

# How the 2020 Census Block Groups will Impact you...

March 12, 2020

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Information from the 2020

will affect billions of dollars of public services.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RetailStat utilizes U.S. Census Bureau block groups as a cornerstone for site evaluation, demographic analysis, sales projections, and mobile insights. Block groups are industry standard and form the foundation of RetailStat's core data offerings and advisory services. Additionally, RetailStat's advisory and market analysis teams extensively leverage block groups in various projects, including forecasting new store openings and analyzing market dynamics. RetailStat also utilizes PopStats, a Synergos data product, for current estimates beyond the Census count.

Despite the latest Census being conducted in 2020, the detailed statistics regarding updated geographic boundaries<sup>1</sup> were not made available by the Census Bureau until Q2 2023 due to several delays noted in the Update Timeline (refer to Appendix A).

RetailStat recognized this delay as an opportunity to update its Mobile Data for several crucial reasons:

1. **Alignment with Updated Demographic Data:** RetailStat's Trade Areas, based on Census geographic boundaries, need updating to align with the latest demographic data for accurate analysis and projections.
2. **Consistency in Visitation Calculations:** Visitation calculations rely on population sampling rates from Census geographies, making consistency between Mobile Trade Areas and visitation calculations imperative.
3. **Accuracy in Mobile Data Calculations:** Using the new boundaries and statistics for Mobile Data calculations ensures results closer to Ground Truth, considering substantial demographic changes since 2010.

## WHAT IS A BLOCK GROUP?

A block group<sup>2</sup> is a geographic unit used in the statistical data collection process by United States Census Bureau. Block groups are subdivisions of a census tract, which are smaller geographic areas within counties. Block groups are designed to be smaller than census tracts to provide a more detailed breakdown of population characteristics, including housing, income, education, and other socioeconomic factors.

Below are some key features and characteristics of block group<sup>3</sup>:

- **Size and Composition:** Block groups typically encompass between 600 and 3,000 people, with an optimal population size of around 1,500. This allows for a more detailed analysis of demographic and social characteristics within a smaller, localized area.
- **Geographic Boundaries:** Defined by visible and logical features such as streets and rivers, block group boundaries are easily distinguishable, facilitating data analysis and mapping efforts.
- **Hierarchy in Census Geography:** Block groups are part of the hierarchical structure of census geography, fitting within census tracts. Census tracts, in turn, fit within counties, and the hierarchy extends further to states and the nation. This structure allows for organized and systematic data collection and reporting.
- **Stability Over Time:** Block groups are typically stable over the ten-year period between decennial censuses, providing consistency for longitudinal studies and trend analysis. However, changes may occur due to significant demographic shifts or geographic boundary adjustments. The census is constitutionally mandated every 10 years.

In summary, block groups play a crucial role in census geography, providing detailed insights into population characteristics and facilitating informed decision-making in various fields.

## WHY BLOCK GROUPS?

Census data serves as a foundational source of information for both private and public sectors, driving strategic initiatives and facilitating socioeconomic development.

In the private sector, businesses utilize census data to refine their strategies, make data-driven decisions, and gain insights into consumer behavior. For instance, retail chains may use census data to identify optimal locations for new stores based on demographic trends within specific block groups. This granularity allows them to tailor their offerings to local needs, optimizing operations and enhancing market competitiveness.

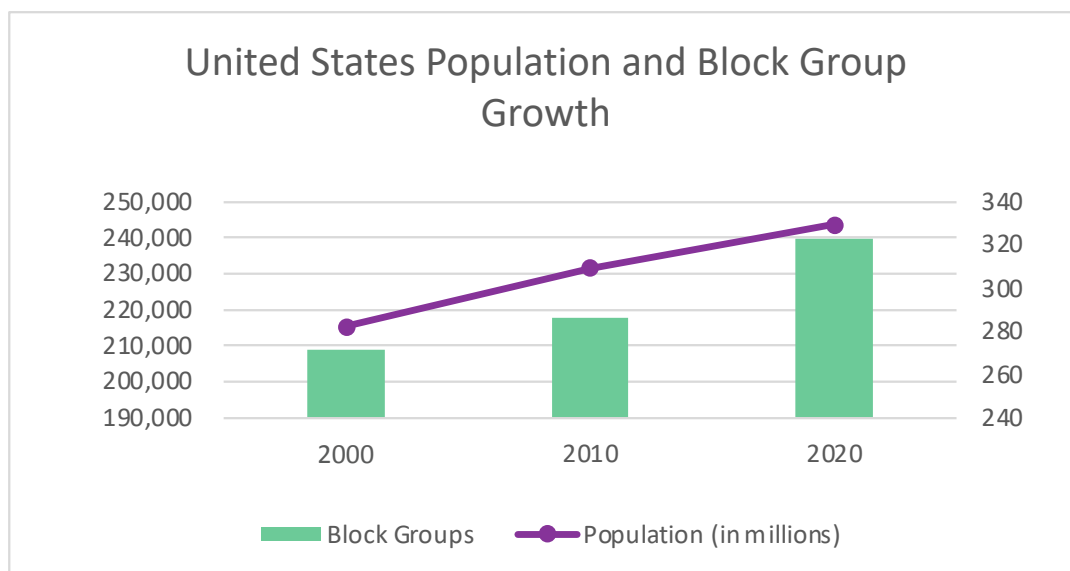
In the public sector, census data plays a vital role in resource allocation, infrastructure planning, and policy formulation. Government agencies use block-level data to identify areas with specific demographic needs, such as education or healthcare access, and allocate resources accordingly. For example, school districts may use census data to determine where new schools are needed based on population growth within block groups.

Block groups offer a finer level of detail compared to broader census tracts, enabling stakeholders to gain insights into localized patterns and trends. By leveraging block-level data, decision-makers can develop more targeted and effective strategies to address the unique needs of communities, ultimately fostering a more equitable and prosperous society.

## WHAT CHANGED?

Block group boundaries have the potential to change every 10 years. Boundaries change due to several factors including population shifts, changes in geographic features, and the need for accurate representation and data collection. Here are some common reasons for changes in block group boundaries during each decennial census:

- **Population Changes:** Population distribution is dynamic, and over a decade, certain areas may experience significant population growth or decline. Population changes drive the need for maintaining optimal population size within block groups. These adjustments, typically between 600 and 3,000 people, with an optimal size around 1,500, ensure accurate reflection of dynamic population shifts and facilitate detailed analysis without block groups becoming too large or too small.
- **Demographic Changes:** Demographic shifts, such as changes in racial or ethnic composition, age distribution, or socioeconomic status, may occur unevenly across regions. Adjusting block group boundaries helps ensure that demographic data accurately represents the evolving characteristics of different communities.
- **Urban Development and Redevelopment:** Urban areas can undergo significant changes in land use and development over a decade. New neighborhoods may emerge, and existing areas may undergo redevelopment. Adjusting block group boundaries allows census data to align with these changes in the built environment.
- **Infrastructure Changes:** Changes in infrastructure, such as the construction of new roads or the expansion of public facilities, can impact the landscape of a region. Block group boundaries may be adjusted to align with these changes and maintain logical divisions based on visible features.
- **Policy and Planning Considerations:** Local and regional planning initiatives, as well as changes in administrative boundaries, can influence the need for adjustments to block group boundaries. This ensures that census data remains relevant for planning and decision-making purposes.
- **Accuracy and Granularity:** Fine-tuning block group boundaries enhances the accuracy and granularity of census data. Smaller, more localized boundaries allow for a more detailed understanding of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics within specific neighborhoods or communities.

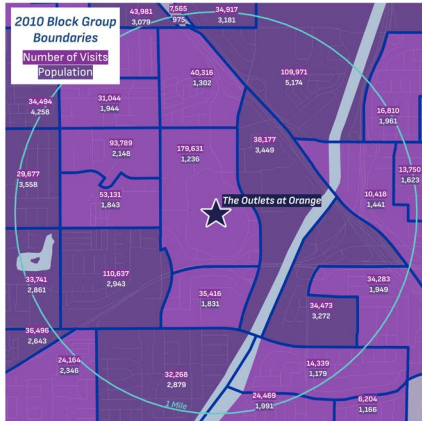


In the dynamic retail landscapes of The Outlets at Orange, Villages at Westfork, Beach Western Commons, and Concourse Plaza demographic shifts play a pivotal role in shaping visitation patterns. As population dynamics evolve in suburban, coastal, and urban settings alike, the retail hubs experience corresponding changes in consumer behavior. By analyzing demographic data, stakeholders gain valuable insights into the evolving preferences and needs of their diverse customer bases. Armed with this knowledge, businesses can adapt their strategies and offerings to remain relevant and appealing amidst changing community landscapes. This data-driven approach fosters a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, enabling businesses to optimize their operations and enhance the overall visitor experience across all four areas.

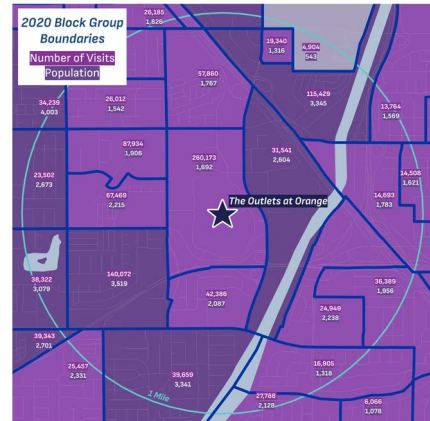
To illustrate how new boundaries and demographics affect Mobile Trade Areas, below are maps depicting locations where surrounding block groups have experienced significant population changes. Additionally, other maps showcase how Retailstat's Mobile Trade Areas reflect these changes.

## THE OUTLETS AT ORANGE

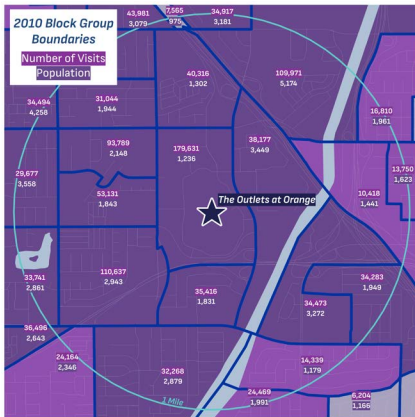
20 City Blvd W, Orange, CA 92868



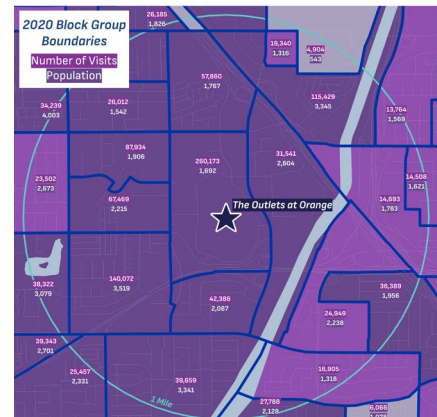
The Outlets at Orange 2010 by Population



