

BINATIONAL BORDER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING STUDY

Phase IV Continuing Transportation Planning And Programming

*Prepared for
The Joint Working Committee*

*Barton-Aschman
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April 13, 1998

Preface

U.S./Mexico Binational Border Transportation Planning and Programming Study implements a significant binational policy making document entitled "Memorandum of Understanding on the Planning Process for Land Transport on Each Side of the Border" signed by the federal governments of Mexico and the United States at the first "NAFTA Transportation Summit" held in Washington, D.C., April 29, 1994.

The purpose of this study is to provide policymakers with information needed to establish a continuous, joint, binational, transportation planning and programming process. A goal of this study is to improve the efficiency of the existing binational policy making planning procedures and funding criteria affecting our Border Land Transportation Systems (BLTS). The BLTS should be seen as a binational transportation system made of international bridges and border crossings and land connections to major urban and/or economic centers, principal seaports, airports and multimodal/transfer stations, and ultimately, to national transportation facilities.

Disclaimer

The purposes of the Binational Planning and Programming Study and all of its reports were: to investigate current state and national transportation planning processes in both the United States and Mexico, to review available data on border transportation infrastructure and goods movement, and to recommend an ongoing, binational planning and programming process. The information contained in these reports was not developed to serve as the basis for making funding allocation or distribution decisions at either the federal or state level in the United States.

**BINATIONAL BORDER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING STUDY
PHASE IV REPORT: CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
AND PROGRAMMING MECHANISM**

(subject to expansion if/when the Phase III reports are added to the current material)

This report contains a description of opportunities for conducting continuing binational transportation planning and programming along the U.S.-Mexican border area. This area covers approximately 100 kilometers on each side of the border. The report describes the objectives and principles adopted by the Joint Working Committee (JWC). It also identifies some initial concepts for the JWC's continuing activities and describes an organizational structure to carry on the activities.

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1. Introduction

This report describes potential opportunities for conducting continuing transportation planning and programming to address binational border area transportation issues, needs, and proposals. While this transportation planning and programming may have broader applicability, it is directed toward addressing binational transportation within the previously defined border area; that is, the area within 100 kilometers on each side of the U.S.-Mexican border.

On April 29, 1994, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the United States and Mexico. This Memorandum of Understanding created a Joint Working Committee (JWC) charged with:

- analyzing,
- developing, and
- coordinating...

border transportation plans and programs...reflecting needs of both countries. It is also clear that the U.S.-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group (BBBCG) will continue to exchange information regarding existing and proposed new or expanded bridges and border crossings as well as major program development with direct impact on the U.S.-Mexican border area.

This Memorandum of Understanding indicates that the JWC would not make decisions or direct transportation, planning, programming, operations, or any other aspect currently performed by U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and local government agencies. However, the Memorandum of Understanding did contemplate enhanced communications, coordination, advice, and consensus building among the entities on both sides of the border.

The binational border transportation planning and programming study, of which this report is a part, consists of five phases which have resulted in:

- enhanced communication and working relationships among U.S. and Mexican border transportation entities
- familiarization with a variety of conditions, practices, policies, trends, issues, needs, and in general, ways of conducting transportation planning, programming, and operational activities
- discussion among the participants of a variety of transportation planning, programming, and operational issues and needs; these have been limited not only to traditional issues and needs facing transportation agencies, but also to those facing institutions and non-transportation agencies involved in border transportation
- Establishment of a goal for binational transportation to be addressed by the JWC:
to improve the efficiency of binational transportation, with an emphasis on trade, through coordinated, existing, ongoing transportation planning and programming processes
- understanding of how federal and border transportation agencies work and desire to work related to binational and border area transportation issues
- increased understanding and recognition of the activities and implications of enforcement and other agencies affecting border area transportation

- recognition of the factors needed to meet the overall goal improving the efficiency of binational transportation

One of the desired outcomes for the study was to establish a framework for coordinating transportation planning and programming for the border area. With many agencies and private companies from both countries involved in or affecting binational transportation, it is clear that a group mechanism is necessary to facilitate and enhance communication and coordination. The existing JWC, with redefined functions, is the appropriate group.

The role of the JWC was discussed at length during its meetings for this study. It was concluded that the JWC should:

- facilitate the *communication* among the state, local and federal groups responsible for border transportation planning in Mexico and the United States
- serve as a forum for the *coordination* of border transportation planning and programming activities while respecting the differing transportation planning processes and requirements that exist in both countries

It was also recognized that other binational border area transportation issues could also be discussed through the JWC.

This report is presented as a suggested approach with specific opportunities for the organization and activities of a JWC. Opportunities are outlined for a program which coordinates and supports binational transportation planning and programming. It is contemplated that the planning and programming functions discussed through the JWC would be those that affect major transportation facilities within the border area and which serve trade between the two countries.

The planning and programming would be mainly directed toward roads and railroads which accommodate the bulk of the trade between the United States and Mexico. However, the planning and programming considerations will involve support facilities to those roads and railroads and will involve other modes of transportation, either directly or indirectly as individual cases require. It is also assumed that the activities of the JWC would not be limited strictly to traditional transportation planning and programming but could also involve transportation operations, policy, maintenance and other aspects of transportation as it affects binational trade.

This report suggests an organizational structure for the JWC. The organizational structure for the JWC must support its adopted functions.

Also included in this report is a description of possible future continuing program activities. These include several different but related areas of activity. All activities are presented as opportunities for continuing activities. Most could be moved between initial and future initiation.

The current document is the first draft of this report. The final draft is planned to include output from Phase III tasks involving methods for projecting cost, benefits, impacts, and selected transportation planning and programming procedures suggested for this continuing program.

2.

Transportation Planning And Programming Objectives

During the later stages of this study, the JWC discussed at length the potential objectives for supporting the continuing transportation planning and programming mechanism. The objectives were ultimately based on considerations of a number of different approaches which could be taken. These ranged from a very strong role in which the JWC could assume some of the planning and programming roles to minimal activities other than an annual coordination workshop.

2.1 The Need

The JWC concluded that its activities should continue to focus on the area within approximately 100 kilometers on each side of the U.S.-Mexican border. Existing federal, state, and local agencies would still maintain their independent responsibilities. It was also concluded that increased communication and coordination among the states and federal agencies on both sides of the border is necessary in order to achieve the desired transportation system efficiency in the border area.

More specifically, there was a strong desire to eliminate or minimize the occurrence of “disconnects” in transportation facilities, operations, plans, and policies. “Disconnects” are considered here to be inconsistencies or discontinuities in transportation plans, programs, facilities, operations, and policies. For example, if a bridge between the United States and Mexico was planned, but the respective road approaches to the ends of the bridge were built in different years, there would be a time disconnect. That is, the two bridge approaches would not be completed and ready to operate at about the same time, and there would be no major roads on one or both sides to connect it to the major highway system.

Typical disconnects include:

- project definition -- location, capacity, or character of a border transportation infrastructure project, such as bridges, major connecting highways, railroad border crossings, etc.
- project timing -- scheduling for implementation of a border transportation project, operational change, or policy
- funding availability -- ability to commit and expend funds at approximately the same time for a binational project or several elements of a project which are required to complete a system on one or both sides of the border
- conflicting priorities -- projects, policies, or operations differ on both sides of the border because priorities or policies differ and the desired end results are different
- changing operations -- operations by transportation, enforcement, or other entities change in one part of the facility or program and not another and therefore create difficulties in the overall system operations
- lack of system optimization -- different parts of a system operate at a greater or lesser efficiency creating discontinuities of capacity or efficiency.

2.2 Reasons For Disconnects

There are a number of reasons why disconnects currently exist. These may be of a political, economic, operational, and legal/regulatory nature. Some of these are:

Economic

- inadequate funding exists to address all transportation needs
- local economic and social interests influence projects, needs, priorities, and feasibility; such interests are not consistent from area to area, jurisdiction to jurisdiction, or between the two countries

Political

- politics, policies, and priorities change over time; these changes are not always consistent between entities on one or both sides of the border
- lack of coordination between federal, state, and local agencies which have jurisdiction in border matters

Operational

- problems are complex and require comprehensive knowledge to properly address
- inadequate data influences decision makers and the data has not always been consistent among all entities
- inspection and enforcement actions have transportation implications; these actions are not always consistent with the goal of transportation efficiencies
- lack of common methods among the various entities involved in binational border transportation

Legal and Regulatory

- multiple jurisdictions with independent decision making and implementation authorities
- transportation solutions are influenced by practices, laws, and regulations which are not necessarily consistent among border transportation entities
- inconsistent operational procedures and policies by entities involved in transportation in the border area
- differences in weight and length of trucks and standards for infrastructure designs and materials

2.3 Framework Principles

The JWC agreed that it should focus on, but not exclusively devote its efforts to transportation planning and programming.

Definitions

For the purposes of continuing transportation planning and programming, the JWC agreed on the following definitions:

- Transportation planning: a process to develop proposed transportation actions to serve validated objectives and projected needs
- Transportation programming: coordination of priorities, budgets, and schedules for the implementation of projects and actions

Planning and Programming Horizons

Transportation planning and programming involves projecting forward a number of years. In the United States, typical transportation planning horizons are approximately 20 years. Transportation programs in the four U.S. border states typically extend between six and ten years at the state level and at least three years at the local levels.

In Mexico, the horizons are much shorter because of the turnover in state government administrations every three years. Terms are three or six years and office holders cannot succeed themselves. With elections every three years and half or more of the government legislators and executives being replaced every three years, there is no long term formal planning or programming horizon. Typically transportation programs have been in three year cycles matching the change in administrations. Given that short term, programming has become the primary function and long range planning is limited to the most important regional transportation facilities.

Discussions among the U.S. and Mexican state and federal agencies concluded that the following time horizons should be established for binational border area transportation planning and programming:

- transportation planning -- horizon should be (at least) approximately ten years, with plans updated annually
- transportation programming -- programs should be five years, with annual updates

It was recognized that this timing differs with the existing practices of many of the border transportation entities, but it was felt desirable to try to achieve these goals in order to make possible the coordination of transportation infrastructure and operational improvements and to eliminate current disconnect problems.

Transportation System Principles

It was also agreed that several transportation system principles should be adopted as part of the continuing process. These would be primarily guidelines for transportation planning and programming considerations.

- transportation infrastructure, operations, institutional elements and technologies should be addressed as an integrated package
- infrastructure investments should be optimized from a transportation *systems* perspective; that is, access, border crossings, and operations
- federal, state, and local governments should work together, binationally, and coordinate actions
- efficiency of existing border crossing systems should be considered before new ones are begun; that is, operations at existing border crossings should approach optimization prior to considering additional border crossings in the same corridors.¹
- actions should be prioritized; highest priorities should be addressed first
- infrastructure and operational investments should be guided by long range plans and strategies

¹ A border crossing system includes not only the immediate highway or bridge, but also the access roads, inspection facilities, and other infrastructure and operations involved in a truck or train passing across the border.

Institutional Considerations

The continued existence of multiple institutions and jurisdictions must be recognized. Several federal agencies have jurisdiction over certain aspects of transportation in the border area. In Mexico, the multitude of agencies involved in planning for construction of infrastructure and the operation and regulation include the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation (SCT), the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE), the Secretariat of Housing and Public Credit (SHCP), the Secretariat of the Interior (SEGOB), the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAGAR), and the Attorney General of the Republic (PGR). In transportation planning and programming phases, the SCT and SRE are both important Mexican entities in border area transportation. SCT is charged with funding, constructing, and operating the most important highway facilities in the border area. SRE is involved in the approval of all binational transportation facilities (i.e., bridges and border crossings).

On the U.S. side of the border, the Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Department of State (DOS) are both heavily involved in border area transportation. However, the role of USDOT is somewhat different than that of the SCT. The USDOT provides funding and many of the policies and regulations associated with transportation. However, the states and some local agencies are primary implementers and operators of transportation. As it relates to transportation, the DOS's role is similar to that of SRE.

In the United States, states are the primary funders and implementers of major roadway facilities in the border area. In Mexico, the states have less funding, but nevertheless are involved in some funding, construction, and operation of roadway infrastructure.

Federal agencies on both sides of the border are involved in building, operating, and maintaining major road systems. In U.S. urbanized area with populations over 50,000, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) work with state and local governments to plan and program infrastructure improvements, although the MPOs have no role in construction and operation. Hence, it is easy to see that many agencies at various levels are involved and planning, programming, implementing, operating, and maintaining roadway infrastructure facilities.

At local levels and in the private sector, the involvement is similar on both sides of the border. With Mexico's railroads now being privatized, the railroads on both sides of the border will be handled similarly by the private sector.

Transportation across the international boundary involves inspection by federal agencies to enforce immigration and import laws and regulations. Although different types of federal agencies are involved, their objectives are similar: to prevent contraband from crossing the border, to ensure proper identification and documentation of individuals, and to ensure that proper tariffs and duties are paid for imported items. Since virtually all inspections occur at border crossings, inspections impact transportation efficiency at the border. The objectives and priorities of the inspection agencies are not necessarily consistent with those of the transportation agencies. Therefore the inspection agencies bring different priorities and perspectives to the border transportation process.

Several institutional considerations need to be kept in mind when considering what the transportation planning and programming process should and can include:

- Formal agreements for border bridges and crossings fall under the auspices of DOS and SRE; these agencies must be involved in all international agreements involving transportation infrastructure (see Task 4 report).
- In Mexico, border bridges and major roads to the bridges and crossings fall under the jurisdiction of SCT.

- In the United States, most major access roads to the bridges and roads crossing the border are under the jurisdiction of the border state departments of transportation (DOTs).
- Local entities in border states also have jurisdiction over supporting transportation linkages leading to the border crossings.
- Federal inspection agencies are responsible for the operations of the port of entry (POEs) and inspection facilities.
- In the United States, the inspection facilities are generally built and owned by the General Services Administration (GSA) and leased to the federal inspection agencies.
- No single entity in either Mexico or the United States is commissioned to serve as the coordinating entity for border area transportation systems.
- Perhaps most important, numerous border area transportation agencies have jurisdiction for planning, prioritizing, funding, and operating border area transportation facilities; these numerous agencies must work together cooperatively to coordinate trade corridor and general transportation investments are to be carried out efficiently without disconnects.

2.4 Responsibilities Initially Assigned to the JWC

The April 29, 1994 Memorandum of Understanding made the JWC responsible for planning activities that would address the long term growth patterns, creation of coordinated planning data sets, and other border (highway) transportation planning information. These activities were to enable the states on both sides of the border to better coordinate border access roads, border crossings, efforts to alleviate congestion, and other border transportation needs. As mentioned previously, the JWC was charged with analyzing, developing, and coordinating border transportation plans and programs to reflect the needs of both countries.

It was concluded that this general charge should be a continuing responsibility of the JWC. However, this was with the understanding that the JWC would not have any direct role in the federal permit process for border bridges and border crossings, except as requested.

2.5 Program Objectives

With the above considerations as background, the JWC suggested the following objectives for the continuing transportation planning and programming:

- Increase binational border area transportation system *efficiency*
- *Eliminate disconnects* in plans, funding, scheduling, and operations
- Improve *communication* among border transportation entities, including both public agencies and private sector transportation providers
- Improve *coordination* of transportation planning and programming as well as policies and operations
- Strive to achieve *consensus* among the border area transportation entities on issues of importance to binational transportation (with an emphasis on trade)
- Establish and maintain a binational *data bank*
- *Maintain the existing transportation programs and processes* of participating public agencies involved planning and programming transportation improvements in the border area
- *Conduct special studies* to address issues identified by the JWC
- *Provide support* to border area transportation entities in areas of transportation planning and programming need

The remainder of this report describes a proposed approach to meeting these objectives. This includes an overall concept, a suggested organization through which the proposed process and program can be delivered, and a suggested set of activities which could be carried out.

3.

Transportation Planning And Programming Approach

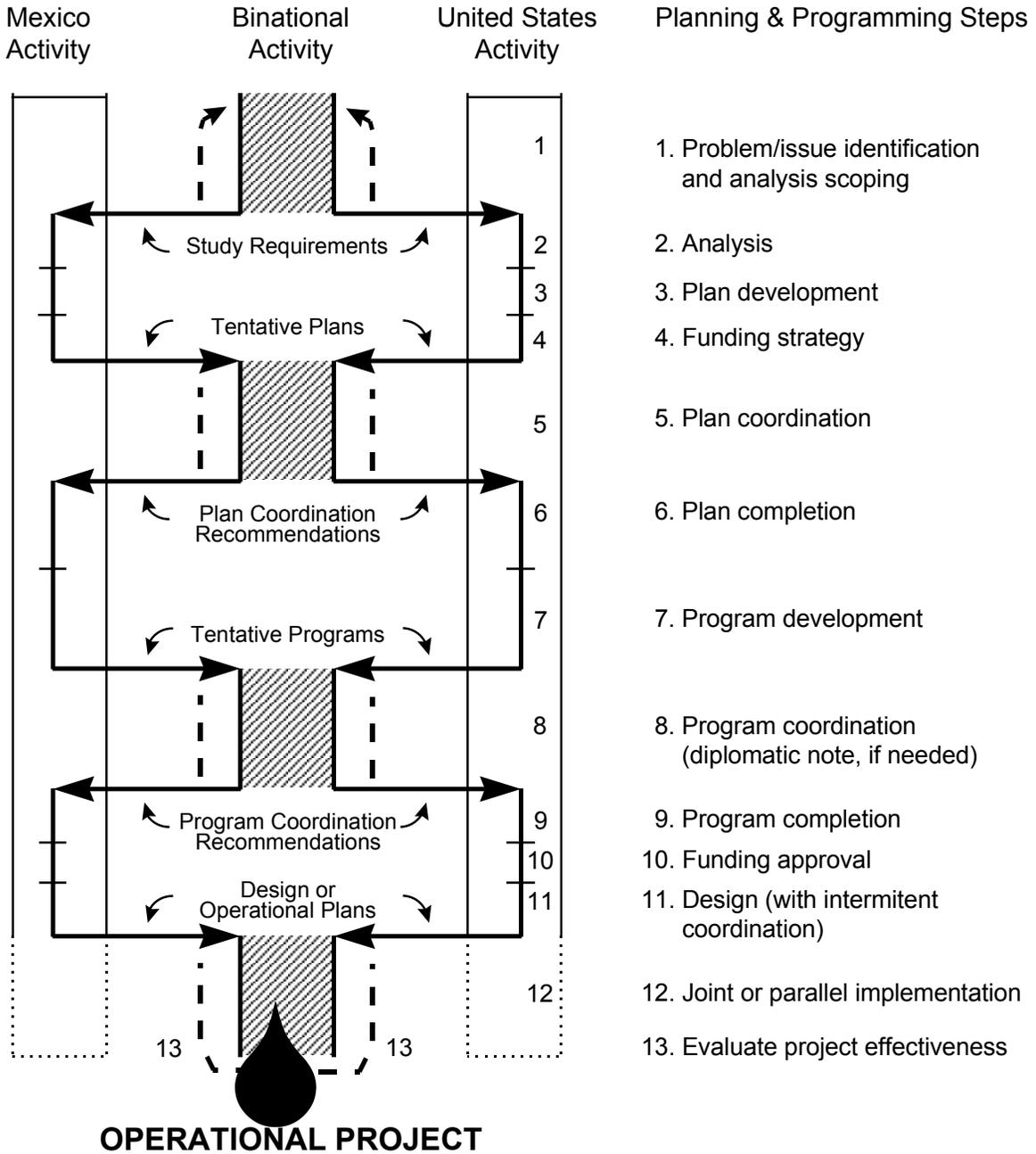
In the previous chapter, three of the objectives are directed toward achieving increased communication, coordination, and ultimately helping to develop consensus among the entities involved in implementing various aspects of binational transportation. At the same time, it is recognized that the existing individual entities must be able to continue independent transportation planning and programming activities. To eliminate the disconnects between different governmental agency processes, there needs to be a substantial increase in communication and coordination.

