

TBWG: Working Group Report
Burlington, Vermont
June 10, 2003
Communications Group

Summary of Discussion and Next Steps

Key Issues/Areas of Interest Discussed:

- What is our message/mission?
 - We are closely coordinating and working together
 - TBWG is a unique forum. There is no other forum bringing together such a diverse group of interests on border issues
- Who is our audience?
 - Elected officials
 - TBWG members
 - Stakeholders
 - Other interested parties
- Showcase uniqueness of TBWG
- Once communication methods are in place, need to promote them/get the word out that they exist
- Communications tools such as websites and newsletters support the other, more technical work, of the group (i.e., data and technology)

Areas in which the TBWG may address these issues:

- Website. FHWA currently accepting proposals to develop a Canada/US planning website. Start small, don't bite off more than we can chew too early. There is plenty of time for the site to evolve. Website should be a one-stop shop, a place where people can go for information when they need it. "Information mapping"
- Information to include on the site:
 - TBWG mission/memorandum of cooperation
 - List of federal/state/local contacts on both sides of the border
 - "side-by-side" of US and Canada border information
 - TBWG meeting resources (presentations, etc.)
 - Links to agencies/members/relevant organizations
 - List of upcoming events
 - Action items/TBWG products (e.g., in the other action plan areas, compendium, etc.)
 - List of acronyms and what they mean
 - List of upcoming events
 - Studies (e.g., Michigan study, other studies)
 - Fact sheets on US and Canadian programs relating to borders

- Stress importance of two-way exchange of information. FHWA will keep the site current but we are only as good as the information we are given. A website needs to remain current to be useful.
- Considered e-newsletter or blast emails. The group decided that in this age of information overload, those avenues should only be used for urgent issues of high importance and internal communications to the group. Concentrate on developing a comprehensive, high-quality website that will be useful to people when they need information.

Next Steps:

- FHWA, in coordination with TC, will proceed with developing the website. A draft should be ready by late summer or early fall, 2003. The site will be shown to the entire TBWG at the Montreal meeting in December. Many of the participants in this discussion agreed to serve as an ad-hoc advisory committee, reviewing drafts and providing comments/input as the site is developed.