

ICE Out of San Diego, January 15, 2026

Crowd Size

Larry Stowell and Wendy Gelernter, Take Action San Diego

Direct questions to: TakeActionSanDiego@gmail.com

January 15, 2026

Summary

The ICE Out of San Diego rally is a recurring event at the John Roades Federal Plaza in San Diego to protest the actions of ICE and the shooting death of Renee Nicole Good. Approximately 480 participants gathered to hear speakers.

Stationary photography and crowd density area-based estimations were used to estimate crowd size. Figure 1 illustrates the area measurement using Google Earth Pro. Figure 2 provides stationary images of the rally and the area that the participants occupied. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the crowd. The hand count of the crowd revealed 478 individuals were present. Based upon the area measurements in Figure 1 and the hand count, each individual occupied an average of 2.8 sq ft. Live music resulted in the crowd density being higher than previous events at this same location.

Crowd Size Estimation

Accurate crowd size estimation is essential for gauging the scale and societal impact of public demonstrations. Recent advancements in the use of UAVs have significantly enhanced the precision of such assessments (Choi-Fitzpatrick et al., 2018). However, the practical deployment of drones is prohibited by cost, required training, and strict regulations—particularly in urban areas or directly above protest crowds.

Fortunately, the widespread availability of mobile phone cameras, combined with social media and online geospatial tools such as Google Earth Pro, has empowered organizers to apply traditional crowd estimation techniques with greater accuracy. These traditional methods involve calculating the total area occupied by a crowd and applying density estimates in addition to use of crowd flow measurements.

Reference

1. Choi-Fitzpatrick, A, T. Juskauskas and B. Sabur. 2018. All the protestors fit to count: using geospatial affordances to estimate protest event size. *Interface*. 10:297-321. Retrieved 4/7/2025 chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Interface-10-1-2-Choi-Fitzpatrick-et-al.pdf

Figure 1. Google Earth estimate of area that the crowd occupied during the speech portion of the rally when most people were gathered near the speaker. The hand count reported 478 participants occupying approximately 1345 sq ft and the average area occupied per individual as 2.8 sq ft.

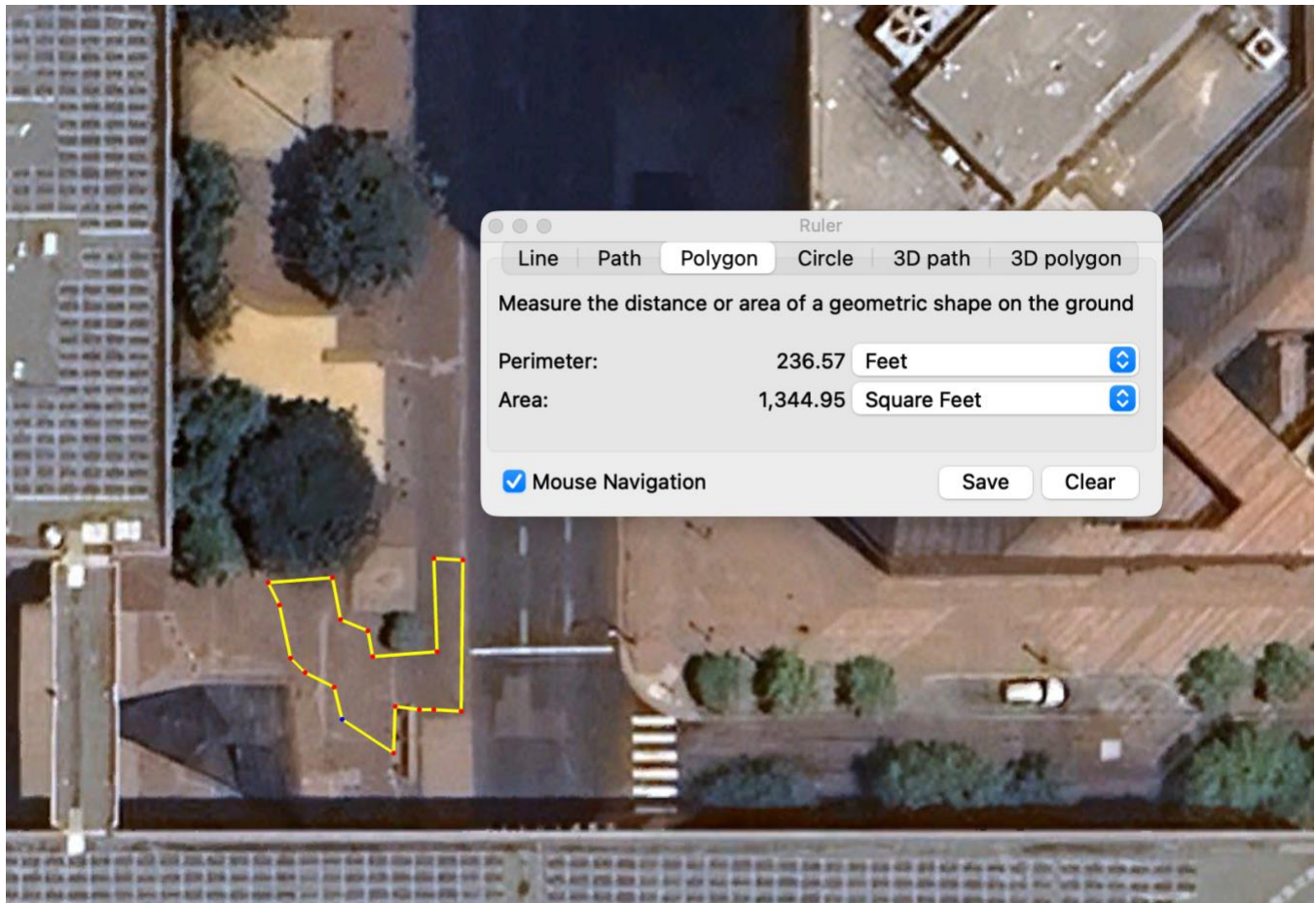


Figure 2. Composite image illustrating the density and location of the participants at the event.

