

California High Speed Train Program EIR/EIS: Economic Growth Impacts



Client

Facts

Period

2007

Project Country

Forecasting County-Level Economic Growth

For the California High Speed Rail Authority, EDR Group (under subcontract to Cambridge Systematics) was part of a large multi-disciplinary team to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), commissioned as part of the development process for high-speed rail in California. The EIR focused on the analysis of economic impacts and economic growth associated with proposed statewide high speed rail. Bullet trains operating at speeds up to 220 mph would mean express travel times from downtown San Francisco to Los Angeles of under 2½ hours.

The roles of EDR Group staff were to: 1) specify a sub-state economic impact and growth model; 2) develop and apply a system for evaluating and forecasting county-level business attraction impacts, along and accompanying changes in county-level employment and population, and 3) review methods for applying the county-level analysis to develop finer-level forecasts of station area land development impacts.

Teresa Lynch and Glen Weisbrod of EDR Group developed a core tool – an application of EDR Group’s LEAP-trans model for assessing business growth and attraction impacts of transportation access improvements (predecessor of what is now the TREDIS model). They applied this model to estimate county-level economic growth and development impacts. The analysis examined how high speed rail would change the pattern of accessibility for commuting, business-related travel and tourism travel and thus lead to changes in effective labor markets, business location and business delivery markets.

EDR Group applied the model for forecasting the changes in economic growth, by economic sector (type of business), distinguishing between expansion of existing business, attraction of outside business, and relocation of business activities within the state. This information represented inputs to an economic simulation and forecasting system, to calculate total economic impacts for regions of California.

Contact Persons