

Border Master Planning

Peer Exchange Summary Report

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Acronyms

Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CBP	United States Customs and Border Protection
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency
DOT	Department of Transportation
EBTC	Eastern Border Transportation Commission
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GSA	General Services Administration
IMTC	International Mobility Trade Corridor
ITA	International Trade Administration
JWC	Joint Working Committee
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
POE	Port of Entry
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SIDUE	Baja California Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development
TBWG	Transportation Border Working Group
U.S.	United States
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
WCOG	Whatcom Council of Governments

I. Summary

On April 21, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Planning, in cooperation with Transport Canada and the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG), sponsored a one-day peer exchange to facilitate a discussion about border master planning among Federal, state, and regional transportation agencies from the "prairie" region along the United States (U.S.)/Canada border, which includes Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota in the U.S. and eastern British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and western Ontario in Canada. Participants in the peer exchange included representatives from FHWA, Transport Canada, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the International Trade Administration (ITA), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Eastern Border Transportation Commission (EBTC), the state Departments of Transportation (DOT) in California, Idaho, Minnesota, and North Dakota, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG).¹

The purpose of the peer exchange was to allow the participating agencies to work together and build consensus about moving forward with a potential border master plan for the prairie states and provinces along the U.S./Canada border. Representatives from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), SANDAG, and WCOG made presentations about border master planning efforts along portions of the U.S./Mexico and U.S. Canada borders. Following the presentations, representatives from the participating agencies discussed ways to collaborate and share data and information to work toward a coordinated border transportation planning process for the region.

II. Overview of the TBWG

The TBWG serves as a forum for transportation, border, and other agencies and organizations in the U.S. and Canada to coordinate transportation planning, policy implementation, and the deployment of technology to enhance border infrastructure and operations. The TBWG fosters on-going communication, information sharing, and the exchange of best practices to improve the transportation and the safety and security systems that connect our two countries. The group convenes meetings twice annually and serves as a clearinghouse for information about the U.S./Canada border.

III. Presentations and Discussion

Call to Order and Introductions

David Franklin, FHWA and Daniel McGregor, Transport Canada

Mr. Franklin and Mr. McGregor welcomed the participants and thanked representatives from the TBWG for helping to plan the peer exchange. They noted that this is a unique opportunity for State and Provincial transportation agencies to work together to improve transportation in the prairie region along the U.S./Canada border.

¹ A full list of participants is included in Appendix A.

California-Baja California Border Master Plan

Sergio Pallares, CalTrans and Cheryl Mason, SANDAG

The Joint Working Committee (JWC), a group of representatives of agencies from the U.S. and Mexico that cooperate on transportation planning across the U.S./Mexico border, saw a need for enhanced coordination among transportation agencies on both sides of the border. To address this issue, the JWC funded the California-Baja California Border Master Plan as a pilot program in 2006. The JWC worked with Caltrans and the Baja California Secretariat of Infrastructure and Urban Development (SIDUE) to implement the pilot from October 2006 through September 2008.

The goals and objectives of the California-Baja California Border Master Plan were to:

- Increase the understanding of Port of Entry (POE) and transportation planning on both sides of the border and create a workable plan for prioritizing and advancing POE and related transportation projects
- Develop criteria for prioritizing projects related to existing and new POEs as well as transportation facilities leading to the California-Baja California POEs; rank mid- and long-term projects and services
- Establish a process to institutionalize dialogue among local, state, and federal stakeholders in the United States and Mexico to understand their processes to identify those needs as they affect land POEs and connecting transportation infrastructure

