Municipal-Led, Community-Engaged Local Redistricting

- **Dr. Rebecca Theobald**, Univ. of Colorado, Colorado Springs
- **Jerry Vattamala**, Director, Democracy Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
- **Emily Lapel**, Legislative Policy Analyst, City of Denver, CO
- **Spencer Wagner,** Cities Count, National League of Cities

March 25th, 2021

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

Roadmap for today's session

- **Welcome**
  - **Municipal-Led, Community-Engaged Local Redistricting webinar series: Mapping & Data, Community-Engagement, Differential Privacy**
- **Presentations**
  - **Dr. Rebecca Theobald, Assistant Professor Research, University of Colorado Colorado Springs**
  - **Jerry Vattamala, Director, Democracy Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund**
  - **Emily Lapel, Legislative Policy Analyst, City of Denver, CO**
- **Q&A**
- **Closing**

LDI Technical Assistance

2021 Cities Count program key issues (100% nonpartisan):

- Municipal-led, community-engaged redistricting
- Final census data accuracy & undercount remediation
- Federal funding allocations
- Peer-to-peer network for municipal leaders
- Local Democracy Webinar series (census + voting & elections)
  - *Register for 2021 webinar sessions here*
  - *Find our past Census webinars here*

Cities Count

censusrapidresponse@nlc.org

https://www.nlc.org/census

Cities Vote

citiesvote@nlc.org

https://www.nlc.org/initiative/cities-vote/

Local Democracy is a Critical Piece to Racial Equity in Systems

- The Census determines congressional representation
  - Cities need to achieve a full and complete census count so they receive the federal/state representation they need to accurately support their needs through 2030
- Census data is used in the elections' redistricting process in every state AND city
- Census data determines trillions of dollars in federal spending for state & local governments

Electoral Redistricting in the Era of Geospatial Technology

Asking geographic questions to address political issues

National League of Cities
Municipal-Led, Community-Engaged Local Redistricting
March 25, 2021

Rebecca Theobald, Assistant Research Professor
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

- increasingly sophisticated software
- ever more robust data about voters
- maps that lock in a comfortable majority of seats for one side, even when voters are split evenly between the two parties

- election outcomes that don't reflect what voters want
- uncompetitive races that encourage politicians to cater to the extremes
- too often, under-representation of communities of color

ANALYZE POPULATION CHANGE DURING THREE TIME PERIODS USING INTERACTIVE MAPS

REVIEW THE PROCESS FOR APPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING

DISCUSS KEY CRITERIA FOR DRAWING ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

PRACTICE CREATING ELECTORAL DISTRICTS WITH AN EASILY-ACCESSIBLE ONLINE MAPPING APPLICATION

CONSIDER THE AUDIENCES YOU NEED TO INFORM AND EDUCATION – WHICH MATERIALS ARE APPROPRIATE?

GeoCivics

Use interactive maps to support community organizations and geography, civics, and government classes

ENUMERATION

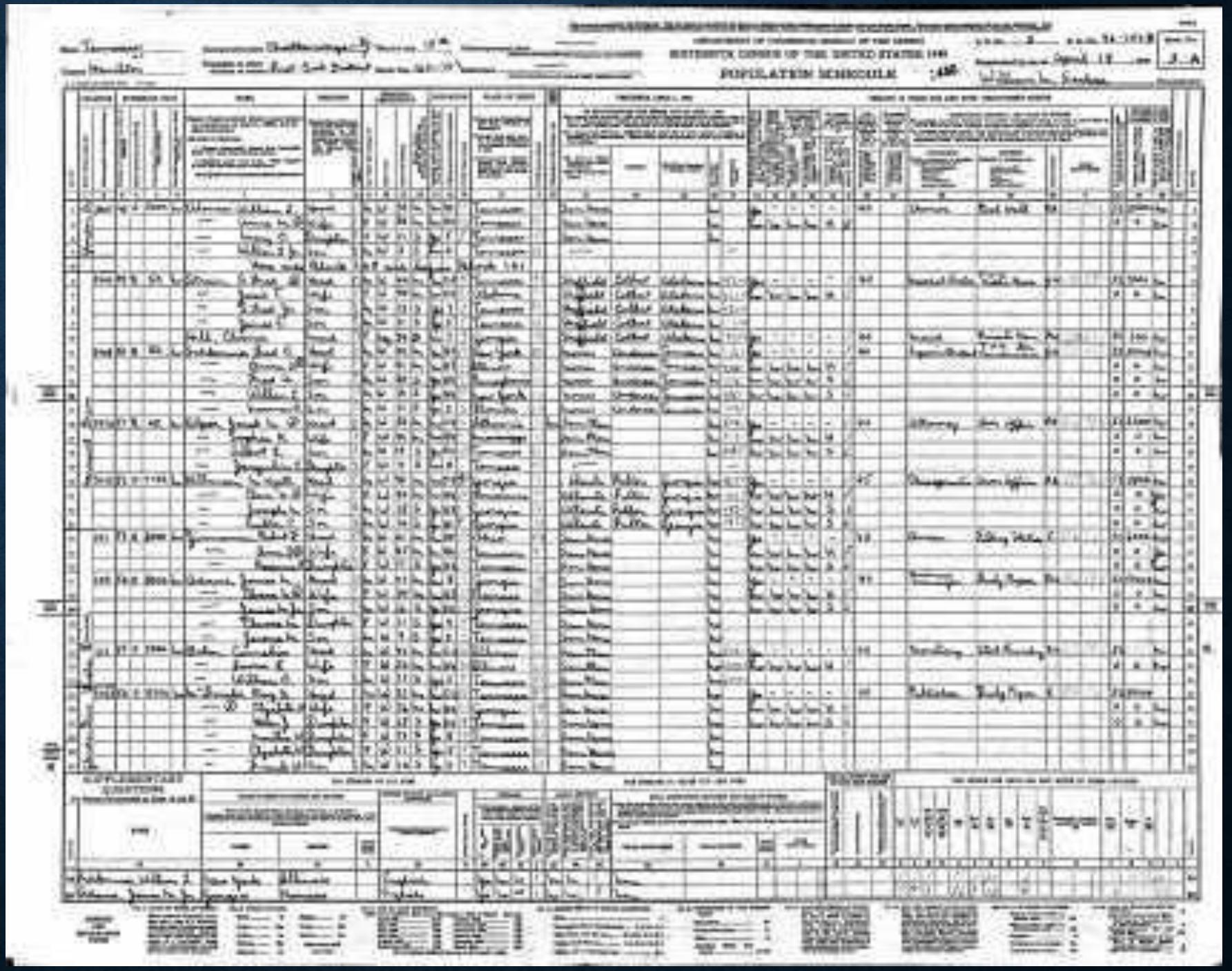
Responsibility of the United States Census Bureau

Counting is completed, now we wait for the report in April 2021 and the redistricting information in September 2021

Multiple controversies surrounding the 2020 Census

- Who should be counted
- COVID-19 interruptions
- Questions about accuracy

For updates, choose a reliable news source such as National Public Radio (https://www.npr.org/tags/534942946/2020-census).



ON THE MOVE

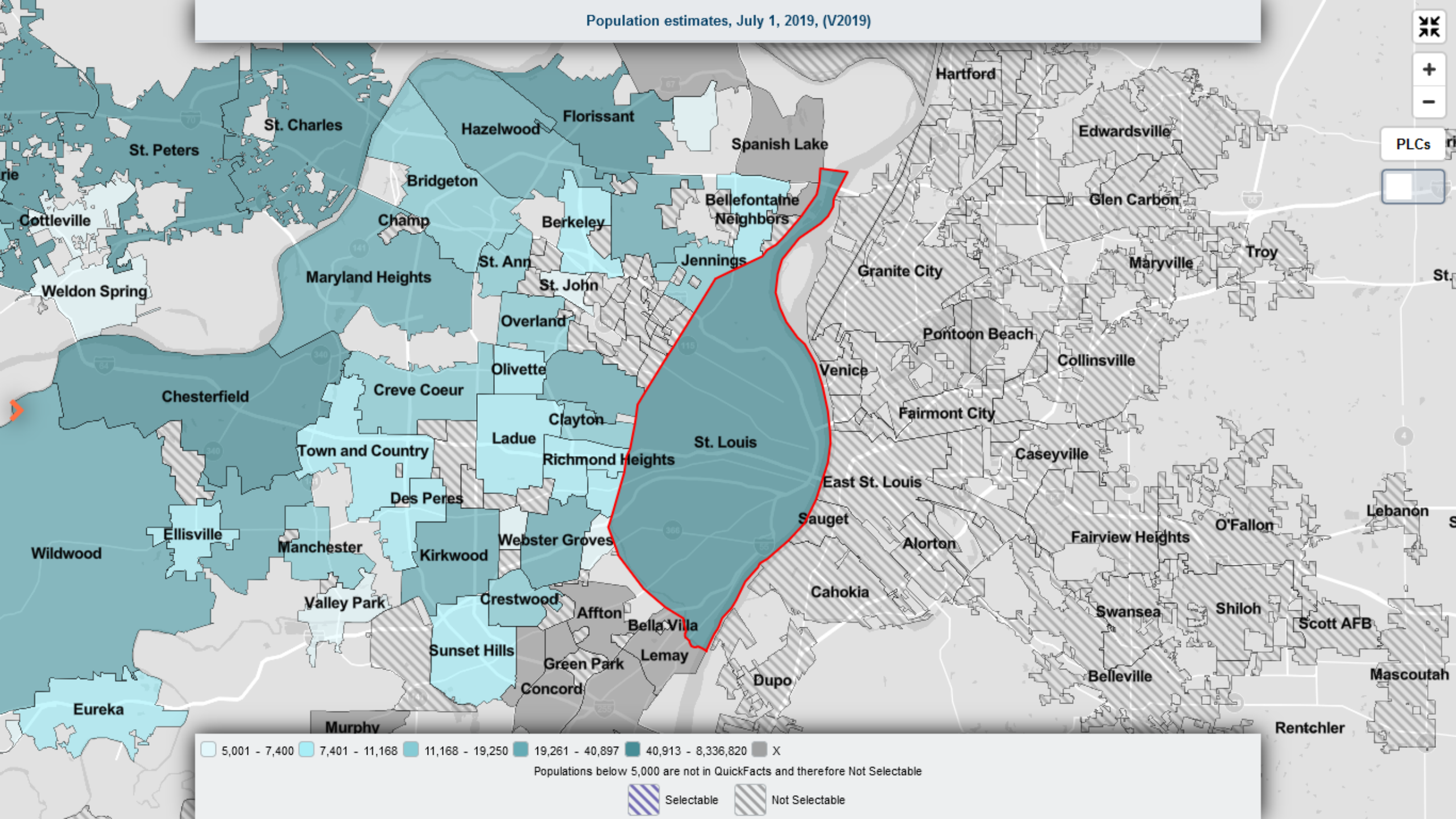
Where do most people live in your state?

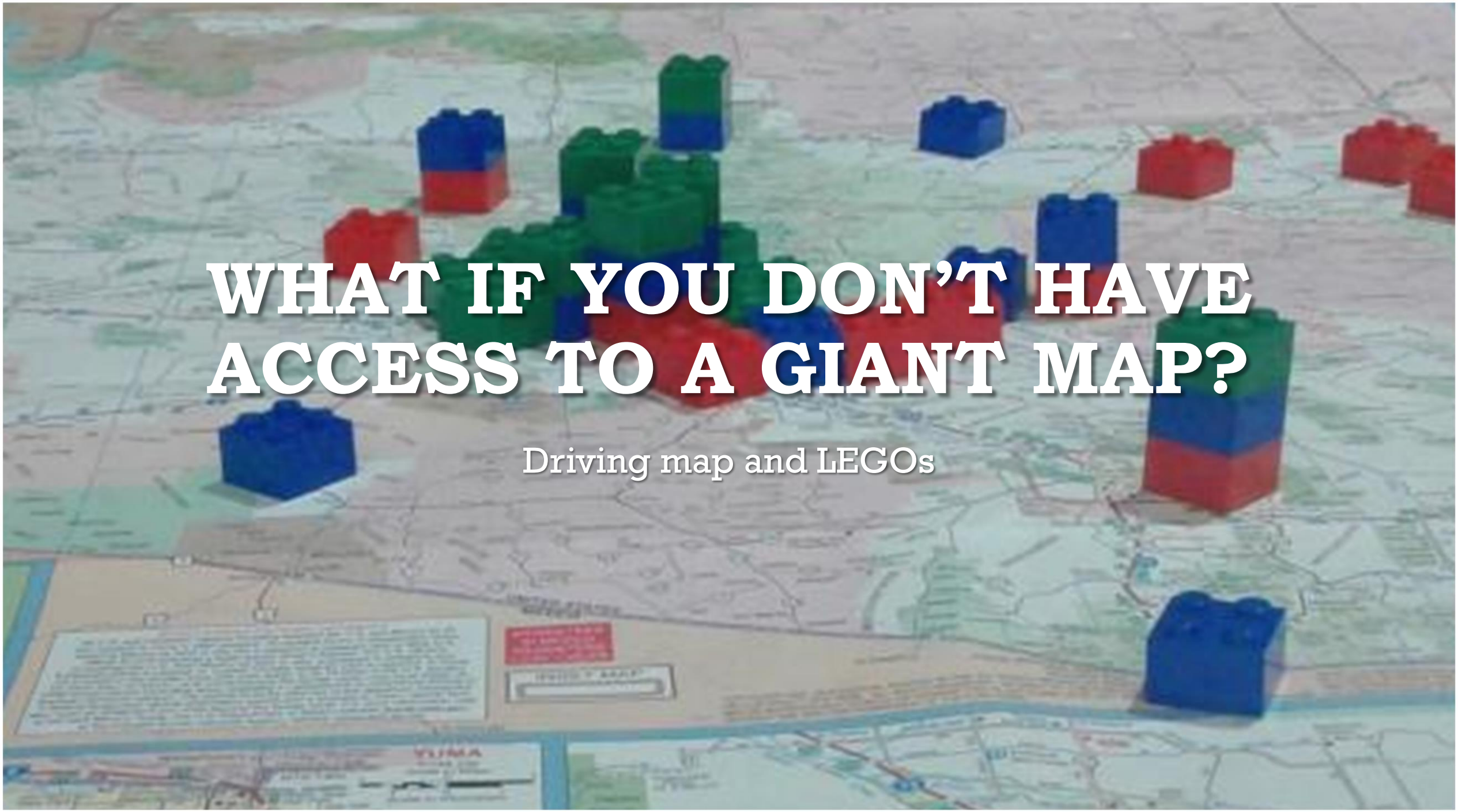
Why?

Did they always live in those places?

If not, what prompted people to move from or to those regions?

How does population migration inform redistricting in your city?

