

Teleconference Summary
TBWG Policy Research Subcommittee
June 21, 2005, 11:00 AM EST

Present on the call:

Wayne Sauer, **Canada Border Services Agency**; Walter Steeves, **Eastern Border Transportation Coalition**; Alan Stillar, **Ontario Ministry of Transportation**; Michael Avery, Sarah Clements, Jill Hochman, Alicia Nolan & Roger Petzold; **U.S Federal Highway Administration**; Isabelle Trepanier, Raymond Sabourin, & Mimi Sukhdeo **Transport Canada**; Paul Storer, **Western Washington University**; & Hugh Conroy, **Whatcom Council of Governments**.

Jill Hochman opened up the discussion and asked the group what topics the policy subcommittee should work on. Suggestions included the following.

Suggested research topics:

1. Provide advice to Western Washington University's Border Policy Research Institute. Paul Storer indicated that some projects are underway but opportunities for review of progress-reports and draft papers could be arranged—perhaps via a website.

Paul also mentioned that WWU BPRI would also welcome input on ideas for future projects.

1. Isabelle Trepanier mentioned the forthcoming report on impacts of security on the trucking industry.
2. Jill Hochman suggested looking at the impacts of border operations, closures, etc, on communities, industry sectors (i.e. health care).
3. Hugh Conroy suggested taking topics from existing, binational agreements, as they've been associated with TBWG. Examples of such topics with lingering binational policy dilemmas include:
 - a. From the October 2000 MOC between USDOT and TC:
 - i. Implementation of national policies on intermodalism
 - ii. Interoperable strategic ITS applications
 - b. From the US-Canada Smart Border Declaration
 - i. Joint facilities and the transportation system
 - ii. ITS and information sharing
 - c. Others
 - i. Reverse inspections
 - ii. Passenger rail preclearance
 - iii. Cross-border transit (buses)
4. Walter Steeves noted the interest in analysis of the potential impact of emerging US passport requirements.
5. Border delay study (compiling existing studies)
6. Air quality
7. Michael Avery suggested exploring the potential role of the private sector in system improvements.
8. Cost-benefit analysis of proposals to dramatically raise customs exemptions.

Isabelle Trepanier noted some concern here with having the committee examine the policy of a single agency rather than a shared policy issue resulting from a mandate to coordinate.

9. Alan Stiller suggested that TBWG might look at some longer-term issues such as proposals to pursue a common currency and the potential system consequences of other steps towards integration.
10. Jill Hochman suggested, like was done on the U.S. southern border, a review of ports-of-entry with respect to facility and operational symmetry.

Hugh Conroy wondered to what extent this type of perspective might be included in current strategic resource assessments being done regionally by US CBP. Wayne Sauer agreed that the SRAs might be a good starting point for reviewing this issue.

Suggested methods and practices:

1. Other groups should be identified for inputs, existing studies, and current work.
2. Specific groups mentioned include Canada's Policy Research Institute.
3. The possibility of states using their SPR (State Planning and Research) funds was mentioned.
4. Alicia Nolan reminded of the opportunity to coordinate with the FHWA Border Technology Exchange Program.
5. It was mentioned multiple times that the committee should identify existing studies that address whatever issues are identified for attention. (also, see box below)

In a parallel initiative, Western Washington University's is currently putting together a policy research clearinghouse. Please send Paul Storer your suggestions for any research studies that should be included. Paul's e-mail address is: Paul.Storer@wwu.edu Thank you.

6. Michael Avery suggested development of an institutional policy map (possibly issue-specific)
7. Conduct a test of how to use scenario planning tools for border communities

Isabelle Trepanier noted that the subcommittee is in need of a chair and further noted that she felt it was important that the chair not be a federal employee. Jill Hochman agreed. Isabelle and Jill asked for volunteers to be chair. Hugh Conroy volunteered. Isabelle noted that a Canadian counterpart co-chair should be identified and suggested Margaret Grant-McGivney from New Brunswick.

Next steps.

Hugh Conroy will complete a draft summary of today's discussion including a list of topic suggestions and approaches.

By June 30, all policy subcommittee members will give feedback and additions to the draft list.

The next conference call will be on Tuesday, July 12 at 3:00 PM EST. Alicia Nolan mentioned that she could arrange a toll-free conference number.