

March 29, 2023

13 Major City Engineers/Administrators

**RE: 2020 CENSUS ADJUSTMENTS TO URBAN AREAS**

As a result of the 2020 United States Decennial Census there are number of updates that must occur to accommodate changes in population, highway classification and planning horizons. One of the updates necessary is the adjustments with respect to Urban Area boundaries. Each Urban Area is designated by the Census as an area having a central core with adjacent densely settled territory.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) is requesting that you update your Urban Area boundary based on the U.S. Census defined boundary. Updating the boundaries must adhere to the following requirements:

- At a minimum, the adjusted boundary must include the Census defined boundary and make up one contiguous area.
- Large developments that do not produce a Census definition may be added into the adjusted boundary, such as airports, commercial developments, industrial developments, etc.
- Provide tangible boundaries. If the Census defined boundary splits a roadway in half, it is suggested to include the entire roadway at a minimum; however, including all the right of way may be more appropriate.
- If excluded by the Census defined boundary, other common traffic generators may be added into the adjusted boundary; such as parks, schools, assemblies, etc.
- The adjusted boundary may follow the corporate limits of the City; however, this is not required.

After the adjustments have been made, please submit the boundary information to NDDOT for a preliminary review no later than June 1, 2023. NDDOT will work with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide comments back to each Urban Area as necessary.

Please note, any adjustments made to the Urban Area boundary will not increase your annual federal-aid allocation or change current maintenance responsibilities.

Once all the comments have been addressed, the City must submit their final adjusted boundary via hard copy and electronic copy no later than September 1, 2023. Electronic copies should be in GIS format. All correspondence for submittal may be made to the following:

Michael E. Johnson, P.E.  
Urban Engineer  
North Dakota Department of Transportation  
608 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
701-328-2118  
[mijohnson@nd.gov](mailto:mijohnson@nd.gov)

Please note, failure to meet the September 1, 2023 final submittal date will result in NDDOT considering the Census defined boundary as the final Urban Area boundary without any adjustments.

Along with your submittal please include a resolution from the City commission approving the new boundary. If your City lies within one of the North Dakota Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), an approval from the Policy Board is also required for submittal. The City and MPO submittal should be a cooperative and coordinated effort between the two entities. Please contact your MPO to work together on this process.

After completion of any Urban Area adjustments the next step in the process is to update the functional classification system to match the new boundary. Further details on this process will be communicated as boundaries are approved; however, it is encouraged to be thinking about potential functional classification changes as you update your boundary.

If you should have any questions during the updating process, please contact Michael E. Johnson at 701-328-2118. More information on the adjustment requirements is available on the Federal Highway Administration website:  
([https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census\\_issues/urbanized\\_areas\\_and\\_mpo\\_tma/schedule/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/urbanized_areas_and_mpo_tma/schedule/)).

As a follow up to this letter, you will receive an email from Local Government Division containing the GIS shape file that contains the 2020 Census defined boundary for the entire United States. Please utilize this file as you make adjustments to your urban area boundary.

With gratitude,



Stacey M. Hanson, P.E.  
Assistant Local Government Engineer

38: MEJ

cc: Kristen Sperry – Federal Highway Administration  
Ranae Tunison – Federal Transit Administration  
Rachel Lukaszewski – Bismarck-Mandan MPO  
Cindy Gray – Fargo-Moorhead Metro COG  
Stephanie Halford – Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO