



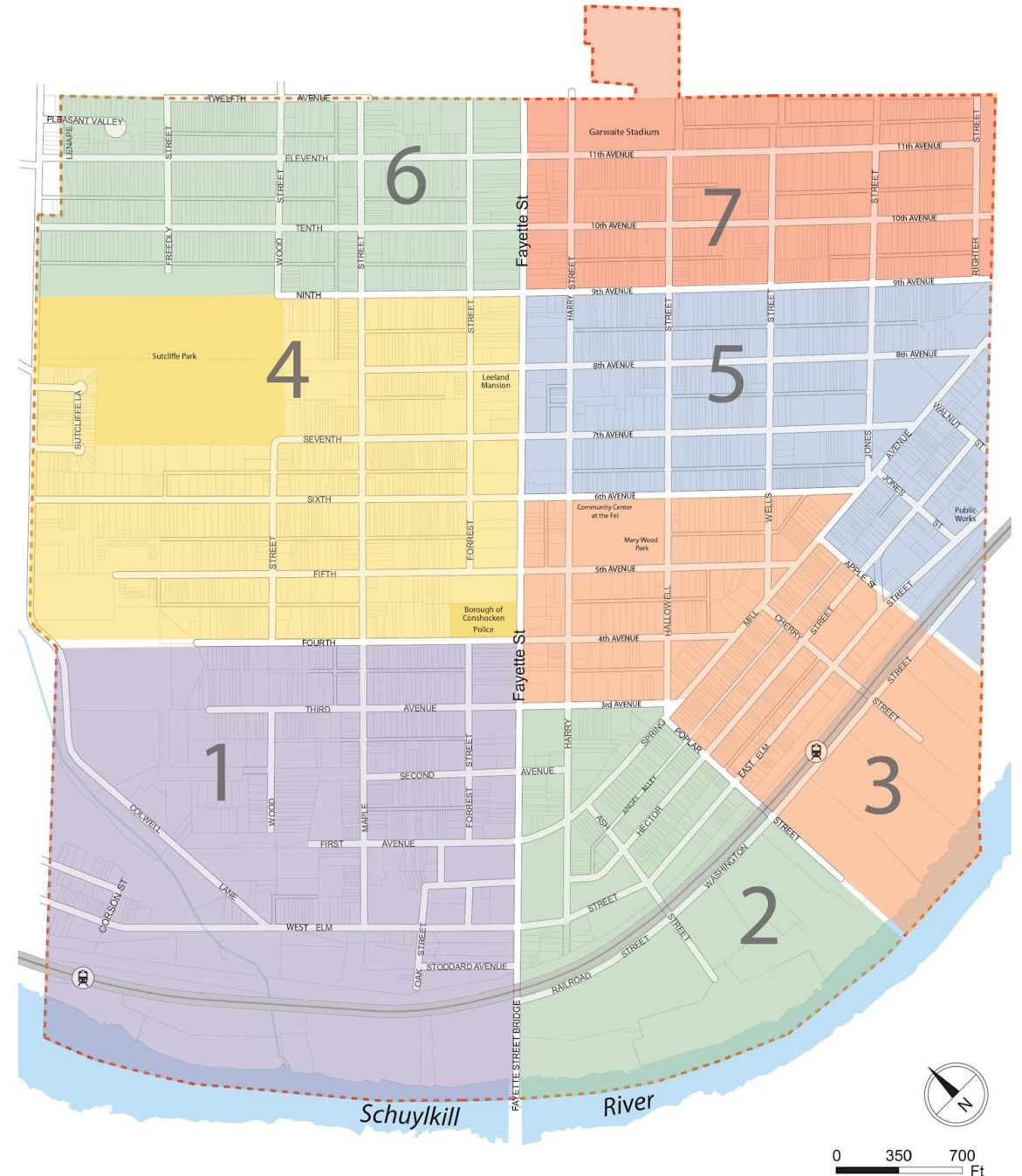
# Ward redistricting in the Borough of Conshohocken

Brendan W. Flynn, Esquire



# The Borough of Conshohocken

- Seven wards
- Each ward elects one member to the Borough Council



# “One person, one vote”

- Under the “one person, one vote” principle of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, any elected body which is elected by multiple districts must be “as nearly of equal population as is practicable.” Connor v. Finch, 431 U.S. 407, 409-10 (1977).
- This is required because each citizen’s vote must be “approximately equal in weight to that of any other citizen[.]” Mahan v. Howell, 410 U.S. 315, 322 (1973).

# “One person, one vote” (continued)

- Since it is a mathematical improbability to create regions that each have the exact same number of population, minor deviations from mathematical equality are permissible. Brown v. Thomson, 462 U.S. 835, 842 (1983).
- A map with a maximum population deviation between the largest and smallest districts of less than ten percent is presumptively constitutional, while a map with a maximum deviation above ten percent is presumptively unconstitutional. Evenwel v. Abbott, 578 U.S. 54, 60 (2016).
- The number used is total number of all people living in each district, per the most recent U.S. Census (not just all voters or all citizens).

