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Department of Transportation

URBAN AREA BOUNDARIES AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADWAYS

AUTHORITY:

Sections 20.23(3)(a) and 334.048(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.)

REFERENCES:

- Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, Urban Area Criteria for the 2020 Census, Final Criteria, Federal Register/Volume 87, No. 57/Thursday March 24, 2022. Web
- FHWA's Office of Highway Policy Information's Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures, 2013: PDF | Web
- Florida Department of Transportation Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook; This handbook is published by and available from the Florida Department of Transportation, TDA Office, 605 Suwannee Street, Mail Station 27, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450. It should be used in conjunction with this Procedure: PDF | Web
- Florida Department of Transportation Roadway Characteristic Inventory (RCI) Handbook; This handbook is published by and available from the Florida Department of Transportation, TDA Office, 605 Suwannee Street, Mail Station 27, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450. PDF | Web.
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Program Management Handbook: This handbook is published by and available from the Florida Department of Transportation, Office of Policy Planning, 605 Suwannee Street, Mail Station 28, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450: PDF | Web
- Title 23, "Metropolitan Transportation Planning", United States Code, Section 134: Web.
- Title 23, "Urban Area Boundaries and Highway Functional Classification"

  Code of Federal Regulations, Section 470.105: Web.
  Title 26, "Public Road Jurisdiction and Transfer Process" United States Code, Section 335.0415: Web.
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PURPOSE:

This procedural document establishes the responsibilities and requirements of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for designating and adjusting urban boundaries and determining federal functional classification designations for all public roads.

SCOPE:

This procedure applies to the District and Central Office staff who are involved with designating and adjusting urban boundaries and determining functional classification for public roadways. This procedure identifies the authority of the Department Secretary or their delegate to officially sign the urban area boundary and functional classification maps.

The principal users of this procedure in the Central Office are Transportation Data & Analytics, Office of Policy Planning, Office of Work Program and Budget, Forecasting and Trends Office, State Safety Office, Office of Design, Modal Development Office, Transportation Technology, Work Program, and Budget Offices.

The principal users of this procedure in the District are the Planning, Maintenance, Environmental Management, and Traffic Operations Offices. Outside the Department, the principal users are the MPOs, local governments, and FHWA.

REQUIREMENTS:

The FDOT is the lead agency to coordinate with local entities, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other agency partners as they work to adjust the U.S. Census Bureau Urban Boundaries and Federal Functional Classification Designations in an efficient manner, following every decennial U.S. Census Bureau and on an as needed basis. FDOT is also responsible for reviewing, approving, distributing, and reporting the official data and statistics from the adjustment process to agency partners, the Governor's office, and FHWA. These activities include reviewing the U.S. Census and FHWA data and comparing it to guidance from each entity to determine if a public road is in an urban or rural area as well as its functional classification. The other activities include ensuring its integration into FDOT's Roadway Characteristics Inventory system and other FDOT business data systems to provide official reports to FHWA's Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). This critical information is used to support the implementation of the statewide transportation planning process (i.e., Roadway Design), and to determine if a roadway is eligible for federal-aid funding (i.e., functional classification).

Following every decennial census, the U.S. Census Bureau releases population and urban area data criteria. FHWA utilizes the U.S. Census criteria for defining the geographical urban areas in the state to administer the following:

- Designation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs), and the application of metropolitan transportation planning requirements for MPOs.

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- Designation of Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) and the application of metropolitan transportation planning requirements for TMAs.
- Distribution of Metropolitan Planning (PL) Program funding from State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs) to MPOs.
- Allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funding to urban and rural areas.
- Assigning functional classifications to roadways and reporting data regarding the extent, condition, performance, use, and operating characteristics of the nation's highways through the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS).
- Designation of critical rural and urban freight corridors for the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP).
- Applicability of MPO Performance Plans and traffic congestion and on-road mobile source emissions performance measures for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.
- Application of outdoor advertising control requirements for urban areas.

FDOT Central Office provides guidance, standards, and resources to support the Urban Area Boundary (UAB) adjustment process and functional classification review of public roadways. The use of the state functional classification to determine the jurisdiction of public roads was eliminated when ***Section 335.04, F.S.*** was repealed, effective July 1, 1995. Jurisdiction is now based on mutual agreement between the Department and the local governmental entity, pursuant to ***Section 335.0415, F.S.*** Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Federal functional classification and urban boundaries are still required by FHWA and must be thoroughly reviewed and updated every ten years, after the decennial census.

The Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook documents the specific activities and best practices to be performed by the District and Central Office staff and will be maintained and updated by the Transportation Data and Analytics (TDA) Office to be consistent with FDOT and FHWA guidance. District Offices will reference the handbook and provide input to keep the handbook up to date.

1. URBAN AREA BOUNDARY (UAB) ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

The U.S. Census Bureau determined that the 2020 census-designated Urban Area Boundary begins with identification of initial urban cores based on land cover and aggregated census block housing unit density thresholds. The census block is one of the key factors in the selection of areas considered urban. A census block is an area normally bounded by visible features such as streets, streams, and railroads, and by non-visible features, such as the boundary of an incorporated place, minor civil division, county, or other 2020 census tabulation entity.

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1.1 CENSUS DESIGNATED URBAN AREA

The U.S. Census Bureau's urban-rural classification is a delineation of geographic areas, identifying both individual urban areas and the rural areas of the nation. The U.S. Census Bureau's urban areas represent densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. The U.S. Census Bureau delineates urban area boundaries after each decennial census by applying specified criteria to decennial census and other data. The Rural classification encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

1.2 FHWA ADJUSTED URBAN AREA BOUNDARY

FHWA allows for the adjustment of UABs to be performed by the states in collaboration with MPOs or local entities. The process for adjusting UABs provides flexibility to various federal-aid highway and transit programs. States have the option of using Census-defined boundaries as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, or they may adjust the Census-defined boundaries to be more consistent with transportation needs. The Urban and Rural categories are used by the Department in the determination of functional classification, level of service, context classification, and distance between interchanges.

FDOT coordinates with FHWA to initiate the adjustment process once the U.S. Census UABs are officially released and FDOT will lead the coordination activities to meet with the MPOs or local entities. Adjustments to the UABs must be reviewed by FDOT and FHWA according to the Federal Register. Guidance and best practices to adjust Florida's UABs will be documented in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

1.3 DISTRICT UAB RESPONSIBILITIES

1.3.1 The District will plan, assign responsible staff, and acquire resources to perform the coordination activities required of the UAB adjustment process and should plan for efficient review of UABs within the District. The District can plan for an efficient review process by including a functional classification review to coincide with the UAB adjustment process and meet schedules specified by the TDA Office. Review/creation of transition boundaries are at the discretion of the District.

1.3.2 The District will initiate discussions with local entities or MPOs to review any necessary adjustments of a UAB and develop proposed UAB map packages. See the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook's Appendix K UABFC Map Package Requirements for an example.

1.3.3 The District must coordinate with adjacent Districts and States to ensure UABs are adjusted accurately and continuously along District/State boundary lines. See the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook's Appendix J Best Practices for Urban Boundary and Functional Classification Process for examples.

1.3.4 The District will utilize the UAB data, Roadway Characteristics Inventory (RCI) data, map templates, applications, tools, and any other resources provided by the TDA Office to develop consistent datasets and maps.

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1.3.5 Any adjustment to a UAB must include all territory defined as Urban by the U.S. Census Bureau. The District will adjust them within the standards specified in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

1.3.6 The District will illustrate a proposed adjusted UAB on maps when agreement and consensus are established between the FDOT, local entity(s), or MPO(s). The District will develop a series of proposed UAB packages for each County as completed, which clearly depict each adjusted UAB in relation to the county they are located within. Districts should also include any proposed functional classifications of each county in the proposed UAB map. The District may submit their proposed UAB packages for a given County to the TDA Office as it is developed and approved by the local entities or MPOs to expedite the review and approval process of each UAB and functional classification application (Refer to section 2 for more information on functional classification).

1.3.7 If there are concerns, inaccuracies, inconsistencies, legibility issues, or errors found during the review of the proposed boundaries, the District will coordinate with the local entities or MPO to rectify any conflicts and provide any revisions of the UABs.

1.3.8 When a UAB map package (see the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook's Appendix K UABFC Map Package Requirements for an example) is approved by Central Office and FHWA, the TDA Office will provide notice to the District. The District will coordinate a final UAB map package and collect official signatures from local entities or MPOs. If functional classification applications are included in the package, the final UAB packages should include any associated counties related to the UAB along with any approved functional classification applications. The District should only include functional classification applications that have been appropriately developed, reviewed, and approved by FHWA.

1.3.9 The District will collect signatures from the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, or another authorized representative of the county, on any county maps and unincorporated urban area maps.

1.3.10 The District will collect signatures of incorporated urban area maps from the Mayor or another authorized representative of the city and, if they extend beyond the municipal limits, the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners or another authorized representative of the county. This does not include urban areas within an MPO planning area boundary.

1.3.11 The District will acquire signatures from the Chairman of the MPO, or another authorized representative of the MPO, for all areas within the MPO planning area boundary. For urban areas with multiple MPOs, the Chairman of each MPO, or another authorized representative of the MPO, will sign the maps.

1.3.12 Upon receiving all of the required local entity or MPO signatures, the District will provide the final UAB packages to the TDA Office for final signature by the Department Secretary or their delegate.

1.3.13 If the District provides any final draft functional classification applications along with UAB maps, the District will adhere to the requirements and standards to submit functional applications and UAB maps outlined in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

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1.3.14 Upon receiving the finalized signatures and approvals to the final adjusted maps, the District will update any necessary roadway data which have a Feature 124 in RCI.

1.4 CENTRAL OFFICE UAB RESPONSIBILITIES

1.4.1 The TDA Office will provide staff and resources responsible for coordinating with Central Office, Districts, and Federal partners to determine requirements, document standards, develop schedules, identify milestones, update procedures, perform review of data, develop guidance, and maintain the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

1.4.2 The TDA Office will be responsible for the public distribution of the official UABs provided by the U.S. Census in coordination with FHWA.

1.4.3 The Office of Policy Planning will initiate the FDOT's review of the State distribution formulas for metropolitan planning (PL) funds allocated to the MPOs and will coordinate the review and approval with FHWA.

1.4.4 The Office of Policy Planning will provide guidance for MPOs to incorporate the qualifying urban areas into their Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs).

1.4.5 The Office of Policy Planning will coordinate the designation and approval of new or current MPOs with Legislative Affairs for notices to the Executive Office of the Governor.

1.4.6 The TDA Office will notify the District Offices to initiate discussions with local entities or MPOs to perform a review and adjustment of the UAB, if necessary. The TDA Office will conduct a coordinated review of any proposed or final UAB map packages for accuracy and consistency with guidance provided by FHWA and the U.S. Census' Federal Register notice. The TDA Office will coordinate approvals and collect signatures from FHWA for any packages.

1.4.7 Upon receiving the final UAB package with local entity or MPO signatures, the TDA Office will acquire the approval signature from the Department Secretary or their delegate for each UAB.

1.4.8 The TDA Office will notify the District of the signed maps and distribute the official signed maps for public access.

1.4.9 The TDA Office will compile a GIS Urban Area Boundary layer inclusive of all adjusted or non-adjusted UABs for public access and distribution.

1.4.10 The TDA Office will review any UAB data input into the RCI. The TDA Office will be responsible for submitting data to the HPMS by FHWA's specified deadlines.

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2. FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Functional classification is the collaborative process performed by FDOT in coordination with local entities and MPOs by which roads open to the public are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they provide. The review of a roadway's functional classification is to establish or update the relative importance of a roadway in the overall hierarchy of roadways. When a functional classification should be modified, a functional classification application will be developed. The application must include all the required road classification information, a location map, and must include proof of local entity consensus by including official signatures from the local entity and MPO signing authorities. Each application must be provided to the TDA Office for review and final approval must be granted by FHWA before modifying RCI.

FDOT utilizes the federal functional classification definitions and standards prescribed by FHWA to support FDOT critical business processes. Examples include determining if a roadway is eligible for federal-aid funding. This information is required to be reported to FHWA through the HPMS annual submittal. The process to review or propose a roadway's functional classification can be found in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

A comprehensive functional classification review process should be performed in coordination with the UAB adjustment process. District offices should plan for efficient meetings with local entities and MPOs to review necessary adjustments to the UAB and functional classification together. Functional classification in urbanized areas should be developed within the framework of the continuing, comprehensive planning process carried out pursuant to 23 CFR, Section 134 and 23 CFR § 470.105.

2.1 DISTRICT FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

As outlined above, a comprehensive functional classification review process should be performed in coordination with the decennial census UAB adjustment process. Roadway functional classification review can be performed in the interim years as well. The list of responsibilities outlined below are applicable during decennial adjustment process and interim years.

2.1.1 The District will plan, assign/identify responsible staff, and acquire resources to perform the coordination activities required of the functional classification review process with local entities, MPOs, and Central Office.

2.1.2 The District will utilize the most up to date RCI data, linear refencing system, existing functional classifications of roadways from RCI, map templates, websites, tools, and any resources provided by the TDA Office to develop consistent statewide maps, map symbology, data, and functional classification codes.

2.1.3 The District must coordinate with adjacent Districts and states to ensure a roadway's functional classification is consistent for roadways across District boundary lines.

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2.1.4 The District is required to be the main point of contact for local entities and MPOs to develop a functional classification application which must contain all the required data and information as specified in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

2.1.5 Upon agreement of the proposed functional classification, the District will develop functional classification applications which includes a map and required information to review and approve the classification. The specific requirements and standards of the application and maps are listed in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

2.1.6 The District is required to inventory roadways which are functionally classified into the RCI and will reference the RCI Handbook and related RCI procedures to perform the data inventory requirements.

2.1.7 After FHWA has approved a functional classification application and notice has been provided by the TDA Office, the District will update any existing Roadway IDs in RCI with the required data and information or add new Roadway IDs in RCI which are functionally classified higher than a local road classification by assigning a Roadway ID, beginning mile point, and ending mile point, and providing a roadway alignment to the TDA Linear Referencing System. The District will inventory the roadway with the required RCI features and characteristics which are detailed in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

The District responsibilities outlined in section 2.2. are additional responsibilities which are applicable for the functional review during the decennial UAB adjustment process.

2.2 ADDITIONAL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES DURING UAB ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

2.2.1 Adhering to section 2.1.2. the District should plan for an efficient review process by including a UAB adjustment review to coincide with the functional classification review and meet schedules specified by the TDA Office.

2.2.2 The District will initiate discussions with local governments and MPOs to review the existing functional classification on all public roadways to develop a proposed functional classification application and map package which provides the visual location and required information to change the roadway's functional classification.

2.2.3 At a minimum, each functional classification review shall include coordination with local governments in each county of the state. The coordination should include reviewing the functional classification of public roadways and provide a forum for the discussion of relevant topics. Subsequent coordination, if necessary, should examine the changes made following previous comments and discussions.

2.2.4 The District should lead local entities and MPOs to obtain local acceptance of the proposed functional classification. The District will document correspondence, discussions, information, and data to support the review and decision making process.

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2.2.5 The Districts will submit the proposed functional classification applications and functional classification maps along with the proposed adjusted UAB maps to the TDA Office for review and approval. The Districts will be required to coordinate with local governments and MPOs, and perform revisions to any submissions and address those issues found during the review process.

2.2.6 After FHWA has approved the proposed functional classification and proposed adjusted UAB maps, the District will be notified by the TDA Office and the District will prepare a final draft of maps as prescribed in the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook for review and signature by the MPOs or local entities for counties with jurisdiction outside the UAB. The parameters of obtaining official signatures are outlined in sections 1.3.9, 1.3.10 and 1.3.11.

2.2.7 Upon receiving all of the required signatures, the District will provide the final draft maps to the TDA Office for final review and final signatures. The District will include final draft functional classification applications which have also been reviewed, approved, and signed by the local government and the MPO. The District will prepare the following elements for submittal to the TDA Office, which will consist of the following items:

2.2.7.1 Functional classification applications of roadways with all required data and information.

2.2.7.2 Signed map combined of functional classifications and adjusted Urban Area Boundaries.

2.2.7.3 Documented written descriptions of Urban Area Boundary changes, functional classification changes, and a summary of added/deleted mileage. Reference the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.

2.2.8 When the final documents have been reviewed and approved by the TDA Office and provided to the District, the District will perform the following tasks in a timely manner:

2.2.8.1 Provide the final documented descriptions of the Urban Area Boundary and functional classification changes to the local governments and MPOs.

2.2.8.2 Provide a complete set of signed maps to the local entities and/or MPOs.

2.2.8.3 Provide a complete set of signed maps to the Outdoor Advertising Office, the District Rail Coordinator/Administrator, and the District Maintenance Office/District Planning Office as appropriate for RCI data collection. Distribute copies of the maps to other offices within the District as appropriate.

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2.3 CENTRAL OFFICE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

2.3.1 The TDA Office will develop and maintain the RCI data management system to support the standardization, storage, and distribution of functionally classified roadways.

2.3.2 TDA will be responsible for editing and maintaining approved functional classification designations in RCI under Feature 121 (FUNCLASS) and in tandem with Feature 112 (FAHWSYS).

2.3.3 TDA will be responsible for submitting approved functional classifications to the HPMS.

2.3.4 TDA will conduct a review of any submitted functional classification applications for completeness, analyze data, coordinated changes to FDOT business systems, and provide comments and assistance to the Districts.

2.3.5 TDA will coordinate review of any functional applications to the FHWA Florida Division Office for its review and approval. If FDOT, in coordination with local entities, proposes major changes to the principal arterial system, the highest functional classification, the FHWA Florida Division Office may submit those proposals for higher level review to FHWA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

2.3.6 TDA will work with the District to resolve any FHWA questions or concerns.

2.3.7 TDA will perform statewide analysis of functionally classified roadways and develop standards to maintain consistency of District roadways.

2.3.8 TDA will provide mileage reports of functionally classified roadways by using data stored in RCI.

2.3.9 TDA will analyze percentage shifts in functional classification data from 2010 to 2020.

The Central Office responsibilities outlined below are additional responsibilities which are applicable for the functional review during the decennial UAB adjustment process.

2.4 ADDITIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES DURING UAB ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

2.4.1 Adhering to section 1.4. and 2.3, the TDA Office will coordinate with Central Offices, Districts, and Federal partners to establish requirements, standards, schedules, and milestones, update procedures and perform review of data, and develop guidance for a coordinated review of functional classification applications and UAB adjustments.

2.4.2 TDA will coordinate reviews of functional classification applications, review draft or final UAB maps and seek approvals from the FHWA and the Department Secretary or their delegate. TDA will provide a notification email to the Districts of any needed

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approvals and to request each District obtain official signatures on the final maps from the appropriate local governments or MPOs.

2.4.3 The TDA Office will provide the final adjusted urban boundary and functional classification data available from RCI, FDOT business data systems, and the Enterprise GIS portal. The final adjusted UAB map and functional classification maps will be provided publicly for data requests and stored into the Department's Enterprise Electronic Document Management System (EEDMS).

2.4.4 The TDA Office will perform statewide statistical analysis of functionally classified roadways in the state. TDA will also collect and store approvals and records per record retention policy (Transportation Technology, P-16 (1) Functional Classification of Public Roads Records Retention schedule). This record series consists of maps, tabular listings indicating the existing state highway system, county road system, and city street system. These systems are determined by classifying every road in the state according to the function it performs. Also included in this series is the correspondence generated by the change of jurisdiction resulting from change of function. Retention: Retain until obsolete, superseded, or administrative value is lost. Copy-of-record is retained by Central Office and duplicates by the districts.

3. URBAN BOUNDARY AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION HANDBOOK

The Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook provides detailed guidance, process flow charts, process checklists, UAB Map package example, minimum data elements, functional classification application, sample letters and forms, and background material to follow when coordinating the adjustments of Urban Area Boundary and functional classification of roads with local entities and MPOs. The sample letters in the Handbook can be tailored or changed to fit specific circumstances, providing only a starting point for users. Samples are not official forms of the Department.

4. TRAINING

Training and technical support will be provided by the TDA Office.

5. FORMS

Refer to the Urban Area Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook.