



EBTC 2019 Annual Report

EBTC ANNUAL REPORT 2019

INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the activities in 2019 of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) and its member provinces and states, working together to improve the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between the United States and Canada.

WHO WE ARE

The Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) is made up of transportation agencies from the states of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine and the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, dedicated to improving the flow of people and goods across the Canada - U.S. border.

EBTC works with US and Canadian federal, state and provincial governments, as well as a network of stakeholders, to identify and address the cross-border needs of business and citizens. These needs include improved physical border infrastructure, reduced processing times, expansion of border pre-clearance programs, and support for developing new technologies that will improve border crossings into the future.

EBTC ports of entry handled 66% of total US \$617 billion U.S. - Canada trade in 2018. Of this total trade, US \$449 Billion was surface trade, where 81% of total truck traffic and 67% of total rail traffic relied upon EBTC Region Ports of Entry.

EBTC VISION

The Eastern Border shall be a model of safe, efficient and sustainable transportation of goods and people between the United States and Canada.

EBTC MISSION

EBTC provides leadership and informed dialog in improving the movement of goods and people across the Canada - U.S. border.

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Throughout 2019, EBTC continued to hold regular meetings with its members; planned and held a workshop for government, business and academic stakeholders; and continued to work on four primary areas of interest:

- Monitoring transportation and cross-border issues related to the US and Canadian federal governments (e.g. United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) negotiations, tariffs and trade);
- Continuing to monitor progress on initiatives started under the Canada - US Beyond the Border Action Plan and other federal initiatives related to or impacting cross-border transportation;
- Improving and advancing cross-border transportation service: expanded preclearance operations, improved infrastructure; and
- Reviewing and responding to federal funding programs developed to support border-related activities.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS:

- EBTC is finalizing the update to its 2007 **Guide for Planning and Constructing Border Crossing Projects.**
- As part of its mandate to support efficient trade flows, EBTC developed and delivered presentations to key stakeholders demonstrating the importance of the Eastern border area for Canada - U.S. trade and the crucial need for efficient infrastructure and processes at the border ports of entry.
- Drawing on the policies and priorities of its members, EBTC continued to provide a focal point to engage legislators, regulators and stakeholders to advance targeted initiatives that support the improved flow of people and goods across the Canada - US international border.

EBTC'S ANNUAL FALL WORKSHOP FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK:

The October 2019 EBTC Workshop was themed ***Changes in Critical Cross Border Trade and Transportation Logistics*** and included discussion of the following topics:

- Insights from a diplomatic perspective into the border and trade-related policies of the Canadian and US governments;
- Examination of the critical role regional trade corridors and gateways play in handling 80% of the international surface trade between the United States and Canada;
- Updates and insights provided by border infrastructure and enforcement agencies on planned infrastructure projects, new initiatives for cross border transport / travel and the unique challenges associated with coordinating all parties at an international border;
- Presentations on changes in the surface transportation sector taking on broader roles in logistics, warehousing, fulfillment services, supply chains as well as opportunities to expand cargo pre-clearance for increasing cross border shipment efficiencies; and
- A look into the future of border traffic flows.

Planning has begun for the next annual conference on border issues to be held in New York state.

ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS:

- EBTC's Executive Director attended the Council of the Great Lakes conference held in May in Cleveland, Ohio.
- EBTC undertook the organizational and logistical tasks necessary to present and develop the agenda for the Coalition's fall 2019 workshop in Fredericton, New Brunswick.
- EBTC's Executive Director attended and presented at the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) spring plenary in Burlington, Vermont and provided updates on EBTC activities for TBWG's fall plenary in Niagara Falls, Ontario. EBTC also participates in the monthly TBWG steering committee meetings and planning sessions for the bi-annual plenary meetings.
- EBTC's Executive Director and various Board members represented EBTC for the monthly U.S. and Canada border infrastructure teleconferences hosted by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

At its annual Board meeting, held in October 2019, EBTC re-appointed officers for 2020: Sara Moore, Michigan Department of Transportation, US Co-Chair and Jim Doyle, New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, 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 and policy initiatives stretching from the Michigan/Ontario ports of entry in the Great Lakes region to the Maine/New Brunswick/Nova Scotia crossings on the east coast. Some representative examples include:

GORDIE HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

The Gordie Howe International Bridge will be a six-lane, 2.5-kilometre-long cable stayed bridge located three kilometres west of the existing Ambassador Bridge over the Detroit River, connecting Windsor and Detroit. Once completed it will provide a direct connection between Ontario's Highway 401 and Michigan's Interstate 75.