Figure 1 schematically illustrates a suggested approach for transportation planning and programming which respects the individual agency processes, yet provides the opportunity for communication and coordination at critical points. Each agency can still maintain its individual planning, programming, and implementation processes and responsibilities.

The proposed concept adds communication and coordination in at least five areas considered to be critical (for agreement about issues, plans, and programs):

- *Step 1 - Problem/issue identification and analysis scoping.* Various entities from both sides of the border would meet to discuss their objectives, needs, and specific issues related to binational transportation and would jointly identify what would need to be done to address the plan and program implications of these needs. They would jointly identify and describe activities to be undertaken to address those needs in a coordinated way. This could happen at least once per year, and more frequently as needed. Additional communication and coordination would be needed as specific items are addressed in more detail. Issue identification would usually be an “almost continuous” process, so no specific frequency has been suggested for this kind of activity.
- *Step 4 - Plan coordination.* Individual entities would proceed after the scoping of efforts to address objectives, issues, problems, proposals, etc. They would conduct their own analyses and develop overall transportation plans. This would include not only new plans, but also a review and an update of existing plans. These plan proposals would then be brought to Step 4 for binational discussion and coordination. Entities on both sides of the border would discuss those projects which have binational implications. This would not necessarily include all projects within the border area, but would include those which involve border crossings, border access facilities, and supporting infrastructure (e.g., intermodal terminals). Typical coordination might involve locations of new or improved facilities, amount of capacity to be provided, type of facility, how to address major environment or other concerns, etc. Ideally the outcome of such coordination would be recommendations to the individual entities regarding what refinements might be needed to make the planned transportation improvements fully compatible and of optimized efficiency.
- *Step 8 - Program Coordination.* After Step 4, the individual entities on both sides of the border would complete their plans, develop funding strategies for specific plan components, and begin to develop a program for implementation. This program would involve both funding and scheduling. Once the tentative programs were developed, the

Figure 1 Binational Transportation Planning/Programming Coordination Concept



Source: Barton-Aschman - La Empresa, 1997

binational interests would then again coordinate primarily on timing. This would involve a discussion of available funding and various scheduling implications, some of which would involve considerations other than funding. For those projects which specifically involve border crossings, interaction with DOS and SRE would be necessary in order to obtain a Presidential permit or authorization to proceed with the border crossing. These processes both involve agreement between the two countries. All of this would be discussed during Step 8. Not only would the scheduling be coordinated, but also the steps necessary in order to obtain funding commitments should be discussed. Subsequent to Step 8 the implementation program would be completed. Funding and other approvals would be obtained and design and other implementation aspects initiated. Work with DOS and SRE to obtain authorization to begin construction through an exchange of diplomatic notes.

- *Step 12 - Implementation.* At such time as binational projects could proceed, the responsible U.S. and Mexican agencies would begin implementation. Ideally the objective would be for the operation of the transportation improvement to be able to commence on both sides of the border at approximately the same time. The agencies involved would need to communicate regarding projected completion dates, duration of implementation preparations, and other necessary critical dates. Any joint construction would need continuing discussion and coordination. The same is true of any temporary conditions such as traffic management during construction. In many cases it would be desirable to jointly implement changes. Prior to becoming operational, involved agencies must coordinate plans to begin operation with DOS and SRE so an exchange of diplomatic notes may occur authorizing the facilities to enter into operation.
- *Step 13 - Evaluation of Operational Efficiency.* The operational effectiveness of binational transportation facilities and operations should be evaluated on an occasional or regular basis. While these evaluations could be done individually on one or both sides of the border, the timing should be coordinated and discussions held about appropriate conclusions. If revisions or refinements are needed, these would become Step 1 of a subsequent planning, programming, or operations action cycle.

This concept is suggested for all planning, programming and similar actions by the JWC. The basic concept is coordination prior to decision points. In Figure 1, the decision points are during definition of study requirements, after tentative plan development (or before the preferred alternative is selected), after tentative program development, and implementation. Communication and coordination prior to those actions should result in substantial improvement in binational transportation planning and programming and should result in substantially fewer instances of disconnects.

4. Organization

In Mexico there are six states and two federal agencies which need to be involved in the communication and coordination process for highway and rail infrastructure. This is especially true since the Mexican government is in the process of decentralizing its transportation responsibilities.

On the U.S. side there are four states and a dozen federal agencies. In addition, there are a total of eight MPOs which have planning and programming responsibilities within the border area. As a result, it will be necessary to set up some kind of organizational structure to facilitate the transportation planning and programming communication and coordination that will be needed.

This chapter suggests a possible organizational structure and describes suggested roles, responsibilities, and personnel.

4.1. Organizational Objectives

The organizational structure and variations which are suggested in this chapter are devised to meet the following structural objectives:

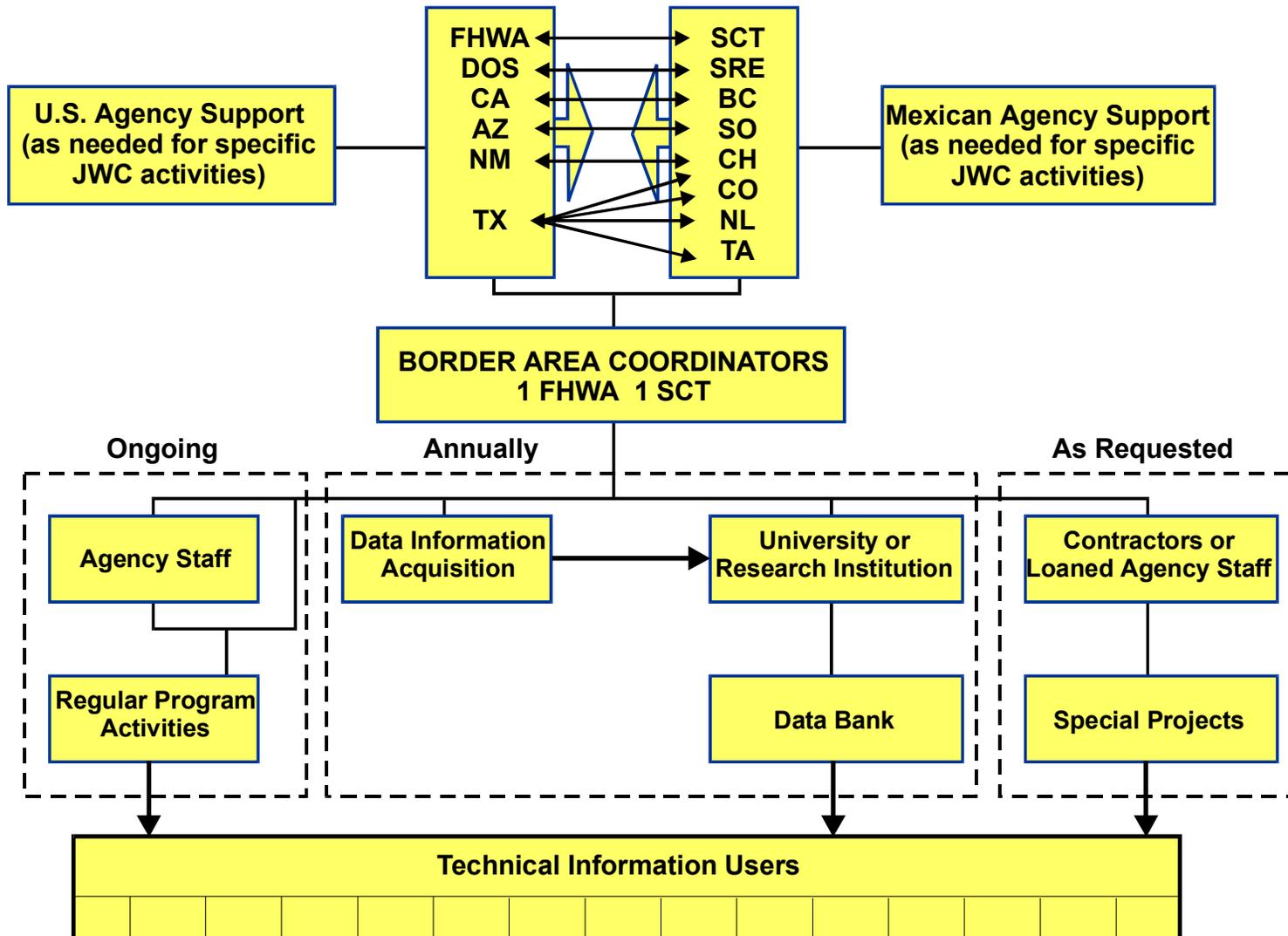
- Retain existing agency transportation planning and programming and related activities.
- Emphasize communication as a means to coordinate plans, projects, and programs which have binational interest.
- Facilitate sharing of information.
- Provide specific supporting services needed to effectively carry out the communication, coordination, planning and programming activities.
- Employ the smallest possible staff.
- Have a flexible and effective organization.
- Provide true binational orientation.
- Facilitate acceptance of communication and coordination activities by the federal, state, and local agencies as well as with the United States-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossing Group.

4.2. Organizational Structure

Figure 2 shows the suggested organizational structure for the JWC. The concept for this structure was developed over several meetings by the JWC and agreed upon at the December 2-4, 1997 meeting in Tampico, Tamaulipas.

All JWC activities would be discussed by and agreed to by the U.S. and Mexican JWC members. These are shown as the top center rectangles in Figure 2. It is contemplated that the state and federal representatives would be equal in authority. There could be one member selected from each state plus the primary federal agency representatives (USDOT, DOS, SCT, SRE).

Figure 2 Joint Working Committee Organization



Source: Barton-Aschman - La Empresa, 1997

Because most of the activities carried out by the JWC are expected to relate to transportation infrastructure planning and programming, it is suggested that the JWC members should be from the department offices which are responsible for transportation planning and programming. However, it is recognized that other policy, construction, operations, legal or regulatory issues may arise and that JWC members may wish to involve staff from other disciplines from their agencies or jurisdictions. It is important that JWC members be capable of making decisions or recommendations on behalf of their agencies. It is suggested that the state and federal representatives be their agency directors of transportation planning and programming departments or divisions. Clearly the DOS and SRE are not transportation agencies; their representatives would most appropriately be the co-chairs of the Binational Bridges And Border Crossings Group (see Task 4 report).

It is suggested that there be co-chairs of the JWC. These co-chairs would be the representative of either the USDOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Secretariat of Communication and Transport (SCT).

JWC Staff

As mentioned above, the role of the JWC would be to facilitate communication and coordination, support efforts to develop consensus, establish and maintain a binational transportation data bank, support planning and programming activities, and provide additional support for related activities. The JWC agreed that two staff members would support the JWC so their activities could be accomplished.

