



SUMMARY

CANADA – UNITED STATES (U.S.) TRANSPORTATION BORDER WORKING GROUP (TBWG) PLENARY Montréal, Québec 2007-10-24/26

General:

- The second TBWG Plenary of 2007 was held in Montréal from Wednesday October 24th until Friday October 26th.
- There were approximately 55 participants representing federal, state, and provincial transportation- and border-related agencies. There were also participants from the private sector (including the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec - FCCQ, the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce, and the Border Trade Alliance - BTA) who took part in a panel discussion on Day Three.
- All presentations will be posted on the TBWG website, specifically under the "Meetings Archive" header.
 - **Update:** Presentations are available upon request. Please email FHWABorderPlanning@dot.gov for further assistance.
- TBWG members reconfirmed the Steering Committee's eastern and western Regional Representatives (Mr. Walter Steeves – Eastern Border Transportation Coalition and Mr. Gordon Rogers – Whatcom Council of Governments).
- The next TBWG Plenary will be held in the U.S. in the spring of 2008. The exact location will be announced in the coming weeks.

October 24th – Day One:

- Prior to the official opening of the Plenary, three TBWG subcommittees were held: the Policy Subcommittee (*co-chaired by Mr. Hugh Conroy and Mr. Ted Mackay*), the Border Infrastructure Coordination Subcommittee (*co-chaired by Ms. Alicia Nolan and Mr. Allan Wilson*), and the Border Trade & Traffic Data Subcommittee (*chaired by Ms. Nolan*). Individual SC Chairs will prepare meeting summaries.
- Following the SC meetings and immediately prior to the start of the Plenary, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA – *Mr. Dan Lagacé*) and the General Service Administration (GSA – *Mr. Ralph Scalise*) provided an overview of ongoing and planned border infrastructure projects. Mr. Lagacé noted that, over the next few years, the CBSA plans to concentrate its infrastructure activities on its Western Canadian facilities (i.e., Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta).

- Following the border infrastructure project overview, participants on the Ottawa-Washington Update Panel (*Transport Canada, the Federal Highways Administration, CBSA, GSA, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection – CBP*) provided a review of transportation, security, and trade-related items and issues including the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), e-manifest, border wait times, business resumption planning, infrastructure funding programs, etc. The Ottawa-Washington update is a regular agenda item at all TBWG Plenaries.
- Next on the agenda was an overview of the 2007-08-29 QC-NY State Regional Workshop provided by Mr. Brian Kirch (*NYS DOT*) and Mr. Dave Henry (*Ministère des Transports du Québec – MDQ*). Designed to deepen coordination and cooperation with respect to smaller land border crossings within a specific geographic area, the workshop was project/issue-focussed, and included a full range of stakeholders from both sides of the border (e.g., Canadian and U.S. border agencies, federal, state and provincial departments of transportation, TC, FHWA, etc.). Both Mr. Kirch and Mr. Henry noted that the workshop had been successful in meeting its objectives. These included:
 - Strengthening lines of communication;
 - Increasing appreciation of roles/responsibilities;
 - Improving understanding of processes;
 - Providing more details on border funding programs;
 - Improving coordination of planned activities;
 - Identifying needs (e.g., highway approaches, signage, etc.); and
 - Expanding the asset inventory (e.g., video-log of crossings, material for Infrastructure compendium, etc.).
- It was noted that information stemming from the QC-NY State Regional Workshop has been shared with TBWG's western stakeholders (including British Columbia, Washington State, and Idaho) to support a possible western regional workshop in spring 2008 (to be confirmed).
- Day One ended with a presentation by Mr. Michael Burt of the Conference Board of Canada (CBoC) on two recent border-related studies that examined the results of post-9/11 security measures on Canada's trade and investment performance. While it was noted that export trends from Canada to the U.S. have not changed post 9/11, the studies' results did suggest that firm-level behavior has changed (e.g., return to stockpiling), and that costs in general have increased (e.g., implementing border programs and related measures). Both Reports are available on-line:
 - See: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.asp?rnext=2050>
 - See: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.asp?rnext=2028>

October 25th – Day Two:

- Day Two featured presentations on a variety of border, transportation, and trade-related topics – a brief summary of each follows.

- Mr. Alain Beaudoin (*Industry Canada*) provided an update on the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) of North America. Mr. Beaudoin briefly reviewed the evolution of the SPP, the contents of the latest North American Competitiveness Council (NACC) report, and noted the outcomes of the August 2007 North American Leaders Summit (NALS - Montebello, QC). Mr. Beaudoin also noted that a priority identified by Leaders for 2007/2008 was “Smart and Secure Borders”, and that the next NALS will be hosted by the U.S. in late spring / early summer 2008.
 - See: <http://www.spp-psp.gc.ca/menu-en.aspx>
 - See: <http://www.spp.gov/>
- Ms. Gloria Shepherd (*FHWA*) presented an overview of the FHWA’s ongoing initiatives related to safety (e.g., Highway Safety Improvement Program and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan), congestion reduction (e.g., Urban Partnership Agreements, the Corridors of the Future, etc.), and addressing medium and long-term funding concerns (e.g., current fuel tax considerations, future liquidity of the Highway Trust Fund, etc.). Ms. Shepherd also highlighted the use and value of performance measurement processes at FHWA.
 - See: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- Mr. Milt Schmidt (*Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration - FMCSA*) provided TBWG members with an update on the ongoing U.S.-Mexico Trucking Pilot Project and some preliminary results from the upcoming U.S.-Canada Issues Study (scheduled release date – February 2008). In essence, the Study’s objective is to increase the level of reciprocal regulatory understanding and capacity for interoperability at both the operator and government agency level.
 - See: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/>
- Ms. Crystal Jones (*FHWA - Office of Freight Management and Operations*) provided TBWG members with an overview of FHWA’s roles at the Canada-U.S. border and its corresponding initiatives to measure border performance. Ms. Jones also described efforts related to traffic and freight data collection along the U.S. Interstate Highway system, in particular the associated application and use of new collection technologies.
 - See: <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/>
- Mr. Marc Fortin (*TC*) presented on the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Study (GLSLS). Scheduled for release in late November 2007, the Study is a bi-national (i.e., Canada-U.S.) effort to evaluate the infrastructure needs of the GLSLS system, including the engineering, economic, and environmental implications of those needs as they pertain to commercial navigation. In the context of increasing levels on containerized traffic, the Study, the first comprehensive assessment of the physical state of the GLSLS system’s infrastructure, will help to inform future policy development and planning initiatives on Seaway related issues.
 - See: <http://www.glsls-study.com/English%20Site/home.html>

- Mr. Paul Sandhar-Cruz (TC) provided TBWG members with a presentation on Canada's National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors, specifically the importance of the Framework to Canada's long-term transportation and trade related infrastructure investments (i.e., APGCI, QC-ON Gateway & Atlantic Gateway). Mr. Sandhar-Cruz also reviewed the Framework's five policy "lenses" that will be applied to help guide future development and investment decisions.

➤ See: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/GatewayConnects/NationalPolicyFramework/nationalpolicy.html>

- As Day Two's final presenter, Mr. Patrick Gosselin (TC) spoke about the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway & Trade Corridor. Mr. Gosselin focused on the Gateway's linkages to the National Policy Framework and to other corridor initiatives, provided a summary of the Gateway's governance structure (e.g., MoU, committees, etc.), and reviewed the immediate next steps in the Corridor's development (e.g., studies, stakeholder consultations, etc.).

➤ See: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/GatewayConnects/Ontario-Quebec/Ontario-Quebec.html>

October 26th - Day Three:

- Day Three began with a Private Sector Panel during which the three members discussed trucking and transportation border-related issues.
- Mr. Garry Douglas (*Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce*) noted the historic economic and social linkages between QC and NY State, described the ever-increasing levels of trade and economic development along the corridor (including the new Champlain facilities), emphasized the need for policy and decision makers to better understand the concept of "bi-national regionality" that characterizes international trade corridors, and stressed (from a planning perspective) the need to, "... skate to where the puck will be."

➤ See: <http://www.northcountrychamber.com/default.php>

➤ See: <http://www.quebecnewyorkcorridor.com/index1.asp>

- Mr. Albert Juneau (fccq) noted the importance of a secure and efficient Canada-U.S. border, especially the necessity for "facts and data to trump fear and ignorance." Four border-related challenges noted by Mr. Juneau included: (1) ongoing improvements to border facilities and approach roads, (2) understanding the plethora of border-related trade and security programs (especially their effects on small and medium sized enterprises), (3) dealing with ever-increasing levels of trade, and (4) addressing environmental concerns as they related to development and trade flows. Mr. Juneau also emphasized technology's central role in continuing to address these challenges.

➤ See: <http://www.fccq.ca/indexfccq.asp?actionlien=affichepagecc&idPage=71>

- As the Panel's last speaker, Ms. Maria Louisa O'Connell (*Border Trade Alliance – BTA*) described the role and activities of the BTA, provided BTA's perspective on infrastructure, security, trade and travel challenges along the Mexico-U.S. border, and noted the importance of accurate and timely border-related data. She also urged TBWG members to remain informed about all border-related security, trade, and travel issues (from both a policy and technical perspective).
- See: <http://thebta.org/>
- Due to difficulties with speaker's travel arrangements, the scheduled presentation on the Secure Border Initiative (SBI_{net}) was cancelled. It is hoped that this presentation can be rescheduled for a future TBWG Plenary.
- Next on the TBWG agenda was the traditional "Report Out" from the TBWG Subcommittee Chairs on the results of their respective meetings on the morning of Day One. Of particular interest:

BICSC:

- It was noted that the TBWG's On-line Border Infrastructure Compendium (OBIC) has been expanded to include all Canada-U.S. land border crossings (120) from its existing top 65 land border crossings. The process of collecting and entering any outstanding data continues.
- A proposal (sponsored by FHWA via possible funding from the Northern Border Pool Fund) to engage a consultant to review the OBIC and recommend improvements to its structure and functionality (e.g., data entry methods, comparability of data, format of reports, etc.) was described to TBWG members and their endorsement was sought. TBWG members endorsed the proposal.

Policy:

- The Cross-border Arrangements Toolkit (a collection of arrangements between governments, agencies, and public and private organizations that have been formed to support bi-national cooperative efforts) was shown (electronically) to TBWG members. Data fields defined for each listed arrangement include name; date executed; purpose; purpose type; parties; party type; party function; cited U.S. authority; cited Canadian authority; enforceability; and reviewers. The expansion of this collection continues.
- An update was provided on the status of recent U.S. legislation: the Implementing Recommendations of the 9-11 Commission Act of 2007, specifically Sec. 1523 of this new law (titled Northern Border Railroad Passenger Report) which instructs the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to research and report back on several points related to the feasibility of pre-screening passenger and freight-rail. This issue remains important in advance of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

Trade & Traffic Data:

- An update was provided on the ongoing plans for the next TBWG Border Data workshop, tentatively scheduled for spring 2008. This workshop would be a follow-up to the October 2003 Port Huron data workshop. An ad-hoc planning committee has been created and additional details (exact dates, location, etc.) will be provided in the near future.

BIFA SC:

- An upcoming 2007-11-13/15 Border Information Flow Architecture (BIFA) Use and Maintenance Workshop Hosted was also highlighted. Hosted by the by Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTEC) and NY State DOT in Buffalo, NY, the purpose of the event is to provide a better understanding of how the BIFA and/or regional ITS architecture can be used in project planning and development.

See: <http://www.iteris.com/itsarch/bifa/>

- It was also noted that planning activities continue for the 2008-09-22/23 North American Freight Transportation Data Conference to be held in Irvine, California.
- Following the Subcommittee Report Out session, TBWG members then reviewed the 2007/2008 TBWG Action Plan. Suggested revisions included:
 - under “Planning & Programming” – the addition of a border-related glossary (working draft to be supplied by Mr. Walter Steeves – EBTC),
 - under “BICSC” – revision of number of crossing entries to 120 from 65, and
 - under “Deployment of Technology” – change month indicated for BIFA workshop from December 2007 to November 2007.
- It was noted that these changes would be made to the existing 2007/2008 TBWG Action Plan and would be then re-posted to the TBWG website.

See: [Action Plan 2015-2017](#)

Day Three – Border Tour:

- Finally, approximately fifteen TBWG members boarded a tour bus and were driven to the nearby Canada-U.S. land port-of-entry facilities at Lacolle (QC) – Champlain (NY State). Participants enjoyed an extensive tour of the Canadian facilities by CBSA representatives (*Mr. Guy Fortin*). This was followed by a tour of the recently renovated and expanded Champlain facilities by U.S. CBP staff (*Mr. Christopher Perry*).