



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

August 4, 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 Report to Congress



**Homeland
Security**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Message from the Acting Commissioner of CBP

August 4, 2023

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 direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement, which accompanies the Fiscal Year 2023 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-103). The report provides an update and a 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 David Joyce
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

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

The Honorable Katie Britt
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,



Pete R. Flores
Acting 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 the 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 the Nation's land ports of entry (LPOE) inspection infrastructure. CBP currently operates at 167 LPOEs, which represent more than half of the 328 total 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 the 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, and identifies operational and workload considerations.

The purpose of this report is to provide a project update on the Blue Water Bridge (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. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) used this POR to aid in developing a feasibility study to analyze project alternatives. In March 2022, MDOT commenced the feasibility study. That feasibility study report was finalized March 23, 2023.

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58), was enacted in November 2021; however, the bill did not include funding for the BWB LPOE project. CBP and GSA continue to evaluate means and opportunities for this project.



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

Table of Contents

I.	Legislative Language.....	1
II.	Background.....	2
III.	Current Project Status	3
IV.	Next Steps	4
V.	Appendix. List of Abbreviations	5

I. Legislative Language

This document was compiled pursuant to direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-328).

The Joint Explanatory Statement states:

LPOE.—CBP shall provide a detailed report and timeline within 90 days of the date of enactment of this Act outlining completion of the Blue Water Bridge Plaza expansion project. The report shall align with the annual LPOE priority list; outline projected CBP costs; explain how CBP will engage with state and local entities; and detail specific milestones and a 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 CBP-operated LPOE is a major port for commercial and noncommercial traffic entering the United States from Canada. This LPOE processes more than 1.5 million noncommercial 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 BWB 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 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 and 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. BWB Canada funded the booths, which decreased wait times and improved traffic flow. Although this effort provided some interim relief, a larger scale expansion and modernization effort would support CBP's full operational requirements at this site.

III. Current Project Status

CBP, in coordination with GSA, developed an updated POR to identify CBP's mission-critical operational needs at the BWB LPOE. On July 9, 2021, CBP provided the completed POR to MDOT as input to an MDOT-executed feasibility study that commenced in March 2022. The feasibility study, which MDOT finalized on March 23, 2023, formally analyzed project alternatives. The results of the feasibility study are currently being evaluated by GSA.

CBP was an active participant in the feasibility study working group and continues to provide technical expertise and support relative to CBP operational requirements for the BWB LPOE. MDOT, CBP, and GSA coordinated throughout the feasibility study process and developed an amenable project scope, cost estimate, and completion strategy for CBP, GSA, and MDOT.

IV. Next Steps

The BWB LPOE project is not included in the listing of highest priority/“shovel-ready” projects within the FY 2022/FY 2023 *Land Port of Entry Modernization: Promoting Security, Travel, and Trade* report. As a result, there are no forecasted milestones or projected completion dates.

CBP continues to collaborate with federal partners (U.S. Department of Transportation and GSA), with the most recent meeting on May 16, 2023. Although a timeline cannot be supplied at this time, CBP continues to work with its federal and non-federal partners to evaluate next steps for this project.

V. 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