

*These guidelines have been updated as a result of the 2010 U.S. Census, and to accommodate maintenance of the adjusted census urban boundaries in the statewide GIS known as the Michigan Geographic Framework (MGF).*

*— MDOT, August 2012*

## **Guidelines for Proposed Adjusted Census Urban Boundaries**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these instructions is to provide the criteria and guidance for establishing, revising, and updating Adjusted Census Urban Boundaries (ACUB). ACUB's were previously known as Federal-Aid Urban Boundaries (FAUB). ACUB's are necessary for several important reasons, including determining eligibility for federal-aid, statistical reporting, highway and street national functional classification density, as well as distribution of Act 51 county funds.

### **Definitions**

1. Urban area. Title 23 of the United States Code, Section 101 (a), provides the following definitions for urban area, at a minimum:
  - a. An urban cluster as designated by the Bureau of the Census and having a population of 5,000 to 49,999, and not within any urbanized area, or
  - b. An urbanized area, as designated by the Bureau of the Census, being an area comprising a place and the adjacent densely settled surrounding territory that together have a minimum population of 50,000 people.
  
2. ACUB.
  - a. For urban clusters (par. 1a), the ACUB shall encompass, as a minimum, the entire urban cluster boundary as designated by the Bureau of the Census and the entire current contiguous corporate limits of any incorporated city or village. In addition, adjacent areas may be included as agreed upon by MDOT in cooperation with responsible local officials. The Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) names the resulting ACUB a "small urban area."
  - b. For urbanized areas (par. 1b), the ACUB shall encompass, as a minimum, the entire urbanized area within Michigan as designated by the Bureau of the Census and the entire current contiguous corporate limits of any incorporated city or village. In addition, adjacent areas may be included as agreed upon by MDOT in cooperation with responsible local officials.

3. Responsible local officials.
  - a. For urban clusters or “small urban areas,” (par. 2a), the term "responsible local officials" means the principal city and county officials who have been designated by the governing body to be responsible for and who represent the governmental body in transactions with MDOT. In unincorporated areas, this refers to the County Engineer, and in municipal areas, it generally means the Street Administrator or comparable position. Approval of the boundary at the local level should be by action of the responsible local officials. MDOT will cooperate with these officials, with local public transit operators and Indian Reservation tribal chairs or representative planners where appropriate, in establishing the ACUB locations for urban clusters or “small urban areas.”
  - b. In urbanized areas (par. 2b), the term "responsible local officials" means the principal officials of local governments acting through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Approval of the boundary at the local level should be by action of the MPO. MDOT will cooperate with these officials and with local public transit operators, where appropriate, in establishing the ACUB locations for urbanized areas.
4. Approval Authority. Following MDOT concurrence with the Proposed ACUB, revisions will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for final approval.
5. Rural areas. Areas outside of the FHWA approved ACUB’s shall be considered rural.

### **Criteria for Establishing and Revising Adjusted Census Urban Boundaries (ACUB)**

1. An ACUB shall consist of a continuous line encompassing one or more contiguous municipalities or other urban area, as per the definitions in paragraph 2. There shall be no detached portions of any ACUB.
2. An ACUB may include any adjacent area that has or is developing urban characteristics. "Urban characteristics" include the following features: residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial development; miscellaneous items such as schools, parks, stadiums, golf courses and airports; improvements such as sidewalks, curbs, street lighting, sanitary and storm drainage facilities; services such as transit service and other transportation terminals, police and fire protection. All of these characteristics do not necessarily have to be present, but sufficient evidence must be available to show that the area has or is developing urban characteristics.
3. Justification Code Values:

To indicate the Proposed ACUB areas that extend beyond the 2010 Census UA boundaries, on the supplied paper “Mark-up Maps”, delineate your own “group(s)” of

Census Blocks or area(s) that shares one or more common urban criteria. The urban criteria are called justification codes; write in the justification code(s) that apply. GIS submittals would create and populate a text field in the 2010 Census Block file with the justification code(s) that apply. For example, code in “CE” or “D”. Transfer the completed GIS 2010 Census Block file listed above to MDOT. It should at a minimum contain the US Census “GEOID10” field and value, your created justification code field and a created field called “UA\_Name” that is filled with the Census UA name the Census Block is to be assigned too. For example, please always use the official UA census name “Iron Mountain--Kingsford, MI—WI”. Adherence to these exact formats will greatly reduce processing time to post to the website and enter into databases that are submitted to FHWA, MGF and Act51.

