



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

January 25, 2022

Fiscal Year 2021 Report to Congress



**Homeland
Security**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Message from the Deputy Commissioner of CBP

January 25, 2022

I am pleased to submit the following report, “Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update,” which was prepared by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

This report was compiled pursuant to the direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanies the Fiscal Year 2021 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-260). The report provides an update and timeline for the Blue Water Bridge (BWB) Plaza expansion project.

Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chairwoman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (202) 344-2001.

Sincerely,



Troy A. Miller
Deputy Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection



Executive Summary

CBP is responsible for securing the Nation's borders at and between the ports of entry (POE), while facilitating the efficient movement of legitimate travel and trade. CBP defends the American public against terrorists and instruments of terror, while protecting our economy by facilitating the lawful movement of goods and people across U.S. borders. Steady global and regional growth continues to funnel more people and goods through our Nation's land ports of entry (LPOE) inspection infrastructure. CBP currently operates at 167 LPOEs, which represent more than half of the 328 official POEs in the United States.

As required by Congress, CBP, in consultation with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), develops an annual plan outlining the investments required to modernize our Nation's LPOEs. The *Land Port of Entry Modernization: Promoting Security, Travel, and Trade* report, which CBP submitted separately, lays out the basis for prioritizing capital investments in the LPOE infrastructure, factoring in safety and site deficiencies, in addition to operational and workload considerations.

The purpose of this report is to provide a project update on the BWB LPOE pursuant to the legislative direction that "CBP shall provide a detailed report and timeline" for the completion of the BWB Plaza expansion project.

CBP, in coordination with GSA, developed an updated program of requirements (POR) to identify CBP's mission-critical operational needs at the BWB LPOE. This POR will inform a new feasibility study to be developed by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), which CBP expects MDOT to begin in early 2022.

With the now-enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, CBP and GSA will reevaluate the way forward for the BWB LPOE project, to include whether it is appropriate or advisable to use this vehicle to advance the project in any way.



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

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I. Legislative Language

This document was compiled pursuant to the direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-260).

The Joint Explanatory Statement states:

Additionally, CBP shall provide a detailed report and timeline, within 90 days of the date of enactment of this Act, for the Blue Water Bridge Plaza expansion project. This report shall align with the annual LPOE priority report and should explain how CBP will engage with state and local entities and the specific milestones and timeline for the project's completion.

II. Background

The Blue Water Bridge (BWB) land port of entry (LPOE), located in Port Huron, Michigan, was constructed in 1996. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)-operated LPOE is a major port for commercial and noncommercial traffic into the United States from Canada, processing more than 1.5 million private vehicles and more than 800,000 commercial vehicles annually.

CBP is the primary tenant and operator at the BWB LPOE. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) leases the LPOE, on CBP's behalf, from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Given this ownership dynamic, any significant investment in the BWB LPOE requires close partnership among all three entities.

For several years, CBP has discussed modernization scenarios with MDOT and GSA, including a 46-acre project to replace the plaza's existing footprint. In 2007, MDOT began acquiring real estate for the U.S. inspection facility after completing an environmental impact statement.

In 2010, CBP and GSA notified MDOT that several factors would prohibit CBP and GSA from submitting the proposed project as a lease prospectus to Congress in FY 2012. As a result, the BWB expansion project was reduced in size to a 16-acre expansion project for commercial cargo processing, while the existing site would be repurposed to facilitate noncommercial throughput.

In FY 2011, CBP and GSA conducted a feasibility study of the revised, reduced expansion project. However, in FY 2012, in lieu of major capital investment, CBP and MDOT partnered with BWB Canada to install three stacked/staggered primary booths, funded by BWB Canada, which decreased wait times and improved traffic flow. Although this effort provided some interim relief, a larger scale expansion and modernization effort is needed to meet CBP's full operational requirements at this site.

III. Current Project Status

CBP, in coordination with GSA, recently developed an updated program of requirements (POR) to identify CBP's mission-critical operational needs at the BWB LPOE. CBP provided the completed POR to MDOT on July 9, 2021, as input to an MDOT-executed feasibility study, which will analyze project alternatives formally.

CBP expects MDOT to begin the feasibility study in early 2022. CBP will continue to work closely with GSA and MDOT throughout the feasibility study process to develop a project scope, cost estimate, and completion strategy for CBP, GSA, and MDOT consensus. If mutually agreed-upon, the project scope, cost estimate, and completion strategy will enable MDOT and the Federal Government to consider additional project planning.

IV. Next Steps

As noted above, an update to the CBP POR was provided to MDOT on July 9, 2021, which will inform a new feasibility study that CBP expects MDOT to begin developing in early 2022. MDOT, as facility owner and the entity executing the feasibility study, is driving the current BWB LPOE expansion project.

CBP does not have any additional project, schedule, or stakeholder engagement information at this time.

It is important to note that the BWB LPOE project is not included in the listing of highest priority/“shovel-ready” projects within the current *Land Port of Entry Modernization: Promoting Security, Travel, and Trade* report, because it still is pending completion of the feasibility study that is needed to support formal prioritization by CBP and GSA.

With the now-enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, CBP and GSA will reevaluate the way forward for the BWB LPOE project, to include whether it is appropriate or advisable to use this vehicle to advance the project in any way.

Appendix. List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
BWB	Blue Water Bridge
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
FY	Fiscal Year
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
LPOE	Land Port of Entry
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
POE	Port of Entry
POR	Program of Requirements