NS-ST DEAL

[No report.]

OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES

State rail plans: Cambridge Systematics draft guidebook by March, for AASHTO - SCORT.

PW: Intermodal service from New Jersey cut.

ST: Various problems are delaying trains.

CONNECTICUT

General Court: Legislator proposes fund to help freight railroads.

Bridgeport: New auto move on 23 February.

MAINE

MMA: L-P on slow-down, little rail traffic.

MMA/CN: Fraser on shut-down.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston: Massport master plan not public.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEGS v ST: Case refiled.

RHODE ISLAND

[No report.]

VERMONT

[No report.]

MARITIMES/QUÉBEC

CN: Halifax buying Chester spur right of way.

RAIL SHIPPERS/RECEIVERS

A cross-reference to companies mentioned here.

PEOPLE, POSITIONS, EVENTS

Event: Biomass conference in New Hampshire may interest transportation providers.

SPECIAL ISSUE ON ATLANTIC GATEWAY

Atlantic Gateway: Private companies led by Armour announce Atlantic Gateway Council.

Atlantic Gateway: The fed-prov committee will announce project criteria, but not select projects.

Sydney: Not waiting for the environmental assessment or the fed-prov committee.

Sydney: $2 million grant to help dredging process.

ATLANTIC GATEWAY GUIDE

1. Key dates.
2. Players and their roles.
   - Halifax Gateway Council
   - Atlantic Gateway Federal-Prov Officials Cttee
   - Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council
   - Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
   - Sydney Gateway Council
   - Atlantic Gateway Council
   4.1 The five lenses
5. How to obtain Gateway funds
6. Coordinating who will apply

FROM THE PUBLISHER

You are correct; this formal issue arrives early.

The articles filled 10 pages. While that’s less than the usual 12, sending out a 14-page 12-point e-bulletin and then the same 10 pages in 10-point type on 27 February did not make much sense.

- Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 13 March.

Common abbreviations:  
STATE RAIL PLANS: GUIDANCE

13 February, Bethesda, Maryland. CAMBRIDGE SYSTEMATICS IS PREPARING A GUIDEBOOK ON STATE RAIL PLANS, said Don Ludlow, consultant in charge, succeeding David Hunt [see 07#08B and 08#12A for status of New England state rail plans]. He expects to submit it to AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) subgroup SCORT (Standing Committee on Rail Transportation) in March, take additional comments, and make changes to the draft in April and May.

The guidebook will contain “tools and examples for a state rail plan,” first to ensure it is eligible for federal funding, and second to help states “dovetail the rail plan with the rest of a state’s multimodal planning.”

How does this comport with the FRA rail plan process?

The 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), signed into law by President Bush in October 2008, contained a lengthy section on state rail plan requirements. [To find the text, search for HR.2095. Part A contains the rail safety legislation, part B the Amtrak-oriented legislation. In Part B, section 303 spells out the rail plan requirements.]

The legislation asks the USDOT secretary to ‘establish the minimum requirements for the preparation and periodic revision of a State rail plan’ tracking the statutory requirements. While the Act does not make a rail plan mandatory, it does require any state receiving federal funding for intercity passenger rail to have a rail plan in place.

States cannot wait

Because federal economic stimulus dollars will start flowing before USDOT has regulations in place on state rail plan requirements, said Ludlow, “the proposed stimulus bill directs USDOT to waive the PRIIA requirement that projects have to be part of a state rail plan.”

Ultimately, the PRIIA guidelines will take effect. In the meantime, the FRA has some flexibility on dealing with states who already have a current rail plan in place. {ANR&P discussion}

PW: REVAMPED SERVICE FOR NJ

16 February, Worcester. ON THIS DAY CSXI CUT BACK INTERMODAL SERVICE FOR THE NY/NJ CONTAINER TERMINALS. It eliminated service from the New York Container Terminal on Staten Island which started in early 2008, and service from the Port Newark Container Terminal, which also started then [see 08#01A].

Service via the Elizabeth Marine Terminal will increase from January 2008’s two days a week to five days a week, with the same 48-hour delivery. Service via South Kearny will resume [in 2007 all Worcester container traffic moved via South Kearny] weekdays, with 46-hour delivery. See CSXI website for further detail. {CSXI notice to customers 13.Feb.09}

ST: AWFUL OPERATIONS

6 February, Freight Main. VARIOUS PROBLEMS ARE DELAYING ST TRAINS. Bill Remington, former ST engineer, confirmed with current personnel two recent examples:

- An RUED (Rumford-East Deerfield) recrew from Lowell to Deerfield never left Lowell as the train was blocked in 10 different blocks. Some of the average mileage that the recrews are putting on is a whopping 10 miles.

- A dedicated slurry train from VTR which originated out of Hoosick Junction made it as far as Buckland, Massachusetts on 1 February. Another crew took an NS engine out to get it, but had to do an air test on the entire train before they could depart, due to engine problems. This second crew consequently outlawed. A third crew made it as far as East Deerfield with the slurry train. {e-mail to ANR&P 6.Feb.09}
CONNECTICUT

GENERAL COURT
19 February, Hartford. **THE STATE SHOULD CREATE A FUND TO UPGRADE FREIGHT RAIL LINES**, said State Representative David McCluskey (D, West Hartford). Scott Conti, PW president, gave McCluskey the idea by referring to a now-defunct Connecticut program under which the state funded 70% of a freight rail improvement, and the railroad 30%.

“I’m not wedded to any particular arrangement,” the representative noted, but he is aware of the need for freight lines to carry 286,000-pound cars. “Right now only the Housatonic” rail line is 286-capable, and to help freight railroads the state network should be improved. He would also support building or rebuilding rail spurs to get more freight onto rail. “Maybe even an 80-20 match for that.”

Emphasizing he is not fixed on a particular method (he has a study from the legislature’s research office on how other states assist freight rail), McCluskey also mentioned these concepts: restricting the funding only to state-owned lines, using economic development bond money, using stimulus funds, and awarding funds competitively. He wants to hear from the railroads themselves.

Comments on ST
McCluskey has strongly supported commuter rail on ST’s Berlin Branch [see 09#02A], envisioning Metro-North continuing its Waterbury service to Hartford. “I would not do that for free,” upgrade ST’s freight line from Waterbury to Berlin. “I would require a kick-in.”

When made aware that NNEPRA paid the entire upgrade cost for Downeaster service on the ST Freight Main from Portland to Plaistow NH, the representative said ST had been “solicitous of the state. Perhaps they got the false impression that we would give it to them for free.”

ST “is becoming a major player.” The railroad has told him it is getting the assistance of US Representative John Olver to assist in upgrading ST’s ConnRiver line.

The rail revival
McCluskey has played a key rail advocacy role for the past several years. He helped organize the Southern New England rail summit in 2007 [see 07#04A]. “People are now paying attention to rail.” He noted that ConnDOT Commissioner Joe Marie and Deputy Commission Jeff Parker both worked for the MBTA. “They get it.”

Various groups are finding “a lot of commonality.” Those supporting clean air, open space, brownfield site reclamation, smart growth, and even affordable housing (residents tend to need public transportation) all “see how freight rail and passenger rail help serve their causes.” {ANR&P discussion}
Next step
On 24 February at 1PM, the General Assembly’s joint committee on transportation will hear testimony on the McCluskey concept and other freight and passenger rail proposed bills. Two of them:

- **Proposed H.B. No. 5657** an Act Concerning the Restoration of Freight Rail Service. (McCluskey’s)

**BRIDGEPORT: AUTO MOVE**

17 February. **HOEGH WILL CALL ON 23 FEBRUARY TO PICK UP AUTOS**, the first traffic through the Coastline Terminal since Turbana changed its call to Delaware. Dave Shuda, the president of Coastline Terminals of Connecticut, said Hoegh and Coastline had agreed to a three-month trial of the used auto market in New England. The carrier will transport vehicles to West Africa and Saudi Arabia.

- The *Pleiades Spirit*, serving the Middle East, will make the first call, and thereafter stop in Wilmington, Delaware, Baltimore, and Jacksonville to pick up additional vehicles. It will discharge the vehicles in Tripoli, Libya; Beirut, Lebanon; Aqaba, Jordan; and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- The *Hoegh Manila*, serving West Africa, will call Bridgeport on 3 April, preceded by Jacksonville, Baltimore, and New York. It will arrive Cotonou, Benin, on 17 April, and Tema, Ghana on 20 April.

**Bridgeport versus New Haven**

New Haven was angling for exactly this type of call [see 08#12A], but from a different carrier, said Shuda. The opportunity arose when the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey replaced the Northeast Auto Terminal with a container facility [see 08#10B *Connecticut*]. Each carrier using the terminal had to search for alternatives. Bayonne, New Jersey led the list, but the carriers also looked at Bridgeport, New Haven, and Davisville.

- One carrier which approached Coastline Terminals was also talking to Logistec about using New Haven, said Shuda, and Coastline turned them away [ACL–see 08#10B]. A second line had ships with too much draft—32 or 33 feet—for Bridgeport.
- Hoegh did look at Bridgeport closely, and “never approached New Haven because it was more focused on the New York market,” per Shuda. “At the end of the day,” Hoegh decided to move to Bayonne.

