



BORDER POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



The Canada – US Border Restrictions: Regional Impacts & Implications

Laurie Trautman, PhD

*Director, Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University
Global Fellow, Woodrow Wilson Center & Canadian Global Affairs Institute*

Our Cross-Border Region

- Cross-border transportation networks
 - Planes, trains, automobiles...and ferries
- Economic interdependence
 - Tech & bioscience
 - Bilateral trade (over \$16 billion)
 - Travel (~11 million US entries)
- Robust cross-border collaboration
 - Cascadia Innovation Corridor, BPRI, PNWER, PNREC, Governor-Premier
- Regional innovation drives national border policy
 - EDL, NEXUS, pre-clearance



A Look Back at the Pandemic Border Restrictions

"May these gates never be closed"



Canada – US Border Restrictions

- 'Essential' vs 'non-essential' travel
 - Definitions and modes varied by country
- Canada's Federal Quarantine Act
- Canada had exemptions for 'compassionate reasons,' the US did not
- Restrictions renewed monthly for ~1.5 years
 - Last summer/fall shift from trip purpose to vaccination status
 - Canada dropped testing requirement April 1
- Restrictions still in place, vary by mode and country

What were the economic impacts in the region?

Disproportionate impacts by location and sector

- Cross-Border transportation
- Whatcom County
 - Retail, air travel, parcel pick-up
- Tourism
 - Seattle
- Domestic counter-balance

Massive growth of tech and bioscience sectors

- In OR, WA and BC
- Microsoft doubled employees in Vancouver
- GDP recovered by 2021

Robust collaborative networks driving governance

- Engagement from multiple scales of government
- WA Dept. Of Commerce grants

Public health or politics?

- Different politics in Canada and US
 - US southern border
- Both countries had some illogical policies
 - US air vs land
 - Canada's testing + quarantine regime
- Social impacts:
 - Barriers for family unification
 - Elderly, impaired, or non-native English speakers
 - Created more unequal mobility
 - Ongoing uncertainty, frustration, and anxiety

Curious Case of Pt. Roberts, WA

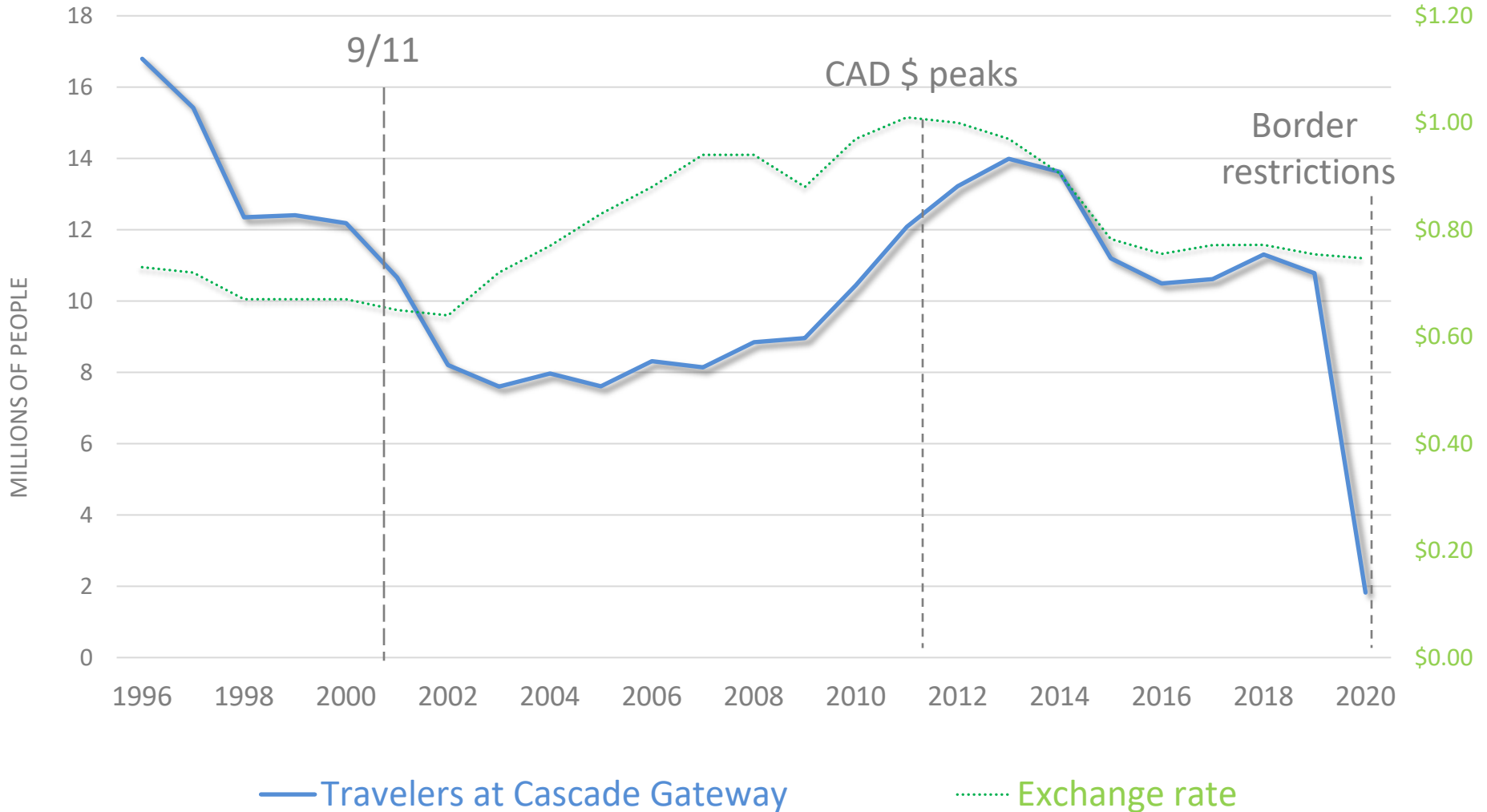


A Post-Pandemic Border

*"Brethren dwelling
together in unity"?*



Border 'shocks' have long-lasting effects



New Era of Cross-Border Travel

- US & Canada not aligned
- Border is more costly, time-consuming, confusing to cross
- Long-standing assumption that the border will function tested
- Continued uncertainty
 - Intimate relationships
 - Businesses
 - Community dynamics