

MEMORANDUM

TO: DCHC MPO Technical Committee
FROM: Doug Plachcinski, AICP, CFM, Executive Director
DATE: October 23, 2023
RE: **MPO BOUNDARY UPDATES**

The MPO must complete two (2) different boundary reviews following each decennial US Census. This memorandum provides an overview of the boundary amendment processes, schedules, and practical effects on our work.

1. MPO PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

The MPO is responsible for defining the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The planning area must include areas we anticipate remaining or becoming urban (developed by Census guidelines) in the next 20 years. The MPO must submit the planning area to NCDOT for concurrence prior to USDOT acceptance. We engaged Chatham County, the only member jurisdiction affected by the proposed planning area modification, for agreement prior to finalizing the draft planning area.

The MPO will initiate a process to update the memorandum of understanding that establishes our membership and representative functions once USDOT accepts the new planning area.

2. ADJUSTED CENSUS URBAN AREA BOUNDARY

The MPO is also responsible for developing an adjusted (smoothed) Urban Area. The adjusted boundary is reviewed and approved by NCDOT and FHWA. The adjusted boundary for each MPO is due in its entirety (MPO, NCDOT, and FHWA) by December 29, 2023. The adjusted (smoothed) UA boundary must be within the MPO planning area.

The Adjusted Census Urban Boundary determines the official urban/rural designation for a road. It is subject to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval. Once approved, it is used to declare a road urban for the Federal Highway Performance Monitoring System. Any road within or on the ACUB border is urban. For roads on the ACUB border, both sides of the road are considered urban. The federal FAST Act Transportation Performance Measures reference urbanized area roads; this means the urbanized roads. Urbanized roads are reported in the annual HPMS report to FHWA. Any road outside an ACUB is considered a rural road for federal transportation purposes. The process for creating the ACUB area starts every 10 years using the U.S. decennial census urbanized areas as a base.

We may optionally adjust the U.S. census UAs since the boundary is usually very irregular. Irregular boundaries may cause roads to switch between rural and urban status many times along their length. To prevent the urban designation from frequently switching designation, FHWA allows states to adjust or smooth the boundaries outward in a cooperative process with regional planner. Agencies cannot remove area from the U.S. census UA, but area may be added. By adjusting the boundaries outward, the UAs are smoothed and create more consistent urban/rural road segment classifications. The adjusted UA boundaries are then sent to FHWA for approval. Urban area population is static and unchanged by the adjustment process. Urban designation for transportation use is not the same as urban land use.

REQUESTED ACTION: We ask the TC to endorse the updated MPO planning area boundary and adjusted Census urban area boundary to the DCHC MPO Policy Board for adoption and submission to NCDOT and USDOT.

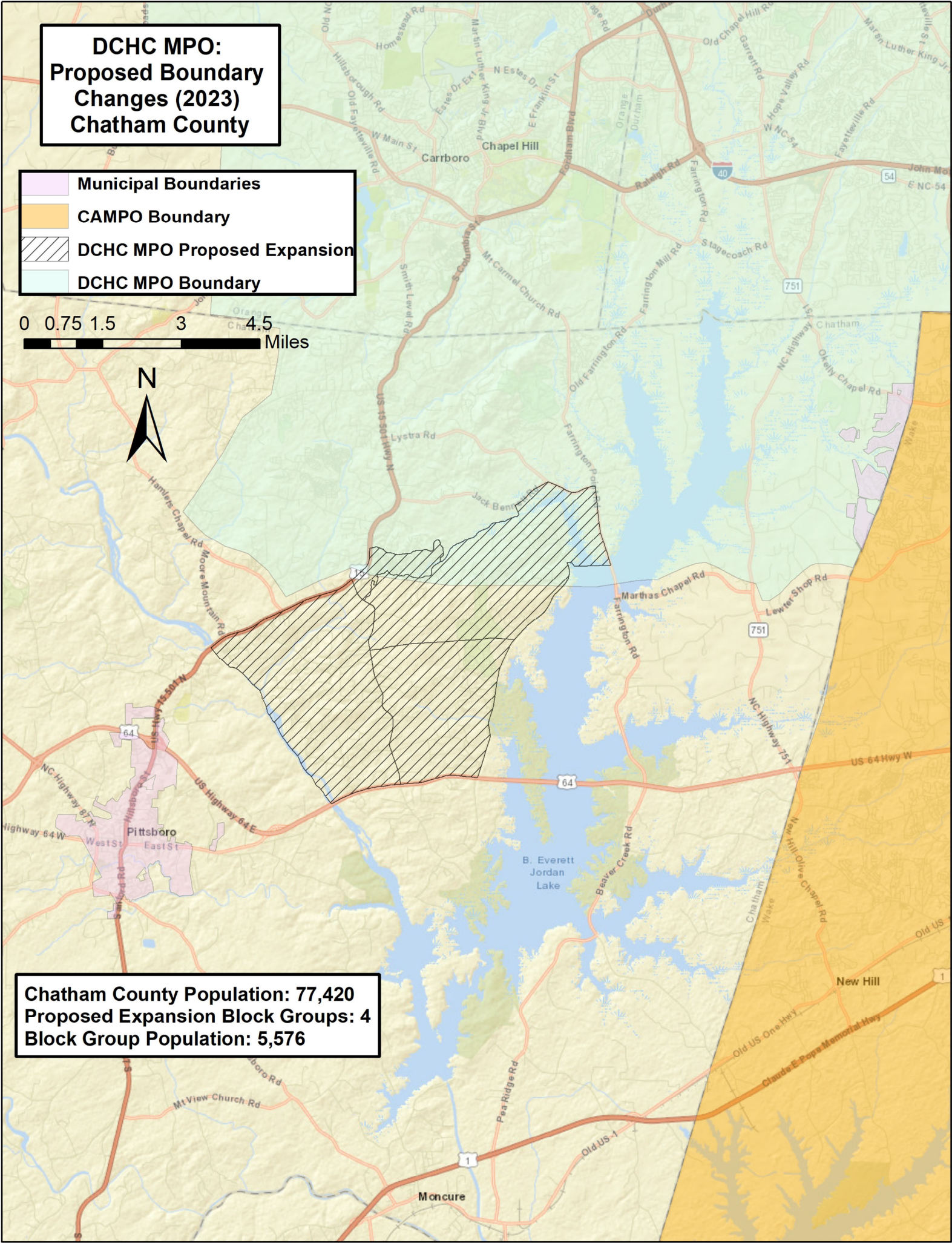
**DCHC MPO:
Proposed Boundary
Changes (2023)
Chatham County**

