

SMART GROWTH AND CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Transportation infrastructure can be viewed as a strategic investment that has consequences for urban growth and development. Transportation projects can be viewed as part of broader efforts to improve the livability of communities, the productivity of local economies and the sustainability of future urban growth. EDR Group evaluates the economic development and societal benefit consequences of these efforts.

The Role of Transit in Support of Cluster Development. For the American Public Transportation Association, EDR Group conducted studies of the role of transit in supporting growth of high tech business clusters. These reports evaluated the process by which information technology and biotech R&D services have grown in urban clusters, creating new needs for high density employment clusters in parts of urban areas that have access to a highly skilled workforce and proximity to leading research institutions. Case studies examined high tech clusters in ten cities and showed how transit investment is playing an increasingly important role in their growth.

Transit Corridor Development. For Toronto MetroLinx, EDR Group conducted a series of transportation corridor analyses that assessed potential development effects of proposed public transportation investments in metropolitan Toronto. These included impacts of changes to the rapid transit system, improving local access to the GO-Rail commuter network and electrifying GO Rail tracks in the Greater Toronto area. The studies used Multiple Account Evaluation frameworks that combined mobility, economic impact, benefit-cost and financial analysis, along with environmental and land use impacts.

Smart Growth Plan for a New Commuter Rail Corridor. For Massachusetts DOT, EDR Group assessed land development and economic development consequences of a proposed commuter rail from Boston to the economically depressed “South Coast” area. This study examined economic development impacts for three alternatives: (1) currently land use, (2) projected land use changes with existing land development patterns, and (3) a prospective “smart growth” land use scenario. EDR Group examined the productivity and business attraction consequences of each alternative.

California Airports – Sustainable Communities. For California DOT, EDR Group was part of a team that examined opportunities under California's Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS). The role of EDR Group was to evaluate land use and economic development patterns around airports, and the potential economic benefits of efforts to support SCS through multimodal transportation and land development goals. The study analyzed relationships between airports, land use, zoning, business centers, transit and highways as critical parts of a multimodal transportation system.