



MEMBERS:

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Rainier
- City of Tenino
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Town of Bucoda
- Thurston County
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Olympia School District
- Tumwater School District
- Intercity Transit
- LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Port of Olympia
- PUD No. 1 of Thurston County

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

- Lacey Fire District #3
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- The Evergreen State College
- Thurston Conservation District
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Timberland Regional Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Technical Advisory Committee

FROM: Michael Ambrogi, Senior Planner, TRPC

DATE: September 14, 2023

SUBJECT: FHWA Urban Areas Review

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to approve proposed adjustments to the urban areas designated based on the 2020 Census.

Summary:

- The Census Bureau revises the urban area boundaries after each decennial census.
- FHWA allows MPOs and state DOTs to cooperatively adjust urban area boundaries. These are referred to as “FHWA Adjusted Urban Area” boundaries.
- These boundaries define the breaks between rural and urban areas for transportation planning, operational, and funding purposes.
- TRPC has met with the cities, Thurston County, and Nisqually Tribe to discuss proposed modifications. The proposed FHWA Adjusted Urban Area is shown in this webmap:
<https://trpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=443ee224f0fc4f5ab2825b9cb929f85f>
- All perimeter roadways with the exception of 183rd Ave SW between Guava St SW and Sargent Rd SW are proposed to be urban.
- The deadline for local agencies to submit proposals to the boundary review team is October 2023.
- New urban area boundaries and resulting functional classification will be incorporated into WSDOT systems in 2024.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approve proposed adjustments to the urban areas designated based on the 2020 Census.



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Executive Director

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OVERVIEW

TRPC is requesting TAC's approval of the FHWA adjusted urban area boundary. These urban areas differ from the metropolitan planning area boundary or urban growth area boundaries.

FHWA urban areas are used primarily to establish eligibility for transportation planning, operational, and funding purposes. Federal functional road classifications and eligibility for certain federal grant funds are tied to urban and rural designations. The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Transportation Alternatives (TA), and Carbon Reduction Programs (CRP) each have minimum urban and rural allocation requirements that TRPC must award/program the funds to.

The FHWA adjusted urban area boundary must include the entire census urban area, which is revised after each decennial census. Local agencies have the ability to propose adding additional areas. WSDOT provided criteria and recommendations for establishing FHWA adjusted urban area boundaries (see Additional Information). Required adjustments include adding area to encompass a single contiguous area without holes or islands. Local agencies have the option to propose additional adjustments to encompass areas expected to become urban in the next decade, avoid peripheral roadways from snaking in and out of the boundary, and encompass traffic generators located within a reasonable distance to the urban areas.

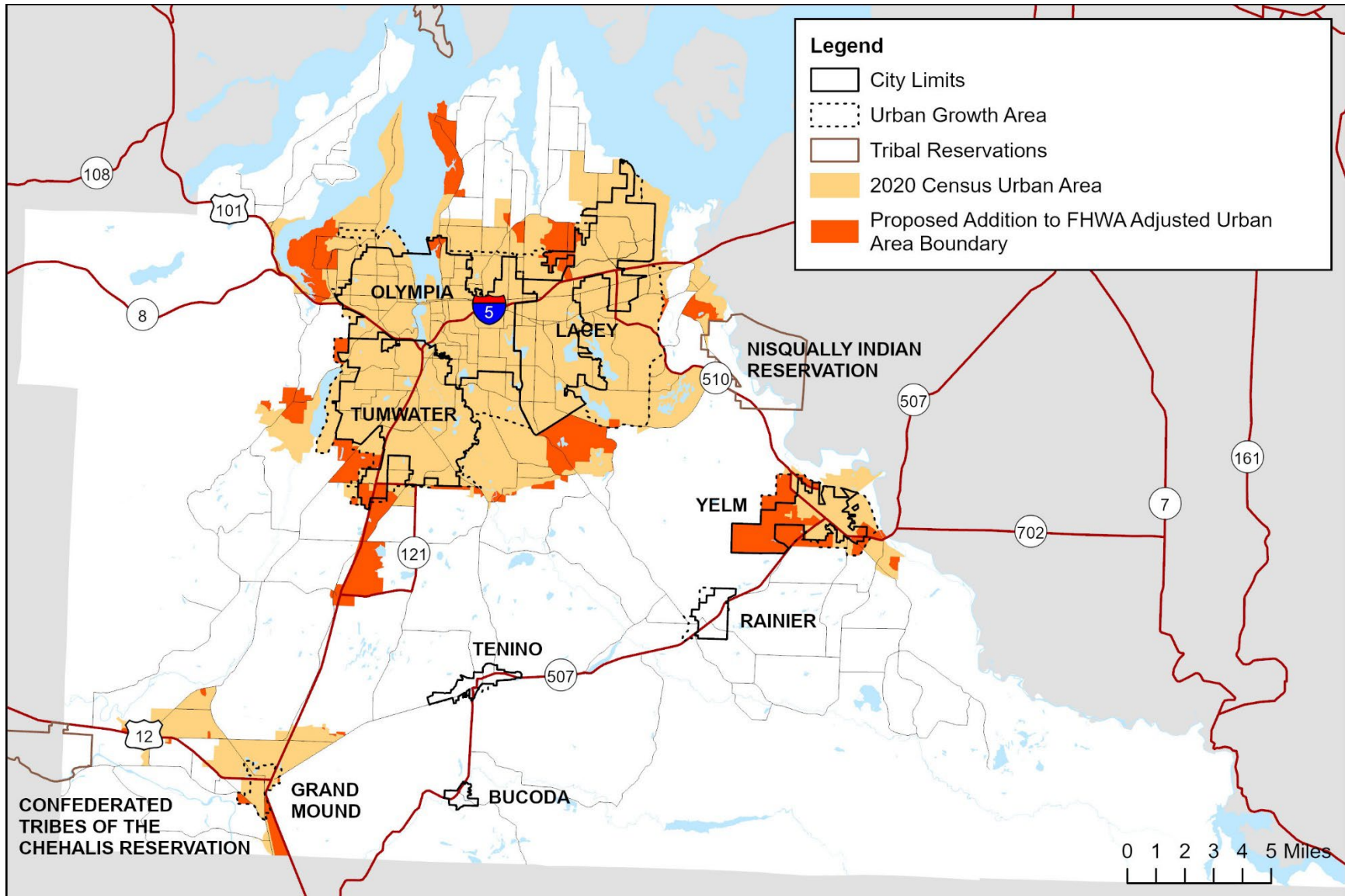
TRPC met with staff from Thurston County, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm to review the proposed urban areas and discuss potential adjustments. TRPC combined the proposed adjustments and sent the updated urban area boundaries out for review prior to this meeting. Figure 1 below shows the unadjusted 2020 Census urban areas and proposed adjusted urban areas. All perimeter roadways with the exception of 183rd Ave SW between Guava St SW and Sargent Rd SW are proposed to be urban.

