

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee and
Cooperative Forecasting and Data Subcommittee

FROM: Greg Goodwin, COG/DCPS

SUBJECT: Proposed Opportunity to Update Round 10.0 Cooperative Forecasts

DATE: September 27, 2024

COG's Planning Directors established the Cooperative Forecasting Program in 1975 to provide for the development of a consistent set of population, household and employment growth projections. The COG Board of Directors approved the 10th major update to the Cooperative Forecasts, "Round 10.0" during 2023, and this memorandum describes a proposed process and schedule for the development of the first update to those projections, or "Round 10.1".

COOPERATIVE FORECASTING PROCESS AND ROUND 10.0

The Cooperative Forecasting Program enables local, regional, and federal agencies to coordinate planning decisions using common assumptions about future growth and development in the region. Each series of forecasts, or a "round," provides forecasts of employment, population, and households by five-year increments, and each round covers a period of 20 to 30 years. The Cooperative Forecasting process provides data necessary for regional planning activities including analyzing the effects of growth and developing policy responses to regional issues. In addition, the forecasts are used to determine the demand for schools, parks, medical facilities, roads, stores, and services, and as the basis for calculating COG member dues. COG's Cooperative Forecasting and Data Subcommittee members prepare the Forecasts with oversight by the Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee.

For Round 10.0, in addition to the traditional "top-down / bottom-up" process of synthesizing the regional economic forecasting model with local land use plans and growth assumptions, specific enhancements to the process included work by a consultant team to:

- Better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on utilization, density, and development of commercial office space in the region;
- Develop a "range" of potential regional forecasts to 2050 given ongoing economic uncertainties; and

- Access emerging trends in regional housing location and choice

After a briefing in April on the new draft Round 10.0 Forecasts, the COG Board approved the projections at their meeting on June 14, 2023.

PROPOSED ROUND 10.1 UPDATE TO THE COOPERATIVE FORECASTS

The Cooperative Forecasting Program provides the opportunity – but not a requirement – for jurisdictions to update their Forecasts on an annual basis. Key factors or actions that may warrant a local update include:

- Adoption of a new small-area or comprehensive plan;
- Significant commercial or residential rezonings;
- Changes to the amount or location of local residential and commercial permits and construction; and
- Changes to local labor and employment markets.

Earlier this year, as part of the COG budget development process for FY2026, the City of Alexandria alerted COG staff to the need to update their near-term Round 10.0 population estimates and forecasts based on updated residential development information and local impacts of the pandemic.

While no changes are required to the Round 10.0 Forecasts of other COG jurisdictions, staff is requesting that all member jurisdictions review their Round 10.0 population, household and employment Forecasts to determine whether updates are needed for any of the projection years of 2025 through 2050.

A general schedule for development of Round 10.1 is shown below (further refinement may be required based on discussions with Cooperative Forecasting and Planning Directors Committees):

| Key Dates | Actions or Milestones |
|----------------------------------|--|
| October 2024 | Cooperative Forecasting Subcommittee and Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee briefed on proposed Round 10.1 updates and schedule |
| November through January 2025 | Local governments review / benchmark Round 10.1 Cooperative Forecasts and submit proposed revised jurisdictional totals to COG |
| February 2025 through March 2025 | COG staff reviews proposed Round 10.1 updates and benchmarks local and regional Forecasts to COG Round 10 Econometric Model |

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| March 2025 through April 2025 | Local governments transmit updated TAZ Forecast data files to COG |
| May 2025 | Cooperative Forecasting Subcommittee and Planning Directors review and approve draft Round 10.1 |
| June 2025 | COG Board adopts Round 10.1 |

Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at ggoodwin@mwkog.org.