



# HOW TO REQUEST A FORECAST CHANGE

## LOCAL PLANNING HANDBOOK

Metropolitan Council updates its local forecasts of population, households and employment at least once a decade. The Council's local forecasts reflect land and real estate market demand and supply, constrained by local land use controls. Planned land use, planned development intensity and staging constrain what is possible in a local area; however, projected market demand could be less than that maximum possibility. Unused, surplus capacities for growth are found in all types of communities.

Between major updates, local forecasts can be reexamined and revised to better fit local plans, consistent with regional system plans. Typically, these interim revisions are initiated by local governments through comprehensive plan updates or amendments.

Local governments can request a forecast change by indicating their preferred forecasts in the comprehensive plan update or amendment (as a table in the Land Use chapter). Requested forecast changes must be related to planned land use, allowable development intensity, specific small-area or site development plans, updated current conditions, or staging. Metropolitan Council may require a forecast change accompany a comprehensive plan amendment in situations:

- Where a subject development and/or other known developments will cumulatively advance employment, population or households counts to exceed 2030 or 2040 forecast levels;
- Where those forecast levels have already been reached in a recent year; or
- Where capacities for employment, population or households are so substantially changed (increased or decreased) that the approved forecast for a forecast year becomes impossible.

Metropolitan Council may recommend a forecast change in additional situations:

- Where expectations or capacities for employment, population or households have changed to a degree that future outcomes are likely altered (but the forecast is not yet exceeded or impossible); or
- Where any of the situations above will cause sub-city, zone-level forecasts (for Transportation Analysis Zones) to be exceeded or impossible in a forecast year.

Council staff will evaluate community forecast proposals based on land supply and development-pipeline data, and any other information local governments provide in support of a forecast change. We will also review if the changes to expectations, capacity or forecast cause any system impacts. Provided that system impacts can be resolved or mitigated, Council staff may recommend action on communitywide forecasts. Any needed forecast changes are approved together with Council actions on comprehensive plan updates or amendments.

Minor forecast revisions can be approved through “[Administrative Review Approval](#),” an expedited process, so long as the associated comprehensive plan amendment meets all criteria for Administrative Review Approval.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR LOCAL PLANNERS

Discuss prospective forecast changes ahead of time. Communities can discuss forecast revisions with their sector representatives early in the comprehensive plan update or amendment process, before formal submission to the Council for review. Council staff will communicate any concerns back to communities, minimizing the need for revisions or re-submittals later.

Provide information about why your community's forecast should change. Requested forecast changes must be related to planned land use, allowable development intensity, specific small-area or site development plans, updated current conditions, or staging. Examples of information local governments can provide include:

- A list of upcoming known development projects – or recent, but previously unexpected, unreported projects – including location, type of development, and estimates of housing units or nonresidential floorspace
- A discussion of changes in local planned land use or land supply that might change the type or amount of local growth

- Identification of redevelopment areas, and expected impacts on housing units or nonresidential floorspace in these areas
- Maps of land that is permanently preserved or undevelopable, especially for local plans in which residential land guidance is a “holding” categorization for land use not elsewhere classified (e.g. greenspace, schools or cemeteries guided as residential land use)
- Discussion of other factors that demonstrate a need for forecast changes

Local governments can provide this information during early discussions with their sector representatives, or in their comprehensive plan or amendment’s discussion of their preferred forecasts.

## **SUB-CITY, ZONE-LEVEL FORECASTS**

In the preparation of Comprehensive Plan Updates during 2018-2021, local governments provided Metropolitan Council with allocations of communitywide forecasts to sub-city Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ). Metropolitan Council has compiled the TAZ allocations in a database, published online <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset?tags=forecasts>

Going forward, Metropolitan Council staff are responsible for maintaining this database, to ensure currency and consistency with local planned land use changes and any communitywide forecast changes.

When zone-level forecast adjustments are needed, associated with a comprehensive plan amendment, Council staff will describe the adjustment in an advisory comment. In most cases, no additional information will be needed from local governments.