

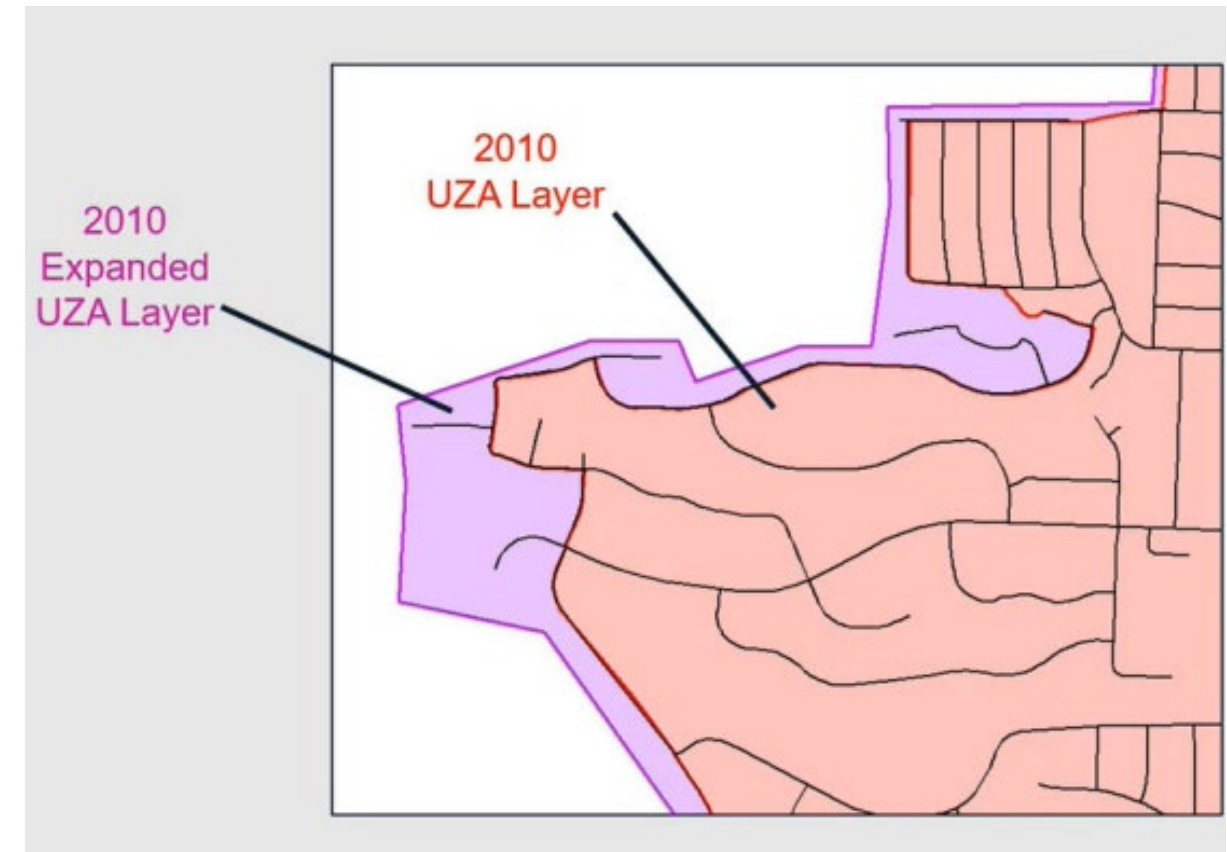


# Urban Area Boundary



# Urban Area Boundary Update - Background

- Urban area boundaries are updated by the US Census Bureau after completion of the decennial census
- Urban area boundaries undergo a “smoothing” process (adjusted outward) in order to follow identifiable features such as roadways (and right of way), water features, and municipal boundaries
- The smoothed urban area boundary must include the entire area identified as urban by the Census Bureau
  - Cannot shrink – only expand
- For urban areas within an MPO, the MPO leads this process



# Changes to the Urban Area Criteria

- Removal of the distinction between urban areas and urban clusters; all urban clusters are now also called urban areas
- Housing unit density may be used as an alternative to population to determine whether a census block is urban or not
  - Previously, a block must have at least 2,500 people
  - New methodology is a population of 5,000 OR at least 2,000 housing units
- The “jump distance” (distance along the roadway that can connect urban blocks) was lowered from 2.5 miles to 1.5 miles
- The most significant result of this change was that Stillwater is now a separate urban area
  - Stillwater is still within our planning area boundary

# Purpose of the Urban Area Boundary

- In most MPOs, the urban area boundary affects federal transportation programs such as:
  - Roadway functional classification
  - The FHWA Highway Performance Monitoring System
  - Apportionment and distribution of STPBG Funds
  - Sets boundaries for USDOT data reporting
  - **Is used to determine the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary**
- The MPA boundary is the MPO's area of responsibility for transportation planning and programming
- However, by state law, the Council's MPA must include the 7 counties
- This means the urban/rural distinction and subsequent urban area boundary for all areas within the 7 counties is not of great importance
- The urban area continues to include portions of Wright and Sherburne counties

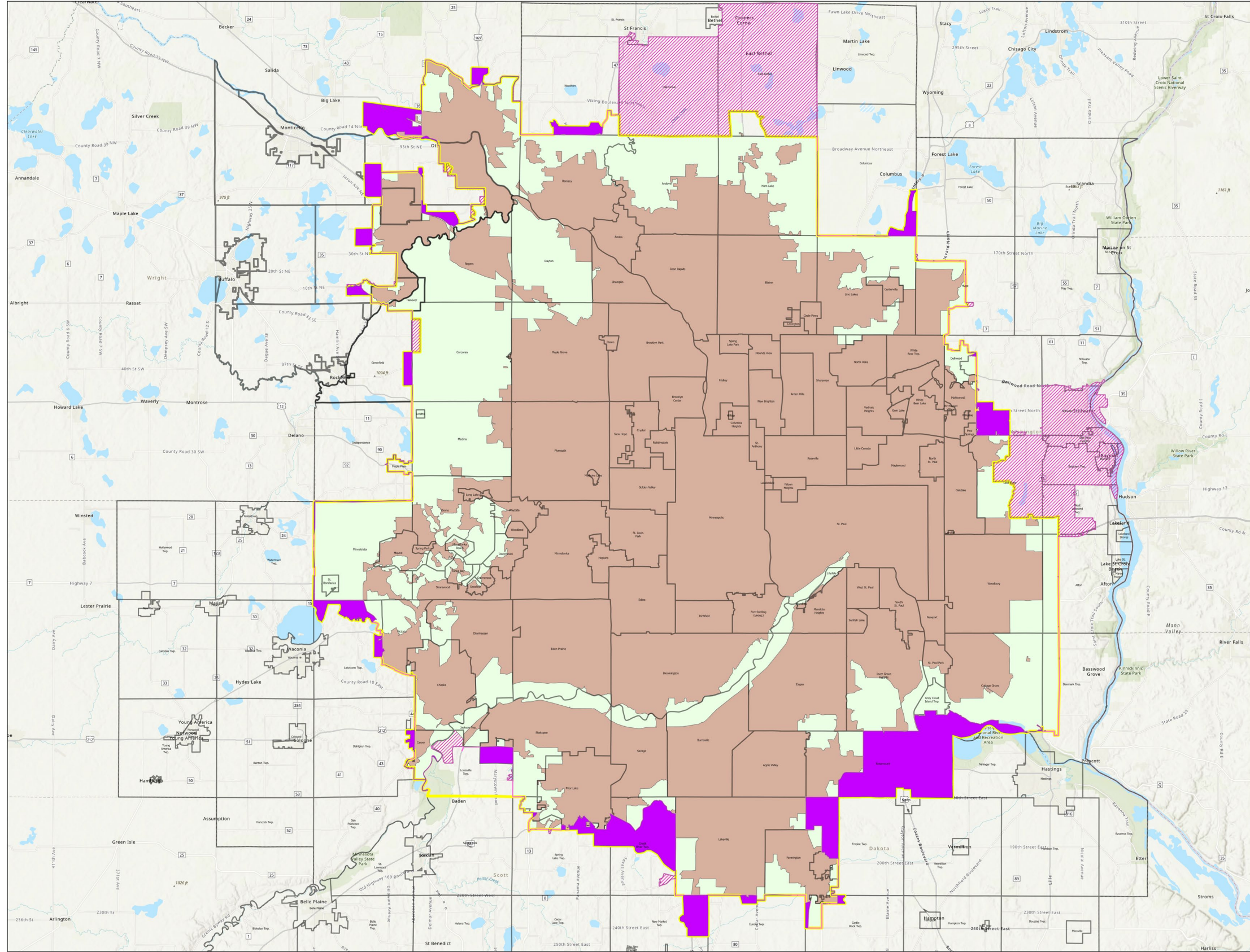
# Roadway Functional Class Implications

- Has limited effect on the Council's functional classification process due to the creation and use of A-Minors in our planning activities and in eligibility for the Regional Solicitation
- Could affect the urban/rural distinction for MnDOT and FHWA classification of roadways, but would only matter for the accounting of total system mileage classified as urban and rural

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

# Notable Changes from 2010

- Stillwater, Stillwater Township, Baytown Township, Oak Park Heights are now their own urban area
- Wisconsin is completely out of the MPA
- Lake Elmo split between the Twin Cities urban area and Stillwater urban area
- Inclusion of Rosemount to urban area
- Maple Plain, Nowthen, and Oak Grove are now outside the urban area and are classified as rural
- St. Francis is now its own urban area
- Minor changes in Wright and Sherburne counties – mainly to include interchanges

# Timeline and Process

- **June:** Council works with jurisdictions to create smoothed urban area boundary (separate meeting with Wright/Sherburne county staff)
- **June:** Council coordinates with MnDOT on proposed boundary
- **July:** TAC Planning approval
- **August:** TAC, TAB approval
- **September:** Council approval
- **End of September:** MnDOT submits to FHWA for approval





## David Burns

Planning Analyst

MTS Planning

[David.Burns@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:David.Burns@metc.state.mn.us)

