

Information Item

Metropolitan Council



Meeting Date: February 28, 2024

Topic

Preliminary Local Forecasts to 2050

District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stats. §§ 473.146 and 473.859
Staff Prepared/Presented: Todd Graham, Principal Researcher (651-602-1322)
Division/Department: Community Development / Research

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

Minnesota Statutes 473.146 and 473.859 assign the Metropolitan Council responsibility for developing long-range forecasts and using forecasts as a foundation for coordinated planning. This memo describes progress in preparing forecasts for *Imagine 2050*.

The forecasts describe likely and reasoned expectations of regional growth based on an understanding and modeling of regional dynamics. Regional totals were published in April 2023.

Local forecasting at Metropolitan Council involves the geographic allocation of regional employment and households totals to specific places. Preliminary Local Forecasts, Version 1, are published at <https://metro council.org/forecasts>

Metropolitan Council uses UrbanSim, a real estate market simulation model, to develop the local forecast set. The local forecast set describes the geographic pattern of expected future growth. The logic of UrbanSim is the market sorting of real estate demand and creation of new supply in locations that are the most preferred and available. The main determinants of local forecasts are location characteristics and amenities, activity patterns and accessibility.

Preliminary Local Forecasts, Version 1, is substantially a “clean slate” look at the pattern of likely development without new policies and without new regulations.

The Version 1 results do not yet reflect known developments after 2020; do not yet reflect an update of transportation model results; do not reflect regional systems capacity or water supply analyses; and do not yet reflect any new regional policies. Those features, any new regional policies, and associated limits or implications for spatial planning are the homework assignment for the next version.

Local governments and partners are invited to send comments and questions, by February 29, 2024, to todd.graham@metc.state.mn.us

Policy lens analysis.

Proposed Local Forecasts, Version 2, in summer 2024, will introduce new regional system characteristics, including a refresh of the planned transportation and transit networks.

In this next phase of work, Council staff may indicate to the model explicit development limits in – for example – areas with prime agricultural lands, ecologically sensitive areas, and/or floodplains. Council staff will evaluate whether these refinements matter; the Version 1 modeling had assumed these considerations to be largely represented by local planned land use data.

Also in the next phase, Council staff will introduce and represent in the model those new regional policies with implications for spatial planning or development limits. Council staff are asking the Council’s *Imagine 2050* work group for direction on such new policies and plan objectives.

Table 1: Timeline for new 2050 forecasts.

Timing	Milestone
April 2023	Regional total results were published
January – February 2024	Preliminary Local Forecasts, Version 1: published January 2024; comments solicited and discussion with local governments and stakeholders, January – February 2024
March – June 2024	Metropolitan Council staff will re-run its forecast model, including any new regional policies, updates to transportation projections and transportation network data, and any other forward-looking data inputs.
August – October 2024	Proposed / Public Hearing Local Forecasts, Version 2, to be published; public hearing process, August – October 2024.
December 2024	Local Forecasts, Version 3: expected to be substantially Version 2 with adjustments; to be published December 2024 or January 2025; Council action, February 2025, with adoption of <i>Imagine 2050</i> .
February 2025	Council action, February 2025, with adoption of <i>Imagine 2050</i> .

