Regional Transportation Committee

Meeting date: July 15, 2025

Agenda Item #: 6 (Attachment D)

Small-Area Forecast: Member Agency Feedback Update

Agenda item type: Discussion

Summary
Updates to the small-area forecast have been completed incorporating jurisdiction and agency feedback.

Background
DRCOG staff have completed a major update to the small-area forecast, which is used as an input to DRCOG's Regional Housing Needs Assessment and DRCOG's Focus transportation model.

Feedback was accepted from January 20 through February 21. A webmap was provided to share the preliminary forecast and allow for comments. Additionally, a webinar was held January 27 to discuss the feedback process and 'office hours' were made available for one on one conversation with DRCOG staff. Twelve jurisdictions provided 105 comments which led to block level capacity changes to 2,800 census blocks and adding 169 new scheduled projects totaling over 7,000 housing units. All jurisdictions that provided comments were sent a follow-up email to describe how their comments were incorporated into the forecast. A follow-up webinar was held May 29 to share the updated forecast.

An updated webmap with census block group results is available online: Census block group webmap of the updated forecast.

Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) level shapefiles are available to download from DRCOG's regional data catalog: Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) shapefile.

DRCOG's small-area forecast webpage has additional information and updates.

Action by others
None

Previous discussion/action
None

Recommendation
None

Attachment
Staff presentation

For more information
If you need additional information, please contact Zachary Feldman, Program Manager, Data Science and Analytics, at 303-480-6790 or zfeldman@drcog.org; or Sheila Lynch, Division Director, Regional Planning and Development at 303-480-6839 or slynch@drcog.org.

Small-area forecast

Member agency feedback update

Regional Transportation Committee – July 15, 2025

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Presentation outline

1. What is the small-area forecast?
2. What is the land use model?
3. How was member agency feedback incorporated?
4. Where can the new forecast be accessed?

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Small-area forecast update timeline

- Forecast was shared and feedback accepted from January 20 through February 21.
- A webinar was held with jurisdiction and agency staff January 27th to discuss the feedback process.
- ‘Office hours’ were made available for one-on-one meetings.
- Follow-up emails were sent to all jurisdictions that provided comments to describe how their feedback was incorporated.
- A follow-up webinar was held May 29th to share the updated forecast.

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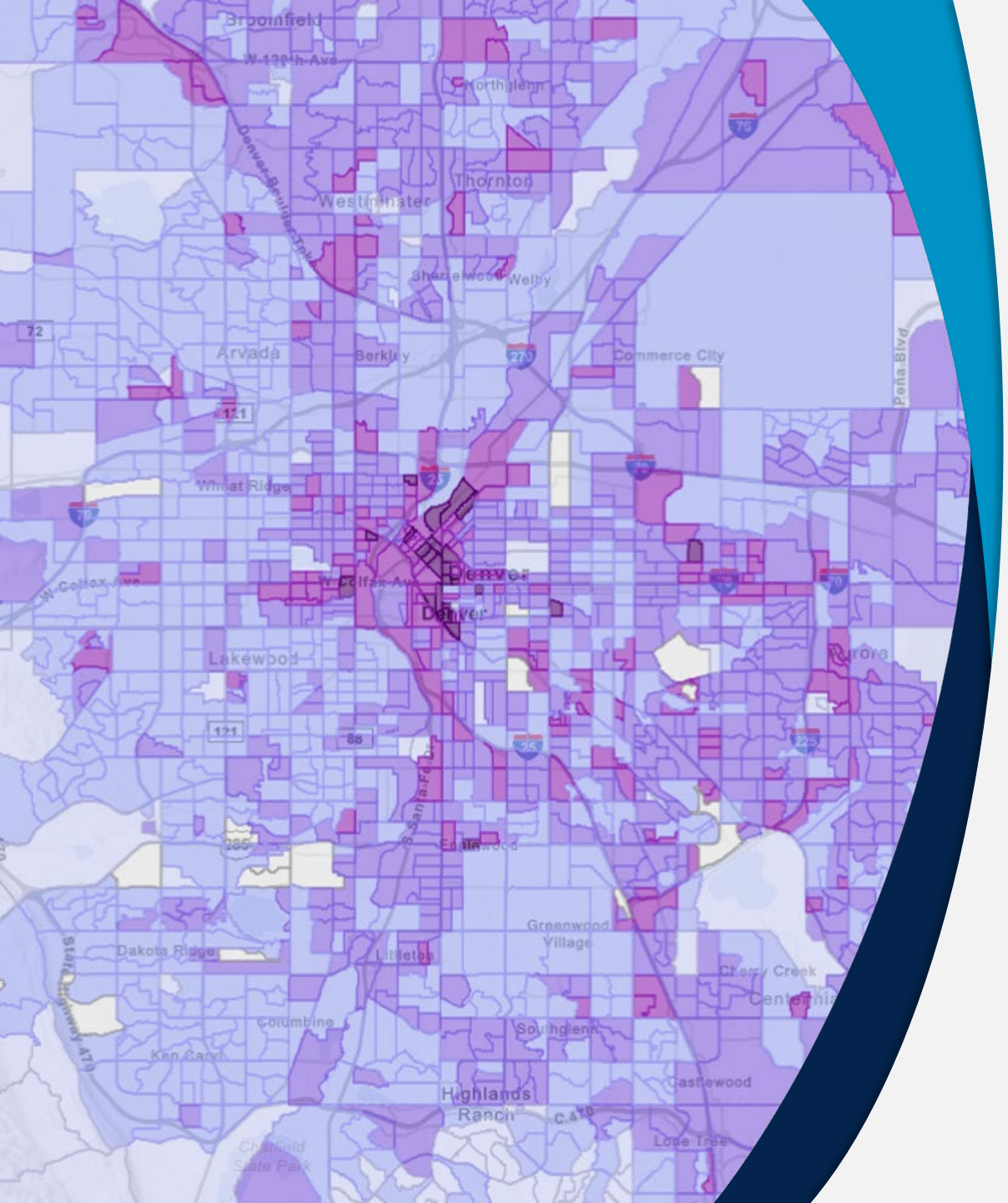
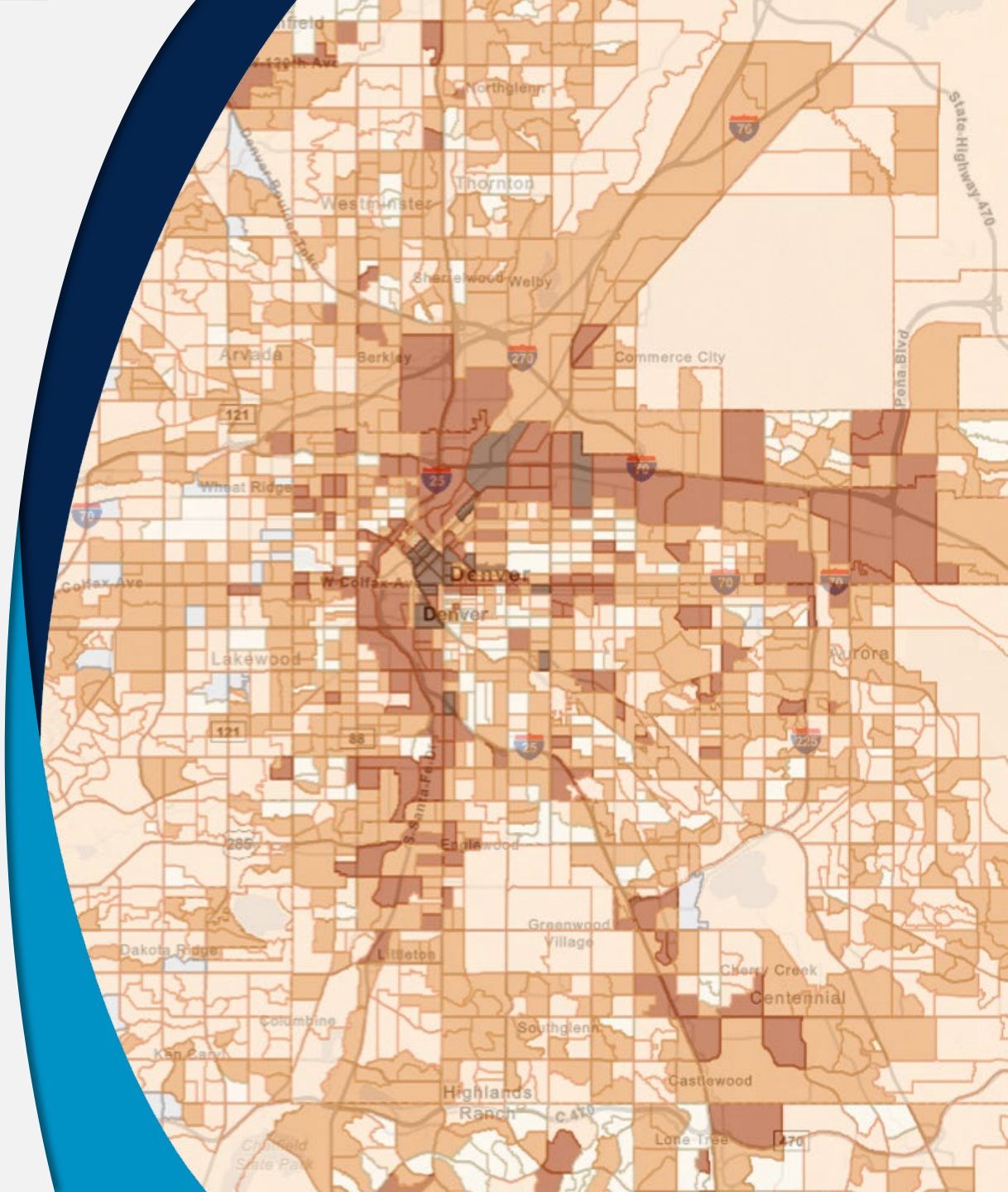


