

EASTERN  
BORDER  
TRANSPORTATION  
COALITION

2021  
Annual Report

Sources: EBTC Annual Report Cover Pictures	
Completed Bridge Work - East view - Provided by Steven Deschaine <a href="#">Madawaska-Edmundston International Bridge Project - MaineDOT</a> <a href="#">Ogdensburg Bridge &amp; Port Authority (ogdensport.com)</a>	<a href="#">gsa land ports of entry - Bing images</a>
	<a href="#">Home - The Federal Bridge Corporation Limited</a>
A view of the passenger inspection lanes. (Photo courtesy of Revette Studio) <a href="#">Copy of December 2021 Alexandria Bay LPOE Stakeholder Update (gsa.gov)</a>	<a href="#">Madawaska LPOE - EXTERNAL Fact Sheet, 2021119 (gsa.gov)</a>

## 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

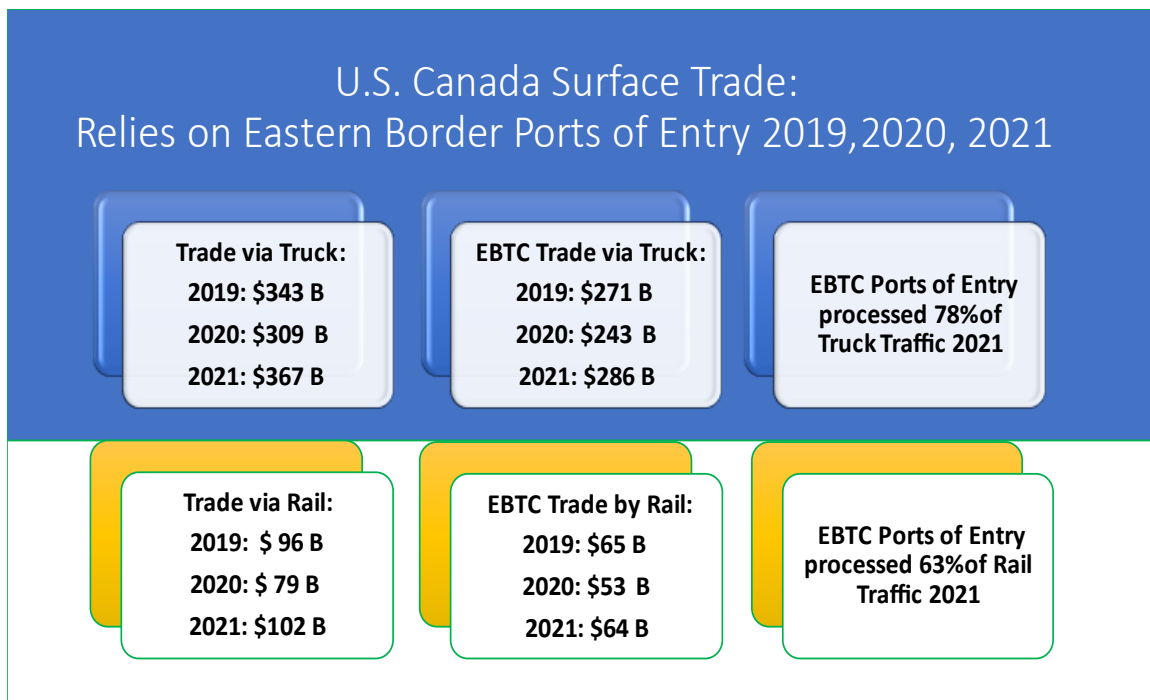
EBTC provides leadership and informed dialog to improve the safe and efficient movement of goods and people across the Canada - U.S. border.

## U.S. – CANADA TRADE (U.S. DOLLARS)

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

Total U.S. – Canada trade increased by \$138 Billion from \$526 Billion in 2020 to \$664 Billion in 2021. Sixty percent of this trade was handled at EBTC ports of entry.

