



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE
GOVERNOR

EUGENE A. CONTI, JR.
SECRETARY

April 13, 2012

Larry T. Williams
Mayor, Town of Rural Hall
Winston-Salem MPO TAC Chair
P. O. Box 549
Rural Hall, NC 27045

Subject: Urbanized Area Boundary, MPO Boundary and MPO Review

Dear Mayor Williams:

In the March 27, 2012 Federal Register, the United States Census Bureau issued the designation of urbanized areas and urban clusters based on the 2010 Census. These areas are defined by the Census Bureau as follows:

- Urbanized Areas (UZAs) – 50,000 or more people; and
- Urban Clusters (UCs) – at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people.

These designations are critical to the administration of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) by the United States Department of Transportation.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Transportation Management Area (TMA) designations are based on UZA population, as follows: 50,000 minimum for MPOs and 200,000 minimum for TMAs. MPO and TMA designations affect transportation program fund allocations, establish program standards, and may have an effect on implementation of some program elements. The earliest that the apportionment of metropolitan planning funds to the states will be affected will be for Federal fiscal year 2013 funds apportioned on October 1, 2012. The earliest these funds will be available for use by MPOs is July 1, 2013.

Based on the designation of urbanized areas, North Carolina will:

- Maintain the seventeen currently designated urbanized areas, each with population greater than 50,000 and establish one new urbanized area – New Bern; and
- Maintain the seven currently designated TMAs and establish three new TMAs – Concord, Hickory and Wilmington.

MAILING ADDRESS:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BRANCH
1554 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
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TRANSPORTATION BUILDING
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH, NC 27601
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In addition, the Charlotte urbanized area has expanded to include more of the Rock Hill, S.C. area and the Myrtle Beach, SC urbanized area now includes a portion of Brunswick County in North Carolina.

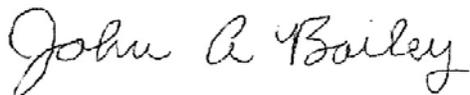
The NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) will be working cooperatively with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the MPOs to update the UZA boundaries. This will involve "smoothing" the UZA to capture areas that are urbanized in nature but not initially included and to streamline bookkeeping. The MPOs, in conjunction with NCDOT, may update their metropolitan planning boundaries (MAB) to reflect changes to the UZA, if needed.

In conjunction with updating the UZA boundaries, TPB will be spearheading the evaluation of MPO boundaries, structure and governance as required by North Carolina General Statute 136-200.4. The goal of this evaluation shall be to examine the need for and make recommendations for adjustments to MPO boundary, structure, and governance in order to ensure compliance with the objectives of 23 USC 134. The MPO evaluation report will be submitted to the Governor and to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee.

Prior to the final submission of the smoothed UZA, MAB and MPO evaluation, the NCDOT requests a letter from the TAC Chair stating that these processes have been coordinated and that the TAC is in agreement with each. A sample response letter for your use is enclosed.

I have been working with the MPO staff on these tasks, and will be in touch with the TCC and TAC in the near future to facilitate this coordination. Please call me at 919-707-0991 or email me at jabailey@ncdot.gov if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Bailey".

John A. (Andy) Bailey
Winston-Salem MPO Coordinator

Attachments

cc: Ralph Womble, NC Board of Transportation
Pat Ivey, PE, Division 9
Stan Polanis, PE, Winston-Salem DOT
Greg Errett, AICP, Winston-Salem MPO
Terry Arellano, PE, Systems Planning Group
Wayne C. Davis, PhD, PE, Triad Planning Group