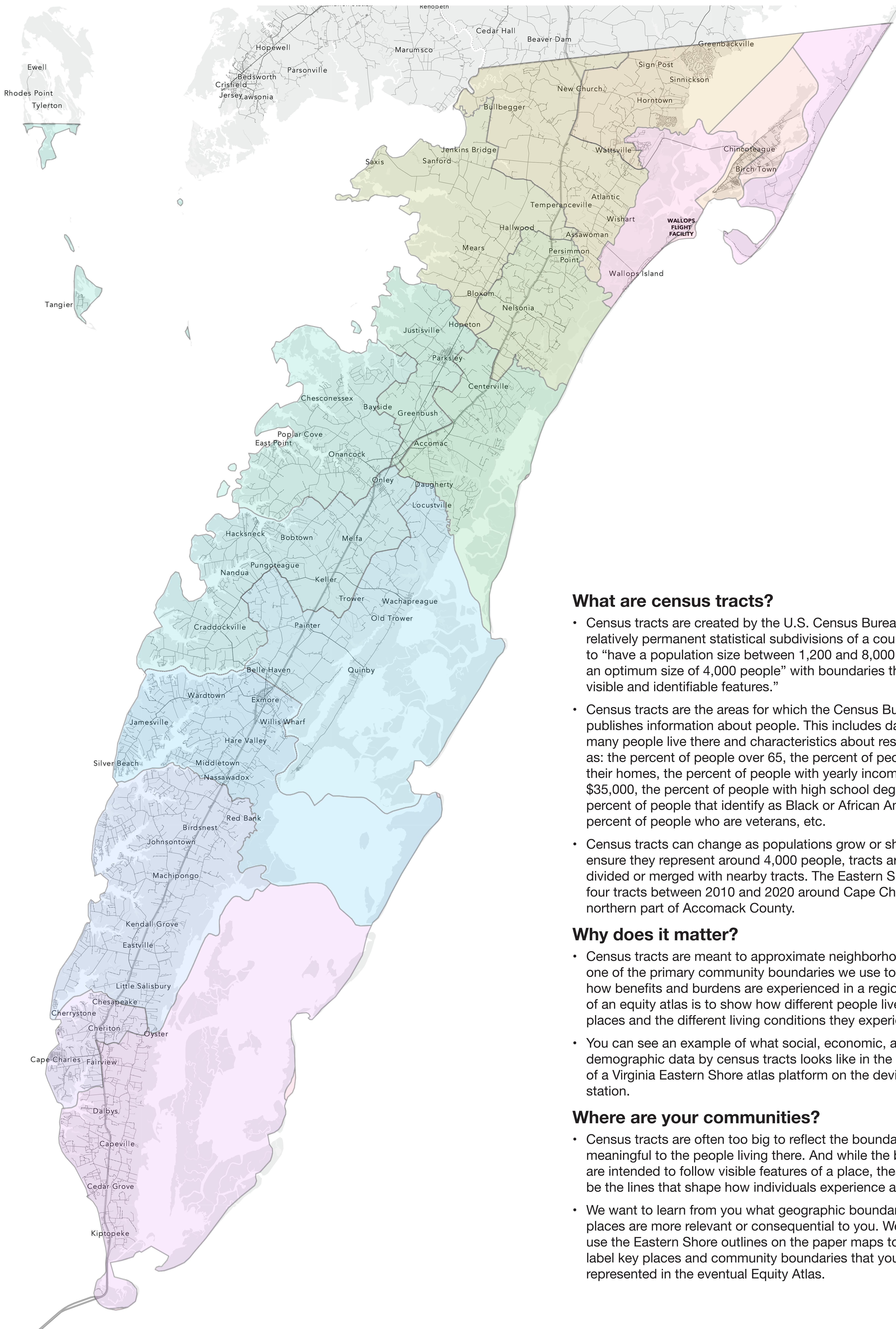


Where Are Your Communities? Eastern Shore Census Tracts



What are census tracts?

- Census tracts are created by the U.S. Census Bureau as “small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county” drawn to “have a population size between 1,200 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000 people” with boundaries that “follow visible and identifiable features.”
- Census tracts are the areas for which the Census Bureau publishes information about people. This includes data like how many people live there and characteristics about residents such as: the percent of people over 65, the percent of people who own their homes, the percent of people with yearly incomes below \$35,000, the percent of people with high school degrees, the percent of people that identify as Black or African American, the percent of people who are veterans, etc.
- Census tracts can change as populations grow or shrink. To ensure they represent around 4,000 people, tracts are sometimes divided or merged with nearby tracts. The Eastern Shore gained four tracts between 2010 and 2020 around Cape Charles and the northern part of Accomack County.

Why does it matter?

- Census tracts are meant to approximate neighborhoods and are one of the primary community boundaries we use to understand how benefits and burdens are experienced in a region. The goal of an equity atlas is to show how different people live in distinct places and the different living conditions they experience.
- You can see an example of what social, economic, and demographic data by census tracts looks like in the early version of a Virginia Eastern Shore atlas platform on the devices at this station.

Where are your communities?

- Census tracts are often too big to reflect the boundaries that are meaningful to the people living there. And while the boundaries are intended to follow visible features of a place, these may not be the lines that shape how individuals experience a place.
- We want to learn from you what geographic boundaries and places are more relevant or consequential to you. We hope you’ll use the Eastern Shore outlines on the paper maps to draw and label key places and community boundaries that you would like represented in the eventual Equity Atlas.