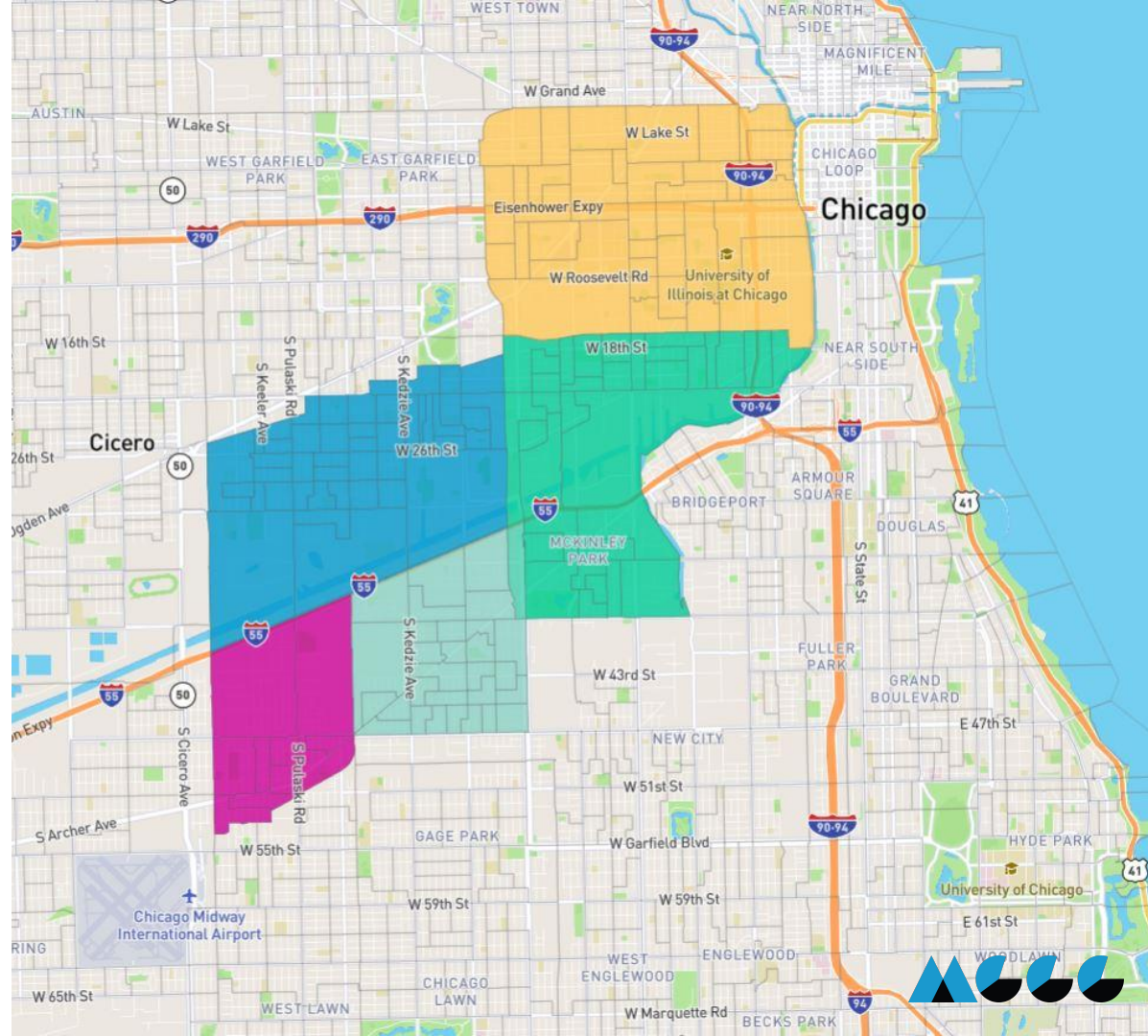


Mapping Communities with **Districtr**



Agenda

- I. Introduction to Districtr
- II. Redistricting and “communities of interest”
- III. Community case study
- IV. Collecting rich, useful community maps
- V. Districtr demonstration



I. Introduction to Districtr



What is Districtr?

A **free, public mapping tool** for state legislatures, commissions, and community organizers

Developed by a team of mathematicians, data scientists, software developers, geographers, and volunteers committed to a **fair and open redistricting** process

Built **in partnership with civil rights and community groups** to customize the tool

At Districtr.org



What can you do with Districtr?

The screenshot shows the Districtr website for Virginia. The browser address bar displays <https://districtr.org/virginia>. The website's navigation bar includes links for DRAW, WHY?, RULES, EXAMPLES, and DATA. A blue map of Virginia is visible in the top left corner, and a small US map is in the top right corner.

The main content area features the word "Virginia" in large black text. Below it, there are two buttons: "Draw Districts" (highlighted in purple) and "Draw Communities" (gray). A dashed blue arrow points from the "Draw Districts" button to the text "Districting mode" on the right side of the screen.

Below the "Draw Districts" button, there is a button labeled "Draw a plan from scratch" in a gray box. Underneath this, there are two buttons: "Statewide" (highlighted in purple) and "Cities" (gray).

At the bottom, there are three purple boxes, each representing a different type of districting plan for Virginia:

- Virginia**
11 Congressional Districts
Built out of precincts
- Virginia**
40 State Senate Districts
Built out of precincts
- Virginia**
100 House of Delegates Districts
Built out of precincts



II. Redistricting and COIs



What can you do with Districtr?

The screenshot shows the Districtr website for Virginia. The browser address bar displays <https://districtr.org/virginia>. The navigation bar includes tabs for DRAW, WHY?, RULES, EXAMPLES, and DATA. A blue map of Virginia is visible in the top left corner of the page.

The main content area features the title "Virginia" and two primary buttons: "Draw Districts" and "Draw Communities". A dashed blue arrow points from the "Draw Communities" button to the text "Community mode".

Below the "Draw Communities" button, there is a button labeled "Draw your community" and two sub-buttons: "Statewide" and "Cities".

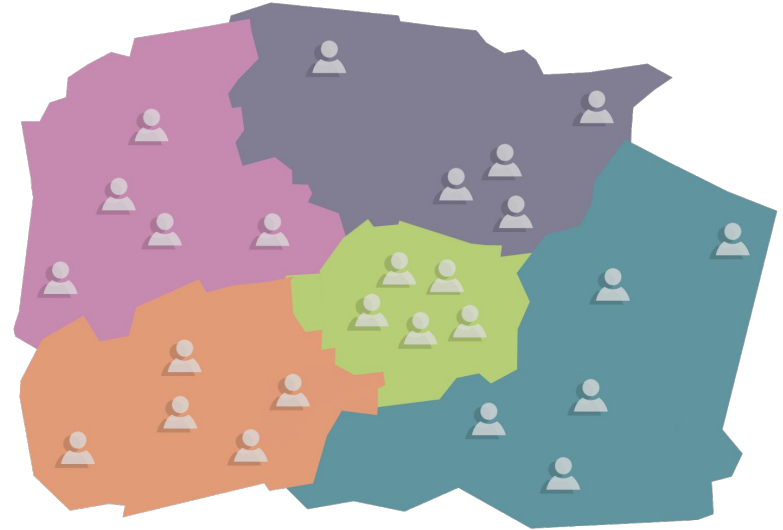
At the bottom, there are two red buttons, both labeled "Virginia":

- Identify a community
Built out of block groups
- Identify a community
Built out of precincts



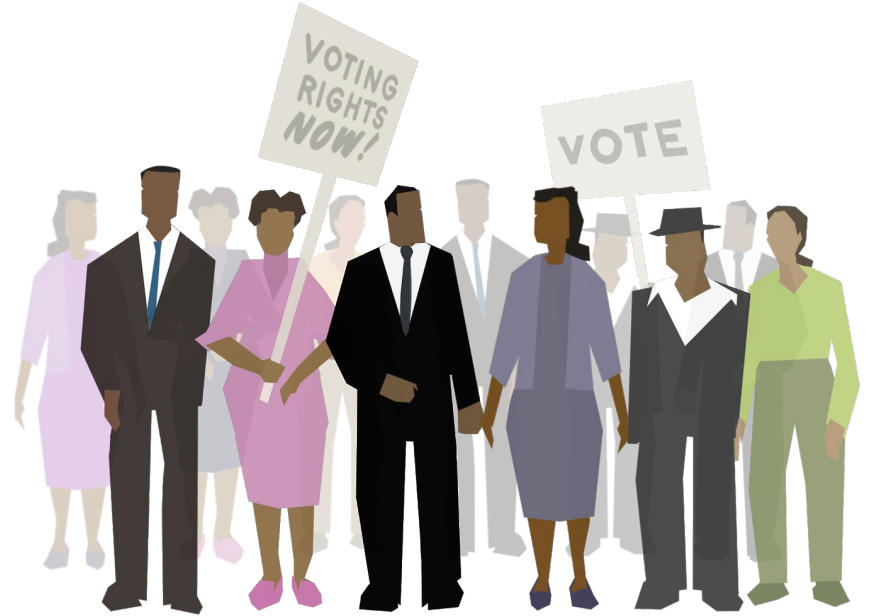
What is redistricting?

- Redrawing the **district boundaries** where elections take place
- Congress, state legislature, county commissions, city councils, school boards, and more...
- Must be redone every **10 years** after the Census to balance population



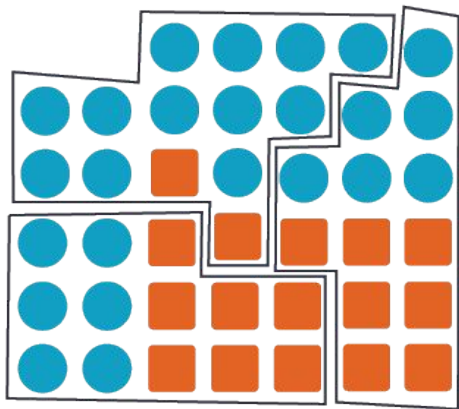
Why does it matter?

- Impacts **who has a voice**, who can run for office, and who is elected
- Many communities are well served by being **kept whole** to have a louder voice with their representative
- Some communities are better served by being **split** between districts to avoid packing

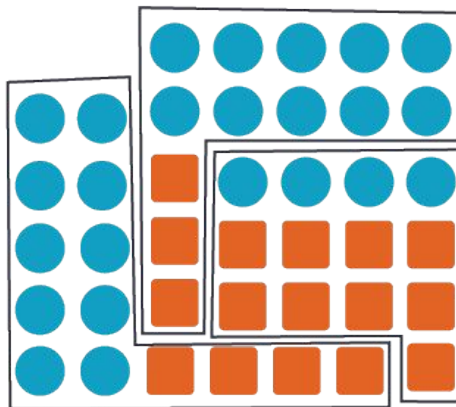


Drawing the lines

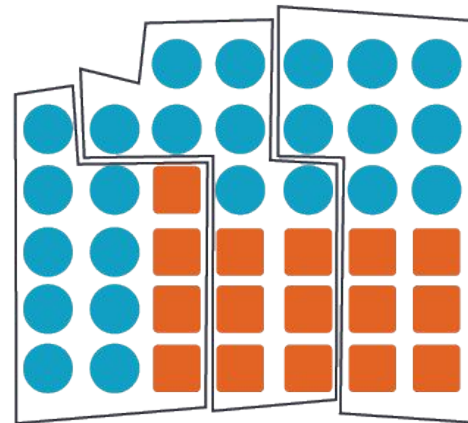
In most states, **legislators redraw their own lines**, allowing the government to choose its voters instead of the voters choosing their government!



Scenario 1



Scenario 2



Scenario 3



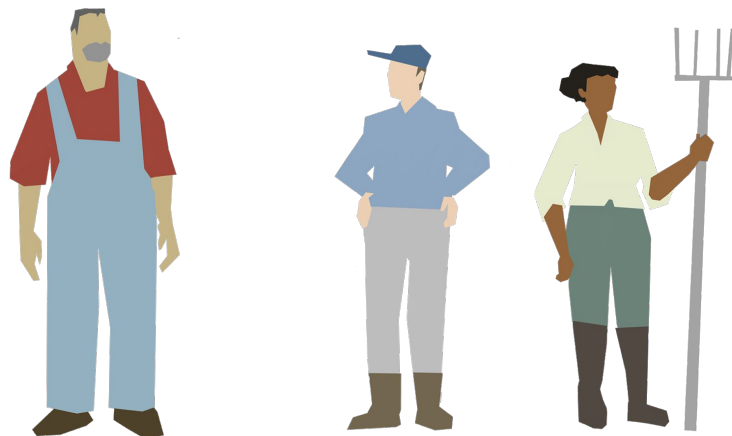
Which plan would **cats** choose?

What is a Community of Interest (COI)?

A group with **significant shared interests** that should be **given careful consideration by the line drawers**, such as...

- Small family farmers
- Residents of mountainous regions with unique environmental concerns
- Commuters who rely on the same public transit
- Residents of tourist-centric beach towns
- People who work in the same industrial sector
- Families that rely on the same public school system

Can be **rural, urban, suburban**, etc.



III. Community case studies



Let's look at a real example!

- Little Village, Chicago
- Neighborhood historically **divided into multiple city council districts** – and divided differently every time
- Many shared concerns don't get a real voice in government
 - **Violence abatement**
 - **Public health concerns** – e.g., power plant demolition

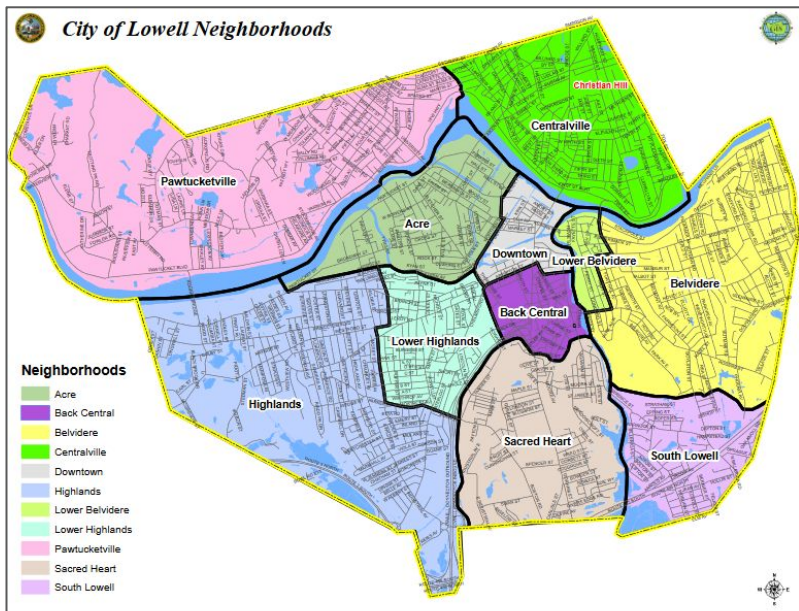


FIGURE 1.11 Little Village ward boundaries, 2015.
Source: Map Collection, University of Chicago Library.

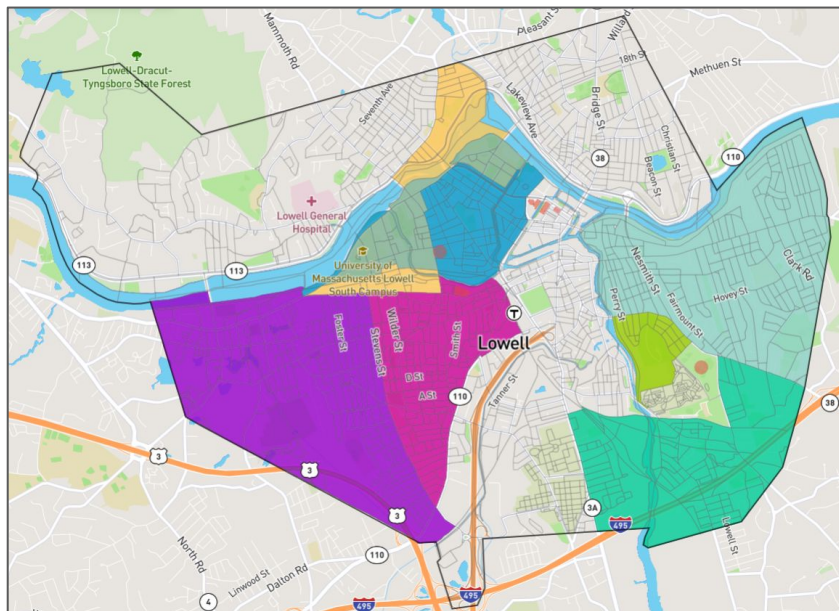
see Robert Vargas, *Wounded City*

COI point of view centers community needs

The importance of **public mapping**: Lowell, Ma



City Neighborhood Map



Community Map

*Lived experience won't quite line up with official neighborhoods –
real communities are fuzzy, overlap, or may not be on official maps at all*

IV. Collecting rich, useful community maps



Interview prompts for collecting COI narratives

- *Who is part of your community? Where do they live? What do they have in common? (Employment sector, languages spoken, pedestrian-friendly areas)*
- *What are some important places? (Commercial areas, places of worship, community centers, employers)*
- *What issues need attention from officials? What community projects need resources? (Parks, transportation, social services, schools, sidewalks, affordable housing, flood risk)*
- *What might a community meeting be about? (Violence, policing, pollution, food security)*

