

# Voting Precincts

History and Purpose



**UTAH**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
**COUNTIES**

*The Unifying Voice for County Government*

# What do we recommend?

## **County Clerks recommend two improvements to precincts:**

1. Use population instead of active registered voters
2. Increase or eliminate precinct size restrictions

# Redistricting Process

Key principles: Fairness, Consistency and Simplicity

Level	Requirements	Based on
Congressional	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
State Legislature	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
State School Board	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
County & City Commission/Council	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
Local School Board	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
City Voter Participation Areas	Substantially equal in population, compact & contiguous	Population
Precincts (20A-5-303)	“Facilitate voting” (obsolete)	Active Registered Voters

# Redistricting Process

## Benefits of using Population vs. Active Voters

- **Continuity** – same measuring stick
- **Simplicity** in mapping
  - Only one set of data
  - Precinct results align more with Census tracts
- County/Municipal/School Districts would be more **substantially equal in population.**
- Would have little impact on the current number of voters in a precincts

# Precinct Purpose Has Changed Over Time

## Original Need for Precincts

- Group voters in the same political districts
- Determine ballot style
- Determine where voters go to vote
- Limit how many voters poll at a specific location
- Ensure voters only vote once
- Send appropriate ballots to the correct polling place

## Vote Centers

- Eliminated need for a specific voting location
- Eliminated the need to limit how many voters went to polling place

## Technology – Electronic Poll Books

- Ensures voters can only vote once
- Determine the precincts and prints the correct ballot style for the voter

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Needs are Different

## **Vote Centers + Vote By Mail**

- Group voters in the same political districts
- Determine ballot style
- Send appropriate ballots to the correct polling place
- Determine where voters go to vote
- Limit how many voters poll at a specific location
- Ensure voters only vote once

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology and Processes have simplified and streamlined our needs.**

**Updating our precinct approach would further improve the way we manage elections.**

# 1,250 Problems

A cap of 1,250 voters in a precinct causes several issues.

## Split Precincts

- Special Service Districts often don't follow election boundaries – Create odd boundaries
- Often contain a small number of voters.
- Each split creates a unique ballot style.
  - Example: Weber County - 182 precincts/splits.
  - A 3-party primary could create 728 ballot styles to proof and supply.

## Reporting Results

- Reporting precinct level results on these few voters also likely discloses how they voted.
- Violates state constitutional right to a secret ballot.
- Larger precincts allow these few voters to be grouped together.
- Allows release of more precinct level results while preserving the right to a secret ballot.

# What the 1,250 Cap Looks Like in Reality

## Precinct Statistics

County	Precincts	Min Voters	Average Voters	Max Voters
Salt Lake	796	3	759	2,120
Utah Co.	308	2	1,151	4,331
Davis	224	6	876	1,946
Weber	182	3	834	2,435
Millard	29	3	240	823
Statewide	2,629	2	831	4,925



# Precinct Size Limits

There is little danger of “Mega-precincts”

## **Natural Limits to Precinct Size**

- Still have overlapping political boundaries
  - State legislative districts
  - Municipal districts
  - School board districts
  - Voter participation areas
- Counties can choose to make smaller precincts if it makes sense in their situation