# **“One person, one vote” (continued)**

- Because of the system of ward representation the Borough uses to elect Borough Council members, “one person, one vote” applies to the ward map.
- Patterns of development in the Borough have led to a situation where there is excessive deviation between the largest and smallest ward.
- Thus, the Borough must redraw its wards to comply with “one person, one vote.”

# Statutory requirements

- Pennsylvania law also requires that “each [municipal] entity having a governing body not entirely elected at large shall be reapportioned into districts by its governing body.” 53 Pa.C.S. § 903(a).
- This statute requires that “[d]istricts shall be composed of compact and contiguous territory as nearly equal in population as practicable as officially and finally reported in the most recent Federal census, decennial or special.” 53 Pa.C.S. § 903(b).

# 2020 Borough Census numbers

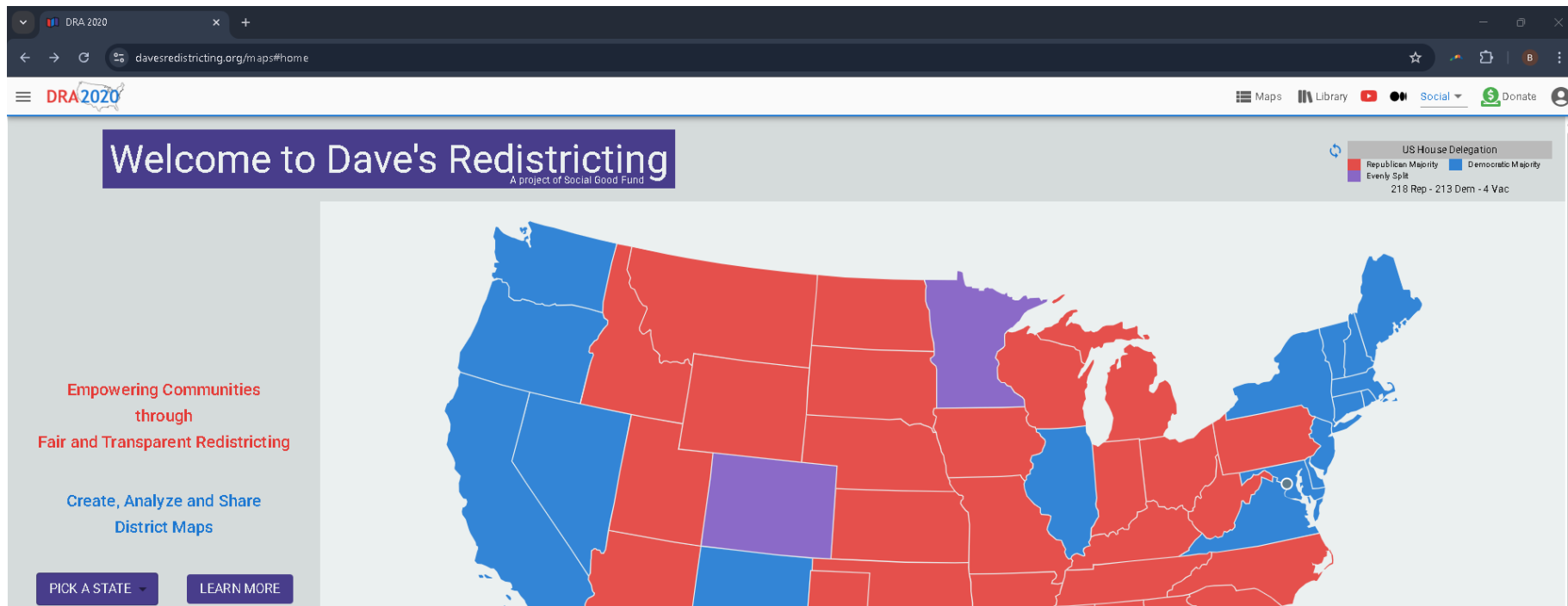
- Total Borough population: 9,261
- Ideal ward size: 1,323 (*total population divided by 7 wards*)

| Ward # | Ward population | Deviation from ideal |
|--------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1      | 1,835           | +38.70% (largest)    |
| 2      | 992             | - 25.02%             |
| 3      | 1,571           | +18.75%              |
| 4      | 1,643           | +24.19%              |
| 5      | 1,156           | - 12.62%             |
| 6      | 1,151           | - 13.00%             |
| 7      | 913             | - 30.99% (smallest)  |

