

## **COOPERATIVE FORECASTING GROUP**

December 18, 2024  
10:02 A.M. to 10:58 A.M.

### **MINUTES**

Mr. Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County, called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

#### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Cohoon asked for approval of the minutes from the June 26, 2024 meeting of the CFG. Ms. Jennifer Meacham, Baltimore County, moved to approve the minutes with Ms. Kathleen Comber, Carroll County, seconding the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **2. MEET-AND-GREET NEW BMC DEMOGRAPHER**

Mr. Matt Hancock was introduced by Mr. Todd Lang as the new Demographer at BMC. He holds a BS in Sociology from Louisiana State University and his MS in Rural Sociology from the Pennsylvania State University. Mr. Hancock comes to BMC having recently served as the State Data Center representative for the state of Mississippi where he focused on demographic research, population forecasts, and workforce projections.

#### **3. LRTP SCHEDULE AND SCENARIO PLANNING**

Mr. Zach Kaufman presented an overview of the schedule for the 2027 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP covers at least a 20-year planning horizon beyond the timeframe covered by the short-range Transportation Improvement Program 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. The next LRTP will extend through a planning horizon year of 2055.

Mr. Kaufman then detailed key steps in the LRTP development process along with the associated timeline for each step. Defining regional goals and strategies is 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, increase mobility, and improve system safety. BMC anticipates a timeframe of June – October 2025 for revising the goals and strategies for the next LRTP, including a public comment period.

A financial forecast is another key element of the LRTP. MDOT will provide a forecast of anticipated federal and state revenues through 2055 for operations, system preservation, and expansion projects. The forecast includes an estimate of total revenues along with the anticipated needs for operations and system preservation based on historical expenditures.

The remaining funds are available for expansion projects. An updated financial forecast is expected from MDOT in late 2025 or early 2026. Over the last several LRTP's, the share devoted to system preservation has gradually increased, resulting in a smaller share available for expansion.

Project submittal and scoring is another key component of the LRTP. Local jurisdictions and MDOT MTA will submit priority projects for consideration in spring 2026. Local jurisdictions coordinate with MDOT SHA and are responsible for submitting all projects within their jurisdiction (including those on state roadways). After project submittal, all projects are scored based on policy and technical scoring criteria. Policy scores are based on project priority for the submitting jurisdiction. BMC staff score projects for the technical scoring criteria, which are based on the goals for the region. The total score (policy + technical) is used to prioritize projects for inclusion in the LRTP.

Mr. Kaufman then summarized the use of CFG forecasts in the LRTP. The CFG 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 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 forecasts are used to analyze the potential impacts of LRTP projects on low-income and minority populations, known as Environmental Justice analysis.

Mr. Kaufman then provided an update on the LRTP Scenario Planning project. The project will explore the potential impacts of uncertain future conditions related to transportation investments and policy decisions, demographic changes, housing, technological change, environmental impacts, and the economy. Results will be used to identify strategies and policies that work well across multiple scenarios to inform the 2027 LRTP.

Mr. Kaufman provided a brief overview of the analytical framework for the project. VisionEval is an open-source strategic modeling tool designed to evaluate many alternative futures and policies. The project team will identify several scenarios related to each of the primary categories and use VisionEval to run every combination of scenarios across the categories. The project team may also identify the most promising scenarios meriting more in-depth analysis with the activity-based travel demand model.

The contract for the project was awarded to ICF, with a kickoff meeting in September. The project team completed a peer agency scan to identify scenario planning best practices in December. The project team also launched a survey from November 19 through December 15 to gather input on scenario categories, variables, and performance measures for the project. The survey yielded more than 600 responses.

The January 2025 Technical Committee meeting will include a presentation on recommended scenario categories, variables and performance measures, followed by model runs and analysis in late January and scenario workshops in late February or early March.

During discussion, Mr. Kaufman discussed the motivation for using VisionEval for the scenario planning project along with several possible scenarios.

***[PowerPoint: Introduction to the 2027 LRTP and LRTP Scenario Planning]***

**4. FORECAST UPDATE PLANS IN 2025**

Mr. Zach Kaufman outlined the proposed forecast update in calendar year 2025.

