



Updated Urban Area Boundary



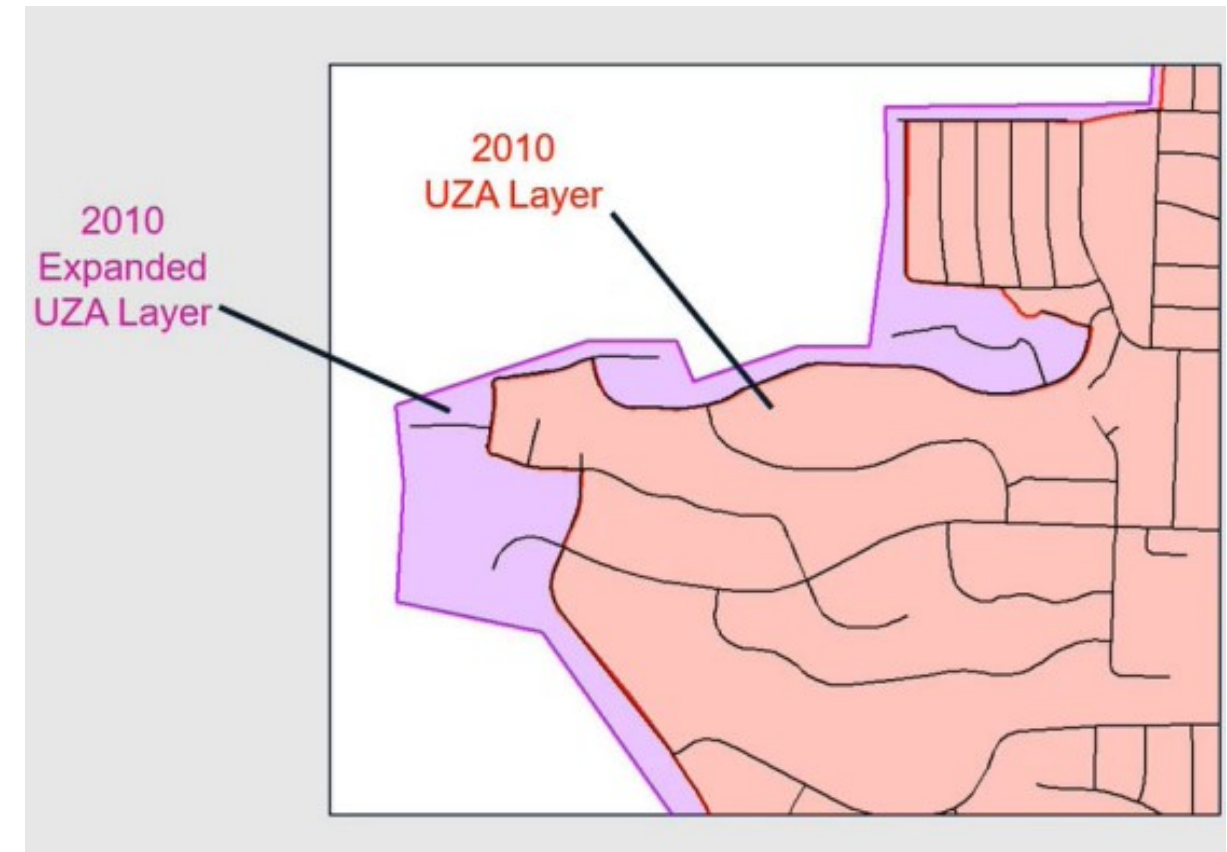
June 2023

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metro council.org

Urbanized Area Boundary Update - Background

- Urban area (UZA) boundaries are updated by the US Census Bureau after completion of the decennial census
- UZA 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 UZA 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 UZA Boundary

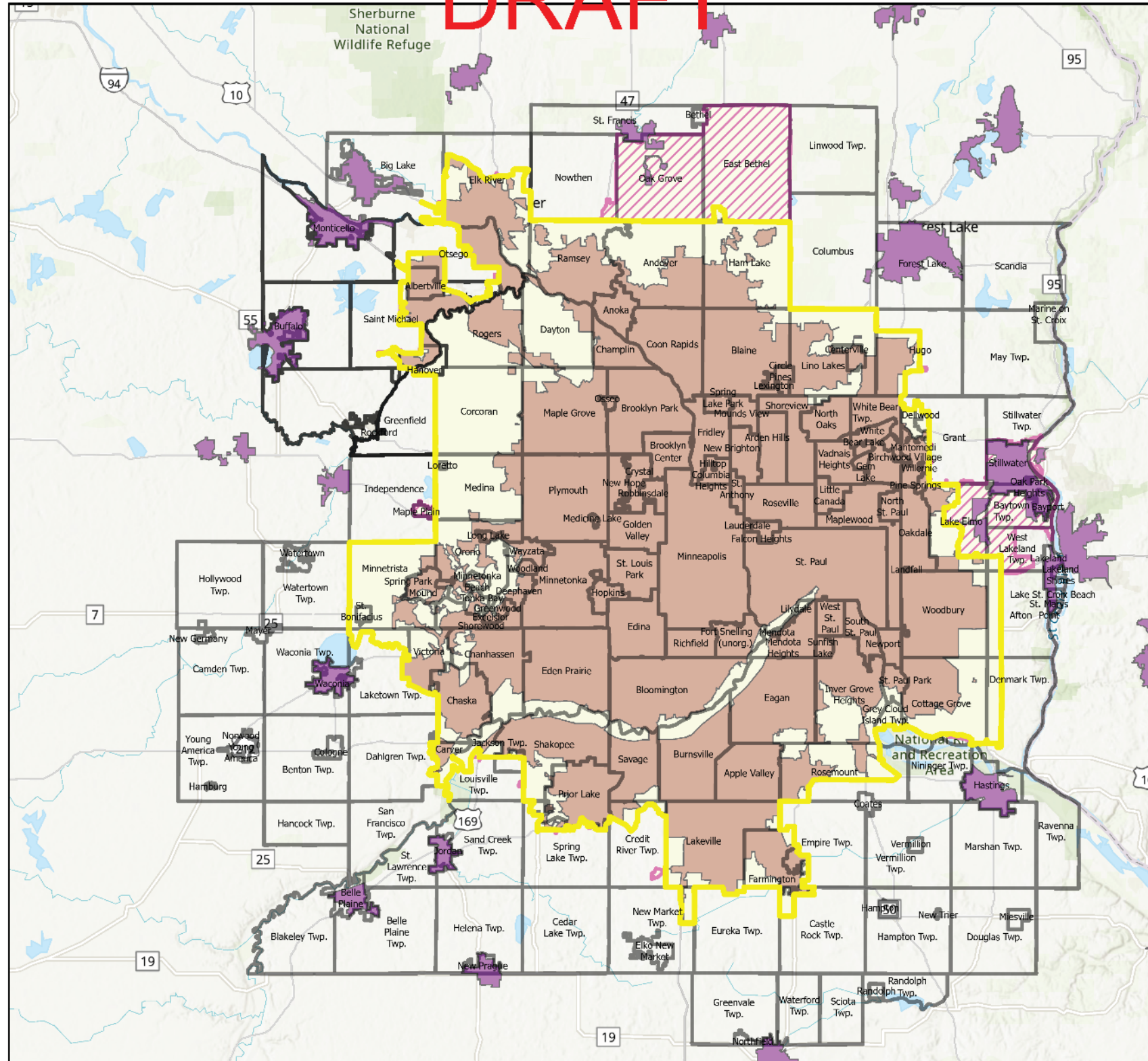
- In most MPOs, the UZA boundary affects federal transportation programs such as:
 - Roadway functional classification
 - The FHWA Highway Performance Monitoring System
 - Apportionment and distribution of STPBG Funds
 - Sets boundaries for US DOT data reporting
 - **Is used to determine the Metropolitan 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 UZA 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; staff will meet with these counties in mid-June to discuss the proposed smoothed boundaries

