


Questions and Answers

MPO/RPA Quarterly
June 23, 2021



Q:

Transit (A) is applying for a grant, which will be approved/rejected in late June/early July. If they receive the grant, they will want to start work ASAP.

Will it be possible to add a new project to the approved FY21 STIP if they go through all of the public hearings, board approvals, etc.?

A:

Unless being programmed is required as part of the grant application process, Program Management does not typically have entities program projects that have not yet secured the funding for the project. While new projects can be added to the FY21 STIP, the funding should first be secured prior to do doing so.

Q:

Are we able to use our STBG funding allocation to purchase transit buses?

A:

Yes, eligible activities for STBG funding do include transit capital projects that are listed as eligible under Chapter 53 of Title 49, USC.

Transit agencies that are located within the planning area boundary are eligible applicants for the agency's STBG funds, and thus, they would need to apply for the STBG funding like any other applicant vying for those funds. Any award for the purchase of buses would need to be included in the agency's FHWA TIP and would be administered by the Public Transit Bureau.

Q:

Do you have any updates on the proposed changes to how the Census defines urban areas and how it might affect MPO's?

Q:

No, we have not seen much lately in the way of new updates to the proposed changes. One semi-related update is that FHWA has a new “estimated” schedule of activities on the subject of Census Urbanized Areas and MPO/TMA Designation.

See the following pages for the schedule.

CY 2021

“Estimated” schedule of activities on the subject of Census Urbanized Areas and MPO/TMA Designation.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/urbanized_areas_and_mpo_tma/schedule/

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.
May 20, 2021	Due date for written comments on the proposed changes.
HERE WE ARE	
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.

CY 2022

HEPGIS is a web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) that enables users to access transportation-related geo-spatial data using only their web browser.

Among the numerous datasets maintained by HEPGIS is a dataset of MPO boundaries, which also includes UA and UC boundaries.

Date	Activity
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 October 1, 2022	States should revisit their intra-State 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.
<i>Before next regularly-scheduled metropolitan transportation plan update, after October 1, 2022, or within 4 years of the designation of the new urban area boundary, whichever occurs first</i>	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).

CY 2023/2024

HEPGIS is a web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) that enables users to access transportation-related geo-spatial data using only their web browser. Among the numerous datasets maintained by HEPGIS is a dataset of MPO boundaries, which also includes UA and UC boundaries.

Date	Activity
<i>Spring/Summer 2023 (1 year after the Census Bureau publishes the urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census)</i>	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.
<i>Spring 2024</i>	New TMAs must have a Congestion Management Process (CMP).
<i>April 15, 2024 and June 15, 2024 (date of 2024 HPMS data submission to FHWA)</i>	Any adjustments to urban area boundaries must be approved by the Governor(s) (or Governor's designee) and FHWA Division Office(s). FHWA will consider all urban area boundaries final as of April 15, 2024 and will use the original 2020 Census boundaries for all urban areas that have not been adjusted. The 2024 HPMS data submissions on April 15, 2024 and June 15, 2024 must conform to the approved urban area boundary.
<i>Spring/Summer 2026 (4 years after the Census Bureau publishes the urban areas based on the results of the 2020 Decennial Census)</i>	New MPOs must have a formally adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).