Small-area forecast

- Forecast of population, households and jobs.
- From 2020 to 2050.
- Block level forecast – aggregated to TAZ, block group, municipality.
- Input for DRCOG's Travel Demand Model.
- Input for DRCOG's Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Small-area forecast

- Starts with county level forecast from Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) for population and households and a regional jobs forecast.
- UrbanSim land use model used to apportion growth from DOLA forecast down to census blocks.



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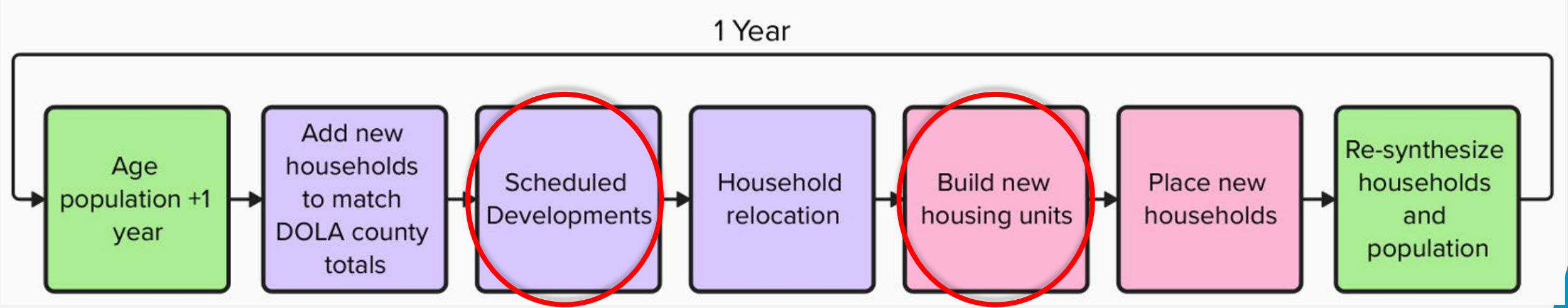
UrbanSim – a land use model

- Microsimulation model designed to represent the behavior of individual agents (households, businesses and developers) and their interactions in real estate markets.
- Simulates annual changes, capturing the dynamics of household moves, housing choices (renting vs. owning), firm location decisions, and developer activities (e.g., new construction or redevelopment).

UrbanSim – a land use model



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UrbanSim – a land use model

- Every Census block has an assigned development capacity for households and jobs.
- Capacities are constrained by
  - Zoning (over 1,900 unique zones).
  - Undevelopable land (waterbodies, protected open space, parks).
  - Future housing unit data from subscription sources (CoStar and Zonda).
  - **Local jurisdiction feedback.**

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UrbanSim – a land use model

- Scheduled developments are created from Costar and Zonda data.
- Only includes projects under construction or nearing construction.
- Future capacities are updated using Costar and Zonda projects with a longer build horizon.