At least initially, one full-time person would be employed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and one by SCT. The staff would ensure communication and to coordinate among the federal and state agencies within their countries to identify issues, needs, and proposals needing coordination and communication. They would also help coordination between entities in the United States and Mexico. The staff would frequently communicate with JWC members as well as top level staff within the participating agencies. In some instances they might also need to coordinate with federal inspection agencies in the two countries.

To establish an effective data bank, it will be necessary to establish certain criteria and to continually work with the various JWC members and other suppliers of transportation-related information to ensure accessibility and, to the extent possible, consistency and compatibility of data. Task 17 establishes the criteria for the binational transportation data bank. It also establishes how that data bank will be maintained and expanded over time. That information is not repeated here but can be found in the Task 17 report.

The JWC concluded that perhaps the most appropriate way to administer the data bank would be to contract with a research institution or university (one institution or one in each country) to operate and maintain the data bank². The JWC would direct the border planning coordinators to convert the JWC's data bank objectives into a scope of work for the contract services to support the data bank.

Contract support would also be needed to accomplish specific technical support activities needed to address certain areawide binational transportation issues and needs. For example, special studies, specific research, or other items not easily provided by JWC member agencies would need to be provided in this manner. This would also be the case if agencies offer staff support

² At time this report was prepared, it appeared that the recommended data bank structure would result in a number of separate data banks coordinated through a common index. Individual data banks would be accessible to all JWC entities participating in the data bank program. See Task 17 report for details.

for JWC activities; the border planning coordinators would direct the schedule and logistical aspects of such tasks on behalf of the JWC.

The border planning coordinators would work with the JWC to establish work programs and financial criteria for such contracts. The coordinators would also oversee the conduct performance under those contracts.

The staff must be bilingual. They must be able to speak and write fluently in both English and Spanish. They should also be familiar with transportation planning and programming issues. Ideally they would have experience in the areas of transportation planning and policy. They should also have experience dealing with high level government agency staff in intergovernmental coordination, with experience helping to resolve issues which are both technical and political. Table 1 also includes additional suggested staff qualifications.

**Table 1
Joint Working Committee Staffing and Duties**

Features	Coordinators	Data Bank
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and coordination of transportation planning and programming (with emphasis on binational trade -oriented issues and proposals within the border area • Prepare annual agency program of activities • Assist in resolving “disconnects“ between the states in transportation planning and programming • Administer contracts for services needed to address special issues requested by the JWC. These could initially include a continuing contract(s) for data bank support. Identify issues to be brought to the JWC • Develop work scopes for requested projects/activities • Organize and attend JWC meetings • Coordinate with and represent JWC with other entities involved in border area transportation or related trade • Maintain an outreach program to obtain and disseminate information about border area transportation plan, program activities, issues and proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide similar and compatible data for use in addressing transportation planning and programming issues (especially binational ones) in the border area • Provide a current index of transportation and planning information usable for (binational) transportation and programming issues and activities • Recommend “standards” or criteria for such data • Establish and maintain a data access/communication system to make such data available to all participating agencies per direction of the JWC • Encourage federal, state, and local agencies and private (trade and transportation) entities to maintain desired data in their own data banks • Develop and disseminate limited summaries of border transportation and trade statistics relevant to border area transportation planning and programming on a periodic basis
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent • Bilingual English and Spanish (writing, verbal) • 1 from each country • Desired experience including transportation planning or policy, experience working with top level government staff on interagency issues, transportation planning/ programming, contract administration experience, familiarity with data banks • Administrative support available in JWC/JWC staff's office(s) on hourly basis including skilled PC usage in normal office, Internet, and e-mail software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico - Mexican Institute of Transport • U.S. - initially FHWA; may later be transferred to a university or research institution in a border state
Location	Offices which handle transportation planning and programming within FHWA (Office of Environment and Planning) and SCT (to be determined)	JWC office or the contractor location(s)
Budget		
Funding Source	U.S. - federal transportation funds Mexico - to be determined	Same as for staff

Source: Barton-Aschman - La Empresa, 1997

5.

Suggested Program

5.1 Introduction

This chapter defines a binational transportation planning and programming program which will help achieve the overall goals and objectives of the JWC. The intent of this program is to develop strategies and procedures which will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the border area transportation system through a process of communication and coordination among border transportation entities.

The existing transportation entities have ongoing planning and programming processes and procedures which address the needs of their respective jurisdictions. Each entity analyzes problems, develops improvement plans, and prioritizes projects for implementation. Therefore, another organization to perform the same activities on a binational level is not needed. However, The JWC is needed to institutionalize the process of communication and encourage and support coordination among these various entities. This will be the greatest opportunity for the implementation and operation of a comprehensive and efficient transportation system in the border area. Its activities will reinforce the efforts of the United States-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossing Group.

In recognition of this need, the two principal goals for the JWC are:

- Facilitate communication among the various groups which are responsible for border area transportation planning in the metropolitan areas, states, and federal governments in the United States and Mexico; and
- Serve as a forum for the coordination of border transportation planning and programming activities, while respecting the different transportation planning requirements that exist within various agencies in both countries.

5.2. Suggested Activities

The JWC considered and discussed possible activities it should pursue. After considering a wide variety of possibilities, the JWC selected twelve basic activities upon which to base its program in the near term. These are:

1. strengthen the network of professional contacts and binational understanding
2. advise the United States-Mexico Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group on related themes building upon products of this study to increase the efficiency of transportation systems
3. facilitate communication and consensus building among the groups responsible for transportation planning in the federal, state, and local governments of the United States and Mexico
4. support the analysis and the joint formulation of projects between federal and state governments of both countries
5. technically review transportation programs/projects before and during binational communications (Binational and federal to state)
6. help to minimize “disconnects” of the plans, programs, funding, and operations

7. distribute and update methodologies developed (in this study and after)
8. act as a forum for the coordination of border transportation activities, respecting the planning processes and requirements existing in both countries
9. supervise the maintenance and updating of the binational data bank with relevant information for border transportation planning and programming
10. conduct special studies to look into specific issues
11. research new financing schemes
12. annual work plan

Possible details of these activities are described in Chapter 6.

6. Program Activities

This chapter provides descriptions of the continuing activities that could be undertaken by the JWC. These activities are intended to be compatible with, build upon, and/or extract from the existing activities and methodologies currently in use in the border area. All activities would be performed with the intention of fulfilling the two principal goals for the planning process, that is, improving communication and improving coordination among the existing transportation planning and programming entities.

