



**EBTC Members are the Transportation Agencies of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine
Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia**

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

2016 Annual Report

Introduction

This report highlights the activities of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) and its member provinces and states as they worked throughout 2016 to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between Canada and the United States.

Who Are We

The EBTC is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to improving the movement of people and goods between the United States and Canada. EBTC members are the transportation agencies of the states of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine and the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

EBTC's Vision

The Eastern Border Transportation Coalition, through its member activities, will assist in the development of a seamless, multi-modal transportation network that is secure, safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable. EBTC will provide a proactive forum within which state, provincial and metropolitan transportation agencies, border service agencies, and like-minded public and private organizations, can work together to overcome barriers and impediments to our shared vision.

2016 Accomplishments

Policy/Focus Areas

Throughout 2016, EBTC continued to hold regular monthly meetings with its members and maintained a focus on five primary areas of interest:

- monitoring transportation and cross-border issues in relation to the new U.S. administration (e.g. anticipated infrastructure plan, Buy American provisions, potential for a border-adjustment tax, etc.);
- continuing to monitor progress on the implementation of the Canada-U.S. *Beyond the Border Action Plan*;

- exploring cross-border information needs;
- improving and advancing cross-border transportation service, including through expanded preclearance operations to passenger rail and other modes;
- monitoring opportunities for federal funding to support border-related activities.

Each of these focus areas was summarized in a White Paper that was posted to [EBTC's website](#).

Actions in Support of Priority Focus Areas:

Research Support:

- To support its work, EBTC updated issue papers covering priority topics, including: *Beyond the Border Action Plan* implementation, information needs in support of infrastructure planning, improving and expanding cross border rail passenger service through the implementation of pre-clearance, and federal funding for cross border transportation infrastructure.
- These papers are being used in support of EBTC actions to improve the flow of people and goods at the border. Specifically, these documents are helping to educate legislators and other stakeholders in efforts to enact legislation needed to move forward with expanding pre-clearance to all transportation modes (see below).
- EBTC members contributed critical information and statistics to support efforts of the US Congressional Northern Border Caucus in their outreach regarding preclearance and cross-border trade and transportation between the US-Canada that aided in passage of enabling legislation.

Beyond the Border:

- In December 2016, the U.S. Congress passed the *Promoting Travel, Commerce, and National Security Act of 2016*, which provides the U.S. extraterritorial jurisdiction over its preclearance officers, completing the U.S. legislative process needed to implement the *Agreement on Land, Rail, Marine and Air Transport Preclearance*.
- The Canadian House of Commons undertook a first reading of Bill C-23, *An Act respecting the preclearance of persons and goods in Canada and the United States*, on June 17, 2016. Bill C-23 will continue to move through the legislative process in 2017.
- EBTC continued to monitor progress and engage - both through the Coalition and as individual states and provinces - on such issues as preclearance and

providing input into the latest edition of the Canada-U.S. Border Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP).

- Border Wait Time (BWT) initiatives at the top 20 Canada/U.S. crossings (12 of these crossings touch EBTC member states/provinces) remain a priority. EBTC members worked with the targeted ports of entry on applying for U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Border Deployment Initiative grants. The Rainbow Bridge, between Niagara Falls, N.Y., and Niagara Falls (ON) and the Detroit–Windsor Tunnel each received U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Border Wait Time grants in 2016, receiving two of the three grants awarded.

Cross Border Information Needs:

- The EBTC Executive Director represented the organization at the Federal Highway Administration / Transport Canada *Scenario Planning of Future Traffic Flows Across the Borders Workshop* in Ottawa in June.

Cross Border Rail:

- In addition to the background information used to support legislative efforts, EBTC members worked with Amtrak to identify issues which need to be addressed to reach full pre-clearance at Central Station in Montreal.
- Given the importance of the March 2015 Canada-U.S. pre-clearance agreement, EBTC worked to expand its annual workshop to include a dedicated session on rail pre-clearance, covering issues for both passenger and freight rail. The session was held on the second day of the annual EBTC Workshop in Detroit, MI in April. Mark Fisher, the Chief Executive Officer of the Council of the Great Lakes Region, moderated the session that included presentations and perspectives from Public Safety Canada, the Emissary for the Province of Quebec for preclearance issues, the special project consultant for the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation, the Washington State DOT and the Railway Association of Canada.
- Planning has begun for the fall 2017 annual workshop in Montreal, which will include a session on preclearance.
- EBTC actively participated in the Transportation Border Working Group's (TBWG) cross-border passenger rail discussion group, assisting in the development of its ongoing agenda.

Opportunities for Federal Funding for Border Investments and Services

- EBTC continued to monitor funding opportunities. The 2016, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) budget included \$105.6 M for a project to replace the American plaza at Alexandria Bay, New York, which will

- expand the number of travel lanes southbound into the US and expand capacity for primary and secondary inspection functions.
- The Canadian government's 2016 Budget proposed to implement a plan to invest more than \$120B in infrastructure over 10 years. The plan will be implemented in two phases. The first phase will focus on immediate investments in public transit, housing and protecting infrastructure from climate change. The second phase will include, among other things, the delivery of efficient trade corridors that allow Canadian exporters to benefit fully from international trade.
 - The Budget itself contained a number of proposed funding initiatives related to transportation and trade infrastructure, including:
 - An update on collaboration with the State of Michigan and the U.S. federal government to construct the Gordie Howe International Bridge between Windsor and Detroit;
 - \$3.4B over five years to maintain and upgrade federal infrastructure assets such as small craft harbours, federal airports and border infrastructure;
 - \$50M over two years to Canada's national tourism marketing organization, *Destination Canada*, to augment marketing initiatives in important international markets, such as the U.S. and China.

On-going Communications:

- EBTC's Executive Director attended the spring Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance (Can/Am BTA) conference held May 2-3 in Ottawa.
- EBTC undertook the organizational and logistical tasks necessary to develop an agenda for the Coalition workshop in April.
- EBTC's Executive Director attended the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) spring plenary in Alexandria Bay, New York, as well as the fall plenary in Ottawa, Ontario. The Executive Director provided updates on EBTC activities at these sessions.
- EBTC members also attended the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials (NASTO) annual conference in Quebec City.
- EBTC participated in the monthly TBWG steering committee meetings.
- At its annual Board Meeting, held in November 2016, EBTC appointed officers for 2017. Karen Songhurst, Vermont Agency of Transportation, was named the U.S. Co-Chair and Bill Parish, Ministry of Transportation Ontario, was named the Canadian Co-Chair. Maurice Rasheed, New York State Department of Transportation, was reappointed as the Treasurer/Secretary.

EBTC Border-Related Activities/Accomplishments:

EBTC members, through their state and provincial work, continued to be engaged in projects from the Michigan/Ontario ports of entry in the Great Lakes region to the Maine/New Brunswick crossings on the Canadian east coast. Some representative examples include:

Commercial Truck Single-Crossing Use Fee Automation and Prepayment Pilot

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced in June that the Ambassador Bridge (Detroit, MI/Windsor, ON) and the Peace Bridge (Fort Erie, ON/Bufalo, NY) were two of the three sites named for the one-year pilot beginning in June 2016. The other site selected was in El Paso, Texas.

Under current regulations, carriers who opt for the single crossing user fee, instead of the annual fee, must pay in cash at the U.S. port of entry. The need for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officers to manually handle cash has been identified as a major contributor to delay at the border. The pilot will investigate the feasibility of allowing the single crossing user fee to be electronically prepaid prior to arrival at a port of entry.

Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge

In 2009, the Canadian federal government announced a \$44 million multi-year investment through the Borders and Gateway Crossing Fund to redevelop the Canadian Plaza at the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge. Phase One was completed in January 2015 and included the reconstruction of the commercial plaza, duty free shop and bridge administration office. Phase Two, which began in June 2015 and is currently on-schedule and on-budget to be complete by 2018, includes the reconstruction of the main border plaza and Canada Border Services Administration offices.

The American toll plaza construction was completed in 2016, with the renovation and reconstruction of the toll lanes, toll booths, and toll canopy. This follows the construction of a new administration building and the renovation of maintenance facilities on the U.S. plaza.

Right Honourable Herb Gray Parkway

The Ontario government delivered on its commitment to construct the \$1.4 billion Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway (RHHGP), part of a long-term transportation solution to improve the movement of goods and people through the Windsor-Detroit border. The Parkway will eventually connect to the new Gordie Howe International Bridge, linking Windsor to Detroit in the United States.

The Canadian federal government and the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA), working in partnership with the State of Michigan, continue to make progress towards the new Gordie Howe International Bridge.

On November 10, 2016, the WDBA issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) to the three invited Proponents to submit formal proposals to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

As well, Ontario is working with the WDBA to coordinate the construction of the Ojibway Parkway Overpass that will connect the RHHGP to the new customs inspection plaza for the future Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Blue Water Bridge (Point Edward/Sarnia, Ontario to Port Huron, Michigan)

The installation of a Border Wait Time System was completed in 2014. The system includes Bluetooth and loop-based detection, with a physical plant located on Highway 402 on the Canadian side, near the Primary Inspection Lanes (PILs), and on the U.S. side of border. The project has been carried out as a partnership between the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Blue Water Bridge Authority. Work is ongoing to locate Hybrid Border Advisory Signs further upstream on Highway 402 to disseminate commercial and passenger vehicle border-wait times.

Whirlpool Rapids Bridge (Niagara Falls, New York/Niagara Falls, Ontario)

A \$38 million project in Niagara Falls, N.Y., was designed to relocate the Amtrak passenger terminal and other transit functions within a consolidated intermodal facility that will also house border inspection facilities. The project involves the revitalization and adaptive reuse of the 1863 U.S. Customs House, a National Register historic landmark structure, as the central hub for the multi-modal facility and as a regional gateway at the base of Whirlpool International Bridge.

The new 26,000 square foot building serves the current two daily Amtrak *Empire Corridor* trains that originate and terminate in Niagara Falls (NY), in addition to the daily *Maple Leaf* service. The station opened for passengers on December 6, 2016.

Peace Bridge (Fort Erie, Ontario/Buffalo, New York)

The Peace Bridge Authority and New York State Department of Transportation partnered to undertake the Gateway Connections Project, a series of projects to improve the functionality of the bridge's American plaza. The primary goals are to improve access to the American plaza by addressing the limited direct access between I-190 and local roads to/from the plaza, and to alleviate the crowded and potentially hazardous operating conditions within the American plaza.

The proposed projects include the widening of the approach to the American plaza, renovation and expansion of the CBP commercial inspection building, and a new flyover ramp exiting the plaza, providing direct access to I-190. The project will improve access to/from the City of Buffalo local roads while removing traffic from Front Park, which is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

The project also includes major upgrades of the ITS network within the border area, including a queue end warning system, new cameras and additional dynamic message signs. The new ramp from the Peace Bridge Plaza to I-190 opened on November 10, with the remaining construction completed in early 2017.

The bridge will be re-decked over three successive winter seasons. The first phase of the re-decking began in November 2016, with one lane closed between November 14 and May 2017. The re-decking project will be completed by 2019. The total cost for all of the proposed improvements is approximately \$100 million.

Peace Bridge (Fort Erie, Ontario/Buffalo, New York)

A \$22 million project to renovate and expand the CBP commercial inspection building and warehouse was completed in April 2016. The project increased commercial processing capacity and facilitates secondary inspections. As a public-private partnership, the Peace Bridge Authority (PBA) provided advanced funding to CBP for the installation of new radiation portal monitors at the American plaza.

Rainbow Bridge (Niagara Falls, New York/Niagara Falls, Ontario)

The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission was awarded a \$100,000 grant under the FHWA Border Wait Time Deployment Initiative in June. The grant will be used to expand the border wait time system currently in place at the Peace and Lewiston–Queenston bridges to the Rainbow Bridge. This will complete a regional system. The integration of the system will allow the Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTEC) to have uniformly accurate information to populate a digital message sign system and hybrid message signs to inform motorists and supplement the current 511 and online sources.

