

UPDATE ON THE FORECAST PROCESS

Background

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and many other studies of travel demand and air quality are based on growth forecasts developed by H-GAC. The last forecast was completed in 2006 and is currently being updated for the 2040 RTP. The forecasting process is broken into two phases: first, a “macro” forecast of population and jobs is developed at the regional level; second, a “micro” land use forecasting model (UrbanSim) that simulates the dynamics of real estate markets is employed to predict likely locations of future residential and non-residential development which would accommodate the population and employment growth.

Current Situation

H-GAC staff has completed the draft macro forecast, using a demographic model that has been created in-house. The methodology employed in this model has been reviewed and endorsed by the Office of the State Demographer and model results have been reviewed by H-GAC’s Forecast Advisory Committee (FAC).

Forecast Advisory Committee Members

Bala Balachandran	City of Houston
Chad Burke	Economic Alliance Port Region
Donald Carroll	City of Texas City
David Crossley	Houston Tomorrow
Perri D’Armond	Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council
Charles “Skip” Kasdorf, III	Greater Houston Partnership
Lata Krishnarao	City of Pearland
Brian LaBorde	City of Shenandoah
David Nussbaum	Mischer Investments, LP
Vincent Sanders	METRO
Charlie Savino	CDS Market Research

In addition to the baseline regional forecast, several alternative forecasts have been prepared, ranging from explosive growth to a prolonged depression. Modeling results predict that even under pessimistic assumptions about the economy, the region can expect to add significant population and jobs over the next 30 years.

A significant change in the methodology of this forecast is that regional “control totals” will not be developed at the county level. Instead, UrbanSim will be used to forecast development at the small area scale within the region. Staff is currently configuring and estimating the model under the guidance of the FAC.

H-GAC plans to have initial small area forecast results available for review by local governments, stakeholders and the public in the late spring.

Action Requested

For information only