COOPERATIVE FORECASTING GROUP
June 22, 2022
Virtual Meeting
10:00 A.M. to 11:10 A.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Jeff Bronow, Howard County, called the meeting to order at 10:03 A.M.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Deborah Price, Harford County, moved to approve the minutes from the April meeting of the Cooperative Forecasting Group (CFG), with Ms. Kathleen Comber, Carroll County, seconding the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Zach Kaufman, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, provided the group with a description of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), its components, and the development process for the LRTP. The BRTB is responsible for producing a short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and an LRTP.

The LRTP covers at least a 20-year planning horizon beyond the timeframe covered by the TIP and is updated every four years. The core of the LRTP is a list of planned major federally funded capital projects, their estimated costs, and the revenues expected to be available to fund the projects. The LRTP is fiscally constrained, meaning that the cost of projects in the LRTP cannot exceed the revenues anticipated to be available. It also includes a transportation vision for the region through adopted goals and strategies and details various factors anticipated to affect the operation of the transportation system over the next 20-25 years. The LRTP in development is called Resilience 2050 and will cover a planning horizon extending from 2028 to 2050.

The TIP, on the other hand, is a short-range program including projects programming federal funds over the next four fiscal years. It is updated annually. The TIP translates recommendations from the LRTP into a short-term program of improvements. As the conceptual projects in the LRTP move into the implementation stage, they enter the TIP, which details anticipated funding requests by phase and fiscal year. Projects must be identified in the LRTP to be included in the TIP. The upcoming 2023-2026 TIP includes $4.2 billion in proposed federal, state, local, and toll revenue funding.

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Voting: City of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, Howard County, Queen Anne's County, MD Department of Transportation and Annapolis Transit. Non-Voting: MD Department of the Environment, MD Department of Planning, and MD Transit Administration.

Mr. Kaufman then detailed key steps in the LRTP development process along with the associated timeline for each step. In November 2021, the BRTB adopted updated regional goals and strategies for Resilience 2050. Goals and strategies are one of the first steps in the development of the LRTP as these goals form the transportation vision for the region. Examples include: improve accessibility; improve system safety; and implement environmentally responsible transportation solutions. Each goal is accompanied by supporting implementation strategies intended to help the region to achieve a goal.

A financial forecast is another key element of the LRTP. MDOT provides a forecast of anticipated federal and state revenues through 2050 for system operations, system preservation, and major capital projects. The forecast includes an estimate of total revenues along with the anticipated needs for operations and preservation based on historical expenditures. The remaining funds are available for major capital projects. An updated financial forecast is expected from MDOT in July 2022, with BRTB review and adoption in August or September 2022. Over time, the share devoted to operations and system preservation is gradually increasing, resulting in a smaller share devoted to major capital projects.

Project submittal and scoring is another key component of the LRTP. Local jurisdictions and MDOT MTA submitted candidate projects for Resilience 2050 from April through June 2022. Local jurisdictions coordinate with MDOT SHA and are responsible for submitting all projects within their jurisdiction (including those on state roadways). After projects are submitted, they need to be scored since the cost of projects exceeds the revenues anticipated to be available. Projects receive both a policy score and a technical score. The policy score is in the hands of the submitting jurisdiction and reflects how high of a priority the project is and if it has financial support. The technical score is composed of various criteria drawn directly from the regional goals and is scored by BMC staff. For example, there are technical scoring criteria for safety, accessibility, mobility, and environmental conservation.

The total score (policy + technical) is used to prioritize projects for inclusion in Resilience 2050. A draft preferred alternative of projects is generated based on project scores, project costs, and the amount of funding available to the region. This draft preferred alternative is reviewed and finalized by BRTB committees. BMC staff anticipate presenting a draft preferred alternative to the Technical Committee in fall 2022.

Mr. Kaufman then summarized the ways that the Round 10 CFG forecasts are used in the LRTP process. Forecasting future impacts and needs for our transportation system requires an understanding of where people might live and work. As a result, the Round 10 forecasts are key inputs to the BMC travel demand model, which is used to predict the impacts of transportation investments on travel behavior and air quality over the timeframe covered by the LRTP. The Round 10 forecasts are vital for project scoring and for analyzing the potential effects of the preferred alternative. They are also used in air quality modeling, which is required since the Baltimore region does not attain the air quality standard for ground level ozone. Finally, the Round 10 forecasts are used to analyze the potential impacts of implementing LRTP projects on low-income and minority populations, known as Environmental Justice analysis.

BMC staff have also been working on a series of white papers on LRTP related topics. These white papers are released monthly and focus on factors and trends that may affect the transportation system over the next 20-25 years. Topics include project scoring, traffic safety, freight and trucking, transit, air quality, and active transportation.

All of these components will be organized into a draft of Resilience 2050 in spring 2023. The draft will be released for public comment, followed by a review and response to comments. The BRTB is anticipated to vote on a resolution regarding adoption of Resilience 2050 in July 2023.