**Back to Bridgeport**

But then Hoegh discovered that New England had auction houses which could serve the West Africa and Saudi Arabia markets. The carrier did not look at other ports; due to the earlier investigation, it knew the rates and the capabilities of Bridgeport.

- Coastal cannot keep its Bridgeport terminal “open with just one car carrier,” Shuda emphasized. “If we can attract additional cargo, maybe it does make sense.”

**History of auto use**

David Pohorylo, president of agent New England Shipping Company Inc, said a number of operations have shipped used cars out of Bridgeport. The last one stopped around 2004. For awhile, about 300 used cars a month were shipped out of Bridgeport Harbor to Haiti, according to *Connecticut Post* reports from 2001.

**What about selling the terminal?**

Coastal put the terminal on the market in 2007 [see 07#12A]. In August 2008 real estate firm Vidal Wettenstein announced Coastline had sold 315 Seaview Avenue in Bridgeport to the Gault Companies of Westport for $2.6 million. ‘The property consists of 6.7 acres of land and a 60,000SF high bay industrial building.’

Shuda reported that the parcel, although directly on the harbor, “has no waterfront access.” When Shell built its terminal in the 1970s, it wanted to ensure that CILCO, which then owned the property, would not bring barges alongside the property. The city “granted a 20-foot buffer with no littoral rights.” But the buyer, Gault, operates a
heating oil company and needs no water access.

Coastline, which bought the CILCO property in 1996, still retains 535 Seaview Avenue, which has 80,000SF of high bay refrigerated distribution and warehouse buildings with 1,000 feet of deep water dockage resting on 20 acres, according to Vidal Wettenstein.

Shuda said he has several interested parties, mostly from maritime uses, either deepwater or service industry. {ANR&P discussion; Hoegh website for calls; Vidal Wettenstein website; Rob Varnon in Connecticut Post 16.Feb.09}

MAINE

MMA: CUSTOMER SLOW
17 February, New Limerick. “WE HAVE NOT BEEN USING THE RAILROAD MUCH,” said Skip Cleary, general manager of Louisiana-Pacific’s laminated-strand lumber mill here [see 08#06B]. “We’ve been open a week, then closed a week” due to the market, consuming less inbound product and making less outbound product. MMA switches the plant once a week, setting off loads and picking up empties and some product. “Not much,” said Cleary.

Wood pellet impact
In the past, Cleary has sent lumber not up to grade standards to Northeast Pellets LLC in Ashland. Now, he burns most of it in his biomass boiler. “But today we are sending [the mill] a truckload.” {ANR&P discussion}

Northeast Pellets LLC has had to lay off seven of its 19 workers. “This goes hand in hand with the layoffs at the Fraser mills in Ashland and Masardis,” Matthew Bell, president of Northeast Pellets LLC, said. “We had already lost a significant fiber supply.” Combined that with the cutbacks at Louisiana-Pacific and the Columbia Forest Products mill in Presque Isle, per Bell 70% of his wood fiber supply vanished.

Since opening in 2004, Northeast Pellets has used dry hardwood sawdust, shavings and chips — byproducts of the northern Maine forest lumber industry — to produce 25,000 tons of pellets annually that are sold throughout New England and Atlantic Canada. “We do a lot of business locally,” Bell said. “We’ve gone from producing 1,400 tons of pellets a month to around 400.”

That means Bell is buying fewer bags from a Presque Isle vendor in which to put those pellets, along with fewer pallets from another central Aroostook manufacturer on which to stack them. In addition, Bell contracts all incoming and outgoing freight with local businesses. “The spinoff of our layoffs affects all those workers,” he said. “It’s a huge ripple effect.”

Bell said his company chose to locate in Ashland, located at the end of Reality Road — the major artery leading in and out of the North Maine Woods — and the proximity to numerous lumber mills. “When we were first open we were surrounded by mills,” he said. “Now there are maybe two or three left open.”{Julia Bayley in Bangor Daily News 16.Feb.09}

CN/MMA: FRASER
17 February, Madawaska and Edmundston. FRASER WILL SUSPEND OPERATIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. Beginning on 21 February the pulp mill in Edmundston, served by CN, will shut down for two weeks. {Fredericton Daily Gleaner 17.Feb.09}

In Madawaska, by the end of February only 112 of the company’s 712 workers might be left to work two of the mill’s six papermaking machines, said Bill Peterson, the company’s director of human resources. “We anticipate having the machines back up by Monday, March 9.” Before this 16 February announcement, company officials had expressed confidence that only two machines would be shut down simultaneously. {Nick Sambides in Bangor Daily News 17.Feb.09}
MASSACHUSETTS

MASSPORT: NO STUDY REVEALED

6 February. WHERE, OH WHERE, CAN THAT STUDY BE? Massport advertised for a consultant to do a strategic plan in March 2007; it hired Norbridge to complete it by autumn 2007, but then changed the date to early 2008. [See 07#10B.]