**Maximum deviation: 69.69%**

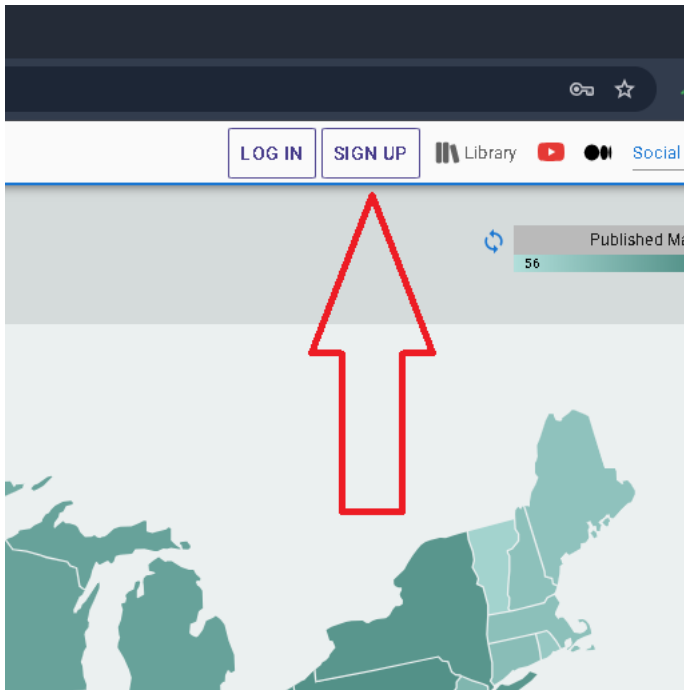
# Dave's Redistricting App ("DRA")

- Free, web-based app in which users can put together redistricting maps for states and municipalities.
- Available at: <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#home>.



# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- Go to <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#home>.
- Create a free account:



Empowering Communities  
through  
Fair and Transparent Redistricting

Create, Analyze and Share  
District Maps

Email

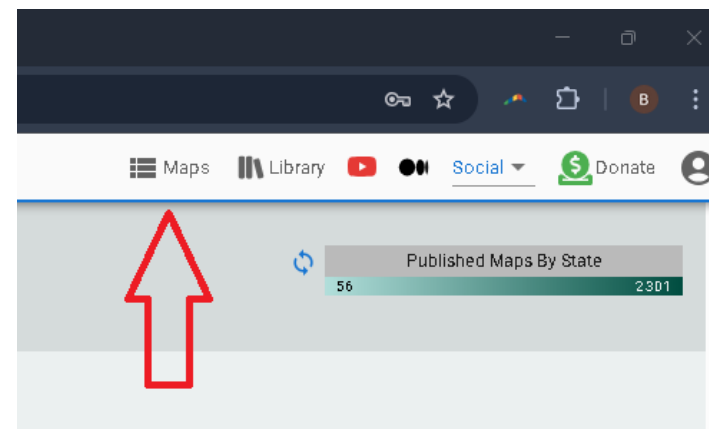
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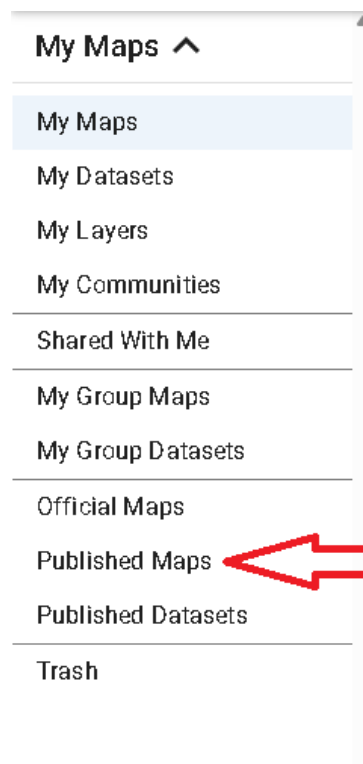
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# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- Click on “Maps” in the top right corner:

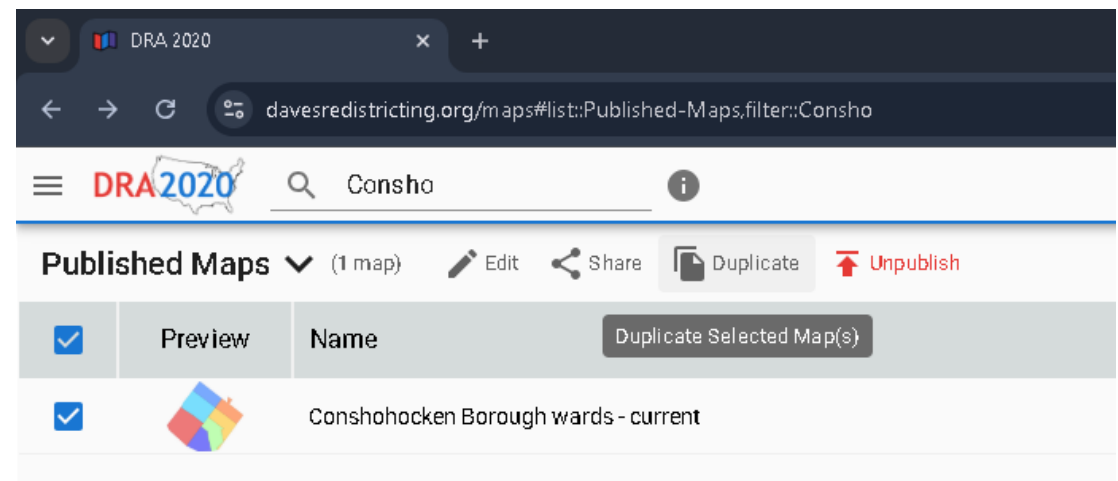
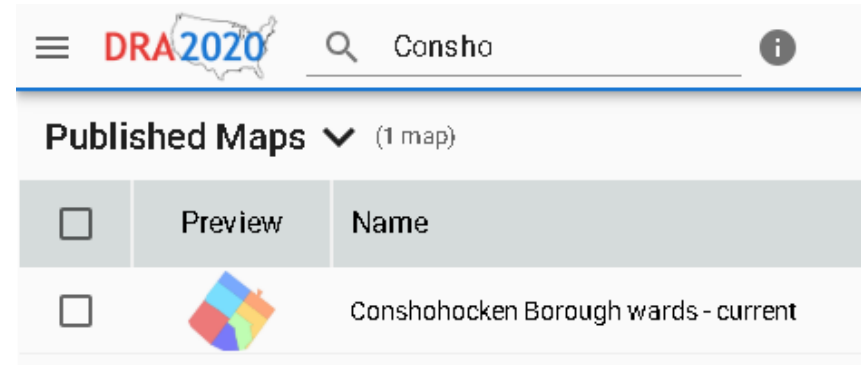


- Go to “Published Maps”:

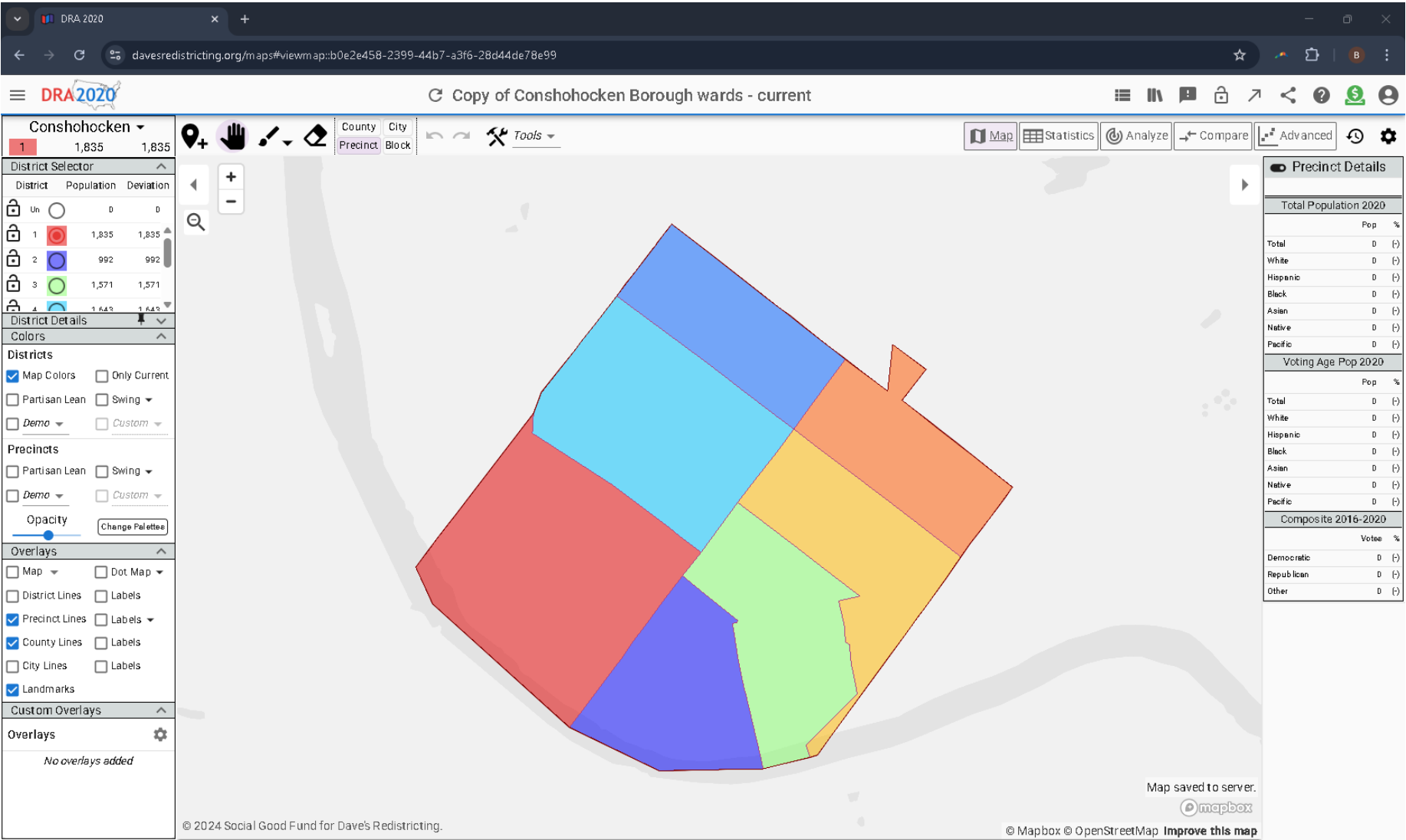


# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- Search for Conshohocken in “Published Maps” and you should find a map of the current wards:
- Select the “Conshohocken Borough wards – current” map and click “Duplicate”:



