

CANADA—U.S. TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER

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Addressing the need for pedestrian safety improvements at Pacific Highway

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Pacific Highway, the fourth busiest commercial port-of-entry and second busiest bus crossing on the U.S. – Canada border, does not have a designated route for pedestrians.

In this congested environment built for cars, trucks, and buses, pedestrian facilities are limited. Sidewalks exist up to a certain point and then stop. There are no wheelchair-accessible routes. Portions of the path pedestrians are required to walk are on the highway itself, in amongst oncoming traffic. Signs, cable barriers, gates, and other impediments force pedestrians to make up their own paths to get from one inspection facility to the other.

Pedestrians do traverse this environment. Truck drivers and visa applicants often cross from one facility to the other for paperwork. Inspection officers escort travelers. Visitors walk between the Duty Free stores and their buses, waiting in line for processing. And without a defined route, these pedestrians often choose dangerous courses, or cross opposite the inspection facilities, making it difficult for Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers to ensure that people entering Canada are properly processed for admission.

CBSA requested the blocking of one of the popular routes pedestrians have chosen, because it prevents pedestrians from checking in before entering Canada. However without any safe alternative, blocking the route may further complicate predictable movements of people at the border crossing. Regional border stakeholders that participate in the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) identified the need to develop a clear pedestrian route to define legitimate safe paths for both the public and the inspection agents securing the border.

In June of this year, representatives from the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BCMOTI), WA State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), CBSA, U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the City of Blaine, and the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) identified a means to address the following objectives:

- ◆ Improve pedestrian safety
- ◆ Improve port security
- ◆ Improve inspection officer safety
- ◆ Limit the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists to a defined, designated route
- ◆ Create a legitimate, viable pedestrian environment

The suggested route has three segments, divided by who has responsibility for the property. Segment one is on B.C. Highway 15 right-of-way. Segment two is on CBSA property. And segment three is on GSA land.

The proposed solution includes adding crosswalks, wheelchair-accessible ramps to sidewalks, removing barriers such as fences and signage, and providing a raised, safe area off the road to connect U.S. and Canadian inspection facilities. Additional signage would be needed to direct pedestrians on the correct course.

Once all agencies agree to the plan, an advisory team of IMTC participants will oversee efforts to secure funding, coordinate construction, and assure that the project proceeds in a synchronized manner.

Next steps also include looking at the pedestrian needs at the nearby Peace Arch/ Douglas crossing, where the sidewalk through the state park terminates suddenly, requiring those with strollers or in wheelchairs to use the highway for approximately forty feet before resuming their passage on the GSA-provided sidewalk.

For more information about the project, contact Melissa Fanucci, Principal Planner, at 360-685-8385 or by email: melissa@wcog.org

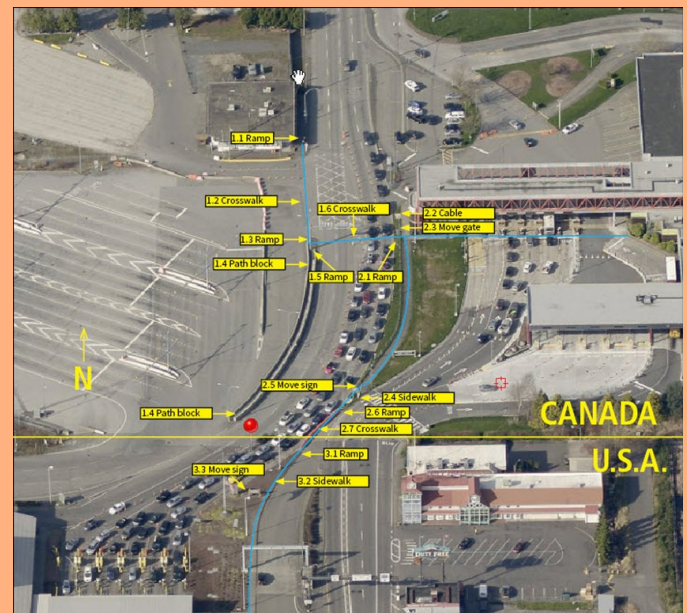


Image: Both U.S. and Canadian ports-of-entry at Pacific Highway. The blue line shows the preferred pedestrian route, and the notations show improvements needed to make the route accessible and safe.

GSA and CBP do Michigan Border Crawl

Submitted by Donald Melcher, Program/Project Manager, General Service Administration

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA – Great Lakes Region, Region 5) Land Ports of Entry mission support team, comprised of the Property Management, Capital Construction Projects, and Portfolio Management Divisions, accompanied staff from the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Detroit Field Office on a tour of the Michigan Land Ports of Entry over July 25-28, 2016.

The purpose of the tour was a joint observation by GSA and CBP of operational and facility conditions at the ports of entry for consideration of future improvement projects and actions that may be taken to improve efficiencies, as well as strengthening a long-standing collaborative relationship. The itinerary included visits to Detroit's Ambassador Bridge, Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, and Fort Street Cargo Inspection Facility, along with Port Huron's Blue Water Bridge and Sault Ste. Marie's International Bridge.

While visiting Sault Ste. Marie, the group toured the new administration facilities of the International Bridge Administration (opened in October 2015), the new Canadian port of entry facilities currently under construction, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Soo Locks.

GSA and CBP conduct Border Crawls annually, alternating between visits to the Land Ports of Entry in Michigan and Minnesota.



Tour participants are as follows: Front row, left to right: Laura Marble, Michelle Munroe, Sylvia Hermann, Kathryn Leonardo, Anndrea Greer, Anna Bednarczyk, Back row, left to right: John Cooke, Steve Byker, Mark McCready, William VanderJagt, Mark Spann, Mark Hurley, Allan Frappier, Dennis Turzak, James Harvey.



An aerial view of the Sault Ste. Marie bridge that GSA toured as part of their Michigan Port of Entry Tour.

Scenes from the Alexandria Bay TBWG Meeting



Rob Horr, Executive Director of the Thousand Island Bridge Authority speaks during the bus tour of the port of entry.



FHWA Deputy Administrator and TBWG Co-Chair David Kim poses with his birthday cake that was presented during one of the meeting breaks.



Eduardo Hagert, an International Relations Specialist with the Texas Department of Transportation presents on Border Master Planning in Texas.



Chris Dingman with FHWA explores some relics during the Boldt Castle Reception.



Ron Rienas with the Buffalo & Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority during the Energy Intelligence Session.



Don Melcher with the U.S. General Services Administration and Sara Moore with the Michigan Department of Transportation pose for a picture during one of the networking breaks.



Deborah Meyers with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Giovanni Matrisciano with Public Safety Canada present on the U.S.—Canada Land Rail, Marine, and Air Preclearance Agreement



Trettha Chromey and Michael Canavan, both with FHWA, talking during the boat portion of the Alexandria Bay Port of Entry Tour.