- LRTP Scenario Planning and Needs Assessment, Jan – June 2025
- CFG Develops Demographic Forecasts, May – Oct 2025
  - BMC Reviews Forecasts and Develops Model Inputs, Nov 2025 – May 2026
- Public Involvement Activities such as white papers and newsletters, June 2025 – Jan 2027
- LRTP Goals and strategies, June – Oct 2025. Nine goals:
  - Improve accessibility
  - Increase mobility
  - Improve system safety
  - Improve and maintain the existing infrastructure
  - Implement environmentally responsible transportation solutions
  - Improve system security
  - Promote prosperity and economic opportunity
  - Foster participation and cooperation among stakeholders
  - Promote informed decision making
- Financial Forecasts, June 2025 – Jan 2026

Forecast Update Plans Beyond 2025

- Submittal and scoring of candidate projects. Develop preferred alternative, March – Oct 2026
  - Analysis of preferred alternative Oct 2026 – Jan 2027
- Public comment on draft, Feb – May 2027
- Adoption of forecast June – July 2027

**5. UPDATE ON POST-PANDEMIC TRENDS PROJECT**

Mr. Lang provided an update on the post pandemic trends consultant project. The project began in the last year and Mr. Lang informed the group that BMC received a draft of the initial reports from phase one of the project. The report will be shared and could be a presentation for the February 2025 CFG meeting. Phase 1 was a survey, looking at employees and then employers. The employee survey looked at remote work arrangements and travel choices from workers employed in a variety of occupations. The survey obtained the workers home and work location, day of week flexibility; and information about the commute, such as mode, departure time and travel time. The same information collected for the workers for pre-pandemic travel also.

The phase one employer survey collected as many responses from employers as possible. Gathered information on current and planned flexible work arrangement and policies; existing

and planned employee space utilization needs; and gathered information on operational accommodations in response to hybrid work.

#### Phase One Post Pandemic Trends: Early Takeaways

- 1,630 employees and 77 employers surveyed in the period of February to April 2024.
- Almost two thirds of Baltimore Metropolitan area employees are working entirely or primarily in person. That means 35% are working either in a hybrid fashion or entirely remote, which goes up to 54% when you factor in those that are primarily in person, but occasionally, remote.
  - Pre pandemic we had a very small work from home share, but that has changed dramatically in the post COVID environment.
- Only one in five (22%) consider working in-person to be their ideal working environment. Even split between the five ideal work environments (all in person, mostly in person, equal split, mostly remote, and all remote, each preferred by 17%-24% of the adult working population). Women and those 44 and younger are more likely to be seeking an entirely remote working arrangement.
- There is a disconnection between what employees anticipate happening and what employees are planning. For at least the near future, employers generally see their company maintaining their current work from home policies (89%), but employees are less sure (only 45% stating they expect the same). One in five employees (21%) believe that employers will require them to work in the office more frequently.

Phase two of the post-pandemic trends study will look at office space utilization, change in where people are living post-pandemic, and projections for how this could inform the next set of forecasts.

#### ***[PowerPoint: Post-Pandemic Trends Consultant Task]***

#### **6. SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 2025 MEETINGS**

- Ms. Comber suggested presentations to help with forecasting employment.
- Mr. Greg Goodwin, MWCOG, volunteered to present on MWCOG's forecasting process. They took on a new round this year with 7 (or 8) jurisdictions participating and are hoping to wrap up by mid-2025.
- Mr. Jeff Bronow, Howard County, suggested a group discussion on the Governors housing package.
- Mr. Al Sundara, MDP, volunteered to present MDP's population projections for Maryland, its Counties and Baltimore City.
  - Additionally Mr. Sundara noticed a proposed bill from DHCD to look at conversion of residential units from dilapidated structures to habitable units. Mr. Sundara passed this information along to the Census. The population estimates and

residential conversions are something that the Census Bureau does not take into consideration toward population growth. The Census representative said they will look into this.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no New Business introduced. The next meeting of the CFG will be Wednesday, February 26, 2025. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 A.M.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### ***Members***

Jeff Bronow, Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning  
Jennifer Meacham, Baltimore County Department of Planning  
Steve Cohoon, Queen Anne's County Department of Public Works  
Kathleen Comber, Carroll County Department of Planning  
Rebecca Baird, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning - GIS  
Al Sundara, Maryland Department of Planning  
James Wilkerson, Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning

### ***Staff and Guests***

Greg Goodwin, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Regina Aris, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, (BMC)  
Todd Lang, BMC  
Zach Kaufman, BMC  
Crystal McDermott, BMC  
Md. Mohklesur Rahman, BMC  
Matthew Hancock, BMC