Several of the activities described below would be performed by the JWC and/or its technical staff, while others would be performed by existing transportation entities at the request of the JWC.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 12 activity *opportunities* described here are not intended to limit the future activities of the JWC. Other opportunities will be identified over time which could be very beneficial. They, too, may be included in future programs if the JWC feels the need exists.

Activity 1: Strengthen network of professional contacts and binational understanding

Objective: Increase communication and develop improved working relationships and understanding and a high level of trust and respect among those working or having jurisdiction over transportation in the border area to facilitate cooperation and coordination on binational transportation matters.

Description: The JWC would provide a forum for communications and exchanges of information about transportation planning, programming and other aspects of transportation, both binational and in the border area. In addition to agencies that are JWC members, this could also involve other entities providing or operating transportation in the border area.

The JWC would encourage and facilitate exchange of information and addressing issues that affect the efficiency of transportation between the two countries. Information about agency plans, improvement programs, technologies, policies, regulations, and other aspects could be exchanged to increase awareness of the factors which affect transportation decisions along and across the border. The JWC could also periodically publish a newsletter to inform its members and border area transportation interests, such as local transportation agencies, universities, or research institutes, regarding its activities, plans, programs, achievements, and research findings, as well as to solicit comments.

The JWC could also organize workshops annually (or as needed) to discuss and coordinate the border area transportation plans and programs with binational implications. These workshops would be scheduled in conjunction with the development of annual implementation programs and transportation plan updates. The JWC could monitor binational projects and needs over time. At least once a year, the JWC could communicate with the agencies/entities having jurisdiction to determine if those projects, actions, or proposals would be considered for the next (state and/or local) plan or for the one year or three-five year program. If any change was contemplated, the JWC would inform the affected entities. These projects and any others raised by the participants would be discussed, along with any aspects needing binational or other multiagency coordination or attention (e.g., funding, environmental, institutional, or legal). The JWC could follow up on all

actions needing coordination and also publish progress reports on the status of these binational projects.

The JWC could also convene or co-sponsor periodic workshops to discuss information, studies, and/or policies relative to border area and binational trade. The intent would be to identify and discuss issues to increase understanding, as well as approaches for resolving problems through a coordinated binational effort, where appropriate. The meetings would be documented. Any follow-up actions could be referred to the JWC's staff or to the appropriate transportation entities for research or other study and reported back to the interested parties. The JWC would also monitor progress toward the resolution of these issues to ensure that a response, plan, or other action was developed.

Activity 2: Advise the United States-Mexico Binational Bridge and Border Crossing Group (BBBCG)

Objective: Upon request from the DOS, SRE, or BBBCG, provide technical assistance and/or institutional information to assist the BBBCG in its efforts to evaluate border bridge and crossing proposals, technology applications, and operational improvements to improve transportation efficiency at border crossings and access routes.

Description: As the BBBCG reviews proposals and needs for new crossings and efficiency improvements and operational or policy changes, provide, on request, information, assistance, and/or technical reviews. For example, the JWC could provide a "standard" review or evaluation (methodologies and binational technical staff) of proposals in accordance with criteria proposed by the JWC and approved by the DOS and SRE. The request could be transmitted along with information specified in the standard evaluation procedure (received from applicants). After the technical evaluation was completed, a report or memorandum could be prepared containing findings relative to the standard criteria. This report would be largely numerical, but should also include some qualitative responses directly related to specific qualitative criteria, including some based on analyses described in Task 13. Examples of potential criteria are expected changes in travel time; delays; hourly capacity in trucks, total vehicles, tons or value of freight moved; annual truck operating costs; highway/bridge/railway operating and maintenance costs; environmental impacts; etc. The JWC's technical staff could also be available to answer questions for the DOS, SRE, or at a BBBCG meeting, if requested.

The JWC could also assist BBBCG member agencies to conduct transportation movement efficiency evaluations of the type conducted for Task 9 of this study. This could be done in conjunction with planning to improve the facilities or operations at a commercial border station or a request to assess the current state of operational efficiency. Reports could be prepared. The JWC could also assist, through its member agencies, in experimental or trial installations and evaluations of new procedures, equipment, technology, or other changes. This might involve the border crossing facilities or border access routes.

The JWC could also provide information as background to the BBBCG so the BBBCG could be more knowledgeable about border area transportation activities or policies which might influence questions, activities, or responses of its member agencies.

Activity 3: Facilitate communication and consensus building among the groups responsible for transportation planning and programming in federal, state, and local U.S. and Mexican governments

Objective: Increase the communication and trust among the U.S. and Mexican agencies responsible for providing and operating transportation in the border area, especially those parts which are binationally related.

Description: Whereas Activity #1 will build working relationships, trust, and respect, this activity will address specific issues at the JWC level (affecting the entire border area) or among two or more entities trying to work on a binational effort. The JWC could provide a forum for discussion, provide supporting information, or obtain technical or other assistance from one or more of its member agencies. The intent would be to help the participants develop a consensus among themselves and others if needed.

Activity 4: Support the analysis and joint formulation of projects between federal and state governments of both countries

Objective: Support border transportation agencies as they conduct their analyses, planning, funding, design, and plan for implementation of joint U.S.-Mexican transportation projects

Description: Provide supporting information, data from the binational data bank, technical assistance, technology support, analytical assistance, and other support as requested by the participating agencies. The JWC would provide technical support as the agencies work toward projects which have components on both sides of the border. This support would be provided upon request. It might be limited to providing data needed for an analysis or it could be special technical assistance needed to enhance the project's viability or feasibility. It could also be assistance to meet the requirements of a funding source or to gain binational approval or permitting.

Activity 5: Technically review transportation programs/projects

Objective: At the request of transportation and other agencies with projects or operations in the border area, develop and use binational criteria to technically evaluate the projects, policies, and other actions proposed by these entities.