Navigating the COI narrative: dos and don'ts

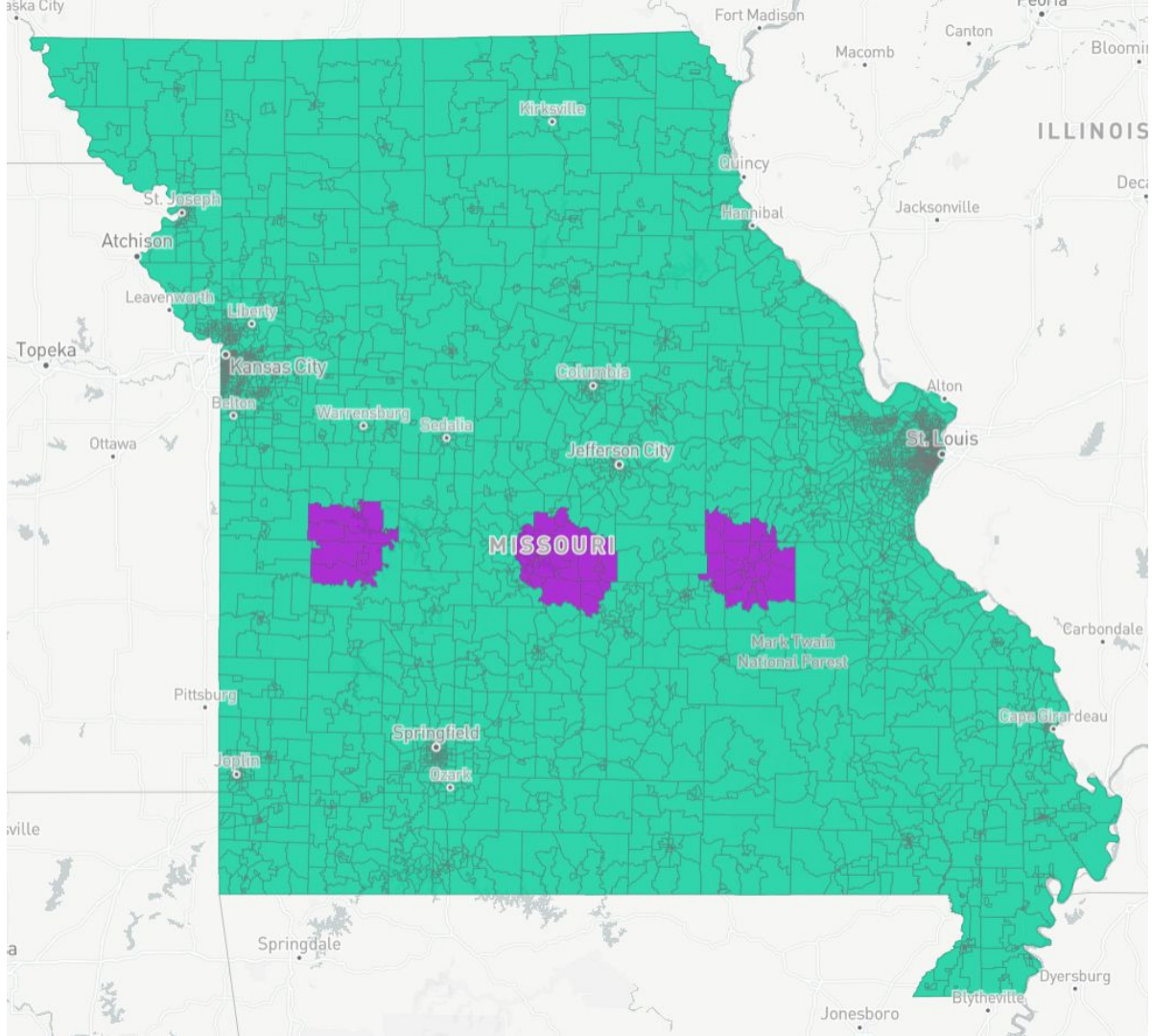
COIs cannot be **exclusively** defined by race or political party

You can steer the conversation, or ask follow-up questions, by prompting about common issues that unite the community:

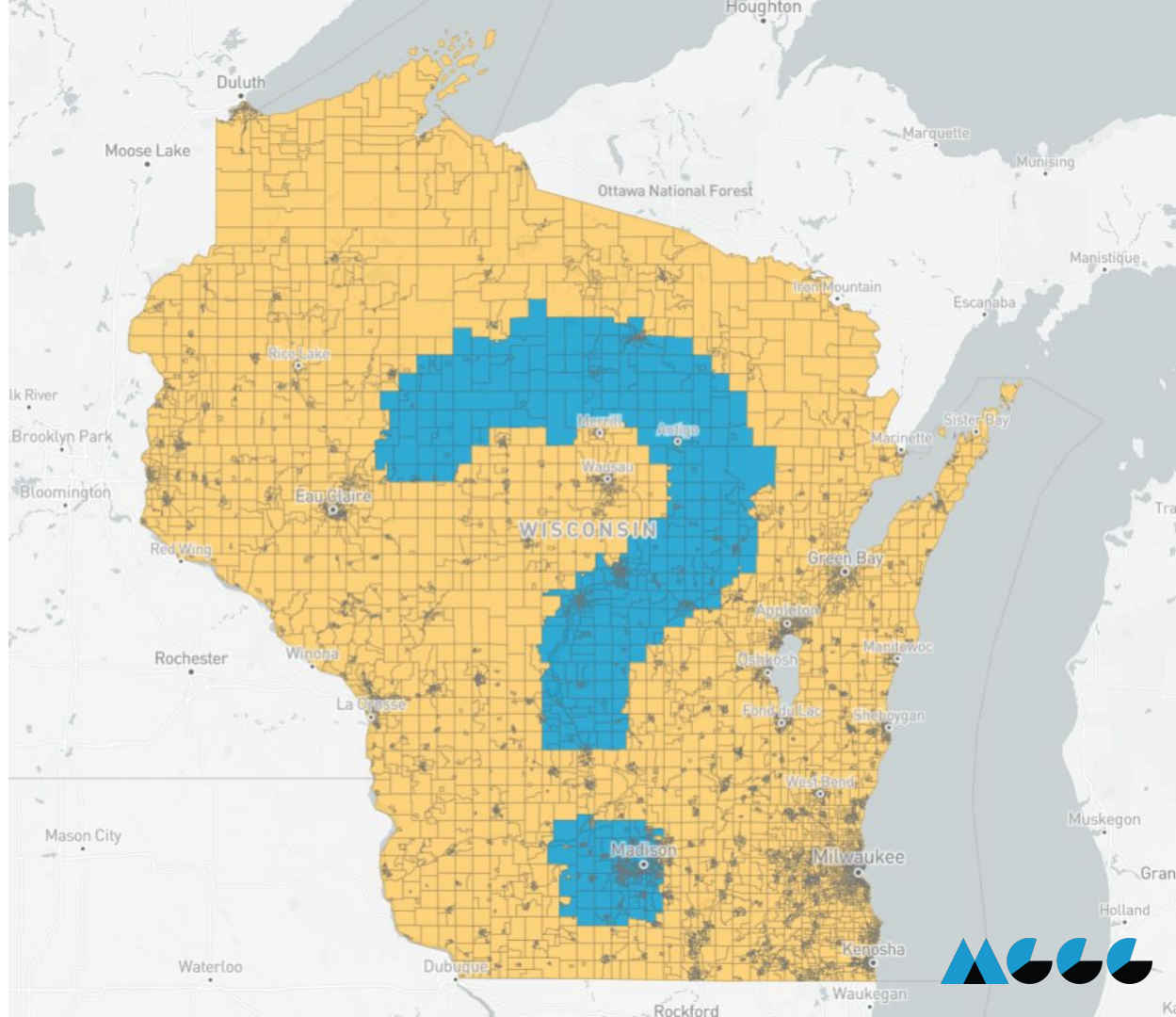
- How is this shared identity reflected in resource needs?
- Are there frequent protests here? Where do they meet? What are they about?
- Do people tend to have the same kinds of jobs or employment needs?
- What would you like your representative **to do** for your neighborhood?

Now what?

