



**EBTC Members are the Transportation Agencies of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine
Ontario, Québec, 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)**

2017 Annual Report

Introduction

This report highlights the activities of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) and its member provinces and states working to improve the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between Canada and the United States, during 2017.

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, Québec, 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 as well as border agency, and like-minded public and private organizations can work together to overcome barriers and impediments to our shared vision.

2017 Accomplishments

Policy/Focus Areas

Throughout 2017, EBTC continued to hold regular monthly meetings with its members and maintained focus on four primary areas of interest:

- monitoring transportation and cross-border issues related to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments (e.g. anticipated U.S. infrastructure plan, ongoing NAFTA negotiations, Buy American provisions, etc.);

- continued to monitor progress on initiatives started under 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 being used 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).

Canada-U.S. Preclearance Agreement:

- 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*.
- With the passage of U.S. preclearance legislation in 2016, EBTC spent 2017 closely following the progress of enabling legislation in Canada. The Canadian federal government introduced Bill C-23, *An Act respecting the preclearance of persons and goods in Canada and the United States*, on June 17, 2016. In support of the Canadian process, EBTC was invited to make a submission to the Parliamentary committee reviewing Bill C-23. EBTC's submission strongly supported the concept of preclearance as an effective means of reducing border crossing times and improving the viability of all transportation modes, while also meeting safety and security goals

for both countries. A copy of EBTC's submission can be found on the [EBTC's website](#). The Bill was approved by Parliament and received Royal Assent in December 2017.

Cross Border Rail:

- In addition to the background information used to support legislative efforts, EBTC members worked with Amtrak to identify issues needed to reach full pre-clearance at Central Station in Montreal.
- Given the importance of the Canada-U.S. pre-clearance agreement, EBTC included a session on preclearance at its annual fall workshop, held in Montreal in September 2017. The session began with remarks from Raymond Chrétien, a former Canadian Ambassador to the United States and currently the Québec Government's Emissary for Canada/U.S. Preclearance at Central Station in Montreal. An engaging panel discussion on implementing preclearance expansion followed, featuring representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Public Safety Canada, Amtrak and the Railway Association of Canada.
- EBTC participated in the Transportation Border Working Group's (TBWG) cross-border passenger rail discussion group, assisting in the development of its ongoing agenda.

EBTC's Annual Fall Workshop

- In September 2017, EBTC hosted a very successful workshop in Montreal. Participants and attendees included academics, diplomats, representatives of key government agencies, and industry stakeholders. The workshop covered a number of topics, including logistics and freight movement; trade corridors, gateways and strategies; and, as mentioned above, preclearance. The workshop ended with a tour of the proposed preclearance facilities for rail passengers at Montreal's Central Station. Planning has begun for the fall 2018 annual workshop in New York State.

Opportunities for Federal Funding for Border Investments and Services

- In its 2016 Fall Economic Statement, the Canadian federal government announced it would invest \$10.1 billion over 11 years in trade and transportation projects. In its 2017 Budget, the government proposed to establish a new National Trade Corridors Fund "to address urgent capacity constraints and freight bottlenecks at major ports of entry, and to better connect the rail and highway infrastructure that delivers economic growth across Canada." More specifically, the Budget proposed to provide \$2 billion over 11 years to support the Fund's activities. It also committed that an additional \$5 billion will be provided through the Canada Infrastructure Bank to address trade and transportation priorities.

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 present and develop the agenda for the Coalition's fall 2017 workshop in Montreal.
- EBTC's Executive Director attended the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) spring plenary in Bellingham, Washington, and provided updates on EBTC activities for TBWG's fall plenary in Calgary, Alberta. EBTC also participated in the monthly TBWG steering committee meetings and planning sessions for the group's biennial meetings.
- EBTC members participated in activities and meetings of the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials (NASTO).
- At its annual Board meeting, held in September 2017, EBTC appointed officers for 2017: Karen Songhurst, Vermont Agency of Transportation, was named the U.S. Co-Chair and Bill Parish, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, 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, continue to follow and be engaged in a wide range of projects stretching 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:

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. To this end, the Ontario government is working with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) to coordinate the construction of the Ojibway Parkway Overpass which will connect the RHHGP to the new customs inspection plaza for the new bridge. Construction of this work is expected to begin in 2018.

Ontario continues to support the Canadian federal government and the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority as they work to implement the Gordie Howe International Bridge in partnership with the United States and Michigan.

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, 2016 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 bridge had one lane closed on October 15, which will remain closed until May 2018 as the second phase of the project got underway. The re-decking project will be completed by 2019. The total cost for all of the proposed improvements is approximately \$160 million.

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 2016. The grant was used to expand border wait time system in place at the Peace Bridge and Lewiston – Queenston Bridge to the Rainbow Bridge to 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. During 2017, the readers and supporting instrumentation were installed on the bridge. The transmitted data is being analyzed as the integration with the regional system is being implemented. The system should be full automated by Spring 2018.

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

The FFY 2016 budget for the General Services Administration (GSA) 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. In 2017, GSA awarded a \$90 million contract for the first phase of construction to include building new commercial primary inspection lanes, a new warehouse and new veterinary services facility. Construction for the first phase is expected to begin in early 2018, although some site work was completed in 2017.

In June 2017, the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) announced the completion of phase one of the new Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) integrated Traffic and Commercial Building, which provides a modern and expanded facility for border operations. This marked the completion of phase one of the project. The project involved, among other things, construction of new traffic and commercial primary-inspection lanes, an integrated traffic and commercial building and ancillary operational spaces, including lease space for brokers and Nexus operations. Phase two of the project, including demolition of the existing traffic building, construction of six remaining traffic primary-inspection lanes is planned to be completed for December 2017.

Baudette-Rainy River International Bridge

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) continued to work in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on the Baudette-Rainy River International Bridge structural replacement. Achievements in 2017 included advancing design work for the project, which involves the design and construction of a new bridge and the removal of the existing bridge, which is at the end of its service life. The new bridge will include widened lanes and shoulders, guide rails, a sidewalk, and an improved load capacity. The project is being cost-shared between Ontario and Minnesota. The Government of Canada also is contributing over \$13M toward the project.

Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge

In May 2017, The Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) unveiled the new Service Building located on the Canadian plaza at the Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge, named in the memory of James L. McIntyre. Mr. McIntyre was a former Chair of the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority. The Canadian Bridge Plaza Redevelopment Project is funded by the Canadian federal government. Currently, three of the four buildings within the complex are completed and operational. Completion of the entire project is expected in 2018.

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.

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

The 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, Quebec; New York City, New York/Toronto, Ontario

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 132,000 passengers in FFY 15-16, of which more than 75,000 passengers crossed the Canada – U.S. border. Amtrak's *Maple Leaf* service between New York City and Toronto saw more than 31,000 passengers in cross-border travel between the U.S. and Canada in FFY 15-16.

Vermont/Québec Border Infrastructure Projects Between Vermont and Québec

In late 2016, the US-GSA/CBP project to replace and expand the existing US port of entry at Derby Line, VT-Stanstead, QC crossing began. This project includes expansion of lanes accessing the port to three, new commercial inspection lanes and facility, new trusted traveler facilities, and new main passenger inspection facilities. With entrance to the POE immediately on the US-Canada border, a major traffic coordination effort involving the State and Provincial DOT/MOTs, with the project contractor, security agencies and highway safety teams on both sides of the border was required.

Planning and design continued in 2017 for a separate Vermont Agency of Transportation project at this same location, which will rebuild the existing deck and an abutment wall for the overpass that crosses both north and southbound lanes of Interstate 91, and US southbound port of entry facilities. Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2018.

Final design and request for bids for the rehabilitation of the international (and commonly owned) Sutton-East Richford Bridge were also completed in 2017. This small, but locally important, crossing serves a variety of non-commercial travelers, including seasonal bicycle tourism and portage inspection for canoers and kayakers traversing the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, which links New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire and Maine. The project is expected to go to construction in spring 2018, with a five-month closure planned for both the

US and Canada ports of entry to facilitate faster and safer rehabilitation of this historic structure.

Regulatory Updates

The EBTC member provincial and state transportation agencies continued to inform stakeholders in the trucking industry and the trade community of the 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.

Preclearance

Vermont's new Governor Scott and Quebec Premier Couillard announced the continuing appointments of former Vermont Secretary of Transportation, Brian Searles, and Raymond Chretien, the emissary of the Gouvernement du Québec for preclearance matters. They will be working together to advance the effort to develop full preclearance passenger rail facilities in Montreal Central Station. This effort, which would allow for the return of passenger rail service from Vermont to Montreal, includes work with New York State DOT, Amtrak, and the U.S. and Canadian security agencies. Additionally, it involves several private parties who own and/or operate rail systems and real estate enterprises that will be affected by the additional service and new preclearance facility. Mr. Chrétien's mandate also includes U.S. preclearance at Québec City Jean-Lesage international airport.

As well, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport continues to work with federal officials on both sides of the border with the aim of establishing U.S. Preclearance at the airport.