



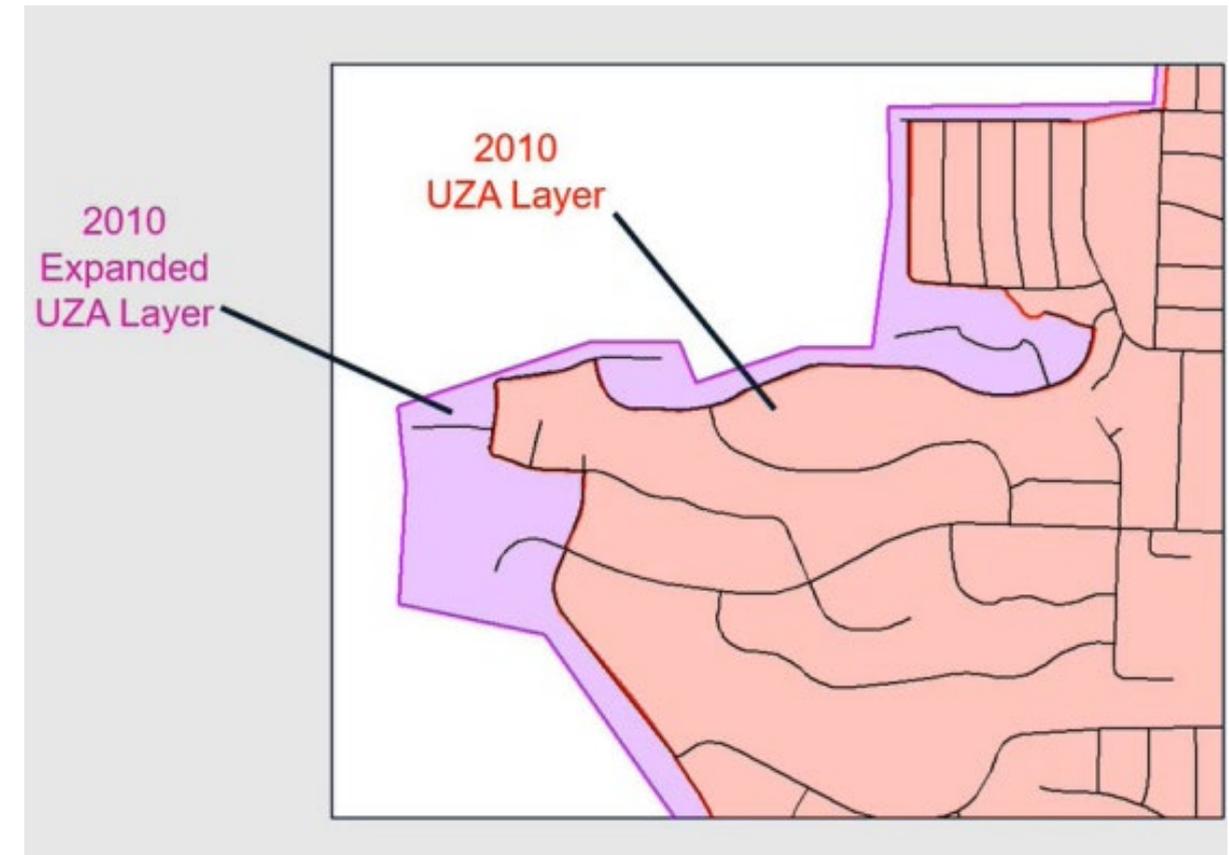
# Urban Area Boundary



August 2023 – David Burns – MTS Planning

# 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



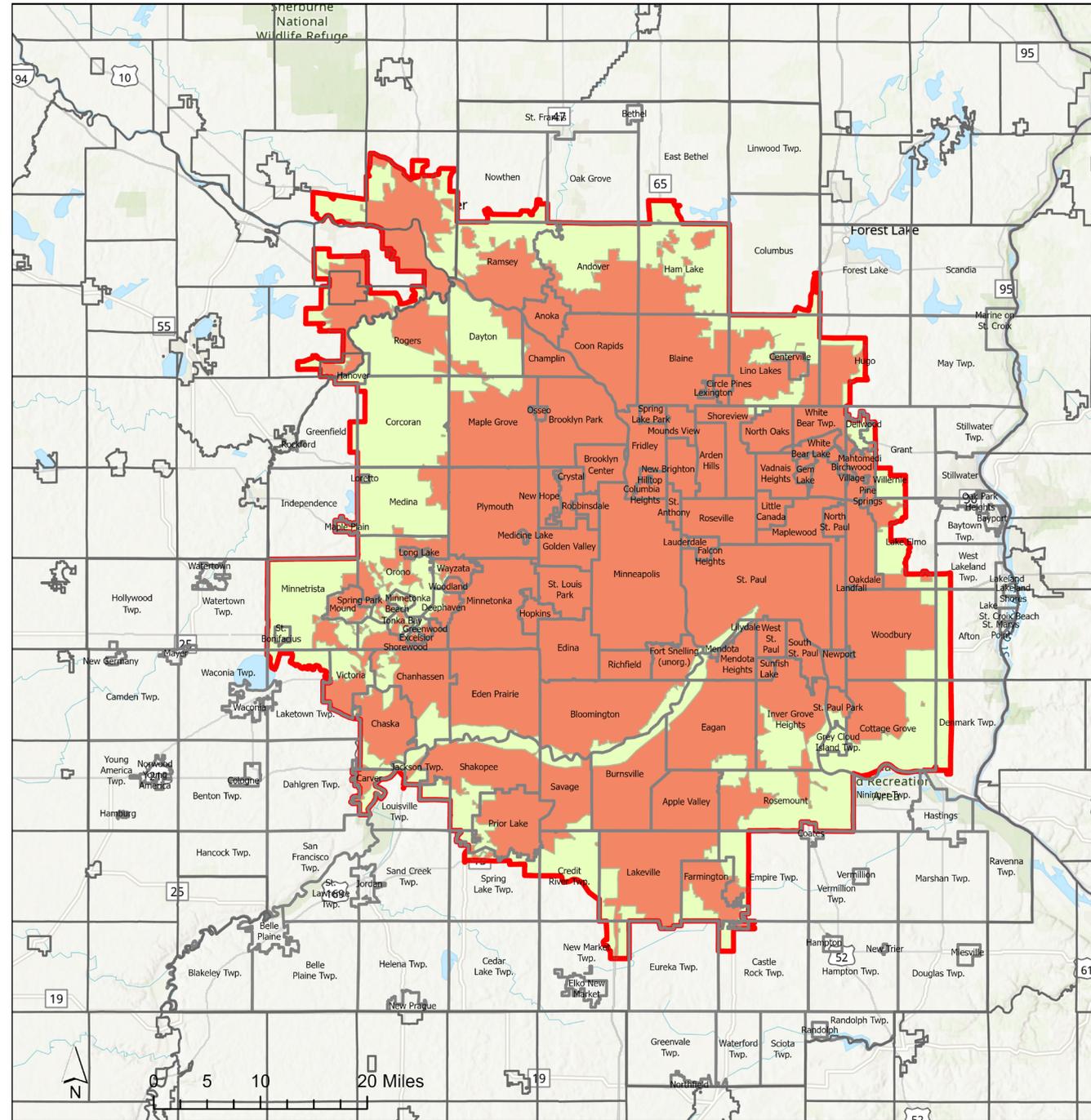
# Purpose of the Urban Area Boundary

- 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
- As required by federal law, the urban area continues to include portions of Wright and Sherburne counties

# MnDOT Use of the Urban Area Boundary

- MnDOT uses the urban area boundary to define urban and rural highway mileage, as required by FHWA
- Some federal competitive funding programs distinguish between urban and rural roadways for funding applications