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

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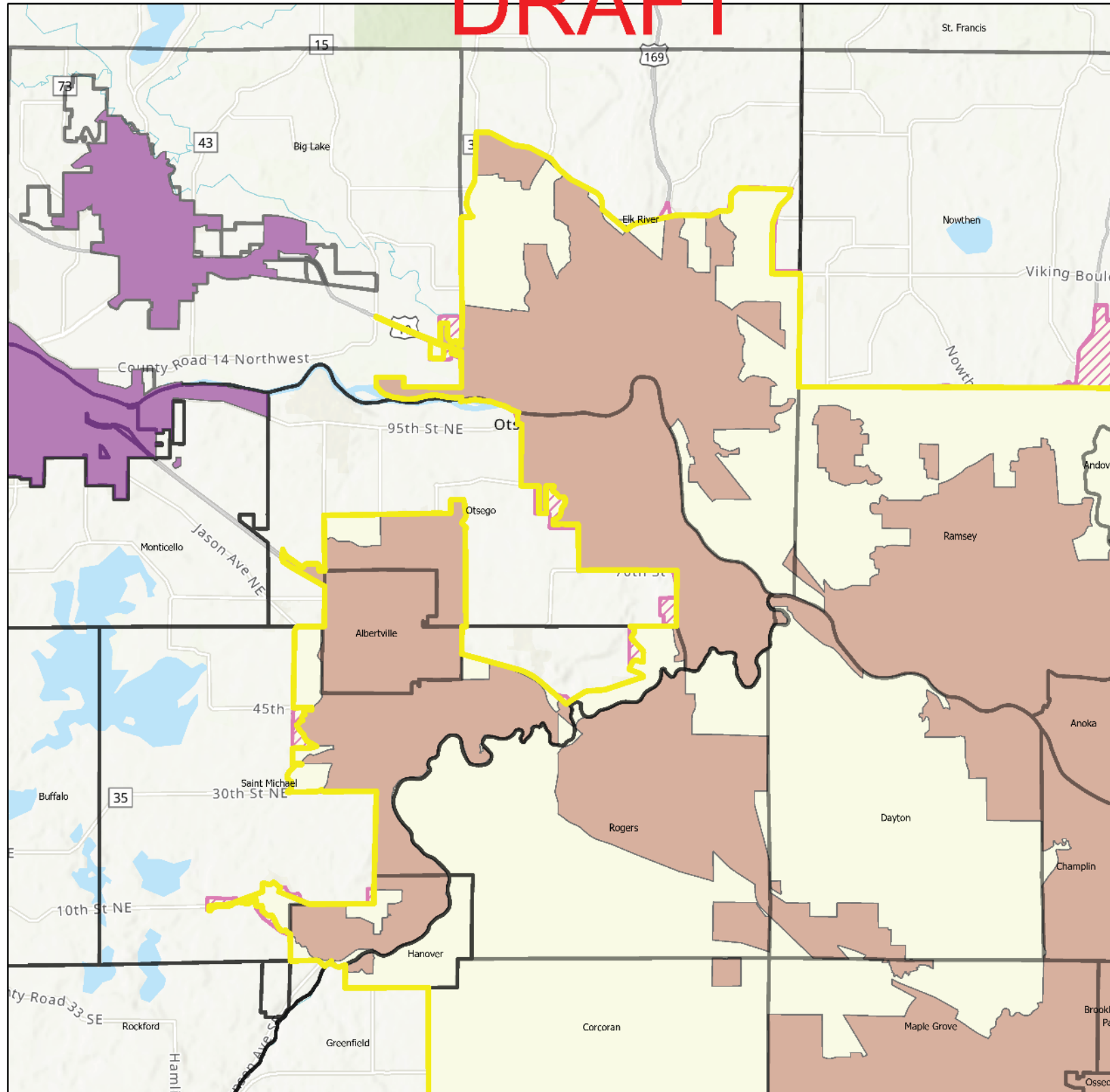
2020 UZA Regional View



