

# City of Laguna Hills

## Introduction to Districting

October 7, 2025

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# Election Systems

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1. “At Large”
2. “From District” or “Residence” Districts
3. “By District”

The California Voting Rights Act was written to specifically encourage by-district elections.

# California Voting Rights Act (CVRA)

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- Under the Federal Voting Rights Act (passed in 1965), a jurisdiction must fail 4 factual tests before it is in violation of the law.
  
- The California VRA makes it significantly easier for plaintiffs to force jurisdictions into “by-district” election systems by eliminating two of the US Supreme Court *Gingles* tests:
  - ~~■ Can the protected class constitute the majority of a district?~~
  - Does the protected class vote as a bloc?
  - Do the voters who are not in the protected class vote in a bloc to defeat the preferred candidates of the protected class?
  - ~~■ Do the “totality of circumstances” indicate race is a factor in elections?~~
  
- Liability is now established by just the presence of racially polarized voting and dilution of the protected class’s ability to elect or influence the outcome of elections.

# CVRA Impact

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- **Switched (or in the process of switching) as a result of CVRA:**
  - At least 328 school districts
  - 46 Community College Districts
  - 200+ cities
  - 1 County Board of Supervisors
  - 75 water and other special districts.
- **Palmdale, Santa Clara and Santa Monica fought “on the merits.” All lost.**
  - Santa Monica: CA Supreme Court sent case back down. Now back in Superior Court.
  - Palmdale spent about \$1.8 million, Santa Clara \$1.37 million, and Santa Monica over \$7 million, just on their defense.
  - Santa Monica plaintiffs requested \$22 million
  - So far, no jurisdiction has won a case.
- **Key settlements:**
  - Palmdale: \$4.7 million
  - Santa Clara: \$3.8 million
  - Modesto: \$3 million
  - Highland: \$1.3 million
  - Anaheim: \$1.1 million
  - Whittier: \$1 million
  - Santa Barbara: \$600,000
  - Tulare Hospital: \$500,000
  - Camarillo: \$233,000
  - Compton Unified: \$200,000
  - Madera Unified: about \$170,000
  - Hanford Joint Union Schools: \$118,000
  - Merced City: \$42,000
- **An estimated \$20 million in total settlements and court awards so far.**

# Districting Process 1

Step	Description
<b>Two Initial Hearings</b> October 7 & 14, 2025	Held prior to release of draft maps. Education and to solicit input on the composition of districts.
<b>Community Workshop</b> October 15, 2025	Education and to solicit input on the composition of districts.
<b>First Deadline for Community Maps</b> October 17, 2025	Maps must be in by 5 pm Last day to receive maps for processing for the October 28 <sup>th</sup> Public Hearing
<b>Release draft maps</b> October 21, 2025	Maps must be posted at least 7 days prior to 3 <sup>rd</sup> hearing.
<b>Third hearing on the draft maps</b> October 28, 2025	First of two meetings to discuss and revise the draft maps and to discuss the election sequence.
<b>Community Workshop</b> Early November 2025	Date To Be Announced Community opportunity to discuss draft maps

# Districting Process 2

Step	Description
<b>Second Deadline for Community Maps</b> November 7, 2025	Maps must be in by 5 pm Last day to receive maps for processing for the November 18 <sup>th</sup> Public Hearing
<b>Release revised maps</b> November 11, 2025	Maps must be posted at least 7 days prior to 4 <sup>th</sup> hearing.
<b>Fourth hearing on the draft maps</b> November 18, 2025	Second of two meetings to discuss and revise the draft maps and to discuss the election sequence.
<b>Map Adoption</b> December 9, 2025	Final map and sequence must be posted at least 7 days prior to adoption.
<b>First election</b> November 3, 2026	First elections in new districts in 2026 & 2028

# Districting Rules and Goals

## 1. Federal Laws

**Equal Population**  
**Federal Voting Rights Act**  
**No Racial Gerrymandering**



## 2. California Criteria

*In prioritized order:*

1. **Geographically contiguous**
2. **Avoid division of neighborhoods and “communities of interest”**  
(Socio-economic geographic areas that should be kept together)
3. **Avoid division of Cities and Census Designated Places**
4. **Easily identifiable boundaries**
5. **Compact**  
(Do not bypass one group of people to get to a more distant group of people)

## 2. California Prohibition

“Shall not adopt election district boundaries for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, political candidate, or political party.”

## 3. Other Traditional Redistricting Principles

**Future population growth**

# Key Demographics

Each of the five Districts will contain about 6,280 people.

“Citizen Voting Age Population” data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey is considered the best available data on “eligible voters.”

Category	Field	Total
2020 Census	Total Population	31,399
Total Pop.	Hispanic/Latino	24%
	NH White	54%
	NH Black	2%
	NH Asian/Pac.Isl.	19%
	NH Native Amer.	1%
Citizen Voting Age Pop	Total	22,690
	Hisp	17%
	NH White	62%
	NH Black	2%
	Asian/Pac.Isl.	17%
	Native Amer.	1%

# Demographic Summary

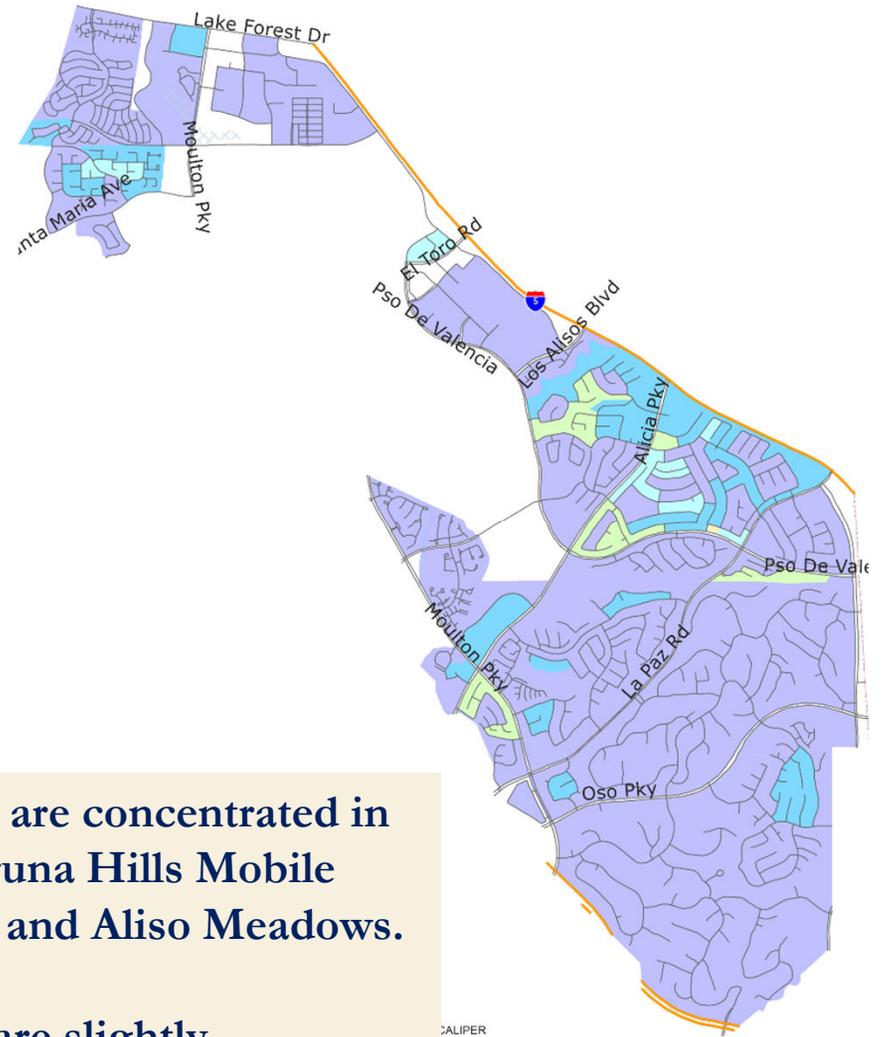
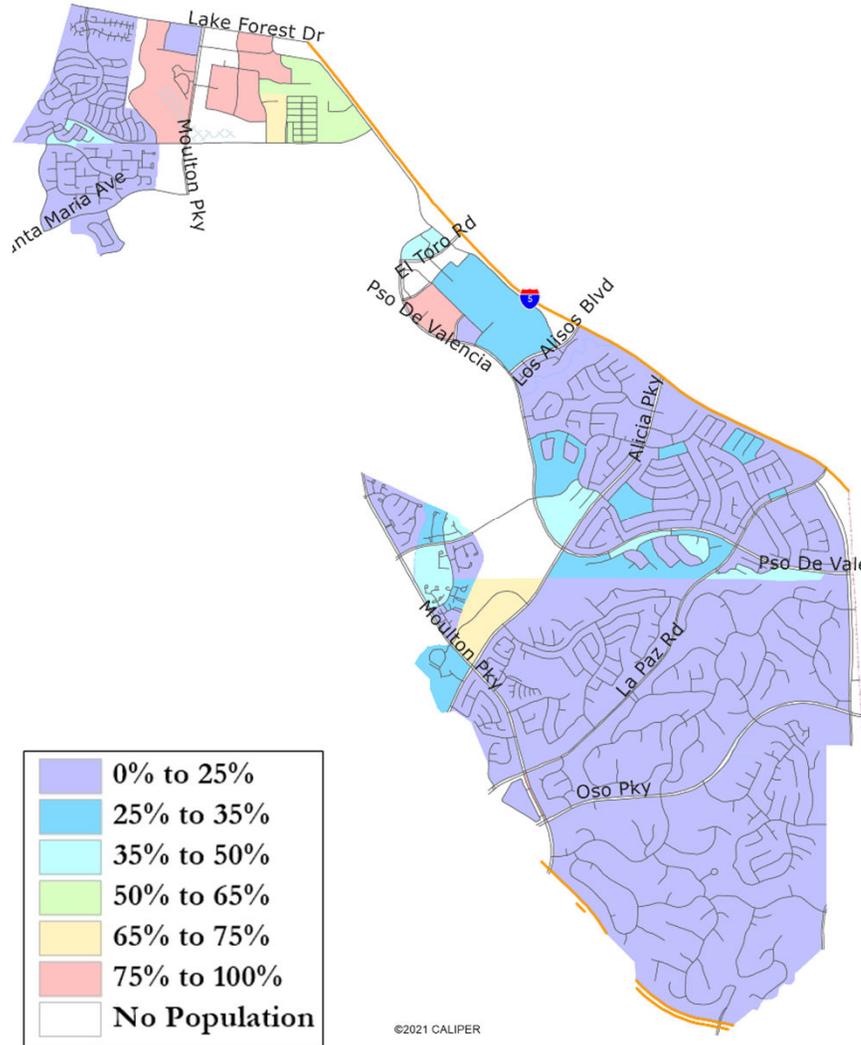
Each of the five Districts will contain about 6,280 people.

