EBTC Members are the Transportation Agencies of the U.S. States of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine and the Canadian Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec

(Honorary members are the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council and the Regional Municipality of Niagara)

ISSUE: INFORMATION NEEDS IN SUPPORT OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

BACKGROUND:

Significant data gaps in coverage exist in the patchwork of passenger and multi-modal freight information available to track passenger and commercial vehicle traffic volumes and trade moving across the U.S.-Canada border. Criteria-based investment strategies based on sound data are critical to building an equitable degree of reliable crossing capacity, meeting the needs of the northern border states and provinces and trade partners far removed from the border.

North American supply chains, for both large and small companies, are highly integrated with plants, distribution centers, warehouses and retailers dispersed between the two countries. Efficient border crossings are vital to the global competitiveness of U.S. and Canadian companies that have supply chains that span the two countries.

As the economies of both nations continue to rebound from the global recession and trade volumes increase, shippers will experience border delays unless strategies are in place to mitigate impacts. Having accurate and current information on border wait times, traffic volumes, trip origin and destinations, commodities, etc is critical to identifying appropriate infrastructure and operational solutions.

CURRENT SITUATION:

States and provinces have been working with federal agencies to improve the availability of trade and traffic data. With financial support from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) has been conducting passenger and commercial vehicle surveys along its borders with Minnesota, Michigan, and New York. These surveys will provide transportation planners with quality data to assist them in infrastructure and policy planning, project development, implementation, and prioritization along their mutual borders.

Ontario is developing iCorridor, an innovative, web-based, and user friendly GIS information sharing platform that provides a central database solution for transportation data storage and analysis, where analysis and flow maps from the Ontario Border Survey will be available. The iCorridor application can be used as an evaluation tool for analyzing infrastructure investment decisions.

EBTC ACTION:

EBTC provinces and states strongly support border data collection and dissemination efforts undertaken by federal, provincial, state and regional government entities to reduce existing data gaps; to assist transportation and border agencies in identifying and prioritizing border investments; and to support policy development that improves the cross border movement of people and goods.

- EBTC will continue to advocate for increased federal funding for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of trade and traffic data across the Canada/U.S. border to strengthen infrastructure planning and prioritization.

- EBTC will advocate for the sharing of cross border trade and travel data collected by federal, provincial, state, and regional transportation agencies, and border inspection agencies to strengthen infrastructure planning and prioritization.

- EBTC will support and assist the federal working group on border wait time data, as requested.

- EBTC will support provincial, state, and regional border data initiatives developed by individual member agencies.