

5. Findings

Manitoba and Winnipeg are well positioned and have some exceptional competitive advantages in addition to those already mentioned.

- * They have a large transportation infrastructure already serving the east-west traffic and increasingly active in corridor trade.
- * They offer the shortest gateway route and least travel time for trucks moving to Mexico from anywhere on the Canadian prairies.
- * They have a progressive 24-hour airport, with the presence of major carriers and the Winnport initiative, offering an array of services and connections throughout the world.
- * They are the head office location for eight of Canada's largest trucking companies.
- * They have valuable multicultural and multilingual capabilities such as the large francophone business community, able to serve national and international call centres.
- * They have educational and training facilities with capabilities in technical trades to support the business community.
- * They are locations that have wide visitor appeal for their outdoor activities and eco-tourism.
- * And, they have a vibrant business climate in which transportation and trade are recognized for their crucial role in the economy.

The fundamental strengths of Manitoba and Winnipeg are enhanced even more by the opportunities created by the corridor. The considerable attractiveness of the province as a location for industry and as an increasingly important gateway centre are strengthened by the north-south reorientation of trade and business. It is reinvigorating Winnipeg, in particular, and reinforcing its traditional role as a vital transportation centre.

The Mid-Continent International Trade Corridor and its gateways have competitive strengths relative to other north-south routes, such as the other corridors mentioned earlier. It is widely accessible from all directions and has increasingly updated inter-modal capabilities, including air transport. Being located at the centre of the continent, it has a larger geographic window than other corridors. And, it runs through favorable flat, dry terrain, with fewer weather-related interruptions.

Markets throughout the central US and into Mexico can be readily accessed from Manitoba using the corridor. It offers the shortest distance and least travel time between the population centers of Mexico and Western Canada. By incorporating three countries and including the key gateway cities, the corridor provides a breadth of international trade opportunities unsurpassed by others.

Given these advantages, the Mid-Continent International Trade Corridor makes strong economic sense and provides strengths on which Manitoba and Winnipeg can build. In the mandate of this Task Force, there was particular reference to what could be done to advance the involvement of Winnport and Port of Churchill. We found that there were no special measures necessary for either of them, but they would benefit from a series of initiatives that would have broad application to industries and transportation companies in Manitoba and elsewhere across Canada.