

FEDERAL OFFICIALS AND MDOT ANNOUNCE REVISED BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA EXPANSION ALTERNATIVE

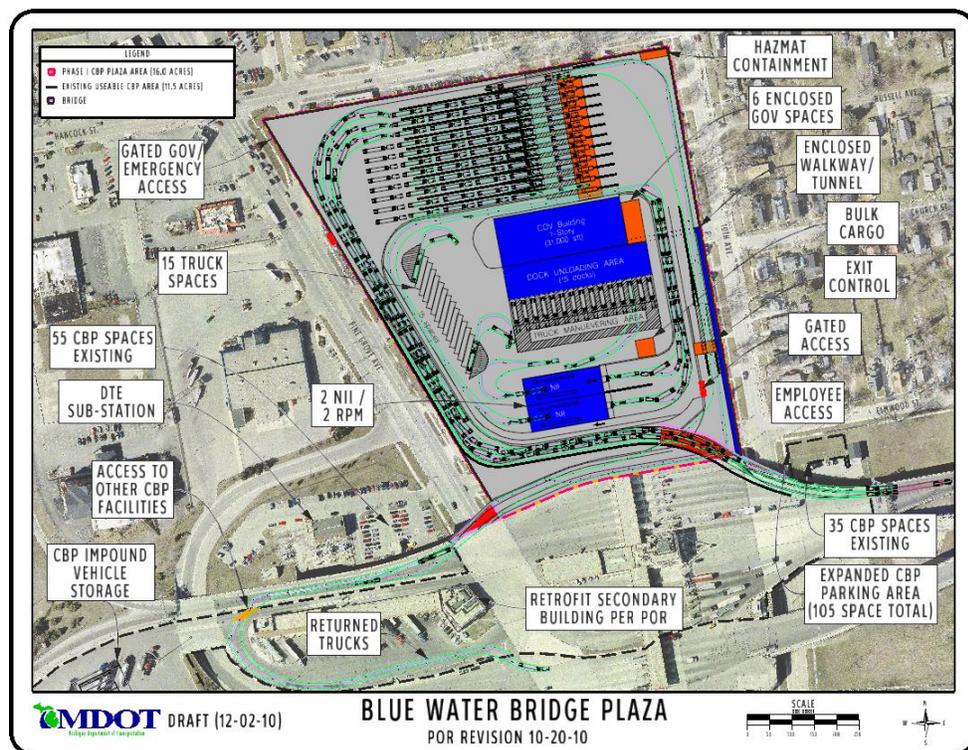
*Revised Plaza Alternative Fact Sheet
December 9, 2010*

Citing federal funding woes, Federal officials from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), General Services Administration (GSA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) announced that the Blue Water Bridge (BWB) Plaza Expansion Project will be scaled back. The following fact sheet provides an overview of the new plaza alternative announced today:

Expansion Area:

- A 16-acre expansion will be constructed to the north of the existing 18-acre elevated plaza. In total, a 34-acre plaza will be utilized for customs processing and MDOT bridge operations, maintenance and toll collections.
- The 16-acre expansion area will be bounded by Pine Grove Avenue to the west, Hancock Street to the north, 10th Avenue to the east, and the existing elevated plaza to the south. An 8'-10' security wall will surround the perimeter of the expanded plaza.
- The proposed expansion will provide a new customs processing and inspection area for commercial vehicles. All commercial vehicles will remain in the right lane as they cross the BWB entering the United States, effectively eliminating the existing commercial weave on the westbound lanes of the BWB.

The exhibit to the right illustrates the revised Blue Water Bridge Plaza expansion alternative that Federal and State officials are now looking to construct given the fiscal realities of the U.S. Federal government.



Primary Inspection Facilities:

- 12 new primary inspection lanes will be constructed at grade to process commercial vehicles coming into the United States.
- The existing 13 primary commercial inspection lanes on the elevated plaza will be converted to process passenger vehicles and buses.
- In total, 25 primary inspection lanes will be available to complete necessary CBP customs processing. Future delays coming into the United States are anticipated to be reduced to less than 5 minutes when all 25 primary inspection lanes are fully utilized.

Secondary Commercial Facilities:

- With the proposed expanded plaza, CBP officials will implement and utilize the latest in security technologies to accomplish their agency's mission. This includes the addition of radio-frequency identification responders, radiation portal monitors, automated license plate readers, and non-intrusive inspection technology.
- The new plaza expansion will also include 15 commercial vehicle loading/unloading docks that will allow CBP officers to unload and inspect the contents of a commercial vehicle.
- A new commercial vehicle processing building will be constructed along with modernized CBP office facilities that will accommodate today's officer staffing needs.
- Space will be provided within the expanded plaza footprint to accommodate parking for 15 commercial vehicles.
- Exit control is improved in the secondary commercial plaza area, reducing the threat of port-runners at the Port Huron Land Port of Entry.

Other CBP & Federal Facilities:

- Portions of the existing elevated plaza will also be renovated under this expansion proposal to provide additional CBP office space. Other Federal agencies will also be provided space to complete their agency missions including the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Additional CBP staff parking is proposed to be added under the existing BWB near 10th Avenue.

Estimated Cost:

- The estimated construction cost of the new expanded plaza alternative is \$110 million. Further refinements to the construction cost estimate are likely once the aforementioned concept is further refined during the design phase.

Next Steps:

- Because of the magnitude of changes proposed, the Federal agencies and MDOT will need to re-evaluate the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Record of Decision (ROD) signed by FHWA in May of 2009 to determine if the impacts of the project have changed significantly. FHWA and MDOT envision starting this process in 2011. The public and local stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on the revised plaza alternative.
- Before design and construction can begin, CBP must secure funding in a future appropriations budget. At this time, CBP has indicated they will be ready to move into execution in 2013 pending the availability of resources.
- 3 remaining commercial properties within the proposed expansion footprint must also be acquired before construction can commence.
- The earliest construction could begin is in 2015.
- MDOT is committed to begin construction on the adjacent I-94/I-69 freeway improvements in 2011. Once construction is completed in 2013 on this \$170 million project, improvements will have replaced the aging Black River bridge, completely separating international and local eastbound traffic, effectively eliminating the existing traffic weave. Both the Water Street and the Lapeer Connector interchanges will also be completely reconstructed. Over 2 miles of freeway pavement will also be reconstructed. Finally a new connection to Pine Grove Avenue will improve local access to the City of Port Huron from the I-94/I-69 Freeway.
- Finally, MDOT and the Federal agencies are committed to implementing the mitigation and enhancement commitments contained in the original EIS/ROD. MDOT will continue to work with the city of Port Huron, St. Clair County, and other local stakeholders to mitigate the impacts of this capital improvement project.