Guide to Quantifying the Economic Impact of Federal Investments in Large-Scale Freight Transportation Projects



Client

US Department of Transportation

Facts

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By Cambridge Systematics, Economic Development Research Group (now EBP) and Boston Logistics Group, for the US Department of Transportation, 2006

With dramatic increases in both domestic and international trade, there is a growing need to expand freight facilities throughout the U.S. However, investment decisions are complicated by the multi-modal character of most freight movements. For instance, nearly all air and marine freight also involves truck or rail travel to and from terminals, while most rail freight also relies on trucks for local access. The result is that any evaluation of new freight transportation projects can become complex, as it can involve a range of public and private interests.

To address this issue, the US Department of Transportation commissioned the development of a **Guide to Quantifying the Economic Impacts of Federal Investments in Large-Scale Freight Transportation Projects**. The guide lays out a straightforward sequence of steps for evaluating the economic benefits and impacts of investment in large-scale, multi-modal projects. It is applicable for agencies considering upgrading, expanding or building any new freight facility that involves multiple modes of freight, including any air freight, marine port or intermodal truck/rail loading facilities.

Transportation writers and planners at all levels are invited to obtain a copy of the new Guide, prepared by the team of Cambridge Systematics, Economic Development Research Group and Boston Logistics Group.

The guide includes an analysis framework, tools and procedures for evaluating economic benefits of large capital investment freight projects. The framework is designed to: 1) identify the range of economic effects of freight investments; 2) distinguish first order effects from downstream effects; 3) identify effects on different beneficiaries; 4) determine the geographic scope of effects; 5) determine the magnitude of benefits; and 6) compare relative costs and benefits across projects.

Contact Persons