

F-M population projected to grow to 340,000 by 2045

By Helmut Schmidt on Mar 9, 2017 at 8:22 p.m.



1 / 2

FARGO — The population in and around the Fargo-Moorhead area is expected to grow nearly 50 percent by 2045, according to "best case scenario" projections approved Thursday, March 9, by a Metropolitan Council of Governments committee.

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area — which includes Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead and Dilworth, and the rest of Cass and Clay counties — had a population of 232,900 in 2015, according to estimates.

In 30 years, the Fargo-Moorhead statistical area will likely have 330,550 people, though a "best case" projection puts that number at 340,760, according to KLJ, a West Fargo engineering and planning firm.

Metro COG's Transportation Technical Committee voted to go with the best-case estimates through 2045 because population projections for the area have consistently lagged actual growth, said Metro COG Executive Director William Christian. The work now goes to Metro COG's policy board.

Population, household and employment projections will help determine what improvements will be needed for transportation systems in the F-M area, Christian said.

"We have to look at least 20 years into the future to predict traffic volumes," he said. "We are a growing community ... even with the Bakken (western North Dakota's Oil Patch) slowing."

The Fargo-Moorhead statistical area's "best case" population estimate is 280,550 residents in 2025 and 316,460 in 2035, KLJ estimates.

In 2015, there were 94,750 households in the F-M statistical area. By 2045, that could rise to 133,950 households, KLJ estimates.

In 2015, there were 151,290 jobs in the F-M statistical area. By 2045, that could rise to 209,363 jobs, KLJ estimates.

The best-case assumptions count on the F-M diversion being finished by 2025. Fertility rates are also expected to rise from 2015 to 2025, Joel Quanbeck of KLJ said.

The area is retaining more recent high school and college graduates, which adds to the number of people in the child-bearing age range, he said. More high school graduates are also continuing school at area colleges.

Out-migration of 22- to 30-year-olds is expected to decrease through 2025, while a relatively large increase in the senior population is expected as more baby boomers are attracted to the area for its amenities and medical care, Quanbeck said.

Continued growth will rely on more in-migration, he said.

The economy is expected to continue to grow, with mortgage rates remaining below 4.5 percent through 2025, Quanbeck said.

He said the demographic estimates are revisited every five years.

Helmut Schmidt

Helmut Schmidt was born in Germany, but grew up in the Twin Cities area, graduating from Park High School of Cottage Grove. After serving a tour in the U.S. Army, he attended the University of St. Thomas in St Paul, Minn., graduating in 1984 with a degree in journalism. He then worked at the Albert Lea (Minn.) Tribune and served as managing editor there for three years. He joined The Forum in October 1989, working as a copy editor until 2000. Since then, he has worked as a reporter on several beats, including education, Fargo city government, business and military affairs. He is currently The Forum's K-12 education reporter.

hschmidt@forumcomm.com

(701) 241-5583