[PowerPoint: Introduction to the LRTP]

3. SELECTING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU PRODUCTS

Mr. Krishna Akundi, Maryland Department of Planning, provided on overview of a selection of the U.S. Census Bureau's resources that are useful for accessing demographic and socioeconomic data. Before focusing on Census products, Mr. Akundi noted that the Maryland State Data Center (SDC) utilizes data from a wide variety of federal statistical sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service – among others.

For the purpose of this presentation, Mr. Akundi focused on three programs from the Census Bureau: the Decennial Census; the Population Estimates Program; and the American Community Survey.
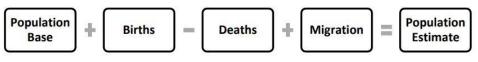
The Decennial Census – Mr. Akundi first provided some background information on the decennial census, explaining its primary purpose (as specified in Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution), collection methods, and an overview of questions asked. The questions contained in the decennial census questionnaire are now somewhat limited in scope, and focus on satisfying the data needs for apportionment and redistricting, and include topics regarding age, sex, race, ethnicity, homeownership, and relationships (family and non-family). The decennial census provides data down to the lowest level of census geography, the block.

In the presentation, Mr. Akundi provided a series of links to access 2020 decennial census directly from the SDC website. The SDC website allows users to access the decennial census data for Maryland, its component counties, as well as municipalities, tracts, block groups and blocks. He also provided information on data release dates, noting that the redistricting file (PL 94-171) had been released (late) in August 2021, and that the Demographic and Housing Characteristics file is not expected to be released until the Summer of 2023.

The Population Estimates Program (PEP) – The PEP produces the official measures of population and housing between decennial censuses. The PEP estimates are developed via modeling efforts, rather than through surveys. As the official measure of population between censuses, the PEP informs the distribution of $675 billion of federal government spending each year. The PEP supports a variety of demographic tools and research efforts including the ACS (by serving as population controls), academic research, and program planning in public

and private sectors. The data includes estimates for July 1 of each year and is released annually for over 80,000 areas in the United States and Puerto Rico. PEP data releases include information on population totals, components of change (base population, births, deaths, domestic migration, and international migration), age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, as well as housing unit totals.

Mr. Akundi also provided an overview of the methods and sources behind the PEP data. The basic methodology behind the estimates was illustrated with the below equation:

$$\boxed{\text{Population Base}} + \boxed{\text{Births}} - \boxed{\text{Deaths}} + \boxed{\text{Migration}} = \boxed{\text{Population Estimate}}$$

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The estimates are primarily based upon administrative records: the births and deaths data is based upon vital statistics; domestic migration is based upon data from the IRS, Social Security Administration, and Medicare; and international migration is based upon ACS, Year of Entry data. Links were provided to access summarized PEP data for Maryland jurisdictions on the SDC website, as well as the Census Bureau's PEP page.

The American Community Survey – Mr. Akundi explained that the ACS replaced the Census Bureau's Long Form Questionnaire (utilized in pre-2010 decennial censuses), and collects information on topics such as ancestry, citizenship, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics. Each year, the Census Bureau contacts 3.5 million households across the United States to participate in the ACS.

Mr. Akundi described the features of each of the ACS products (1-year, 1-year supplemental, 3-year (discontinued as of 2013), and 5-year), but focused on the most frequently utilized series (1-year and 5-year estimates). He explained that the 1-year estimates are based upon 12 months of collected data (for the calendar year), and that the 5-year estimates are based upon data collected over the referenced 60-month period. The 1-year estimates are available for all census geographies with populations of 65,000 or more, while estimates from the 5-year ACS are available for all areas. The 1-year estimates are preferred when currency is more important than precision, and when the researcher is analyzing larger populations (65,000+). The 5-year estimates are preferred when precision is more important than currency, and/or when the researcher is analyzing geographies containing smaller populations. It is important to remember that the Census Bureau recommends that data users make comparisons between 5-year estimates that do not contain overlapping years. Comparing data between 5-year ACS estimates with overlapping years is discouraged, as much of the data in the estimates would be the same – thereby complicating trend analyses.

Mr. Akundi completed his presentation by referencing a selection of additional federal demographic data sources that may be useful for planning efforts including the Current Population Survey, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Survey of Income Participation, the Microdata Access Tool, and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.

[PowerPoint: MDP_SDC_DemographicSources_Census]

4. NEW BUSINESS

The next CFG meeting will be held Wednesday, August 24th. Mr. Kimberly said that he would notify the group about the meeting format (hybrid/virtual) two weeks prior to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 A.M.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Krishna Akundi, Maryland Department of Planning
Jeff Bronow, Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works
Kathleen Comber, Carroll County Department of Planning
Jennifer Meacham, Baltimore County Department of Planning
Sara Paranilam, Baltimore City Department of Planning
Deborah Price, Harford County Department of Planning
Alfred Sundara, Maryland Department of Planning
Kristopher Weaver, Baltimore County Department of Planning
James Wilkerson, Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning
Jamie Williams, Baltimore City Department of Planning

Staff and Guests

Blake Fisher, BMC
Zach Kaufman, BMC
Shawn Kimberly, BMC