In early February 2009, Andrew Hargens, senior planner/project manager in the Economic and Planning Development Department, indicated that although the agency, due to changes in the global economy, has not put together a final version for public notice on the strategic plan, it remains an internal document, providing valuable information on global markets, infrastructure needs, capacity requirements, and landside access. The effort Massport has expended on the study has produced data of great utility and value. {e-mail to ANR&P from Massport spokesperson Lisa Langone}

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEGS v ST

12 February, Concord. THE RAILROAD REFILED ITS CASE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE SUPERIOR COURT this week after the US District Court found it did not have jurisdiction [see 08#10B]. NEGS wants to recover a half million dollars in unpaid revenue. {ANR&P discussion with Merrimack County court clerk, Docket No. 09-C-0059, 20.Feb.09}

QUEBEC/MARITIMES

CN: CHESTER SPUR

12 February, Halifax. THE MUNICIPALITY HAS MADE AN OFFER TO PURCHASE THE CHESTER SPUR, the CN-owned stub extending west of downtown [see 07#08B—the municipality will not operate the spur]. Dave McCusker, director of regional transportation, said CN officials would come to Halifax the following week to discuss the transaction. {ANR&P discussion}

Lifting of the track has already begun. {AtlanticRails e-list}

ATLANTIC GATEWAY: NEW ENTITY

5 February, Dartmouth. THIRTEEN OF THE REGION'S MOST PROMINENT LEADERS FORMED THE ADVISORY ATLANTIC GATEWAY COUNCIL. Wesley Armour announced the new group. “If we don't act in unity, we're not going to get anything from the federal government. How do we become more unified? This has been the problem with Atlantic Canada and a lot of the things we do. We're better at beating up on ourselves than we are at beating up on the real enemy a lot of times. We needed a tool to pull us together and some leadership.”

Denis Losier, the chairman of the New Brunswick Business Council, applauded the development. “…I've seen a list of projects and hopefully that group will be able to determine in priority what will be the main projects that will warrant consideration by the government.”

With $400 million already committed to the Windsor-Detroit border crossing, transportation advocates in Atlantic Canada must vie for a share of the leftover $1.7 billion in the Gateway fund. {press release via CNW; Rebecca Penty in Saint John Telegraph-Journal 6.Feb.09}
Next step
Alisha Armour, spokesperson for Armour Transport, would provide no more information beyond what appeared in the news release. “It’s too early to talk about a formal mandate or the role of Council. The members are looking forward to working with other stakeholders.” {ANR&P discussion 18.Feb.09}

ATLANTIC GATEWAY: FED-PROV
17 February, Ottawa. **THE FED-PROV COMMITTEE WILL NOT DECIDE ON PARTICULAR PROJECTS** when it reports this October, said Maryse Durette, spokesperson for Transport Canada. It tasked itself with creating, by October 2009 [see ‘Guide’ below] an ‘Atlantic Gateway Strategy.’ Officials connected with the work said “collaboration has been good. [The committee] might have something by the end of spring....As soon as the strategy is out, all partners will guide their every move according to it from then on.”

Criteria will emerge
The webpage about the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund, written in 2007, states: ‘Eligible investment categories for the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund have yet to be established. Details on the full criteria for project eligibility will be made available in the near future.’

Durette said the criteria have not yet emerged. The fed-prov committee will release the criteria at the same time it releases the strategy. {ANR&P discussion}

SYDNEY: UPDATE
17 February, Sydney. **THE SYDNEY MARINE GROUP IS PROGRESSING THE DREDGING-CUM-CONTAINER TERMINAL PROJECT.** Jim Wooder of the Laurentian Group, spokesperson for the Marine Group, gave 20 February as the “self-imposed deadline” to review the revised Environmental Assessment, based on the preliminary remarks provided by Nova Scotia Environment [see 09#01B]. The following week, he hoped to submit the EA to the department, which will open it to a 30-day public comment period. [The province has 50 days from the filing to issue a decision–see Donkin filing in 08#11B.] In April, Wooder believes, the Marine Group will receive a decision report stating any required additional measures it must undertake.

“We know that every day late on the formal filing means a day later on a decision.”

