

ACTION: Urban Boundaries and Functional Classification  
For Data Years' 2003 and 2004 Highway Performance  
Monitoring System (HPMS)

May 25, 2004

Barna Juhasz (original signed by Barna Juhasz)  
Director, Office of Highway Policy Information

HPPI-20

Division Administrators

We appreciate the efforts of your planning staff in working with your State and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to identify and approve changes to urban boundaries and functional classification as a result of the 2000 Census. This is a major activity that impacts many programs at both the State and Federal level which needs your continued support and attention for accurate and timely completion. We understand that about half of the States will submit these changes in the 2003 HPMS data this June and another half next year according to our December 12, 2003 survey responses. In a few cases, States are planning to delay reporting of areas beyond the 2004 HPMS data year.

We encourage you to continue to work with your State to facilitate timely completion of any remaining changes for the 2003 and 2004 databases and to place extra effort in those few States where more time was indicated. Your attention to this schedule and plan to accomplish this task is important and we suggest it be a high priority activity for you in the coming months. We will have 2002, 2003, and 2004 data years with mixed results using different boundaries and functional classes, which may produce unusual trends and difficult comparisons. Changes not completed in 2004 would become a problem for us in maintaining a viable database for our business needs. Your involvement in this process may need to be reassessed to streamline procedures for Division Office approvals to be completed and revisions reflected in 2004 HPMS data. This may be an opportune time to review the State's schedule and to assure adequate resources and priority are placed on this activity in upcoming SPR and MPO work programs.

These changes would become problematic beyond the 2004 data year since they have many implications on Federal and State programs, which rely on rural and urban data and proper functional classification designations. We remind you that they impact rural and urban vehicle miles of travel (VMT) totals and trends, including VMT for air quality analysis, traffic accident crash rates, congestion monitoring, urban travel demand models, coding HPMS urban data items, and HPMS sample adequacy for rural and urban areas. In addition, the next "Conditions and Performance" Report to Congress will be based on the 2004 HPMS database so it is important that all changes as a result of the 2000 Census be made to HPMS for more consistent and current analyses.

In our December 12, 2003 guidance and on our Community of Practice web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohpi/hpms/index.htm>, we requested that these changes be made

to the HPMS database for individual urban areas as soon as they are finalized and approved by your office rather than waiting for the entire State to be completed to the extent possible. We also requested that the State indicate which urban boundaries are represented in their HPMS data submittal on the "Urban Area Codes Screen" in Version 6 of the HPMS submittal software.

We appreciate your cooperation to expedite the reporting of the revised boundaries based on the 2000 Census for all urbanized and small urban areas within your State. We have coordinated this memorandum with the Office of Planning (HEPP) and request that as the States complete their adjustment of the urban boundaries, the GIS databases (or maps) defining the adjusted boundaries for all urbanized areas and small urban areas be submitted to HEPP. Thank you for your assistance.

Federal Highway Administration

HPPI-20:FORloski:mfb:517-702-1840:5/14/04, 5/25/04

Copies to:

HEPP-1 (Gloria M. Shepherd), e-mail HPPI-20, HPPI-1, HPPI-20 Chron., HPPI-20 Official File, k:2Urban Boundaries and Functional Classification 03 & 04 data