- Municipal Boundaries
- CAMPO Boundary
- DCHC MPO Proposed Expansion
- DCHC MPO Boundary

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 Miles



Chatham County Population: 77,420
Proposed Expansion Block Groups: 4
Block Group Population: 5,576





Chatham County, NC

Certified Copy

Agenda Item: 23-4734

File Number: 23-4734

Receive a presentation on Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary changes and vote on approving a new boundary.

I, Lindsay K. Ray, Clerk to the Board, certify that Agenda Item No. 23-4734, was passed unanimously by the Board of Commissioners on 6/20/2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kenlan, seconded by Vice Chair Dasher, to approve the DCHC-MPO proposed larger boundary expansion and the delineated CAMPO proposed boundary. The motion passed unanimously.

Attest: *Lindsay K. Ray*
*Lindsay K. Ray, NCMCC, Clerk to the Board
Chatham County Board of Commissioners*

6-30-2023
Date Certified



FHWA Adjusted Urban Area Boundaries (AUAB) and Functional Classification (FC)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

AASHTO Urban Areas for the 2020 Census Webinar
3/30/2021



Census Urban Areas and MPO/TMA Designation

Estimated Schedule of Activities

Date	Activity
February 19, 2021	The United States Census Bureau published a Federal Register notice with proposed criteria for defining urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census.
Summer 2021	The Census Bureau will review the comments received on the proposed criteria published in the Federal Register.
Fall/Winter 2021	The Census Bureau will publish a Federal Register notice with the final criteria for defining urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census.

Census Urban Areas and MPO/TMA Designation

Estimated Schedule of Activities (continued)



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Spring/Summer 2022

The Census Bureau will publish a Federal Register notice announcing the qualifying urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census and release TIGER/Line geographic shapefiles on their website.

Spring/Summer 2022

[HEPGIS](#) will provide urban area boundaries, including the ability to download shapefiles.

Fall 2022

USDOT (FHWA and FTA) will publish a Federal Register notice designating Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) for urban areas with populations of 200,000 or more, as determined by the Census Bureau and the results of the 2020 Decennial Census.

Before Oct 2022

States should revisit their intra-State distribution formulas for metropolitan planning (PL) funds allocations to MPOs to ensure that the new Census 2020 population figures are being used and that any new MPOs are part of the calculation.

Census Urban Areas and MPO/TMA Designation

Estimated Schedule of Activities (continued)



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Before next regularly-scheduled metropolitan transportation plan update, after October 1st, 2022, or within 4 years of the designation of the new urban area boundary, whichever occurs first

Existing MPOs must expand their Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs) to include all territory in urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more, as determined by the Census Bureau and the results of the 2020 Decennial Census. (if necessary).