You will now have a copy of the Borough wards map which you can adjust to find a map which is compliant with the ten-percent rule.

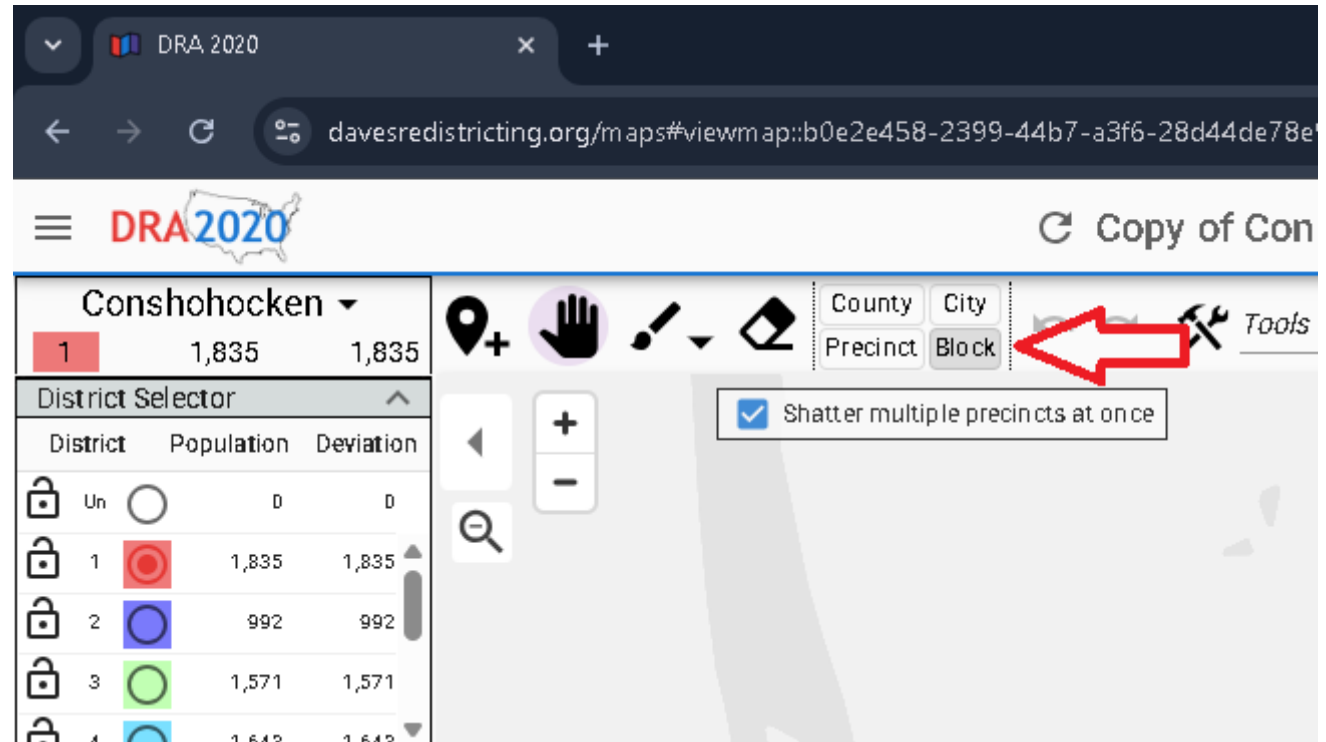


# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- The smallest geographical unit that the Census Bureau collects demographic data for is the “census block” – often equivalent to a city block bounded by four streets. (Note that some census blocks, in the Borough and elsewhere, have zero population).
- The census block is also the smallest geographical unit used in redistricting.
- The Borough's wards are considered to be “precincts” in DRA's terminology, so in order to redraw the wards, you will have to “shatter” the precincts into census blocks.

