



STAFF REPORT
Board Meeting of May 21, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5-A

PREPARED BY: Dylan Stone, Principal Regional Planner

SUBJECT:

Madera County Growth and Development Forecast

Enclosure: No

Action: Approve the Madera County Growth and Development Forecast

SUMMARY:

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization and state-designated regional transportation planning agency for Madera County, the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) is responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the county and its cities. The effectiveness of these plans depends heavily on how well their investments and policies address current challenges and anticipate future needs. Overestimating growth can lead to excessive development costs and underinvestment in existing issues, while underestimating growth can create avoidable, costly problems by straining housing, roads, and service needs. To guide these efforts, MCTC relies on its Regional Growth and Development Forecast and regional traffic model, updating both ahead of the RTP and SCS revisions to inform planning decisions.

The Madera County Growth and Development Forecast was prepared to provide accurate projections of future conditions in Madera County out to the year 2050. The report is divided into four parts:

1. Long-Term Trends – National and state factors that affect local growth.
2. Core Forecasts – Projections for population, housing, and jobs.
3. Secondary Forecasts – Age breakdowns, household types, and housing composition.
4. Subarea Forecasts – How growth is expected to be distributed across five areas, including the cities of Madera and Chowchilla, Southern SR 41 Corridor, and north/south Madera County unincorporated areas.

The Madera County Growth and Development Forecast uses a cohort-component model, a standard demographic tool that projects population changes by age and sex. It uses three main inputs:

1. Births – Estimated using fertility rates for women aged 15–49.
2. Deaths – Based on age-specific mortality rates.
3. Migration – The number of people moving in or out of the county.

Each group (“cohort”) is aged forward, adjusted for births, deaths, and moves.

The Madera County Growth and Development Forecast utilizes data and information from an array of sources including:

- U.S. Census Bureau – Annual American Community Survey (ACS) and Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) microdata
- California Department of Finance (DOF) – Population and housing reports (Report E-5 and Report E-8)
- Other Sources – State health and employment data, local agency staff interviews

Like all long-term forecasts, this forecast involves uncertainty, especially looking out to 2050. Regular updates help adjust for changes. This forecast faces added uncertainty due to:

- COVID-19 impacts – Some trends changed or sped up; others remain unclear.
- Federal immigration policies – Future changes may affect state and local population growth.

Because of these unknowns, MCTC will continue monitoring conditions closely and revise forecasts as needed. As the RTP/SCS is required to be updated every four years, MCTC staff anticipate forecast updates on a schedule that aligns to this four-year planning process.

Key findings from the study have been summarized in the tables below:

Madera County Total Population Forecast 2025 to 2050	
2025	160,600
2030	168,100
2035	173,500
2040	178,000
2045	181,800
2050	184,700
Total Growth	24,200
Average Annual Change	970
Annualized Growth Rate	0.6%

Madera County Total Housing Forecast 2025 to 2050	
2025	48,300
2030	51,400
2035	53,900
2040	56,300
2045	58,600
2050	60,500
Total Growth	12,270
Average Annual Change	490
Annualized Growth Rate	0.9%

Madera County Total Employment Forecast 2025 to 2050	
2025	55,800
2030	57,900
2035	60,000
2040	62,200
2045	64,600
2050	67,000
Total Growth	11,180
Average Annual Change	450
Annualized Growth Rate	0.7%

MCTC retained PlaceWorks to prepare the forecast. Steve Gunnells from PlaceWorks will be speaking about the forecast development and the findings during the May 21, 2025, MCTC Policy Board Meeting for this item.

When approved, MCTC staff will apply the findings from the Madera County Growth and Development Forecast to its analytical planning tools in support of the in-development 2026 Madera County RTP/SCS.

A copy of the DRAFT Madera County Growth and Development Forecast is available on the MCTC website at: <https://www.maderactc.org/transportation/page/madera-county-growth-and-development-forecast>

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact to the approved 2024-25 Overall Work Program and Budget.