RFP for dredging
The Group is not waiting for the decision report in order to put out a Request for Proposals to do the dredging of the harbor and filling of the terminal [see 09#01B for schematic]. “We’ll put the RFP out as soon as we have it in place. We’ve already benefitted from the competence and experience of dredging companies. We want to give them time to develop their proposals. We will make it clear that the work is not final until the project is sanctioned. The bidders will need to understand the limits contained in the decision report.”

Need to wait for fed-prov committee for funding?
Whether the Marine Group will wait for particular funding programs depends on “how quickly the programs get advanced, and what they say to applicants,” said Wooder. The Group will not wait for the decision report before pursuing funding. “We have high level of confidence” in the project. “We are not shy about advancing something; I’m not sure it hangs on EA report.

“We are not sitting on our hands. We are obviously talking about potential models and mechanisms for funding.” That includes the federal Gateways and Border Crossings Fund, other stimulus packages, and public-private partnerships. “It’s most important to get the harbour dredged. We are turning over every possible stone.”

The Marine Group wants to “get the dredging work done this year,” which would allow completion of the terminal by 1Q2011. “It’s important to do the work now, to prepare ourselves for the recovery.”

He emphasized that “this is not a one-trick pony.” Dredging will help “every rate payer in the province” by permitting Nova Scotia Power to bring in coal in cape-sized vessels, reducing the cost of coal. It will help Xstrata export coal from Donkin, if the coal quality proves out [see 08#12B]. {ANR&P discussion}
SYDNEY: PROVINCIAL ASSISTANCE

18 February. **THE PROVINCE WILL GRANT UP TO $2 MILLION TO THE DREDGING PROJECT**, according to an announcement by Premier Rodney MacDonald and Cecil Clarke, minister of Justice, in Sydney. NSDOT (formally the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal) will help offset costs associated with an environmental assessment, related planning, engineering and technical design requirements.

“Limited water depth in the main channel of Sydney Harbour has long been recognized as an impediment to the development of the port's full potential [see 08#01A],” said Premier MacDonald. “Port-related development will be a key ingredient to Cape Breton's long-term economic growth and sustainability.”

“We're happy to help in moving this important project forward,” said Clarke, on behalf of Angus MacIsaac, minister responsible for the Gateway Initiative. “Sydney Harbour is a key component of the Atlantic Gateway, and this funding brings us a step closer to being able to capitalize on its full potential.”

John Lynn, chief executive officer of the federal Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, reported: “These funds, which will be held in trust and administered by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, are critical for the necessary preconstruction planning, related work and environmental permits required to position the harbour to compete for, and secure, marine-related business.”

The press release concluded: ‘Nova Scotia's potential as an international gateway includes exponential growth in container traffic, and significant growth opportunities in international air passenger and cargo traffic handling, and the cruise ship industry.’ {NSDOT press release}

ATLANTIC GATEWAY GUIDE

**A rough definition:** The Atlantic Gateway effort seeks to identify Atlantic Canada as a major gateway for traffic to and from North America.

1. Key dates for the Gateway

2004. Creation of Halifax Gateway Council. 05#12A.

2006-09-12. Angus MacIsaac on behalf of the four provinces invites Transport Canada and ACOA to participate in planning. Atlantic Gateway Federal-Provincial Officials Committee was created as ‘primary forum for public sector collaboration.’ {ANR&P discussion with ACOA spokesperson Chris Brooks; text of terms of reference of October 2007 MOU}

2007-03-01. Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC, an NGO) releases Halifax-centric report on a gateway. 07#03A.

2007-03-19. Federal budget includes $2.1 billion national Gateways and Border Crossings Fund. 07#03A.

2007-10-03 Saint John Port Authority commissions InterVistas Consulting Inc to develop a workplan for the formation of a Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council. 07#10A.

2007-10-05. Peter MacKay (Conservative, Pictou Center), ACOA minister, releases federally-sponsored ‘Business Case for an Atlantic Gateway’ which put a priority on container traffic opportunities and also noted opportunities for bulk and break bulk cargoes, cruise and tourist traffic and air cargo and passenger traffic. 07#10A.

2007-10-14. Fed-prov committee signs MOU with objective of developing an Atlantic Gateway Strategy within 24 months. 07#10A.

2008-03-14 MacDonald announces nine initial Gateway projects including: trucks through CN cut in Halifax,
logistics park in Burnside, twinning the 104, dredging Sydney Harbour, and building a refrigerated terminal at the Halifax airport. 08#02B


2008-09. Sydney Gateway Council formed. [See other article.]

2008-10-29 MacKay appointed Minister responsible for the Atlantic Gateway. Keith Ashfield (Tory, New Brunswick) becomes minister of state for ACOA.

