

# **BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

## **BALTIMORE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD RESOLUTION #24-11**

### **RESOLUTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE URBAN AREA BOUNDARY FOR THE BALTIMORE REGION**

**WHEREAS**, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region, encompassing the Baltimore Urban Area, and includes official representatives of the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore; the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's; and representatives of the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of Planning, the Maryland Transit Administration, and RTA of Central Maryland; and

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region has the responsibility, under the provisions of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, for developing and carrying out a comprehensive, continuing and coordinated transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

**WHEREAS**, the US Census Bureau, a division of the United States Department of Commerce, is responsible for determining the population and other statistical information of the United States every ten years (decennial census). The mission of the Census Bureau is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. To accomplish this mission, Census measures and disseminates information about the nation's dynamic economy, society and institutions, fostering economic growth and advancing scientific understanding, and facilitating informed decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the 2020 decennial census, the US Census Bureau established urban areas, boundaries and populations; and

**WHEREAS**, The Census Bureau adopted two key changes for the 2020 Census: 1) raising the minimum threshold for qualification as an urban area to at least 2,000 housing units or at least 5,000 people and 2) using primarily housing unit density to identify qualifying census blocks instead of population density.

**WHEREAS**, Urban areas represent densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial and other nonresidential urban land uses. Each urban area must encompass at least 2,000 housing units or at least 5,000 people. This is a change from the previous minimum of 2,500 people, which had been in place since the 1910 Census. Urban areas are defined primarily based on housing unit density measured at the census block level. Three housing unit densities are applied during the delineation process:

- Initial urban core: at least 425 housing units per square mile. Based on the national average of 2.6 people per occupied housing unit, this density threshold is similar to the 1,000 people per square mile used in 2000 and 2010 when delineating initial urban cores.

- Remainder of urban area: at least 200 housing units per square mile. This is similar to the 500 people per square mile density used for the 2000 and 2010 Censuses, based on the national average of 2.6 people per occupied housing unit.
- At least one high-density nucleus of at least 1,275 housing units per square mile required for qualification. This ensures that each urban area contains a high-density nucleus typical of what one would expect to find within an urban area. In addition to the change in minimum thresholds for qualification and the change to use of housing unit density, the Census Bureau also will no longer distinguish between urbanized areas of 50,000 or more people and urban clusters of less than 50,000 people.

**WHEREAS**, the guidance issued by the Federal Highway Administration suggests that states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations should take appropriate steps to adjust the 2020 Census-designated urban area boundaries, if necessary, to meet Federal Aid Highway Program requirements consistent with State and local planning requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, adjustments, if necessary, to the Census-designated boundaries is a necessary first step in the process of completing a functional reclassification of public roads and streets and then proposing routes for the National Highway System to be submitted to the Congress; and

**WHEREAS**, the Maryland Department of Transportation has participated in cooperative meetings with the local jurisdictions in consideration of new adjusted urban area boundaries based on Census 2020 data for the Baltimore region (see Attachment 1); and

**WHEREAS**, FHWA will consider all urban area boundaries final as of June 1, 2024 and will use the original 2020 Census-designated boundaries for all urban areas that have not been adjusted. The 2024 HPMS data submission must conform to the approved urban area boundary as of June 15, 2024.

**WHEREAS**, the membership of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region, will continue to include official representation from the cities, counties and State of Maryland agencies heretofore identified as the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Metropolitan Planning Organization approves for submission to the Federal Highway Administration the new adjusted urban area boundaries based on Census 2020 data for the Baltimore region as presented on the Adjusted 2020 Urban Area Boundary Smoothing maps prepared by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region, approved the aforementioned resolution at its January 23, 2024 meeting.

1-23-24

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Date



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D'Andrea Walker, Chairman  
Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

## Baltimore Region Proposed Urban Area Boundary

