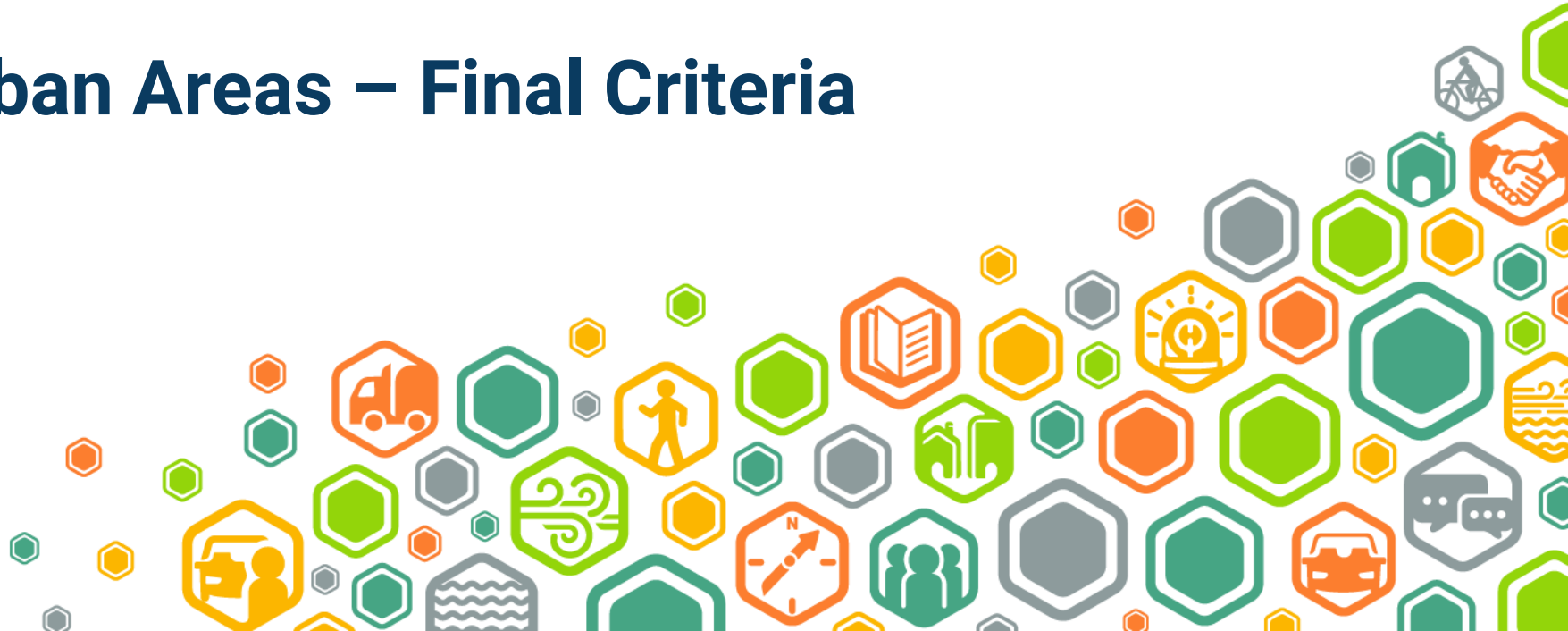




Census 2020 Urban Areas – Final Criteria

Technical Committee

July 6, 2022



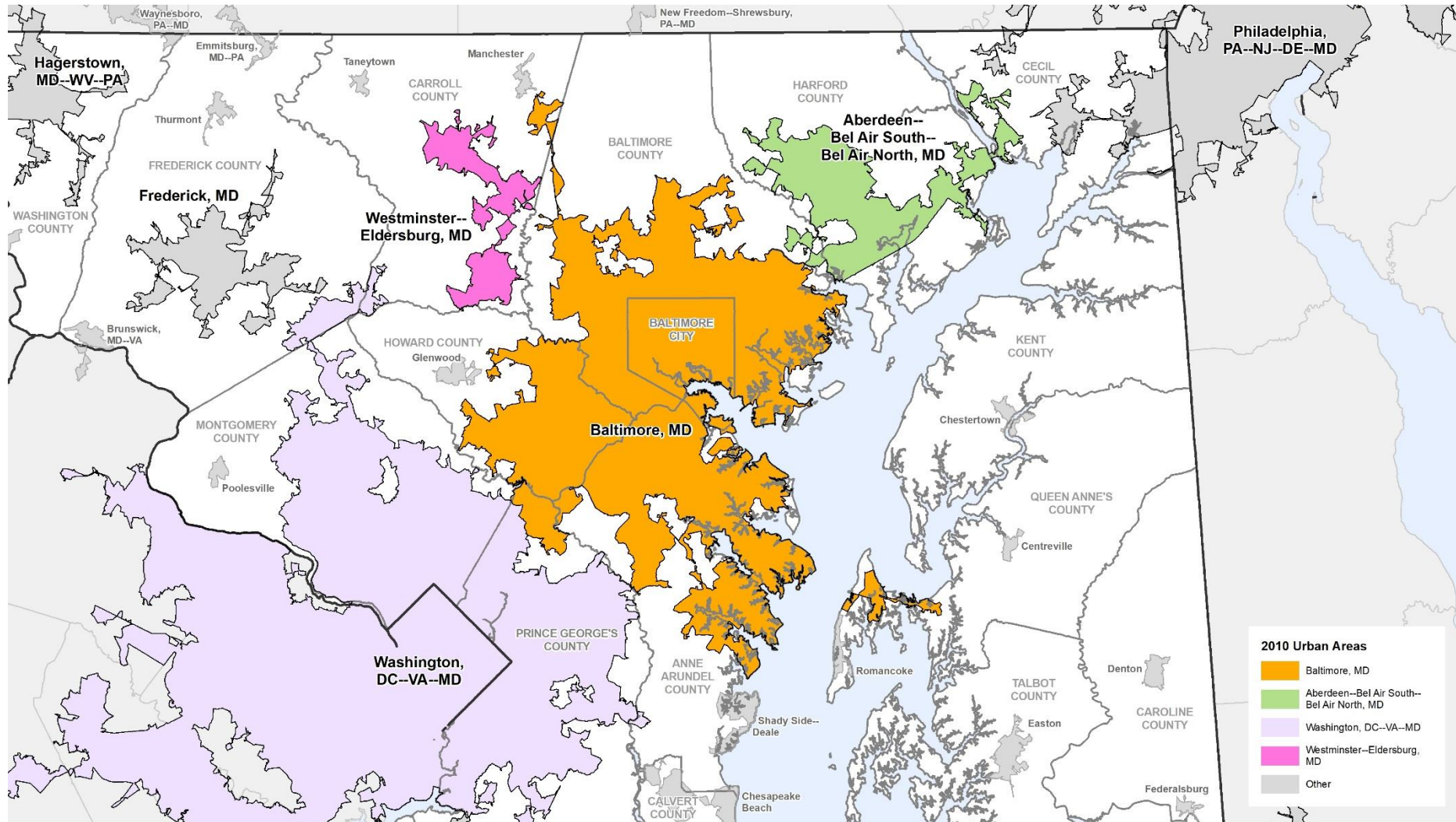
What are Census Urban Areas?

- **Census Bureau** delineates Urban Areas that represent densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** uses the Census definition of Urban Areas and requests State DOTs to create adjusted urbanized areas to smooth irregular boundaries
- **FHWA** requires Urban Areas with population of 50,000 or more to be covered by a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

2010 Urban Areas

- **Three Census Urban Areas included in the BRTB region**
 - Baltimore, MD
 - Aberdeen--Bel Air South--Bel Air North, MD
 - Westminster--Eldersburg, MD

2010 Urban Areas



2020 Urban Areas

- Criteria for Urban Areas have changed considerably from 2010 to 2020
- Census Bureau's goals:
 - Refine the criteria in order to capture only truly urbanized areas
 - Use more direct measures of built landscape (housing units)
 - Use data measures that will potentially allow for updating between censuses

2010 Criteria

GEOGRAPHIC UNIT

- Census Tracts and Blocks

MINIMUM THRESHOLD

- Has a population of at least 2,500

INITIAL URBAN AREA CORES

- Population density threshold of 1,000 people per mi² -and- blocks with a high degree of impervious land cover

LOW-DENSITY URBAN AREAS

- Population density threshold of 500 people per mi²

2020 Criteria

- Census **Blocks**

- **Has a population of at least 5,000 -or- has at least 2,000 housing units**

- **Housing unit density threshold of 425 housing units per mi² -and- blocks with a high degree of impervious land cover**

- **Housing unit density threshold of 200 housing units per mi²**

2010 Criteria

HOPS (can have multiple)