Additional demographic information from the American Community Survey and Statewide Database can be used to understand communities

Category	Field	Total	Category	Field	Total
2020 Census	Total Population	31,399	Age	age0-19	21%
Total Pop.	Hispanic/Latino	24%		age20-60	51%
	NH White	54%		age60plus	28%
	NH Black	2%	Immigration	immigrants	26%
	NH Asian/PacIsl.	19%		naturalized	69%
	NH Native Amer.	1%	Language spoken at home	english	66%
Citizen Voting Age Pop	Total	22,690		spanish	14%
	Hisp	17%		asian-lang	10%
	NH White	62%	other lang	10%	
	NH Black	2%	Language Fluency	Speaks Eng. "Less than Very Well"	13%
	Asian/PacIsl.	17%		Education (among those age 25+)	hs-grad
Native Amer.	1%	bachelor	35%		
Voter Registration (Nov 2024)	Total	20,473	graduatedegree	18%	
	Latino est.	15%	Child in Household	child-under18	28%
	Spanish-Surnamed	13%	Pct of Pop. Age 16+	employed	62%
	Asian-Surnamed	9%		Household Income	income 0-25k
	Filipino-Surnamed	2%	income 25-50k		8%
	NH White est.	73%	income 50-75k		10%
NH Black	2%	income 75-200k	46%		
Voter Turnout (Nov 2022)	Total	12,256	income 200k-plus		25%
	Latino est.	11%	Housing Stats	single family	72%
	Spanish-Surnamed	10%		multi-family	28%
	Asian-Surnamed	7%		rented	31%
	Filipino-Surnamed	1%		owned	69%
	Voter Turnout (Nov 2024)	Total	16,015	Total population data from California's adjusted 2020 Census data. Citizen Voting Age Population, Age, Immigration, and other demographics from the 2019-2023 American Community Survey and Special Tabulation 5-year data. Turnout and Registration data from California Statewide Database. "Latino" figures calculated by NDC using Census Bureau's Latino undercount by surname estimate.	
Latino est.		13%			
Spanish-Surnamed		12%			
Asian-Surnamed		9%			
Filipino-Surnamed		2%			
NH White est.		75%			
NH Black est.	2%				

