INTRODUCTION

The explosive growth of the Asian economies and in particular, those of India and China, are transforming the global economy, world energy demands and world trade flows, transportation networks and infrastructure of ships, ports, railways, roads, planes, airports and all of their related multi-modal handling facilities. Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Research Initiative is a consortium of four western research agencies. They are:

- Centre for Transportation Studies of the SAUDER School of Business of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver
- Van Horne Institute of the University of Calgary in Alberta
- Organisation for Western Economic Cooperation in Regina, Saskatchewan
- Transport Institute at the I.H. Asper School of Business of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba

The research agencies were conducting three roundtables in the Prairies in the spring of 2007 in Regina, Winnipeg and Calgary and the major conference in Vancouver in May. The Roundtables and Conference had been created with the objective of:

1. Exploring the theory and economics of the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor concept in regional and national economic development.

NOTE

This paper has been prepared by the authors to guide discussions at three Roundtables on Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridors Initiative in the spring of 2007 in Regina, Winnipeg and Calgary.

The paper has been prepared with financial assistance from Transport Canada under the Government of Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative. The views and opinions expressed in the paper are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of Transport Canada.
2. Focusing national and international academic attention on the concept of international transportation gateways and corridors and their application and development in Canada.

3. Generating relevant, high quality publications and high-level discussions on issues, options and opportunities in support of the development of Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor concept.


The Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Conference and Roundtables are being undertaken with financial support from Transport Canada and within the framework of the Government of Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative that is providing expert advice and analysis “important to advancing understanding of the long term challenges and opportunities of the Gateway, expanding the foundation of knowledge that will support sound investments.”

This initiative recognizes that human and physical capital to support the movement of people and goods are concentrated in key geographic locations that we refer to as gateways and corridors. These not only encompass many different aspects of infrastructure, such as ports, borders and roadways, but also include key elements of logistics and supply chains management.

In an era of expanding global supply chains, gateways and corridors are becoming sources of competitive advantage for many firms domestically, while their performance is increasingly linked to Canada’s ability to develop global trade and financial networks. What are the economic impacts of gateways in Canada? How are gateways and corridors enabling the integration of Canada in global trade and financial networks and how can we improve these?

This discussion paper provides a brief introduction to some of the theory, concepts, reality and issues surrounding the development of trade gateways and corridors in Canada and around the world. It has been prepared to stimulate thought by roundtable and conference participants and to focus discussion on issues and opportunities that Canada will have to address in fully developing its policies, strategies and infrastructure investments for Canadian gateway and corridor development to remain competitive in the global economy. This paper is a living document and will evolve with each roundtable to provide an introduction to the Gateway and Corridors Conference in May 2007.

DEFINING GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS

Gateways and corridors are a fact of history and an integral part of transportation economics. From ancient ports like Alexandria and Marseilles, to today’s Rotterdam or Shanghai, the port success is dependent upon its role as an entrepot to a surrounding hinterland or its location on a trading corridor. Similarly, trade routes can also be found in the ancient history of Marco Polo on the Silk Road to China, or even the more recent Orient Express between London and Istanbul or now the emerging water, land and air trade corridors between Asia and North America.

1 Transport Canada, Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative, Ottawa, 2006 www.tc.gc.ca.
Transport seeks the easiest, shortest and lowest cost routes, while land settlement patterns determine the location of transportation markets. Trade gateways and corridors exist within broader networks of links and nodes. Cities form nodes within the network and the competing modes of transportation infrastructure for road, rail, air or water, form the links. A trade gateway or corridor is any pathway that facilitates the movement of goods and people between two or more nodes.

Burghardt developed a model of a gateway city that provides a useful framework to consider trade corridors. The Burghardt hypothesis rests on the location and role of cities in a hierarchy of different sizes and functions. Larger cities have the economies of scale to provide higher-level services like appellate courts and specialized education that smaller cities cannot. At the very pinnacle of the hierarchy are cities that host national and international financial services and entertainment industries. As the largest centres of distribution, these cities dominate commerce and serve as transportation hubs and gateways to smaller communities in their hinterland.