The bridge will be delivered via a Public-Private Partnership (P3), with the Government of Canada financing the project and to be reimbursed through toll revenue.

The \$5.7 billion project includes the Canadian and U.S. Ports of Entry, the bridge, and Michigan Interchange. The private-sector partner, Bridging North America, is responsible for construction of all four project components – the bridge, the Canadian and U.S. ports of entry and the Michigan interchange.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is working with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority to coordinate the construction of the Ojibway Parkway Bridge, which will connect the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway to the new border customs inspection plaza for the future

LEWISTON-QUEENSTON BRIDGE (NIAGARA FALLS BRIDGE COMMISSION)

In November 2018, a \$91 million plan was announced that will add six lanes for vehicles entering the U.S. across the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge. This will bring the number of lanes to 16 and will allow officials to dedicate lanes to specific kinds of traffic, e.g. trucks or cars, depending on volumes. The project also includes a new, larger customs building and new inspection booths. The project will be done in stages to minimize disruption. The project will also provide a new secondary inspection area and a new dedicated bus processing facility. A new duty-free store was already completed in 2016 as part of the project. The Lewiston-Queenston Land Port of Entry (LPOE) located in Lewiston, New York, is the fourth-busiest commercial land crossing between the United States and Canada.

PEACE BRIDGE (FORT ERIE, ONTARIO/BUFFALO, NEW YORK)

In 2016, the Peace Bridge Authority (PBA) initiated a three-year, self-financed, \$100 Million bridge deck replacement construction project. To ensure fluid bridge traffic movement over the three-year construction period, deck replacement activities were limited to the off-peak travel season only, i.e. mid October to early May, with only a single lane closure in place over the three fall/winter construction seasons. This enabled all three lanes to remain open during the summers of 2017 and 2018 while other elements of the rehabilitation project continued. The rehabilitation project was completed in June 2019.

RAINBOW BRIDGE (NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK/NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO)

In 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission a \$100,000 grant under the FHWA Border Wait Time Deployment Initiative to expand the wait time system to the Rainbow Bridge and complete the regional border wait time system. This technology is now in place at the Peace Bridge, the Lewiston / Queenston Bridge and the Rainbow Bridge.

THOUSAND ISLANDS BRIDGE (ALEXANDRIA BAY, NEW YORK / LANSDOWNE, ONTARIO)

In 2016, the U.S. Congress approved a project to address significant traffic queuing on the approach roads to the American plaza that cause major traffic delays and safety issues. The project includes construction of a new plaza to expand the number of southbound travel lanes into the United States for primary and secondary inspection functions, add more space for queuing, improve truck queuing and maneuvering areas to address current safety issues and increase operational efficiency. The existing roadways will be shifted, lengthened, or altered to accommodate the new port operations. All 14 new primary lanes will be equipped to process passenger traffic, with eight of those equipped for both commercial and passenger vehicles.

To accommodate a constrained project location, where construction must coordinate with the need to maintain full passenger and commercial processing operations as the facility is upgraded, the project will be completed in two phases. The 2016 US federal budget provided \$91 million in funding for the first phase and the 2018 federal budget funded phase two for another \$133 million.

Construction for the first phase got underway in early 2018 and is expected to be completed in March 2020. Phase one will consist of construction of new commercial primary inspection lanes, with hi/lo booths to accommodate non-commercial traffic, a new commercial inspection warehouse, expanded from 3,000 to 60,000 square feet, as well as inspection bays, a new veterinary services building and a new impound lot.

Phase 2 will include construction of new passenger primary inspection lanes, a new covered secondary inspection plaza, a new bus lane, a new main administration building, an outbound inspection building, non-intrusive inspection facilities and employee and visitor parking areas. Phase 2 is expected to be substantially complete in August 2022.

BAUDETTE-RAINY RIVER INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is currently working in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on the construction of the new Baudette-Rainy River International Bridge. Construction activities began in June 2018 and work is proceeding.

The International Bridge is located at the Canada – US border on Highway 11 in Rainy River, Ontario and on the Minnesota Trunk Highway 72 in Baudette, Minnesota. The project 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 is also contributing more than \$13 million towards this project.

It is anticipated the new structure will be open to traffic in 2020. Demolition of the existing bridge will commence after the new structure is open to traffic.

LACOLLE, QUEBEC/CHAMPLAIN, NEW YORK PORT OF ENTRY (POE)

The Quebec Ministère des Transports (MTQ) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) continued dialogue with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on the project to modernize the St-Bernard-de-Lacolle border inspection facility located on the Montreal / New York City trade corridor in 2019. This continued dialog contributed to on-going discussions around planned upgrades at this border crossing between a number of highway and border agencies: NYSDOT, MTQ, CBSA, US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the US General Services Administration (GSA) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

MTQ and NYSDOT worked with the CBSA during the summer and were able to reach an agreement on a design option that addressed the traffic operation needs on the approach facilities and within the POE. The agencies will continue to work together in 2020 to address right-of-way, environmental and permitting issues.

CHAMPLAIN COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INSPECTION FACILITY

The Champlain Commercial Vehicle Inspection Facility (CVIF) is an undertaking by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to provide a facility to screen commercial vehicles departing the Champlain POE prior to their entry onto the I-87 southbound. To enhance inspection capability, the New York State Police (NYSP) will be co-located at the facility.

This new facility will offer NYSDOT and the NYSP enhanced capability to pre-screen all trucks leaving the Champlain POE for valid credentials, weight compliance and to conduct risk based commercial vehicle inspections as required. This will not only increase overall safety and mobility on the major I-87, north/south New York City - Montreal trade corridor, it will also preserve the highway infrastructure on I-87, and throughout New York state.

The facility is located on a fully fenced, five-acre site, with a 5,600 square foot operations building for both NYSDOT and NYSP personnel, an attached, fully enclosed 2-bay truck inspection building, an in-ground static scale, lights, fencing, storage shed, signs and an electronic screening system. Commercial vehicle inspection capacity will include 27 truck inspection / out-of-service parking spaces and another 29 standard parking spaces for employees, customers and visitors.

Deployment of ITS technologies, including e-screening, transponder readers, license plate readers, overview cameras, and weigh-in-motion scales, will allow low risk vehicles, with proven safety records to bypass the facility, facilitating cross-border trade. NYSDOT and the NYSP can then focus on randomized inspections of higher risk vehicles as required.

Project construction began in spring 2018, with early February as the target date to finish major construction activities. Operational startup is anticipated by May 2020.

HIGHGATE SPRINGS, VERMONT / ST. ARMAND, QUEBEC

The US General Services Administration (GSA) feasibility study for potential replacement of the Port of Entry facility in the US is completed and they are awaiting final approval for preliminary design concepts before anticipated submission for funding support in 2020.

Additionally, the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation is at the final stage of work for the Phase III study of anticipated Auto-Route 35 traffic impact to this key US-Canada trade corridor crossing. The work product is being undertaken with direct coordination and collaboration with State, Provincial and Federal agencies and stakeholders to craft a multi-year project chart identifying overlaps or conflicts with several planned port of entry and highway projects that will likely impact traffic at, or approaching this crossing.

An outcome of the study in 2020 is expected to be the formation of a multi-jurisdictional working group that will vet project schedules and plans to ensure continuous safe and efficient flow of travel across the US-Canada border through this major commercial gateway as the infrastructure projects unfold over the next 2-5 years.

