

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR ROUND 6.3 COOPERATIVE FORECASTS**

July 2, 2003

1. What Are The Trends By Region?

Our responses will concentrate on COG member jurisdictions, rather than the larger region for which transportation planning is done. The Round 6.3 Forecast projects regional employment to increase by 46%, to almost 4 million jobs by the year 2030. It projects the regional population to increase by 32%, to almost 5.6 million people by 2030. Finally, Round 6.3 projects the number of households in the region to increase by 35%, to almost 2.2 million by 2030. This would improve the region's ratio of jobs to households from 1.7 in 2000 to over 1.8 by the year 2030. We believe that this continued growth is a positive trend.

We focus on increasing the number of jobs relative to the number of housing units (households) in a jurisdiction as a way to improve the odds that residents can work closer to home and shorten their commutes. This is important given our problems with traffic congestion and air quality.

By Jurisdiction?

Our responses will be in alphabetical order, and will mention significant increases only.

The *City of Alexandria* projects a 50% increase in its employment by 2030, increasing its jobs/housing ratio from 1.6 in 2000 to 2.0 in 2030.

Arlington County projects increasing its number of jobs by 50%, so that its jobs to household ratio would increase from 2.3 in 2000 to 2.8 in the year 2030.

The forecast for the *District of Columbia* maintains a jobs/housing ratio of 2.7, but shows a 23% increase in population, to over 700,000 in 2030.

In *Fairfax County*, the jobs/housing ratio increases from 1.6 to 1.8 over the 30 year period, while the population increases by 23% to over 1.2 million by the year 2030. (This includes the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.)

The forecast for *Frederick County* shows a 78% increase in employment, increasing the jobs/housing ratio from 1.4 to 1.5. The population in Frederick increases by 66% and the number of households increase by 71%, over the 30 year forecast period.

Loudoun County shows its employment almost doubling, and its population and households increasing by over 161% between 2000 and 2030. The result is that its jobs/housing ratio increases from 1.5 to 1.6 over the forecast period.

Montgomery County maintains its jobs-housing ratio at 1.7, with growth in both employment and households at 29% over the 30 year period.

In *Prince George's County*, employment is projected to increase by 68%, increasing the jobs/housing ratio from 1.1 in 2000 to 1.5 in the year 2030. Households are only projected to increase by 28% over the period.

Prince William County shows a 76% increase in employment, increasing its jobs/housing ratio from 1.2 to 1.3 between 2000 and 2030. The number of households in Prince William (including Manassas and Manassas Park) increases by 61% over the forecast period.

2. What Trends Are Positive ?

As mentioned above, we think the regional increase in jobs/housing ratio from 1.7 to 1.8 is a positive trend. We also note that 74% of the projected increased employment is located in the six jurisdictions currently served by Metro: Alexandria, Arlington County, the District of Columbia, and Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. We also note that the combined employment in the three closest-in jurisdictions -- Alexandria, Arlington and the District of Columbia -- will increase by nearly one-third. Specifically, employment in these three jurisdictions increases from 978,000 in 2000 to almost 1.3 million in 2030. In addition to the presence of Metro in these three jurisdictions, this increase in jobs reflects planning policies that focus development and support "Regional Smart Growth."

3 . What Trends Are Negative?

We are concerned that at least 36% of the household growth and 42% of the population growth between 2000 and 2030 is located in three counties that are currently not served by high speed transit, whether bus or rail: Frederick, Loudoun and Prince William Counties. (This does not include current commuter rail service.) This argues for increased transit (e.g. eventual extension of the Orange line to Dulles and beyond, and the building of the Capital Cities Corridor Transit from Shady Grove to Frederick County). It also argues for land use planning policies which support concentrated development, a process which we believe is underway in all three of these counties.

4. How Do the Forecasts Link to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP)?

As a committee, the CAC is interested in regional land use planning and in strengthening the connections between land use and transportation planning. Given that orientation, we believe that the TIP is a capital budget for those transportation improvements for which there is now or will soon be funding available. We also believe that the Constrained Long

Range Plan, per federal requirements, is a necessary form of top-down, “control and command” planning in which possible outcomes are very limited by fiscal and other realities. We believe a better question is: “How do the forecasts link to the alternative regional land/use transportation scenarios now being developed as part of the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study?” We believe the development of alternative scenarios offers a better opportunity to engage in real, yet responsible long-range regional planning. We will have more to say about this under question 7.

5. How Do the Forecasts Link to the Regional Activity Centers? What Are the Share of Jobs and Households in the Regional Activity Centers?

Because there are 58 Activity Centers, COG staff has provided the CAC (and will shortly provide MDPC) with charts showing 24 Activity **Clusters**. Clusters are groups of Regional Activity Centers, generally located along transportation corridors. Staff’s analysis shows that over 70% of 30 year employment growth will take place in Activity Clusters, but less than 40% of household growth will occur there. The questions here are good ones which need further analysis. We suggest that this analysis be done under Cooperative Forecast 7.0 which we understand will also entail an updating of the regional activity centers. It is our further understanding that Cooperative Forecast 7.0 will be undertaken in the next 6 to 12 months.

6. How Do the Forecasts Link to the Air Quality Conformity Analysis?

The forecast shows over 60% of household growth outside of the Regional Activity Clusters. This implies that several hundred thousand additional residents would be making at least part of their trips to work via automobile, as they would be living in jurisdictions not served by high speed transit. In addition to the emissions generated by those additional trips to work, other occupants of those households would generate additional emissions during trips to school, to the grocery store, and other daily activities. We are aware that changes in technology, including those required by law, may well reduce vehicular emissions (e.g. SUVs), just as they have in the past. However, we believe that, in order to reduce vehicle miles of travel and resulting emissions, or at least slow the rate of increase, we need a combination of land use, environmental, and transportation policies supporting more compact development throughout the metropolitan region.

7. What Changes in Policy Should be Considered Based on the Forecasts?

Substantative Growth Policy --- It appears to us, looking at the Key on the Regional Activity Centers Map, that there is an unstated hierarchy of activity centers. For future analysis we would like to see a concentration on the first three categories of activity centers: Core, Mixed Use Centers and Employment Centers. These 29 centers already have a significant share of the region's jobs, and are also well-served by transportation. We wonder whether some of these 29 centers could be planned to accommodate more multifamily housing. The location of such housing near both jobs and transportation would not only help with congestion and air quality, but could also help provide more affordable housing for the region.

We acknowledge that planning for housing near transit and employment is taking place, such as the recent upzoning at Tysons Corner. We think such planning has been successfully implemented near Metro stations, notably in Alexandria, the District of Columbia, Arlington County (the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor), and Montgomery County. We believe there is additional potential for higher density development and redevelopment within the jurisdictions served by Metro, and for locating housing close to employment and transportation in all the communities in the region.

We believe that the success of the 1960s plans that brought us the Capital Beltway and the Metro system prove the adage, "We'll get what we plan for." We would like to see all the COG jurisdictions work together to plan for a network of activity centers that include both jobs and housing, and that provide transportation options other than the single-occupancy vehicle. This suggests that activity centers be accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as being served by buses, trains and/or highways. We see a leadership role for MDPC in helping to create this network of activity centers.

Planning Procedural Policy --- There are two activities which should and will come together over the next six to twelve months: first, the development of the Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecast and updating of the regional activity maps; and second, the development of regional land use/transportation alternative scenarios.

The development of Round 7.0 will flow directly out of much of the work on the Round 6.3 Forecast. The Round 6.3 Forecast could be further analyzed to see how it fully comports with existing and evolving local land use policies. However, we counsel against such a "retrospective" analysis, as the Round 6.3 Forecast is needed in the very near future to meet air quality emission requirements under the Constrained Long Range Plan. Instead, the relationship of specific cooperative forecast numbers to changing local land use policies

should be fully explored under Round 7.0. which will be underway in the near future. In particular, we would like to see some baseline analysis of Regional Activity Centers, particularly the Core, Mixed Use and Employment Centers. This would show existing land uses in those centers, and potential for balancing housing and employment there in the future.

Including such analysis in Round 7.0 will directly support the excellent work now underway through COG and the TPB, as the Planning Directors and other local government staffers work to develop alternative regional land use/ transportation scenarios. We believe that the refinement of the alternative scenarios fits very well with the development of the Round 7.0 Forecast. They both should feed into each other including a review of their underlying assumptions, how they interact with each other, and how they support existing local land use policies and their regional implications. This is our suggested procedural approach.