Description: Transportation entities in the border area may make proposals to add or upgrade infrastructure, revise operations or policies, or undertake other actions which could affect binational border area transportation. Under this activity, participating jurisdictions could request that the JWC conduct a technical evaluation, comparing options or evaluating the proposed action(s), relative to established criteria (which could be developed in one of the early years). Upon request from a participating entity, the JWC would specify the criteria to be used and the data needed plus any specific issues to be addressed beyond the normal criteria. Where applicable, the JWC would use standard methodologies (the Task 14 report contains descriptions for common applications) and information from its data bank to conduct the evaluation. The JWC would then document and review its findings with the requesting agency. The evaluation could be refined again, if needed, and the documentation revised and forwarded to the requesting entity. Work would include binational resources and address binational considerations.

Activity 6: Help minimize “disconnects” in plans, programs, funding, and operations

Objective: Encourage and facilitate, when requested, the coordination of plans, programs, and operations of binational transportation infrastructure projects so that these projects will become operational and effective as an integrated transportation system, rather than as disconnected components.

Description: The JWC would work with border area transportation entities to encourage and facilitate coordinated schedules and implementation strategies for the binational components of transportation system infrastructure, operations, and policies. This activity could be accomplished on an annual basis in conjunction with already established planning and programming activities, and at interim times as specific projects demand. A work session among the representatives of

the entities responsible for scheduling, funding, and project implementation (as appropriate) could be convened to discuss projects or other actions under consideration for inclusion in the next annual and three-five year programs. Those projects with binational implications would be discussed to determine whether improved coordination in the scheduling of specific project components would maximize the effectiveness of the intended actions.

Activity 7: Distribute and update binational transportation analysis methodologies

Objective: Distribute and update technical transportation analysis techniques and information to border area transportation entities for use in binational transportation analyses.

Description: The JWC could supplement current technology transfer programs to enhance the exchange of technical transportation analysis methodologies and information for use in binational analyses. This program would build upon existing transportation technology transfer programs. It could also be combined with one or more related binational technology transfer program(s) to make better use of existing exchange organizations and distribution channels. The JWC would package and distribute the methodologies and techniques developed in this study which are applicable for future analyses of binational transportation and related projects.

As part of this activity, the JWC could also update the methodologies as more and better techniques and data become available. The same could be done as other issues are identified and need analysis. It is contemplated that the information would be distributed as a combination of printed material, transportation data in hard copy or electronic form (some downloaded from websites), and computerized or manual analysis routines.

Activity 8: Provide forum for the coordination of binational transportation activities respecting the planning processes and requirements existing in both countries

Objective: Provide a mechanism and a place(s) for border area transportation entities to coordinate the binational components of their transportation activities to provide efficient and effective plans, programs and other actions which are responsive to their needs and in accordance with their own objectives. This activity would not require changes in the agencies' own processes or requirements but would attempt to facilitate needed coordination of agency outputs and questions.

Description: The JWC would assist border transportation entities to discuss, consider, and coordinate binational transportation analyses, proposals, plans, programs, operations, and policies. This would expand upon normal federal and state discussions which now occur. The coordination could extend from issue identification through the data base to the outputs or operations resulting from the efforts. The JWC could encourage the entities to consider binational transportation objectives. The JWC could also encourage and assist the entities to coordinate analyses, evaluations, and transportation plan components which are binational in nature (i.e., border crossings, access/approach routes, associated infrastructure, related operations and policies, etc.). Work sessions could be convened on an as-needed or regular basis to discuss and coordinate schedules and proposals, as well as to discuss and try to resolve any inconsistencies and potential disconnects. The JWC could also publicize the binational components of the plans, and the coordination efforts and results. This would not duplicate the efforts of the BBBCG.

Activity 9: Supervise the maintenance and updating of the binational data bank

Objective: Provide a continuing data bank to support ongoing binational transportation planning and programming activities by border area entities.

Description: One of the responsibilities of the JWC's staff would be to contract for the maintenance and updating of the data bank (for incoming data, obtain updated information for centrally maintained index and verify that data is accessible and meets whatever standards are eventually set; for outgoing data establish and maintain information about where the data resides and how to extract it). The JWC would establish the requirements and procedures for updating the data index (contents, format). The index updates would then be established and entered appropriately. Requests for updates could be sent out to data sources on an annual basis. Occasionally new data might be added to the data bank and its index.

Activity 10: Conduct special studies on specific issues

Objective: Develop information, as requested, in order to address specific binational issues or questions facing border area transportation entities.

Description: The JWC, upon the request of one or more border area transportation entities, would perform (or have a member agency or contractor perform) special studies or analyses to address specific binational transportation issues or questions. The requesting entity would define the issue to be addressed and the JWC would work jointly with the requesting entity, and any others potentially affected, to develop a scope of work. The study would be performed by the JWC's staff, a member agency, or a contractor, with review, input, and/or participation by border area transportation entities. Assumptions, analyses, findings, conclusions, and any recommendations could be reviewed by the JWC and affected entities before they would be finalized. Outputs could be supplied to the requesting and affected entities as well as to JWC members.

Activity 11: Research new financing schemes

Objective: Provide agencies and private entities with information on binational transportation project financing options, based on information obtained from international and binational finance entities.

Description: The JWC could develop and maintain updated information on infrastructure financing, including examples, experiences, and proposals from the border area and from around the world. Continuing communication could be established with multinational, private and regional finance entities. A specialized file on examples and experiences, with bibliographic references, could be created. This file could identify general financing strategies applicable to binational transportation projects. More detailed analyses might be performed by or with project proponents on a case-by-case basis. As part of the process of establishing this specialized file, areas of interest for research would be defined (i.e., assurances, guarantees, investment grades, market and feasibility studies, etc.). A preliminary outline of the suggested activities could be presented for each research area.

Activity 12: Produce annual work program

Objective: Prepare an annual plan of work for the JWC to perform to meet its stated objectives for the year.

Description: The JWC would identify its objectives and what it wants to accomplish for each coming year. Some activities would be repeated on an annual basis; others would be performed on an occasional or one-time basis depending on need. Each activity would meet a specific need identified by the JWC. A detailed description of the activity would be prepared, including objectives, methods to be used, specific steps, inputs required, outputs to be produced, approximate start and finish months, proposed budget, suggested funding source, and who would do the work. The draft work plan would be reviewed by the JWC and appropriately refined based

on comments received. It would be published and distributed to JWC members and other entities involved with the JWC in binational transportation. It could also be used as the basis for funding requests to fund the planned activities.