Action Transmittal

TAC Planning Committee

Committee Meeting Date: August 2, 2023 **Date:** July 27, 2023

Action Transmittal: 2023-38

Smoothed Urban Area Boundary

To: Technical Advisory Committee

From: TAC Planning Committee

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Requested Action

The Metropolitan Council staff requests adoption of the proposed smoothed urban area boundary as shown on the attached map.

Recommended Motion

That the Technical Advisory Committee recommend adoption of the proposed smoothed urban area boundary as shown on the attached map.

Background and Purpose

Upon completion of each decennial census, the U.S. Census Bureau delineates and provides maps depicting the contiguous urban area boundary for metropolitan areas. These boundaries represent urban areas that meet certain population and distance thresholds to the core urban area. The urban area boundary must include all areas identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as urban but should also undergo a "smoothing" process to include identifiable features such as roadways and rivers, and to follow municipal boundaries. For urban areas with a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the MPO is charged with leading this process.

For the 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau altered the methodology used to determine urban area boundaries. This resulted in some cities within the Council's 7-county metropolitan planning area, most notably Stillwater, becoming separate urban areas but remaining within the planning area. Stillwater and all other urbanized communities within the 7-county region remain part of the Council's planning area boundary defined under State statute and are still eligible for Regional Solicitation funding and other Council services.

Similarly, due to the fact that under adopted local practices all A-Minor Arterials within the MPO planning area are eligible for the Regional Solicitation, urban and rural distinctions have little effect on communities and roadways within the 7-county metro area. MnDOT and FHWA, however, do track and use total urban and rural system mileage and are therefore more concerned with the urban and rural classifications.

Among the more significant changes to the urban area boundary is the removal of Houlton, Wisconsin, from the urban area and thus from the planning area. There were also some minor boundary changes within the urbanized areas of Wright and Sherburne counties, which became part of the Council's urbanized area after the 2010 census. Council staff met with staff representing

the counties and cities affected by these changes on June 12, and the area representatives have not indicated any concerns with the new boundaries. Since the proposed boundary was presented to the TAC Planning Committee, Council staff has received feedback from MnDOT and other local partners and have slightly revised the map.

The updated draft urban area boundary map is included. Due to some continuing and minor feedback received from partners, the draft map may be slightly altered as it goes through the TAC/TAB process.

Relationship to Regional Policy

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Twin Cities, the Council is required to perform the urban area smoothing process and adopt a smoothed urban boundary to comply with federal law.

Staff Analysis

The adjusted urban area boundary follows guidelines and best practices set forth by both MnDOT and FHWA. It includes all the urban areas as well as logical contiguous areas within the region. It has been reviewed and vetted by stakeholders, including MnDOT and representatives of Wright and Sherburne counties.

Committee Comments and Action

At its July 13, 2023, meeting, the TAC Planning Committee voted to recommend adoption of the proposed smoothed urban area boundary as shown on the attached map.

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed (*Scheduled*)
TAC Planning	Review & Recommend	July 13, 2023
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	August 2, 2023
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	August 16, 2023
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	August 28, 2023
Metropolitan Council	Review & Adopt	September 13, 2023

2020 UZA

7W View

Urbanized Area Change

UZA Change 2010 to 2020

- Added UZA in 2020
- Removed UZA in 2020

- City and Townships
- 2020 Census Defined UZA
- 2020 DRAFT Smooth UZA Metro
- Area Removed from Draft 2020 UZA
- 2020 DRAFT Smooth UZA Boundary
- 2013 Smooth UZA Boundary