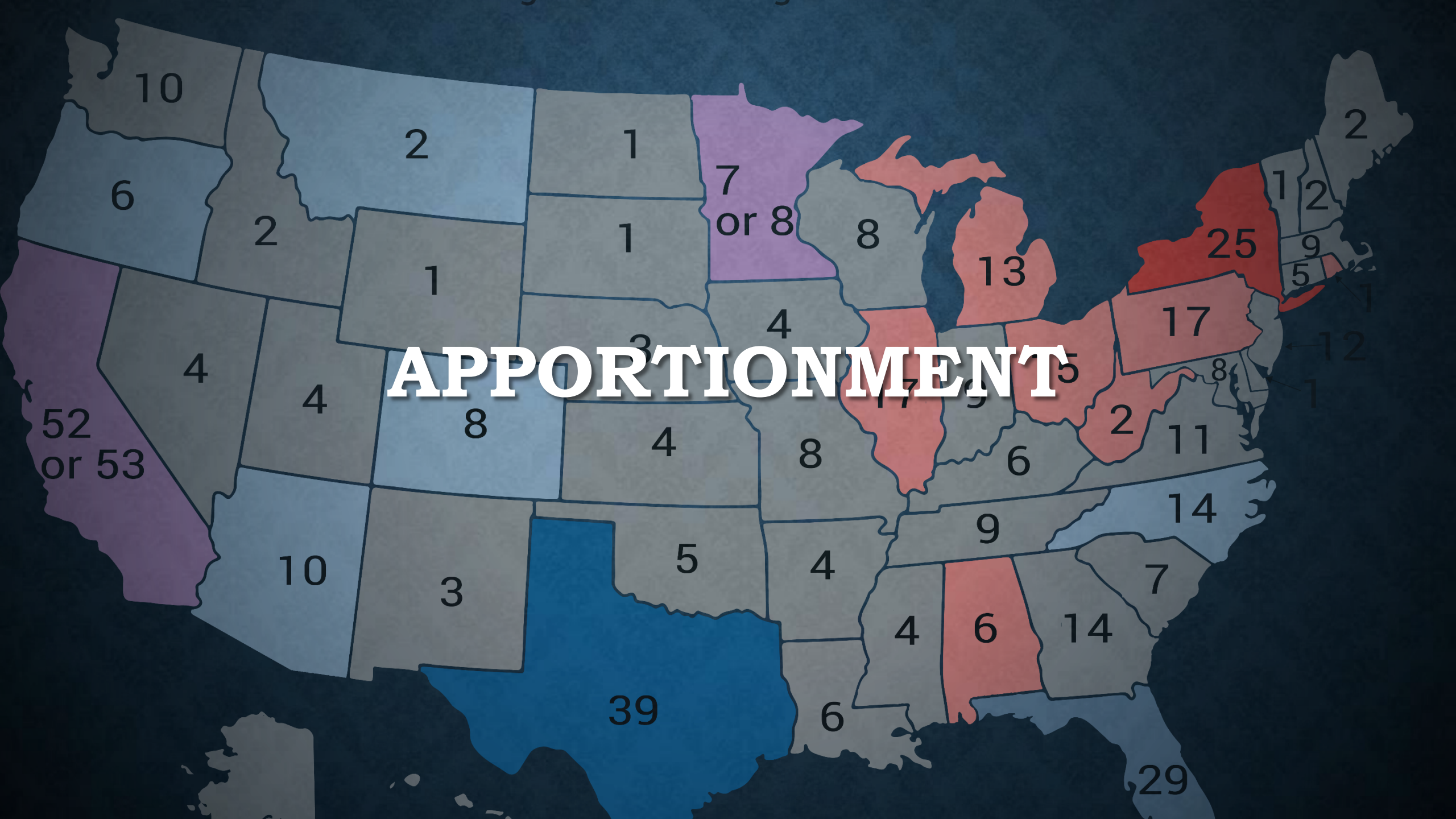

Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)
PLCs
St. Charles
St. Peters
Cottleville
Weldon Spring
Hazelwood
Florissant
Spanish Lake
Bridgeton
Champ
Berkeley
Bellefontaine Neighbors
Jennings
St. Ann
St. John
Maryland Heights
Overland
Olivette
Creve Coeur
Chesterfield
Clayton
Ladue
Town and Country
Richmond Heights
St. Louis
Des Peres
Ellisville
Wildwood
Manchester
Kirkwood
Webster Groves
Valley Park
Crestwood
Affton
Bella Villa
Sunset Hills
Green Park
Lemay
Concord
Eureka
Murphy
Hartford
Edwardsville
Glen Carbon
Granite City
Maryville
Troy
Pontoon Beach
Collinsville
Venice
Fairmont City
Caseyville
East St. Louis
Sauget
Alorton
Cahokia
Fairview Heights
O'Fallon
Lebanon
Swansea
Shiloh
Scott AFB
Belleville
Mascoutah
Dupo
Rentchler
5,001 - 7,400
7,401 - 11,168
11,168 - 19,250
19,261 - 40,897
40,913 - 8,336,820
X
Populations below 5,000 are not in QuickFacts and therefore Not Selectable
Selectable
Not Selectable

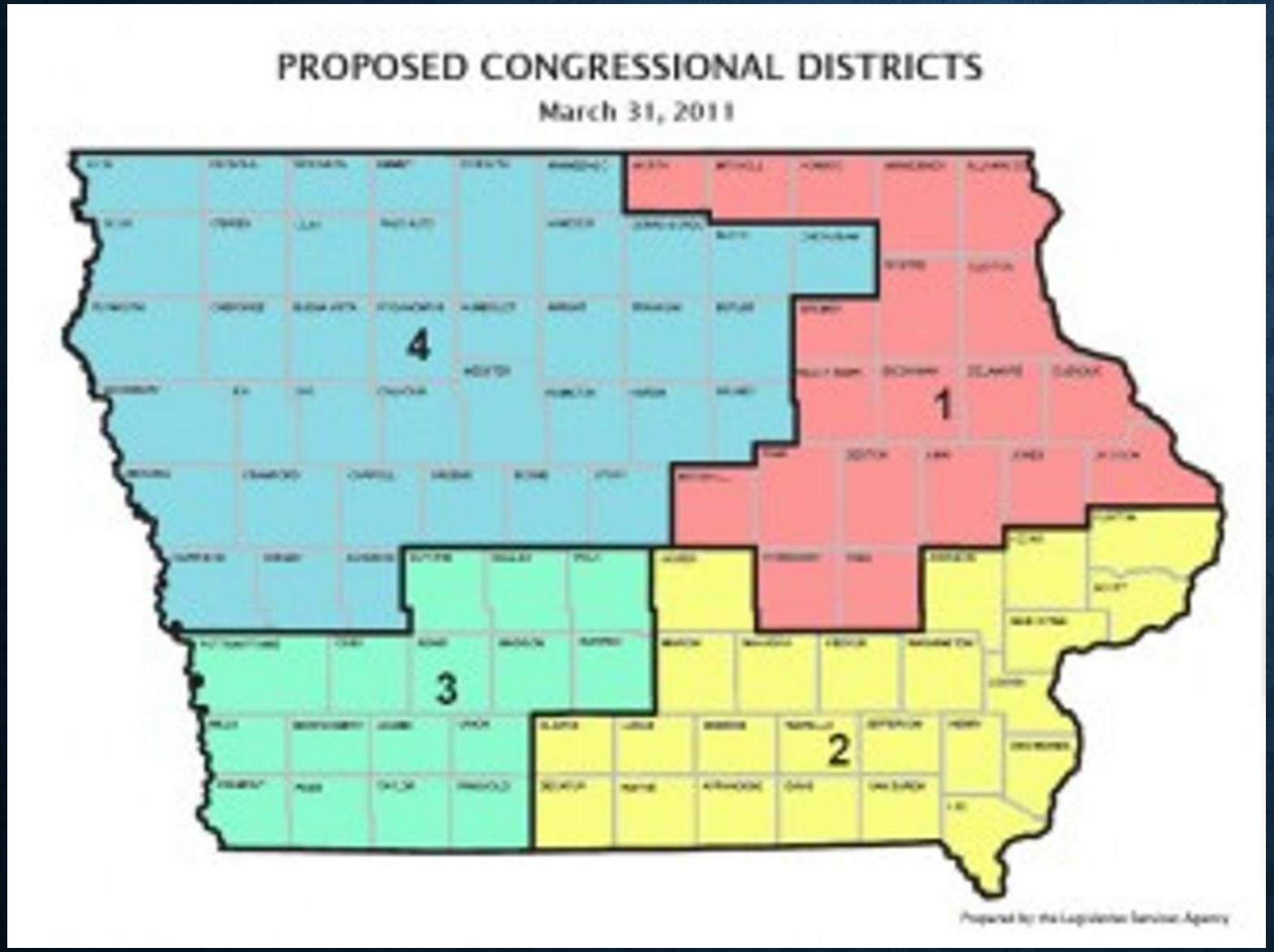


WHAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A GIANT MAP?

Driving map and LEGOs

APPORTIONMENT





Who decides how and where the lines are drawn?

REDISTRICTING

- Redrawing of the boundaries of the districts within each state based on census results
- Follows the process of reapportionment
- States gaining or losing significant population in comparison to other states will have more changes than those that are stable
- District boundaries may also change due to population migration within a state
- Congressional district lines define other political and economic regions, such as for state university regents and state school board members

- https://bloximages.chicago2.vip.townnews.com/qctimes.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/0/f4/0f4d1fbe-5b9c-11e0-a95f-001cc4c002e0/4d948b9f112e5.preview-300.jpg?crop=300%2C225%2C0%2C3&resize=1200%2C900&order=crop%2Cresize

https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/flashes-of-insight-exercise

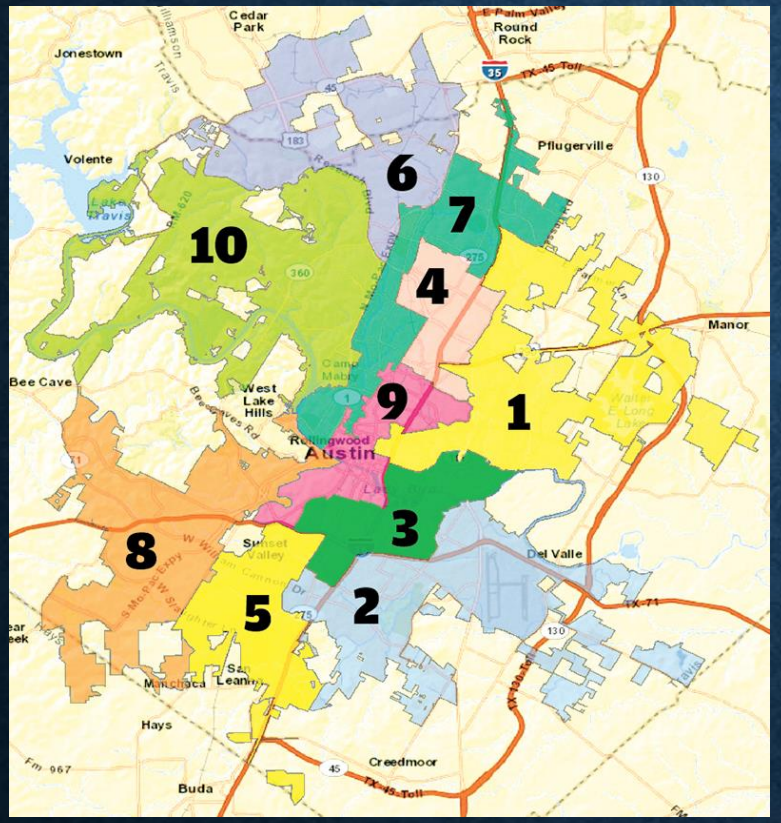
VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

- offered a way to get around barriers at the state and local levels preventing exercising 15th Amendment right to vote
- coverage formula designed to encompass jurisdictions that were the most discriminatory and hold them liable to special provisions
- pre-clearance requirement meant that jurisdictions falling under coverage areas – with a long history of racial discrimination - had to get federal approval to any changes they attempted to make in their election laws – no longer applicable due to *Shelby v. Holder* in 2013
- Supreme Court currently considering constitutionality of Section 2 which prevents states from enacting laws which disproportionally result in the denial of the right to vote for minorities *(Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee)*

IS CREATING MAJORITY-MINORITY DISTRICTS TO COMPLY WITH THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT INHERENTLY AT ODDS WITH THE GOAL OF PARTISAN FAIRNESS?

- Erroneous to imagine creation of majority-minority districts resulted in biased maps
- Partisan bias: manipulation of district lines to give the party drawing the map a share of seats grossly at odds with statewide election results
- Analysis: efficiency gap / seats-to-votes curve / mean-median district vote share
- Electoral volatility: responding to changes in voter preferences in contrast to durable partisan bias
- Decreasing racial gerrymandering can lead to improved partisan fairness levels

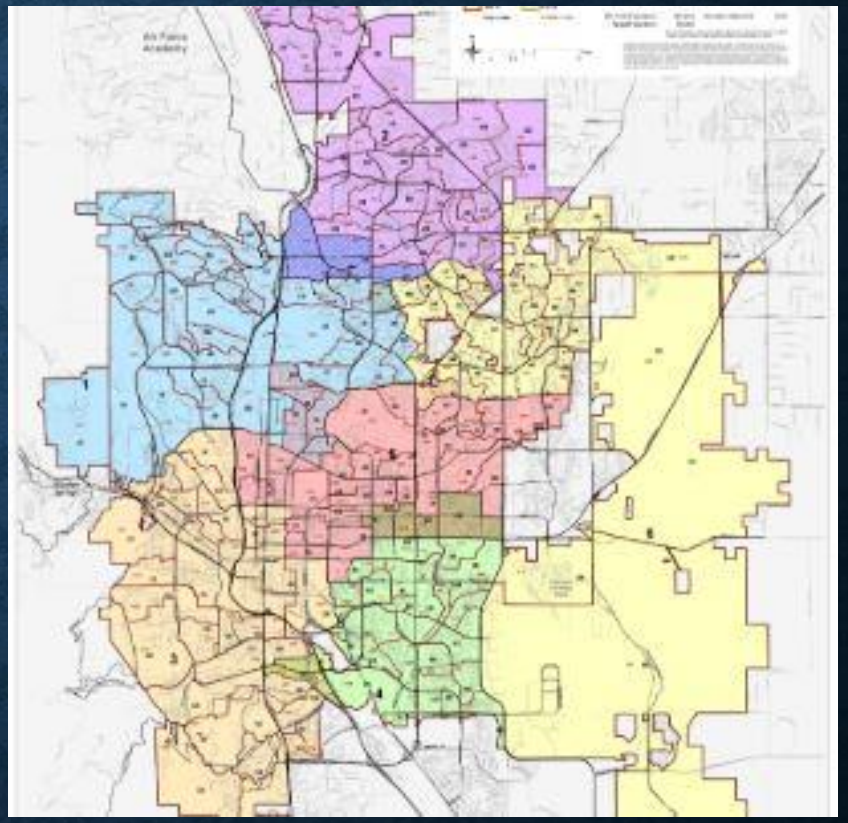
IMPORTANCE OF FAIR REPRESENTATION AND TRANSPARENCY



Austin, Texas

Population 950,807 (2019)

