

CANADA—U.S. TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER

Issue 7 — Spring 2012

From the Desk of Co-Chair Ted Mackay:



As Canadian co-chair of the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG), I would like to convey my greetings to its members and others interested in Canada-U.S. border issues. I am very proud of what this group has achieved on a wide range of Canada-U.S. border issues since our first meeting in Vancouver almost 10 years ago.

I would especially like to thank the participants in our plenary meeting in Niagara Falls, Ontario, last November for making it a great success. A highlight was the excellent tour of the Niagara Region

border crossings organized by Ron Rienas of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority and Lew Holloway of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. Their expertise and intimate knowledge of the various crossings made this a very valuable outing.

The past few months have seen major developments in Canada-U.S. relations that will set the agenda for the management of our shared border for years to come. On December 7 last year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama released the Action Plan on Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness (www.actionplan.gc.ca). The action plan contains 32 initiatives that will focus on four areas of cooperation: addressing threats early; facilitating trade, economic growth and jobs; integrating cross-border law enforcement; and improving critical infrastructure and cyber-security.

Both Transport Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency played an important role in bringing forward initiatives on border infrastructure, technology and security. They were also active in negotiating details of the proposed initiatives with their American counterparts. These included the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Transportation Security Administration.

In developing the action plan, the Government of Canada engaged directly with Canadians to ensure it heard from as many stakeholders as possible. Many participants contributed, including representatives of other levels of government, business, labour, civil society, border communities, First Nations, think tanks and academia, as well as individual citizens. We welcome further input from these stakeholders, and from affected provinces and states as we implement these initiatives, because it helps us measure our progress.

Today, we are busy working with our U.S. neighbours to implement this ambitious, but achievable, action plan that will significantly contribute to border efficiency, trade and security for both our countries.

I encourage you to attend our upcoming TBWG plenary meeting in Seattle in April. We will be discussing action plan initiatives, including the Border Infrastructure Investment Plan and the Border Wait Time Technology initiative. Like the Niagara Region, the Pacific Northwest is a leader in critical cross-border linkages and cooperation, and we are both privileged and excited to join our U.S. hosts in Seattle.

From the Desk of Co-Chair Jim Cheatham:



“How is the Highway Reauthorization Legislation coming along?” That is one of the most frequent questions that I get asked as the Director of FHWA’s Office of Planning. The legislative process on this new legislation has been long and complicated. The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate both continue to have different perspectives of funding amounts and the length of new legislation. On a positive side, until they do find common ground and reach a compromise, we expect the SAFTEA-LU Legislation to be extended. This means our state and metropolitan transportation partners can continue their transportation infrastructure programs without interruption or loss of funding. It also means that the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Fund continues to receive additional formula funds that can be used to finance transportation projects that will facilitate the efficient movement of freight and passenger traffic to and from the border.

It’s also been over a year since President Obama and Prime Minister Harper signed the Beyond the Border Proclamation. Since our two leaders announced this historic proclamation, our working group has spent a lot of time and effort to lay the groundwork for this agreement to come to life. As many of our TBWG participants already know, the implementation process has not always been as quick as we had hoped but now the action plan is being finalized and our next TBWG meeting in Seattle will have a large portion of the agenda dedicated to consulting with our state and provincial partners who will be in attendance.

Seattle is a wonderful location for our TBWG meeting. The Red Lion Inn is the hotel that was selected for our meeting space. One of the factors in our hotel selection was its proximity to a convenient light rail line that would allow for easy access from the SeaTac Airport to the downtown Seattle area. The Red Lion Inn is less than two blocks away from the Westlake Station, which is the last station on Seattle’s Central Link Light Rail. Our participants can conveniently get on the Central Link’s Light Rail at the SeaTac Station and arrive near the conference hotel in less than 40 minutes for the low cost of \$2.75. Not only will you get from the airport to the hotel in less time, but you will save money over a taxi fare and also have an excellent opportunity to view some of Seattle’s historic areas as you ride in comfort.

I strongly recommend you take some time and visit many of the historic sites that are within walking distance or accessible by the Central Link Light Rail. The best advice I can give to anyone who is visiting Seattle is to bring an umbrella. Seattle is known for its frequent rain storms and you would be wise to always have an umbrella near to prevent getting wet. I wish all of our TBWG participants who will be attending a safe journey there and I hope to see you in the “Emerald City”!



Scenes From the Peace Bridge & Queenston POEs



Ron Rienas, General Manager of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority, serving as a tour guide during bus tour of the Peace Bridge.



Gregory Bennett, CBP Public Affairs Officer at the Peace Bridge Port of Entry addressing the TBWG participants.



Lew Holloway, General Manager of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, served as the tour guide during the bus tour of the Queenston Port of Entry.



A tractor trailer is processed through the Peace Bridge Port of Entry during the TBWG bus tour.



David Berardi, CBSA Director of the Niagara Falls District talks to the TBWG bus tour through the Queenston Port of Entry.



TBWG Participants were given a walk through of the recently completed CBSA facilities at the Queenston Port of Entry.



TBWG Participants looking over the tarmac at the Peace Bridge Port of Entry.



CBP Public Affairs Officer Gregory Bennett responding to a participant question during the Peace Bridge POE bus tour.



TBWG Participants carefully listening in during the bus tour of the Queenston Port of Entry.



The photo above shows the passenger vehicle processing pill boxes at the Peace Bridge Port of Entry. TBWG Participants were given a walking tour of the facility.



The Queenston Port of Entry was the second stop on the bus tour. Shown above was the passenger vehicle processing pill boxes that were recently constructed.

Scenes From the TBWG Meeting at



Greg Nadeau, FHWA Deputy Administrator giving a presentation at the TBWG Meeting.



Rob Tardif presenting during the Trade & Data Subcommittee Session.



Fred Eberhart, responding to a question during on the TBWG Sessions.



Annette Gibbons, Director General, Surface Transportation Policy at Transport Canada presenting during the Washington—Ottawa Update Session.



CBP's Garrett Wright presenting during the Washington—Ottawa Update Session.



DHS's Neema Khatri presenting during the Session on Supply Chain Security.



Lew Holloway, General Manager of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission asking a question during one of the session on day two of the TBWG Meeting.



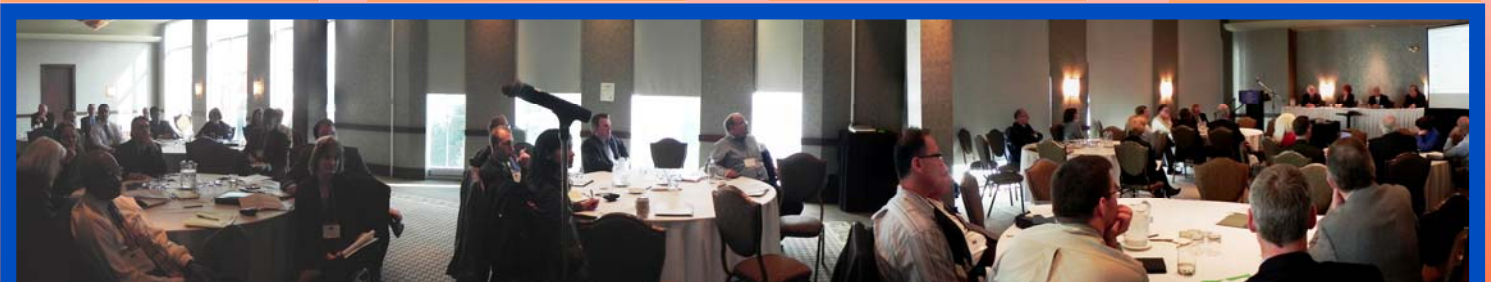
Jay LaFrance, with the Canada—US Relations Division of CBSA presenting during the Ottawa & Washington Update Session.



Kris Wisniewski, Executive Director of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition presenting during the Regional Perspectives on the Border Session.



Athena Hutchins, with the Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition presenting during the Regional Perspectives on the Border Session.



The photo above is a panoramic photo taken during the TBWG Session. The photo is actually multiple photos taken and then electronically stitched together by a computer.

Canadian Motor Coach Study Completed

In 2009, Motor Coach Canada made a presentation at the TBWG's fall plenary in Winnipeg. The industry reported on the challenges faced at the border, including: access issues and delays; inconsistency of rules; and, lack of communication. In response to these concerns, Transport Canada engaged RTR Technologies to have a closer look at the current challenges and opportunities for cross-border bus passenger travel.

There are generally four types of cross-border passenger bus travel: scheduled; charter; tour; and, shuttle. The scheduled services are bus trips with fixed origins and destinations that typically take place on an ongoing basis (eg. Greyhound). Charter services are those wherein a bus company provides one or more buses to a group for the purposes of a specific trip (eg. hockey team trip). Tour services are similar to scheduled services, but they provide entertainment options and/or accommodations as part of the package (eg. a trip to New York City or a visit to a popular shopping destination). Finally, shuttle services are ones wherein people are transported across the border between hotels and/or stations/terminals/airports.

The study consisted of a qualitative survey whereby fourteen organizations and the customs agencies on both sides of the seven highest-volume Canada-U.S. crossings were interviewed. The crossings were: Pacific Highway; Detroit-Windsor Tunnel; Ambassador Bridge; Peace Bridge; Queenston-Lewiston Bridge; Rainbow Bridge; and, Champlain-Lacolle.

A number of challenges were noted, including: road and port of entry infrastructure that causes buses to get caught in car traffic and lack of facilities (sometimes only 1 bus at a time could be processed); border wait times and information about them;



inflexible schedules whereby buses could not always go during off-peak hours; simultaneous bus arrivals leading to back-ups; and, lack of communication.

The following are some of the solutions identified:

- ◆ *Reservation system (reserve a time at primary inspection)*
- ◆ *Pre-clearance (or pre-processing)*
- ◆ *Alternative access lanes (allowing use of FAST and NEXUS lanes)*
- ◆ *Inspection policy improvements (eg. distribute declaration forms in advance of arriving; standardize policies and procedures pre-approve passengers with electronic ticketing system similar to air model)*
- ◆ *Adapt technology (eg. advance traveller information, manifest transponders that read passenger information upon arrival of buses, enroll bus drivers in FAST program, and consider using hand-held devices to inspect buses rather than disembarking)*
- ◆ *Increased engagement between bus industry and border agencies*



Reactions from the bus industry were positive. At the TBWG's 2011 fall plenary in Niagara Falls, comments were provided by Peter Pantuso of the American Bus Association and Doug Switzer of Motor Coach Canada. Mr. Pantuso noted that people who travel by bus sometimes feel like they are not treated the same as flyers and that seniors sometimes feel threatened by border officials. He reminded the audience of the importance of treating people like customers, since they are often tourists and shoppers. Mr. Switzer said that the challenges faced by the bus industry at the border are similar to those raised for trucks travelling across the border seven years ago. While he saw the potential for much improvement, he cautioned that the costs of each potential solution needed to be carefully considered and weighed against the benefits. Both agreed that the time for pilots was over and that everyone should now be working towards full advanced traveller information systems.

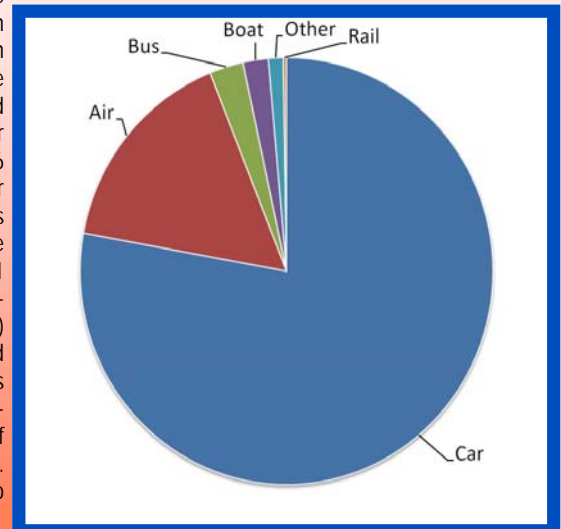
The full report is available on the TBWG website at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/border_planning/us_canada/downloads/bus_study.pdf.

President of the Border – Passenger Numbers (2010)

The car is still king of the border, or president if you are from the U.S. In 2010, automobile travel far outweighed all other modes of passenger transportation between Canada and the U.S. Air was a surprisingly distant second. The diagram below provides a breakdown of the different travel modes.

Passenger Volumes (Round Trips)

The total number of round trips for all passenger modes amounted to approximately 59.8 million people travelling between Canada and U.S. in 2010. Automobile passengers topped out at 46.5 million, air passengers at 9.6 million, bus (motor coach) passengers at 1.6 million, marine travellers at 1.1 million, other categories (eg. pedestrians) at 700 thousand, and passenger rail was last with 150 thousand. Two thirds of trips are to the U.S. and the other third to Canada.



