CENSUS 2020, URBAN DONUTS AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE

Or, “A Tale of Four Brunswicks”
Chris Zeilinger, CTAA

“Urban Donut” is real; it’s based in Dallas TX
**Census data drive much of FTA $$$**

Approximately 32% of FY 2020 FTA formula spending is driven by Census data. For state-managed programs, it’s almost entirely Census-driven. *Note: These are CTAA’s rough estimates and assumptions only.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTIMATED BASES OF FTA FORMULA FUNDING, FY 2020</th>
<th>Population cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 200K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocated based on population factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>$768,458,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons per square mile</td>
<td>$768,458,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income population</td>
<td>$132,083,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly/disabled population</td>
<td>$170,488,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocated based on land area factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$144,516,247</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Allocated based on supply factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle revenue miles</td>
<td>$3,979,483,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directional route miles</td>
<td>$1,628,378,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocated based on performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(STIC, urban performance tiers)</td>
<td>$378,649,390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s “Urban”? What’s “Rural”?

**Urban Area:** contiguous Census tracts with population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile, along with any surrounding blocks with population density of at least 500 persons per square mile.

**Urbanized area:** any urban area with a population of at least 50,000.

**Rural:** any area that is not an urban area.

*Urban areas are delineated without regard to political boundaries!*
Some urban-rural distinctions

Urbanized areas with populations more than 200,000:
• FTA Section 5307, 5310, 5339 funds allocated to the area’s designated recipient
• The area’s MPO is responsible for planning & programming

Urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000:
• FTA Section 5307, 5310, 5339 funds are calculated for each area, but allocated to states
• The area’s MPO develops transportation plans, but FTA & FHWA funds are programmed by the state in consultation with the MPO

Non-urbanized (“rural”) areas:
• FTA Section 5311, 5310, 5339 funds allocated to the states
After a census, what happens?

- For most urbanized areas, no dramatic changes
- Formerly “rural” areas may be designated as new urbanized areas, generally with populations between 50,000 and 200,000
- Urbanized areas often expand and engulf formerly “rural” areas
- Some formerly “small” urbanized areas jump over the 200,000 population threshold
- Existing urbanized areas may be merged or absorbed
- Some currently urbanized areas may lose that
Brunswick, Georgia

This formerly rural area was designated as an UZA after the 2000 census.

- The state had to work with local officials to establish an MPO
- There was an incumbent regional rural transit system, whose role with respect to the UZA had to be determined
- The state had to determine what to do with the annual Section 5307 apportionment attributable to the UZA ($682,220 in FY 2019)
- Meanwhile, the local donut shop in Brunswick closed. Only the national chains remain.
Brunswick County, N.C.

A small portion of this largely rural county long has been part of the Wilmington NC UZA, but in 2010, a quarter of the county’s formerly rural population became part of the Myrtle Beach SC UZA.

• One rural county, two large-urban UZAs, including one in another state
• The county’s transit system now has to get much of its FTA funding as part of Myrtle Beach’s Section 5307 allocation, while NC DOT can use Section 5311 to assist in transit for the still-rural portions of Brunswick County.
• FTA had to adjust interpretation of the “100 bus rule” so that the county could use Section 5307 funds to help support its operating costs.
• The local donut shop remains in the rural portion of Brunswick County….for now.
Brunswick, Maryland

Frederick County MD’s transit system is focused on the small-urban core city of Frederick, but includes rural services. In 2020, it’s likely that the county’s urbanized portions will become part of the Washington DC UZA.

• Since MWCOG already serves as the MPO for Frederick, that part of the transition will be relatively seamless.
• The county’s urban transit program will have to start relying on a portion of the DC area’s Section 5307 allocation.
• The Maryland Transit Administration may use Section 5311 funding to assist in transit for the county’s rural areas.
• Gluten- and dairy-free donuts continue to be sold at the local donut shop.
Brunswick, Ohio

This city is just barely in the Cleveland suburbs, but is 60 miles away from Sandusky OH, which stopped being a UZA in the 2010 census.

• FHWA, FTA and the state had to determine what to do with what had been the MPO for the Sandusky area.
• Transit in Sandusky became eligible for ODOT-administered Section 5311 funds, instead of its share of small-urban Section 5307 funds, which had been $641,851 in FY 2012.
• Since becoming rural, Sandusky’s FTA funding has grown considerably, albeit at ODOT’s discretion.
• Transit in Brunswick remains limited to an otherwise-rural transit service, but there are donuts.
What can we learn from these four Brunswicks?

• Where there is transit, there almost always are donuts.
• States will need to work with local entities, FHWA and FTA to help stand up MPOs and Section 5307 operations in newly designated UZAs.
• When rural or small-urban areas are absorbed into large UZAs, someone often will need to guide transit stakeholders and local officials through the transition into being part of a different planning and playing field – and this typically isn’t seen as an FHWA or FTA function.
• In addition to Section 5307/5311 transitions, there also will be Census-induced changes to Section 5310 activities.
• When urbanized areas disappear, there’s also a state role in those transitions.
In Conclusion

There will be a lot of moving pieces affecting states’ management of their transit programs as a result of Census 2020. It’s not just a matter of new UZAs, and it’s not just a matter of the right flavor of donut. If you want to explore this further, or want some assistance from CTAA in helping understand and prepare for how the census will affect communities in your state, contact

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