DISCUSSION

TRPC staff request the TAC members discuss the following, if necessary, during the September 21 TAC meeting:

1. Does the proposed FHWA Adjusted Urban Area boundary reflect your organization's urban and rural federal functional classification needs for planning and grant funding needs?
2. Do you observe any potential issues with the proposed boundary amendments and pending functional classification changes that are adjacent to your jurisdiction's boundary?
3. Do TAC members approve TRPC submitting the amended 2023 FHWA Adjusted Boundary to WSDOT as presented in Figure 1 and the webmap?

FIGURE 1: Proposed FHWA Adjusted Urban Areas



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Criteria for Establishing Adjusted Urban Area Boundaries (WSDOT)

1. The adjusted urban area boundary, at a minimum, must encompass the entire 2020 decennial United States Census urban area of 5,000 people or greater.
2. A review of local and regional plans should be conducted so that the boundary reflects areas expected to be urban in the next decade (i.e., until the 2030 US Census urban area designation).
3. The adjusted urban area boundary will encompass a single contiguous area without holes or discontinuities and rural areas should not be situated along the inside edges of the adjusted urban area boundaries.
4. The adjusted urban area boundary should include entire municipalities (incorporated areas), as long as there is not an attempt to extend the boundaries beyond the area expected to become part of the urban area within the upcoming decade. Note: contiguous city watersheds may be excluded from the urban areas.
5. The adjusted urban area boundary should encompass areas outside of municipal boundaries having residential, commercial, industrial, and/or national defense land use patterns that are consistent with or related to urban development patterns.
6. The adjusted urban area boundary will encompass all traffic generators that are located within a reasonable distance to the US Census-designated urban areas, such as public parks, large places of assembly, large industrial plants, etc.
7. Rapidly expanding areas of urbanization should be included within the adjusted urban area boundary, especially if these areas are expected to fall within a 2030 US Census urban area designation.
8. Transportation terminals and/or access roads serving these areas, (e.g., airports and seaports), but outside of the urban area should be included if they are located within a reasonable distance from the US Census-designated urban area.
9. Consideration should be given to transit service routes (e.g., bus, passenger rail, etc.) and linkage points (e.g., stations and bus stops) with substantial implications and where inclusion will not unduly distort the 2020 US Census-designated urban area boundaries.
10. The adjusted urban area boundaries should be designed to avoid peripheral roadways from snaking in and out across the boundary. Adjustments should support consistent designations of roadways, such that they are either inside or outside of the boundary.
11. The adjusted urban area boundary, to the greatest degree possible, should be defined so that by using a map in the field it can be easily located. In instances where the boundary deviates from political jurisdictions, the boundary should follow physical features (e.g., rivers, streams, irrigation canals, transmission lines, railroads, streets, or highways). In instances where physical features are lacking, the AUA boundary should cross roads, streets, highways intersections, major crossroads, and/or interchanges that are easily identified in the field.

Additional Adjusted Urban Area Boundary Recommendations (WSDOT)

1. Minimize confusion and ambiguity, such as between a divided highway, by either including or excluding both sides of the highway.
2. Roadways that define a boundary between two urban areas belong in the urban area that it primarily serves. If the roadway serves both urban areas equally, a binding agreement should be made that assigns the roadway appropriately.
3. If access-controlled roadways are used to define adjusted urban area boundaries, all ramps and interchanges for access-controlled roadways should be included or excluded, and interchanges should not be divided.
4. Coastal areas should reflect the generally accepted geospatial coastal boundaries.