2009-02-05 Wes Armour announces creation of Atlantic Gateway Council. [See other article.]

2. PLAYERS IN THE GATEWAY EFFORT
AND THEIR TASKS

Halifax Gateway Council

‘The Halifax Gateway Council was established in 2004 to provide a forum for transportation stakeholders in the Halifax region to work collectively to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of goods and passenger movements through Atlantic Canada’s primary gateway (efforts will be undertaken in the future to examine how the gateway council concept can be broadened to include all four Atlantic provinces).’

Membership. Voting members: Stephen Dempsey, president and CEO, Greater Halifax Partnership - Chair; Joyce Carter, vice president finance and CFO, Halifax International Airport Authority – Vice Chair; Karen Oldfield, president and CEO, Halifax Port Authority – Past Chair; Francois Hebert, Vice President, Network Strategies, CN; Wesley Armour, President and CEO, Armour Transportation; John Hamblin, President, Clarke IT; Gerald Thornton, City Manager, Ottawa, UPS Supply Chain Solutions; Patricia Lyall, president and CEO, Destination Halifax; Robert MacPherson, president, Armco Capital Inc; Doug Rose, president and CEO, Halterm Limited; Nancy Conrad, senior vice president, Policy, Halifax Chamber of Commerce; Steve Snider, general manager and CEO, Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission; Captain Sid Hynes, executive chair, Oceanex.

Ex-Officio Members: David Darrow, deputy minister, NSDOT; Dan English, chief administrative officer, Halifax Regional Municipality; Harold Hefferton, regional director, Transport Canada; Stephen Lund, president and CEO, Nova Scotia Business Inc; Paul Taylor, deputy minister, Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development; Deborah Windsor, vice president Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. {website}

Atlantic Gateway Federal-Provincial Officials Committee

The ‘fed-prov committee’ is composed of ten members: ACOA and NBDOT, co-chairs; one representative from each of the four provinces, two representatives from Transport Canada, and two representatives from ACOA. Deborah Windsor, ACOA vice-president Nova Scotia co-chairs the fed-prov committee with Doug Johnson, assistant deputy minister of Transportation for New Brunswick.

Per the MOU of October 2007, the committee will produce an Atlantic Gateway strategy by October 2009. The MOU states: ‘A gateway strategy is an integrated package of measures that advance the capacity and efficiency of the gateway and Canada’s ability to take advantage of it.’ [http://www.tc.gc.ca/GatewayConnects/Atlantic/AtlanticGateway.html]

David Oxner, executive director of the Nova Scotia provincial gateway initiative, said the core committee meets every month. Three subcommittees meet at least monthly, on analytical framework, marketing, and stakeholder engagement.
The analytical framework committee has initiated a number of studies, including: Multimodal Freight and Passenger Traffic Flows and Infrastructure Flows; Road Access to Intermodal Terminals and Transload/Distribution Centres in Atlantic Canada; and Atlantic Gateway Border Traffic and Infrastructure Study. These studies and others will be rolled up into the Atlantic Gateway Strategy, which (unlike the interim studies) will be a publicly-released document. {ANR&P discussion 13.Feb.09}

Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council
Captain Al Soppitt, Saint John Port Authority president and chair of the Council, said on 13 February that the NB Council covers the transportation corridor from Moncton to St.Stephen, and is “open to anyone who has a vested interest in this transportation corridor. The Port of Saint John is centrally located in this corridor and its position as the region’s largest bulk and breakbulk and most diverse port brings some distinct complementary strengths to the Atlantic Gateway. We also recently approved the membership of Belledune.” {ANR&P discussion}

Priorities. At an autumn 2008 meeting, the membership reached consensus on transportation needs for the region and prioritized them for consideration under the Atlantic Gateway initiative. In addition to air and road priorities, the Council listed:

Marine:
• Cruise berth capacity/extension at Saint John
• Second berth at Bayside
• Lower west side pier reconstruction (Saint John)

Rail:
- Improvement to MMA & Pan Am Rail access
- Upgrading of track from Saint John to Brownville, Maine
- Intermodal facilities in Saint John or region to grow traffic out of Halifax headed to USA
- Rail line to Bayside
- Elimination of level rail crossing on major highways

Multiple modes:
- Road, rail and marine infrastructure required to efficiently move high volumes of bulk cargoes through the Port of Saint John. This is necessary to accommodate the expanding operation of the Port’s major users and attract new business opportunities while at the same time reducing the industrial impact on the public. {Saint John Board of Trade website}

Membership. Voting members consist of transportation providers who serve as directors of the Board; and Resource members consist of importers, exporters, government agencies, associations and other interested parties. Resource members do not have a vote on the Council

Voting members as of 1 February 2009: Bayside Port Corporation, Belledune Port Authority, CN, Greater Moncton Intl Airport, Irving Oil, Irving Transportation Services, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Saint John Airport Authority, Saint John Harbour Bridge Authority, Saint John Port Authority.


Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
ACOA is a federally-funded agency. Deborah Windsor, ACOA vice-president Nova Scotia co-chairs the fed-prov committee with Doug Johnson, assistant deputy minister of Transportation for New Brunswick.

Atlantic Gateway Council
Formed 5 February 2009 [see separate article this issue, 09#02B].

The membership. Wes Armour, Armour Transportation Systems; Jim Irving, J.D. Irving, Limited; Derek Oland, Moosehead Breweries Ltd.; David Ganong, Ganong Bros. Ltd.; Joseph Randell, Jazz Air LP; Doug Rose, Halterm Ltd.; Henry Demone, High Liner Foods Ltd.; Joseph Shannon, Atlantic Corporation Ltd.; Captain Sidney Hynes, Oceanex Ltd.; Tanny (Bernard) Collins, P.F. Collins; Wade MacLauchlan, University of Prince Edward Island; Francois Hebert, CN; and Patrick Sinnott, Canadian Tire Corporation.

Sydney Gateway Council
Formed early autumn 2008. Jim Wooder of Laurentian Energy said on 17 February that the Sydney Marine Group, which is “advancing the environmental permitting for the dredging of the harbor and the construction of the container terminal [see 09#01B], chairs the Council. As spokesperson for the Marine Group, Wooder also acts as spokesperson for the Council.

The Council membership, “to a company,” sees the dredging of the harbor as the most important priority, but certainly not the only reason the Council was formed.

Membership. The Council includes the members of the Marine Group, as well as CBNS, the local airport authority, and the local roadbuilders group. “We broadened the membership to a significant cross section” of the community, said Wooder.
3. Development of Atlantic Gateway strategy
The October 2007 MOU among the four provinces and the federal government outlined the objectives for the development of an Atlantic Gateway strategy over the following 24 months, including analytical work required to map and assess the multi-modal transportation system in the region that supports international commerce activities.

This is part of the Building Canada Plan [see diagram], a seven-year program 2007-2014. Also available to fund projects: the Building Canada Fund, which for infrastructure covers these categories: Core National Highway System, Short-Sea Shipping, Shortline Railways, Local and Regional Airports, Connectivity and Broadband, and Tourism.

4.1 The five lenses
Federal Minister of Transport Lawrence Cannon announced in May 2007 the National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors. ‘Future gateway and corridor strategies will be based on a compelling analysis through each of the following five conditions or “policy lenses.”

1. Gateway and corridor strategies must help align Canada’s major transportation systems with our most important opportunities and challenges in global commerce.

2. Gateway and corridor strategies must have, at their core, systems of transportation infrastructure that carry nationally significant levels of trade.

3. Gateway and corridor strategies must be forward-looking, addressing major trends in international transportation. Long-term planning is essential, but must be based on empirical evidence and analysis, not just optimism.

In his speech, Cannon mentioned Canadian Tire’s significant and increasing volume of finished goods from Asia. ‘While this means the company’s managers have a clear interest in the capacity and efficiency of the Port of Vancouver, they are also in the process of ramping up their containerized imports through the Port of Halifax. The strategy is driven by the need to optimize balance—and therefore efficiency—in their supply chain. They strive for balance between shipments southbound from central Canada to their stores, and inbound from Asia.

This strategy of one major shipper alone is having an impact on the Port of Halifax and ancillary developments such as the major new trans-shipment facility built there by Consolidated Fastfrate.’ [See box.]

4. Gateway and corridor strategies should go beyond infrastructure systems to address interconnected issues that directly impact how well the system works and how well Canada takes advantage of it.

5. Gateway/corridor strategies must ground federal actions in concrete federal responsibilities and effective partnerships with other governments and the private sector. {Transport Canada website}
5. How to obtain Gateway funds
The website describing the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund states (webpage dated 2007): ‘Eligible investment categories for the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund have yet to be established. Details on the full criteria for project eligibility will be made available in the near future.’ A spokesperson for the Infrastructure Canada ministry said the details would become available when the fed-prov committee reported in autumn 2009. [See separate story in this issue 09#02B.]

6. Coordinating who will apply
At this time, while the fed-prov committee is still working and no criteria for using the Gateway funding exist outside the Five Lenses, players in Atlantic Canada believe that a party with a potential project need not wait for regional coordination in order to apply for funding.