- 0.5 mile max hop distance

JUMPS (can only have one along each roadway)

- 2.5 miles max jump distance

HOP OR JUMP CORRIDORS

- Included low-density territory between main urban area and other areas that are connected with a hop or a jump

BOUNDARY INDENTATIONS & ENCLAVES

- Includes low-density territory that meets specific geometric size and distance criteria

2020 Criteria

- 0.5 mile max hop distance

- 1.5 miles max jump distance

- Does not include low-density territory between main urban area and other areas that are connected with a hop or a jump

- Includes low-density territory that meets specific geometric size and distance criteria

2010 Criteria

SPLITTING OF LARGE AGGLOMERATIONS

(multiple cities)

- Used previous Census' urban areas and Metropolitan Statistical Areas to determine whether to split adjacent urban areas

2020 Criteria

- Identifies and splits distinct urban areas based on Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) commuting pattern data and Leiden algorithm
- May modify boundary to avoid splitting a legal boundary or Census geographic boundary near the commuter-based boundary

Overall Effects of Changes for Baltimore Region

- **Urban Areas will be discontinuous, since only qualified blocks are included**
 - Gaps within the main urban area
 - Disconnected patches surrounding the main urban area
- **Some qualifying areas will no longer be connected to nearby Urban Areas and will instead become their own Urban Areas**
- **May affect our Urban Area boundaries in some of our more suburban counties**
- **Census Bureau will release the 2020 Urban Area definitions in Fall 2022**

For More Information

Erin Bolton | GIS Coordinator

410-732-0500 x1025 | ebolton@baltometro.org | www.baltometro.org



2010 Urban Areas

