

## CANADA—U.S. TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER



### From the Desk of Co-Chair Jill Hochman

With the Chicago Meeting behind us, TBWG members can now think about our next plenary meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba. As some of our TBWG members already know, Transport Canada and FHWA move the location of the TBWG meetings around our countries to accommodate our local members who often don't get to travel across their country because of limited travel budgets. After the Winnipeg meeting, the FHWA staff is actively working on Boston, Massachusetts for our spring meeting location.

At our Chicago meeting, I spoke about change. Change in the Administration, funding, and focus. At the time, Victor Mendez was designated as the FHWA Administrator. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Mendez became the 18th person to hold the position. You can find his biography on page two. At his Senate confirmation hearing, Mr. Mendez expressed that his priorities as the new FHWA Administrator will be implementing the highway stimulus portion of the \$787 billion American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, reauthorization of the surface transportation law, and research and technology innovation.

Another change relates to new strategic goals for USDOT. A new strategic plan is in process, the goals are likely to cover: Economic Recovery, Safety, Livable and Sustainable Communities, Accountability, Transparency and Performance, and Innovative Programs and Projects.

In the area of economic recovery, TBWG members are addressing border wait times. The FHWA is working with U.S. and Canadian agencies to minimize these wait times and to develop a standard for passenger travel. More on this topic is on page 2.

Another new goal area in which the TBWG can contribute is Sustainable Communities. TBWG members can share information about ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in our border regions. My office is creating an inventory of environmental efforts at the Federal level that are taking place along the northern and southern U.S. border and plans to identify best practices.

The TBWG is a catalyst for the changes that both the U.S. and Canadian governments are facing. The TBWG's mission "to facilitate the safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of goods and people across the Canada/U.S. border" dovetails nicely with the areas that will be addressed by the new USDOT new strategic goals.

Finally, I look forward to seeing all of you at the next TBWG meeting in Winnipeg. Have a safe trip to Winnipeg and come ready to network and learn!

### From the Desk of Co-Chair Ted Mackay



On behalf of Transport Canada, I welcome you to the Transportation Border Working Group and to the second edition of our newsletter.

We had a very productive plenary meeting in Chicago in April 2009, our 13th since the TBWG was launched in 2002. Our next plenary will be in Winnipeg, Manitoba, October 27-28. All federal, state and provincial officials with an interest in transportation and border issues are welcome to attend. Our program will include a site visit to the Emerson-Pembina border crossing. More information on the Winnipeg meeting can be found in this newsletter.

On June 1, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) was fully implemented at Canada-US land border crossings. Contrary to some predictions, the requirement to hold a passport or other approved secure document denoting citizenship and identity does not appear to have led to delays at the border. That is good news. The not so good news is that cross-border travel is down considerably compared to 2008. Whether this is due to uncertainty around WHTI document requirements, the recession, the stronger Canadian dollar, or our poor summer weather (at least in Central Canada), is hard to say.

In 2009, infrastructure stimulus programs (with a large focus on transport projects) have occupied a great deal of the time and attention of political leadership as well as those of us "in the trenches", both in Canada and the US. In Canada, these efforts include the new Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, a \$4 billion fund introduced by the Canadian Government, and an accelerated Building Canada Fund, which total 4,500 infrastructure projects.

In Canada, we continue to work on the development of our Continental and Atlantic Gateway strategies, and to implement the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative. As we develop these Gateways, we are identifying needs for further strategic investments and policy changes to improve the overall functioning of the transportation network, linked to cross-border commerce, international trade, and economic competitiveness.

North American Leaders, at their recent Summit in Guadalajara, stated: "...our deepening ties are a source of strength...Our integrated economies are an engine of growth. We are investing in border infrastructure, including advanced technology, to create truly modern borders to facilitate trade and the smooth operation of supply chains, while protecting our security. Building on these investments, we will work together to strengthen the resilience of our critical infrastructure, which transcends borders and sustains the well-being of our communities and economies."

Very well said, indeed. And this underlines the value of the TBWG, and why we continue to promote a forum for coordination, cooperation and information-sharing in the interest of a "safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods across the Canada-U.S. border". Making our border work effectively, in the interest of our economies and in the interest of our bilateral relationship, remains a high priority for the Government of Canada.

I hope to see you in Winnipeg.

## Next TBWG Meeting: Winnipeg, Manitoba!



*Winnipeg's Esplanade Riel Pedestrian Bridge*

Mark your calendars for the 2009 fall plenary session of the TBWG. It will be held at the Inn at the Forks in Winnipeg, Manitoba from October 27th to 28th. The proposed agenda includes panel discussions on small border crossings, "greening the border," the Pembina-Emerson border crossing, updates on gateway strategies and infrastructure initiatives, and an update on the border wait times initiative. A block of rooms has been set aside for the event with prices ranging from \$144-154 per night. Manitoba has graciously

offered its support for the event and we look forward to working with all our partners to make this another successful and productive event. Registration forms are available on the TBWG website.

Originally an aboriginal meeting place, the Forks has been the site of numerous encounters over the past 6,000 years and now attracts over four million visitors each year. It encompasses an interpretive park, revitalized historic and new buildings and offers a host of year round outdoor and indoor attractions.



*Inn at the Forks Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

## Victor Mendez Becomes New FHWA Administrator



*Victor Mendez, FHWA Administrator*

On July 17, 2009, Victor Mendez became the Federal Highway Administrator—the 18th person to hold the position.

Previously, Mr. Mendez served as Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). Starting with ADOT in 1985 as an engineer, he became Director in November 2001 after serving four months as its Acting Director. As Director, Mr. Mendez worked to

improve the agency's customer service in both its highway and motor vehicle divisions. Under his leadership, ADOT built the Regional Freeway System in the Phoenix area six years ahead of schedule and consistently delivered statewide construction programs on time.

In 2006, Mr. Mendez was elected president of both the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, its national counterpart. He chaired its Standing Committee on Research, the Operations Council of the Standing Committee on Highways, and the oversight group for the TRB Long-Term Pavement Performance program.

In the two years he served as ADOT's Deputy Director, from 1999-2001, his leadership resulted in major infrastructure improvements throughout the state. His 24-year career at ADOT, where he implemented innovations in management, funding and financing, research and technology, infrastructure and planning, will serve him well as the nation's top federal highway official.

Mr. Mendez earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Texas at El Paso and later earned an MBA from Arizona State University. Before joining ADOT in 1985 as a transportation engineer, Mr. Mendez worked for the U.S. Forest Service as an engineer in Oregon. In the years that followed, Mr. Mendez was named deputy state engineer with ADOT's Valley Transportation Group, where he provided leadership for the Phoenix area's multi-billion dollar valley freeway system.

## Automated Measurement of Border Wait Times at U.S.–Canada Land Border Crossings

To facilitate the safe and secure movement of goods and people across the U.S. and Canada land border crossings, a Border Wait Time (BWT) working group comprised of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and Transport Canada (TC) are working together to foster the use of technologies for automating the measurement and dissemination of wait times at U.S. - Canada land border crossings. The BWT working group is in collaboration on various wait time measurement initiatives to include testing and evaluation of border wait time measurement technologies and the implementation of solutions that meet cross border operational needs.



*Traffic waiting to enter Canada at the Peace Arch Port of Entry*

### Project Description

Border wait times and delays are an important concern for travelers and those involved with or affected by international trade. Accurate, timely and reliable border wait time data can be used by drivers to make decisions about when, where and if they should cross the border, and by border agencies to better manage traffic and port of entry (POE) operations.

The data collected at many border crossings are primarily collected manually. In addition, while wait time data collection tasks are important, they are subordinate to the primary inspection and enforcement duties of the customs agencies. The adoption of an automated method of collecting wait time data at POE locations will reduce the burden of manual collection by customs staff and will increase the reliability and timeliness of the information provided to users. Border wait time information can be electronically archived to support infrastructure and transportation planning decisions by border agencies

### Project Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the project is to 1) identify and evaluate automated, technology-based solutions for measuring border wait times and 2) deploy an automated, technology-based solution for measuring border wait times at two border crossing locations along the U.S. – Canada land border.

In order to achieve this purpose, two test-bed locations along the U.S. –Canada land border will be identified and prepared. An application process will be defined whereby solution providers and vendors will be encouraged to submit their solution for deployment and testing at these locations. A process for testing candidate solutions will be implemented and the evaluation findings will be documented. The plan is to deploy a fully operational solution at each site following the evaluation.

