Socioeconomic forecast

What is the socioeconomic forecast?

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) produces a socioeconomic forecast every four years as part of the regional transportation plan cycle, with two main components: a ***regional forecast*** and a ***local forecast***. The forecast estimates the number and distribution of people and jobs in northeastern Illinois to help CMAP and the region's communities plan for changing needs. The forecast uses data and projections from Moody's Analytics, the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other governmental data sources.

All metropolitan planning organizations are required to forecast land use and transportation conditions to at least a 20-year planning horizon as part of creating a regional transportation plan. CMAP chose to project a planning horizon out to 2050.

The socioeconomic forecast is produced in conjunction with the four-year plan cycle. The most recent forecast was released in late 2022 and can be found here. We are building up awareness of our forecast among our municipalities, stressing its value and use for a variety of purposes including grant applications, water allocation, and local planning.

Socioeconomic forecast components

Regional forecast

The regional forecast estimates how many people and jobs will be in the region through 2050. The regional population forecast is a cohort-component model that estimates births, deaths, and net migration. Future birth rates and mortality rates are calculated by analyzing past data, with some adjustments.

We use economic forecasts from Moody's Analytics – a trusted analytics firm – to estimate the number and mix of jobs in the region, which influences the amount of net migration in or out of the region.

Local forecast

The local forecast estimates population and employment at the block level from base year 2020 to 2050. Block data is aggregated up to municipal and county levels to produce summarized results hosted in the CMAP Data Hub. The local forecast is implemented using a model called UrbanSim. UrbanSim uses a combination of regional forecast data, travel model data, and local information like land use, zoning, and recent construction to estimate the distribution of people, households, and buildings in the region.

UrbanSim consists of several supporting models. The real estate development model predicts buildings based on profitability and zoning to accommodate incoming households in a forecast year. The location choice models place households and employment into buildings, based on preferences learned from real input data.

Learn more

If you have specific questions or would like to discuss the forecast more in-depth, please contact:

Regional forecast – Alex Bahls, abahls@cmap.illinois.gov
Local forecast – Carlos Lopez, clopez@cmap.illinois.gov
Forecast team organizer – Laurent Ahiablame, PhD, lahiablame@cmap.illinois.gov

last updated July 2024

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning