

Board of Directors

Meeting date: July 16, 2025

Agenda Item #: 10

DRCOG Small-area forecast: update on jurisdiction and agency feedback

Agenda item type: Informational briefing

Summary

DRCOG staff have completed an update to the small-area forecast which is used as an input to DRCOG’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment and DRCOG’s transportation model, FOCUS. The recent update to the small-area forecast has included the incorporation of jurisdiction and agency feedback.

Background

One of the essential roles of DRCOG is analyzing and assessing patterns of growth across the Denver region. DRCOG forecasts population, household, and job growth in the Denver region through 2050 using county-level forecasts from the State Demography Office. DRCOG then allocates growth across 51,000 census blocks to be used to model future travel demand, assess transportation network impacts, and evaluate mobility and accessibility.

By 2050, the Denver region is projected to grow to 4 million people, 1.68 million households, and 2.7 million jobs. These estimates represent a slower growth rate due to lower birth rates and an aging population. This demographic shift, characterized by smaller cohorts reaching child-bearing age and increasing retirements, will influence household and labor force dynamics. The table below summarizes the population, households, and jobs growth from 2020 to 2050.

TABLE 1. DENVER REGION FORECAST, 2020-2050

	2020	2030	2040	2050	Growth: 2020-2050	Percent growth: 2020-2050
Population	3,206,447	3,489,332	3,811,034	4,005,831	799,384	25%
Households	1,271,052	1,425,829	1,588,205	1,682,511	411,459	32%
Jobs	2,048,898	2,372,065	2,574,288	2,704,881	655,983	32%

DRCOG employs the UrbanSim block model, an open source microsimulation tool built and maintained by DRCOG staff that simulates annual changes in households, jobs, and real estate markets at a granular level. The model uses agent-based modeling, discrete choice models, and spatial detail to predict location choices for residential units, households, and jobs. Key variables include proximity to jobs, transit, and amenities, as well as housing costs and density.



Board of Directors Meeting
July 16, 2025
Page 2 of 3

DRCOG improved UrbanSim by aging and resynthesizing the simulated population annually, ensuring demographic changes align with real-world trends and allowing for evaluation and sharing of the forecast at more granular levels of demographic detail.

Local government feedback is integral to refining model inputs, such as adjusting block-level capacities, updating zoning constraints, and incorporating scheduled developments. This collaborative approach ensures accurate forecasts that inform transportation planning and address the region's evolving needs.

Jurisdiction and agency feedback process

DRCOG facilitated multiple opportunities for local jurisdictions and agencies to share their perspectives on the updated small-area forecast. Jurisdictions had the opportunity to share feedback from January 20 through February 21. An interactive webmap illustrating the preliminary forecast allowed reviewers to leave comments specific to geographic areas. Additionally, a webinar was held January 27th to discuss the feedback process. DRCOG also offered 'office hours' where local government staff could schedule short meetings to discuss their thoughts with DRCOG staff.

Twelve jurisdictions provided 105 comments which led to block level capacity changes to 2,800 census blocks and adding 169 new scheduled projects totaling over 7,000 housing units. All jurisdictions that provided comments were sent a follow-up email to describe how their comments were incorporated into the forecast. A follow-up webinar was held May 29th to share the updated forecast.

An updated webmap with census block group results is available online. Small-area forecast [webmap](#).

DRCOG's small-area forecast webpage has additional information and updates. [Small-area forecast webpage](#) on DRCOG.org.

Integration of the forecast

In addition to updated data on DRCOG's website and data catalog, the updated forecast has been incorporated into the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and will be used in transportation modeling for the upcoming 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan update.

Action by others

None

Previous discussion/action

None

Recommendation

None



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

July 16, 2025

Page 3 of 3

Attachment(s)

Staff presentation

For more information

If you need additional information, please contact Zachary Feldman, Program Manager, Data Science and Analytics, at 303-480-6790 or zfeldman@drcog.org; or Sheila Lynch, Division Director, Regional Planning and Development at 303-480-6839 or slynch@drcog.org.