### Project Milestones

- Evaluation Protocols—Fall 2009
- Application Process—Fall 2009
- Select Technologies for Testing—Winter 2010
- Test Technologies—Spring 2010
- Document Test Results—Summer 2010
- Implement Border Wait Time Measurement System—Fall 2010

### For more information, contact:

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# Scenes from the Chicago TBWG Meeting



*Brigit Matthesen of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association*



*Bernardo Bustamante, Project Manager for the Chicago CREATE Rail Project*



*TBWG members during one of the many sessions*



*Chris Sands, PhD, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute delivering his presentation North Border Diversity: The Challenge for U.S. Policymaking*



*TBWG members during one of the many sessions*



*Dominick Spataro, Chief, North American Borders Division of the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration*



*Jonathan Sabeau, Policy Advisor, Transport Canada*



*Fausto Natarelli, Director of the Border Initiatives Implementation Group, Ontario Ministry of Transportation*



*Jim Steele, FHWA Michigan Division Administrator during the Detroit International River Crossing presentation*



*William Thompson of the Association of American Railroads during the Chicago CREATE presentation*

## Transport Canada's Land Border Investment Map



One of many perennial issues brought up during discussions of the border is infrastructure. Very few people probably know how much has actually been invested by our two countries. Over the past year, Transport Canada produced a map entitled Land Border Crossing Investments. The map is a compilation of \$4.4 billion (CDN) in border-related infrastructure undertaken by various levels of government since 9/11. The purpose of the map is to inform decision makers both in Canada and the U.S. of the enormous Canadian contribution being made to border facilities.

With information from both Transport Canada and Canada Border Services Agency sources, a list of seventy-five projects was consolidated by border crossing for a final list of 34 sets of projects over the 2001-2009 period. This list of projects includes work done at land ports of entry, approach roads, and key connecting highways spread out across the continent.

The map also includes both the National Highway System in Canada and major highways in the U.S. In addition, four inset boxes zoom in on the lower mainland of British Columbia, Windsor-Detroit, southern Quebec and part of the Niagara peninsula. In these cases, border crossings were too close together to depict in the main map.

Printed poster-size copies are available by contacting Daniel McGregor, [daniel.mcgregor@tc.gc.ca](mailto:daniel.mcgregor@tc.gc.ca), or Marc Aubin, [marc.aubin@tc.gc.ca](mailto:marc.aubin@tc.gc.ca) from the Highway and Border Policy Branch at Transport Canada. The foldout poster is in English on one side and French on the other. I can also be viewed and downloaded on the web at: <https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/acg-acgd-menu-highways-map-2152.htm>. (French - <https://www.tc.gc.ca/fra/politique/acg-acgd-menu-routes-carte-2152.htm>)

## FHWA's STEP Solicits Feedback for FY 2010

The Surface Transportation Environment and Cooperative Research Program (STEP) is a Federally administered research program authorized in the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU). The general objective of the STEP is to improve understanding of the complex relationship between surface transportation, planning, and the environment. The FHWA anticipates that the STEP (or a similar program to provide resources for national research on issues related to planning, environment and realty) will be included in future surface transportation legislation.

The FHWA's Office of Planning, Environment and Realty (HEP) uses STEP funding to conduct research and develop tools and technologies to advance both the state of the practice and art for national environment, planning and realty research initiatives. Stakeholder input is used to help identify and prioritize STEP research topics and to develop and implement the national research agenda.

The FHWA issued a Federal Register notice on September 4, 2009 soliciting suggested lines of research for the proposed FY 2010 STEP. To provide your feedback, please visit the STEP Web site and review the draft FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy. [www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/resources/federal\\_register/fr04se09106.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/resources/federal_register/fr04se09106.cfm).



The diagram above illustrates how STEP's Proposed FY 2010 emphasis areas are grouped

After reviewing the proposed strategy, please submit your feedback at: <http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/cops/step.nsf>. The deadline for submitting feedback is December 3, 2009

**Review Proposed FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy** The proposed FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy outlines the likely research priorities for FY 2010. This strategy can help stakeholders understand how potential suggested lines of research might fit within the scope of the proposed FY2010 STEP Implementation Strategy that can be found at the following link: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/HEP/STEP/strategy.htm>.

- **Develop Suggested Lines Of Research** After reviewing the proposed STEP Implementation Strategy, stakeholders should develop suggested lines of research that are related to the proposed FY 2010 STEP research priorities.
- **Submit Feedback** Stakeholders should submit suggested lines of research using the following link: <http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/cops/step.nsf/home/>. Stakeholders should note that these submissions are not considered formal research proposals.
- **Review Proposed FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy** The proposed FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy outlines the likely research priorities for FY 2010. This strategy can help stakeholders understand how potential suggested lines of research might fit within the scope of the proposed FY2010 STEP Implementation Strategy that can be found at the following link: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/HEP/STEP/strategy.htm>.
- **Develop Suggested Lines Of Research** After reviewing the proposed STEP Implementation Strategy, stakeholders should develop suggested lines of research that are related to the proposed FY 2010 STEP research priorities.
- **Submit Feedback** Stakeholders should submit suggested lines of research using the following link: <http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/cops/step.nsf/home/>. Stakeholders should note that these submissions are not considered formal research proposals.
- **Review Annual Step Plan** After submitting feedback, stakeholders should review the annual STEP plan once it is approved by the HEP Associate Administrator and posted to the STEP Web site.
- **Monitor FEDBIZOPPS.GOV** After the STEP Plan has been approved, individual STEP emphasis area contacts will develop specific requests for proposals as appropriate for research projects that are included in the STEP plan. The STEP research funding opportunities will be posted at <https://www.fbo.gov/>
- **Contact Step Emphasis Area** Stakeholders should contact individual STEP emphasis area contacts to discuss the status of research in a specific emphasis area. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/contacts.htm>

Your input to the proposed FY 2010 STEP Implementation Strategy is requested by December 3, 2009!

## Auditing an Anti-Idling Initiative at the Peace Arch Crossing

by David Davidson, Border Policy Research Institute

British Columbia and Washington State are collaborating on a project aimed at reducing air quality impacts associated with crossing the border. Called "Greening the Border," the project was memorialized in an *Action Plan on Border Management* adopted by Governor Gregoire and Premier Campbell in June 2008. A central component of the project involves installation and operation of anti-idling signalization at major border crossings. A pilot system became operational in November 2008 at the southbound approach to the Peace Arch automobile crossing (B.C. Highway 99 / Interstate 5).

The system consists of a new traffic signal and signal-control system, with the signal cycling in response to inputs from pre-existing loop detectors (part of the border wait-time ATIS system) installed within approach lanes to the border. The signal is installed about 250 meters upstream of the U.S. Customs inspection booths, and there are two sets of loop detectors between the signal and the booths. When stopped traffic is present over the loop detectors immediately downstream of the signal, the light turns red, stopping upstream traffic. In theory, all cars upstream of the signal turn off their engines during the red light cycle, while cars downstream of the signal



*Informational sign educating motorists to turn off their car engines on the Canadian side of the Peace Arch Port of Entry.*

creep forward through the inspection process. The light remains red until an *absence* of traffic is noted at the loop detector that is furthest downstream (i.e., just prior to the inspection booths). The light then turns green, allowing a new cohort of cars to refill the area between the signal and the booths. This design results in no change in overall wait time, while allowing many cars to wait with engines turned off. The system operates only within standard traffic lanes; the NEXUS lane is not signalized.

At the request of the B.C. Ministry of Transportation, the Border Policy Research Institute fielded a team of students in July 2009 to observe operation of the system.



*Cars with their engines off waiting for the green light at the Peace Arch Port of Entry on the British Columbia side of the border in March, 2009.*

The team's goal was to determine what proportion of the cars stopped upstream of the red light actually have engines turned off. The team used a protocol that supported gathering of data (1) on days with different weather conditions; (2) within zones close to and progressively further upstream of the red light; and (3) at times both soon after initiation of a red-light cycle and later within that cycle. The team observed the following:

- The average length of a red-light cycle is 23 minutes. On the days observed by the team (July 22 and 23), the queue was long enough to trigger operation of the system for a span of about 7 hours per day, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Weather is a factor. On a sunny day with a high temperature of 79° F, a collective average of 71 percent of cars behind the red light had engines turned off, whereas on an overcast day with a high of 68° F, compliance rose to 79 percent. On the hotter day, more cars were idling in order to run air conditioners. Weather presumably will also be a factor in winter months when heating becomes an issue.
- Compliance improves over time within a cycle. When observed at a time 15 minutes after the start of a red-light cycle, an average of 6 percent more cars had engines turned off than at a time 5 minutes after start of the cycle.
- Compliance is worse at the upstream end of the queue. For example, as a given cohort of cars advanced through the queue on the overcast day, 61 percent had engines off at first, but the ratio climbed to 83 percent as the cohort experienced a second red cycle and to 91 percent as it experienced a third.
- Signage is not ideal. Despite the presence of roadside signs associated with the signal system, drivers repeatedly asked students "why is the queue not moving?" At some locations, signs bearing the message "Turn Engine Off on Red Light," are placed where it is not actually possible to see the signal, due to road curvature. The students suggested blunter wording, such as "Queue advances every 20 minutes. Turn off engine while waiting."

The students did not succeed in calculating the overall reduction in emissions achieved by the system. This is not a trivial calculation, because of the factors mentioned above, as well as issues such as the proportion of traffic using NEXUS (which bypasses the system) and the varying length of the standard queue throughout the day, week, and year. At times when the queue is not long enough to trigger a red light, there is obviously no reduction in emissions, whereas very significant reductions are achieved when long queues are present. The raw data collected by the team is available to other agencies

## Get the Facts – Name That Border Crossing



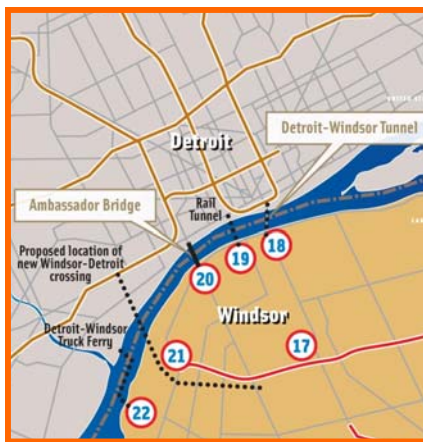
Have you ever wondered how many road crossings there are between Canada and the United States? This is the very question that Transport Canada and the Federal Highways Administration tried to respond to recently as they began to fill in some gaps in lane and booth information for the expanded Transportation

Border Working Group's database of land border crossings on the website.

In fact, there is no magic number. After much research and help from the General Services Administration and the Canada Border Services Agency, it was determined that there are currently 118 road crossings into the United States and 119 into Canada.



There are a few quirks that are not initially obvious from these numbers. For one, there are the one-way crossings where two-way traffic between both our countries is not possible. There are, in actual fact, two one-way crossings into Canada (Four Falls, New Brunswick and Stewart, British Columbia) and one into the U.S. (St. Zacharie, Maine). In some instances, crossings have been completely closed, such as Noyes – Emerson between Manitoba and Minnesota and Trail Creek between Montana and British Columbia.



An additional challenge in understanding the number of border crossings comes from their names. For example, did you know that there is a crossing called Boundary Bay in British Columbia (United

States Port of Entry – Point Roberts, WA) and one called Boundary in the state of Washington (Canadian Port of Entry – Waneta, British Columbia)?

And if having different Canadian and United States names for the same border crossing was not enough, in some cases, on the Canadian side, there are two names. For example, the St-Armand crossing in Quebec (U.S. POE – Highgate Springs) is also known as Phillipsburg. Another example is the set of three similarly named Quebec POE's: Stanstead Rte 55, Stanstead Rte 143 and Stanstead Rte 247. You may periodically see Stanstead replaced with the name Rock Island.



Finally, there are also government bodies that like to use their own names for crossings. Statistics Canada refers to the St-Just-de-Bretenieres, Quebec crossing (U.S. POE – St. Juste) as Daaquam in its transborder traffic counts data. Pity the poor analyst that does not already know this as we discovered through trial and error.

All of these small details aside, in the end, it is important to recall that 75% of Canada-United States trade (by value) carried by trucks takes place at six border crossings (Windsor/Ambassador Bridge, Peace Bridge, Blue Water Bridge, Lacolle / Champlain, Emerson / Pembina and Pacific Highway). This still leaves about 113 other crossings. The significance of these other border crossings lies in the trade and tourism links that they provide between smaller communities and regional economies.

## GSA National Office of Design & Construction Reorganization

You might have noticed that one of our border partners, the General Services Administration (GSA), recently experienced reorganization. According to Mr. Ralph Scalise, Land Port of Entry Subject Matter Expert, the GSA has embarked on organizational changes within its Office of Design and Construction in an effort to create national consistency and to align GSA's organizational structure to better implement GSA projects included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Three divisional offices, including Land Ports of Entry, were realigned to a zone based structure that is consistent with the GSA's national Program Management Office, which was created as a result of ARRA. Subject matter experts, previously assigned to the Land Ports of Entry Division were reassigned to the newly formed Strategic Programs and Professional Resources Division, led by Mr. Charles Matta. GSA is confident that this internal reorganization will not adversely impact relationships established with transportation agencies, CBP or any other land ports of entry stakeholders. To ensure continuity and program advancement along our borders with Canada and Mexico, GSA has dedicated several land ports of entry subject matter experts solely to both borders.

