

Solano County  
Redistricting  
Advisory  
Committee

Redistricting 101  
June 3, 2021



# Overview

This presentation will cover a range of topics to bring together training to date and expand to the technical aspects of the redistricting process.

- What is Redistricting?
- State and Federal Voting Rights Act
- What is Gerrymandering
- Traditional Redistricting Principles
- Census Data
- RAC Timeline

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# What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is at its core the act of equalizing population among districts.

This is important in order to meet two requirements - one constitutional, one from Supreme Court precedent:

- *Equal Representation (14<sup>th</sup> Amendment)* - how effective any resident can be at advocating for themselves or being represented within a jurisdiction.
- *One Person One Vote* - equal ability to elect a candidate of choice.

# What is Redistricting?

Redistricting has changed significantly over the years as federal and state laws, norms, best practices, and public opinion has transformed.

In Federal Law:

- Elimination of part of the Voting Rights Act
- Supreme Court Decisions
- HR1 – currently in Congress

# What is Redistricting?

Redistricting has changed significantly over the years as federal and state laws, norms, best practices, and public opinion has transformed.

In California/Municipal Law:

- Prop 11 and 20 (Statewide Redistricting)
- CA FAIR MAPS Act

# What is Redistricting?

Redistricting has changed significantly over the years as federal and state laws, norms, best practices, and public opinion has transformed.

## In Public Opinion / Media:

- 97% of Voters agree that “local government should be required to have transparent / open redistricting.”
- Media and Community Based Organizations have become much more adept at covering redistricting.

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# What is the Voting Rights Act?

The Voting Rights Act is federal Law that seeks to remedy racial disenfranchisement. It has two sections impacting redistricting:

**Section 2** – Majority Minority Districts

**Section 5** – Preclearance (inactive)

The California Voting Rights Act prohibits the use of At Large Election Systems in local government if there is Racially Polarized Voting. *Does not impact Solano County.*

# What is the Voting Rights Act?

The Voting Rights Act Section 2 is enforced when a jurisdiction meets certain preconditions:

- 1) A minority group must be sufficiently large and geographically compact to comprise a majority of the district;
- 2) The minority group must be politically cohesive (it must demonstrate a pattern of voting for the same candidates, also known as “bloc voting”); and,
- 3) A majority of voters vote sufficiently as a bloc usually to defeat the minority group’s preferred candidate.

# What is the Voting Rights Act?

Determining Section 2 obligation requires legal counsel and sometimes a racially polarized voting analysis.

- Does the minority population qualify under Section 2?
- Is the proposed district a sufficient remedy – is it an “effective” majority minority district?
- Is there a claim for a coalition district?
- *Without Section 2, a community of interest can still be supported but race cannot be a predominant factor in drawing lines.*

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# What is Gerrymandering

## The Gerrymander

The term Gerrymander came from a cartoon depicting a rather serpentine looking district created by Governor Elbridge Gerry in Massachusetts.