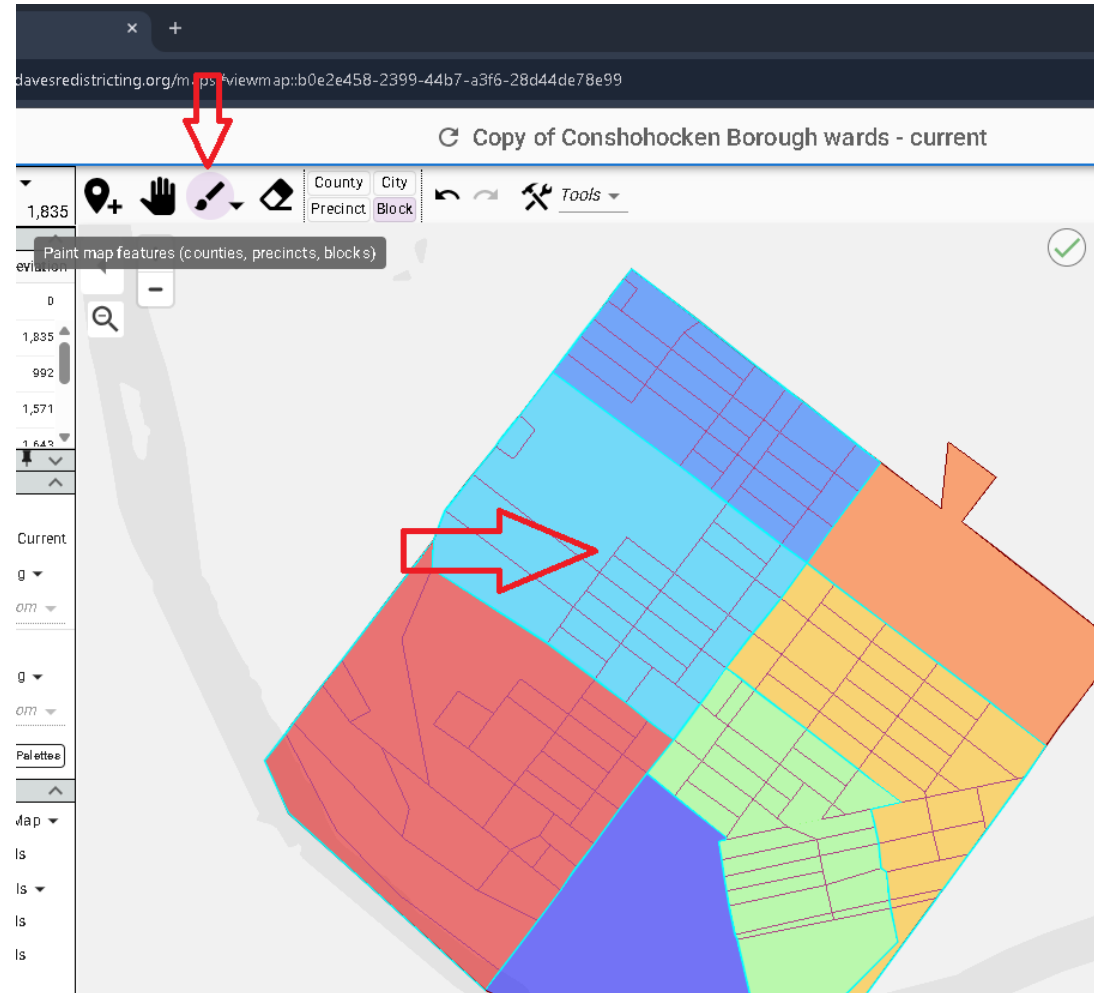
# Dave's Redistricting App ("DRA")

- To "shatter" a precinct/ward, click on the "Block" button near the top left corner and there will be an option to "Shatter multiple precincts at once," which should be checked.



