

2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program

Drafted May 29, 2020

The 2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) offers local governments, councils of government, and regional planning organizations the opportunity to review and modify select statistical boundaries that the U.S. Census Bureau uses to count people in our community. By participating in the PSAP, the Triangle region will ultimately be provided with the most relevant, useful data possible about population, income, and housing for small-area geographic analyses. The Census Bureau uses statistical boundaries to tabulate data for the 2020 Census, American Community Survey, Economic Census, and other surveys. Data tabulated to PSAP geographies are used by federal, state, and local agencies for planning and future purposes, as well as by the private sector, academia, and the public. Standard statistical geographies include: Census Tracts, Census Block Groups, and Census Designated Places (CDPs).

In July 2018, the Census Bureau invited regional planning agencies, councils of governments, and local governments and organizations to participate in PSAP. Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) served as the PSAP primary participant for the Triangle region, which includes Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake Counties. In January 2019, the Census Bureau sent TJCOG both the 2010 PSAP geography and proposed 2020 PSAP plan to review. During the program, TJCOG worked with its seven counties and other interested local parties, including both Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the Triangle Rural Planning Organization (TARPO), to review the 2020 PSAP plan and send modifications back the Census Bureau. Triangle J COG utilized the Census Bureau’s Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) to review the boundaries and generate the final 2020 PSAP plan. In coordination with the counties, MPOs, and RPO, TJCOG submitted the final PSAP package to the Census Bureau on May 15, 2020. The Census Bureau will begin to release geographies from the 2020 Census in December 2020. The next opportunity to review and delineate statistical areas is planned for the 2030 Census.

What is a Statistical Boundary?

A *statistical boundary* breaks down large geographical areas into smaller, local areas. These small-area boundaries let you compare poverty, health, education, and many other topics across local areas.

See below for statistical boundary thresholds, as defined by the Census Bureau.

Statistical Boundary Thresholds

Statistical Boundary	Primary Purpose	Nest within	Threshold Type	Minimum	Optimum	Maximum
Census Tract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable small area data Data comparability 	County	Population	1,200	4,000	8,000
			Housing Unit	480	1,600	3,200
Block Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spatial resolution Demographic characteristics 	Census Tract	Population	600	N/A	3,000
			Housing Unit	240	N/A	1,200
Census Designated Place (CDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic and economic data for unincorporated places 	None	Population	Cannot have both zero population and zero housing units.		
			Housing Unit			

Participant Statistical Areas Program Timeline

February 2017 – October 2018: Census Bureau conducts PSAP internal review to generate 2020 proposed plans.

March – May 2018: Census Bureau contacted 2010 Census PSAP participants to inquire about 2020 Census PSAP participation.

- *March 2018: TJCOG designated as primary PSAP participant for Triangle region.*

July 2018: Census Bureau began sending 2020 Census PSAP invitation materials to participants.

- *July 2018: TJCOG receives 2020 Census PSAP invitation materials.*

January 2019: PSAP delineation phase begins. Participants have 120 calendar days to submit updates.

- *January 23, 2019: TJCOG receives PSAP delineation materials from Census Bureau.*

January – May 2019: PSAP delineation phase begins. Participants have 120 calendar days to submit updates.

- *January 23 – May 23, 2019: TJCOG coordinates review and comment on PSAP geographies from counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *January 23, 2019: TJCOG receives PSAP delineation materials from Census Bureau.*
- *March 8, 2019: TJCOG finalizes PSAP timeline, workflow, and stakeholders.*
- *March 11, 2019: TJCOG contacts PSAP stakeholders and coordinates PSAP review.*
- *April 19, 2019: PSAP edits due to TJCOG from Counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *April 19 – May 22, 2019: TJCOG consolidates and finalizes PSAP edits and comments, with reach back to Counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *May 23, 2019: TJCOG submits final PSAP package to Census Bureau via SWIM.*

January – May 2020: PSAP verification phase begins. Participants have 90 calendar days to review updates.

- *January 23, 2020: TJCOG receives PSAP verification notification and materials from Census Bureau. TJCOG initiates PSAP verification.*
- *January 23 – March 16, 2020: TJCOG coordinates review and comment on PSAP geographies from counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *March 13, 2020: TJCOG determines changes accepted or denied by Census Bureau during delineation phase.*
- *March 23, 2020: TJCOG contacts MPO and County stakeholders re: PSAP verification.*
- *March 23 – April 10, 2020: Counties and MPOs determine whether to accept or contest Census geographies.*
 - *If contested, Counties and MPOs coordinate changes with TJCOG.*
 - *If accepted, TJCOG communicates acceptance of changes to Census Bureau.*

April 10, 2020: Due to COVID-19 operational adjustments, Census Bureau extends PSAP verification deadline to May 15, 2020.

- *April 10 – May 8, 2020: TJCOG continues to coordinate review and comment on PSAP geographies from counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *April 17, 2020: PSAP edits due to TJCOG from Counties, MPOs, and RPO.*
- *April 17 – May 14, 2020: TJCOG consolidates and finalizes PSAP edits and comments. Reach back to Counties and MPOs, and RPO, as required.*
- *May 15, 2020: TJCOG submits final PSAP package to Census Bureau via SWIM.*

October 2020: Census Bureau conducts closeout of the 2020 Census PSAP.

Points of Contact

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Participant Statistical Areas Program Outcomes

In coordination with local government and transportation planning agencies, TJCOG delineated and verified Census statistical boundaries for the following counties: Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake. In addition, TJCOG and CAMPO staff coordinated closely with the Kerr-Tar COG to make sure TAZs in Franklin, Granville, and Person figure into Kerr-Tar's work. Below are the recommended changes to statistical areas, which were submitted by TJCOG on behalf of its seven counties, two MPOs, and RPO.

Geography	PSAP Delineation Phase		PSAP Verification Phase	
	2010 Census Geographies	TJCOG Delineation Submittal	2020 Census Geographies	TJCOG Verification Submittal
Triangle J Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 361 tracts • 896 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 546 tracts • 1,316 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 445 tracts • 1,279 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 480 tracts • 1,299 block groups
Chatham County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 tracts • 35 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 tracts • 65 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 tracts • 56 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 tracts • 58 block groups
Durham County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 tracts • 153 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67 tracts • 237 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67 tracts • 237 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 tracts • 238 block groups
Johnston County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 tracts • 84 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88 tracts • 164 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 tracts • 158 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 tracts • 158 block groups
Lee County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 tracts • 37 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 tracts • 48 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 tracts • 40 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 tracts • 40 block groups
Moore County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 tracts • 57 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 tracts • 76 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 tracts • 71 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 tracts • 71 block groups
Orange County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 tracts • 75 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62 tracts • 122 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 tracts • 121 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 tracts • 121 block groups
Wake County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 187 tracts • 455 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 255 tracts • 604 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 222 tracts • 596 block groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 252 tracts • 613 block groups

Triangle J COG worked with its seven counties and other interested local parties to ensure that the region's priorities were appropriately considered in the delineation and verification of the statistical boundaries. Census data for updated statistical areas are used to prepare grant applications to fund community and regional development, education, agriculture, energy, and environmental programs, as well as other needed community improvements and enhancements. Census data are used to plan for future community needs, which necessitated outreach and engagement across multiple county departments, such as planning, public works, transportation, and GIS/information technology.

This collaboration is best exemplified in TJCOG's collaboration with the City of Durham's Public Works Department and its Stormwater & GIS Division. The Stormwater & GIS Division updates and maintains the City Limits and Annexations datasets, as well as the Census Bureau's Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) program. The Census Bureau conducts the BAS annually to collect information about selected legally defined geographic areas. The BAS is used to update information about the legal boundaries and names of all governments. In supporting the BAS, the Stormwater & GIS Division noted the absence of the Little River Reservoir, which was constructed in 1988. Triangle J COG worked with the Division, and others at Durham City/County government, to incorporate this change into the PSAP package, draw a new perennial shoreline, reshape the Census Tract and Block Group boundaries, and create a Special Use Tract for the Little River Reservoir.