

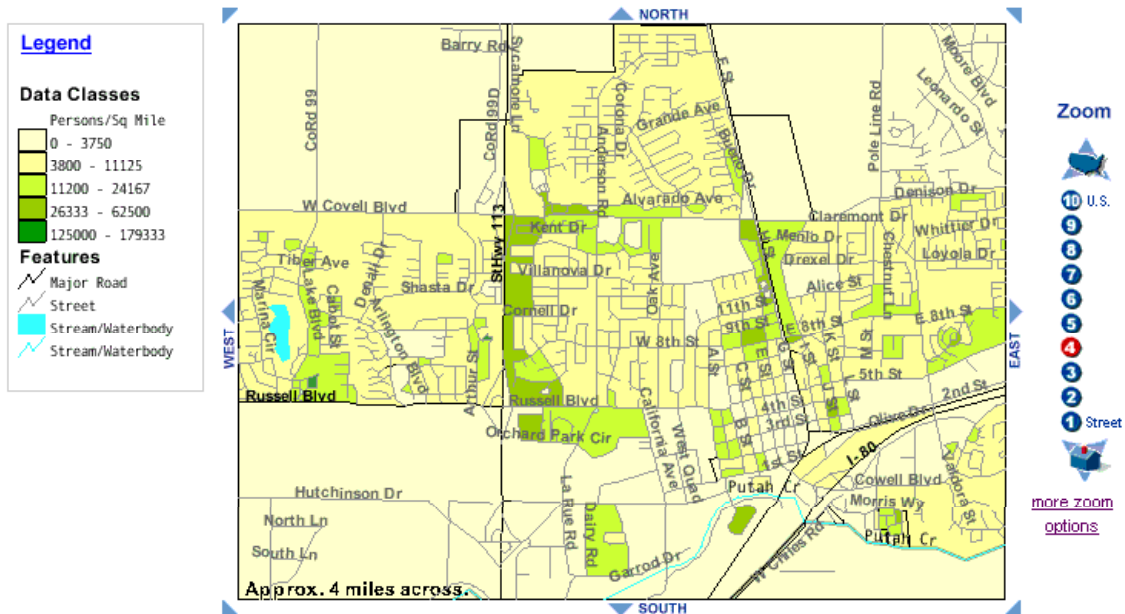
Population Density in Davis

As William Diemer pointed out in his book *Davis from the Inside Out: A Municipal Almanac*, the average population density of Davis (the number of people divided by the total square miles of incorporated area) has held remarkably constant from 1917 to the present—at 6,000 people per square mile (see page 18 of his book).

To put that number in perspective, compare it with other cities (from the 2000 Census):

City	Population	Population Density (per sq.mi.)
Palo Alto	58,598	2,475
Davis	60,308	5,769
Berkeley	102,743	9,823
San Francisco	776,733	16,634

The U.S. Census Bureau enumerates population and population density on a block-by-block basis and makes this available graphically on its web site, in its “American FactFinder” section. From there I was able to download the following nifty map, showing how density varies across the city:



From this, one can see that high-density regions are scattered around the city. The darkest-green regions correspond, unsurprisingly, to where the apartment complexes are clustered.

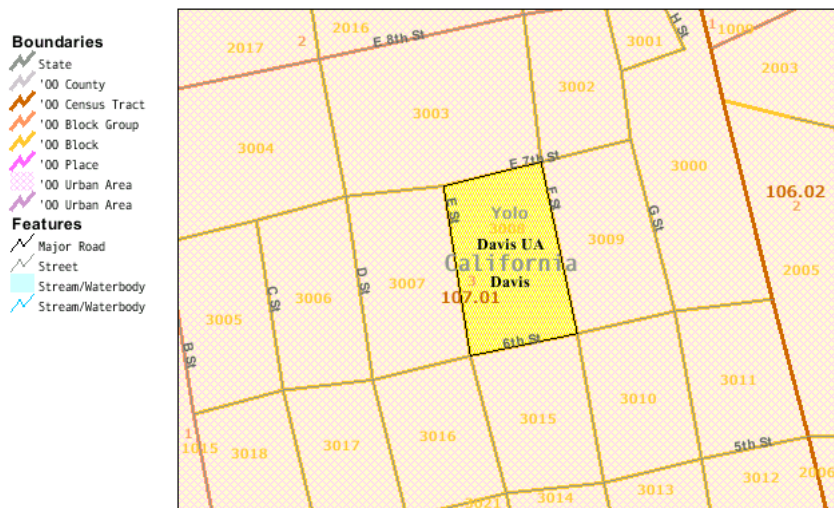
Conveniently, the data of Davis broken into nearly 1,000 Census Blocks can be downloaded into spreadsheet format for analysis. From this one finds what fraction of our population lives at what population density:

Percentage of Davis' population	Density (people per square mile)
Highest density 20%	15,300—more
Next 20%	9,200—15,300
Next 20%	7,800—9,200
Next 20 %	4,700—7,800
Lowest-density 20%	0—4,700

Half of Davis residents live in blocks with density above 8,300 people per square mile, half at densities less than that; this is the *median* population density. The *average* population density (total population divided by total area) is that 5,789 people per square mile cited earlier.

The Census Blocks for Old North are as shown in the figure below...

Block 3008, Block Group 3, Census Tract 107.01, Yolo County, California



...and the population density can be downloaded (cells shaded in yellow are in the R-2 zone, green the R-3 zone under Davis zoning).

Block number	Pop. Density (per sq. mi.)	Actual Population
3002	7000	35
3003	14545	160
3004	11000	99
3005	7167	43
3006	8667	52
3007	5000	35
3008	6286	44
3009*	8167	49
3010*	6167	37
3011	1000	6
3012	0	0
3013	400	2

3014	3333	20
3015	8167	49
3016	7800	39
3017	6600	33
3018	0	0
Blocks in R-2	7,056	381
* blocks include some of the Mixed Use M-U zone		
Blocks in R-3 (Apartments)	11,760	294

Old North falls into 3 City of Davis Zones: R-2, R-3, and M-U, and the dividing lines between zones split some of the Blocks down the middle. And some Blocks are half John Lofland's definition of Old North Davis, and half outside. Nevertheless, the data show:

- As John observed, the population density in the R-2 zone of Old North is about 7,000 people per square mile.
 - The U.S. Census data show that about 60% of Davis residents live in Blocks that are more densely populated.
- Combining the R-2 and R-3 blocks of Old North yields an average population density of 8,544 people per square mile.
 - About half of all Davis residents live in Blocks that are more dense, half less dense.
- As John observed, many parts of Davis are *less* densely inhabited than Old North. On the other hand, many parts of Davis are *more* densely inhabited. If one wants to argue for some grand smoothing (to spread the 'burden' of density), then, at the end of this process, College Park would be denser and the apartment strips along Anderson would be less dense—and Old North would be about where it already is.

—Z Smith
1/4/04