## **Counties can take into account specific needs:**

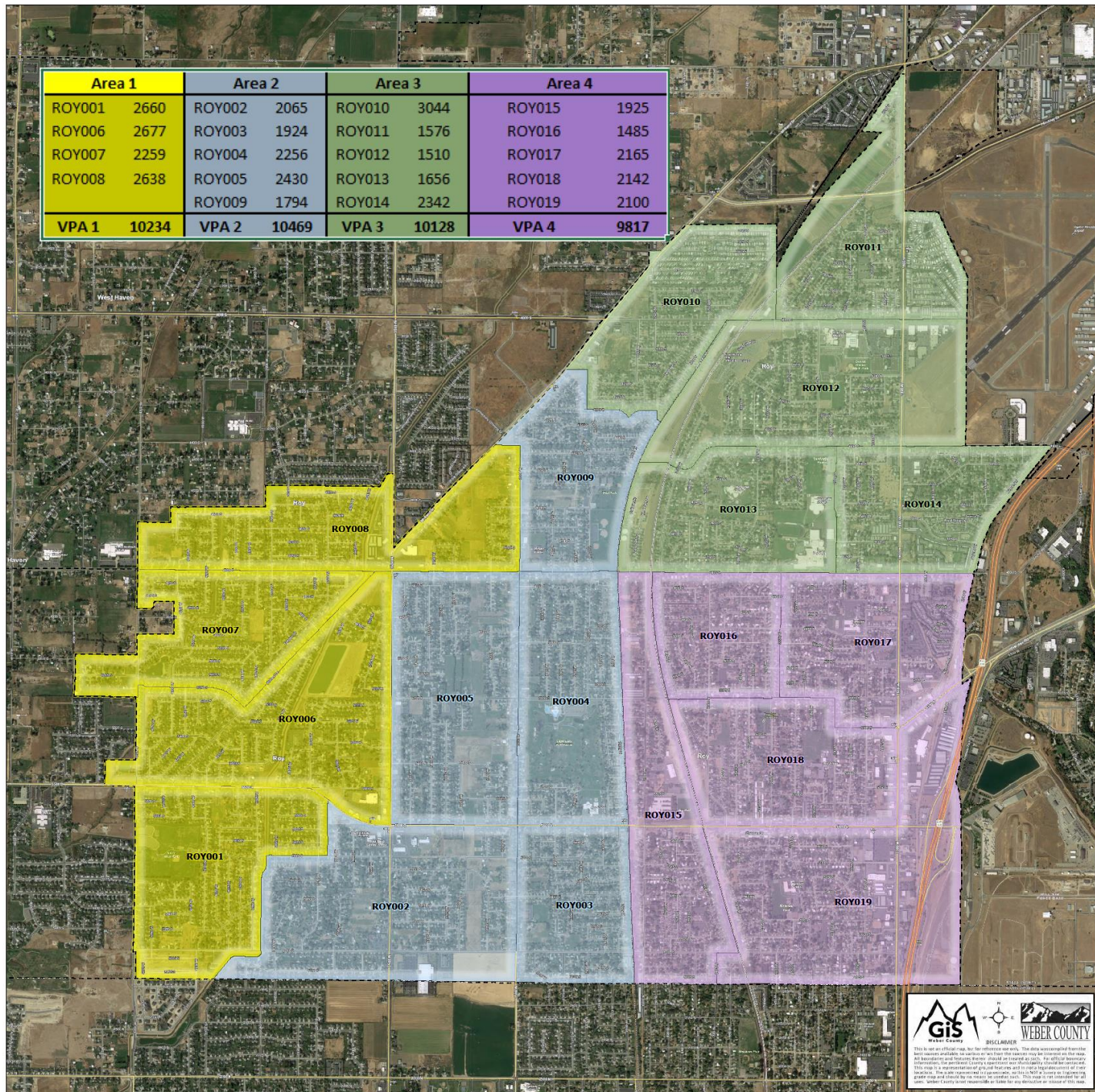
- Political party considerations
- Geographic boundaries
- Administrative requirements

# A Tale of Three Cities

City	Pop.	Current Precincts	New Precincts	Current Voters/Precinct	New Voters/Precinct
Ogden	87,000	45	28	770	1,238
Marriott-Slaterville	2,000	4	2	275	551
Roy	39,000	19	4	967	4,594
Roy – Option 2	39,000	19	10	967	1,837

*Precinct size has no impact on election results.  
It's purely an administrative tool.*

Area 1		Area 2		Area 3		Area 4	
ROY001	2660	ROY002	2065	ROY010	3044	ROY015	1925
ROY006	2677	ROY003	1924	ROY011	1576	ROY016	1485
ROY007	2259	ROY004	2256	ROY012	1510	ROY017	2165
ROY008	2638	ROY005	2430	ROY013	1656	ROY018	2142
		ROY009	1794	ROY014	2342	ROY019	2100
<b>VPA 1</b>	<b>10234</b>	<b>VPA 2</b>	<b>10469</b>	<b>VPA 3</b>	<b>10128</b>	<b>VPA 4</b>	<b>9817</b>



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