Spring/Summer 2023

(1 year after the Census Bureau publishes the urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census)

New MPOs must be designated by Governor(s) to represent all new urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more, as determined by the Census Bureau and the results of the 2020 Decennial Census.

Spring 2024

New TMAs must have a Congestion Management Process (CMP).

April 15th and June 15th, 2024

(date of 2024 HPMS data submission to FHWA)

Any adjustments to urban area boundaries must be approved by the Governor(s) and FHWA Division Office(s). FHWA will consider all urban area boundaries final as of June 1, 2024 and will use the original 2020 Census boundaries for all urban areas that have not been adjusted. The 2024 HPMS data submission must conform to the approved urban area boundary as of April 15th and June 15th, 2024.

Spring/Summer 2026

(4 years after the Census Bureau publishes the urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census)

New MPOs must have a formally adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



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Why Adjust the Original Census Urban Area Boundary?

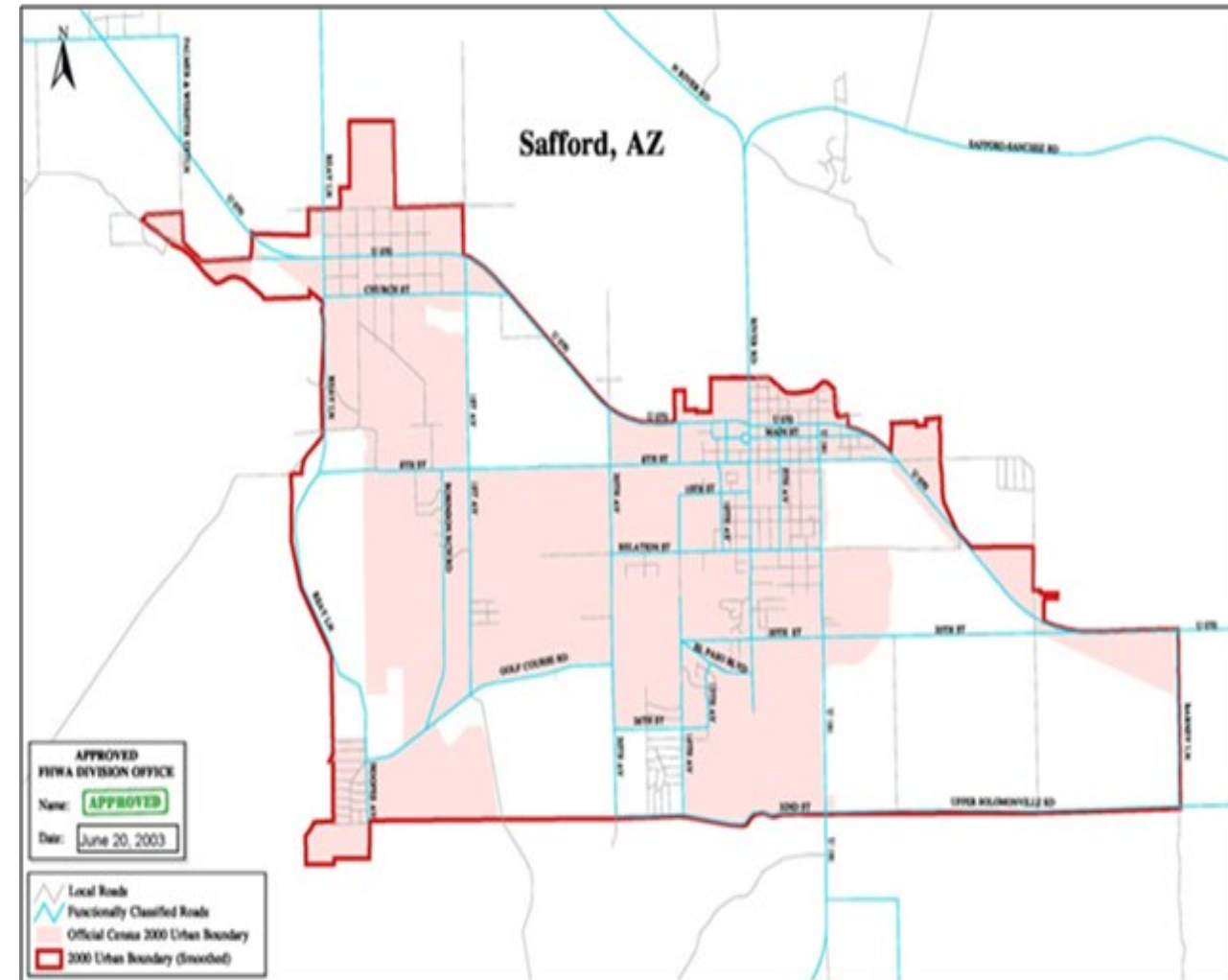
Boundaries can consider transportation
terminals, transit routes