271.8 square miles



Colorado Springs, Colorado

Population 464,871 (2019)

195.4 square miles

NESTING DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA

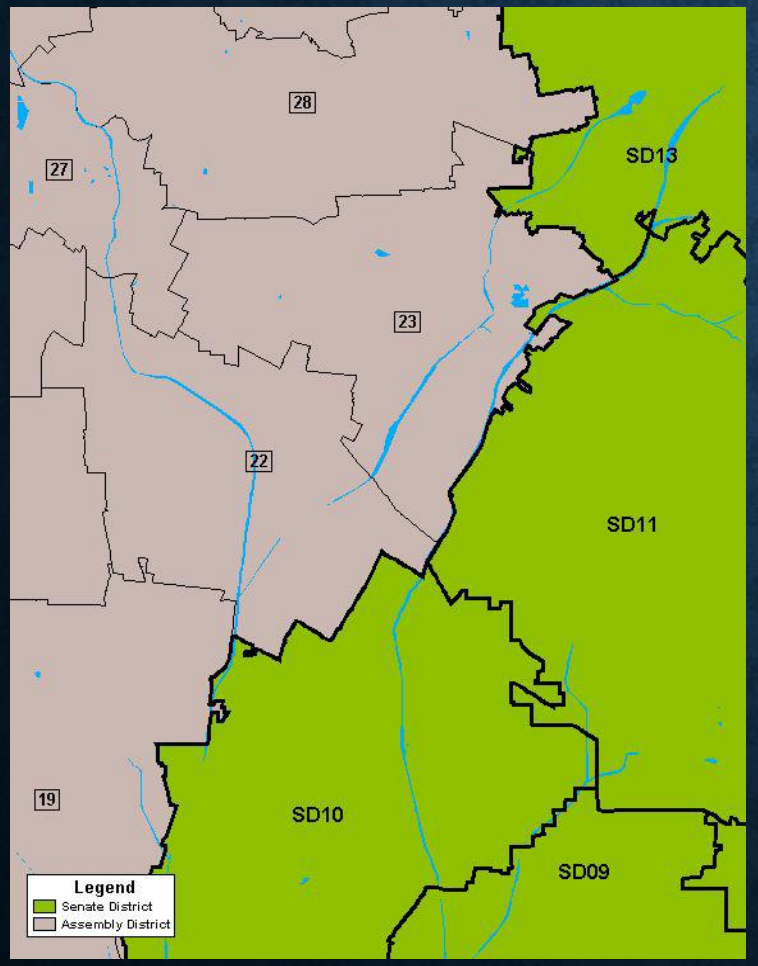


Figure 1a

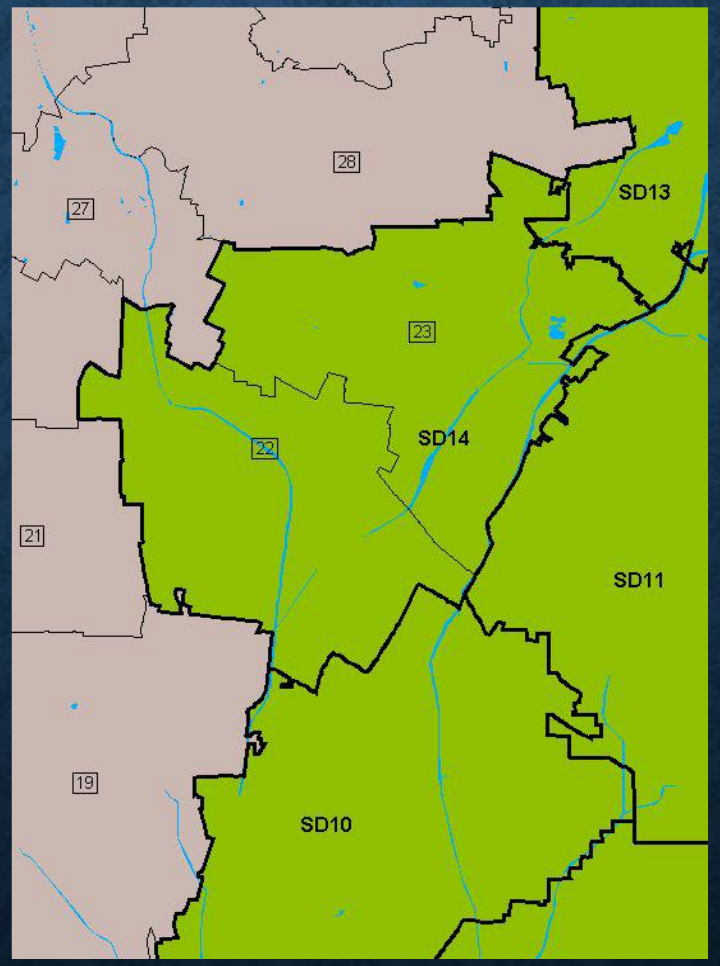


Figure 1b

The maps in figures 1a and 1b illustrate nesting by the method of aggregating two Assembly Districts into Senate seats. Specifically, these maps illustrate the aggregation of the (hypothetical) 22nd and 23rd Assembly Districts in figure 1a into the 14th Senate district in figure 1b.

The Implications of Nesting in California Redistricting, 2007

HOW POWERFUL ARE MAPMAKERS?

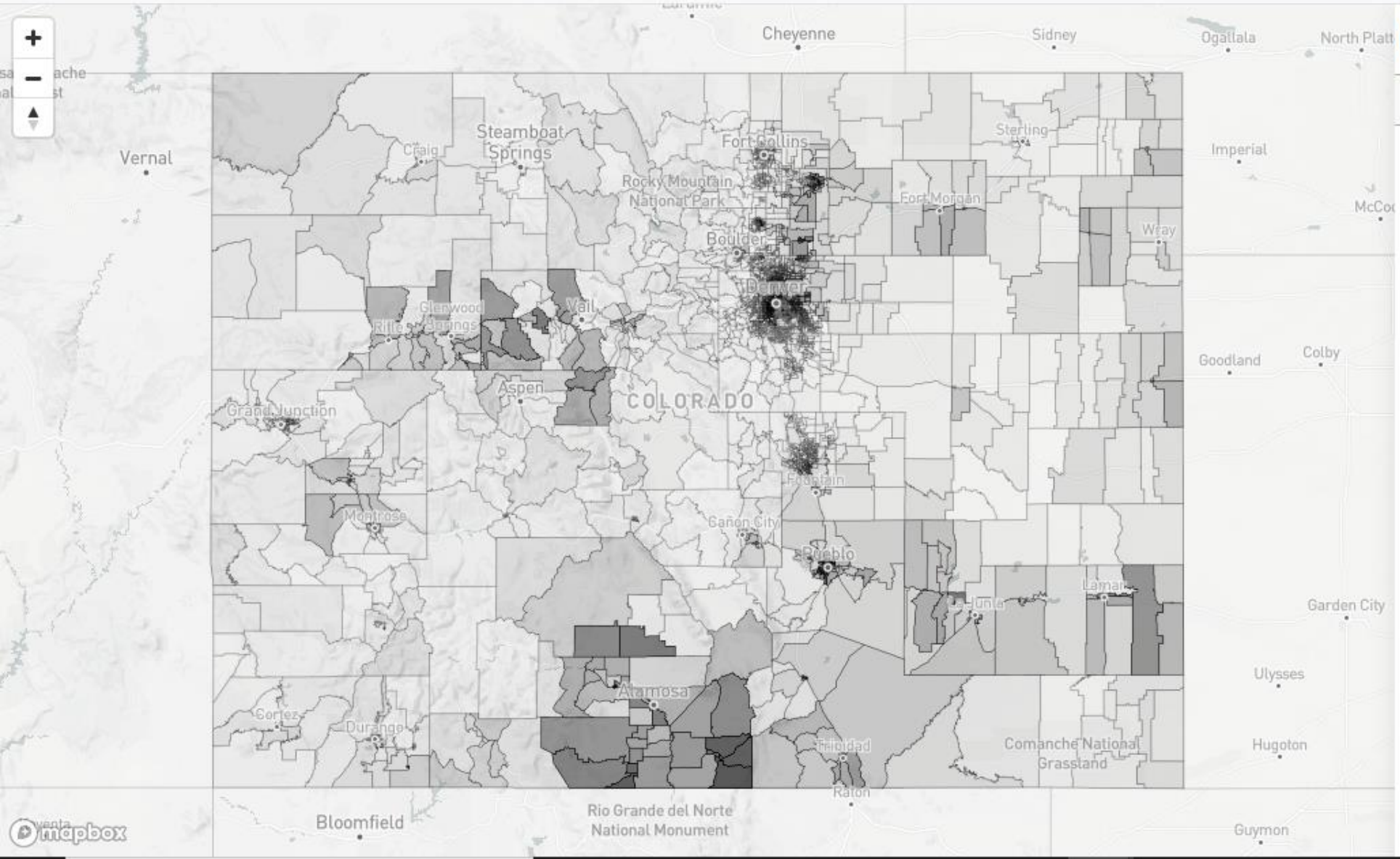
- Files of racial makeup, voting patterns, and residences
- Knowledge of voter identification laws and information about who might not have valid IDs
- Geocoded information leads to crafting of districts with specific characteristics

https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-secret-files-of-the-master-of-modern-republican-gerrymandering

Districtr

https://districtr.org/edit

Getting Started | Colorado History | Colorado | GeoCivics



Share

Population | **Data Layers** | Evaluation

Districts

- [x] Show districts
- [ ] Show district numbers
- [ ] Show County Boundaries
- [ ] Show Tribes

Demographics

Race

- [x] **Show population**

VARIABLE: Hispanic population

DISPLAY AS shaded regions

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- [ ] **Show voting age population (VAP)**

VARIABLE: Voting age population

Type here to search

10:52 PM
11/1/2020

BE PREPARED FOR REDISTRICTING

- Acknowledge your power as someone who is familiar with your community to help engage the public, nonprofit leaders, and educators.
- Examine how your state and municipality handle redistricting.
- Consider whether the federal, state, or local districts where you live or work are gerrymandered.
- Describe a community of interest using the *representable.org* tool.
- Try drawing local electoral districts.
- Devise a plan of action to engage in the redistricting process.

Find additional resources on the GeoCivics website.
geocivics.uccs.edu/
Contact us with any inquiries.
Rebecca Theobald, geocivics50@gmail.com
Explore the TEDxMashpeeED talk on redistricting.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mx9uDXsesg8
Explore the GeoCivics overview video.
https://tinyurl.com/URedist

QUESTIONS?

Mapping Resources – *Mapping & Data webinar coming soon!*

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Online Mapping Tools

- **Representable.org** – free, community-friendly https://representable.org/
- **DistrictR.org** – free, community-friendly https://districtr.org/
- **Dave's Redistricting** – free https://davesredistricting.org/maps#home
- **Maptitude** – paid, allows for multiple languages https://www.caliper.com/maptovu.htm
- **Esri** – paid https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/esri-redistricting/overview

- **Redistricting Data Hub** (fuller list of mapping tools) https://redistrictingdatahub.org/about/partners/mapping-tools/

Redistricting 101 Websites

- **RedistrictingOnline.org** https://redistrictingonline.org/redistrictingbasics/
- **NCSL Redistricting Page** https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting/national-redistricting-seminar-agend-sept-2010.aspx
- **All About Redistricting** https://redistricting.lls.edu/
- **Redistricting and You** https://www.redistrictingandyou.org/#map=3.5/38.5/-103
- **Princeton Gerrymandering Project** https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/ and their **Redistricting Timeline Map** https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/redistricting-timeline-alert-map/

ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND
99 HUDSON STREET, 12th FL • NEW YORK, NY 10013 • TEL 212.966.5932
www.aaldef.org • info@aaldef.org

ASIAN AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

LATFOR Public Hearing

September 7, 2011

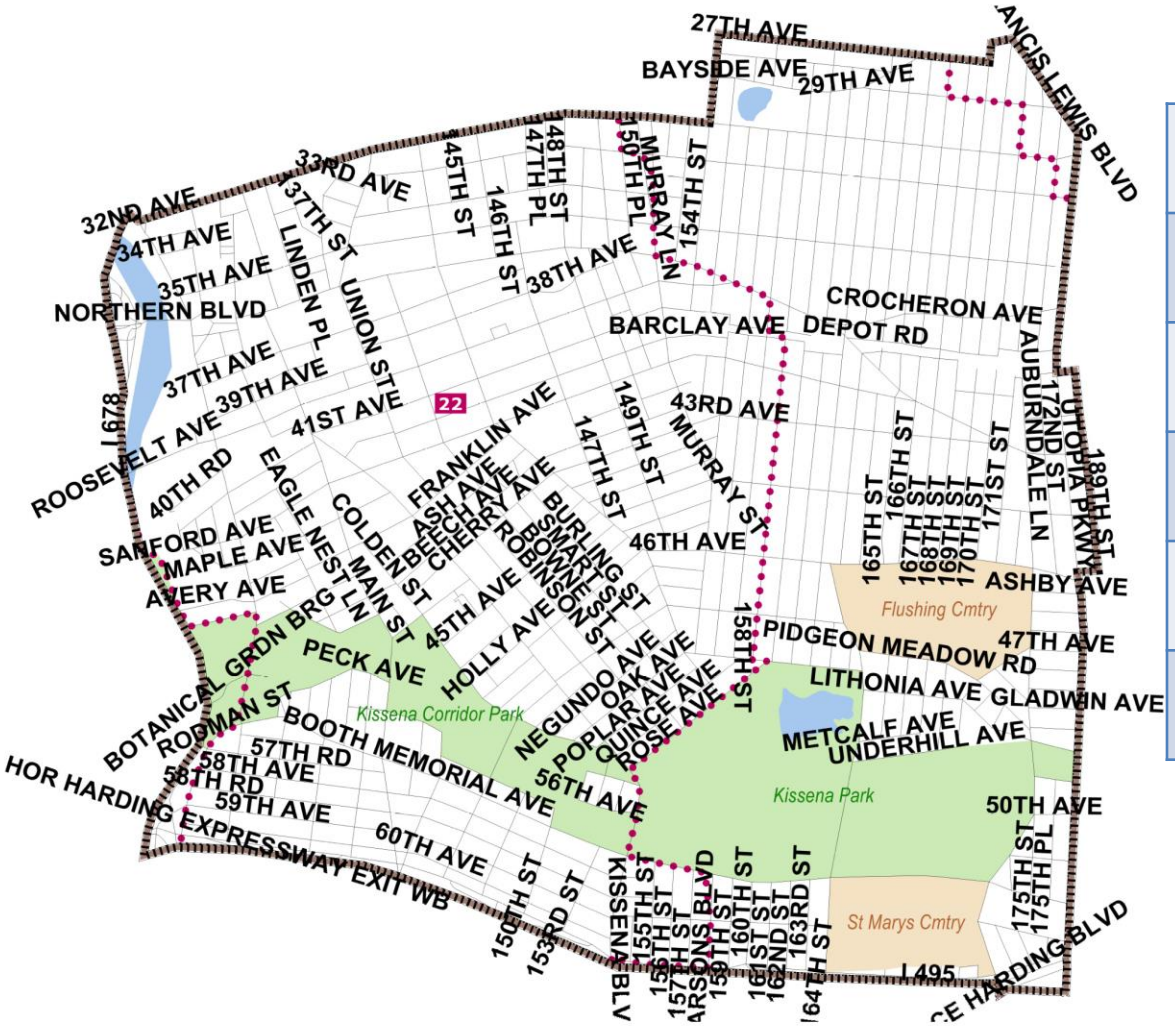
Queens, New York

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

QUEENS

Asian American
Legal Defense
and Education Fund

Flushing



POPULATION	152,078
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+22,891 (+17.7%)
% HISPANIC	16.3%
% NH WHITE	14.8%
% NH BLACK	2.8%
% NH ASIAN	63.8%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