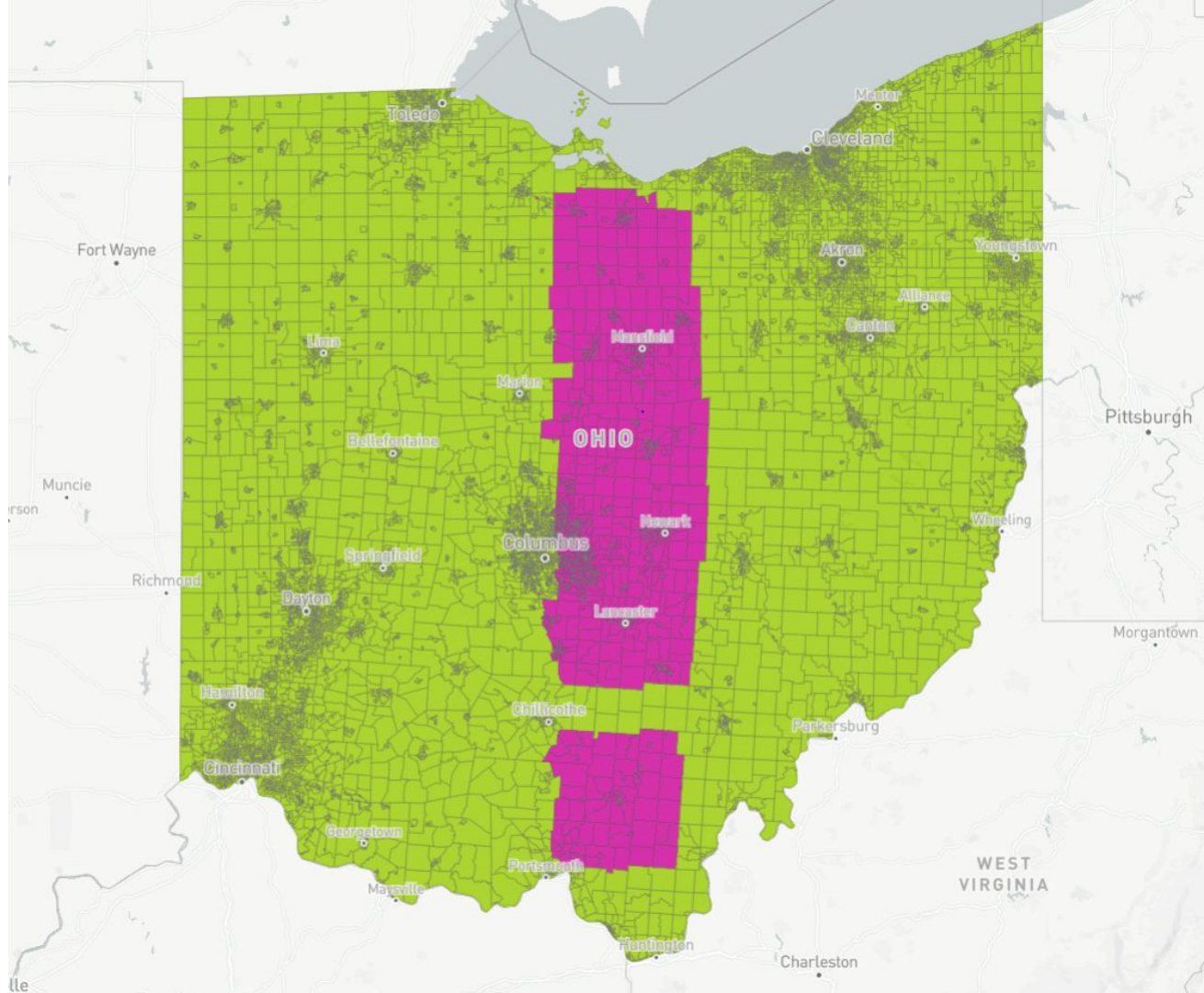
- Testify at public hearings
- Create COI maps of your own and recruit others!
 - We recommend the **interview** format
 - Groups can draw a consensus map or many individual maps
- Use public submission portals – Districtr generates URLs that are easy to share



Questions?



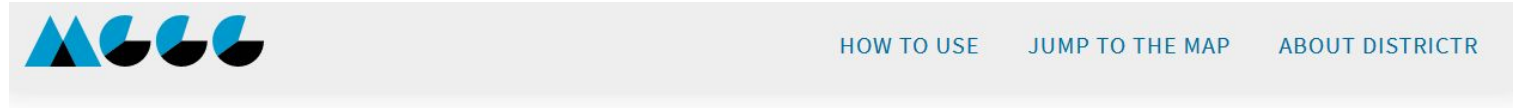
Let's
try it....



V. Districtr demo



Now let's try it on [Districtr.org](https://districtr.org)...



You draw the lines.

Districtr is a free, public web tool for districting and community identification,
brought to you by the MGGG Redistricting Lab.