Boundary should follow municipal limits or
physical features

Boundary should be easy to discern

Boundaries should be simple, without
irregularities

Boundaries should not split roadways or
ramps



Example Boundary Adjusted to Align with Major East-West Roadway to
the South



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Functional Classifications

- 7 Urban Classification
- 7 Rural Classifications
- Other Freeways and Expressways/minor and major collectors for all areas
- Mobility and Access
- Mileage and VMT distribution ranges based on HPMS
- Rural and Urban States
- Context Sensitive
- Map 21 – NHS – Principal Arterials

	Rural	Urban
1	Principal Arterial – Interstate	Principal Arterial - Interstate
2	Principal Arterial - Other Freeways & Expressways	Principal Arterial - Other Freeways & Expressways
3	Principal Arterial – Other	Principal Arterial – Other
4	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial
5	Major Collector	Major Collector
6	Minor Collector	Minor Collector
7	Local	Local



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Where's the FC and AUAB Guidelines

- https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/

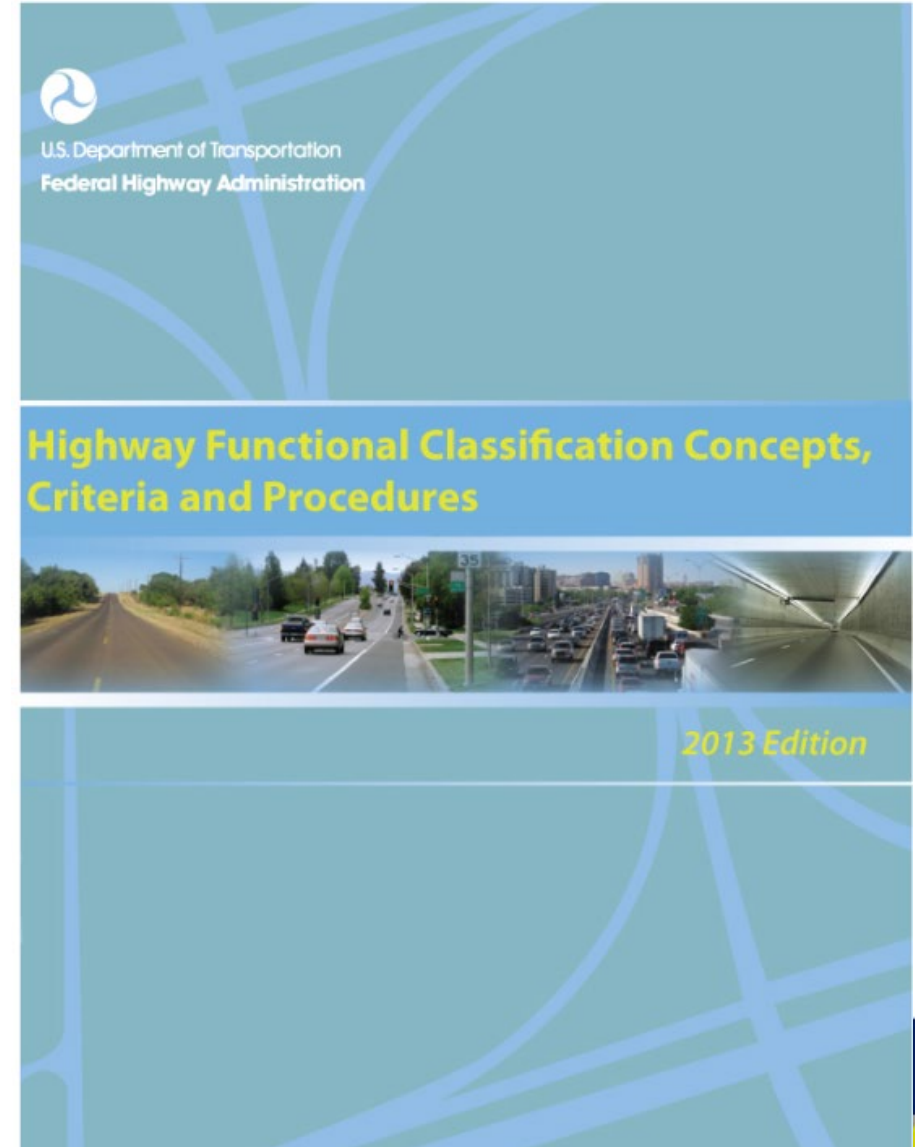
Joseph Hausman | **FHWA** | **HEP** | **PLANNING**

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Proposed Adjusted DCHC MPO Urban Area Boundary