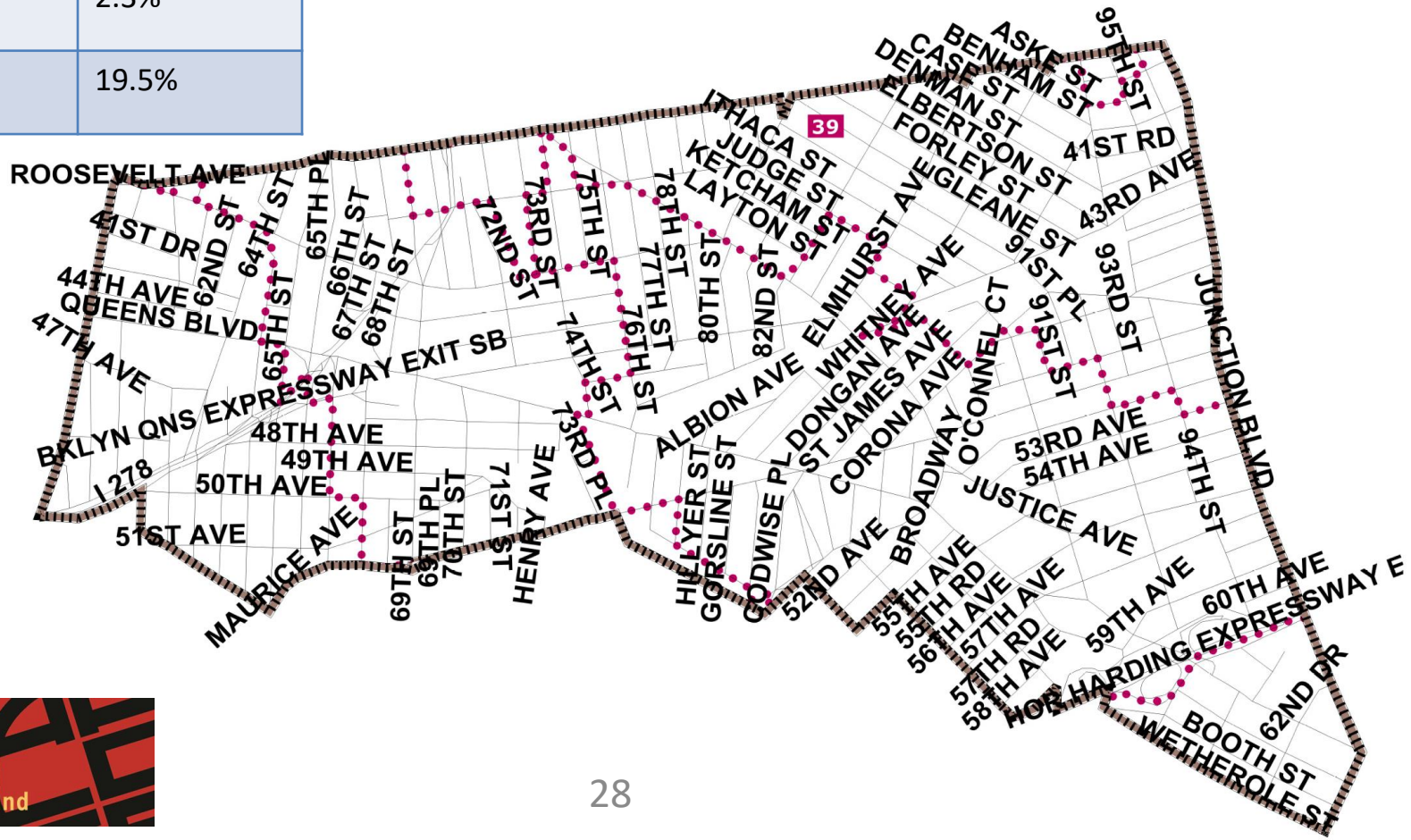
Bayside

POPULATION	**43,588**
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-85,599 (-66.3%)
% HISPANIC	9.7%
% NH WHITE	39.0%
% NH BLACK	2.8%
% NH ASIAN	46.7%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

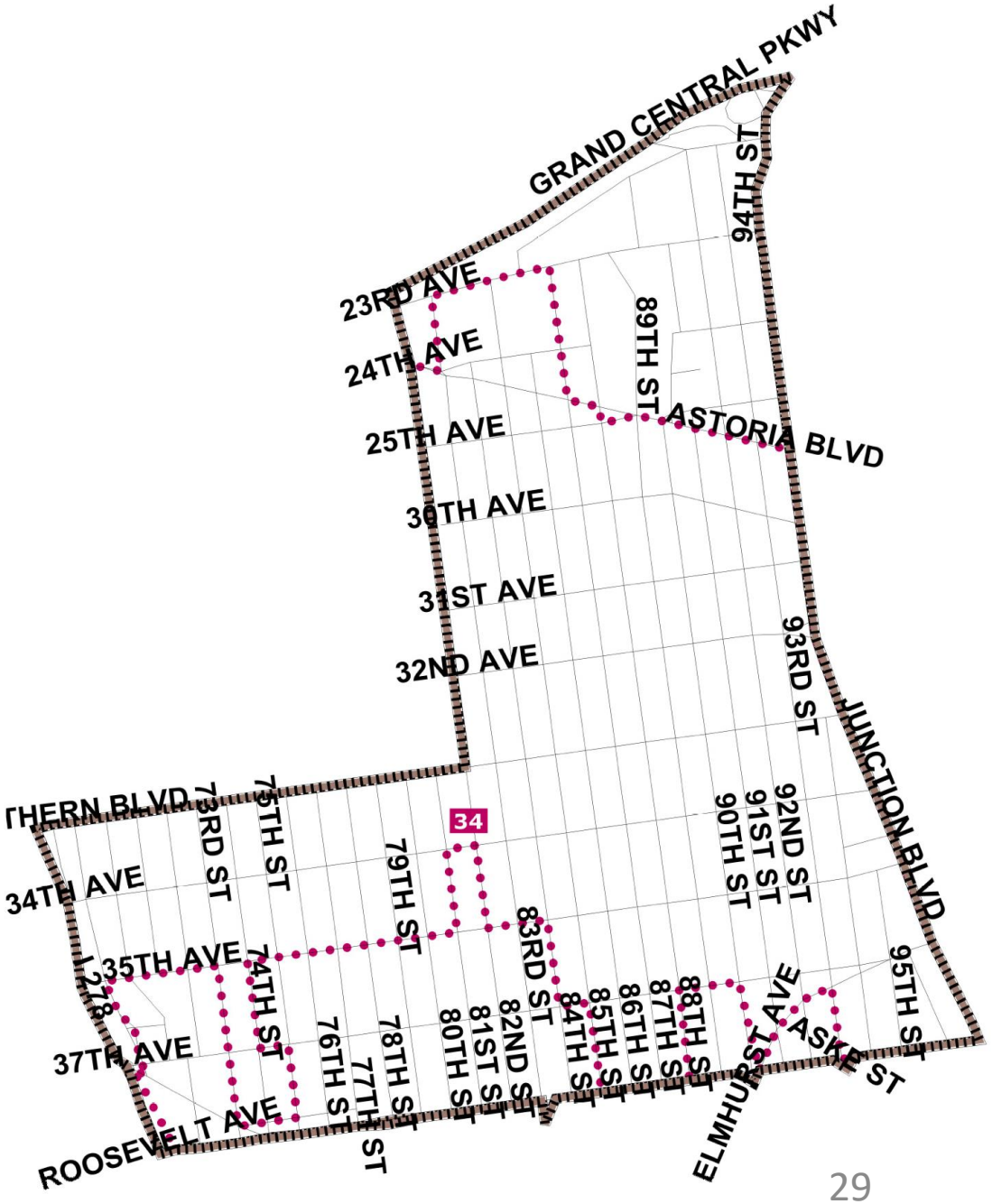
Elmhurst

POPULATION	89,132
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-40,055 (-31.0%)
% HISPANIC	59.5%
% NH WHITE	16.6%
% NH BLACK	2.3%
% NH ASIAN	19.5%



Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

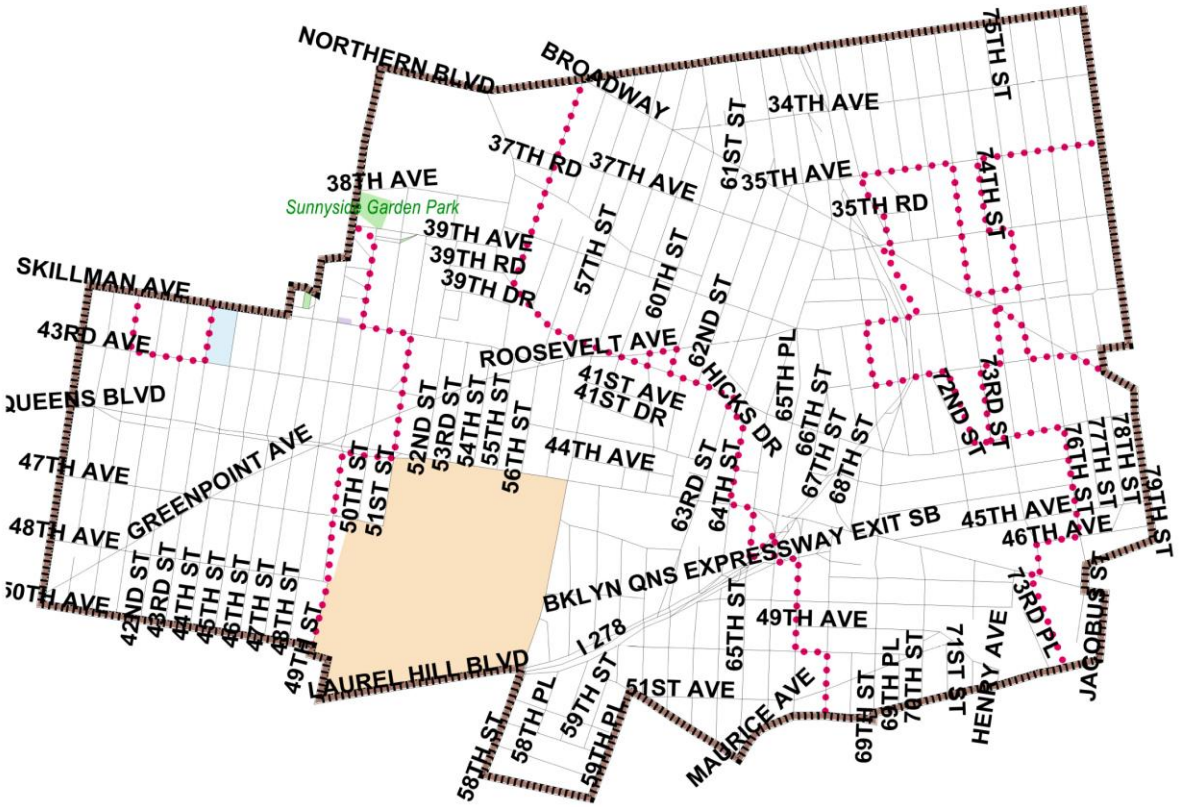
Jackson Heights



POPULATION	127,654
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-1,533 (-1.2%)
% HISPANIC	40.9%
% NH WHITE	10.6%
% NH BLACK	1.3%
% NH ASIAN	44.8%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

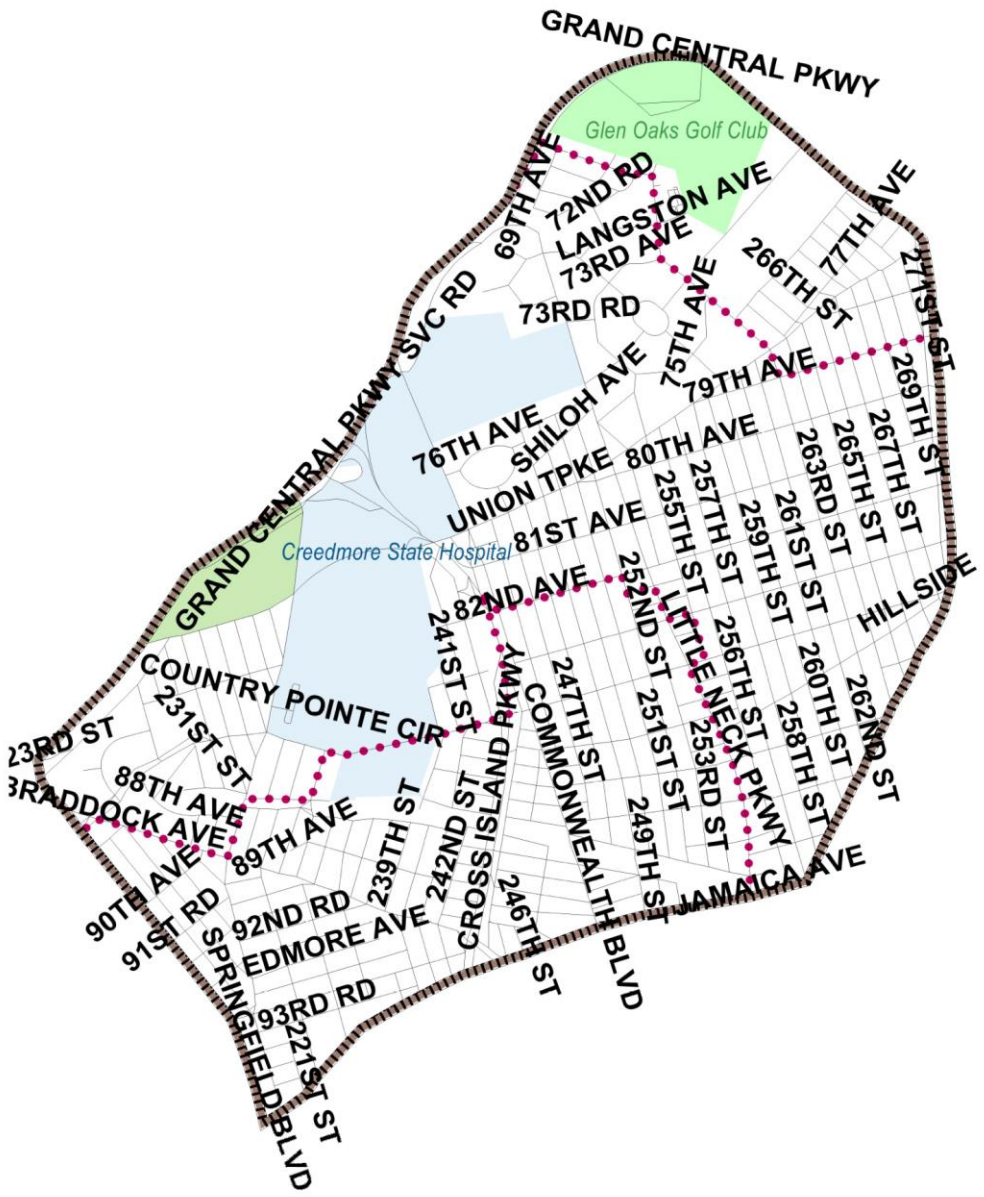
Woodside



POPULATION	124,024
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-5,163 (-4.0%)
% HISPANIC	34.8%
% NH WHITE	23.6%
% NH BLACK	1.3%
% NH ASIAN	37.7%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

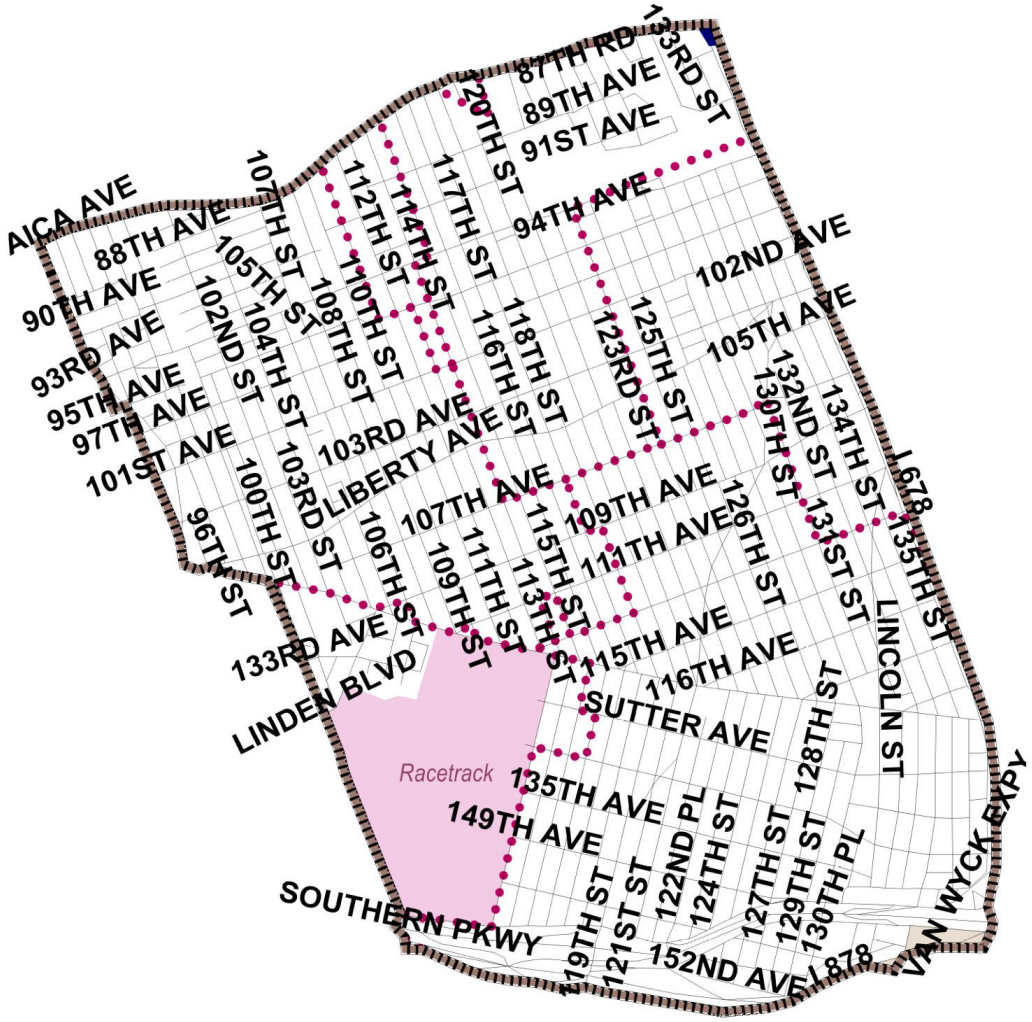
Floral Park-Queens Village-Bellerose-Glen Oaks



POPULATION	54,324
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-74,863 (-57.9%)
% HISPANIC	14.9%
% NH WHITE	36.9%
% NH BLACK	7.0%
% NH ASIAN	35.5%

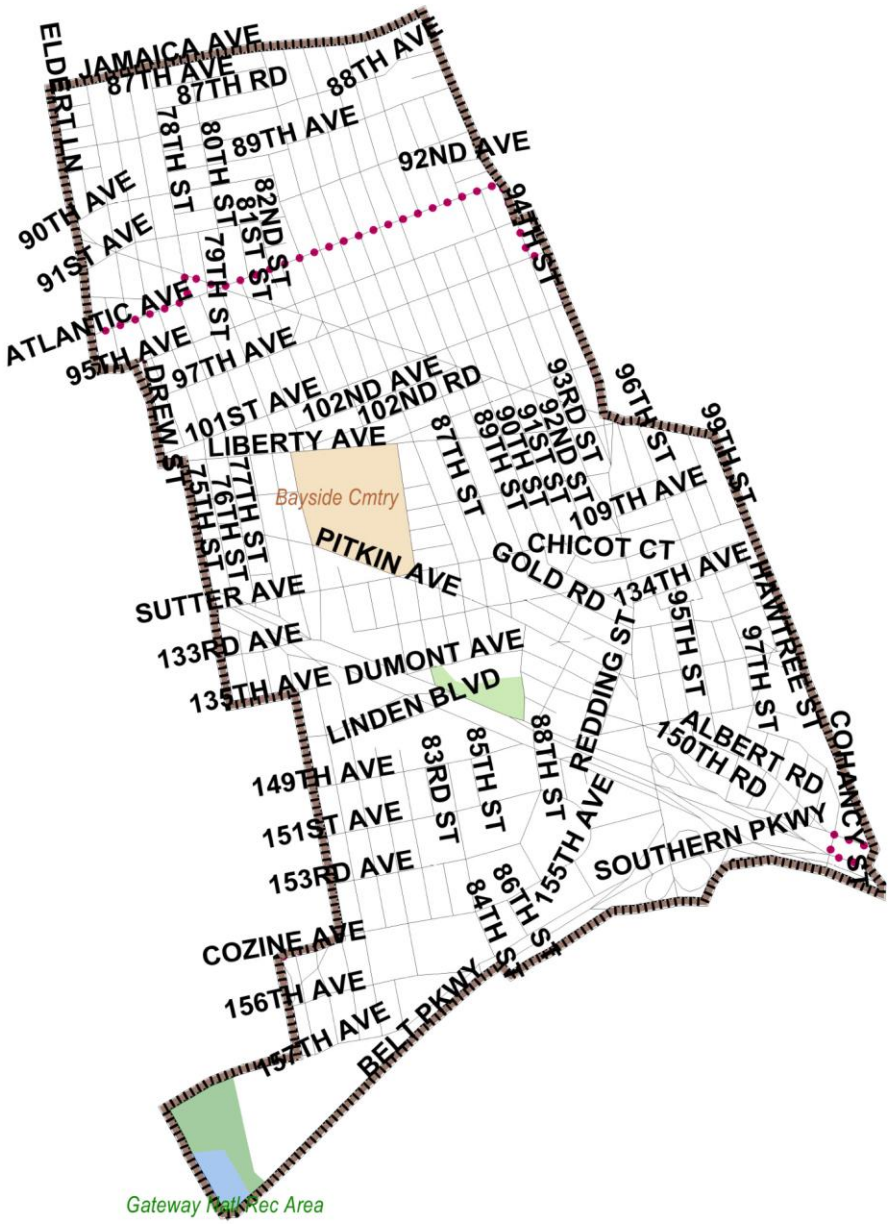
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Richmond Hill-South Ozone Park



POPULATION	133,260
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+4,073 (+3.2%)
% HISPANIC	27.6%
% NH WHITE	7.9%
% NH BLACK	19.4%
% NH ASIAN	25.5%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund



Ozone Park

POPULATION	**68,070**
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-61,117 (-47.3%)
% HISPANIC	45.1%
% NH WHITE	26.9%
% NH BLACK	5.9%
% NH ASIAN	16.3%

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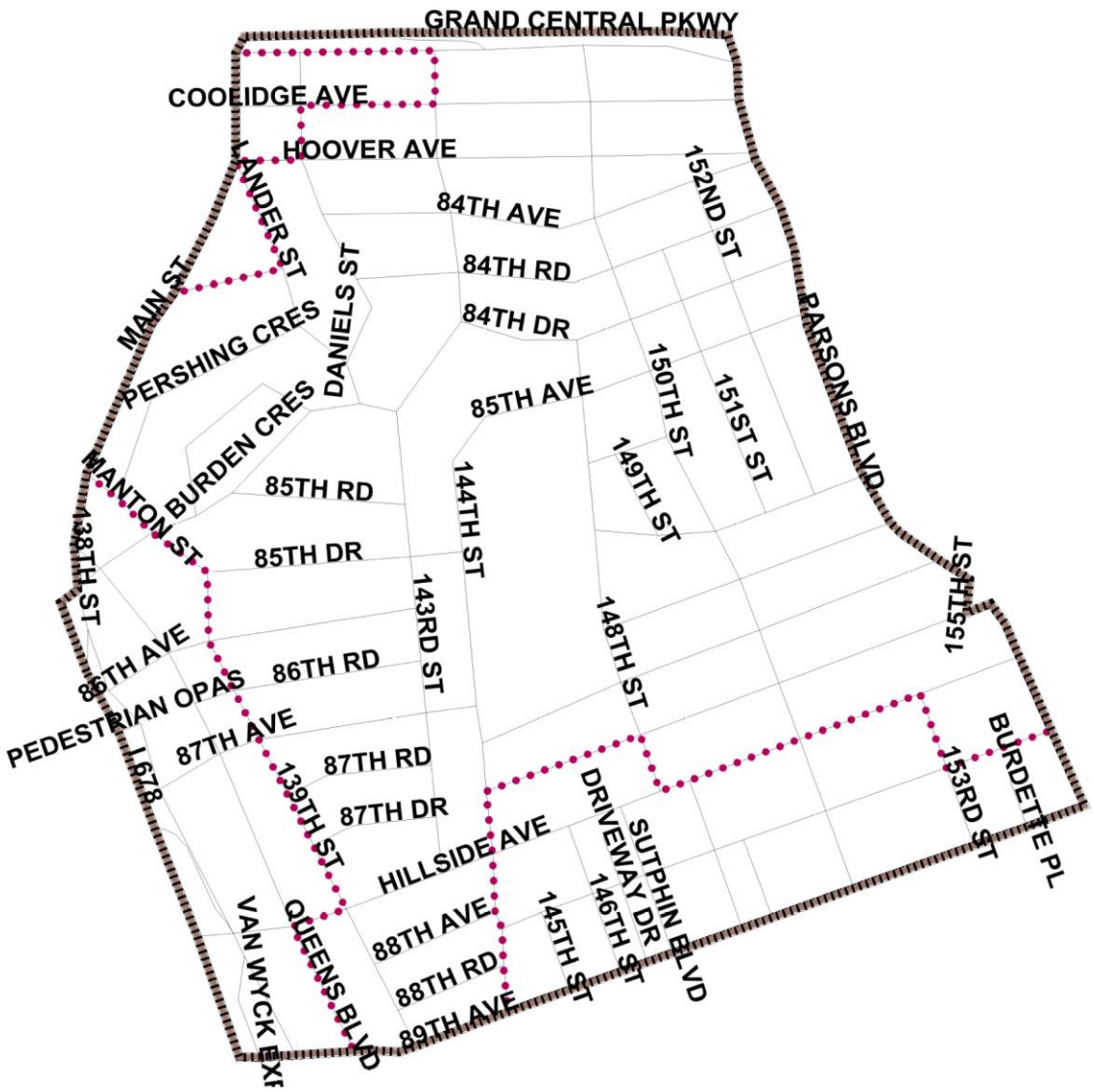
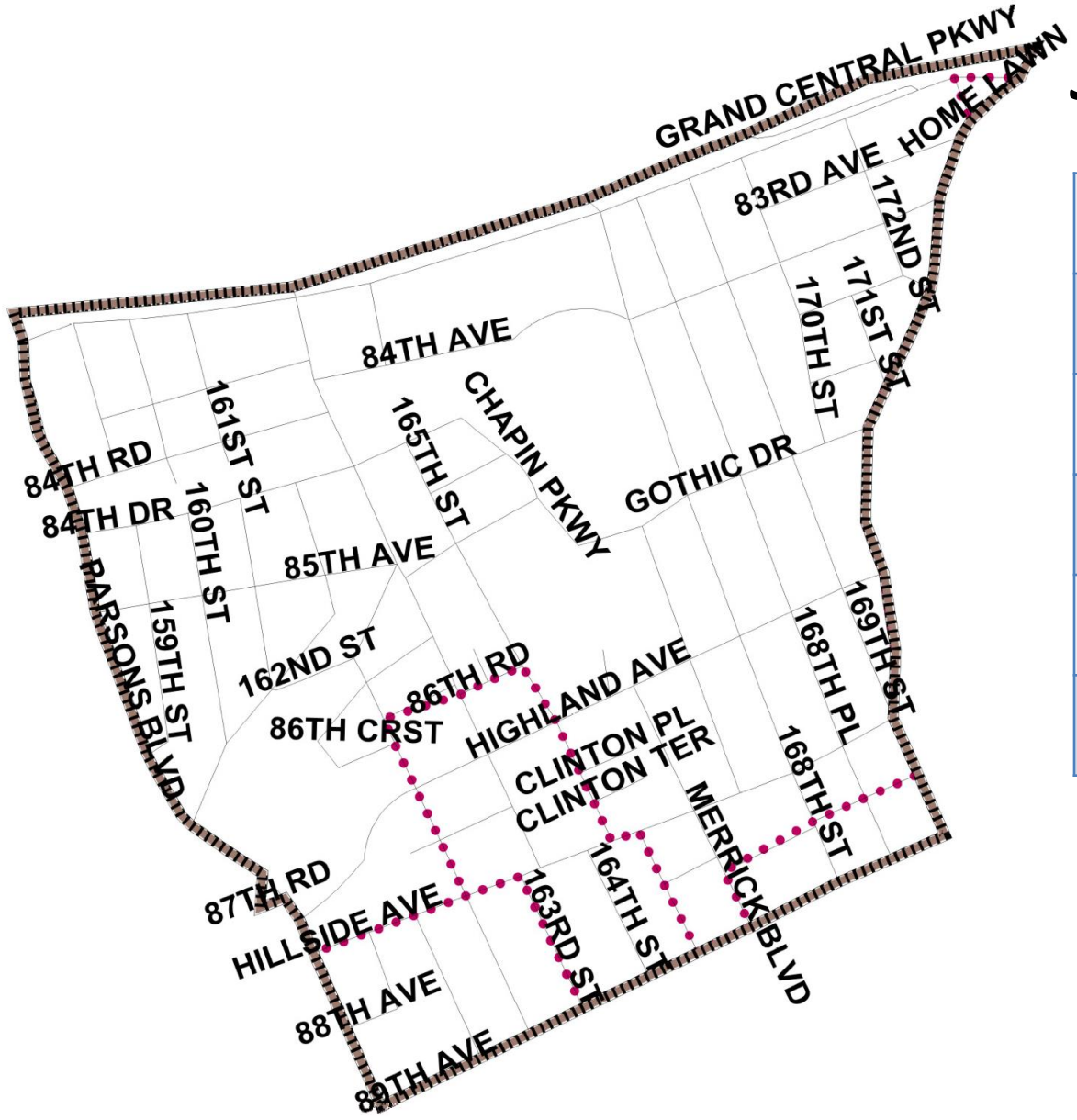
Briarwood



POPULATION	26,239
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-102,948 (-79.7%)
% HISPANIC	32.8%
% NH WHITE	18.8%
% NH BLACK	11.2%
% NH ASIAN	30.3%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Jamaica Hills



POPULATION	19,379
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-109,808 (-85.0%)
% HISPANIC	21.2%
% NH WHITE	8.4%
% NH BLACK	17.4%
% NH ASIAN	46.0%

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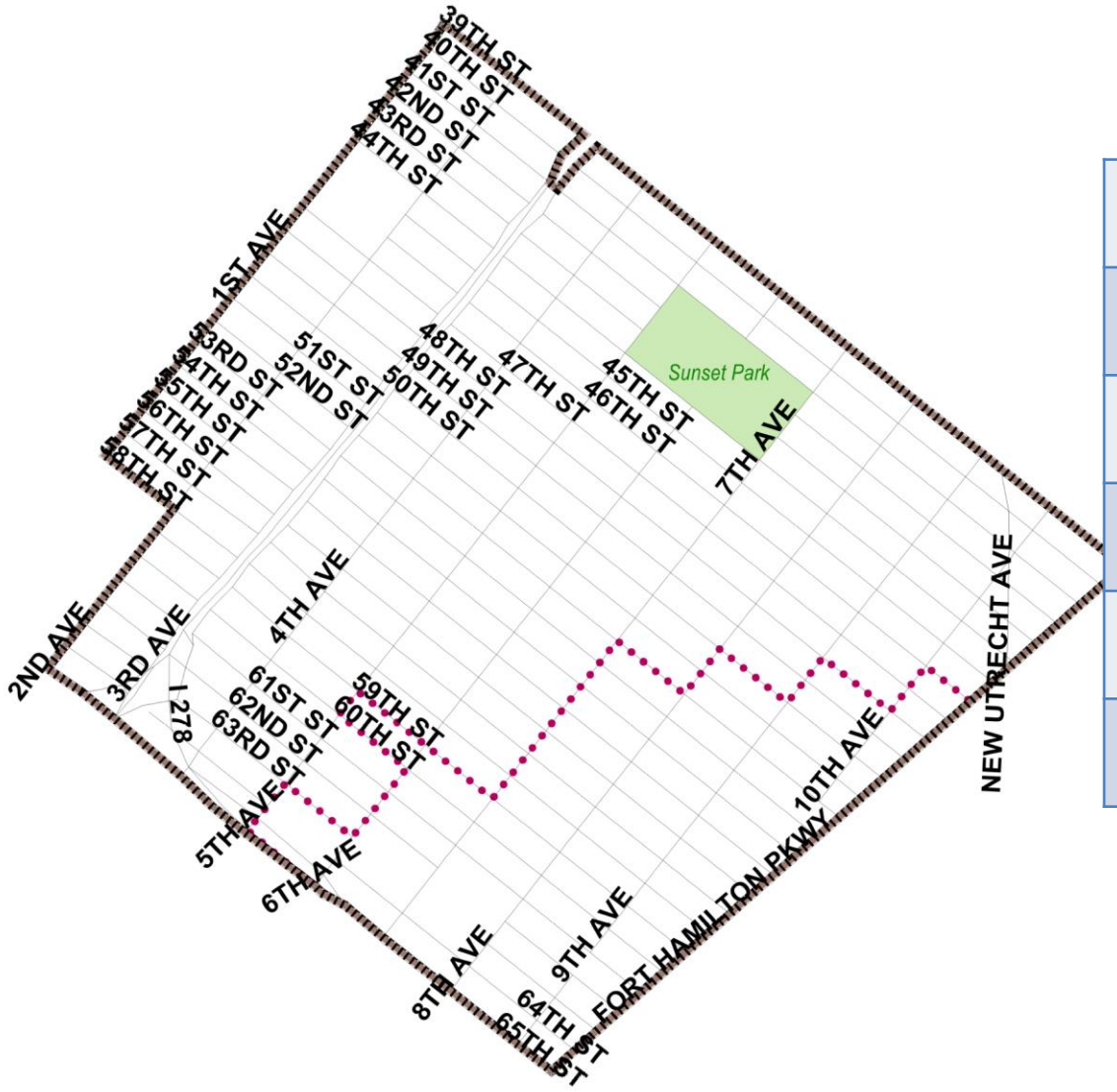
BROOKLYN

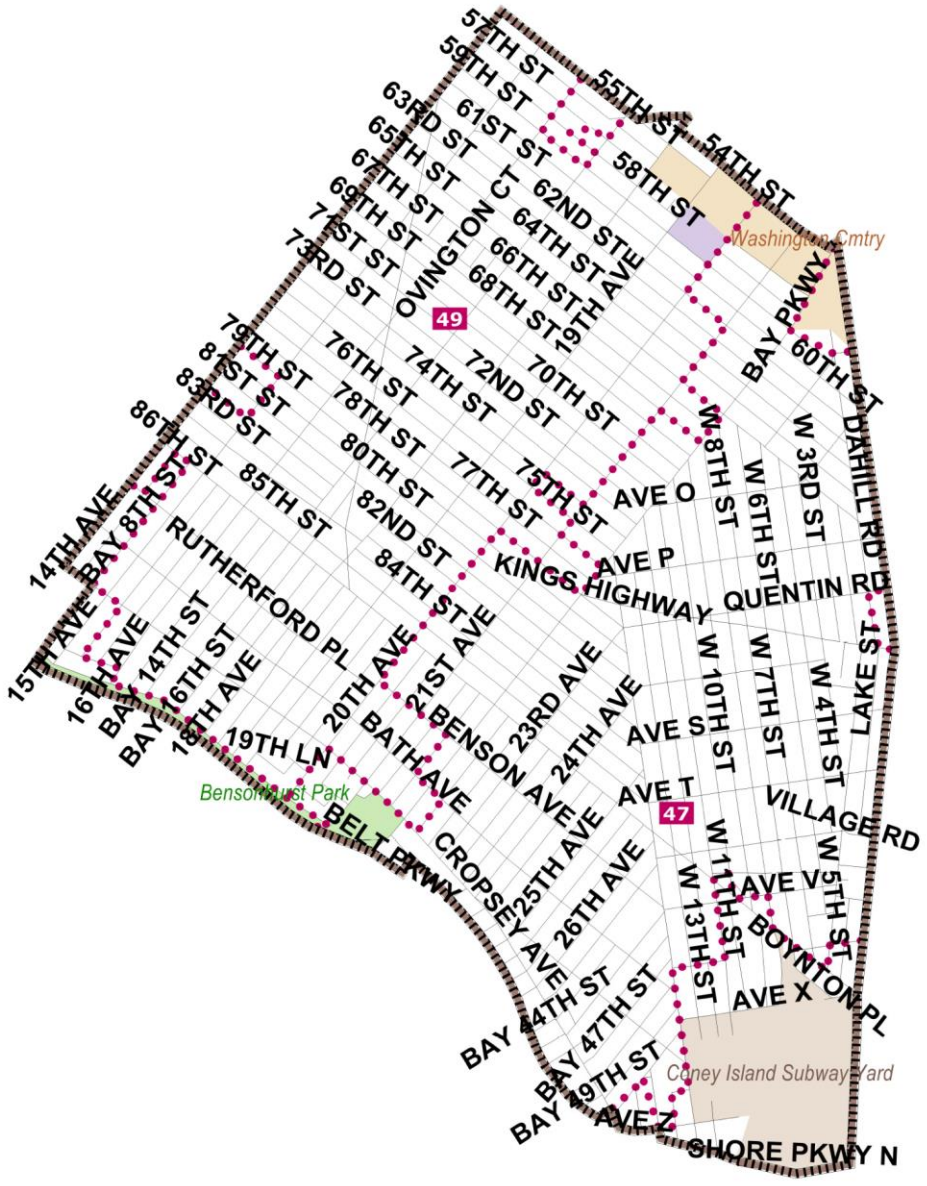
Asian American
Legal Defense
and Education Fund

Sunset Park



POPULATION	118,834
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-10,803 (-8.4%)
% HISPANIC	42.6%
% NH WHITE	13.7%
% NH BLACK	1.6%
% NH ASIAN	40.5%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

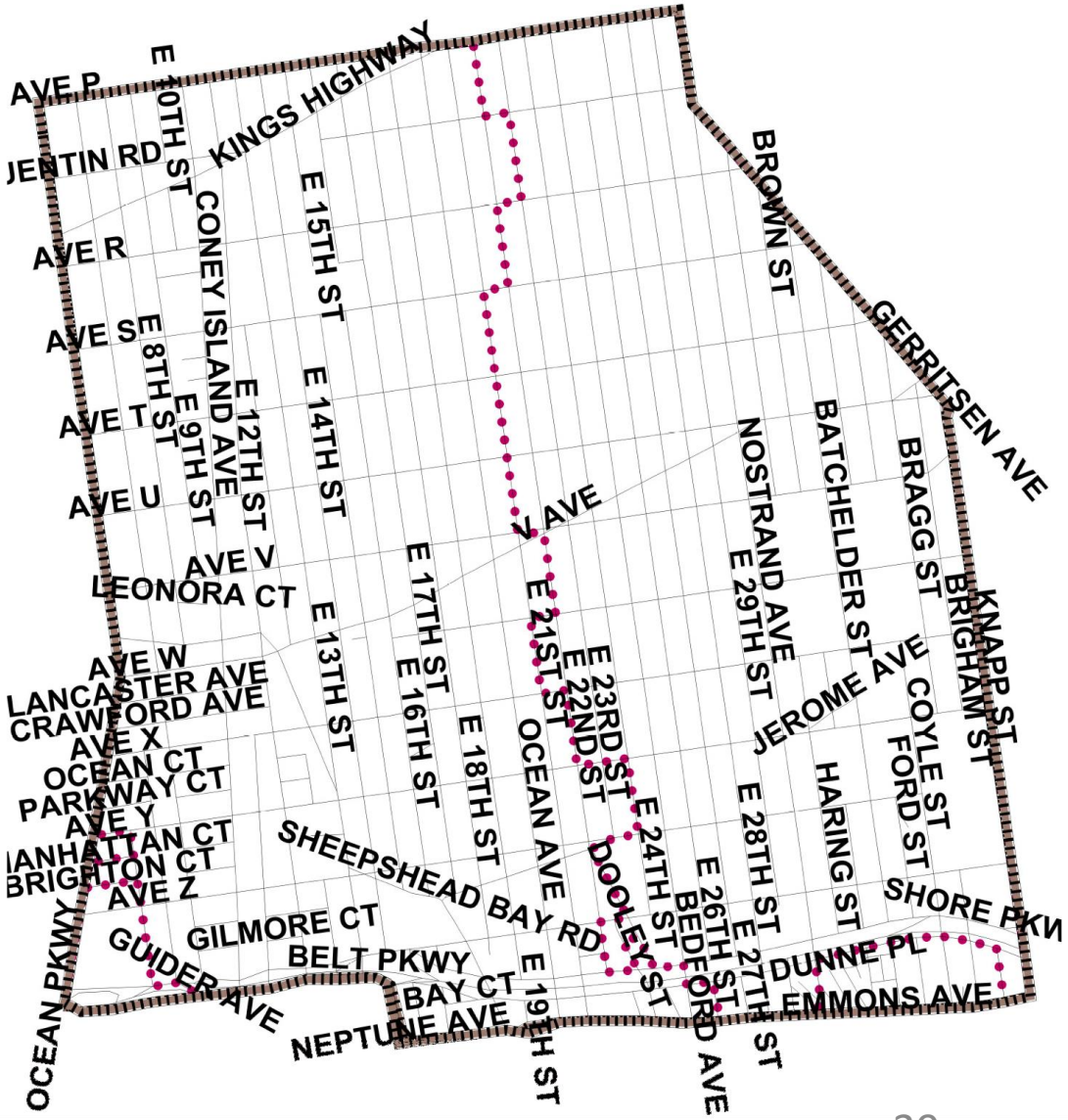


Bensonhurst

POPULATION	219,897
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	+90,710 (+70.2%)
% HISPANIC	13.4%
% NH WHITE	51.5%
% NH BLACK	1.7%
% NH ASIAN	32.0%

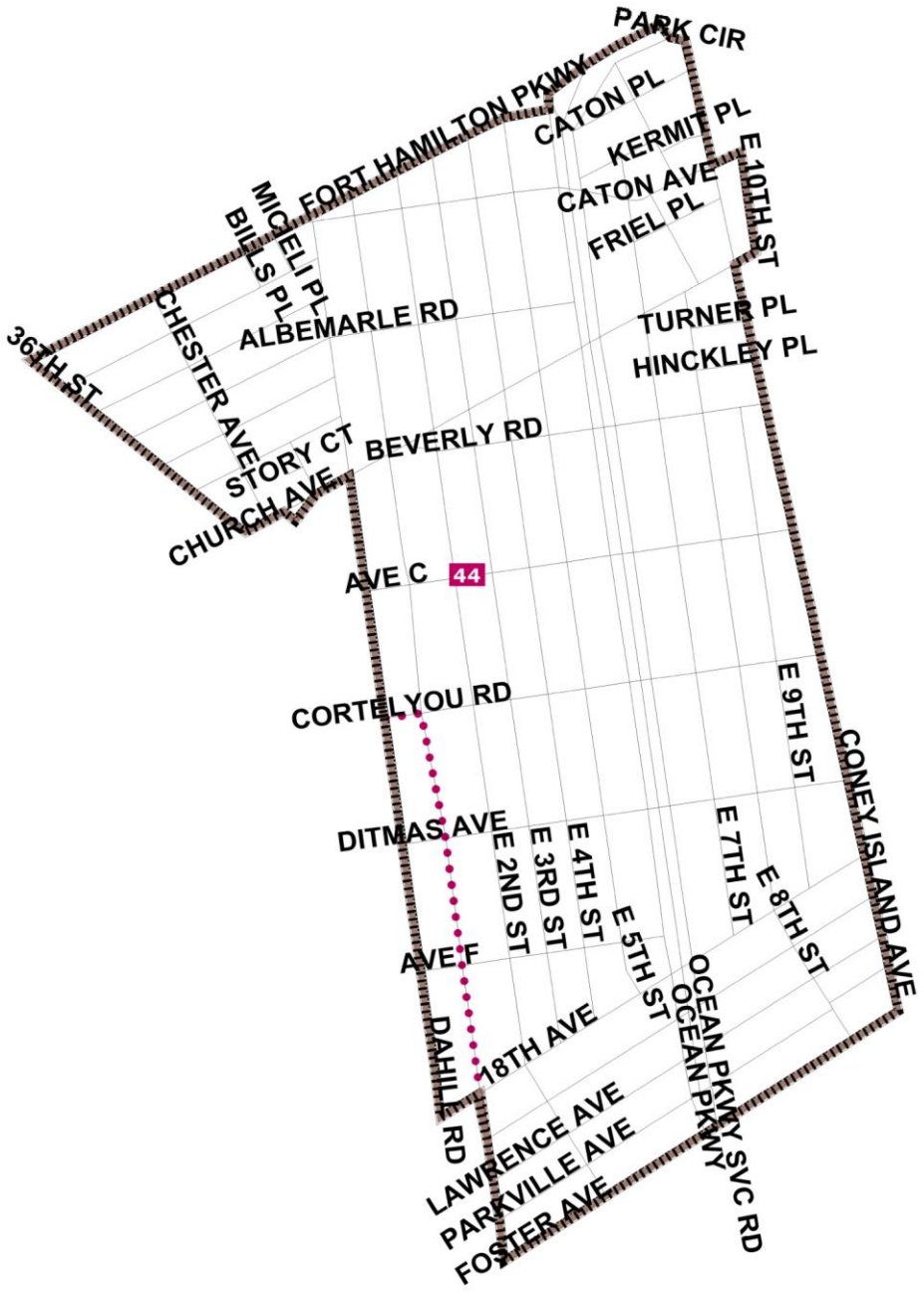
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Sheepshead Bay



POPULATION	117,891
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-11,296 (-8.7%)
% HISPANIC	7.8%
% NH WHITE	68.6%
% NH BLACK	4.1%
% NH ASIAN	17.8%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund



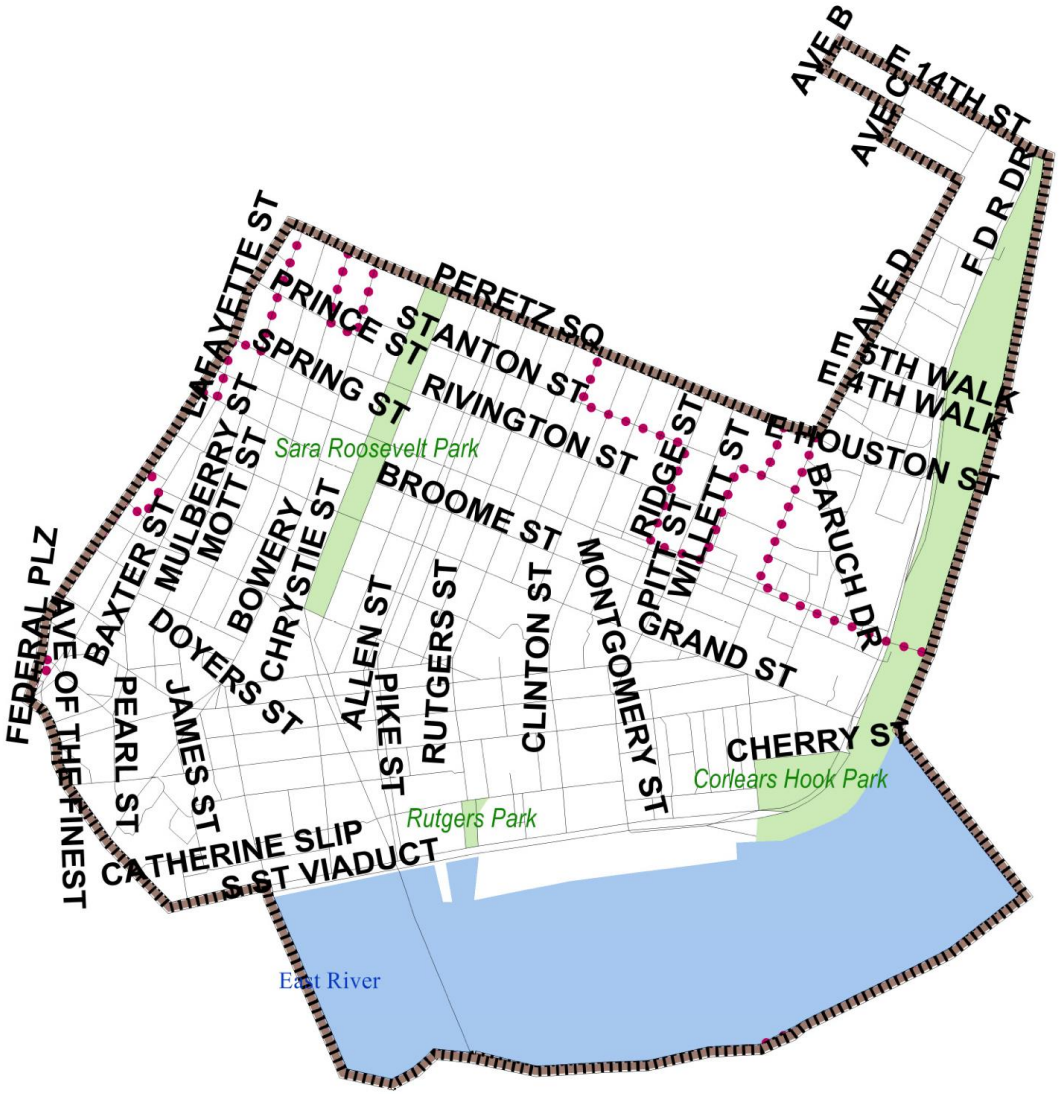
Kensington

POPULATION	53,700
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-75,487 (-58.4%)
% HISPANIC	17.5%
% NH WHITE	49.8%
% NH BLACK	7.3%
% NH ASIAN	22.0%

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

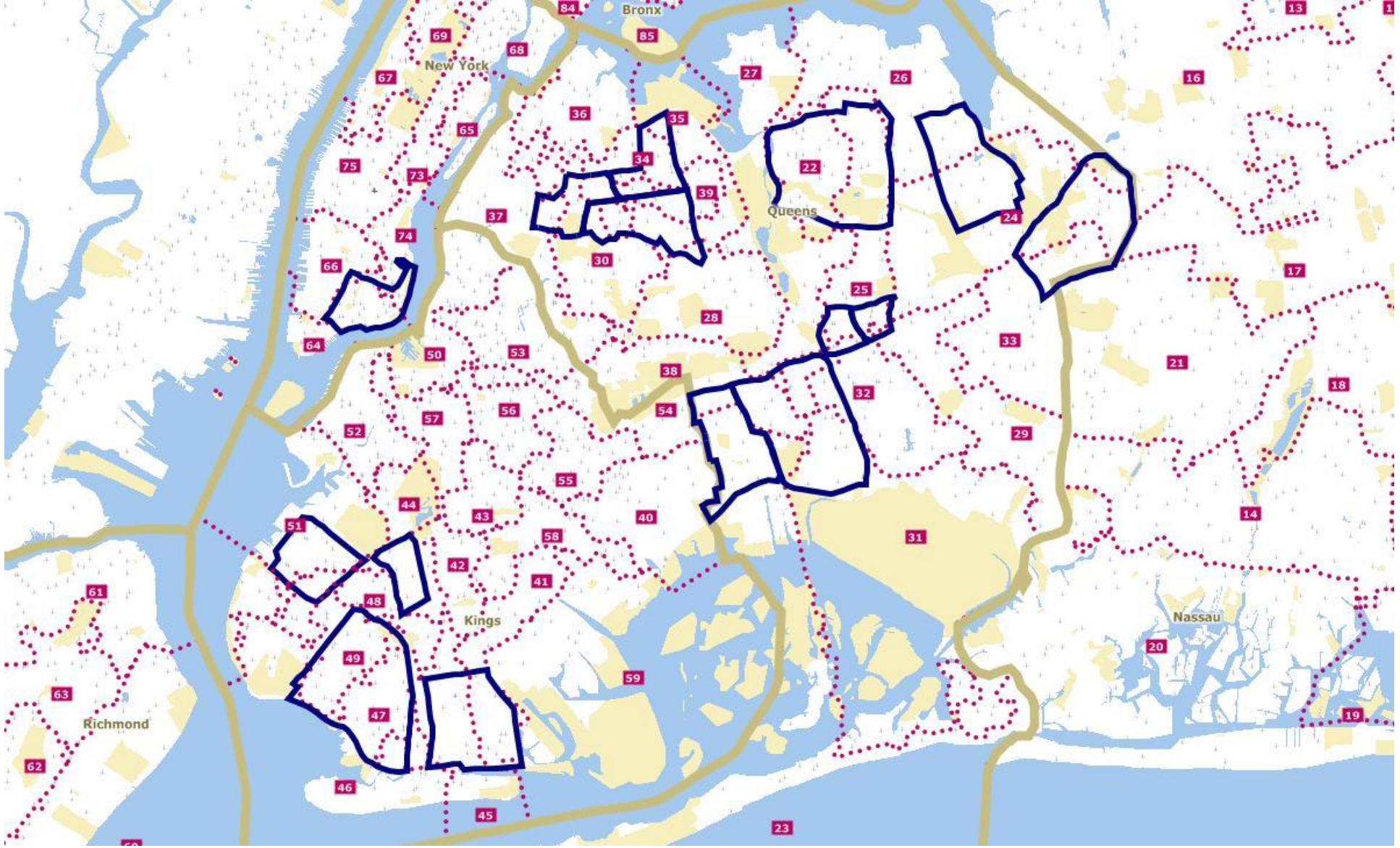
MANHATTAN

Chinatown-Lower East Side

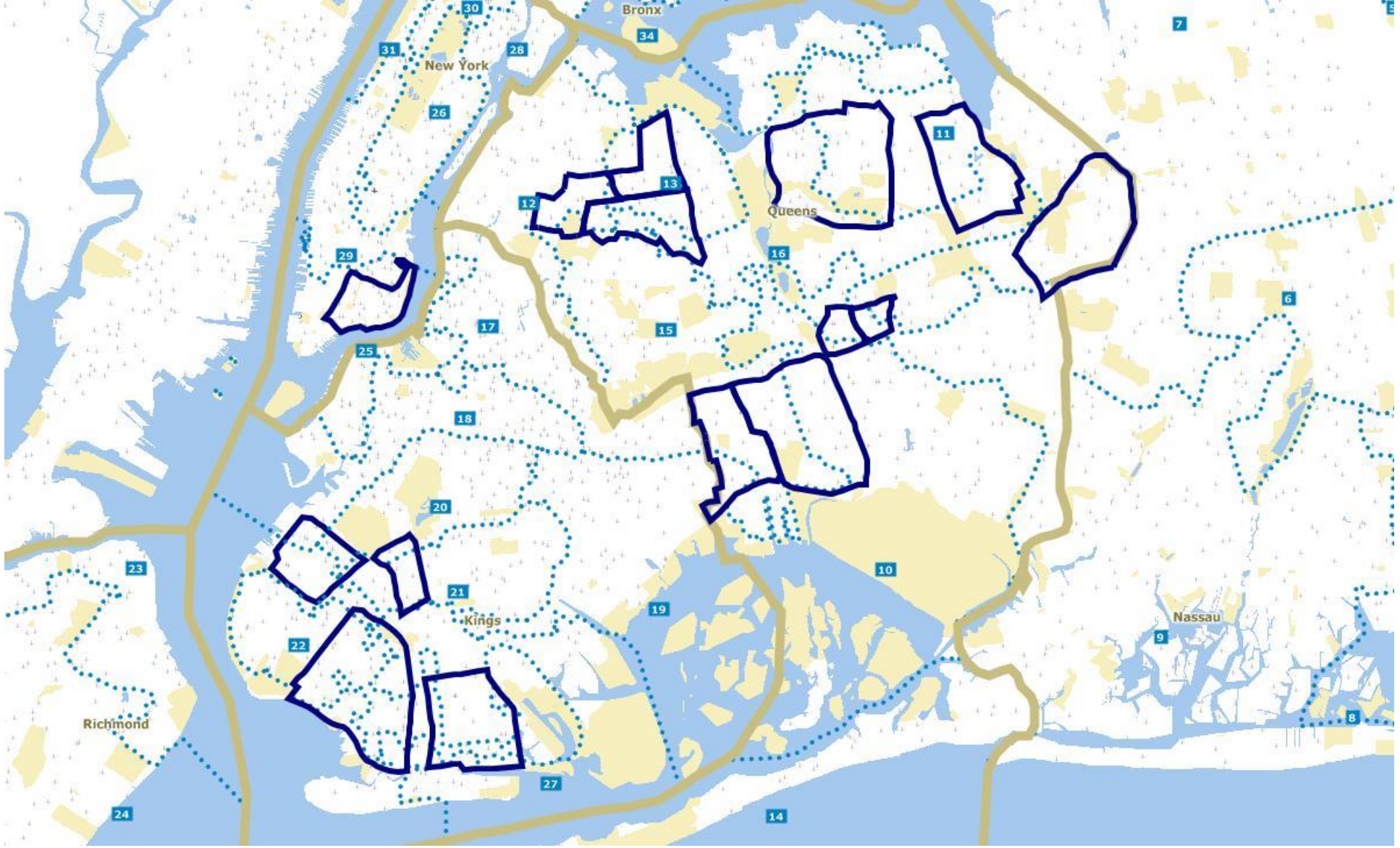


POPULATION	117,057
DEVIATION FROM IDEAL ASSEMBLY SIZE	-12,130 (-9.4%)
% HISPANIC	26.5%
% NH WHITE	19.4%
% NH BLACK	7.4%
% NH ASIAN	44.9%

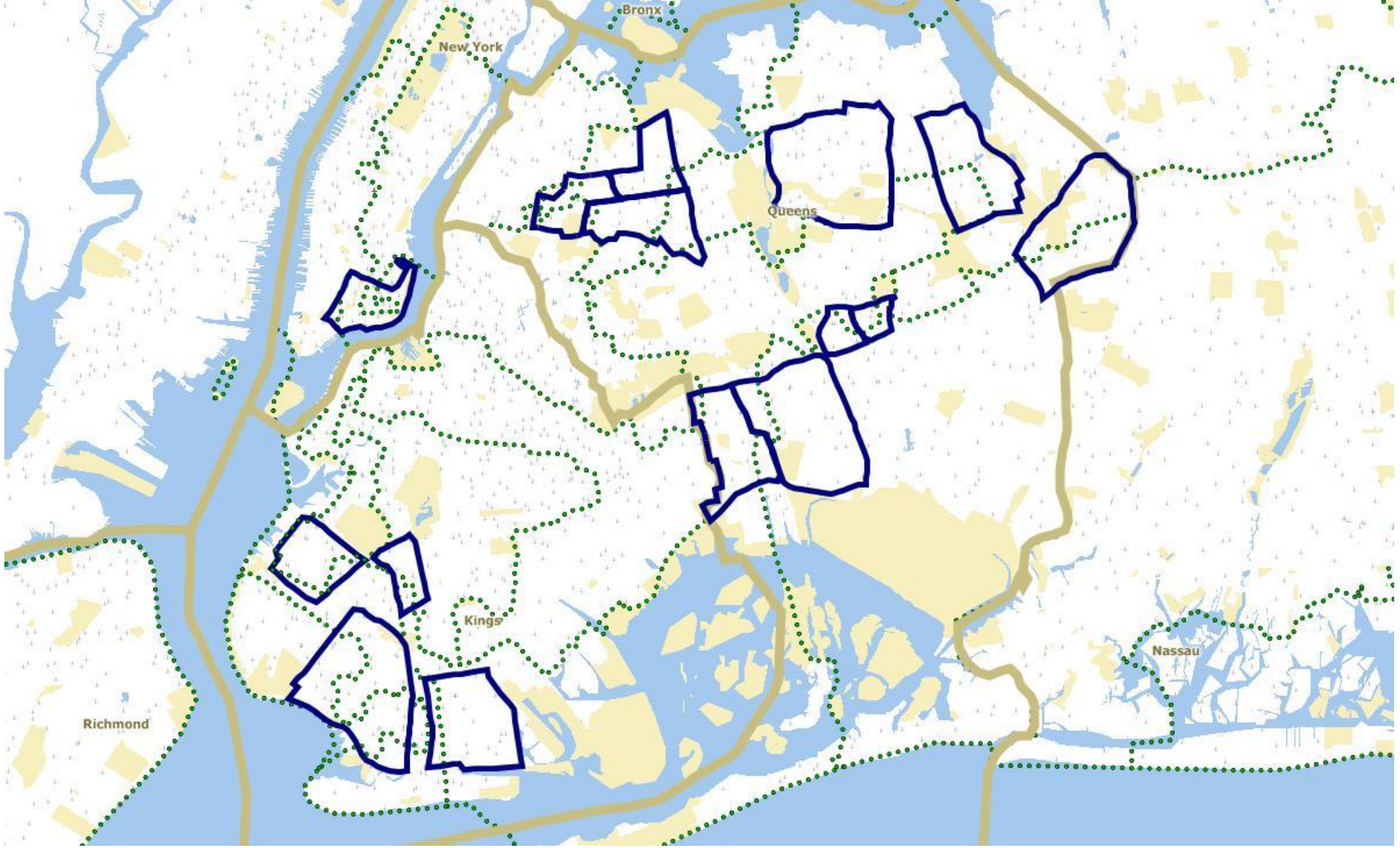
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund



Asian American communities with current NY State Assembly boundaries



Asian American communities with current NY State Senate boundaries



Asian American communities with current NY Congressional boundaries

Denver Redistricting 2022: Focus on equity and inclusion

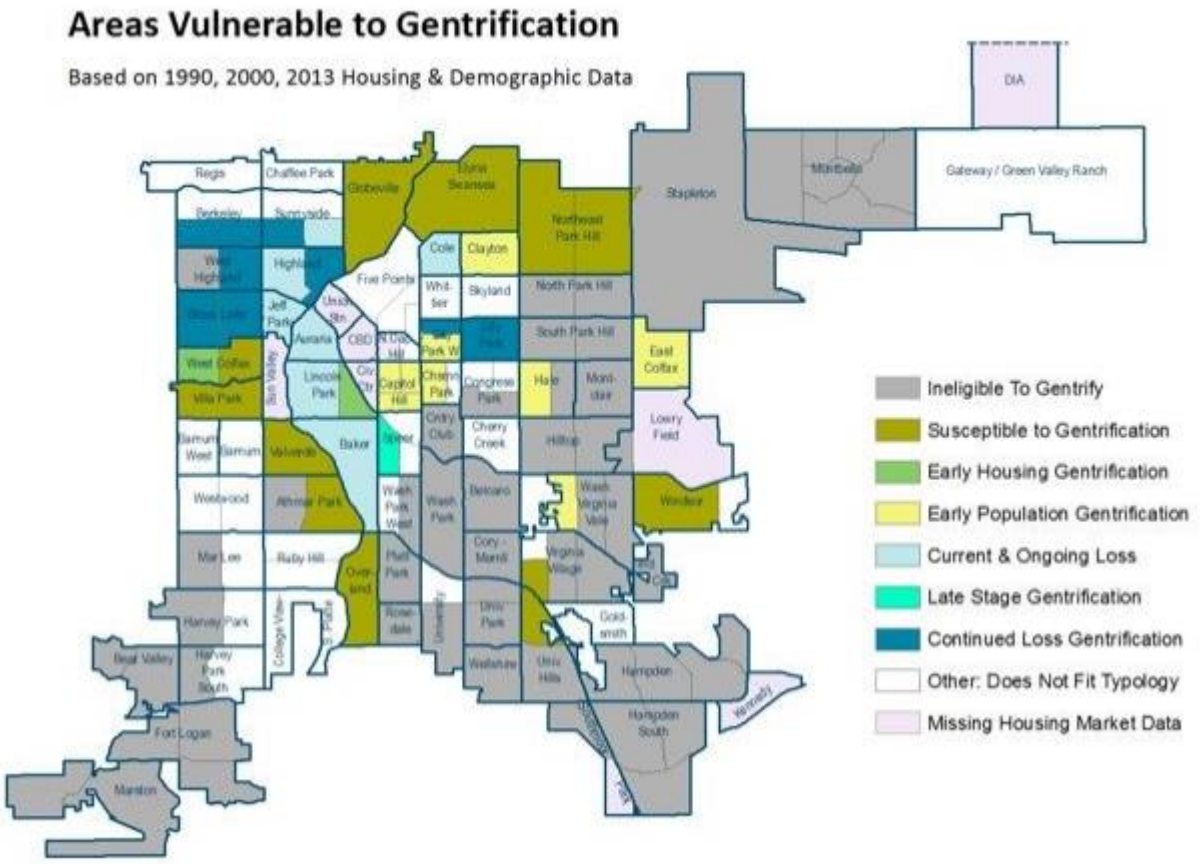
Charter Requirements

- Denver shall have 11 districts that are:
  - Compact as possible
  - Contain contiguous territory
  - Contain as equal a population as possible
  - Be based on the most recent United States decennial census, or other official population studies or report
  - Consist of whole voting precincts
  - Boundaries that change at least once every 10 years

Critiques of 2012

- The process was rushed
- Lacked sincere community engagement
- We experienced issues with accessing the redistricting software

Changes in Denver



- Population boom
- Rapid increase in cost of living
- Gentrification and displacement of BIPOC neighborhoods

Public Engagement Weaknesses

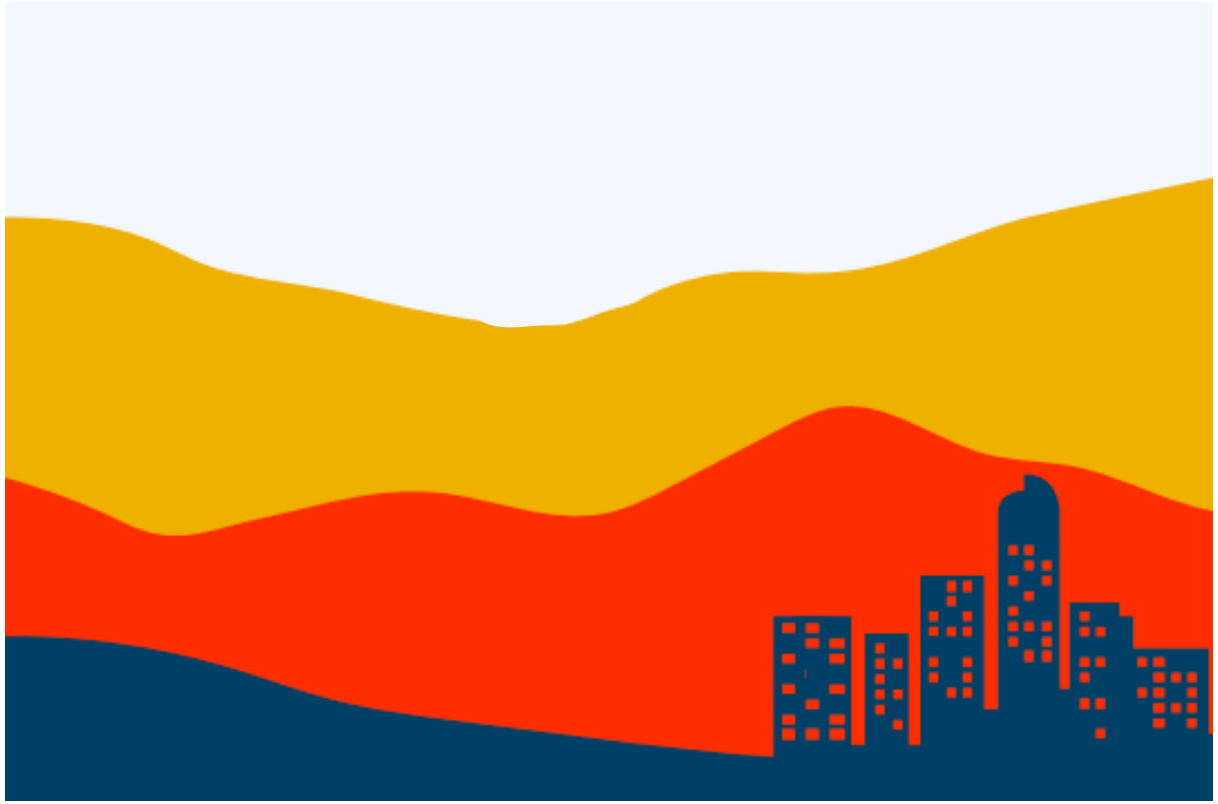
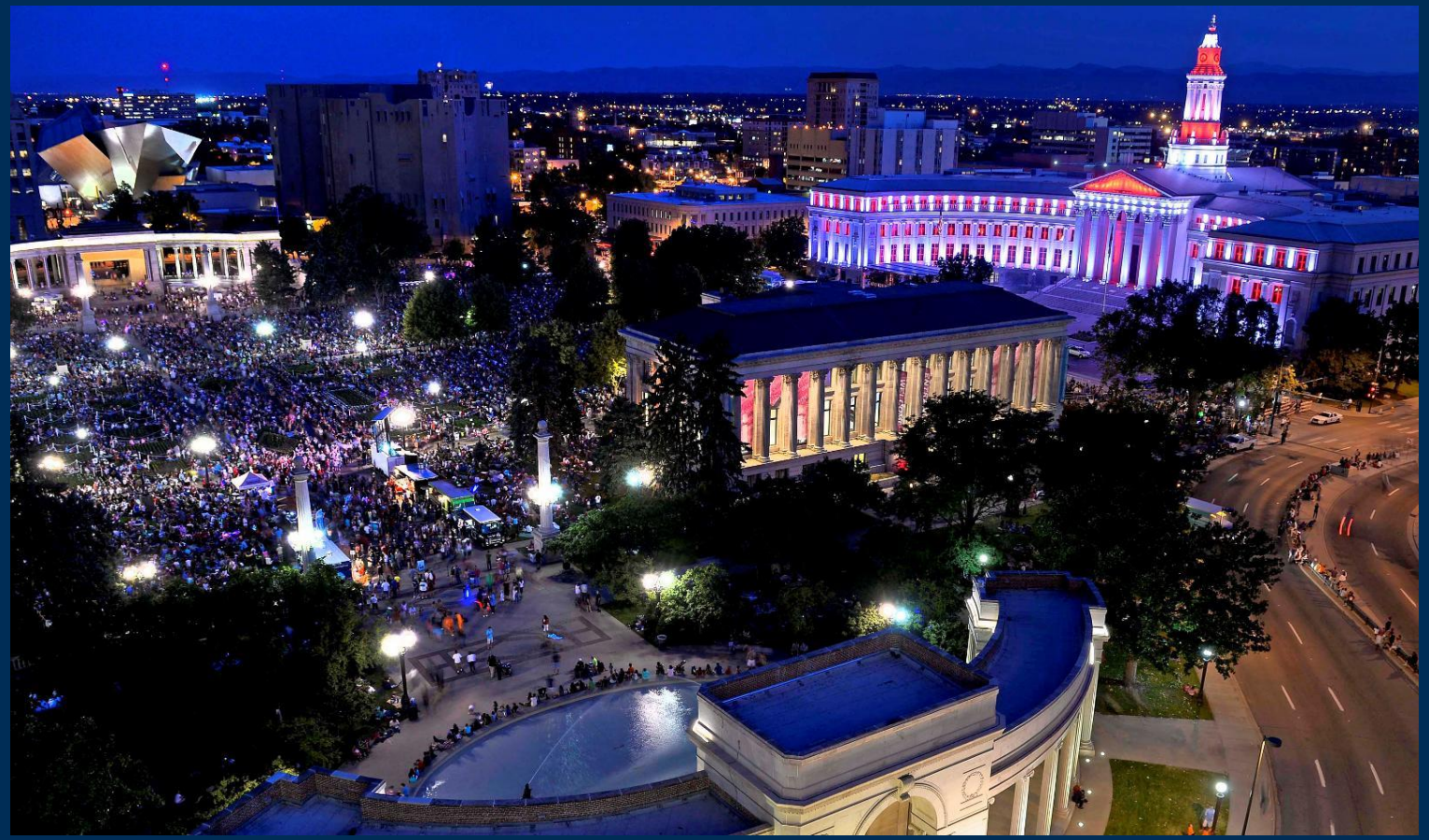
- Public hearings, comment, and listening sessions are not helpful ways to obtain community opinion on policies
- One-way street of communication
- Lacks comprehensive and sincere community input

Moving Forward

- Addressing common barriers to community engagement in our outreach strategies
- Culturally competent and inclusive meetings
- Being mindful of our legacy

Moving Forward

- Long-term planning to address unpreparedness



THANK YOU!