- ▣ 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

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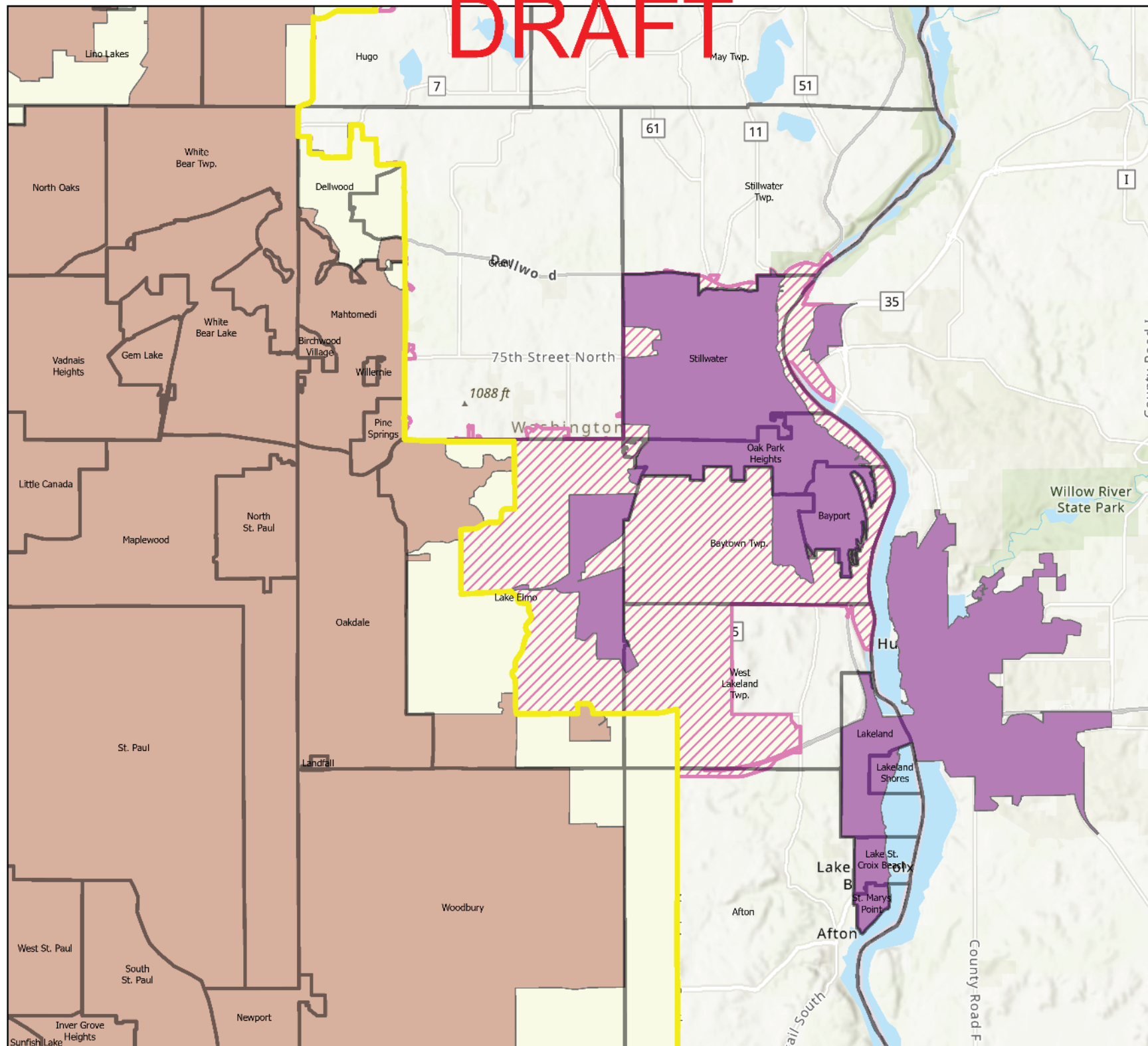
2020 UZA 7W View



- 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

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2020 UZA Stillwater View



- 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 to the UZA 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
- Expansion of Rosemount to the east
- 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 Elk River and St. Michael boundaries change slightly

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



Thank you

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