# Latino CVAP

# Asian CVAP



**Latinos are concentrated in the Laguna Hills Mobile Estates and Aliso Meadows.**

**Asians are slightly concentrated along Alicia Parkway.**

# Defining Neighborhoods

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**1<sup>st</sup> Question: How do you describe or name the area where you live?**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Question: What are its geographic boundaries?**

**What other neighborhoods are there?**

**Examples of physical features defining a neighborhood boundary:**

- Natural neighborhood dividing lines, such as highway or major roads, rivers, canals and/or hills
- Areas around parks or schools
- Other neighborhood landmarks



# Defining Communities of Interest

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California Elections Code Section 21130(c)(2):

**A “community of interest” is a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.**

The shared interests may include (but are not limited to):

- ❑ Shared public policy concerns such as education, public safety, public health, environment, housing, transportation, and access to social services. cultural districts;
- ❑ Shared socioeconomic characteristics;
- ❑ Similar voter registration rates and participation rates; and /or
- ❑ Shared histories.

Definitions of Communities of Interest may not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.

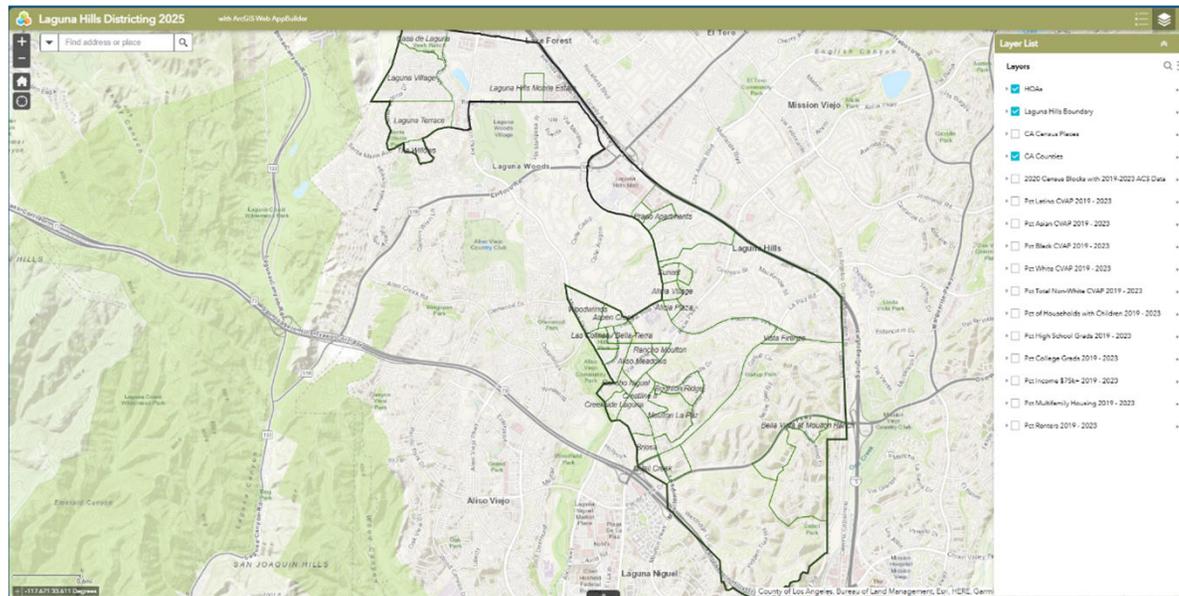
# Census Block Problems

- Census Block lines (shown in pink) do not turn out well where there are hillsides, cul-de-sacs or multiple developments not clearly bounded by streets.
- Census Block lines in Laguna Hills cut through neighborhoods and combine neighborhood pieces almost randomly.
- NDC has carefully divided the Census Blocks and assigned their population shares to the underlying neighborhoods.
- The base layer of geography for maps will be based on local neighborhood boundaries within Census Blocks.



# Public Mapping and Map Review Tools

- Different tools for different purposes
- Different tools for different levels of technical skill and interest
  - Simple “review draft maps” tool
  - Paper-based “Draw a draft map” tool



# Your Turn:

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1. **What area do you consider your neighborhood?**
2. **What are your “communities of interest”?**

For each answer, please provide:

- **Geographic boundaries**
- **The history or defining shared characteristic of the area**

In the absence of public testimony, planning records and other similar documents may provide definition.

1. **Any other questions about the process, criteria, maps, tools or any other part of this process?**



# Share Your Thoughts

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