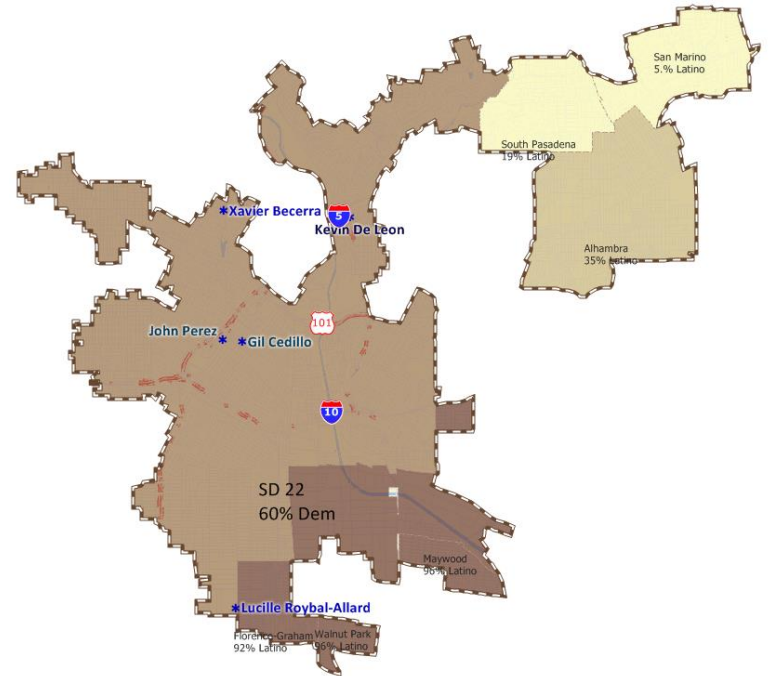


# What is Gerrymandering

## the Gerrymander

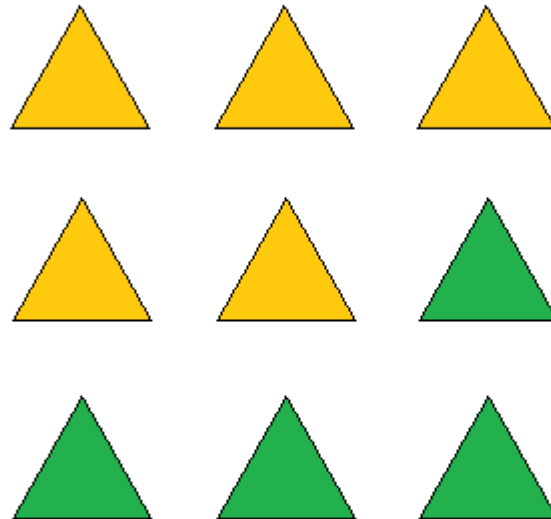
There are more recent examples of gerrymandering, even in California.

This 2001 Senate District is a great example.



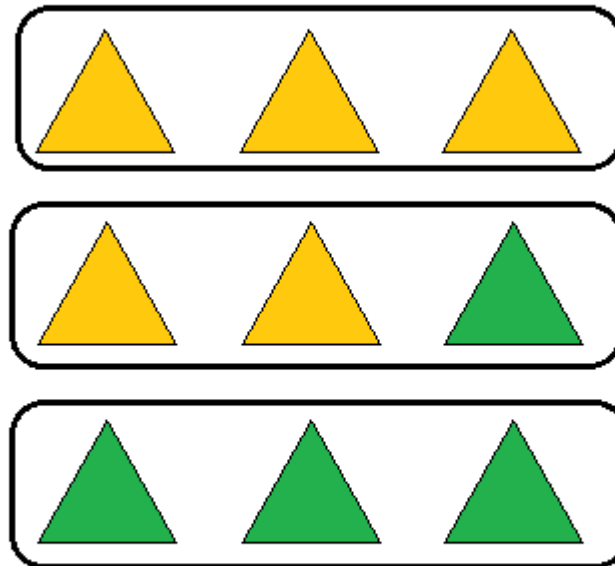
# What is Gerrymandering

How does gerrymandering work?



# What is Gerrymandering

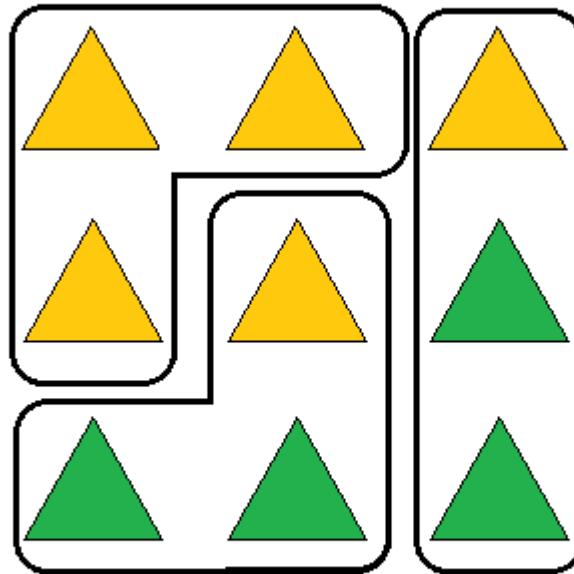
How does gerrymandering work?





# What is Gerrymandering

How does gerrymandering work?



# What is Gerrymandering

## Types of Gerrymanders

The two primary types of gerrymanders are Partisan and Racial, but there are more.

**Partisan Gerrymandering** – current Supreme Court has determined these *non-justiciable* but some state and local laws have stepped in to ban them.

**Racial Gerrymandering** – courts have repeatedly found these to be unlawful.

**Incumbent Gerrymandering** – common in any redistricting conducted by the agency itself.

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# Traditional Redistricting Principles

Preventing a Districting from becoming a Gerrymander

There are a number of criteria that have been used nationally and upheld by courts.

- Relatively equal size - people, not citizens
- Contiguous – districts should not hop/jump
- Maintain “*communities of interest*”
- Follow city and census designated place boundaries
- Keep districts compact – appearance/function

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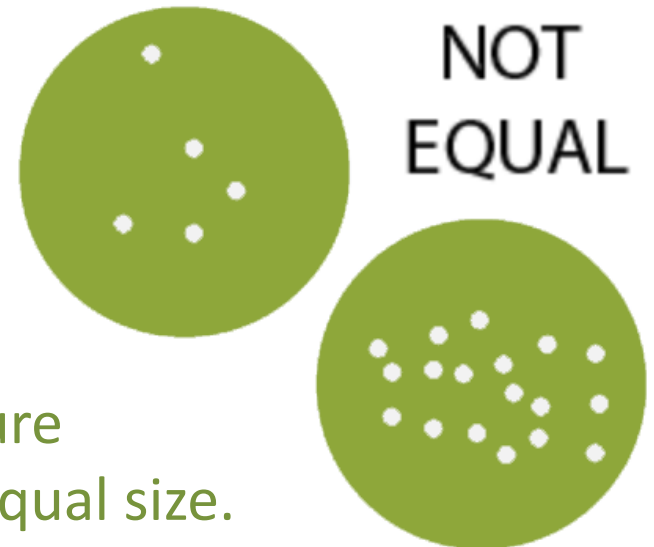
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# Equal Population

## Utilizing the U.S. Census Decennial File

What is “equal” population has been a key subject in redistricting litigation.

- Population Equality is based on “People” not citizens or voters or other metrics.
- The metric used is called “deviation” which is a measure of how close a district is to equal size.

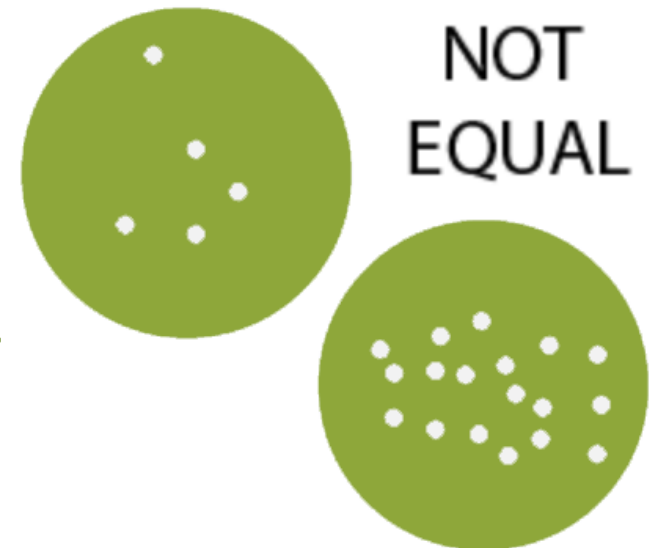


# Equal Population

## Utilizing the U.S. Census Decennial File

What is “equal” population has been a key subject in redistricting litigation.

- Congress: 1 Person
- Local Govt: 10%
- Legislative/others: 1%-5% or other more restrictive by choice.



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# Contiguity

Two definitions for what is contiguous

Contiguity should be thought of as “literal” and “functional.”

- An area that is one whole piece is “literally contiguous.”
- An area that represents how the population functions or how people are connected is “functionally contiguous.”



# Contiguity

Two definitions for what is contiguous

Contiguity should be thought of as “literal” and “functional.”

- Ryer Island: not literally contiguous, but is “functionally contiguous”
- Two houses on either side of the delta could be literally contiguous, but not functionally.



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# Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

A community of interest includes ethnic and language minorities and other groups as discussed.

- Many more, including:
  - LGBTQ+ Communities
  - Senior Citizens or Students
  - Downtown / Urban
  - Rural or Agricultural
  - Homeowners or Renters

# Communities of Interest

Bringing like people together for representation

What are you looking for in trying to judge the applicability of a Community of Interest to the redistricting process?

- Group with shared culture / characteristics
- Geographic Nature / Density / Ability to be mapped
- Relationship to Agency / Policies

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# Compactness

## Determining what is “compact”

The measure of compactness can get complicated.

- Ratio of the circumference of a district and the area of a district.
- Measuring the number of distinct straight lines and the number of kinks and bends.
- Simply outlawing funny shapes.

NOT  
COMPACT





# Compactness

Determining what is “compact”

California has a rather elegant/simple definition.

- Not bypassing nearby populated areas in favor of more distant populated areas

# Additional Redistricting Rules

Criteria required in Solano County Beyond Traditional Principles

The FAIR MAPS Act adds more criteria to the process.

- Not consider Incumbents / Candidates.
- Not draw districts to advantage or disadvantage a political party.
- Hold minimum set of hearings, encourage public engagement.
- Posting of all redistricting commission information on a website that is maintained *for the next 10 years*.

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# The mechanics of Redistricting

## Census Data

Census Files come in two parts:

**Geography** – the underlying framework of the data

**Data** – the counts of population and demographics

And they can convey different information:

**Point in Time** – Decennial Census

**Multi-year Averages** – Trends/Estimates

# The mechanics of Redistricting

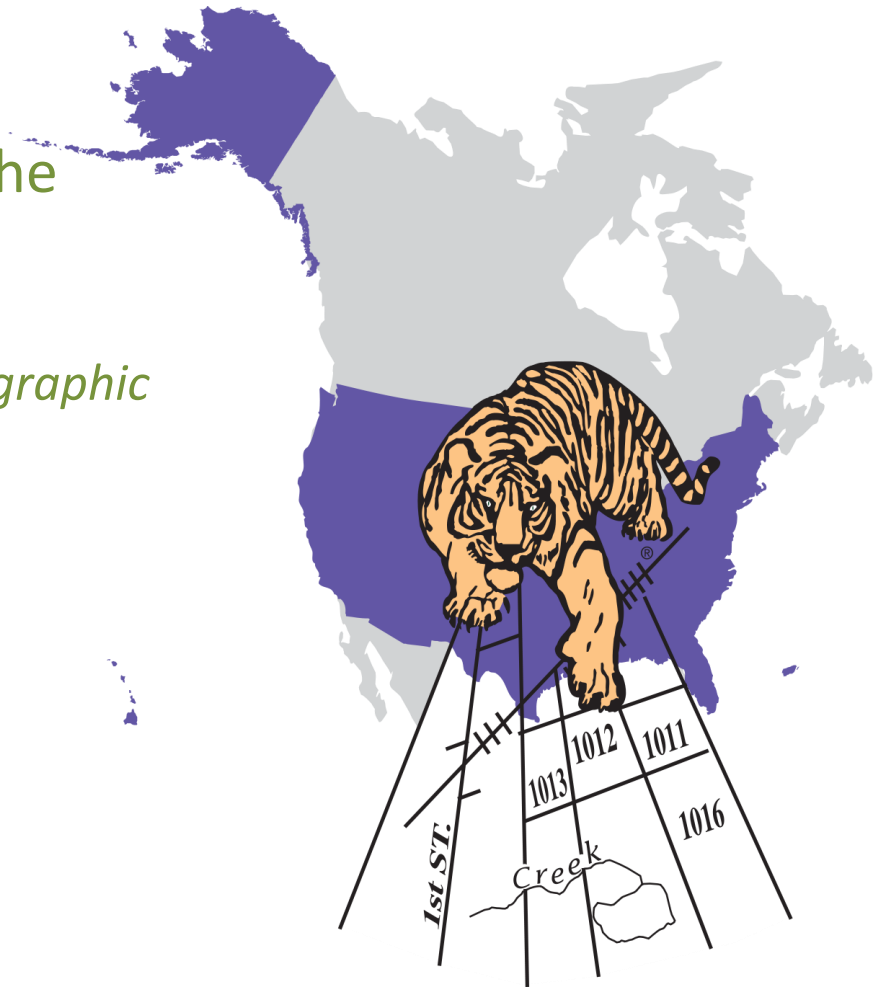
## Census Data

The Geography is called the  
TIGER Files

- *Topologically Integrated Geographic  
Encoding and Referencing*

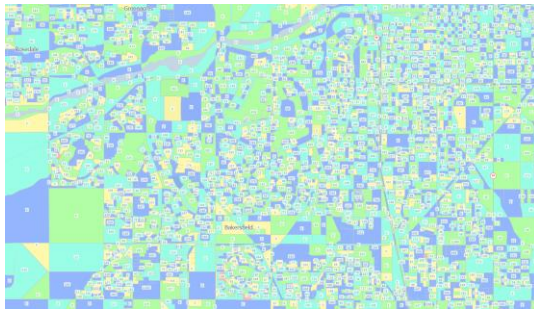
- *Nested geographic units*

- *Block*
- *Block Group*
- *Tract*

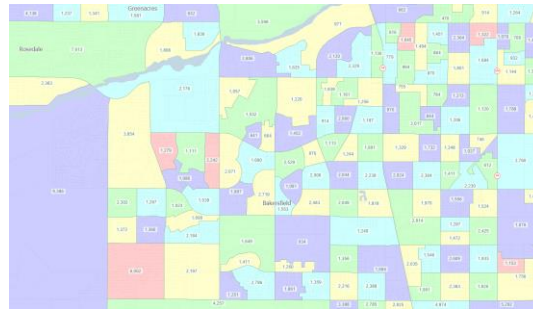


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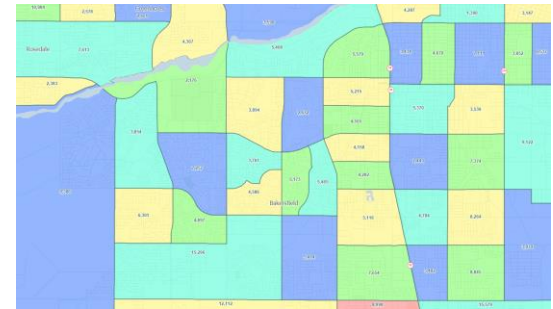
## Census Data



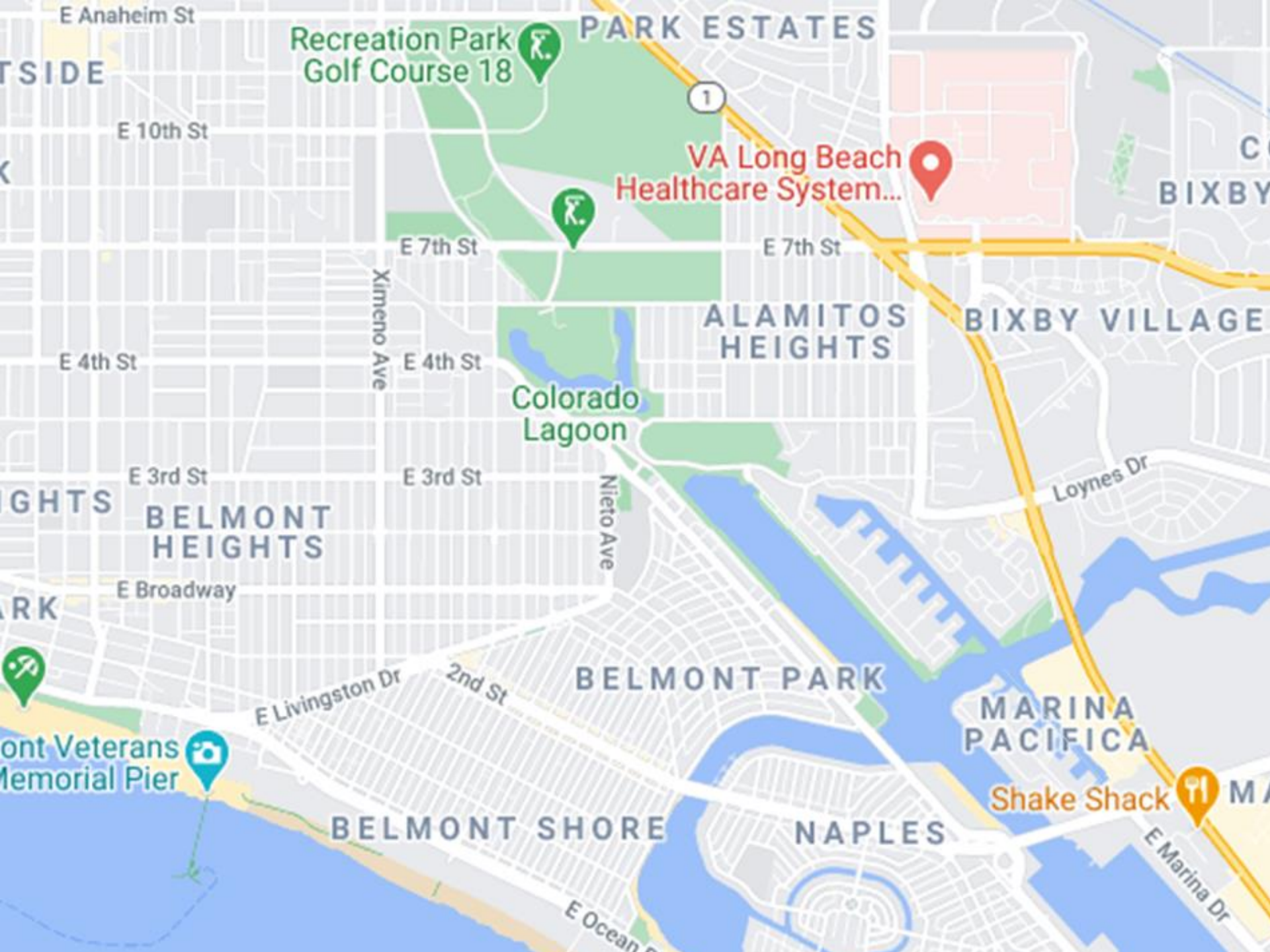
Census Blocks



Census Block Groups



Census Tracts



Recreation Park  
Golf Course 18

PARK ESTATES

1

VA Long Beach  
Healthcare System...

BIXBY

BIXBY VILLAGE

ALAMITOS  
HEIGHTS

Colorado  
Lagoon

BELMONT  
HEIGHTS

BELMONT PARK

MARINA  
PACIFICA

Shake Shack

BELMONT SHORE

NAPLES

Mont Veterans  
Memorial Pier

M

E Anaheim St

T SIDE

E 10th St

E 7th St

E 7th St

E 4th St

E 4th St

E 3rd St

E 3rd St

HTS

ARK

E Broadway

E Livingston Dr

2nd St

Ximeno Ave

Nieto Ave

Loynes Dr

E Ocean Blvd

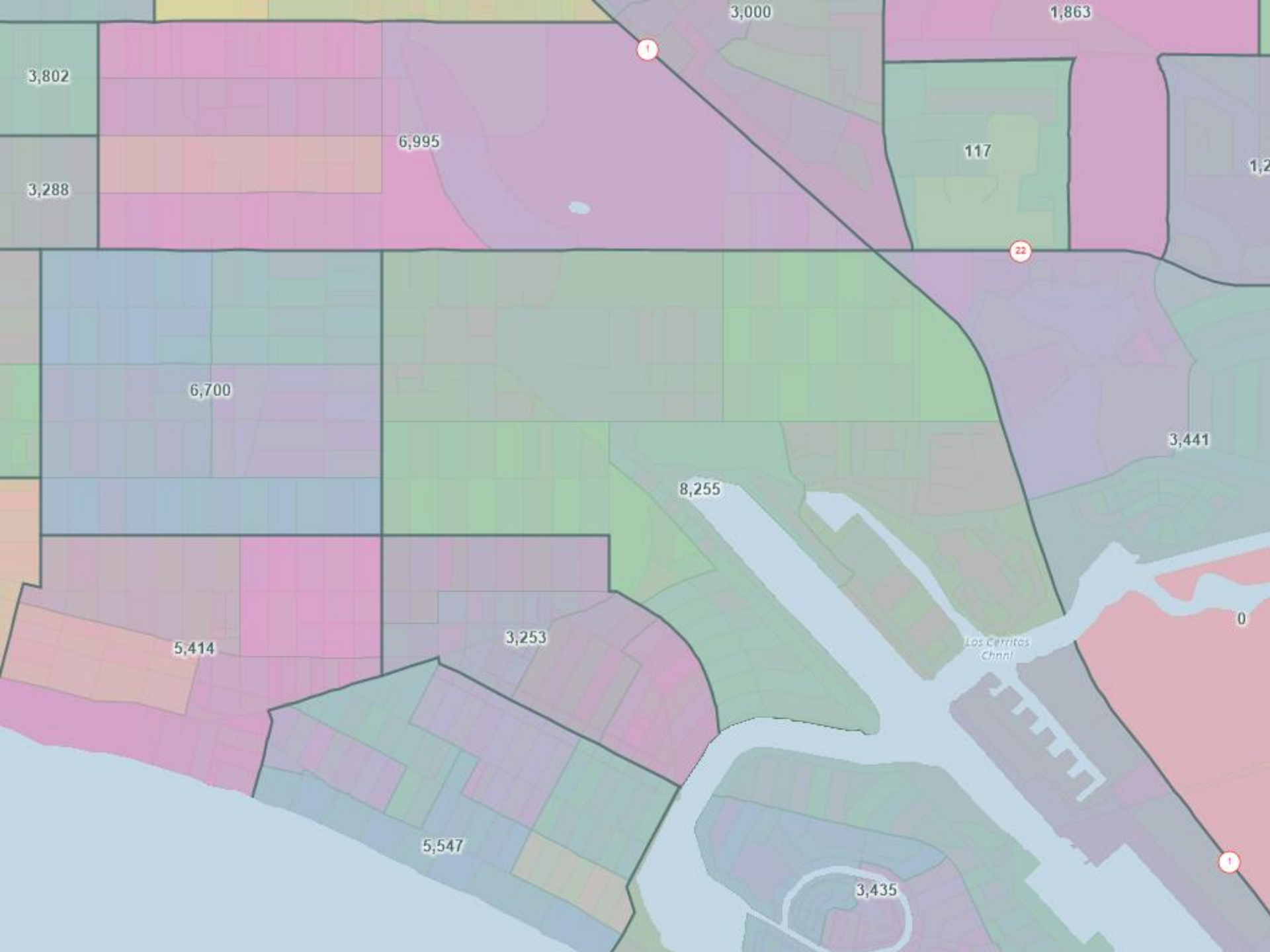
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# The mechanics of Redistricting

## Census Data

Two different datasets most commonly used in redistricting:

- PL 94-171 - the Decennial Census File
  - Census Block Geography
  - Total Population Counts for April 1, 2020, used to determine the size of each district
  - Required to be released before April 1, 2021, but delayed until September 30<sup>th</sup>, with a “legacy” dataset on August 16<sup>th</sup>

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# Solano County Redistricting Advisory Commission

## Timeline for Upcoming Meetings

May 11 <sup>th</sup>	RAC Appointed by the Board of Supervisor
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	RAC Training #1 – Introductory & Governance
<b>June 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>RAC Training #2 – Redistricting 101</b>
June 17 <sup>th</sup>	RAC Training #3 – Public Outreach Hearings
June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Community Meeting – District 1
June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Community Meeting – District 2



# REDISTRICTING PARTNERS