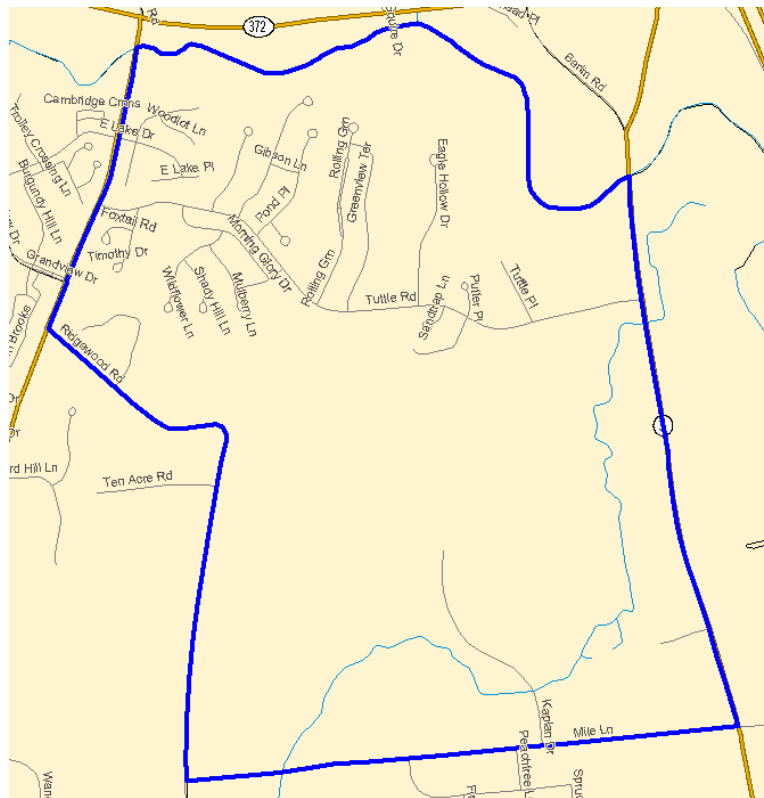


Analyzing Census Block Groups

Used by the U.S. Census Bureau for data dissemination, block groups are larger than census blocks and smaller than census tracts. Block groups are essentially groupings of census blocks, which is the smallest geographic unit used by the U.S. Census. Several blocks comprise block groups, and several block groups make up census tracts. Changes in street patterns caused by highway construction or new developments sometimes require revisions to the geographies; sometimes they are separated because of large population growth, or merged because of population decline.

The U.S. including Puerto Rico is divided into almost 211,300 block groups, each of which contains an average of 39 blocks. Blocks are usually defined by streets, roads or bodies of water. Census blocks covering the entire country were introduced with the 1990 census. Between 1940 and 1990 only selected areas were divided into blocks.¹

You can access data by block group in CERC DataFinder®. Select "block groups" as your geography. Then choose the state(s), county(ies) and census tract(s) in which the block group belongs. Click on the block group(s) you need, and click "complete." This figure shows a map of Block Group 090075412009, a geography in Middletown. Note that the western, southern and eastern borders are all roads, and the northern boundary is determined by the Mattabesset River.



Still Have Burning Questions about Block Groups?

If you would like to brush up on your DataFinder skills, contact Alissa DeJonge (860-571-6206), Dale Shannon (860-571-6209) or send an email to datafinder@cerc.com.

¹ http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cen_tract.html and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census_block