Productive Meeting Between the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Ministère des Transports du Québec

Submitted by Dave Henry, Ministère des Transports du Québec & Karen Songhurst, VTrans

An official working session between the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) was held on November 17, 2011, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Brian Searles, Vermont Secretary of Transportation, and Mr. André Meloche, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Direction générale des politiques et de la sécurité en transport at the MTQ. Both were accompanied by specialists of their respective teams. Road infrastructures at the border and the development of a rail link between Québec and the United States were among the topics that were discussed.



The photograph was taken near the MTQ project that will extend autoroute 35 between Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Saint-Armand at the Vermont border.

The Vermont-Québec partnership is based firstly on a highly integrated economy and stable commercial exchanges: in 2010, the value of such trade amounted to almost C\$3.5 billion, of which about 90% was moved by truck. Road transportation is experiencing the greatest demand growth for the flow of goods between Canada and the US. Efficient, reliable and safe infrastructure in the region is, therefore, vital for exporters as well as for the road freight transportation industry.

The MTQ project of extending autoroute 35 between Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Saint-Armand at the Vermont border was at the core of discussions. A visit of the roadwork site allowed Secretary Searles and his team to appreciate the progress of

work for which Transport Canada provides financial support. Once finished, this stretch of more than 37.9 kilometres (23.5 miles) will complete the expressway link between Montréal and Boston. MTQ engineers indicated that construction of the expressway, which began in 2009, could be completed (and open to traffic) around 2017. In summary, both the MTQ and VTrans expect that, in addition to improving traffic flow and road safety in the axis of autoroute 35 and Interstate 89, the new expressway will improve the overall efficiency of the transportation system and movement logistics between Québec and New England. More than a million vehicles, 20% of which are trucks, use this border crossing each year to cross the Canada-US border.



The bridge pictured above is the Sutton—East Richford Bridge. Collaboration between Québec's MTQ and Vermont's VTrans to reconstruct this bridge were discussed during the November 17th meeting.

Collaboration between Vtrans and the MTQ at the border is not limited to major trade corridors: Québec and Vermont share 15 border crossings. While most of these border crossings have low traffic flow, they play a strong structural role in the lives of the people in communities along the border. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the next steps for the restoration of the Sutton-East Richford international bridge, erected in 1918. Close to 15,000 vehicles use it each year, mainly for recreation and tourism purposes. As the bridge has undoubted heritage value, a joint decision was made to restore it rather than replace it. Also, bilateral committees will be put into place during the coming year to share information regarding road safety and infrastructure matters.

These coordination sessions between VTrans and the MTQ are held yearly in Vermont or in Québec and help maintain an ongoing fruitful collaboration between the two. VTrans and the MTQ have been longstanding transportation partners, which was formalized in 2003 with the signing of a multisectoral agreement between the State of Vermont and the gouvernement du Québec. Under this agreement, the parties plan to encourage cooperation on the part of the broadest range of public and private stakeholders to improve the safety, reliability and efficiency of transportation systems and to foster the region's economic development.



You Are Invited



to the

2012 Transportation Border Working Group Spring Meeting

Tuesday April 17 & Wednesday 18, 2012, Seattle, Washington

The Federal Highway Administration & Transport Canada
TBWG Co-Chairs invite you to the
2012 Spring Meeting of the Transportation Border Working Group



Reservations: A room block at the federal government/group rate of \$137.00 per night plus tax has been arranged at The Red Lion Hotel for the Transportation Planning Working Group (TBWG) Meeting for the nights of Monday, April 16th-Wednesday, April 18th. To make a reservation please call the reservation line at 1-855-515-1144 and identify yourself as a member of the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) in order to obtain the group rate. Individuals are to pay for their own room, tax, and incidentals. Please note that any attendee that does not identify his or her affiliation with the Transportation Border Working Group room block at the time of reservation will not be guaranteed the group rate. The deadline for reserving a room is Monday, March 26, 2012. Reservations received after this date will only be accepted on a space available basis at the group rate. If you wish to cancel your reservation please contact the hotel within 48 hours of the arrival date.

For more information on hotel options and services, please visit their website at: <http://www.seattleredlionfifthavenue.com/>

For more information, contact Dave Franklin, U.S. – Canadian Border Coordinator, at david.franklin@dot.gov or phone 708-283-3540.