographic Segmentation

Most current PACE and CANPASS participants, as well as potential PACE and CANPASS users, reside in specific geographic locations through the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and in Western Washington State. Primary locations for marketing efforts include Vancouver, Surrey, and Richmond in B.C. Not only do these communities have sufficiently large populations and unsaturated markets, but they also account for fully 45 percent of identified potential users.

Primary PACE and CANPASS geographic locations also include: Delta, White Rock, Victoria, Blaine (WA), Burnaby, Bellingham (WA), and Port Coquitlam.

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<sup>1</sup> All figures are from **Report 1: Pre-Approved Cross-Border Travel in the Cascade Gateway** and based off 334 driver interviews performed at the Peace Arch port-of-entry southbound on Friday, March 10, 2000; Friday, March 24, 2000; and Saturday, March 25, 2000 from 9.30am – 12.00pm. Of the 334 interviewed, 107 were selected as the target market of potential program users based on eligibility and frequency of border crossings per year.

### ***2.3 Research-based Targeting***

Of those interviewed in the marketing survey, 48 percent of potential users were either unfamiliar with PACE and CANPASS, did not appreciate the time savings potential, or found it too difficult to enroll. Improved marketing of the programs, education about the programs and their benefits, and simplification of the application process will effectively reach those potential users and eliminate barriers to their participation.

#### **2.3.1 Public Outreach**

Through targeted marketing, advertising, use of the Internet, and signs advertising PACE and CANPASS at the border, travelers can become more familiar with the programs.

#### **2.3.2 Program Education**

Many travelers were unaware that they were eligible for PACE and CANPASS. Many also assumed the programs would be too expensive to join. Advertising materials need to emphasize program information which would educate potential users on who can apply, why they should apply, and how to apply.

#### **2.3.3 Simplification of Application Process**

Providing applications at strategic locations and creating web-based application forms will make it easier for potential users to obtain applications and send them in.

## **3 Marketing Methods**

In order to effectively target the specific markets reviewed above, it will be necessary to print and distribute program information to key destination locations, as well as provide advertising in geographic areas dense with potential users. Advertising costs could be defrayed through partnerships with convention and visitors bureaus, regional businesses, AAA of Washington and BC, and other private agencies which may benefit from increased cross-border transportation.

### ***3.1 Shopping Market***

- Rack cards and application packets on display
- Partnership marketing with retail businesses

Businesses which rely on cross-border clientele also rely on the ability for those customers to reach their merchandise quickly. Businesses may be interested in entering into joint marketing efforts of PACE and CANPASS to help facilitate expedited border crossings for their customers. Ideas include rack cards and applications at their place of business, or joint advertising campaigns in the media.

### ***3.2 Recreation Market***

- Rack cards and application packets on display
- Partnership marketing with recreation providers

Information about PACE and CANPASS could be included with annual memberships, ski passes, and season tickets at specific locations frequented by cross-border travelers.

### **3.3 Work-Related Market**

- Regional business networks

Due to the diffuse nature of this market, promotion of PACE and CANPASS can be effectively enacted through existing business channels, including regional chambers of commerce and business associations.

In addition, immigration lawyers in Whatcom County and Lower Mainland British Columbia which have contact with frequent cross-border business travelers may also assist in marketing the programs.

### **3.4 Geographic Targets**

- **Press Releases**

Press releases should be distributed to all regional newspapers and radio stations with program information.

- **Newspaper Advertisements**

Advertisements should be taken out in papers with high readership amongst cross-border travelers, including the Vancouver Sun, the B.C. Province, and the Bellingham Herald.

- **Radio Advertising**

Advertisements should be placed in conjunction with or following border wait-time reports for listeners interested in cross-border travel times.

- **Mailings**

Direct mailings to homes in the target areas, including advertisements in Val-u-Paks and other forms of mass regional advertising, will reach the maximum amount of people.