Soppitt. “There’s no formal application process in place. Money is out there for infrastructure, and not just infrastructure.” The effort is to “identify Atlantic Canada as a gateway for North America.”

Soppitt said the list of projects “is always in flux. We have to prioritize further, put some meat to the bone. When the committee decides on which projects best promote the gateway, it will “take those to the Gateway Councils.” Eventually “we will come up with a consensus on the highest priority. But that does not preclude any individual entities from also applying.”

The Halifax and Southern New Brunswick Gateway Councils have formed a joint committee to identify common areas going forward. “We have just agreed” to this liaison point, said Soppitt on 13 February.

Wooder. “There is no need to wait for region-wide agreement on a project. People who are advancing particular cases have dialogues with bureaucrats and politicians.” As for the Sydney dredging project, Wooder said “people are aware that this is our most important ask, even though no formal proposal is submitted.”

Oxner. The National Gateways and Border Crossings Fund is merit-based and will enhance infrastructure at strategic locations such as major Canada-US land border crossing and key gateways/trade corridors. The National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors will be used to help guide investment decisions.

Entities may apply for federal funds. “We hope that as a province, [the entity] would contact us. We would work with them to ensure that the project was strategic, that it had a rationale and a business case.”

Oxner noted the policy announcement did list the five lenses. Also, each project must have a local match, which could come from provincial dollars, municipal dollars, or private dollars. {ANR&P discussions 12 & 13.Feb.09}

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**RAIL SHIPPERS**

Described in this issue.
*Our Directory of Rail Freight Facilities in New England has more information on the companies denoted with their directory number.*

Fraser (MMA Maine #750) on shutdown
Intransit Container (PW Massachusetts #s 443, 447) service
Louisiana-Pacific (MMA Maine #781) rail use slows
EDITORIAL ON ATLANTIC GATEWAY

Responding to the news that Halifax is considering a $300 million expansion of the CN rail cut out of the South End terminal for truck traffic [see 09#02A]. The notion that the flow of global goods through the Maritimes will grow significantly because trucks can move a bit more quickly in and out of Halifax' South End is ludicrous. Despite the best efforts of terminal operators and the Halifax Port Authority, container traffic in and out of Halifax was declining even before the global recession.

The entire Atlantic Gateway effort needs dispassionate examination by people not already told what conclusion to reach. The examination must include the proposals already far advanced to build new container terminals in Sydney and the Strait of Canso, as well as Searsport in Maine and a new proposal for Belledune in New Brunswick [see 09#01B].

Even after the recession is over—and it will eventually end—will enough ship traffic emerge to support any one of these terminals, let alone five? Despite Nova Scotia’s brave assertion of ‘exponential growth in container traffic’ [see Sydney article this issue], I think not.

Just as government finally halted its subsidies to the failed Cape Breton steel plant (Sysco) and coal operation (Devco) which sucked up millions of dollars, the Maritime provinces need to halt this headlong plunge into a giant Gateway boondoggle.

If politicians want to spend money to prop up the economy, let them do it for dredging in Sydney, rather than the CN rail cut. Better yet, help out rail for the Donkin coal mine in Cape Breton, where private company Xstrata is proceeding without government dollars.

Instead of moving the coal by truck, rebuild the rail line. We can be sure that the railway will have something to haul in the coming years, whereas we cannot be sure that the Halifax rail cut will have anything to handle.

EVENT

BIOMASS CONFERENCE

This newsletter has covered a number of proposed ethanol refineries, wood pellet terminals, biodiesel tank farms, wood-burning boilers, and other freight rail generators. For that reason, some readers may find this conference of interest. The organizers ignore part of their market: the transportation providers.

Heating the Northeast with Biomass Energy
April 29 & 30, 2009 Radisson Hotel – Nashua, NH
See www.heatNE.com
relevant to freight operations.

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ANR&P appears at least four times a month. We send a formal issue twice a month, via post or e-mail. Between the issues, we send out the e-bulletin, only by e-mail. All information in the e-bulletin is included, and often updated, in the issue.

Stories not updated for the issue are noted with an asterisk. I urge readers to look at the issue’s updated stories (those without an asterisk).

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Purpose
Atlantic Northeast Rails & Ports, née Maine RailWatch (1994-1997) and later Atlantic RailWatch (1998-1999), is dedicated to the preservation and extension of the regional rail network. The editor believes that publishing news on railroads and ports spotlights needed action to preserve the rail network. The publication also imbues the region with a sense of an interdependent community, employing the network to move rail and port traffic. ‘No railroad is an island, entire onto itself.’