In 2020, \$388 Billion of total trade, was surface, i.e., transported by truck and rail, and this increased to \$469 Billion in 2021. Overall, 78% of total truck traffic and 63% of total rail traffic was reliant upon EBTC Region Ports of Entry in 2021. 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

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Truck</b>	268,241	265,604	267,387	275,055	270,501	243,354	285,520
<b>Rail</b>	61,504	62,958	65,592	66,724	65,424	53,139	64,114
<b>TOTAL</b>	349,634	296,493	335,925	341,779	332,979	328,562	329,745

## 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Throughout the second year of the COVID19 pandemic, EBTC held virtual monthly Board meetings with its members in 2021 to discuss emerging issues around the Canada – U.S. border closure, the effect of the pandemic on cross border trade and travel, and progress on border infrastructure projects and planning.

EBTC Board Members:

- Provided updates on measures take to control COVID-19 virus spread with links to all jurisdictions on the EBTC website.
- Highlighted the key role EBTC states and provinces play in support of 60% of Canada – U.S. trade.
- Monitored transportation and cross-border issues related to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments: e.g., issues around the 2020 coming into force of the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement, (known as USMCA in the United States and CUSMA in Canada).
- Monitored 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:

While EBTC opted not to hold an annual in person meeting in 2021, members focused on value-added analysis.

EBTC produced a comprehensive, multi-year trade volume report by jurisdiction with imports and exports, commodities traded, trade volumes by port of entry and mode of transport. The report highlighted cross border vehicle traffic volumes demonstrating the critical trading relationship between Canada and the U.S. These studies are available on the EBTC website: [Eastern Border Transportation Coalition \(ebtc.info\)](http://ebtc.info)

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 updated and posted the ***Consultation and Approval Guide for Planning and Constructing Border Crossing Projects*** on its website to provide guidance for cross border infrastructure project planning.

## ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS:

All conferences were cancelled for the second year in 2021 due to the pandemic. However, members held regular monthly meetings as well as weekly updates as needed throughout 2021.

EBTC re-appointed officers for 2022: 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 across the border with volumes close to pre-pandemic levels. However, passenger vehicle traffic faced an historic drop with repercussions on the Region's International Bridge and Tunnel Authorities (IBTA) passenger toll revenues as well as businesses in both the U.S. and Canada that rely on cross border tourism.

Canada reopened its border on August 9, 2021 to fully vaccinated travelers. New entry requirements prior to arrival at the border are (1.) Electronic submission via the ArriveCan App of proof of vaccination and (2.) A negative PCR Covid 19 test taken within 72 hours before arrival. The PCR test condition was relaxed to a rapid test for visits less than 72 hours but then reinstated with the surge of Covid 19 Omicron variant cases.

The U.S. reopened both northern and southern borders on November 9, 2021, to fully vaccinated travelers. There is no requirement for a proof of a negative Covid 19 test result.

The Bridge and Tunnel Operators Association (BTOA) reported a 5.7% decrease in 2021 for all vehicles (trucks, cars, buses) crossing the border. In 2021, overall car crossings decreased by 15.2% from 2020, but compared to 2019 pre-pandemic traffic, the decrease is 73.4%<sup>1</sup>.

- Truck crossings increased by 7.6% in 2021 from 2020 but decreased by 2.4% from 2019 pre-pandemic levels.
- Overall, 2021 compared to 2019 had a 59.5% decrease in car, truck, and bus crossings, or 20,062,835 fewer vehicles.

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<sup>1</sup> [Media Release - BTOA jan 2022 for dist.pdf \(bridgeandtunneloperators.org\)](#)

## 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:

### LEWISTON-QUEENSTON BRIDGE (NIAGARA FALLS BRIDGE COMMISSION)

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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.

Phase II allocates \$91 Million to demolish the previous inspection facility and 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.

### GORDIE HOWE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

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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 2021, the private sector partner, Bridging North America, began site preparation and construction of the new US and Canadian Ports of Entry, and continued work on the bridge towers in the U.S. and Canada and on the Michigan I-75 Interchange.

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

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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 (NITTEC), 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.

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

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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 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 on right-of-way, environmental and permitting issues continued in 2021.

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

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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.

## HIGHGATE SPRINGS, VERMONT / ST. ARMAND, QUEBEC

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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 been secured by GSA under the Infrastructure Fund.

