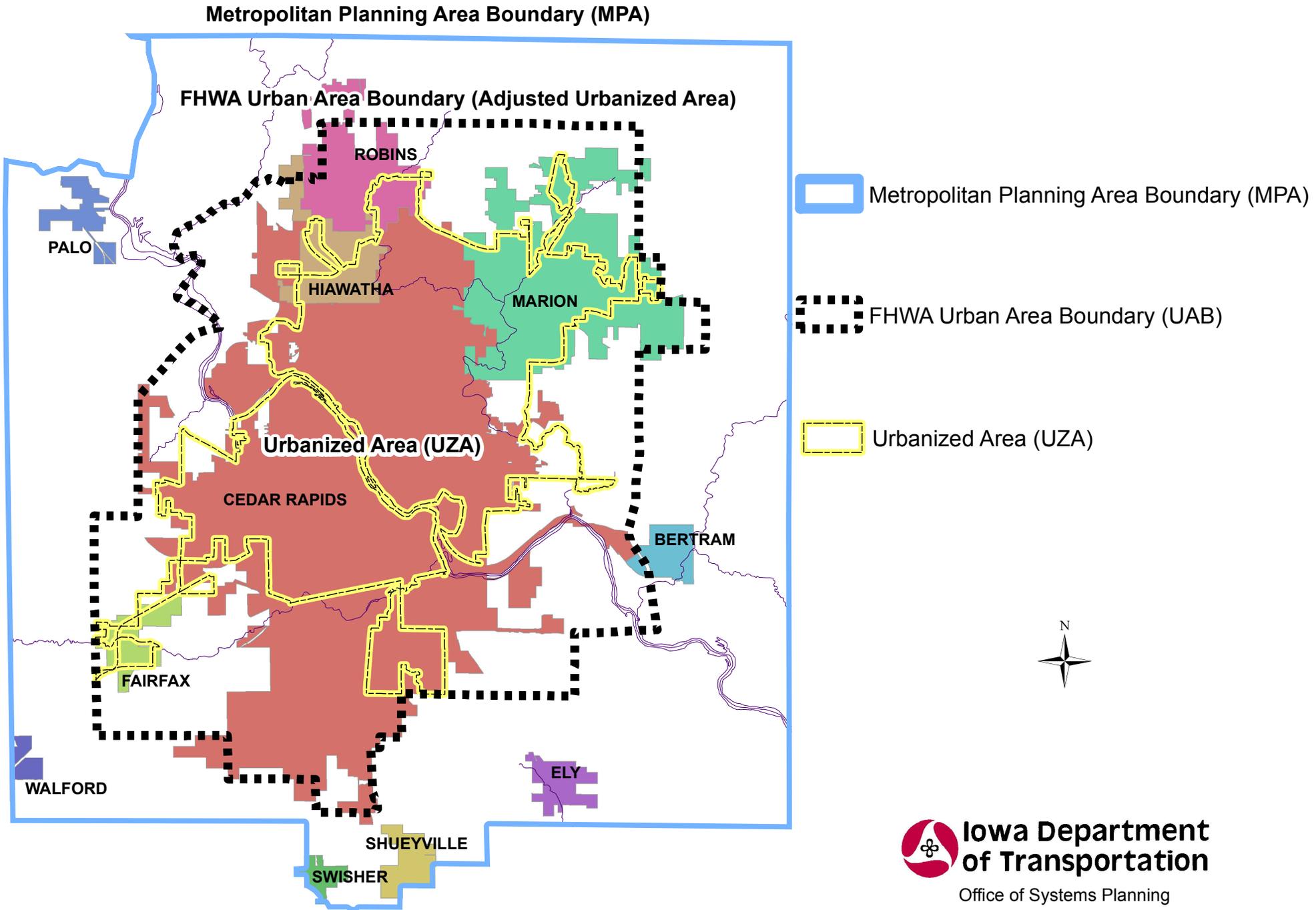


# Planning Boundaries



## Urbanized Area (UZA)

An urbanized area is a geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census tracts or blocks and adjacent densely settled territory. Together, they contain at least 50,000 people, with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile.

An urban cluster (UC) is a statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census tracts or blocks and adjacent densely settled territory that together have at least 2,500 people but fewer than 50,000. Note: Not shown on map

Urban Area is a generic term used to refer collectively to urbanized areas (UZA) and urban clusters (UC). For the 2010 Census, an urban area will comprise a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses as well as territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with the densely settled core. To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of which reside outside institutional group quarters. The term "rural" encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

Urban Area Boundaries are set to be released by the Census Bureau in the spring of 2012. TIGER/Line® Shapefiles will be released in the fall of 2012.

## FHWA Urban Area Boundary

The Federal Highway Administration uses the Census Bureau Urbanized Area (UZA) definition as a starting point but then allows smoothing and adjusting of the UZA, resulting in a slightly larger area better suited to transportation needs.

The following Federal Transportation Programs are impacted by adjustments to the FHWA Urban Area Boundaries:

- 1.) Highway Functional Classification
- 2.) FHWA's Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS)
- 3.) Distribution of STP Funds
- 4.) STP Apportionment Formula
- 5.) Control of Outdoor Advertising

Boundaries should be fixed so as to smooth out irregularities, maintain administrative continuity of peripheral routes, and encompass fringe areas having residential, commercial, industrial, and/or national defense significance. Transportation terminals serving the area such as airports and seaports should also be included within the redefined area if they lie within a reasonable distance of the urban area boundary that would otherwise be selected. 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 project.

The boundary location should be delineated on maps of a scale necessary to show all prominent highways and streets, all fixed transit right-of-way facilities, all major bus routes, corporate limits, township lines, etc., as well as the new limits of the urban area. The maps, together with any supporting documentation, should be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) division office for approval. The submission should indicate the formal approval of the responsible State and local officials.

## Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary

Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary (MPA) refers to the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process must be carried out. The MPA shall, at a minimum, cover the UZA(s) and the contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period covered by the Transportation Plan. An MPO must be designated for each urban area with a population of more than 50,000 people. A Transportation Management Area (TMA) is an area designated by the Secretary of Transportation, having an urbanized area population of over 200,000.

The Census Bureau issued its list of qualifying Urbanized Areas (UZAs) based on population counts from the 2000 decennial Census in the May 1, 2002 Federal Register. Each Urbanized Area listed by the Census Bureau must be represented by a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in order to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process specified in Federal transportation legislation (23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303).

Designation of a new MPO consists of a formal agreement between the Governor and units of general purpose local government that together represent at least 75 percent of the population to be included in the metropolitan planning area (MPA). The agreement should, at a minimum, identify the membership structure of the policy board and establish the metropolitan planning area boundaries (23 USC 134 (b) and 49 USC 5303 (c)).

Sources: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census/faq2cdt.htm#q24>  
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legisregs/directives/fapg/g406300.htm>  
<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010urbanruralclass.html>  
<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/fedregv75n163.pdf>