DERBY LINE, VERMONT / STANSTEAD, QUEBEC

After a multi-year construction, the US GSA/CBP port of entry at Derby Line, Vermont / Stanstead, Quebec crossing was completed in 2019. The US federal project replaced and significantly expanded the existing US land port of entry including: an expansion of southbound port access to three lanes from the Canadian border, to match previous highway expansion work done by the Ministry of Transport Quebec on Auto-route 55, and installation of a new canopy covering all south bound lanes, commercial inspection lanes and facility, new main passenger and motor coach inspection facilities, and new trusted traveler application facilities.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation completed its final components for the full reconstruction of the US Route 5/Caswell Street overpass at this same location – immediately over the entire Port of Entry entrance areas and the northbound approach to the Canadian port of entry at Stanstead. The installation included new ITS technology and fiber optics to support both north and south bound traffic flow with overhead, advance warning signs to direct travelers entering their screening facilities that can be operated by both US and Canadian security agencies.

With entrance to both Ports of Entry immediately on the US-Canada border, a major traffic coordination effort between the State and Provincial transportation agencies, the project contractor, the security agencies and highway safety teams on both sides of the border was required for the 2 ½ year duration of construction. A formal dedication ceremony was held at the port in May 2019, with attendance by both US and Canadian federal officials, State and Provincial government representatives, local dignitaries and key members of the construction project teams.

SUTTON-EAST RICHFORD BRIDGE

Construction for the rehabilitation of the international and commonly owned Sutton-East Richford Bridge was completed enough to allow traffic over the bridge in early summer 2019, after overcoming delays due to challenges in securing steel components. Construction was possible throughout the winter months thanks to a unique tenting structure developed by the contractors. This small, but locally important and historic structure, serves a variety of non-commercial travelers, including seasonal skiers, bicycle tourism and portage inspection for canoers and kayakers traversing the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, which links via connected waterways through New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire and into Maine. A formal dedication ceremony, with senior officials from State of Vermont, the Province of Quebec and US-CBP and CBSA, took place on the bridge in October 2019.

MADAWASKA, MAINE / EDMUNDSTON, NEW BRUNSWICK – INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

Planning for the construction of a new international bridge linking Madawaska, Maine and Edmundston, New Brunswick as well as a new border inspection facility in Madawaska, Maine is underway. Public information meetings were held in June 2017 and January 2018. In June 2018, a bridge Feasibility Study was released by Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NBDTI). The General Services Agency (GSA) awarded the pre-design for the Madawaska, Maine Port of Entry and the subsequent Design / Build award is planned for Spring 2020. The target completion date for both the bridge and Port of Entry facility is 2024.

CANADA-US PRECLEARANCE AGREEMENT

The Agreement on Land, Rail, Marine and Air Transport Preclearance (LRMA), signed in March 2015 by the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security and the Minister of Public Safety, came into force in August 2019 with the exchange of Diplomatic notes. This fully reciprocal agreement allows for expansion to new modes of transportation, enables Canada to establish preclearance in the U.S., and permits the establishment of new U.S. locations in Canada, permits the facility operator to cover operational costs for new sites or for expanded service at existing sites, permits co-location at small and remote ports to create efficiency gains, and provides comparable authorities to both Inspecting and Host Country officers.

Establishing new preclearance sites in Canada or the U.S. will require input from industry stakeholders and facility operators, must meet technical design standards, and must have the resources to conduct preclearance subject to security considerations

INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE:

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 66,792 passengers across the Canada – US border in fiscal year 2019. Amtrak's *Maple Leaf* service between New York City and Toronto saw more than 30,347 passengers in cross-border travel between the US and Canada in fiscal year 2019.

The States of Vermont and New York, the Province of Quebec and Amtrak continued their efforts to develop a secure preclearance facility inside Montreal Central Station that will support passengers using New York's *Adirondack* service and Vermont's planned extension of their *Vermonteer* service over the border. This collaboration includes cooperative efforts with both US and Canadian security agencies and federal departments of transportation.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA)

On September 30, 2018 the United States, Mexico and Canada completed negotiations toward a new United States – Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA) and signed the agreement on November 30, 2018. The agreement is in place in Mexico and was signed by the U.S. in January 29, 2020. Canada is starting the ratification process. Once signed and ratified by all parties, it is expected that the USMCA will replace NAFTA.

CONCLUSION

The coming year presents new challenges to the mission of the EBTC. Planning for the 2020 workshop has started, work has begun on the new consultation and approval guide for international construction projects and EBTC will continue to produce a newsletter that provides the latest border-related news of interest to its network of stakeholders.