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 AND U.S. LAND PORT OF ENTRY CONSTRUCTION

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In April 2021, an \$86.5 million (US) tender to construct a new international bridge linking Madawaska, Maine and Edmundston, New Brunswick was awarded. The opening of the new bridge to traffic is anticipated by the end of 2023. Demolition of the old bridge is scheduled to begin once traffic is moved onto the new bridge. The estimated final completion date of the project is June 30, 2025.

The new bridge will be constructed on a new alignment. It will cross the Saint John River at about a 45-degree angle and will be located about 420 metres (1,400 ft.) upstream from the existing bridge. Because of this new alignment, the new structure will be nearly twice the length of the existing one. The new bridge will feature wider travel lanes and added shoulders on both sides. There will also be a raised sidewalk on the downstream side. The bridge will be constructed using steel girders supported on concrete substructures and is designed to last 100 years.

The General Services Agency (GSA) awarded a \$44,507,000 contract for the design and construction of a new Port of Entry in Madawaska, Maine. The total cost of the project is \$65 Million. Construction and ground-breaking began in 2021. The estimated project completion date of late 2023 is tied to the MaineDOT and NBDTI international bridge construction project schedule to ensure the new Port of Entry facility is operational when the bridge is completed.

## INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

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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.

With the Canada – US border reopening, resumption of Amtrak's cross-border passenger rail service to Canada has been delayed until early 2022 due to crew constraints and vaccine requirements. Amtrak is also working with the inspection agencies and rail track owners.

In late 2021, 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 *Vermont* 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 2021. 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 2022.

## CANADA-US PRECLEARANCE AGREEMENT

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In March 2015, Canada and the United States signed a new treaty entitled the *Agreement on Land, Rail, Marine and Air Transport Preclearance between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States* (LRMA), fulfilling a commitment of the [2011 Beyond the Border Action Plan](#). The LRMA provides the legal framework and reciprocal authorities necessary for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Canada Border Services Agency to carry out security, facilitation, and inspection processes in the other country.

The U.S. Congress passed the necessary supporting legislation in December 2016 and Canada's Parliament did so in December 2017. Canada published their required implementing regulations in June 2019, paving the way for entry into force following an exchange of Diplomatic Notes on August 15, 2019.

Preclearance allows customs and immigration officials from the country of destination to be stationed in the country of origin to clear or deny the admission of travellers or goods to the destination country. Pre-cleared passengers and goods experience faster and more reliable service moving through border points and these operations provide a higher level of security by identifying potential threats at the earliest point in the process. By facilitating the fast and secure movement of people and goods across the border, preclearance supports trade and economic prosperity.

As the Agreement is fully reciprocal, in addition to the potential expansion of CBP preclearance operations in Canada, the Agreement permits Canada to pursue preclearance operations in the United States. CBP currently conducts preclearance operations at eight Canadian airports: Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg.

## ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CORRIDORS

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In support of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, the development of national corridors to service and charge electric vehicles in both Canada and the United States is proceeding. Shared national targets for 2030 are that 50% of all new vehicle sales will be zero emission vehicles.

Leadership from Federal, State and Provincial governments along with technological advances, enhanced vehicle efficiency, product availability, and point of sale incentives will support fleet development with electric vehicles as efficient alternatives to traditional vehicle technology.

These electric vehicle corridors must also support U.S. – Canada cross border connectivity to ensure a free flow of international trade and passenger transportation.

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

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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.

The USMCA Dispute Settlement Panel ruled on its first case in December 2021, that Canada restricted market access to U.S. dairy products in violation of its U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) commitments.

In the coming year, the panel will review a dispute launched by Canada and Mexico regarding the U.S. interpretation of USMCA auto rules of origin.

### CONCLUSION

The coming year presents new challenges to the mission of the EBTC as waves of COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2021. Planning for a 2022 conference will depend upon the progress toward pre-pandemic business levels. Trade data for EBTC jurisdictions is now available on the EBTC website, along with a consultation and approval guide for international construction projects. EBTC will continue to inform on the latest border-related news of interest to its network of stakeholders.