



ARC 21 Redistricting Guide –

Last updated: September 20, 2021

This guide serves to provide the County of Santa Cruz Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC 21) with the information needed to do redistricting work. The guide will be updated as needed.

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1. The Importance of Local Redistricting

After every Decennial Census, districts must be redrawn so that each district is substantially equal in population. This process, called redistricting, is important in ensuring that each board member represents about the same number of constituents. Redistricting determines which neighborhoods and communities are grouped together into a district for purposes of electing a board member. In Santa Cruz County, the Board of Supervisors is responsible for drawing supervisorial districts. The Board appointed an Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC 21) to assist with this work.

Redistricting is done using U.S. Census data, which was released on August 12, 2021. It is required that the data be adjusted so that the prison population in California is apportioned to their last home address, and then be made available for counties. The apportionment work is performed by the Statewide Database at UC Berkeley. That data will be available September 20, 2021. For the County of Santa Cruz, the redistricting process must be completed by December 15, 2021.

AB 849, known as the FAIR MAPS Act, passed in 2019 to improve the local redistricting process and provide clearer guidelines around drawing of district maps to ensure fairness. The Fair Maps Act also created public outreach and transparency requirements to ensure all communities and participate in the redistricting process.

2. Legal Requirements When Drawing District Maps

By way of the United States Constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, and now the FAIR MAPS Act, local governments have clear guidelines of what must be considered when drawing district lines.

2.1 Federal Requirements

Population Equality: Unlike Congressional Districts, local electoral districts do not require perfect equality – some deviation is acceptable to serve valid governmental interests, such as:

- Existing Political Subdivisions
- Maintaining Communities of Interest
- Geographic compactness

The appropriate measure of population when considering substantial equality of population is total population. While total population deviation of less than 10% per district is presumptively constitutional the best practice is to aim for about 5% or less.

Voting Rights Act: The federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 passed during the Civil Rights Movement to prohibit racial discrimination in voting and voting access. Section 2 of the VRA prohibits state and local governments from diluting racial and language rights by denying them an equal opportunity to vote, nominate, and elect candidates of their choice. Two of the most common techniques used in history to dilute the political power of racial, ethnic, and language minorities are “packing” and “cracking”. Packing purposefully concentrates a group of voters all into one district, while cracking dilutes their voting power across more than one district.

Acceptable Use of Race: The 14th Amendment permits some consideration of race in the redistricting process but prohibits its use as the “predominant” criterion in drawing districts. Sometimes district with bizarre shapes can be an indicator that race was a predominant factor considered when line drawing.

2.2 California State Requirements

State legislature provides redistricting criteria that must be considered under a certain order of priority. Below are the criteria in order of priority with accompanying guiding questions.

Order	Criteria	Guiding Questions
1	Geographic Contiguity	Does each district have a single unbroken border?
2	Neighborhoods and Communities of Interest	Are neighborhoods and other communities of interest kept whole (intact within the same district)?
3	Cities and Census-Designated Places Intact	Are cities and other census designated places (e.g. unincorporated territories) kept whole and/or divided as little as possible?
4	Easily Identifiable Boundaries	Do districts follow easily identifiable natural and manmade boundaries, such as streets, rivers, highways, and rail lines?
5	Geographical Compactness	Are districts relatively compact?

In addition to the above criteria, local governments SHALL NOT favor or discriminate against a political party when drafting plans and maps.

2.3 County Principles

In 2001, the County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors adopted four principles for consideration during the redistricting process (to the extent allowed by law, since revised):

1. To the extent possible, the current district boundaries will be preserved;
2. The public will have all the opportunities provided by law to participate in the redistricting process and provide input to the Board;
3. Communities of interest will be preserved to the extent possible;
4. Each supervisor will have the opportunity to suggest changes to their district to the extent such changes are necessary.

3. Public Input

The County of Santa Cruz is taking steps to ensure that the redistricting process is accessible and transparent. The County is encouraging robust public participation with the goal of gathering community of interest testimony to be better informed when drawing district maps.

More information may be found on the County's redistricting website www.santacruzcounty.us/Redistricting2021

3.1 Communities of interest (COI) definition and guiding questions

Elections Code section 21500(c)(3) defines a “community of interest” as a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included in a single supervisorial district for the purposes of effective and fair representation. People can belong to multiple COIs. Communities can be defined by the geography, by boundaries, and/or by landmarks. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.

Examples of COIs: What can this include?

- Civic organizations and other social groups
- Shared economic interests: agriculture, commercial areas, major employers, a “downtown” business district, etc.
- Lifestyle activities: shared social gatherings, recreation areas, shopping areas, etc.
- Demographic: income, education, language, housing, immigration status, etc.
- Geographic: urban, suburban, rural, mountains, coastal, etc.
- Political subdivisions: school districts, HOAs, neighborhoods in unincorporated areas, etc.
- Area Specific Issues or Needs: public safety, wildfires, air or noise pollution, transit, etc.

Public input on COIs can be given through a COI form and mapping tool available online and by attending public workshops and/or public hearings. Below are the questions asked on the COI form to gain information about the community, the geographical space, and the story behind the COI.

Community of Interest form	Guiding Questions to ask as follow up
Tell Us About Your Community	
What are your shared interests? What brings you together? What is important to you and your community? What issues matter?	What are the bonds and common links of your community? What issues do you and your neighbors care about?
Tell Us About Your Place	
Are there nearby areas you want to be in a district with? Are there nearby areas you don't want to be with? Why and why not? What are the streets or major geographic boundaries that physically site your community?	Where is your community located? What do you see as the boundaries?
More About Your Story	
Is there anything else you can tell us about your community?	Why should your community be kept together? Or why are you okay with being separated from another area? Has your community come together to advocate for important services, better schools, roads, or health centers in your neighborhood? How does influencing the maps help your cause?

3.2 Community of Interest forms and maps

As COI forms are received, they will be provided to Commissioners via the report that follows.

What is a Community of Interest, and How can I Participate in Redistricting?

Every ten years, cities and counties must consider the population statistics provided in the decennial census of people living in the United States, to ensure that each District has a substantially equal population. During this process, counties comply with the federal Voting Rights Act and new State laws enacted in 2019 and 2020. These new laws (AB 849 and AB 1276) are designed to encourage public participation and increase transparency in the process. So, to ensure fair representation for you and your community, the County's Advisory Redistricting Commission and Board of Supervisors are asking County residents and interested parties to tell us about your community, and how your community factors into creating boundary lines for each of the five Supervisorial Districts. A map of the current boundaries is found here:

<http://www.santacruzcounty.us/Redistricting2021/CommunitiesofInterest/CommunitiesofInterestReceived.aspx#map>

What Are Communities of Interest?

Keeping Communities of Interests together is an important part of redistricting. Communities of Interest (COI) are overlapping sets of neighborhoods, networks, or groups that share interests, views, cultures, histories, languages, and values, and whose boundaries can be identified on a map. A Community of Interest can be defined in many ways. Relationships with political parties or elected officials and candidates are not considered communities of interest. And, while race and ethnicity can play a role in defining a COI, it cannot be used as a sole definition.

COIs are self-defined and create a common story. The following provides some examples of a Community of Interest:

**Shared interests in schools, housing, community safety, transit, health conditions, land use, and the physical environment, such as the coast, and farming and agricultural spaces;*

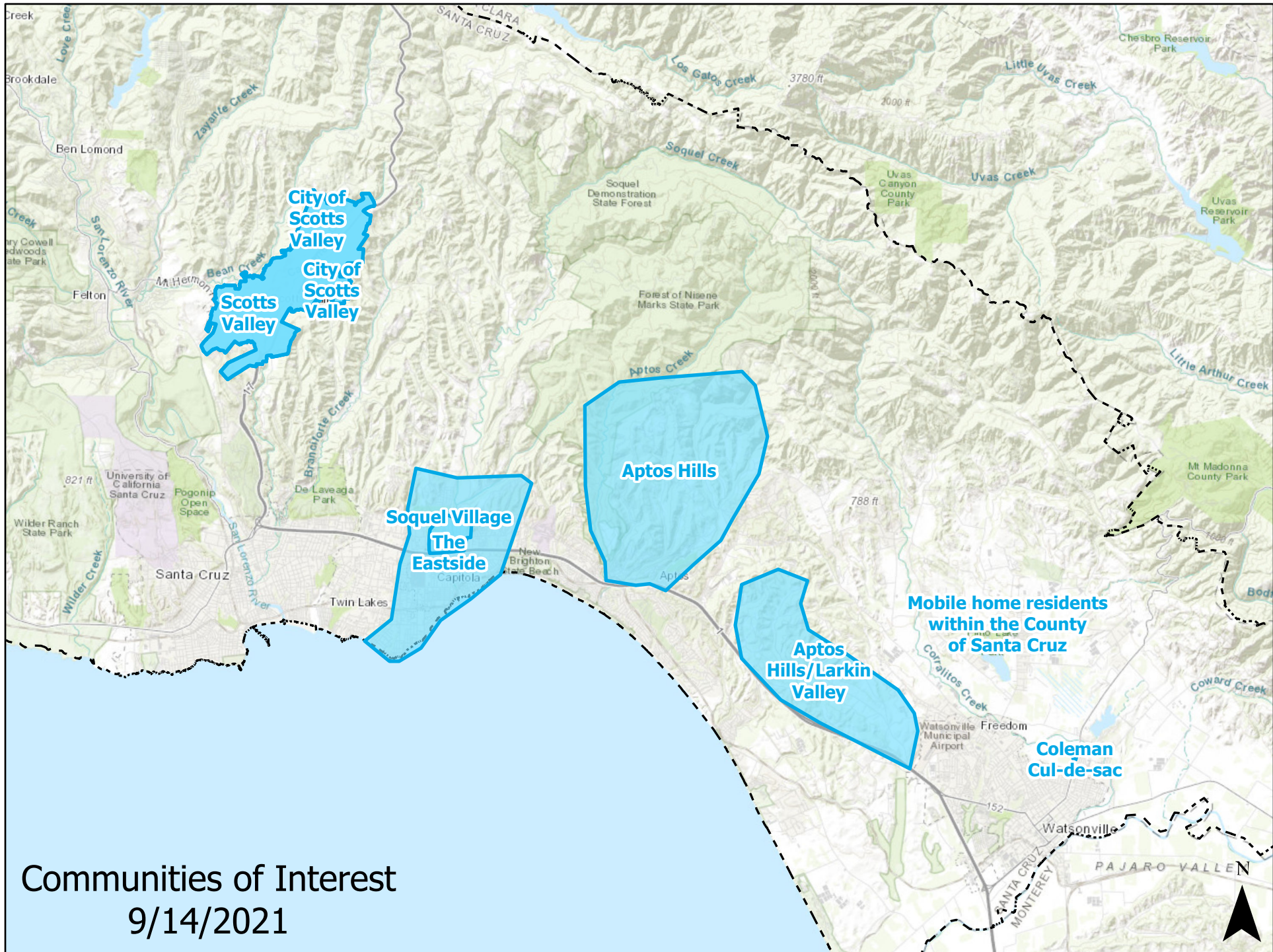
**Common social and civic networks, including places of worship, homeowner associations, community centers, and shared use of community spaces like parks, dog parks, and shopping areas;*

**Racial and ethnic compositions, cultural identities, and households that predominately speak a language other than English;*

**Similar socio-economic status, including but not limited to income, home-ownership, and education;
Shared political boundary lines from other jurisdictions, such as school districts, community college districts, and water districts;*

**Residents who have been working together to advocate for a community issue, such as increasing after-school hours, getting assistance to come back from a natural disaster, or locating a health clinic in their neighborhood.*





Community of Interest Report: 9/14/2021 9:57 AM

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 1 (Supervisor Koenig)

Give Your Community A Name: [The Eastside](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : The Eastside is a distinct community in the Santa Cruz area - including the neighborhoods of Pleasure Point, Capitola and Soquel. Shared interests are surfing, recreation, arts, sports - being active and social. Most retail/services (including healthcare) are available within the Eastside, so traveling to the Westside, Midtown, Downtown, or Aptos is often unnecessary and a burden due to traffic. Relevant issues to people on the Eastside include real estate and development, making a bike/run trail on the traintracks, street bike lanes, environmental conservation, retail collapse at Capitola Mall and potential re-development, beach parking, over-tourism, and academic improvement of local schools.