# 2023 Smoothed Urbanized Area

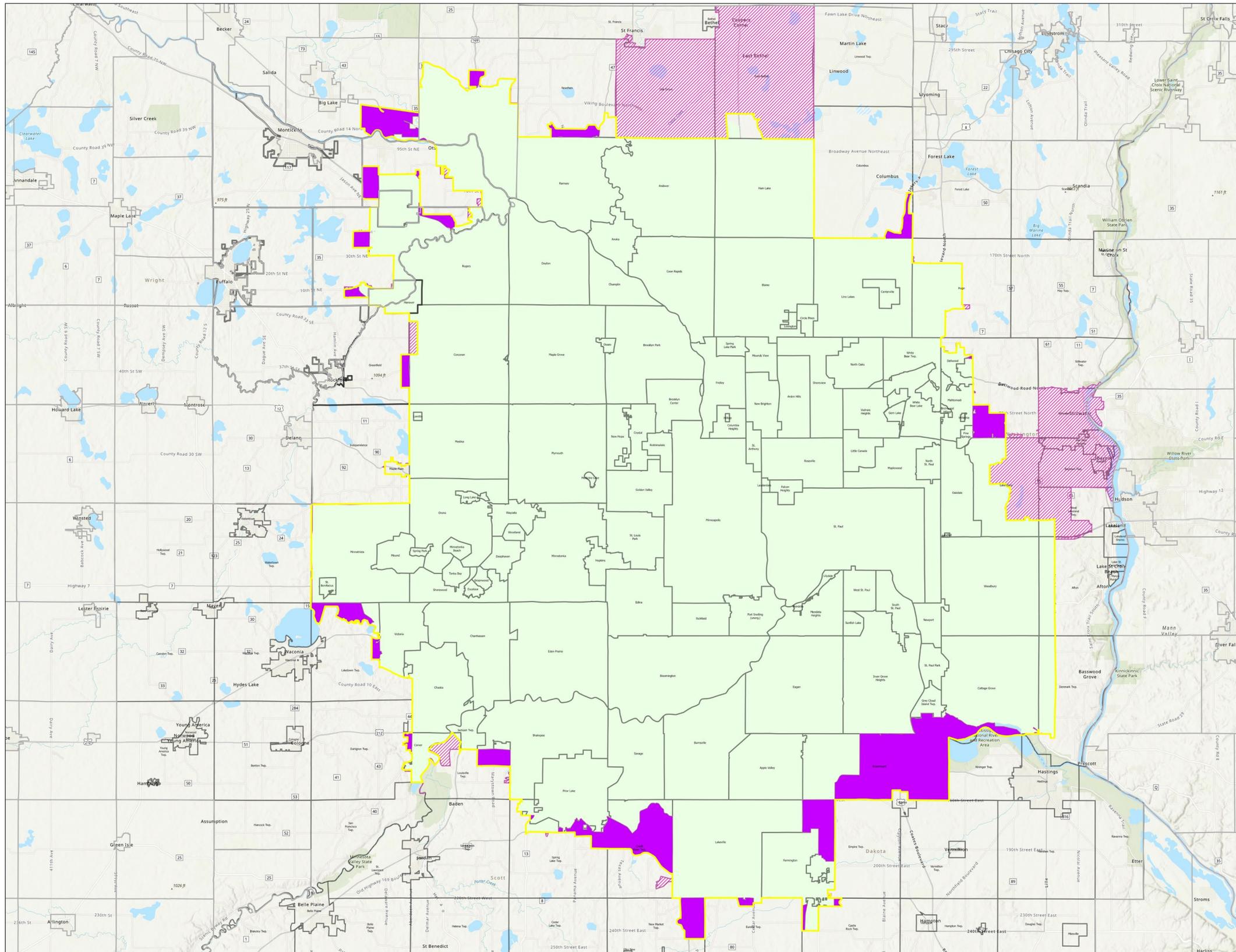


-  2023 Smoothed Urbanized Area
-  2020 Census Required UZA Areas
-  2020 City & Township Areas

**DRAFT**

2023 Smoothed UZA  
Urbanized Area  
Change  
2013 to 2023

- Added UZA in 2023
- Removed UZA in 2023
- 2023 DRAFT Smooth UZA Metro
- City and Townships



# 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

# Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the proposed smoothed urban area boundary as shown on the attached maps.



**David Burns**

Planning Analyst

MTS Planning

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