The Outlets at Orange 2020 by Population



The Outlets at Orange 2010 by Visits



The Outlets at Orange 2020 by Visits

## VILLAGE AT WESTFORK

630 Thornton Rd, Lithia Springs, GA 30122



Village at Westfork 2010 by Population

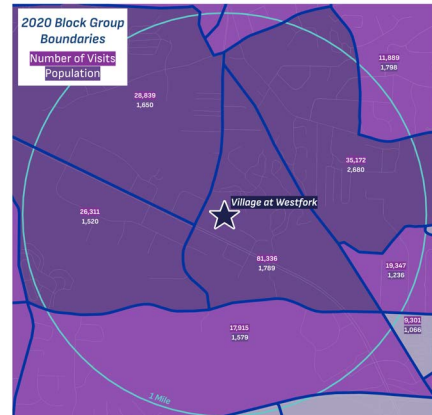


Village at Westfork 2020 by Population





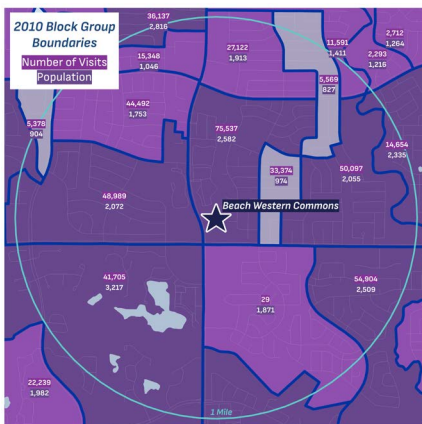
Village at Westfork 2010 by Visits



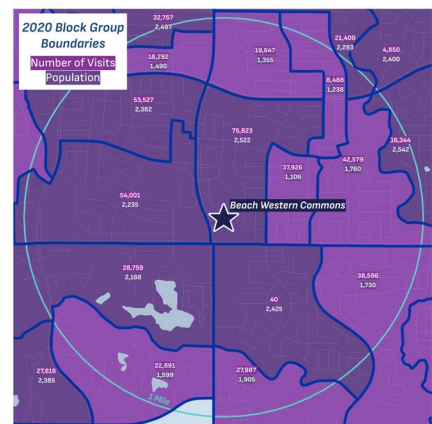
Village at Westfork 2020 by Visits

## BEACH WESTERN COMMONS

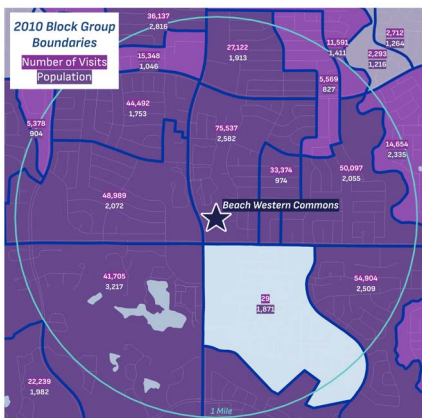
6650 N Beach St, Fort Worth, TX 76137



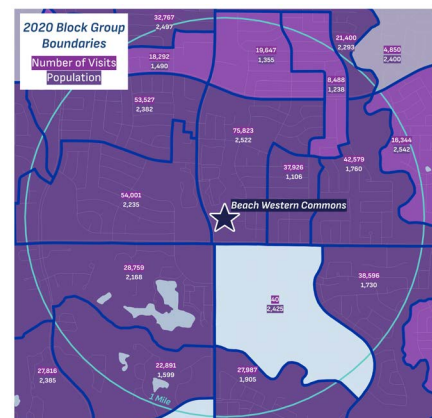
Beach Western Commons 2010 by Population



