






MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Memorandum

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

Via: Richard DeBose, Chief, Research and Technology Center 

From: Khalid Afzal, Acting Research Manager, R&T Center 
Pamela Zorich, Census Coordinator, R&T Center 
Wayne Koempel, Planner Coordinator, R&T Center 

Re: Council of Governments Forecasting process; major findings of the 2008 Census Update Survey,

Staff Recommendation: Discussion of the on-going work on COG cooperative forecast and the 2008 Census Update Survey.

Background

On Thursday, July 30 staff from the Research Unit of the Research and Technology Center will brief the Planning Board on the methodology of the Cooperative Regional Forecast prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the staff's contribution to that forecast. The cooperative forecast is a major component of COG's work and the County forecasts are used by the Planning Department as well as other public and private entities for various purposes.

Staff will also present a summary of major findings of the 2008 Census Update Survey (CUS) conducted by the Research staff. The Survey collects basic demographic data such as age, race, education, employment, income, and housing characteristics. It updates the federal decennial census and provides a local slant on housing, employment, and transportation and their interrelationships for the County and subareas.

COG's Cooperative Regional Forecasts

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) prepares the region's employment, household, and population forecasts. Montgomery County and the other jurisdictions are members of the COG Cooperative Forecasting and Data Subcommittee (CFDS) which meets monthly. This is a subcommittee to the COG Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee.

For every new forecast round, COG produces regional employment, household, and population forecasts from an updated regional econometric and demographic model. COG member jurisdictions produce forecasts for their own areas. Each jurisdiction is further divided into traffic zones, the smallest geographical area for which the forecasts are prepared. The jurisdictions transmit their forecasts to COG, which sums the jurisdictional forecasts and compares the jurisdictional totals to the Regional forecast. As a control to the jurisdictional forecasts, COG requires that the sum of the jurisdictions' forecasts be within three percent of the COG Regional forecasts. If the sum of the jurisdictions forecasts does not fall within three percent of the COG Regional Forecasts, the CFDS must reconcile the forecasts. After reconciliation and adoption by various COG committees, the COG Board of Directors adopts the sum of the jurisdictional forecasts as the official COG Cooperative Forecasts for the Region.

The Montgomery County Planning Department prepares the official employment, household and population forecasts for Montgomery County. These forecasts include the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville. Since the cities produce their own forecasts, we must coordinate to assure that the cities' forecasts fit into the context of the County forecasts. The Montgomery County Planning Department represents the County on the CFDS. The Cities are also represented on the CFDS.

New rounds generally occur every 3 to 5 years. The latest round is the Round 7 forecast adopted by COG in 2005. Between the major forecast rounds, jurisdictions have the opportunity to revise their forecasts usually on a yearly basis. The recent interim forecast is Round 7.2 adopted by the COG Board in July 2009. The Round 7.2 forecast has a 2005 base year and forecasts are in five-year intervals through 2040. It is the first forecast to go beyond 2030. A Round 7.2a forecast that includes the addition of the Purple Line from Silver Spring to New Carrollton and the removal of the MD 28/MD 198 widening from the Region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan is currently going through the review process. The COG Board of Directors is scheduled to adopt Round 7.2a in October 2009. Compared to Round 7.2, Montgomery County's Round 7.2a forecast adds a small amount of employment growth and redistributes a small amount of household and population growth within the County.

A new Round 8 forecast is well underway. The 5-year Regional control totals through 2040 have been produced by a new and updated econometric/demographic model. The jurisdictions are scheduled to submit their jurisdictional forecast to COG in September 2009 so that the reconciliation process can begin. From October 2009 through January 2010, the various COG committees and subcommittees will review the forecasts. Jurisdictions are scheduled to submit traffic zone forecasts to COG in February 2010. Round 8 is scheduled to be presented to the COG Board of Directors in July 2010.

The new Round 8 forecasts will be based on restructured traffic zones. The current 2005 base year estimates will need to be revised to reflect the restructured traffic zones. There

are 7 forecast years beyond 2005, 376 traffic zones, and 8 forecast categories per traffic zone. This yields 21,056 forecast numbers from 2010 through 2040. The Planning Department is responsible for 316 traffic zones, 17,696 forecast numbers. The Cities combined are responsible for 60 traffic zones and 3,360 forecast numbers. The following table is one example of the data generated by the cooperative forecast.