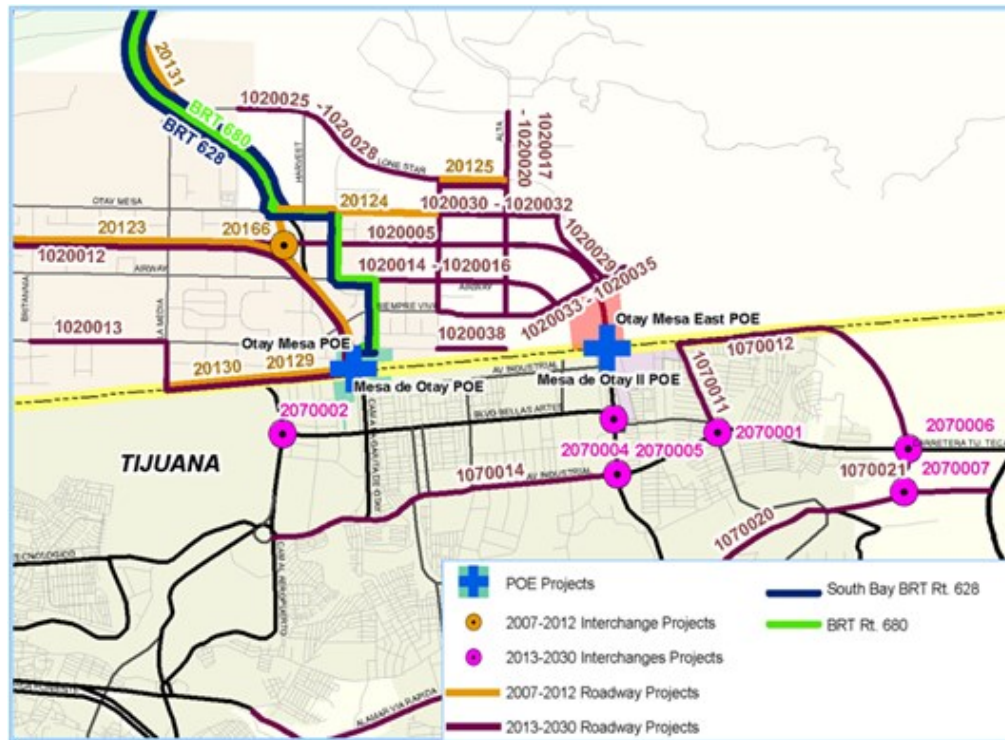
The scope of work for the California-Baja California Border Master Plan included the following tasks:

- Task 1: Establish process for stakeholder participation
- Task 2: Document “State of the Practice” for POE and transportation planning
- Task 3: Assess existing capacity and demand and identify short-term needs and projects
- Task 4: Estimate growth of travel demand
- Task 5: Define and approve evaluation criteria for prioritization of needs and projects
- Task 6: Analyze forecast data and identify mid- and long-term needs; apply criteria and rank projects
- Task 7: Prepare draft and final reports

The study area for the Border Master Plan included two areas: the focus area, which extends 10 miles from both sides of the border, and the area of influence, which extends 60 miles north and 60 miles south of the border. The Border Master Plan team considered transportation projects in these areas when developing the Master Plan but was mostly concerned with projects within the focus area because of their more direct impacts on POEs. The Master Plan had a horizon year of 2030 to provide a long-term perspective on transportation planning along the California-Baja California border.

