

# Montana Tranplan 21 Update - Economic Development Issues And Recommendations



Client

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Facts

Period 2002

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Project Country

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**Montana Integrates Economic Development & Transportation Planning**

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) became a national leader in statewide multimodal transportation planning with the publication of its TranPlan21 in February of 1995. At the time, the study was seen as a model for forward-looking transportation planning that recognized broad changes in population, development and the economy as the state moved into the 21st Century. MDT continued this process with a 2002 update, which further coordinated with an advisory committee of state and local economic development agencies and business sector organizations. MDT contracted to a team led by Dye Management, with the economic development component led by Economic Development Research Group.

The work by EDR Group included an assessment of the differing economic profile, clusters, trends and competitive economic position of the state and each of five regions within the state. The analysis included assessment of past economic trends, future economic forecasts, technology change and its implications for future employment, income and transportation needs. It also looked at the inter-dependence of Montana’s population and economic changes with those occurring in adjacent states. Finally, the study identified how expected future economic trends will change demand for different modes of freight and passenger transport in Montana. This included the fact that the dominant but stagnant sectors of Montana’s economy have tended to rely on railroads, while the newer growth sectors with higher value added tend to rely more on highway and air modes of travel.

The study concluded that there were major technology changes occurring in traditional industries from mining to agriculture and food processing, that were concentrating activity and changing intermodal road-rail transfer needs. Through a process of analysis combined with meetings with industry leaders, the study also found that shifts were occurring in advanced technology sectors that were also changing intermodal road-air needs. Finally, the nature of tourism needs was also changing. Overall, this analysis process led to the identification of opportunities for enhancing economic development in some parts of the state through strategic investments in various forms of air and ground transportation infrastructure, coordinated with complementary investment to enhance other economic development needs

[View the economic development report \(pdf, 1.9MB\)](#)

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