<b>Justification Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
A.	2010 US Census UZA or UC over 5,000 populations – already assigned by MDOT.
B.	The remaining contiguous incorporated limits of any incorporated city or village that is partially determined UA by the US Census.
C.	Adjacent Census Blocks of predominantly residential neighborhoods, commercial/industrial businesses, schools, parks, stadiums, golf courses and airports justified by aerial photography. Areas served by an urban transit program or full-time police and fire protection – supply map of service and agency information. Areas served by municipal improvements such as sidewalks and curbs or street lighting or sanitary and storm drainage facilities – supply documentation/maps showing the service coverage areas.
D.	Smoothing, creating smoother shape to prevent urban/rural confusion that can occur with irregular boundaries.
E.	Include only part of the Census Block split by MGF feature, must have another justification code assigned.
F.	Additional comments or justification supplied separately upon approval.
4.	Strip development along a single roadway, even ones with heavy traffic, will not, in and of itself, be sufficient for inclusion in an ACUB.
5.	Proposed ACUB’s shall be as simple and direct as possible and so delineated that they can be located in the field from data shown on maps. If boundaries are proposed outside the census boundary or corporate limits, they should follow geographical features such as township lines, streams, railroads or streets. To the extent possible, Proposed ACUB’s shall follow the representation of such features as they exist within the statewide GIS known as the Michigan Geographic Framework (MGF). Census Blocks are assumed to underlie all roads, streams, city, village and county boundaries even if not visible on the supplied maps or the Proposed ACUB website.

Census Blocks split by the Proposed ACUB should be minimized. Examples of such reasons include: so as to include an entire freeway interchange within the ACUB, to account for changes in geographical features where the changes have not yet been updated in census geography and to avoid excessive rural area within a large census block that has an area of significant urban characteristics to create a smooth appearance.

6. Wherever the ACUB follows a highway, road, or street, that road shall be considered urban. Within the MGF, the urban attribution, as with related attributes, such as National Functional Classification and Act 51 designation, follows the centerline of the highway, road, or street.
7. Boundaries should be located so as to smooth out irregularities, maintain administrative continuity of peripheral routes, and encompass fringe areas having residential neighborhoods, commercial, industrial, and/or national defense significance. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of boundary locations which will include logical control points for transportation linkages such as interchanges, major cross roads, etc., where the inclusion of such areas will not unduly distort the urban area as would otherwise be selected. Boundaries should not, however, be modified to accommodate a single highway project.
8. ACUB determinations should consider the service areas of transit operations. Such considerations are particularly important if boundaries are to determine eligibility of capital projects, e.g. commuter railroad lines and stations, and rail transit and bus lines.
9. In cases where a single UA extends across state borders, the contiguous states are encouraged to agree on the proposed boundary locations at the state line and avoid irregularities.
10. As a resource, and to aid in communicating Proposed ACUB adjustments, MDOT has created a website that will display data submitted to the Proposed ACUB process. The website can be accessed through the MDOT federal-aid highways home page [http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9622\\_11033\\_11155---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9622_11033_11155---,00.html) or directly at <http://mcgiwebuat.mcgi.state.mi.us/acub>.
11. FHWA has created a website which provides information about the Census UA's, the FHWA urban adjustment process, MPO's and TMA's. [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census\\_issues/urbanized\\_areas\\_and\\_mpo\\_tma/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/urbanized_areas_and_mpo_tma/)
12. Special conditions not otherwise covered will be considered on an individual basis.