



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

September 20, 2022

Fiscal Year 2022 Report to Congress



**Homeland
Security**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Message from the Deputy Commissioner of CBP

September 20, 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 direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanies the Fiscal Year 2022 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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy A. Miller". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "M".

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, and identifies 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. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) used this POR as an aid in developing a feasibility study that will analyze project alternatives formally. In March 2022, MDOT commenced the feasibility study. CBP expects MDOT to complete the feasibility study by August 2022.

The recently enacted Bipartisan Infrastructure Law did not include funding for the BWB LPOE project. However, CBP and GSA will continue to evaluate means and opportunities for this project while MDOT completes the feasibility study.



Blue Water Bridge Land Port of Entry Project Update

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I. Legislative Language

This document was compiled pursuant to direction set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-103).

The Joint Explanatory Statement states:

Within 90 days of the date of enactment of this Act, CBP shall provide a detailed plan for the completion of the Blue Water Bridge Plaza expansion project. The plan shall align with the annual LPOE priority list; describe how CBP will engage with state and local entities; and specify 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 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (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/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 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 program of requirements (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 CBP expects MDOT to complete by the end of September 2022, will analyze project alternatives formally.

To date, CBP has been 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 will coordinate 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 of April 7, 2022, MDOT, in coordination with GSA and CBP, is conducting workshops every 2 weeks to advance the BWB feasibility study's development.

As noted previously, an update to the CBP POR was provided to MDOT in July 2021. MDOT projects that the feasibility study will be completed by the end of September 2022. MDOT, as the facility owner and the entity executing the feasibility study, is driving the current BWB project. However, stakeholder engagement continues between CBP, GSA, and MDOT to finalize the feasibility study and to pursue preplanning efforts to identify roles and responsibilities moving forward.

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. This is because the feasibility study supports a GSA commercial leasing action, which is not included in the scope of the report.

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 |