Tell Us About Your Place : The Eastside is a classic location in the Santa Cruz area, and should be fully included in one district. The Eastside is connected by academic, retail, economic, recreational, social and geographic considerations. Most Eastside kids attend school at SUESD Elementary schools, then New Brighton Middle School, then Soquel High, and participate in Junior Lifeguards in Capitola. Most retail shopping and banking is done along 41st, Soquel Ave, and in Capitola. The Eastside surf spots run from Pleasure Point to Capitola, and on big swells you can surf your way down from Sewers to New Brighton. A favorite path of runners and cyclists is from the Rockview down to Capitola through Opal Cliffs. We all share park space (Jade Street, Monterey Ave Park, Brommer, Blue Ball), and the local sports leagues are based around Eastside geography, such as Capitola-Soquel Little League.

More About Your Story : Hopefully redistricting to include the Eastside in one district will provide governmental efficiencies, and help to better serve our community.

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 1 (Supervisor Koenig)

Give Your Community A Name: [Soquel Village](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : Soquel in the park. Closer or walkable farmers markets.

Tell Us About Your Place : Mobile home rent protections, close to shopping & restaurants, and is close to the ocean.

More About Your Story : Walkable restaurants, ATM machines, EV charger, and close by micro-mobility options (bike share).

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 1 (Supervisor Koenig)

Give Your Community A Name: [City of Scotts Valley](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : I live in Scotts Valley because it is a community, good police and fire departments, parks as well as schools.

Tell Us About Your Place : I don't want to be associated with the City of Santa Cruz or Live Oak . I moved here to get away from those areas, crime is major factor. The city of Scotts Valley should not be represented by district 1, it should be in district 5.

More About Your Story :

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 1 (Supervisor Koenig)

Give Your Community A Name: [City of Scotts Valley](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : Scotts Valley is a city where community priorities include good schools, public safety and the environment. Scotts Valley is family oriented and is home to many seniors. Many residents work in Silicon Valley. Residents enjoy outdoor activities, including visiting our parks and hiking trails. Scotts Valley is a small friendly town where residents greet each other on the street.

Tell Us About Your Place : The portion of Scotts Valley on the east side of Highway 17, where I live, is all within District 1. The larger portion of Scotts Valley on the west side of Highway 17 is all within District 5. I strongly believe that the City of Scotts Valley is one community of interest and should be unified and represented at the County level in one District. This could be either District 1 or District 5.

All of Scotts Valley is one community of interest because all residents share the same parks and recreational opportunities, receive the same City services, share the same religious institution opportunities, share the same Library, shop at the same stores, drive on the same major roads, go the same schools, and love the Scotts Valley life style.

More About Your Story :

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 2 (Supervisor Friend)

Give Your Community A Name: [Aptos Hills](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : This is a rural community with pockets of residential development among the forested Santa Cruz Mountains. Nisene Marks State Park is adjacent, and scattered areas of agricultural production exist, mostly orchards and vineyards. There is a wide range of economic status that includes multi-million dollar homes with ocean views that are second homes or short-term rentals, and also very simple homes from the post-logging era that provide homes for retired people as well as low-income workers and students. Many areas are served by substandard infrastructure, such as narrow roads maintained by County Service Areas and private wells or small water companies. All are on septic systems. Most rely on fire protection from County Fire Dept. volunteers and CalFire. Some are in high-risk fire areas. Many are experiencing insurance policy cancellations.

Tell Us About Your Place : Aptos Hills should be separate from the urbanized Seacliff and Rio del Mar communities because those areas have little in common with rural dwellers. My community is defined by the Aptos Creek Canyon but also the ridgetops on either side, and are connected with adjacent rural communities of the Trout Gulch and Valencia Canyons. We share in common the two PG&E high voltage transmission lines running through our communities that have been the source of wildland fires in recent history. We are in the Second Supervisorial District.

More About Your Story : All rural roads are in shambles and need resurfacing, with new drainage culverts. Valencia Road culvert failure in 2017 was a harbinger of things to come for the Aptos Hills where there are large metal culverts under the roadways. Roadside brush clearing programs have stopped happening, so the roadways are narrower, with corners made blind by encroaching vegetation. Bicycling on these roadways is hazardous because of increased traffic, faster traffic, and vegetation that encroaches into the roadway. There are more people moving into the rural Aptos Hills areas, because they are often more affordable, but many are renting a room or ADU, hence increasing traffic congestion in the adjacent urban Aptos areas. Also , with the permit approvals of more rural wineries and tasting events, and associated special events, the rural roadways are taxed by extra congestion, and pose a real risk for fire evacuation efforts if ever needed.

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 2 (Supervisor Friend)

Give Your Community A Name: [Mobile home residents within the County of Santa Cruz](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : People who reside in mobile home parks. More narrowly, residents of mobile home parks within the unincorporated areas of the County. I serve on the County's Manufactured and Mobilehome Commission; appointed by Supervisor Friend.

Tell Us About Your Place : Pinto Lake Mobile Estates is now in District 2. It should stay in #2. The park is in the unincorporated area, just west of the Sheriff's substation on Green Valley Road, and on the same side of that road as the County's Pinto Lake park. The park is under the County's mobilehome ordinances. County has defended residents there. I represent the park on the County's MobileHome Commission.

More About Your Story : The park is in zip code 95076. It is not in the City of Watsonville. All the parks in the City are in County District 4. The City's mobilehome ordinances are fine. However, it would be difficult for the District 4 Mobilehome Commissioner to have to learn two sets of ordinances. K.I.S.S.

I could not tell from the preliminary map what district the park is dreamt in.

? Is the "Map your Community of Interest" the existing or proposed districts?

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 2 (Supervisor Friend)

Give Your Community A Name: [Aptos Hills/Larkin Valley](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : Our neighborhood is an agriculture/residential area of plots of land that are unused but usable. I believe that housing is of utmost importance to county residents. Our area should be allowed to be more easily split or allowed to build ADU's to accommodate the need for housing. There are currently numerous county restrictions in place that are dated back decades, that significantly restrict certain building projects that hurt our local housing progress. Housing matters and we can help this current dilemma Santa Cruz County is experiencing. The state Assembly/Senate recently approved SB9 that would enhance duplexes on single family residences. SB9 requires CITIES allow lots larger than virtually all of the lots in Aptos Hills/Larkin Valley to be approved for two homes or a duplex. This could help seniors who might want to 'age in place' and have a generated income stream. According to the most recent Census Bureau, the average age of our area is 49.6 years old. This age group start to seriously think about retirement. Of the housing units within this region, approximately 80% are owner occupied. This is the time to generate income through other sources, such as ADU's or lot splits. These two criteria alone are indicative and motivation for a unique group of residents(us) that are able and willing to enhance the housing challenges if we were included in the city limits.

Tell Us About Your Place : I believe that our community would be better served if we were incorporated into the city limits of Watsonville so as to have more direct access to services. The unincorporated areas of our county are large. We seem to lose the privileges that being in the city limits would allow, including housing restraints now in place from the county. Those that live in the Aptos Hills/ Larkin Valley have an enhanced ability to help the housing challenges that face our county, if given the opportunity to do so. We are willing and able to build the ADU's and do lot splits that our county and state are deeming as needed for our future. Our state has lost residents at an alarming rate due to housing costs. As residents of Larkin Valley, we have the financial resources as well as the land to build, but are restricted in doing so. Many of the proposed state legislation that help building of additional units are aimed at cities and exclude the unincorporated county regions, such as Aptos Hills/Larkin Valley. We would be best served to be in the city limits of Watsonville, since we currently are recognized partially in Watsonville via our zip code (95076), but with few of the services...

More About Your Story :

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 4 (Supervisor Caput)

Give Your Community A Name: [Coleman Cul-de-sac](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : We all feel that we are residents of the Watsonville community but do not enjoy many of the same benefits since we are unincorporated Santa Cruz County. We are very distinct from the rest of unincorporated county and have much different financial needs; we are mostly agricultural workers who feel much more at home in Watsonville then being lumped together with unincorporated Santa Cruz.

Tell Us About Your Place : We think that we should be incorporated into the city of Watsonville. We are currently right on the boundary line of unincorporated Santa Cruz but feel it makes sense for us to move locations. All that divides us from Watsonville is East lake Ave and as you'll see directly across from us and for much further down it is all considered Watsonville community. As Watsonville has grown this boundary has remained relatively unchanged and with growth in the future it's time for this boundary to change.

More About Your Story :

Which County Supervisor District do you live in? : District 5 (Supervisor McPherson)

Give Your Community A Name: [Scotts Valley](#)

Tell Us About Your Community : I write today to express my opinion that it's important for you to re-consolidate the City of Scotts Valley into one supervisor district in Santa Cruz County.

Tell Us About Your Place : Currently it is split into 2 districts separated by Highway 17, but the community interests are the same on both sides of Highway 17. The children go to the same schools. The adults shop at the same stores. We are served by the same police and fire services, and we use the same parks and recreation facilities. Dividing Scotts Valley into two supervisor districts dilutes our voice and our vote, and should not have been done in the first place.

More About Your Story :

4. 2020 Census data for redistricting

2020 Census data for redistricting is being released in two phases. Preliminary Census data for the County of Santa Cruz which is shown in the table below. The data is broken up by district with the population target of 54,172.2 for each district, which was obtained by taking the total census population and dividing it by 5, and shows how much each district is over or under from the population target.

This preliminary data is helpful to planning efforts but it's important to remember it is NOT the final data.

The second and final data release is expected on or about September 20th. This data will conform to changes made to the Election Code in 2019 which specified that the incarcerated persons population be apportioned to the Census blocks of their last known home address instead of where they were incarcerated when the census was taken.

District	Population Target	Census Population	Over/(Under) Population Target
1 st	54,172.20	54,047	(125.2)
2 nd	54,172.20	54,637	464.8
3 rd	54,172.20	56,347	2,174.8
4 th	54,172.20	53,733	(439.2)
5 th	54,172.20	52,097	(2,075.2)
County Population		270,861	

5. Best Practices for Local Redistricting

5.1 Map proposal and review process and Brown Act Concerns (dos and donts)

As commissioners begin to draft plans and/or maps, its important to ensure compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the law and to ensure a truly public process. It's best practice to conduct as much discussion and consideration during public meetings and hearings as possible. As commissioners, it important to avoid opportunities that might yield unintentional meetings either in person or through a social media outlet.

Avoid "Meetings by Proxy" which are accidental (or intentional) meetings to share information with and among more than just you and your Board member. Remember that any three constitutes a quorum. Avoid serial conversations where plans and maps are shared by Board member 1 to Board member 2, who then talks to Board member 3, who then talks to Board member 4, etc.

5.2 Checklist for outreach and mapping phases

As the redistricting project moves through the Public Outreach and Engagement Phase and into the Line Drawing and Mapping Phase, a checklist may be helpful for Commissioners to guide their redistricting work.

Outreach/Public Engagement – This phase of the redistricting process should continue until final maps are adopted.

Outreach

- ✓ Does your Board of Supervisors' member have any neighborhood contacts they would like you to engage with to promote participation in the North, Mid, and South County Public Workshops?
- ✓ The list of community organizations we've contacted about getting involved in the redistricting project is attached. Are there groups we are missing that you should contact?
- ✓ Do you have ideas for media coverage for upcoming Public Workshops and Public Hearings?
- ✓ As you are out and about, have you noticed if there are shops, stores, or bulletin boards where you can post the infographic about redistricting and the public workshops?
- ✓ Are there service organization meetings you would like to attend to talk about getting involved?