- **Internet**

61 percent of potential program users use the internet daily. Marketing should therefore include a specific website ([getPACE.com](http://getPACE.com)) with application materials, on-line advertising using banner ads, and links to [getPACE.com](http://getPACE.com) from regional websites and on-line news sources.

- **Billboards & Signs**

Billboards and signs at the border, especially those specifically advertising the web site, will provide cross-border travelers with information on how to access program applications directly as they wait in line. This is the most effective way in targeting the specific cross-border traveler audience.

The following advertising strategies should be focused on the following geographic areas: **Vancouver, BC; Surrey, BC; and Richmond, BC.** <sup>2</sup>

All advertising should include the PACE and CANPASS website, as well as information on eligibility and cost of the programs.

## **4 Marketing Action Plan**

The following action items will best target key PACE and CANPASS markets and effectively reach the highest volume of the targeted demographic. Strategies are organized by both priorities and cost-effectiveness.

### **4.1 Priority Marketing**

#### **1. Develop getPACE.com website**

- a. Create downloadable applications in multiple formats

#### **2. Create PACE and CANPASS rack card**

#### **3. Distribute rack card and application packet to following locations:**

##### a. Retail Centers

- i. Bellis Fair Mall
- ii. Peace Arch Factory Outlets
- iii. Burlington Cascade Mall
- iv. Prime Outlet Center
- v. Costco

##### b. Recreational Destinations

- i. Mt. Baker Ski Area
- ii. Whistler-Blackcomb Resort
- iii. Bellingham Golf & Country Club
- iv. Olsen Riverside Golf Club
- v. Birch Bay Village Golf Course
- vi. Loomis Trail Golf Club
- vii. Homestead Golf & Country Club
- viii. Shuksan Golf Club
- ix. Lake Padden Golf Club
- x. Semiahmoo Golf Club

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<sup>2</sup> These cities represent 45 percent of potential PACE and CANPASS users, and also have less than 4 percent of their total population enrolled in the programs.

- xi. Nooksack Casino
- xii. Skagit Valley Casino
- c. Other Locations
  - i. Universities
  - ii. Travel information centers

**4. Promote programs on local radio stations:**

- i. KISM
- ii. KAFE
- iii. KGMI
- iv. KLYN
- v. KUGS
- vi. KPUG
- vii. KIXT

**5. Publish media advisories (press releases) and distribute to the following newspapers:**

- i. Vancouver Sun
- ii. B.C. Province
- iii. Bellingham Herald
- iv. Northern Light
- v. Lynden Tribune
- vi. Record Journal
- vii. Globe and Mail
- viii. Richmond Review
- ix. Times Columnist
- x. White Rock News
- xi. Puget Sound Business Journal

**6. Distribute advertising materials to regional chambers of commerce.**

***4.2 Secondary Marketing Priorities***

The following advertising strategies are less cost-effective but reach a higher volume of potential users.

**7. Create advertisement for inclusion in regional Valpaks.**

- a. Vancouver

- b. Richmond
- c. Surrey

**8. Insert large advertisement in Sunday editions of regional newspapers**

- i. Vancouver Sun
- ii. B.C. Province
- iii. Bellingham Herald
- iv. Puget Sound Business Journal

## **5 Summary**

The activities listed above will reach the largest audience of potential PACE and CANPASS program users, and provide both information and easier access to applications for those who qualify for enrollment. Such marketing activities will increase the number of applications submitted to the inspection agencies and will, consequently, increase the number of frequent cross-border travelers enrolled in each program.

Because such a high volume of cross-border passenger traffic is locally generated and consists of travelers who cross the border several times a year, pre-approved cross-border programs such as PACE and CANPASS can have a noticeable affect improving mobility through the congested border crossings and assisting inspection agencies with their ability to focus on higher-risk traffic.

The marketing activities listed above were devised using market research collected by the Whatcom Council of Governments. Marketing activity will be conducted by both the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce, and the Whatcom Council of Governments.