

EBTC 2020 Annual Report

Sources: EBTC Annual Report Cover Pictures	
Canada Just Extended The US Border Closure Into 2021 (msn.com)	Madawaska-Edmundston International Bridge Project - MaineDOT
www.tibridge.com/wp/	champlain lacolle border crossing - Bing images
EBTC Picture	richford sutton bridge - Bing images

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) members are the transportation agencies from the states of Michigan, New York, Vermont, Maine and the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia. They are responsible for highway and bridge infrastructure, including access to the U.S. - Canada border.

EBTC members recognized the need to support the smooth flow of people and goods across the border and create an efficient system to handle passengers and freight.

Significant progress has been made by U.S. and Canadian federal, state, provincial, local governments, and interest groups to update border infrastructure, improve safety and respond to the needs of business and citizens.

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

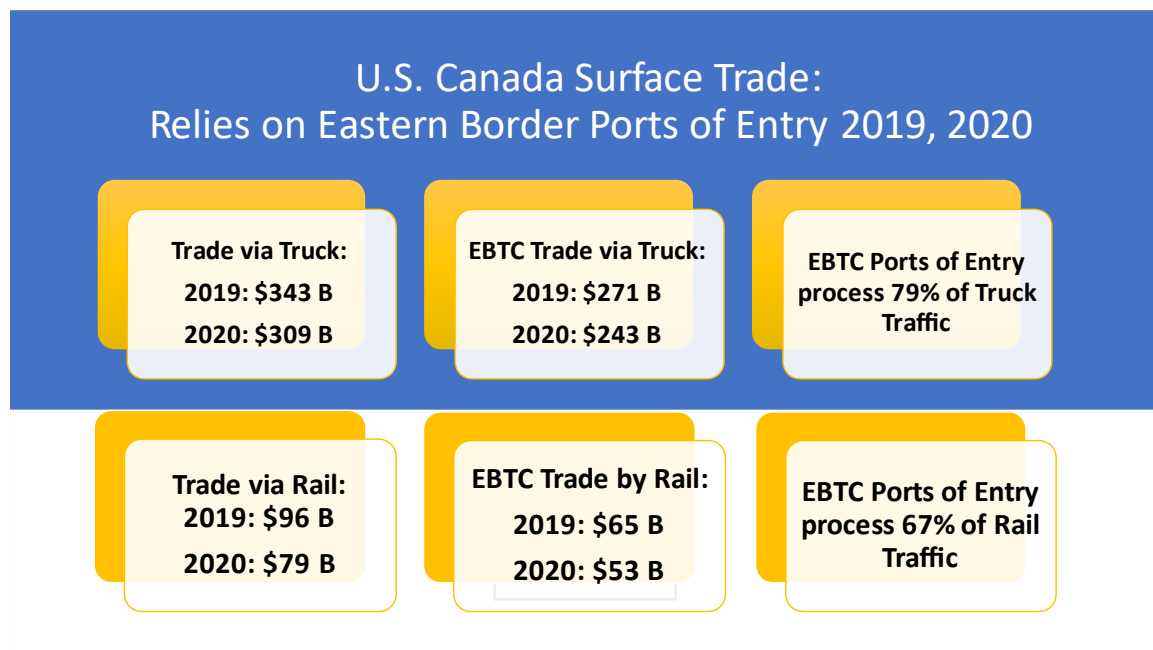
EBTC provides leadership and informed dialog to improve the safe and efficient movement of goods and people across the Canada - U.S. border.

U.S. – CANADA TRADE (U.S. DOLLARS)

Data Source: U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics: [Workbook: Dashboard State by Port \(dot.gov\)](https://www.bts.gov/workbook/dashboard/state-by-port)

Total U.S. – Canada trade dropped by \$86 Billion from \$612 Billion in 2019 to \$526 Billion in 2020, but the share of this trade handled at EBTC ports of entry increased from 59% in 2019 to 60.5% in 2020.