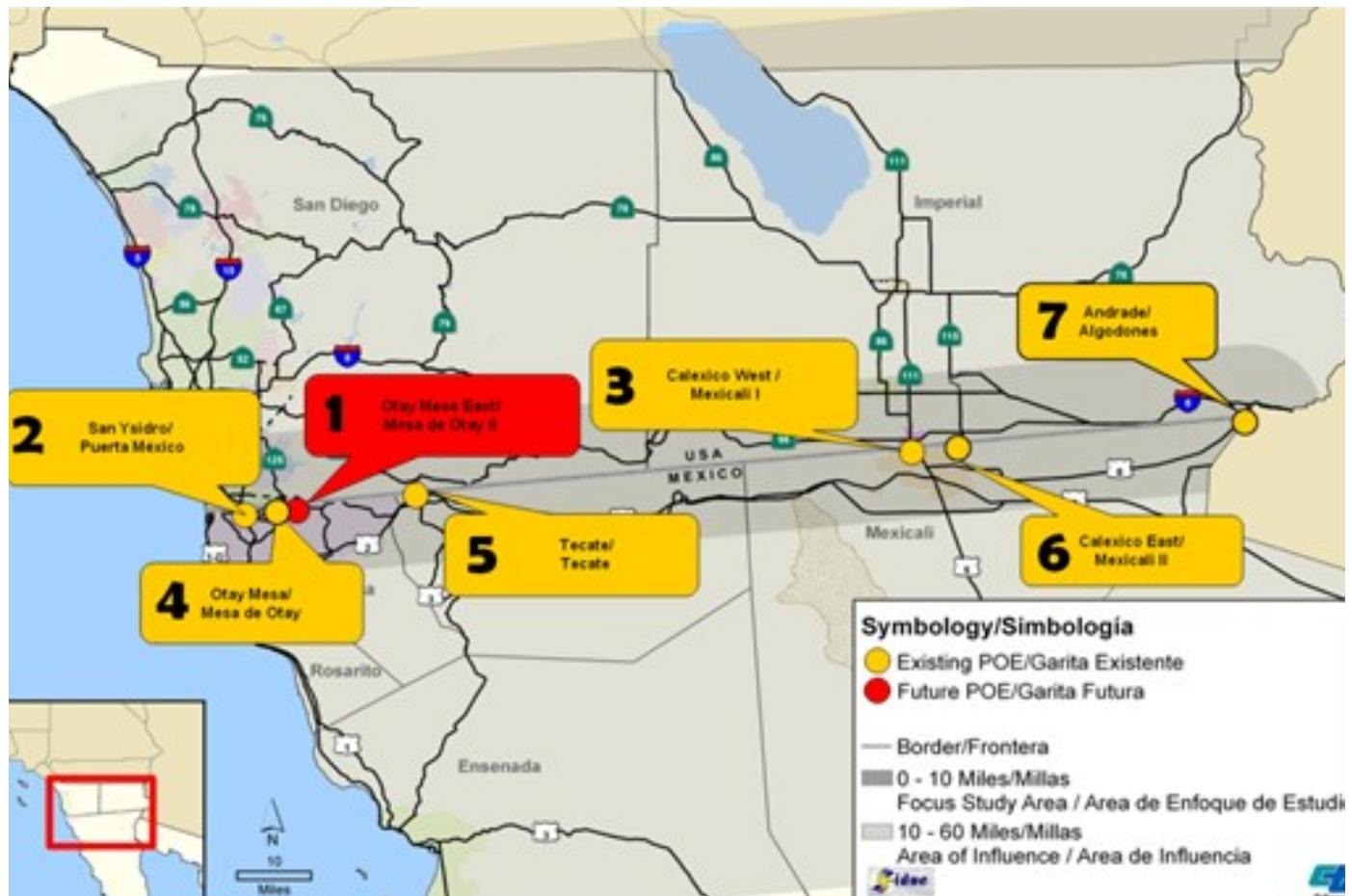
For the “state of the practice” review of POE and transportation planning, the Border Master Plan team asked stakeholder agency representatives questions about their agencies’ roles in POE and transportation planning, what planning documents the agency prepares, what criteria are used in ranking POE and transportation projects, and how interagency consultation occurred. The results of this review showed that the POE and transportation planning processes differ in several ways. For example, POE planning uses a five-year time horizon for planning and programming projects, while transportation planning uses longer horizons. Additionally, POE planning does not typically consider transportation projects, and vice versa. The “state of the practice” review confirmed that there were opportunities to develop a more systemic process to align implementation activities, including coordinating scheduling and funding.

The Border Master Plan team then collected data from stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of the transportation facilities and POEs in the study area. The team gathered data on population, employment, cross-border travel demand, and border wait times. Stakeholder agencies also provided data on POE, roadway, interchange, and rail projects that they were planning in the short term (to be constructed before 2012).



The California/Baja California Master Plan considers both POE and transportation projects.
(Source: Caltrans)

Once the Border Master Plan team had gathered data and information on all POE and transportation projects in the area, the team devised a method to compare projects within each mode and across all modes. To do this, the team developed and applied two sets of criteria: locational criteria (related to existing and projected POE conditions, current and projected travel demand, congestion, etc.) and project-specific criteria (project cost effectiveness, environmental benefits, community impacts, etc.). The team selected the criteria without knowledge of the projects to be evaluated to ensure transparency in the ranking process. Once the team applied the criteria to each project, they then grouped projects by the POE with which each was most closely associated (for example, a project on I-5 in San Diego, which provides direct service to the San Ysidro POE, would be grouped with other San Ysidro projects). These groupings allowed the team to consider which POEs had the greatest needs for infrastructure improvements.



The Border Plan Team grouped border crossing and transportation projects by POE and ranked the POEs by level of need. (Source: Caltrans)

The key outcomes of the California-Baja California Border Master Plan were:

- Development of Binational Evaluation Criteria for POEs, roadways and interchanges, and rail projects that can be applied in the California and Baja California border region,
- Development of a prioritized list of POE projects and associated transportation projects,
- Recommendations for stakeholders to use these outcomes in own planning processes, to compete for funding, and to follow systematic and orderly approach to implement border projects, and
- Recommendations for institutionalizing the Border Master Plan process.

The Border Master Plan team encountered several challenges throughout the planning process. Differing political cycles and planning processes had to be coordinated. Also, because of the large number of stakeholder agencies, it was difficult to gather all the information needed to adequately rank projects. Finally, while the team considered the Border Master Plan a success, it is difficult to coordinate among all of the stakeholders and to find funding for future updates.

Despite these challenges, the California-Baja California Border Master Plan team notes several successes. The process opened the lines of communication among all of the stakeholder agencies and fostered coordination and collaboration. Additionally, the Border Master Plan concept has been approved and endorsed by several key stakeholders, including the Executive Branches of the U.S. and

Mexico. Caltrans and SIDUE plan to build on these successes and address the challenges faced through updates to the Border Master Plan.

Moving forward, the Border Master Plan team would like to institutionalize the California-Baja California Border Master Plan process to encourage cooperation and coordination among all of the stakeholder agencies. With this in mind, Caltrans and SIDUE, in collaboration with the JWC, will establish a timeline for periodic California-Baja California Border Master Plan updates, seek funding for future work, and manage the update process.

Questions

North Dakota DOT: Did you have a predetermined concept of what the Border Plan should be, or did you let the process play out?

Caltrans: We knew that we wanted to develop a rational process for coordinating and integrating planning for POEs and transportation. We saw a need to institutionalize the planning and project prioritization process to determine where to make improvements with limited funds.

FHWA: Was there a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to get the process started?

Caltrans: The JWC was created via an MOU that the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and SCT signed in 1994. This MOU did not specify the creation of “Border Master Plans” specifically but calls for coordination on transportation planning.

Transport Canada: Was there a separate MOU between the JWC, California, and Baja California to start this Border Master Plan?

Caltrans: No, but the JWC, Caltrans, and SIDUE agreed on biannual work plans.

FHWA: The study area is a 10-mile buffer around the border – why not make it larger?

Caltrans: This was only a pilot study. We used the 60-mile buffer to look at demographics, but focused on projects within 10 miles of border, which was where transportation has the greatest impact on POEs.

FHWA: Were projects grouped by POE?

Caltrans: We ranked all 68 roadway projects. Each project was assigned to the POE to which it was most directly related. The project rankings were then combined for each individual POE to be able to prioritize the POEs.

Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation: Did Caltrans do the work in-house or did you hire consultants? What was the total cost?

Caltrans: Caltrans involved SANDAG as a public consultant. The budget for the two-year effort to develop the Border Master Plan was \$286,000.

WCOG: Were POEs along the border grouped as “gateways” or were they considered individually?

Caltrans: Unlike the northern border, the southern border’s crossings are relatively far apart. Therefore, we did not consider groups of POEs.

Transport Canada: Did the ranked list of projects include projects on both sides of border and POE projects? Was the output of the Border Master Plan a final decision on project priority or was it advisory? How does prioritization differ among agencies?

Caltrans: Yes, the ranked list of projects includes projects on both sides of border and POE projects. The

final document was advisory and informational. The Border Master Plan did not require the funding and construction of projects according to the prioritization and rankings. It provides a path to move forward.

FHWA: What is the next phase of this process?

Sergio Pallares (Caltrans): We need to identify funds to move forward. We would also like to poll the stakeholders to understand what they want to get out of the next update. We have approved statement of work and political approval, but we need to be respectful of what all the stakeholders would like to see in the next phase.

CBP: Do you see the need to do all Border Master Plans as two-phase processes?

Caltrans: The phasing of Border Master Plans depends on the development pressures that you have. It should be decided on a case-by-case basis considering the level of existing coordination among stakeholder agencies.

International Mobility Trade Corridor (IMTC)

Gordon Rogers, WCOG

The International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) is a coalition of government and business entities from the U.S. and Canada that identifies and promotes improvements to mobility and security along the border in Whatcom County in Washington State and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The four POEs in this region, which include Peace Arch, Pacific Highway, Lyndon-Aldergrove, and Sumas-Huntingdon, together form the Cascade Gateway.

In the mid-1990s, government and industry officials in the Cascade Gateway area started meeting to discuss ways to coordinate transportation across the U.S./Canada border. What started as casual discussions evolved into the present-day IMTC, which has been in place for 13 years. The objectives of the IMTC are to improve planning and data collection, promote infrastructure improvements and improvements to operations, policy, and border staffing within the Cascade Gateway.

The IMTC consists of three groups of participants. The Steering Committee consists of 30 agencies and meets monthly to make recommendations to the Core Group. The Core Group has 60 participating agencies (including those on the Steering Committee) that meet quarterly and make the decisions for IMTC. The General Assembly is a broad constituency of mostly private-sector stakeholders



The Peace Arch, Pacific Highway, Aldergrove-Lynden, and Huntingdon-Sumas POEs together make up the Cascade Gateway. (Source: WCOG)

that meet annually to provide feedback to the Core Group and to learn about evolving border policies and operations. WCOG in Washington State provides staff support for the IMTC.

The participation of all organizations in the IMTC is voluntary. All participants can have a say in improving mobility, safety, and security at and across the border in the Cascade Gateway area, as the meeting discussions are participant-driven in order to foster collaborative discussion.

The IMTC has been successful in developing a more complete identity for the Cascade Gateway border system and has raised its profile in the U.S. and Canada. The IMTC has also built trust among binational agencies and has garnered financial partnerships to fund its initiatives. The IMTC is now a go-to organization for border data and information for the Cascade Gateway. Its resource manual provides an overview of the IMTC and includes information on projects, transportation, and freight at each of the Cascade Gateway's border crossings.

A key take-away from the IMTC experience is that by concentrating on a small set of interrelated POEs the IMTC is able to think holistically about border transportation without the discussion becoming too broad. Also, allowing all participants the opportunity to provide input and not having a mandate to participate has encouraged collaboration among the stakeholder agencies and other participants.

Participant Introductions and Initial Thoughts

Following the presentations participants introduced themselves and provided their thoughts on the establishment of a border master plan for the region along the U.S./Canada border. Their comments are summarized below.

- Border crossings might not always be the top priorities of border state DOTs.
- Agencies should work together to address border transportation issues.
- Development of a border master plan would give the region's transportation agencies the opportunity to have a greater voice in the issues that impact them.
- Minnesota DOT has a set of small, POE-based plans with prescriptive methodologies and outreach components, but they could be better linked to regional and statewide plans.
- A dedicated border transportation specialist within a state DOT might be beneficial to the agency.
- Funding constraints limit the number of projects that can be funded, so a coordinated project prioritization mechanism is important.
- Decisionmaking processes should be transparent and coordinated so that it does not appear that decisions are being made in a vacuum.
- Border master planning will likely help in the project prioritization process.
- The Pembina-Emerson POE had a coordinated 20-year planning study that involved input from Federal, State, and provincial agencies. This effort fostered collaboration and synergies among the participating agencies.
- Transportation and security planning and standards should be coordinated on both sides of the border, particularly because of the transport of fossil fuels and uranium across the border in this region.
- Saskatchewan's primary interests regarding transportation across the border include promoting Saskatchewan's trade corridor initiatives, preserving and strengthening access to the U.S. market, and working with forums like TBWG to share ideas and concerns.

- Saskatchewan would like to work with its peer agencies in the region to promote communication, cooperation and awareness within the region. The coordination of information is critical for effective decisionmaking.
- Agencies could coordinate border transportation planning in order to improve efficiencies in the cross-border transportation network and avoid unilateral decisions.
- The EBTC promotes trade and the economies in the member States and provinces, which include Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Labrador, Michigan, New York, Vermont, and Maine. EBTC has not done region-wide planning to date.
- The term “border master plan” might be misleading. We are looking to develop a process for coordinating and prioritizing investments on both sides of the border, not to create a long-term vision of what may be built in the future.
- Idaho has experience in coordination with Canada, particularly on the Route 95 crossing at Kingsgate. Besides coordination for this project, Idaho has had limited involvement in border master planning.

Roundtable Discussion of Border Master Planning

Peer exchange participants discussed what a border master plan for the region along the U.S./Canada border might resemble. The key points from the discussion are summarized below.

- The “Prairie” region may not be ready for a comprehensive border master plan. Transportation agencies initiate a dialogue to understand each agency’s processes and needs before embarking on a larger coordinated effort.
- There are 39 POEs in the region; perhaps a single planning effort covering them all would be too broad. The initial discussions among the region’s agencies will help flesh this out.
- Land POEs are influenced by shifting demand and other factors. Because of this variability, border circulation studies and a gateway-level focus may be useful. A border master plan for the U.S./Canada border need not necessarily resemble the border master plan that was developed for the California-Baja California border.
- Regional groups could begin to form organically and meet during TBWG meetings to begin discussions about coordination and cooperation among agencies. The TBWG already has trade data and traffic counts for use in this coordination.
- Because of budgetary constraints, perhaps coordination should begin with provinces and States gathering via teleconference. The discussion might lead to greater collaboration. Perhaps it would be wise to begin with a “regional map” to display and more fully understand the characteristics of the border within the region.
- CBP is interested in working with groups of agencies to eventually make recommendations about project prioritization. CBP could adjust its process to fit within a new regional approach.
- The involvement of MPOs in the process is not critical, although it was very useful in the California-Baja California border master planning effort. The relationship between Caltrans and SANDAG is unique.
- The near-term goals for regional interagency collaboration should be to form relationships and to begin sharing data and information. Once this has been established, we can focus on larger coordinated regional initiatives.
- It may be wise to develop a vision and goals before embarking on the development of a regional document. This group should develop a rough plan of action as a product of this meeting to facilitate moving forward to foster collaboration and coordination into the future.

IV. Discussion of Next Steps

To conclude the peer exchange, the participants brainstormed potential next steps for fostering collaboration among the Federal, State/provincial, and local border services and transportation agencies in the “Prairie” region. Such coordination and collaboration would allow the agencies to form a unified voice to address needs in the border region.

Appendix A: Participant List

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Appendix B: Agenda

April 21, 2011

8:00 – 8:10 AM	Call to Order and Introductions <i>David Franklin, FHWA</i> <i>Daniel McGregor, Transport Canada</i>
8:10 – 9:10 AM	California-Baja California Border Master Plan <i>Sergio Pallares, Caltrans</i> <i>Cheryl Mason, SANDAG</i>
9:10 – 9:20 AM	Mid-Morning Networking Break
9:20 – 9:45 AM	International Mobility Trade Corridor (IMTC) <i>Gordon Rogers, WCOG</i>
9:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Key Participant Opening Statements & Roundtable Discussions
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 – 2:45 PM	Roundtable Discussions Continued
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Mid-Afternoon Networking Break
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Closing Comments and Next Steps <i>Jack Olson, North Dakota DOT</i> <i>Michael Makowsky, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure</i>
3:30 PM	Final Comments – Adjournment <i>David Franklin, FHWA</i> <i>Daniel McGregor, Transport Canada</i>

Appendix C: Useful Links

California-Baja California Border Master Plan Final Report:

http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist11/departments/planning/pdfs/regional/08_CA_BajaCA_Border_Master_Plan.pdf

EBTC: <http://ebtc.info/>

IMTC: <http://theimtc.com/>

TBWG: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/border_planning/us_canada