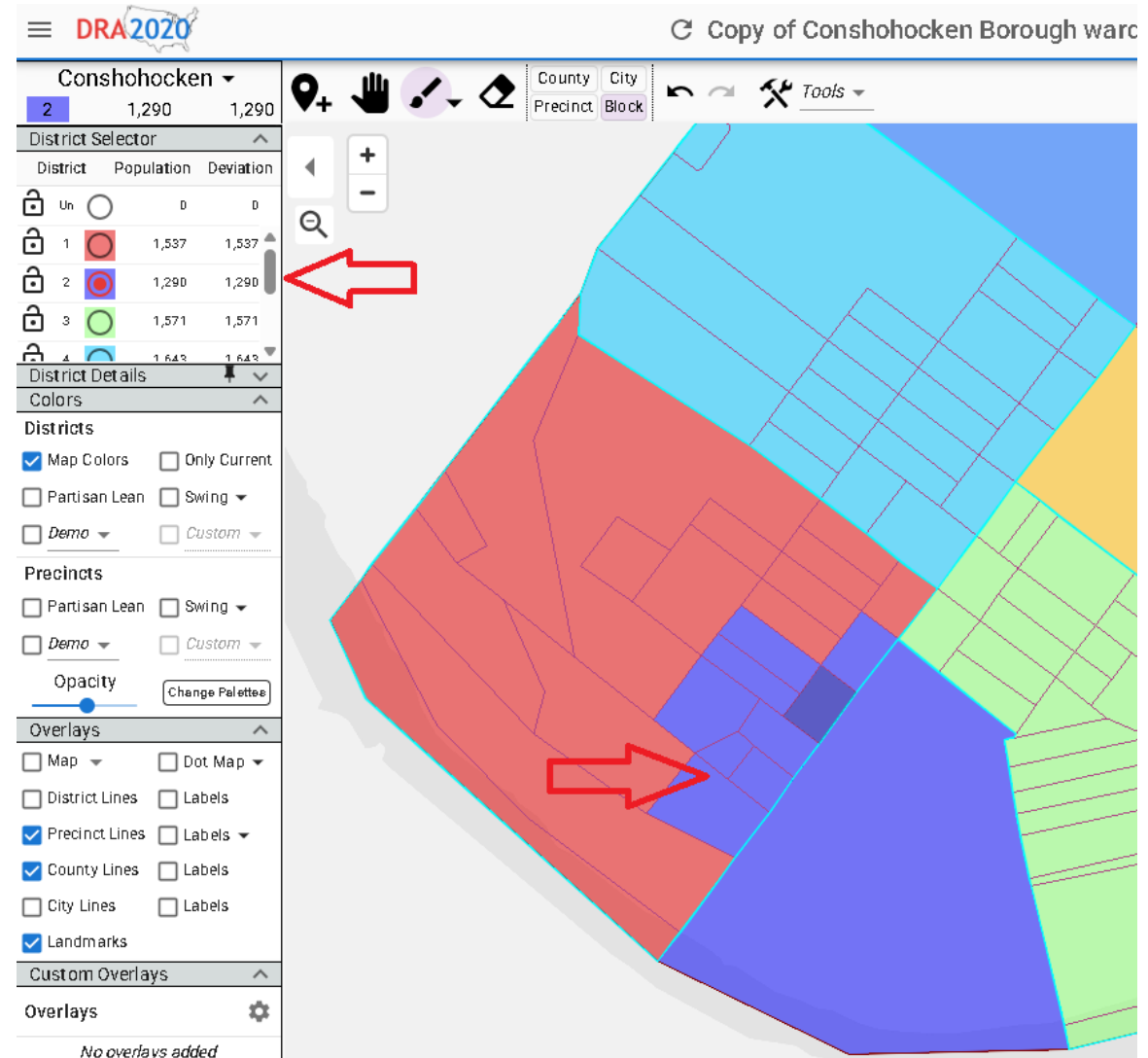
# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- Next, click the paintbrush icon.
- After you have clicked the paintbrush icon, click any precinct/ward, and DRA will reveal the census blocks of that precinct/ward and adjoining precincts/wards.



# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- Click on a particular ward to adjust in the top left corner, and move census blocks from one ward to another.
- Suggestion: start with a small-population ward (like 2 or 7).

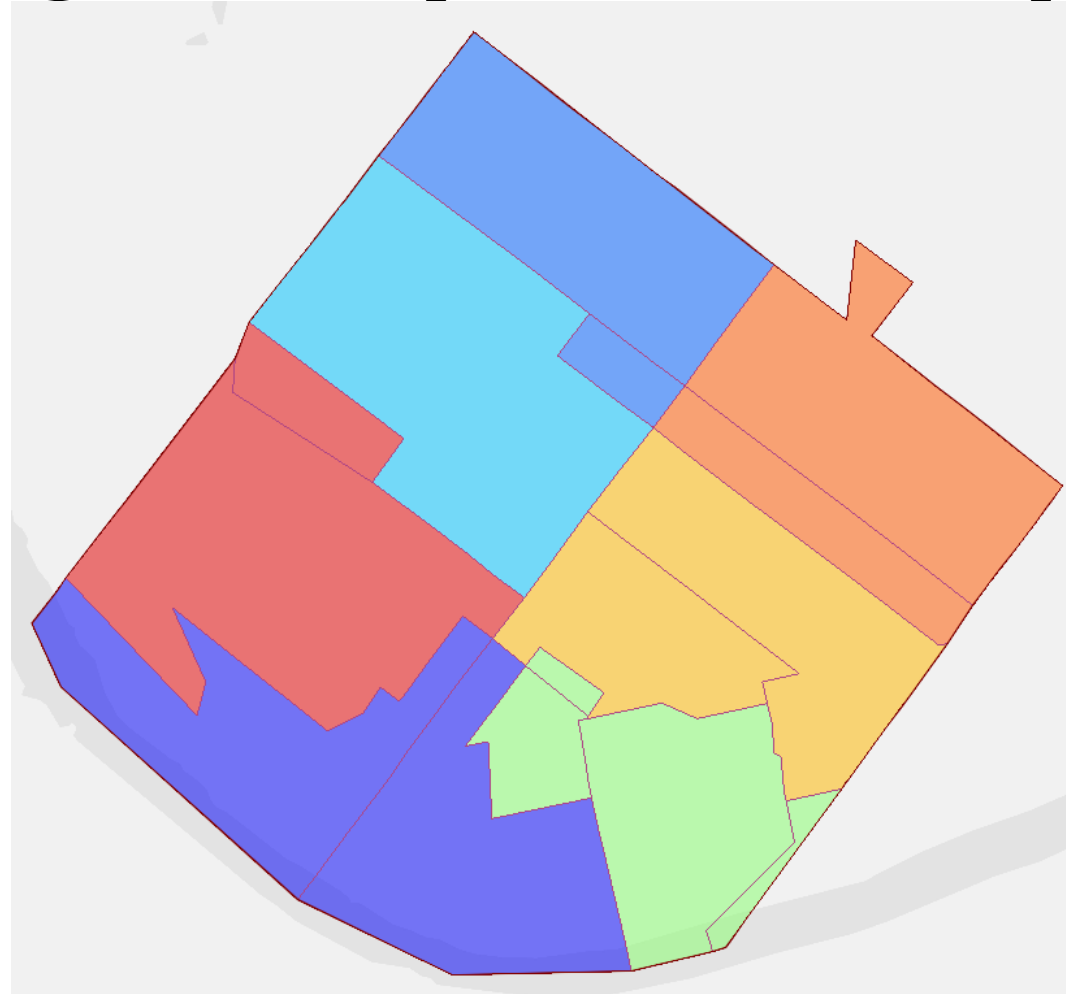


# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- You are now able to move census blocks between wards in order to construct a ward map which will be able to attain maximum deviation of less than ten percent.
- When you are adjusting census blocks between wards, it is helpful to reference Google Maps and the Borough's ward street map to figure out which blocks you are moving between wards.
- Remember also that Pa. law requires contiguous districts.

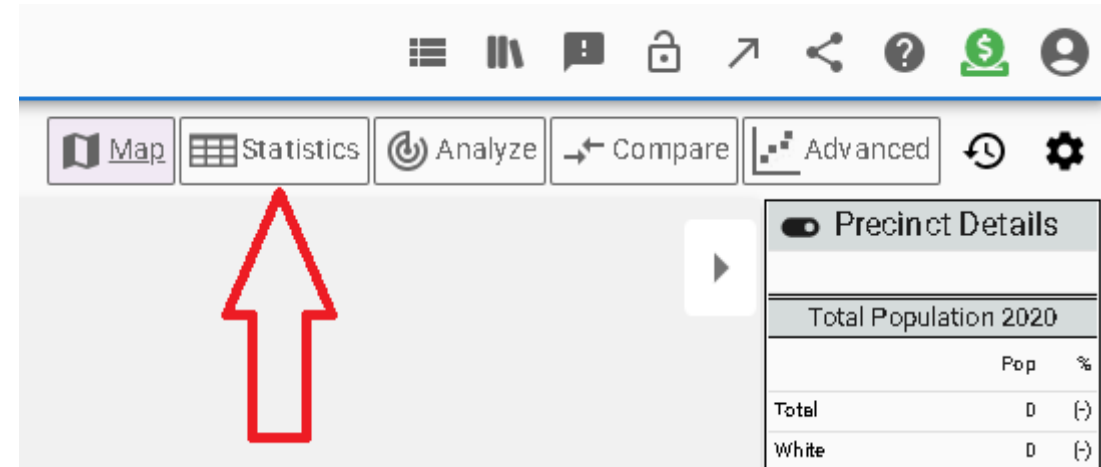
# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- It took me about 20-25 minutes to use DRA to come up with a ward map which satisfies the ten-percent rule.
- Note that I am not proposing this as an option – it is merely an illustrative example to show that it is possible to arrange census blocks to attain maximum deviation of less than ten percent.



# Dave's Redistricting App (continued)

- DRA automatically calculates maximum deviation: click on “Statistics” in the top right corner and it will show you maximum deviation, among many other things).
- The map from the previous slide yields a maximum deviation of 9.83%.



| Population |              |              | Shapes |   |
|------------|--------------|--------------|--------|---|
| ID         | Total        | +/-          |        |   |
| Un         | 0            |              |        |   |
| 1          | 1,296        | -2.04%       | ✓      | ✓ |
| 2          | 1,376        | 4.01%        | ✓      | ✓ |
| 3          | 1,366        | 3.25%        | ✓      | ✓ |
| 4          | 1,380        | 4.31%        | ✓      | ✓ |
| 5          | 1,250        | -5.52%       | ✓      | ✓ |
| 6          | 1,276        | -3.55%       | ✓      | ✓ |
| 7          | 1,317        | -0.45%       | ✓      | ✓ |
|            | <b>1,323</b> | <b>9.83%</b> | ✓      | ✓ |

# Conclusion:

- The U.S. Constitution and Pennsylvania statute require that the Borough of Conshohocken conduct a redistricting of its wards.
- Dave's Redistricting App (<https://davesredistricting.org/maps#home>) provides a free, relatively user-friendly way for interested parties to draw new ward maps which comply with the U.S. Constitution and PA law, and which does all the necessary math.



# QUESTIONS?

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