Beach Western Commons 2020 by Population



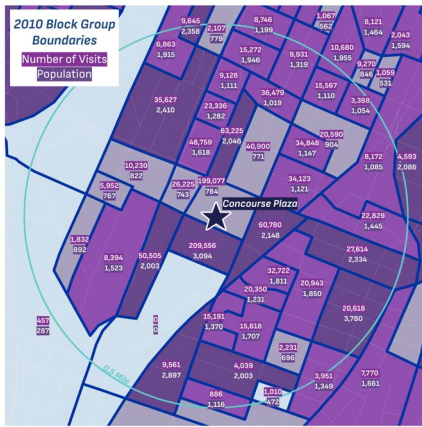
Beach Western Commons 2010 by Visits



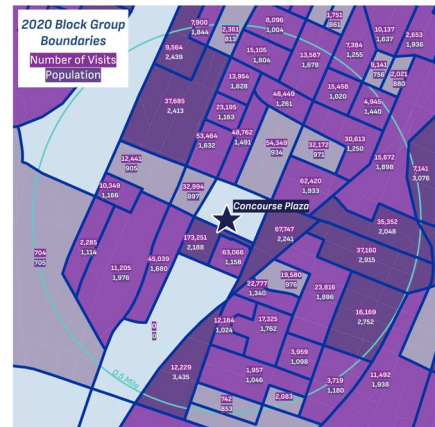
Beach Western Commons 2020 by Visits

# CONCOURSE PLAZA

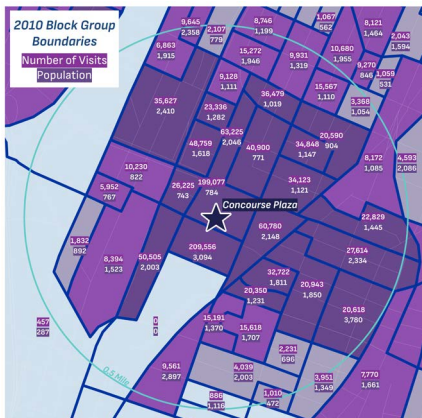
200 E 161 St, Bronx, NY 10451



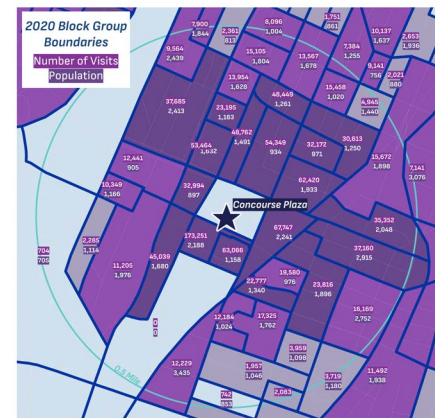
Cconcourse Plaza 2010 by Population



Cconcourse Plaza 2020 by Population



Cconcourse Plaza 2010 by Visits



Cconcourse Plaza 2020 by Visits

## MARKET DEEP DIVES

In examining the evolution of block groups between census counts in several markets, it becomes evident that these areas undergo transformations over time. RetailStat's subject matter experts took a closer look at three key markets - Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, and New York - to highlight the dynamic shifts observed with block groups, key trends, drivers, and their implications for stakeholders invested in understanding the evolving nature of these markets.

Market	2010 Count of Block Groups	2020 Count of Block Groups	Block Group Percent Change
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA Metro Area	2,588	3,942	52%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area	4,132	4,371	6%
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area	14,378	14,982	4%

The Atlanta market experienced notable transformation between 2010<sup>4</sup> and 2020<sup>5</sup> census periods. Witnessing a robust 16% increase in total population, it not only grew but also expanded geographically. The market expanded notably along the Interstate 20 corridor, strategically extending its reach to encompass the Madison, GA market.

The Dallas market experienced substantial transformation between 2010<sup>4</sup> and 2020<sup>5</sup> census periods. Witnessing a notable 20% increase in total population. Despite this population growth, the Dallas market experienced a contraction in size, particularly evident along the northeastern boundaries of the MSA ((Metropolitan Statistical Area).

The New York market experienced substantial transformation between 2010<sup>4</sup> and 2020<sup>5</sup> census periods. Witnessing a 7% increase in total population. Unlike the Atlanta and Dallas markets, the New York MSA did not expand or contract.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, RetailStat recognizes the pivotal role block groups play in shaping its data-driven approach to site evaluation, demographic analysis, and sales projection modeling. As demonstrated in this white paper, the timely updating of Mobile Data to align with the latest Census demographic boundaries is paramount for maintaining the accuracy and reliability of RetailStat's offerings. By leveraging the updated geographic boundaries and statistics, RetailStat is poised to deliver more precise and insightful solutions to its clients, thereby reinforcing its commitment to excellence in data-driven decision making and market analysis.

Stay ahead in retail with RetailStat's mobile data insights. As industry pioneers, we anticipate market shifts and leverage cutting-edge technologies to help you thrive. Contact us at [contact@retailstat.com](mailto:contact@retailstat.com) to discover how our forward-thinking approach, powered by Real Estate Intelligence and mobile data, can drive your success.



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## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of the Census. (2022, July 18). Tallies. <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/time-series/geo/tallies.2020.html#list-tab-1626061381>

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of the Census. (2018, February 15). Block Groups for the 2020 Census–Proposed Criteria. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/02/15/2018-02624/block-groups-for-the-2020-census-proposed-criteria>

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of the Census. (2022, April 11). Glossary. [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par\\_textimage\\_4](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_4)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File

## APPENDIX A

*Retailstat's next demographic update followed on Q1 2024, per its annual cadence and the remainder of the quarter was spent recalculating its Mobile Data statistics in accordance with the new boundaries and demographic values. A more detailed timeline can be found below.*

Q1 2020	The Census Bureau collected responses based on where recipients lives as of 4/1/2020
Q2 2021	The Census Bureau released Apportionment counts to determine how many of the remaining 385 seats in House of Representatives each state would receive based on their population.
Q3 2021	The Census Bureau released Redirecting counts, which included population, age, occupancy, race and ethnicity statistics. These results are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional, legislative and many other kinds of districts to ensure proper representation.
Q2 2023	The Census Bureau released both their Demographic & House Characteristic (DHC) and Demographic Profile files. This delay was in part due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but also so that the data could be revised to have Differential Privacy applied, which is the bureau's new multi-step process to keep personally identifiable information (PII) confidential.
Q3 2023	Third party data providers began releasing up-to-date detailed demographic statistics based on the new 2020 geographic boundaries
Q1 2024	Retailstat received its annual demographics update and began recalculating Mobile Data statistics such as Mobile Trade Areas and visitation counts based on the 2020 updated boundaries and population counts.
Q2 2024	RetailStat releases its updated Mobile Data based on the latest geographies and demographics available.

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