Thousand Islands Bridge (Alexandria Bay, NY/Lansdowne, Ontario)

The FFY 2016 budget for the General Services Administration included \$105.6 M for a project to address major operational issues on the approach roads to the ports of entry in both directions that cause major delays and safety issues. U.S. bound traffic often queues back to Highway 137 and Highway 401 due to traffic processing constraints at the Alexandria Bay POE and weight limitations on the Rift Bridge at the international border.

The project will replace the American plaza with a new plaza a few hundred feet south of the existing one. The new plaza would expand the number of travel lanes southbound into the US and would have expanded capacity for primary and secondary inspection functions.

The GSA expects to award the project in spring/summer 2017, with construction to start in late 2017.

On the Landsdowne side, project construction was initiated in 2015 for the new \$60 M CBSA facility. Construction of the main facility is on target for completion in late 2017.

Lacolle, Quebec/Champlain, New York Port of Entry (POE)

The Quebec government's Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports (MTMDET) maintained a continuous dialogue with Canadian and U.S. border agencies' regional authorities to maintain fluidity and road safety at the 32 ports of entries between Québec and the U.S.

Such dialogue helped to implement and plan infrastructure projects at or near the border, including Canada Border Services Agency's project to modernize its St-Bernard-de-Lacolle facility at the border with New York State in the Montreal to New York City corridor.

Dialogue between the New York State Department of Transportation, MTMDET, CBSA, U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. General Services Administration regarding additional planned upgrades at Lacolle is ongoing.

International Passenger Rail Service - New York City/Montreal; New York City/Toronto

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) continued to provide operating support to Amtrak for the two cross border passenger rail services in accordance with the *Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008* (PRIIA) Section 209 policy. The *Adirondack* service between New York City and Montreal carried more than 133,000 passengers in FFY 13-14, of which more than 89,000 passengers crossed the Canada – U.S. border. Also, Amtrak's *Maple Leaf* service between New York City and Toronto saw more than 34,000 passengers in cross-border travel between the U.S. and Canada in FFY 13-14.

Vermont/Québec infrastructure projects

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and MTMDET maintained continuous dialogue with GSA, CBP and CBSA to coordinate the various phases (planning, design and construction) of the infrastructure projects at the border between Vermont and Québec. This includes the revamping of the U.S. land port of entry at Derby Line (I-91) to add new commercial and trusted traveler facilities, the access to the Highgate Springs port facility on Interstate 89, including Nexus lanes, and the rehabilitation of the international (and commonly owned) Sutton-East Richford bridge.

VTrans is also undertaking an extension of fiber optic cable up to the Quebec border and will be installing new advance automated directional signs at both north and south bound approaches at the Derby Line/I-91 to Stanstead/A-55 crossing as part of a VTrans overpass project. Both CBSA and CBP will be able to access cameras and message boards to assist in lane assignments and reducing border wait time. A similar effort is expected for the I-89/Highgate Springs crossing as plans for improvements to that crossing move forward.

Preclearance (Montreal Central Station)

In August 2015, the Premier of Quebec appointed Canada's former Ambassador to the U.S., Raymond Chretien, to act as Quebec emissary to facilitate progress on the Central Station preclearance initiative. In 2016, Vermont's Governor announced the appointment of former Secretary of Transportation, Brian Searles, to represent Vermont in a similar capacity, working together with Mr. Chretien on advancing this effort.

Regulatory Updates

EBTC member provincial and state transportation agencies continued to inform stakeholders in the trucking industry and the trade community of regulations changes, policies and programs that could impact their activities at the Canada-United States border. Other relevant information or activities that could inform private sector businesses and support compliance with security and custom requirements and reduce border delays were also distributed to interested parties.

For example, in December 2016, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia announced that they had harmonized their requirements for long combination vehicles (LCVs), allowing carriers to transport goods more easily and efficiently across the four provinces while reducing emissions and lowering shipping costs.