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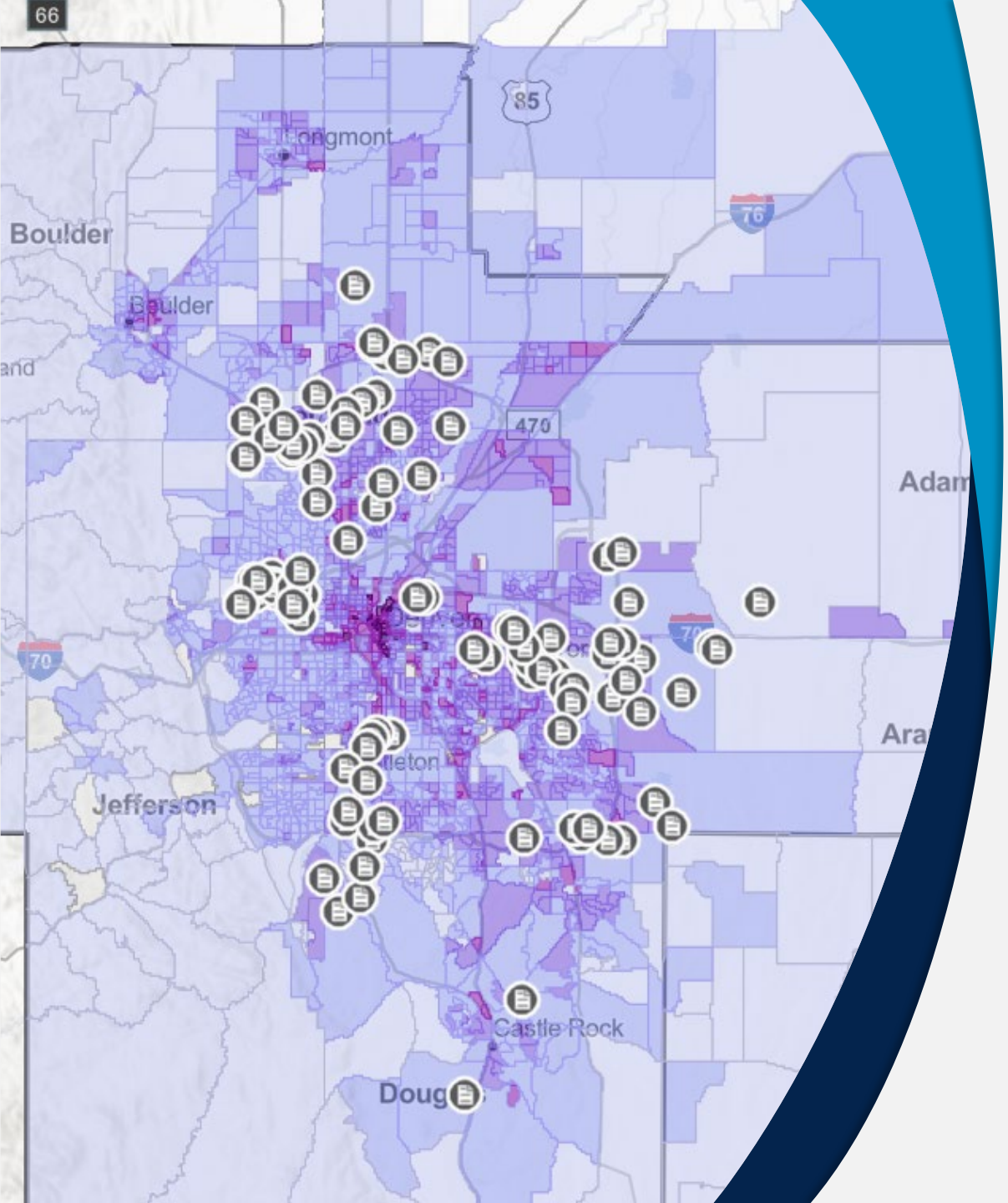

Feedback received

- We received 105 comments from 12 jurisdictions, thank you!
  - Arapahoe County.
  - Aurora.
  - Broomfield.
  - Denver International Airport.
  - Douglas County.
  - Englewood.
  - Erie.
  - Littleton.
  - RTD.
  - Thornton.
  - Westminster.
  - Wheat Ridge.

How feedback was used

Adjusted future capacities of 2,829 blocks.

Added 169 projects as scheduled development.

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How feedback was used – capacities

- Increased or decreased future housing/job capacities.
- Future capacity of a block group was set to match what the jurisdiction believed full build out could be.
- Does not guarantee the development will be built, still competes with other jurisdictions within each county for growth.
- Still ultimately constrained by the county control totals from DOLA.
- Primarily applied changes to areas with PUD or similar zoning type.

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How feedback was used – scheduled developments

- Added known developments to the scheduled development pipeline.
- Some examples of the types of projects that were missing from our data:
    - Hotel to apartment conversions.
    - Rehabs and demolitions.
- These projects are inserted directly in the model, do not face competition from within the county.
- Generally only projects that are under construction or in the final planning phases.

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View the new forecast

- View the updated forecast that incorporates jurisdiction feedback:
  - Census block group webmap of the updated forecast.
  - Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) shapefile download from data catalog.
  - Small-area forecast webpage on DRCOG.org.

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Confidential employment

- This version of the small-area forecast uses QCEW employment data from the state for the first time.
- Restrictions on privacy prevent us from sharing employment numbers for block groups and TAZs with a small number of employers or where a single employer makes up 80% or more of the jobs within a given geography.
  - 57 out of 2310 block groups are suppressed.
  - 202 out of 2260 TAZs are suppressed.
- Consultants who use the travel model will still receive the complete data set.

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Next steps for integration of forecast

- Regional Housing Needs Assessment.
  - Updated forecast has been incorporated into the needs assessment.
- Regional Transportation Plan scenarios.
  - The preliminary forecast shared with jurisdictions for review was used for the scenarios, though with regional instead of county control totals.
- Regional Transportation Plan air quality conformity.
  - Will use the reviewed and updated version of the small-area forecast.

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Thank you!

Zachary Feldman, PhD

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