

Proposed Adjusted Urbanized Area Boundaries (UAB)

Overview

After each decennial census, the U.S. Census Bureau uses very specific population and population density criteria to delineate the urbanized areas of the nation. The boundaries of urbanized areas are, as a result, irregular, and are not a complete measure of the urban area, as they are defined primarily by residential development, and do not include all commercial, industrial, or other urban development.

FHWA looks to the state and MPO to “smooth” or adjust the urbanized area boundary for use as a “federal aid urban boundary”. The Capital District Transportation Committee staff and the New York State Department of Transportation, working with Planning Committee members and other local officials, are responsible for proposing an adjusted urbanized boundary for the Albany- Schenectady and Saratoga urbanized areas of the Capital District. (Previously named the Albany-Schenectady-Troy urbanized area, the area still includes the City of Troy). Please note that Urban Area is not the same as MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area), which in our case is still named the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA.

The adjusted urbanized area boundary is used to define the area within which the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funding and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Program Funding allocated to the Capital District urbanized area may be expended. The adjusted boundary does not affect the amount of funding coming to the Capital District. While levels of federal funding are based on the Census-defined urbanized area, the funding is allocated among projects in the adjusted urbanized area boundary. This particularly impacts FHWA STP funding, as the boundary adjustments increase the mileage of facilities eligible for FHWA STP funding. (The impact of the adjusted boundary is mainly to define the urban/rural distinction in the functional classification of area roadways.) The adjusted urbanized area boundary does not affect CDTC’s jurisdiction regarding TIP actions, due to the fact that CDTC’s programming area extends to the full four-county area including all urban and rural areas (with the exception of the town of Moreau).

Modifications to the Boundaries

CDTC staff explored the opportunity to smooth or adjust the 2010 Urbanized Area Boundary for federal aid purposes. The CDTC planning area contains two urbanized areas, Albany-Schenectady and Saratoga Springs. Please see the factors used in the adjustment of the UAB on the following page. The attached maps show the boundaries before and after the CDTC staff’s adjustment for both 2000 and 2010.

The boundaries were adjusted on the basis of several factors including:

- Existing urban areas and areas expected to become urbanized in the next 20 years
- Existing and proposed land use
- Major traffic generators
- Town comprehensive plans
- Completed Linkage Studies
- Population centers
- Municipal boundaries

Similar to the delineation of other Census geographical areas, the Urbanized Area Boundary must be defined at the Census Block level of geography. Given these restrictions, there are several instances where the boundary has been expanded beyond an intended point to sufficiently meet the physical feature requirement. For additional guidance on this exercise, please see the attached guidance document containing information from NYSDOT and a timeline of the update process.

Action

The draft adjusted UAB has been approved by both CDTC Planning Committee and NYSDOT staff. CDTC staff requests CDTC Policy Committee action to release the draft UAB for public comment. The 30 day public comment period will end on July 8th as indicated in CDTC's schedule below. This schedule is structured to accommodate NYSDOT's September 30th 2013 deadline.

CDTC's Schedule for Urban Area Boundary Adjustment

May 1 st	Planning Committee approves draft plan. Submit to NYSDOT.
June 6 th	Policy Board approves draft plan, and releases it for 30-day comment period.
July 8 th	30-day comment ends. CDTC addresses comments.
August 7 th	Planning Committee approves final plan.
September 5 th	Policy Board approves final plan.