Montgomery County - Round 7.2 Cooperative Forecast

Year	Population	% Change	Households	% Change	Jobs	% Change	Jobs/HH
2005	929,100		347,000		500,000		1.44
2010	966,000	4.0%	362,000	4.3%	510,000	2.0%	1.41
2015	1,025,000	6.1%	386,000	6.6%	547,000	7.3%	1.42
2020	1,075,000	4.9%	408,000	5.7%	590,000	7.9%	1.45
2025	1,113,000	3.5%	425,000	4.2%	630,000	6.8%	1.48
2030	1,141,000	2.5%	440,000	3.5%	670,000	6.3%	1.52
2035	1,160,000	1.7%	451,000	2.5%	700,000	4.5%	1.55
2040	1,174,000	1.2%	460,000	2.0%	720,000	2.9%	1.57

2008 Census Update Survey

Montgomery County is one of the few jurisdictions in the country that conduct their own census survey between the Federal decennial censuses. The survey has a long history of being a valuable source of information characterizing the County's demographic and socio-economic changes. As rapidly changing demographics shape Montgomery County's profile, the survey results help planners understand the underlying components of change, such as aging baby boomers, and residents new to the County. The 2008 Census Update Survey is the third household survey this decade, and it marks the tenth poll in the historical series since 1974.

CUS Process

The CUS begins with the Research and Technology Center's household survey of Montgomery County residents. For the 2008 CUS, approximately 24,000 self-administered questionnaires were mailed to a carefully designed, stratified random sample of Montgomery County households. Addresses, not individuals, were chosen according to a sampling plan based on structure type and geography. After the initial mailing, households not returning the questionnaire were contacted two additional times requesting the respondent to complete the survey. The follow-up efforts resulted in a 50 percent response rate that is higher than the typical mail survey response rate of 13 percent. For the first time, randomly selected households receiving a mailed questionnaire were granted the option to complete the survey online through a secure entry at a dedicated website.

The Survey has always included foreign language outreach efforts. The cover letter for the 2008 survey and the 'reminder/thank you' postcard sent out 10 days after the first mailing included brief notices in four languages (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese) offering phone numbers for foreign language assistance. A separate sheet within the mailer described the purpose of the survey and specific directions for receiving telephone assistance in each of the languages. For the first time in 2008, the questionnaire was available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese by calling the foreign language phone bank and requesting a translated version be mailed to the household. The survey was also offered in Spanish on the website.

The results were tabulated and then statistically adjusted using known household and school enrollment distributions. As with any survey, certain subpopulations are under-represented in the final analysis. These hard to reach groups often include minority households, young adults, and low-income households. Information gathered through the Census Update Survey is strictly confidential. Under no circumstances are individual replies shared with anyone. Survey responses are reported only as statistical summaries for large groups or geographic areas.

Uses of the CUS

Results from the Census Update Survey are the foundation of the Planning Department's forecast of population and households, a valuable input for transportation modeling, and provide a demographic snapshot for a community's master plan. The County agencies, as well as private and nonprofit organizations, rely on the population and housing data compiled from the Census Update Survey. Other examples of how the survey results are typically used include:

- Forecasting public facility needs such as parks, libraries and senior centers based on population size and characteristics by planning areas.
- Helping the Montgomery County Public Schools' staff estimate the number of school age children by housing type in each school district.
- Anticipating and planning for a variety of government programs, such as services for the elderly and children, and affordable housing by describing the characteristics of appropriate population groups.
- Updating federal census data that is used to obtain various types of federal and state grants.
- Determining the need for retail development by describing the characteristics of households within specific trade areas.
- Facilitating transportation planning by describing current means of travel, commuting patterns, and other indicators of the transportation impacts of increases in housing and jobs.

CUS Products

Census Update Survey data products will be available on the Research website easily found at www.MCfacts.org. Starting in early August, 2009, the initial results of the 2008 Census Update Survey will be reported in the standard two page profile table for the most requested geographies: Montgomery County, the Council Districts, Planning Areas, and Regional Services Centers. Demographic trends are reported in a presentation format and in topical reports. Student school yields are calculated from the CUS data for use by the Montgomery County Public School forecasting staff and for the Growth Policy. Demographic presentations (available in FY10) are given to many groups including Regional Services Centers, County agency grant and task force committees, and Health and Human Services departments. The final analyses and other products will be available later this fall.

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