Of this total trade, \$439 Billion was surface trade in 2019 that dropped to \$388 Billion in 2020, where 79% of total truck traffic and 67% of total rail traffic continued to rely upon EBTC Region Ports of Entry. This reliance of trade on infrastructure located in the EBTC Region highlights the importance of an efficient highway / border transportation system.



Total U.S. – Canada Surface Trade at EBTC Ports of Entry

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Truck	243,354	270,501	275,055	267,387	265,604	268,241
Rail	53,139	65,424	66,724	65,592	62,958	61,504
TOTAL	296,493	335,925	341,779	332,979	328,562	329,745

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Throughout the 2020 COVID19 pandemic, EBTC held virtual monthly Board meetings with its members, as well as weekly planning and information sharing sessions.

- EBTC provided a weekly update of measures taken by member jurisdictions to control virus spread on the EBTC website. This initially included a summary of travel restrictions within some member jurisdictions, as well as reporting on various risk levels for rates of virus spread.
- Monitoring of transportation and cross-border issues related to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments: e.g., the coming into force of the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement, (known as USMCA in the United States and CUSMA in Canada).
- Continued to monitor federal initiatives under the Canada – U.S. Beyond the Border Action Plan as well as the U.S. – Canada border closure to non-essential traffic.
- Continued to advance infrastructure projects and cross-border transportation services.

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS:

EBTC was unable to proceed with an annual in person meeting in 2020. These annual sessions for key stakeholders demonstrate the importance of the Eastern border for Canada - U.S. trade and the crucial need for efficient infrastructure and processes at the border ports of entry. EBTC is analyzing the impact of the border closure to non-essential passenger traffic.

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 – U.S. international border.

EBTC completed a **Consultation and Approval Guide for Planning and Constructing Border Crossing Projects** to provide guidance for cross border infrastructure project planning.

ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS:

All conferences were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

- EBTC participated in webinars, including a session to examine the effects of the closure of the Canada – U.S. border. Planning is underway for an EBTC sponsored webinar in Spring 2021.

EBTC was unable to hold its annual Board meeting as part of the annual conference but held regular monthly meetings as well as weekly updates as required throughout 2020.

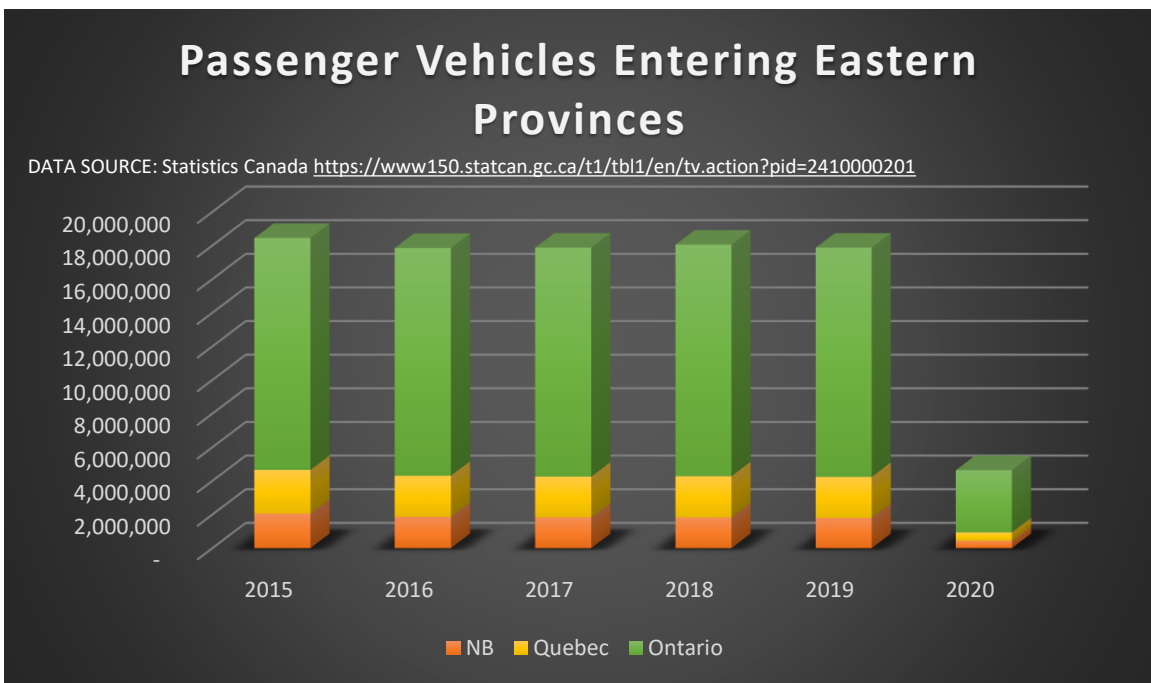
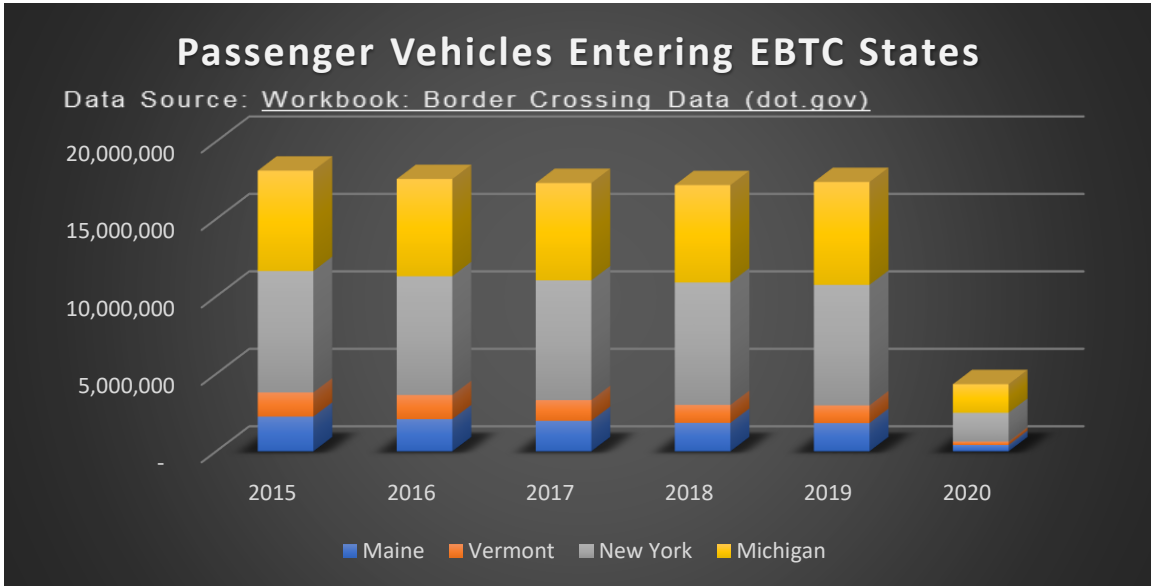
EBTC re-appointed officers for 2021: Sara Moore, Michigan Department of Transportation, U.S. Co-Chair and Jim Doyle, New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Canadian Co-Chair. Maurice Rasheed, New York State Department of Transportation, is the Treasurer/Secretary.

COVID-19 CLOSURE OF THE CANADA – U.S. BORDER

On March 18, 2020, Canada and the United States agreed to restrict non-essential travel across their shared border to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID19. Commercial vehicles continued to transport key supplies between the two nations with volumes close to pre-pandemic levels, but passenger traffic faced an historic drop with repercussions on the Region's International Bridge and Tunnel Authorities (IBTA) that rely on passenger toll revenues to fund operational services as well as businesses in both the U.S. and Canada that rely on cross border tourism.

- EBTC produced a weekly update of measures taken by member jurisdictions to control virus spread. With the U.S. – Canada border closed, measures included lock downs within the Region, mandatory 14-day quarantine requirements for travelers, travel restrictions within and between states and provinces, mandatory masks, curfews, testing requirements and various other measures targeted to respond to the severity of outbreaks.
- Border closure will likely remain in place until the spread of COVID 19 is brought under control.
- Toll revenues of international bridges and tunnel operators in Ontario, Michigan and New York dropped with the border closure to non-essential passenger traffic. Cross-border traffic was down 60% overall for all bridges and tunnels, ranging from a 33% decrease at the Seaway International Bridge to an 83% drop at the Rainbow Bridge.

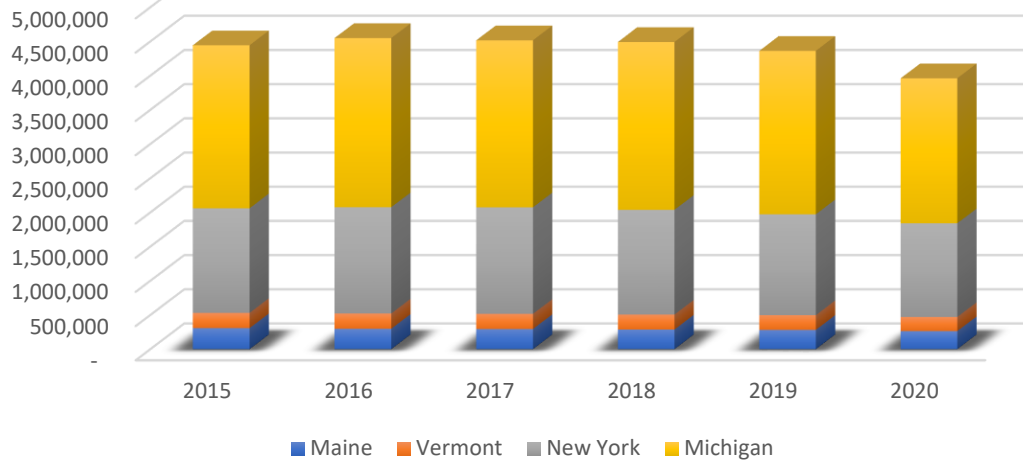
EFFECT OF THE BORDER CLOSURE ON PASSENGER VEHICLE TRAFFIC



EFFECT OF THE BORDER CLOSURE ON TRUCK TRAFFIC

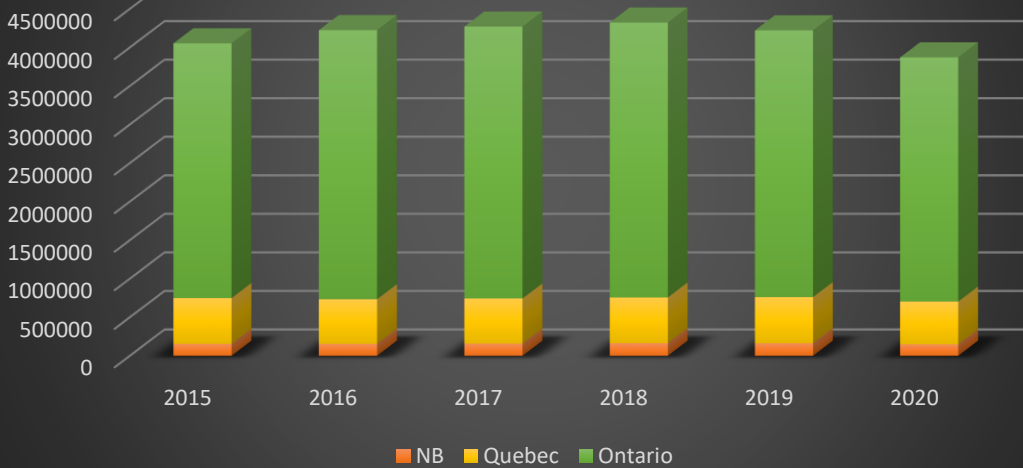
Trucks Entering Eastern Border States

SOURCE: [Workbook: Border Crossing Data \(dot.gov\)](#)



Trucks Entering Eastern Provinces

DATA SOURCE: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2410000201>



EBTC BORDER-RELATED ACTIVITIES / ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

EBTC members, through their state and provincial work, continue to support 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 border crossings on the east coast.

Projects have proceeded even with the COVID-19 pandemic as work crews stagger hours, social distance, and wear masks. Some representative examples include:

GORDIE HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

Gordie Howe International Bridge is a \$5.7 billion Public-Private partnership project that includes construction of a new international bridge, new Canadian and U.S. Ports of Entry, and the Michigan Interchange.

In 2020, the private sector partner, Bridging North America, completed property acquisition, selected pedestrian bridge designs, and began work on the bridge tower foundations in the U.S. and Canada.

BAUDETTE-RAINY RIVER INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) worked in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on the new Baudette-Rainy River International Bridge project. The new structure was opened to traffic in 2020. A virtual celebration of the completion of the new International Bridge Project was held on October 28, 2020. Demolition of the existing bridge will be completed in summer 2021.

The International Bridge is located at the Canada – U.S. border on Highway 11 in Rainy River, Ontario and on the Minnesota Trunk Highway 72 in Baudette, Minnesota. The project includes 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 includes widened lanes and shoulders, guide rails, a sidewalk, and an improved load capacity. The project was cost-shared between Ontario and Minnesota. The Government of Canada also contributed over \$13 million towards this project.

LEWISTON-QUEENSTON BRIDGE (NIAGARA FALLS BRIDGE COMMISSION)

The Lewiston-Queenston International Bridge is now in Phase II of the Lewiston Plaza Modernization Project. Phase I included construction of a new U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspection facility, with a secondary inspection canopy, and dedicated bus lane. Under the \$91 Million Phase II project, the previous inspection facility will be demolished to make way for the construction of 15 new primary inspection lanes, including nine dedicated auto lanes, five high-low lanes that can process both trucks and autos based on demand, and one lane dedicated solely to the processing of commercial trucks.

A new dedicated bus passenger facility, with a dedicated bus processing lane and an expanded secondary area with canopy, will speed up bus passenger processing. To mitigate traffic impacts and maintain the ten current lanes of traffic throughout construction, Phase II is being staged with an expected spring 2023 completion date.

ADVANCED TRANSPORTATION AND CONGESTION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES DEPLOYMENT (ATCMTD) USDOT PROGRAM

Under the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ATCMTD) program, USDOT awarded \$7.8 million to develop and deploy a multiagency, integrated regional mobility management system to mitigate congestion along the I-190 Corridor and the larger Niagara Frontier border crossing corridor. Under the grant, the Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) portion of the project will provide better integration of operational procedures, enhanced emergency responses, and improved dissemination of traveler information to the system operators: New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTC), the Niagara Falls Transportation Authority (NFTA) and their partners.

Relative to border crossings, the ATCMTD system will allow the operators of the four Niagara crossings to provide better information en route to both freight and passenger vehicles via Digital Message Signs (DMS) to evenly distribute traffic among the four facilities. This will help to improve travel times and maintain operational efficiency of the cross-border system. A wide range of information related to weather events, incidents, construction, travel bans, and restrictions will also be available in advance to allow all users to choose the best route.

The ability to measure travel time reliability and delay and travel time separately for truck traffic and passenger vehicles will also be part of the new system.

System planning and implementation is underway with a target December 2023 completion date.

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

To address major traffic delays and safety issues caused by traffic queuing on the approach roads to the American plaza, \$91 million was allocated in the 2016 U.S. federal budget for Phase 1 of this project. Phase 1 included construction of: 1. a new, expanded 60,000 square foot commercial vehicle inspection warehouse complete with inspection bays, served by new primary commercial vehicle inspection lanes, 2. a new building for Veterinary services and 3. a new impound lot. Phase 1 was completed in March 2020.

The 2018 U.S. federal budget provided \$133 million for Phase 2 of the project that includes construction of: 1. new passenger primary inspection lanes, 2. a new covered secondary inspection plaza, 3. a new bus lane, 4. a new main administration building, 5. an outbound inspection building, 6. non-intrusive inspection facilities and 7. employee and visitor parking areas. Phase 2 is expected to be substantially complete in August 2022.

Existing roadways will be shifted, lengthened, or altered to accommodate the new port operations. All 14 new primary lanes will be able to process passenger traffic, with eight lanes equipped with high-low options to process either commercial or passenger vehicles based on demand.

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 St-Bernard-de-Lacolle border inspection facility located in the Montreal / New York City trade corridor. This contributed to discussions around planned upgrades at this border crossing among key 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. CBSA continued to develop the design during 2020, but COVID has slowed the pace, so discussions will continue in 2021. The agencies will continue to work together in 2021 to discuss right-of-way, environmental and permitting issues.

CHAMPLAIN COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INSPECTION FACILITY

NYS DOT and the New York State Police (NYSP) are now co-located in a new Champlain Commercial Vehicle Inspection Facility (CVIF) designed to pre-screen all trucks leaving the Champlain POE, prior to entering the I-87 southbound highway network. Screening for valid credentials, weight compliance as well as conducting vehicle inspections as required will increase overall safety and mobility on the I-87, north/south New York City - Montreal trade corridor, and preserve the New York state highway infrastructure. The 24-7 presence of the NYSP further secures this area.

The operations building includes an attached truck inspection building equipped with 2 bays, and in-ground scales. The five-acre CVIF site is fully lit and fenced, with an electronic screening system. Commercial vehicle capacity includes 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. NYS DOT and the NYSP can then focus on randomized inspections of higher risk vehicles as required.

Project construction began in spring 2018, with construction completed in early 2020. NYS DOT and NYSP staff began moving into the facility in March 2020 and the facility was fully operational by late spring of 2020.

HIGHGATE SPRINGS, VERMONT / ST. ARMAND, QUEBEC

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) feasibility study for the replacement of the existing Port of Entry facility was completed in September 2019. All pre-survey site work was completed in February 2021. Funding has not yet been secured, but close coordination continues among Federal, State, and Provincial stakeholders.

The State of Vermont Agency of Transportation conducted a study of Auto-Route 35 traffic impacts on this key U.S. - Canada trade corridor crossing. Collaboration between State, Provincial and Federal agencies and stakeholders is ongoing through a multi-jurisdictional working group that is developing plans and identifying infrastructure needs to ensure continuous safe and efficient flow of cross border traffic.

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

Planning and design 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. In June 2018, a bridge Feasibility Study was released by Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NBDTI). Public information meetings were held in June 2017, January 2018, and March 2020. Tenders will be called in late winter 2021 for bids from 3 pre-qualified bidders: 1 Canadian company and 2 U.S. companies.

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 early 2021. The target completion date for both the bridge and Port of Entry facility is 2024.

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. Adirondack and Maple Leaf cross-border services were suspended with the closure of the border on March 18, 2020 and remain suspended due to the novel coronavirus COVID19. Prior to the COVID suspension, Maple Leaf cross-border service was further impacted by service suspensions to accommodate a deck replacement project on the Whirlpool Rapids bridge as well as protest blockades in Canada.

The Adirondack service between New York City and Montreal carried 25,042 passengers across the Canada – U.S. border in fiscal year 2020. Amtrak’s Maple Leaf service between New York City and Toronto saw 7,886 passengers in cross-border travel between the US and Canada in fiscal year 2020.

In late 2020, the States of Vermont and New York, the Province of Quebec and Amtrak resumed 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 U.S. and Canadian security agencies and federal departments of transportation. The project was largely on hold during 2020. Studies to evaluate connectivity and security issues along the corridor between Central Station and the border, as well as a detailed design study of the needed modifications is expected to move forward in 2021.

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.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA) CANADA-UNITED STATES-MEXICO AGREEMENT (CUSMA)

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. on January 29, 2020. In Canada, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) came into effect on July 1, 2020.

CONCLUSION

The coming year presents new challenges to the mission of the EBTC as the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control. Planning for a 2021 workshop will depend upon the progress toward pre-pandemic business levels as the vaccination program proceeds. The new consultation and approval guide for international construction projects is now substantially complete, updating the 2007 previous version. EBTC will continue to inform on the latest border-related news of interest to its network of stakeholders.