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Traffic is funnelled through a gateway city because it sits at a strategic location where transportation costs can be minimized along a land corridor or a sea route. Ocean ports are obvious gateway cities. Vancouver serves as a gateway to the Asia-Pacific trade routes and links a corridor through the Prairies to the U.S. mid-west and central Canada.

Figure 1

![Figure 1: Hubs and Gateways on Trade Corridors](image)

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Increasingly the economies of Asia and North America are becoming linked. That China will be the largest economy in the world by 2050, followed by the economic growth from China, India and the rest of Asia. Many observers believe today, at the start of the 21st Century, saw great economic progress in the developed world.

Asian Growth, Trade and Transportation

Much of the 20th Century saw great economic progress in the developed world. Today, at the start of the 21st Century, the developing world is leading global economic growth from China, India and the rest of Asia. Many observers believe that China will be the largest economy in the world by 2050, followed by the United States.1 Increasingly the economies of Asia and North America are becoming linked.

Expanding resource and energy exports from North America are being traded for

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growing imports of consumer goods from Asia. The World Trade Organisation reports that the value of exports to China from North America between 2000 and 2004 grew at an annual average rate of 21%, while imports grew by 20% annually.\(^4\)

Canada is a part of this movement. Between 1995 and 2005 Canada’s exports to China doubled from $3.5 billion to $7.1 billion and imports increased over five times from $5 billion to $30 billion. By 2020 China is expected to account for 60% of all Asian-North American trade.

Asian economic growth is also contributing to the new economic pressures for energy investment and urban expansion now driving much of the Western Canadian economy. The International Energy Agency reports Asia-Australasia as the largest single energy-consuming region in the world and larger than North America.

Oilsands and other western Canadian energy developments are further expanding the energy related transportation demands into Asia and the United States. Increased urbanization, directly related to the energy and trade boom, is creating expanded urban north-south corridors, particularly in Alberta from Fort McMurray to Edmonton to Red Deer to Calgary to Lethbridge and from the B.C. Lower Mainland south into U.S. Cascadia. New high-speed rail links are now under consideration for these emerging urban corridors.

Many traditional sectors of the western economy in rural areas, agriculture and manufacturing are finding their transportation services, resources and infrastructure capacities redirected towards the new and emerging transport demands of Asian trade, the major energy projects and the growing megapolitan areas.

Rodrigue’s review of Asian corridors and development identifies strong social, economic and transport relationships between gateways and corridors. He notes

that: “Conventional approaches to urbanization have tended to split the territorial functions of economic systems from the distribution functions of the transport system. We have proposed that corridors provide integration between those functions. They reinforce the convergence of transactions and spatial accumulation. The structure and regulation of corridors put the emphasis on major articulation points where transaction functions are performed. Their maritime/land interface supports transshipment functions between vast forelands and hinterlands.”

These growing global trade pressures are reshaping the North American transportation system creating pressures on nearly all North American ports particularly on the west coast, increasing shipments on the continent’s railways and, at times, diverting rail container traffic onto an already stressed road system.

Asia-Pacific trade flows to and from North America are leading a growth in continental traffic, often using the northern Canadian routes to access Asia from the United States. In doing so a growing volume of Canadian traffic is displaced.

Yet major new development and investment opportunities will be associated with the gateways and their related trade corridors that emerge to service Asian-North American trade growth. Worldwide containerization of ocean shipping has combined with China becoming a major component in any global supply chain. Canada is centrally located on the U.S. Asian supply routes and therefore has favourable logistics for manufacturing along the emerging trade corridors. Some of the emerging trade corridor development opportunities have been identified as including:

- Auto parts and competitive auto assembly plants
- Lumber for furniture assembly
- Aerospace mechanical systems
- Telecom equipment manufacturing
- Improved transportation systems
- Plastics
- Production technologies

Improved transportation systems and infrastructure at gateways and along corridors are now, therefore, becoming critical foundations for the next round in Canada’s economic growth requiring huge infrastructure investments to be compatible with the emerging scale of the trade flows and the offshore and ocean infrastructure.

