



Working Paper Series

Title: The Role of the Regional Economic Development Programs in Mexico as the Main Support of International Trade: The Creation of the Trade Corridors

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THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRMAS IN MEXICO AS THE MAIN SUPPORT OT INTERNATIONAL TRADE: THE CREATION OF THE TRADE CORRIDORS

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The Role of Regional Economic Development Programs in Mexico as the Main Support for International Trade: The Creation of International Trade Corridors

On May 9-11, the City of Fort Worth, Texas hosted the Seventh Summit of Mayors and the Third Summit of the North American International Trade Corridor Partnership (NAITCP). During this event, the advances and supporting work for international trade by the geographically associated cities, led by their mayors and the synergies with municipal government authorities, business and academic institutions in Mexico, Canada, and the United States, were analyzed and renewed. Through participation in the conferences, workshops, expositions of enterprises, and principally in the meetings between business people (business matchmaking), it was possible to bring about an environment of optimism and enthusiasm, along with the realization of trade opportunities generated within the NAFTA framework. As a researcher, I was led by my curiosity to generate my own information; and it was in this way, through interviews among attendees from Mexico and the United states, that there was one collective sentiment: to enter with confidence into the economic integration brought about by regional economic integration.

This idea of regional development programs represents a clear demonstration of the trends in international trade in the very near future and what is taught in international business and international marketing courses: the trend toward association.

For this reason, the fact that it is one of the most important topics studied in the classroom, and due to the benefits brought about over a period of seven years by the Summits of Mayors and three years by the NAITCP Summits, I believe it is a subject which must be taught to students and business people seeking the

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internationalization of their enterprises, and that the association method is most advantageous and yields important benefits for trade.

I am now going to present the research of the NAITCP executive staff, who have prepared this document with the objective of showing the importance of this organization in service to international trade and its associated communities, as well as to include the definitions of corridors and their impact on international business.

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF TRADE CORRIDORS IN NORTH AMERICA

(The information in this document was gathered from various papers related to trade corridors, but has been modified by the addition of other information known to the authors, but not included in the above-mentioned papers)

Content:

- Trade Corridors (Overview)
- II. Typology of Trade Corridors
- III. Issues in Infrastructure / Transportation Corridors
- IV. The North America Trade Corridor Partnership (NAITCP)
- V. Bibliography

I. TRADE CORRIDORS (AN OVERVIEW)

1. THE CORRIDOR CONCEPT

International economic integration has changed the rules of international trade and new methods and tools of trade have grown in this new world scenario. Not new but surely most valuable for fostering local economic development is the Trade Corridors Concept that has interesting implications for international trade and globalization. Trade corridors are a product of the interaction of and interrelationship among people, infrastructure, business networks, regional markets, trade flows, economic development, social development, education, governments, political integration, tourism, environmental issues and transportation. Naturally, as trade between the United States, Mexico and Canada has increased over time, cross-border corridors have developed to facilitate this trade. The direction and nature of commodity flows and services are important factors in the development of such corridors, and also create the differences that exist between them. The fact that these differences exist is important when examining possible solutions to the common regional issues.

TRADE CORRIDORS

WHAT IS A TRADE CORRIDOR?

While there are no rigid definitions of trade corridors, the prevailing working description in that a transportation route based on geography, traffic flows, infrastructure or economic

development interest. While some corridors and their promoters include intermodal aspects, the overwhelming focus of attention is the transport of goods by truck. Not much attention is paid to the corridor issues related to rail, sea – ports, airports, economic development, market, business networks and tourism in spite of their crucial roles in the transportation system.

In its June, 1999 Trade and Transportation Corridors Discussion Paper, Transport Canada offered the following description:

"Corridors can be broadly defined as the flows of goods and people domestically and internationally within North America; the ground transportation infrastructure and systems that facilitate these flows; and the policy, legislation and regulations governing these elements".

An international trade corridor can be found where significant amounts of trade flow through a particular area. Several characteristics can be used to distinguish a trade corridor: the presence of well-developed physical infrastructure; established commercial infrastructure; available business and professional expertise, such as customs brokers; and well-developed social, political, and business linkages. Trade flow, in comparison, can be recognized and measured as a contributing element within an identified corridor.

This is true to varying degrees along certain routes, particularly between the U.S. and Canada, but with respect to the U.S.-Mexico border is not usually the case. Trade along corridors that cross the U.S.-Mexico border involves compliance with strictly enforced binational tariff regulations and agreement, various inspections, and other non-tariff barriers to trade which are often idiosyncratic to the U.S.-Mexico border area, such as drayage practices, a non-harmonized regulatory environment, inadequate (or antiquated) infrastructure, technological disparities, and various regional economic and social issues that inhibit "seamless" transit across the border.

An important distinction between trade corridors and intra-regional trade flows (i.e. movement of goods and services within cities and their local systems and also between border cities) needs to be developed. These intra regional trade interactions at border crossing points can often interrupt the smooth flow of international trade while supporting local and regional economies by providing jobs and income. Cross border commuting, shopping, and short haul movement of goods are a reflection of the interdependent nature of economies along the border, and it is important to understand that a large percentage of cross border traffic is comprised of non-commercial vehicles and pedestrians.

Studies suggest that, with respect to U.S.-Mexico trade; around two-thirds of the trade movements between Mexico and the U.S. are to or from Texas and the Northeastern U.S., with all three modes (land, sea and air) represented. Land corridors are used by commercial vehicles and railroads; they are typically linked by networks of warehouses, terminals and refueling stations, with brokerage, finance and legal networks operating for their support. Air corridors have separate networks, linked by airport facilities and airfreight warehouses. Sea corridors are utilized by a variety of marine vessels, which include deep-water vessels

and barges designed for shallow water such as the Gulf Intercostals Waterway. A corridor in which two or more modes coordinate purposefully to move commodities from origin to destination are an "intermodal corridor."

TRADE CORRIDORS IN CANADA

In the fall of 1998, a Discussion Paper on the development of a national framework for trade and transportation corridors was circulated to provinces and territories through the Deputy Ministers' Policy and Planning Support Committee.

This report builds on that Discussion Paper, providing a summary of rail and highway corridors in Canada. It also provides an update on consultations with provinces, private sector interests and other stakeholders on corridor-related issues and endeavors. Finally, the report elaborates on policy considerations and elements underlying a national corridors strategy.

AS MENTIONED BEFORE, CORRIDORS CAN BE DEFINED AS:

- The flows of goods, services and people domestically and internationally within North America.
- The transportation infrastructure and systems that facilitate these flows; and
- The policy, legislation and regulations governing these elements.

Interest in trade corridors has increased in recent years, prompted by internal and external trade agreements. There are a number of organizations with both public and private sector support promoting specific corridor routes within North America. Several of these alliances have tri-national (Canada - USA - Mexico) dimensions, with representation in the three countries Stakeholder groups in every region are active in promoting corridor initiatives, which reflect a range of objectives.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADE CORRIDORS

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORRIDORS IN NORTH AMERICA SHARE SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Connect two or more main points (usually metropolitan areas).
- Cross at least one international border.
- Involve parts of several geopolitical units.
- The areas included are frequently related through historical agreements and natural geographic similarities.
- They are often controlled externally, not by governmental bodies, though government support is necessary.

COMPONENTS OF A VIABLE TRADE CORRIDOR

The State of Arizona in the US, has expended a substantial quantity of resources studying its role in trade corridors. The State has, in fact, developed a Free Trade Plan. As part of its work, it has identified what it believes to be the key components of a trade corridor (Arizona, 1993). These elements include:

- A well-developed physical infrastructure, including highways and ports of entry, as well as linkage via highways, railroads, air and sea.
- An established commercial infrastructure and appropriate trade incentives, including distribution and warehousing facilities, foreign trade zones and a harmonious regulatory environment
- A regionally integrated technological infrastructure, including commercial databases and an electronic information network throughout the corridor.
- Professional knowledge and experience in business, including customs agents and freight forwarders, in addition to accountants, attorneys and internationally sophisticated academics.
- Well-developed social, political and business connections throughout the corridor.

2. THE CANADA, U.S.A. AND MEXICO TRADE CORRIDORS

The following trade corridors are identified in North America:

- On the West coast, the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Project (affiliated with the Cascadia corridor) targets improvements to infrastructure and operations at four border crossings between British Columbia and the State of Washington.
- Alberta has promoted the CANAMEX corridor for a number of years as a pilot project
 to harmonize vehicle weights and dimensions along a north-south route. The corridor
 objectives have recently broadened as a result of heightened interest by U.S. states led
 by Arizona. The new CANAMEX proposal differs in scope and focus from the earlier
 initiative. The present focus is on the development of physical and commercial
 infrastructure, trade incentives, distribution and warehousing facilities, foreign trade
 zones, harmonized regulatory environment and integrated information technology
 modes.
- In Saskatchewan/Manitoba, the Central North American Trade Corridor promotes economic competitiveness of the region through increased trade with Border States and enhancement of transportation and border facilities.
- The Mid-Continent Trade Corridor Task Force initiative [based in Winnipeg and comprising business, industry, government and academia] issued a report in August 1998 outlining a series of recommendations to foster trade on a continental scale. The report covered such areas as harmonization, infrastructure, technology and logistics.

- The North American International Trade Corridor Partnership (NAITCP) regroups a number of initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, economic and social sustainable development along a broader inter/intra trade corridor concept, focusing on north/south trade in the NAFTA region. Two NAITCP Summits and six summits of Mayors since 1997 have promoted inter-city (community) alliances with the local private, academic and government sectors along the corridor and strengthened a Virtual Operation Center among the participating cities in the World Wide Web.
- In Ontario, the NAFTA Superhighway Coalition promotes Ontario Hwy 401 [and various connectors] as a key bi-national trade corridor.
- On the East coast, the East-West Highway initiative promotes the construction of a limited access highway from New Brunswick, across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, to Quebec.

In addition to specific corridor initiatives, groups operate at the regional and municipal level as well as within more broadly based regional initiatives to address "horizontal" issues.

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council promotes the international competitiveness
of the area's intermodal transportation facilities. A similar endeavor is active in the
Montreal area [e.g. Forum sur le transport des marchandises] promoting efficient
transportation systems as a tool for economic development.

On a regional level, the Western Canadian Corridors and Ports Initiative highlights the evolving awareness among jurisdictions and stakeholders of the strategic importance of multi-modal corridors and their linkages to ports. Underlying issues being considered within this initiative include factors affecting competitiveness, infrastructure funding mechanisms, and intelligent transportation applications. Similarly, the Northern Great Plains Initiative, in which Manitoba participates, targets opportunities for regional and international trade development through an assessment of specific transportation infrastructure and technology needs.

3. PROJECTED TRADE CORRIDORS

PROPOSED AND PROJECTED TRADE CORRIDORS

TRADE CORRIDORS IN THE U.S.

With the final stage of NAFTA implementation scheduled for this year 2000, when trucking firms from all three NAFTA countries suppose to be allowed complete access into each country, even more well defined and distinct trade corridors may develop, stretching from the interior of Mexico, through the United States, and into Canada. Several potential corridors are being promoted in Texas, and adjacent states, in anticipation of this possibility. The impetus for the promotion of these corridors is the projected dramatic increases in trade. The two corridors with the most visibility are I-35 and I-69

1-35 CORRIDOR

The Interstate 35 Coalition is comprised of 21 Texas counties, along I-35 and cities, chambers of commerce, politicians, and private interests from Laredo to Duluth, Minnesota, whose objective is to gain Congressional approval for a NAFTA Superhighway System designation. The Coalition, which formed in 1994, promotes I-35 as a natural trunk to this system. Coalition members have lobbied the Government of Mexico in order to make I-35 a binational, north-south North American corridor (Hall 1995a). Both the U.S. House and Senate have suggested legislation, which includes a designation of I-35 as a high-priority corridor in the National Highway System.

I-69 CORRIDOR

Of the 21 high priority corridors designated in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, two corridors, 18 and 20, are located in Texas. Taken together, these designated corridors constitute the I-69 Corridor. This potential NAFTA corridor extends from Indianapolis through Memphis, Shreveport, and Houston, where it connects with U.S. 59 and on to Laredo

WEST TEXAS CORRIDORS

Several potential trade corridors in West Texas are being promoted in response to projected NAFTA-related trade increases. One proposal would develop a corridor connecting Denver, El Paso, and Chihuahua. The Camino Real Corridor could possibly extend north from Denver, as well as to the east and west coasts.

TRADE CORRIDORS IN MEXICO

Most of Mexico's commercial traffic travels over four trade corridors: the Pacific corridor, the Chihuahua corridor, the Central corridor and the Gulf corridor. These corridors developed as a consequence of both geography and historical trading patterns, and both highway and rail infrastructure closely follows these routes.

Two major mountain ranges, the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Sierra Madre Occidental, run north-south from the border the lower part of Mexico, effectively dividing Mexico into three major sections traveling from the border with the U.S. to Mexico City. On one side is the Pacific corridor, which originates in Nogales and moves along Mexico's Pacific Coast through Hermosillo, the Port of Topolobampo, Mazatlan and on to Mexico City. A TFM rail line moves parallel to this route. The Chihuahua corridor is in the valley between the two mountain ranges and generally begins at the U.S. border crossing at El Paso. From there it moves on through Chihuahua and other cities in Central Mexico until it reaches Mexico City. The Central Corridor begins in Nuevo Laredo, and moves through Monterrey, Saltillo, San Luis Potosi, and then to Mexico City. The Central Corridor is the shortest route between the U.S. border and Mexico City, which is one of the reasons Laredo, is one of the busiest ports of entry, and one of the reasons that the commodities passing through Laredo are usually less likely to be going to or from a maquiladora. The Gulf Corridor moves along Mexico's Gulf coast from Matamoros through various deep-water ports,

including Tampico and Veracruz. This corridor supports a great deal of containerized traffic and related commerce derived from the ports.

It is important to note that there are few opportunities for east-west crossings in Mexico. This creates a situation in which the choice of U.S. port of entry for commodities moving southbound is generally indicative of their ultimate destination. For goods whose ultimate destination is the interior of Mexico (most likely Mexico City), Laredo is the typical crossing because it is the shortest route. Maquiladora traffic originating in Monterrey and destined for Tucson, for example, cannot simply cross over to Chihuahua and move north through El Paso - there is no highway to enable this movement. This shipment would have to go through Laredo and move west on I-10. Different ports of entry, therefore, tend to handle different commodities.

TRADE CORRIDORS IN CANADA

CASCADIA PROJECT

The Organizing theme of the Cascadia project is development of a transportation strategy that will move people and goods in an efficient manner over the next 50 years bearing in mind the need to plan on a broad, regional basis and connect varied forms of transportation.

Seattle-based Discovery Institute in partnership with the Vancouver, B.C.-based Cascadia Institute, manages the Cascadia Project. It is a strategic alliance for closer public policy cooperation among provincial, state and local governments of British Columbia, Washington and Oregon and their ports, cities, counties, transportation providers and users, businesses and labor councils, civic organizations and individual citizens in the bi-national region of "Cascadia".

The project simultaneously addresses cross-border trade, tourism, technology, ecology, education and culture.

II. TYPOLOGY OF TRADE CORRIDORS

Trade corridors develop different functions, depending on their goal established and direction provided by their members. Six main categories can be identified according to their dominant activities:

- Transportation and Infrastructure Corridors
- Business Network Corridors
- Regional Economic Development Corridors
- Regional Marketing Corridors
- Environmental Corridors
- Tourism Corridors

Although a corridor is predominately of only one type in the typical case, there are some other species of corridors, which involve activities related to other categories.

HL ISSUES IN INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

THE INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS

- 1. **HIGHWAY CORRIDORS** a network for highway trade corridors already exists; it is the American Interstate Highway system. While some critics claim that long distance trucking is not the most efficient way to ship goods, today's reality is that 70 –80% of all cross border freight moves by truck. Many communities along these highway trade corridors look at corridors as being more than just a ribbon of concrete or asphalt traveling through their towns and cities. They see these corridors as a means of economic development, by attracting new business and as tourist corridors, bringing more visitors to their communities. The major Canada US highway trade corridors stretch from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean and encompass almost every province and sate.
- 2. URBAN TRANSIT CORRIDORS Congestion on urban freeways has joined death and taxes as one of life's few certainties. Although urban congestion is generally considered a local issue, it presents as big an obstacle to trade corridor traffic, as do international borders. Commercial traffic cannot avoid major urban cities they are invariably the originating point or destination for the trucks. Therefore, any effort to improve trade corridor traffic must address urban congestion. What is clear is that the local or regional transit authorities must be involved in the discussions about trade corridors. They are key to providing the seamless, integrated system of moving goods and people between seaports, airports, rail depots, highways and their destinations.

THE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

3. TRUCKING CORRIDORS While the trucking industry has experience and incredible growth over the past decade, the growth has not been entirely happy one. One would assume that in an industry where there is a booming demand for drivers and at the same time there is a shortage of qualified drivers in both Canada, US, and Mexico that it would be a good time to be a trucker. In an anomaly of the normal rules of supply and demand, the industry has become less profitable, especially for the owner operator. The life of a long distance trucker is not an easy one, as he or she must accommodate the demands of shippers within the rules of the appropriate regulatory agency, and often to attempt to balance these demands with family life. Corners often have to be cut; there is ample evidence to suggest that many truckers are forced to ignore some of the safety constraints placed on their industry. It is

clear that from all government's perspective, safety is the number one issue. That is why the US Department of transportation separated the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from the Federal Highway Administration.

- 4. RAIL CORRIDORS One alternative to the current highway corridor system is the rail corridor system. Because rail lines are privately owned, there is less likelihood of them being viewed as a rallying point for cross border trade groups. In addition, the private ownership of rail lines prevents government and politicians from jumping on the bandwagon to build more or bigger ones it is up to the private sector to decide when and where to expand. In the 19th century, the building of transcontinental railways was viewed as nation building in both Canada and US, as they connected the east and west coasts with the industrial heartland. For over 100 years these east west corridors have served the commercial interest of each country well. However, free trade and NAFTA have shifted much of our trade to a north south infrastructure, they will want to know that these investments will be profitable over the long term.
- 5. MARINE CORRIDORS There are three major interior marine corridors in North America; The St. Lawrence Seaway, the Columbia River and the Mississippi River. These Corridors face their own set of problems; especially the Columbia River, which is currently undergoing court challenges that could force the removal of the dams on the river that make it navigable. The issue of conservation of pacific salmon stocks and other environmental concerns may eliminate the Columbia River as a corridor. In general, these marine corridors handle bulk goods, but are limited by their geography. The major seaports that ring the continent are often the termini for highway and rail corridors. These ports receive goods arriving from, or destined for, the overseas markets.
- 6. AIR CORRIDORS While seaports are the major continental termini for the movement of goods, with a minor role in the movement of passengers, airports have the opposite role. The problem faced in creating an integrated transportation for people are slightly different from the movement of goods, mainly in the mode of transportation being utilized. Instead of being concerned about getting freight trains and trucks to the seaports, in this instance we are concerned with moving people by cars, cabs, buses and occasionally rapid transit to the airports. The first three modes of transportation all travel on the same roadways and share the same congestion, as do trucks in the urban areas. Substandard highway infrastructure equally affects these modes of travel. The key to moving people efficiently is the integration of the local transit system into the relevant trade corridor. Cooperation between the appropriate officials at the local and regional levels with those at the state/provincial and federal levels is absolutely essential to the success of any plan.

IV. THE NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP

DESCRIPTION

It is a partnership of North American cities linked by a trade corridor that work together to foster economic and social development in the region.

ACTIVITIES

It promotes trade, investment, education and tourism in the region, which stretches from central Canada through the U.S. Midwest to most parts of Mexico.

WEB SITE

Several web site directories will contain information on thousands of companies and institutions in the member cities; you can search for sources of products and services by country, city, company name or industrial activity. You can contact firms directly, go on a virtual trade mission, sell or buy products virtually, see the most important news in the region or contact our member cities directly by e-mail for further help in finding products, service and information in general. You can attend our annual summit meeting where government, business, and academic representatives gather to discuss mayor issues affecting their region and make contact with other business within the three countries.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The international commercial exchange between Canada, the United States and Mexico has grown, achieving record levels and has benefited the economies of these three countries as a result of the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement "NAFTA". Mexico has now replaced Japan as the second most important trade partner of the United States; only Canada currently surpasses Mexico in trade volume with the U.S. Nevertheless the regional and local welfare have not consolidated; this fact has become a concern that is occupying mayors and other local authorities in search of a way to "bring NAFTA home", and in this manner, transform the quality of life in their communities.

As a result of the aforementioned, a group of mayors and representatives of the three nations met in the city of San Nicolas de los Garza, N.L. in April 1997 to promote the creation of an international trade corridor in North America. The intention of this initiative is to establish a network of communities on the North American continent working together with the support of the public, private and education sectors to promote sustainable economic development and to cultivate business opportunities on the north-south axis.

To date and as a result of two NAITCP Summits and Six Mayors summit of various communities in Canada, the United States and Mexico, the following lines of action, among others, have been considered: alliances between cities, import substitution, intercorridor and intracorridor commercial exchanges, expansion of distribution channels, industrial diversification, joint tourism promotion, promotion of regional investment, joint strategic regional planning, incentives for sustainable development of the corridor, and improvement of communication through effective media; within the cities, more efficient government procedures, technological innovations, and long-term improvement in the infrastructure and services, are also being promoted.

MISSION

Establish an alliance of North American communities linked by an international trade corridor through a commitment to resource allocation and establishment of communication for sustainable economic development.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage public and private investment in technology, infrastructure and human resources to advance for the common interests involved.
- Stimulate the initiation of programs to expand trade and economic development in the communities.
- Support the development of cooperative strategies in marketing on a regional level over the long run in the Corridor to stimulate trade and public awareness.

Promote a real and virtual network of International Business Centers and NAITCP Business Information Centers in the cities and municipalities and stimulate investment, trade, tourism and business in general in all parts of the Corridor

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