Community of Interest Input

- ✓ Are there any new Community of Interest submissions on the [santacruzcounty.us/Redistricting2021/communities of interest](http://santacruzcounty.us/Redistricting2021/communities_of_interest) page of the redistricting website?
- ✓ Any new emails in your Redistricting mailbox? If so, please forward a copy to Rita.Sanchez@santacruzcounty.us so public comment can be included on the website.

Public Workshops

- ✓ In order to gain important details, don't hesitate to ask questions and have back-and-forth conversations with Public Workshop participants as they describe their community of interest! It's a good way to allow people to feel comfortable about sharing their story.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to have back-and-forth conversations with participants during the Community of Interest exercise! It's a good way to gain important details, and by being engaged, you'll encourage people to tell the story of their community.

Line Drawing/Mapping

- ✓ Have you signed up for a training slot for the Esri Redistricting software? (These sessions can be also be used to develop map proposals)
- ✓ Have you shared the preliminary redistricting data from the Census Bureau with your Board of Supervisors' member?
- ✓ Do you have a plan to share the final redistricting data with your Board member when released by the Statewide Database and embedded in the Esri software?
- ✓ Your Board member may wish to have additional information about the population in Census Blocks, such as results of election contests. If that is the case, can you provide a list of those to the mapping team?
- ✓ Have you compiled a list of topics around the data to discuss with the commission during the ARC 21 meetings and/or public workshops? Discussing data and line drawing during these meetings and public workshops is the best way to show a transparent redistricting process and avoid issues with Brown Act requirements and
- ✓ Would you like to work one-on-one with Geographic Information Services (GIS) staff on the mapping team to develop scenarios for review. You can make an appointment by contacting Matt.Price@santacruzcounty.us

6. Timeline and Deadlines

6.1 Meetings table

Additional information on public meetings may be found on the redistricting website www.santacruzcounty.gov/Redistricting2021

Meeting Type/Format	Location/Date/Time
<i>Final Redistricting Data Release</i>	<i>On or about September 20, 2021</i>
Public Workshop Virtual and In-Person	Sheriffs Community Room, 5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz September 22 nd , 6:30pm
Public Workshop Virtual and In-Person	Felton Branch Library, 6121 Gushee St, Felton September 29 th , 6:30pm
Public Workshop and Hearing #1 Virtual and In-Person	Starlight Elementary, 255 Hammer Dr, Watsonville September 30 th , 6:30pm
ARC21 Meeting Virtual and In-Person	County Government Building, Fifth Floor, 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz October 6 th , 1:00pm
ARC21 Meeting Virtual and In-Person	County Government Building, Fifth Floor, 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz October 13 th , 1:00pm
Public Hearing #2 Virtual and In-Person	County Board Chambers, Fifth Floor, 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz October 26 th , TBD
Public Hearing #3 Virtual and In-Person	County Board Chambers, Fifth Floor, 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz Board Chambers November 9 th , TBD
Public Hearing #4 Virtual and In-Person	County Board Chambers, Fifth Floor, 701 Ocean St, Santa Cruz Board Chambers November 16 th , TBD

6.2 Remote Meetings and Brown Act Requirements

Under current law, public meetings may continue to be held remotely. However, the following measures must take place:

- Location noticing requirements – If commissioners choose to attend a public meeting remote, their location must be noticed on the agenda for the meeting. The location must be open and available to the public for the duration of the meeting. Thus, it is recommended that commissioners use a public workspace or come into the County meeting space.
- Remote participation outside of the jurisdiction and maintaining quorum – If commissioners choose to participate in a meeting remotely and outside the jurisdiction, we would need a majority of the commission members to be within the jurisdiction for the duration of the meeting.

7. Resources

Links to state and local districting and redistricting efforts may be found on our website under the Resources page <https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Redistricting2021/Resources.aspx>

8. Glossary

Census: The counting and survey of every person in a population. In the U.S., a census is taken every ten years. The census is required by the Constitution for reapportionment and is used in the redistricting process.

Census Bureau: The federal government agency that administers the census.

Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP): The total population age 18 and over and a citizen. (Related to VAP) (CVAP and VAP should not be used for redistricting and could be subject to legal challenges.)

Coalition District: A district where the combined racial minorities make up a majority of the population and where the voters from these different racial groups vote together to elect the minority-preferred candidate. Coalition districts are not legally required by the Voting Rights Act. (Also called Minority Coalition District)

Community of Interest: A neighborhood, community, or group of people who have common policy concerns and would benefit from being maintained in a single district.

Compactness: Compactness refers to the shape of the district. It describes boundaries that are drawn closely and neatly packed together unless there are good reasons such as VRA compliance or following oddly shaped boundaries, like city boundaries or rivers.

Contiguity: A characteristic describing a boundary's single and uninterrupted shape (i.e. All areas in the district are physically connected to each other).

Cracking: A splitting of a racial minority community into two or more districts so that the minority community is not a significant portion of any district. For example, cracking occurs when a minority population is big enough that it can make up 50% of one district but, instead, is divided into two or more districts so that the minority community makes up a small percentage in each district.

Crossover or Opportunity District: A district where some majority voters "cross over" to vote with racial minorities to elect the minority-preferred candidate. Crossover or opportunity districts are not legally required by the Voting Rights Act.

Deviation and Deviation Range: A district's Deviation is the difference of a district's population from the Ideal Population. The redistricting plan's Deviation Range is the plan's largest deviation to the plan's smallest deviation.

Ideal Population: The total population goal for districts in a redistricting plan. It is computed by taking the total population of the jurisdiction and dividing it by the total number of districts in the redistricting plan.

Incumbency Criteria: Making sure the current elected official's house remains in a district.

Influence District: A district where a racial or ethnic minority group does not make up a majority of voters but does have enough members of the minority group to influence substantially an election or the decisions of an elected representative.



Gerrymandering: Drawing of district lines to give one group an unfair advantage over another group. Gerrymandering is not the same as redistricting, but gerrymandering can occur during redistricting. Drawing majority-minority districts to comply with the Voting Rights Act is not gerrymandering.

GIS (Geographic Information System): Computer software used to create redistricting maps.

Majority-Minority District: A district where one racial minority equals 50% or more of the citizen voting-age population. In combination with a few other factors, a majority-minority district may be required by the VRA. (See Rules of Redistricting: The Voting Rights Act)

Minority vote dilution: Drawing districts which result in minority voters having less of a chance of electing their candidate(s) of choice. This is often done by “packing” or “cracking.”

Nesting: A redistricting rule where each upper house (such as the state senate) district is made up of two lower house districts (such as the state assembly).

One Person, One Vote: The Equal Population rule. A phrase that describes the constitutional requirement that each district be substantially equal in total population. Typically, this means that every district in a redistricting plan should contain the same number of people, regardless of age or citizenship.

Packing: An overconcentration of a minority population into a suboptimal number of districts. For example, packing occurs when a minority population makes up 90% of the district instead of two districts where the minority population makes up 50% of each district.

Reapportionment: The redistribution of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives based on changes in a state’s population. This occurs so that a state’s representation in Congress is proportional to its population. Reapportionment is not redistricting, although some states use the terms interchangeably.

Redistricting: The process used by governments to redraw political district boundaries and applies to all levels of government where district elections are held. Maps are redrawn every ten years after the Census to create districts with substantially equal populations to, at minimum, account for population shifts. There are many types of Redistricting Processes (see Strategies for Different Redistricting Processes)

Totality of circumstances: A consideration of all the circumstances to decide a case, rather than any one factor or rule.

Unity Map: A proposed map drawn by a coalition of multiple community groups that demonstrates their multiple communities of interest can be simultaneously respected.

Voting Age Population (VAP): The total population ages 18 and over. (Related to CVAP) (CVAP and VA should not be used for redistricting and could be subject to legal challenges.)

Voting Rights Act (VRA): The federal legislation passed in 1965 to ensure state and local governments do not pass laws or policies that deny American citizens the equal right to vote based on race. Section 2 of the VRA protects voters from discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group in all election procedures.