Elements of economics, geography and public administration associated with supply chains will act upon gateways and corridors. This is manifest in terms of pressures ranging from costs such as frictions of border security to regulation. To local versus national interests and more. What seems clear is that gateways and corridors are not simply physical infrastructure, but an integration of managed activities through which the distribution of significant incoming and outgoing transport flows take place by means of transfer and transshipment, and in which

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4 David T. Fung, Western Canadian Container Trade, Presentation to Leaders’ Strategic Forum on Western Canadian Container Traffic, Regina (Saskatchewan), Canada, February 8, 2006
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added value can be obtained by entering new regions and markets with the help of
direct investments.

**CANADA’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

In the 19th Century Western Canada was forged under the National Policy that built the
railway west and exported grains east to Dominion and Empire. The rail network of mainline and branch lines united Canada, settled the Prairies and connected the West to Eastern Canada and the World. Western Canada’s subsequent road, air and community infrastructure developed around that core east-west rail network.

Canadian national transportation policy, laws and regulations, including subsidies like the Crows Nest Freight Rates, were developed to meet contemporary national goals and objectives within the geographic confines of Canada’s national boundaries. Subsequent National Transportation Acts fundamentally changed these approaches from making transportation a direct tool of national policy by one of encouraging transportation to be competitive and efficient and thereby provide a basis for the competitiveness of Canadian industry. The provinces implemented their own transportation policies within the national framework for movement in Canada.

In spite of Canada’s national trade dependence now approaching one trillion dollars each year and expected to grow by 40% by 2020, Canada’s trade infrastructure and transport frameworks retain their 20th Century foundations. Canada’s transportation policy frameworks, federal and provincial, have moved only slowly to meet the changing conditions of a rapidly changing world transport marketplace. An economy focused on global markets requires a likeminded transportation policy.

On the ground road infrastructure financing deficits remain large on many urban and freight routes. In the air, movement towards Open Skies policies moved Canada slowly into the North American and global air marketplaces. Provincial barriers to international trade remain in place and transportation standards across the country have yet to be harmonized. Capital constraints remain for many ports and airports to meet the emerging demands.

Major Canadian rail carriers expanded to become major continental railroads. However, the related infrastructure, institutional, regulatory, fiscal and financing frameworks for all modes of transportation have yet to fully accommodate the emerging continental wave of Asia-Pacific North American trade flows. Debates on public and private financing options continue while the global and continental marketplaces and the growth in trade and transportation continue in spite of often constraining domestic policy frameworks and public infrastructure capacities.

An important start has been made on transport policy reform for Asia-Pacific Trade with federal and provincial commitments to strategic infrastructure contained in the federal Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative investments to reduce bottlenecks in the B.C. Lower Mainland, at Prince Rupert and to the east and in the provincial western transportation ministers Western Canada Transportation Infrastructure Strategy for an Economic Network that identifies strategic economic transport investments.

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These all represent important starts at a new transportation policy framework for Canada in an era of rapidly growing Asia-Pacific and continental North American trade. However, the magnitude of the transportation growth and its implications for gateway and corridor development in the context of global and continental transportation systems will not be resolved by investment alone. Much transport investment to date represents a recovery from the severe infrastructure deficits of the past two decades that too often left bottlenecks and barriers on both public, private and multi-modal transportation networks.

The challenge for federal and provincial governments today is to move ahead of the emerging trade flows to create policies and commercial frameworks to provide Canada with a competitive transportation advantage for the development of Asian trade with North America. This may involve increased infrastructure investments, inland ports, gateway and corridor designations, improved border clearances, grade separations and new competitive, regulatory and information management frameworks and institutions.

Past practice is unlikely to meet the need. With massive infrastructure investment already underway in China and the United States, Canada will be challenged to keep pace. Indeed Canada's position calls for strategic initiatives to reduce the costs of transportation friction. The average exporter pays $9 in transportation costs for each $1 in tariffs. Gravity models of international trade show that a common border, common language and belonging to a common regional trading bloc have a much larger effect (by a factor of 80 to 300 times) on facilitating trade than a reduction of physical distance by 1%.

The resolution of transport issues is far more than trade, economics or commerce alone. Transport infrastructure is usually shared with people engaged in both their economic and social lives. Growing trade will encourage the movement of peoples between Asia, Canada and the United States along the new corridors creating new personal, family, social and institutional relationships across North America and the Pacific. Policy frameworks for the movement of people become equally important in providing for personal mobility throughout the gateway-corridor combinations.

ISSUES AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION RELATED TO CANADA’S ASIA-PACIFIC GATEWAY AND CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENTS

It is clear that trade gateways and corridors result from many social, historical, economic, commercial, institutional and regulatory forces that shape the geography of transport systems from time to time. As the world currently reshapes many of its global trading patterns, particularly with respect to Asia-Pacific and continental North American trade, there are opportunities to shape Canada’s future role in the movement of goods and services. All regions of Canada can benefit by strengthening the Asia-Pacific trading framework through modernized transport networks of gateways and corridors.

However, in building Canada’s new transportation systems within continental and global trade flows a number of critical areas related to the development of new transportation networks and their gateway and corridor components will warrant further discussion, evaluation and research. Nine main themes are identified for review and discussion.

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Area 1: Theory of Gateways and Corridors in Transportation and Regional Economics

How do gateways and their corridors evolve? What are the major forces that shape their geography? Will market forces alone self-select the optimal combination of gateways and corridor? How important are strategic government interventions? What about the places left off the main corridors for moving goods and people? How can the hinterlands gain access to the gateway and corridor opportunities?

Area 2: Supply Chains, Gateways and Corridors

Gateways can be seen as hubs in supply chains. They create value by the efficient transfer of goods and information between modes and by linking different geographical areas through corridors. They can exist at the coast or inland. How will the growing traffic flows between Asia and North America provide supply chain opportunities for Canada? How will domestic industries access capacity when an increasing share of infrastructure is being used on continental U.S. - Asian trade? Can Canada become an interim stop on the new continental trade corridors?

Area 3: Gateways, Corridors and Competitiveness

New gateway and corridor networks are changing the competitive frameworks for transportation in North America. What makes gateways competitive and how can competitive gateways support the competitiveness of other activities in Canada? Should transport competition be structured within the emerging continental network? Are there shipper and consumer benefits that would become available by encouraging the development of continental systems of movement and competition?

Area 4: Institutional Frameworks for Governance

Gateways and their networks of corridors cross provincial, national and even international boundaries raising major issues of governance, regulation and policy. How may policies and institutions have to change to support the development of efficient and competitive systems of gateways and corridors? How can national transport law, regulation and policy adapt to the new realities of movement while maintaining national coherence? While NAFTA governs North American trading relations is it time to make the domestic Agreement on Internal Trade effective to remove inter provincial barriers to trade and transportation? Are new transnational institutional frameworks required to manage gateway and corridor networks?

Area 5: Land Use/Urban Planning/Environment

Gateways have national importance yet their elements are physically located locally. Commonly there are differences of views between local priorities and national considerations. Nowhere is this more obvious than in land use planning where land is at a premium as in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland.
Gateways and their freight corridors geographically concentrate traffic, creating potential local disturbances (noise, congestion, etc.), environmental pollution with CO2 emissions and influence the structure of trade flows into the future. Investment choices must be made that take these dimensions into account. Balancing global competitive and local social and environmental interests becomes a special challenge. How can the long-term commercial and economic interests of the country adapt to the local concerns of citizens and their long-term vested interests?

**Area 6: Smart Gateways and Corridors -- Borders & Security**

The new global trading networks cross many jurisdictions creating security risks at border crossing points. Questions of how supply chains can remain secure, security risk and management systems have become priorities. Secure infrastructure, internationally recognized security standards or best practices can be used to increase the competitive advantage for Canada’s ports through the Pacific Gateway initiative vis-à-vis other North American and Pacific ports. These concerns are far more than terrorist threats, but can also consider the threat environment more generally in a real world trading environment of product safety and security, wide variations in product standards and continuous requirements for documentation and tracking.

**Area 7: Information Management**

A gateway requires that goods move seamlessly across modes and geographic boundaries. It also needs the transfer of vast amount of information between parties to ensure that the title of goods is clear and the shipment is routed effectively across and between modes and across jurisdictions. When gateways and corridors stretch across the continent from east to west and north to south there are few institutional or information bases on this scale. How can information be best restructured to meet the realities of continental and global movement? Can improved data management support increased competition, improved productivity and more efficient logistics?

**Area 8: Public and Private Investments in Gateways and Corridors**

Gateway development might require new arrangements to manage and allocate the risks between various private and public parties. This could involve consideration of public investments in facilities or access to infrastructure in commercialized or private entities. These realities raise important issues about the policy principles that should guide such actions given the various governance regimes and public policies applying to transportation infrastructure providers.

Are financial incentives in either the public or private sectors adequate to provide for infrastructure investments of a quality and scale to meet competitive transportation alternatives? Can Canada mobilize its resources to catch up to the global investments already underway in Europe, Asia and the United States? Is Canada ready for innovative infrastructure financing of its transportation system? Is there an understanding of the scope of infrastructure financing that will provide for infrastructure investments of a quality and scale to meet competitive transportation alternatives? Can Canada mobilize its resources to catch up to the global investments already underway in Europe, Asia and the United States? Is Canada ready for innovative infrastructure financing of its transportation system? Is there an understanding of the scope of infrastructure financing that will
be required to both meet the needs of the North American Asian trade flows, the expanding energy markets and the continued growth of Canadian cities and the national economy?

Area 9: Review of International Best Practices

Around the world there are many examples of successful international gateways in the world (e.g. Shanghai, Singapore, Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, etc.). Understanding how this experience can be applied to Canadian conditions and the role that the government and the private sector have played in their development will be important to the creation of new Canadian systems. Can the offshore global success with gateway and corridor development be applied to Canadian conditions?

If the gateway and corridor strategy is to succeed, it will take more than simply investing in the local infrastructure of ports, airports and roads, where the emphasis seems to be.

In our view, the gateway and corridor strategy is not simply about facilitating transshipment of goods across the region. It should also be about creating value added services and the development of a significant logistics industry that among other things reduces the cost of the border to shippers. It is about securing the movement of people undertaking the trade and strengthening the social, intellectual, research and policy ties throughout the network.

Our research and dialogue will focus on a number of strategic issues, including infrastructure funding, border management and security and linkages between local, provincial and national policies for both freight and people. It will examine the relationships of the gateway and corridor systems within the wider continental and transpacific transportation networks. It is structured to provide a multidisciplinary framework for review and analysis with the best research, minds and advice from academia, research, industry and government.

A CONCLUSION AND INVITATION TO FOLLOW UP

The Prairie Roundtables and Vancouver Conference held in connection with the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative is the start of a process that will contribute to research, policies and procedures designed to improve the international competitiveness and productivity of Canada’s economy and its multi-modal transportation networks.

We will continue to welcome your views after the roundtables and conference discussions and for that reason have established a website at www.GatewayCorridorResearchConsortium.ca to provide the results of the discussions in this area and to continue to solicit your views on issues, opportunities and priorities for improving Canada’s Transportation Gateways and Corridors related to the continental movement of goods and services into the growing Asia-Pacific trade.

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