

FHWA Urbanized Area Adjustments to District 1 / CMAP Region – Summary

March 4, 2014

Background

Per FHWA requirements, the Illinois Department of Transportation is required to accept the U.S. Census Bureau's defined urban areas or submit adjusted urban area boundaries to the FHWA as part of the continual process of updating and maintaining the state's system of functionally classified roads and highways. The urban area boundary is typically updated every ten years after new urban clusters and urbanized areas are delineated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Areas that are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as urban and having a population of 5,000 or more **must** be accepted or adjusted outward based on FHWA guidelines. Once adjusted each urban area within the state is submitted to FHWA for review and approval.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is seeking cooperation with CMAP in approving the updated urbanized and small urban areas for District 1 and the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Area as shown on the attached exhibit. The proposed new urban areas must be approved by the CMAP Transportation Committee and the CMAP Policy Committee at their upcoming committee meetings in order for the urban areas to proceed to the IDOT Central Office and receive approval by the FHWA before the June 2014 federal deadline.

Proposed Changes

The District 1 / CMAP planning area is currently comprised of three urban areas - Chicago, Marengo and Harvard. These urban areas will be slightly expanded to incorporate areas that have been defined as urban by the U.S. Census, areas that are newly incorporated per recent municipal boundaries files, and adjusted to follow roads, streams or other recognizable features on aerial photography per the FHWA's 2013 guidance.

The towns of Plano and Sandwich which are currently defined as their own "small urban areas" must be consolidated into the Chicago urbanized area. The U.S. Census Bureau has identified portions of the two towns as part of the Chicago urbanized area; not as small urban areas as they were from the 2000 Census.

March Update – NEW

Based on conversations between the IDOT Central office and the FHWA, we are seeking CMAP's concurrence to modify the previously approved urban area boundaries from CMAP's January's transportation committee meeting as follows:

- 1) Define Somonauk and Lake Holliday as a separate "small urban area" independent of the Chicago "urbanized area". The U.S. Census Bureau defines the area as a small urban cluster with an approximate population of 7,500. If this entire area is identified as part of the Chicago urbanized area the metropolitan planning area must be expanded to include the entire area, including the portion in LaSalle County.
- 2) Define Coal City, Braidwood, Wilmington and Godley as a separate, "small urban area" independent of the Chicago "urbanized area". The U.S. Census Bureau defines the area as a small urban cluster with an approximate population of 22,700. If this entire area is identified as part of the Chicago urbanized area the metropolitan planning area must be expanded to include the entire area, including the portion in Grundy County.

Discussion Point: Why can't these two "small urban areas" be incorporated into the Chicago urbanized area?

Federal law requires that a Census defined “urbanized area” be located completely within a metropolitan planning area. In this case, CMAP’s metropolitan planning area ends at the Will county line adjacent to Grundy County near and along the DeKalb county line near and along the border with LaSalle County. *(Note: This addition to CMAP’s metropolitan planning boundary is currently awaiting approval from the governor’s office.)* In order for these two areas to be incorporated into the Chicago urbanized area, the CMAP metropolitan planning boundary would need to be extended into LaSalle County and expanded in Grundy County.

FHWA regulations do not require the entire Census defined “small urban areas” be located within a specific metropolitan planning area.

Implications for federal-aid funding within District 1 and the CMAP Metropolitan Planning Area.

It is anticipated that adjustments to the urban boundary will have a negligible effect on eligibility for federal aid funding. Roads that are currently classified as minor collectors (yellow on IDOT functional classification maps) would become eligible for federal aid funding if they are incorporated into one of the three urban areas within the District 1 / CMAP planning area. This represents a very small amount of additional roadway mileage within District 1.

Additional Resources

- 1) FHWA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding urbanized area adjustments (attached)

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/urbanized_areas_and_mpo_tma/faq/page07.cfm

- 2) Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures (2013 Edition)

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/index.cfm

Attachments:

- 1) Proposed District 1 / CMAP Urbanized Area Boundary Map – March 4.
- 2) FHWA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding urbanized area adjustments.
- 3) CMAP Proposed Metropolitan Planning Boundary (12/7/2012).