

**Ad Hoc Committee on  
Redistricting**  
*Orientation Meeting*

September 29, 2021

# Meeting Agenda

- 6:00 – 6:10: Public Forum
- 6:10 – 6:30: Welcome, Introduction of Committee Members, Committee Purpose
- 6:30 – 6:55: Redistricting Overview with Q&A
- 6:55 – 7:20: Preliminary 2020 Census Data with Q&A
- 7:20 – 7:50: Planning for Public Meetings
- 7:50 – 8:00: Next Steps

# Committee Makeup & Purpose

**Per the Council Resolution creating the Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting:**

- Includes a member from each City Ward, selected by the NPA's
- Is independent of Council, School Board and former elected officials of these bodies
- *“gather community input to the current redistricting plan, review the past plan (when there were 7 wards and 14 Councilors), hear opinions about the number of councilors per ward/district, and consider the current wards/districts configuration.”*

# Committee Charge

**Per the Council Resolution creating the Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting:**

- Committee holds two public meetings where input is taken
- Provide a report to the Council reflecting this input

**Committee to help Council gain community input on:**

- General perspectives on the number Councilors, and Wards/Districts
- Opinions about current and most recent past Ward plans

# Redistricting Process

**Per the Council Resolution creating the Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting:**

## **Part 1: Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting**

- Committee holds two public meetings where input is taken
- Report back to the Council on this input (by Nov 8)

## **Part 2: Council Preparation of Redistricting Plan**

- Council to use Ad Hoc Committee report, provide specific guidance to mapping specialist
- Mapping specialist to prepare a map for delivery to Council (Dec 13)
- Council intent to approval a map for consideration by voters on the March 2022 ballot

# **Redistricting**

## *Burlington's Wards and Districts*

Dan Richardson, City Attorney

# What is Redistricting?

- The Constitution provides that a census every 10 years determines the distribution of House of Representative seats. Each state gets one House seat, plus additional seats based on population. This is known as apportionment.
- Each state then must adjust its voting districts to elect the number of seats allotted by creating or changing geographic subdivisions to have relatively equal sized populations. This is known as redistricting.
- The same principles apply at each level of government, including the City of Burlington.
- Currently, all of Vermont has one US House district (which will remain the same). Burlington is divided among 7 Vermont House districts. Burlington, since 2014, has 8 wards and 4 districts for local electoral offices.

# Constitutional Requirements (1)

- Fourteenth Amendment requires one person, one vote
- Basing measurement on total population equality is the norm.
  - For municipalities, perfect mathematical equality is not required, but districts must be of as nearly equal population as is practicable—that is, substantial equality, and loss of such equality may trigger redistricting outside the 10-year process.
  - Measurement is by population, **not voter**
  - That means student residents are considered—even if they vote in another district. See *Evenwel v. Abbott*, 136 Sup.Ct. 1120 (2016) – Nonvoters access constituent services and take part in public debates, and representatives represent all residents.
- Other measurements might be constitutional, but no others have been approved for municipalities.
- Deviation from perfect equality allowed to serve valid government interests.



# Constitutional Requirements (2)

- A prima facie case of discrimination is established if there is a deviation of more than 10% between districts, although less than 10% can also be discriminatory if the effect is to limit a protected class—most often a racial group—that is, if there is invidious discrimination.
  - A deviation of more than 10% may be allowed for states, but not usually for a municipality, if the state can
    - Articulate a reasonable government policy to justify the deviation
    - Explain how the apportionment plan advances that policy
    - Demonstrate that the resulting deviation does not exceed constitutional limits
- A deviation less than 10% is presumed to be constitutional, unless there are other factors involved.

# Traditional Redistricting Factors

## Must Haves:

- One person/one vote required by 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Population of each district as nearly equal to every other district as practicable with deviations of <10%
- Contiguity of territory—one part of a district cannot be physically separate or detached from the other parts.
- Cannot separate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion

## Should Haves:

- Maintaining existing political subdivision lines or
- Honoring natural or historical boundary lines
- Compactness
- Respect for communities of interest
- Providing small districts meaningful representation
- Use of census blocks—groupings of houses and apt buildings that are the smallest unit the census uses

# Vermont State Redistricting Standards

- 17 VSA § 1903(b) (concerning state reapportionment) Requires, Insofar as practicable,
  - To preserve existing political subdivision lines;
  - To recognize and maintain patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests
  - To use compact and contiguous territory.
- A Vermont municipality using these state principles, in conjunction with other constitutional standards, would likely satisfy constitutional standards

# Burlington's 2010 Evaluation Criteria

- Total number of councilors divided by population
- Number of wards
- Keep geographic areas intact
- Minimize the population difference between wards
- Boundaries follow major roads as much as possible
- Academic institutions should be in more than one ward
- Ward size matters for citizen communication and campaigning
- Minimize changes from current wards
- Relationship to state districts
- Overall deviation less than 10%

# Additional Potential Considerations 2021

- Preserve Incumbency?
- Keep current number of wards?
- Keep districts?
- Should areas of large student population be kept together or broken up into multiple wards?
- Keep neighborhoods intact?
- At large City Councilors?
- Even v. Odd number of City Councilors?
- Multiple representatives per ward?

# Redistricting Process- Detailed

***Redistricting is expected to begin as soon as possible following census.***

1. Determine the Need for charter change (Overall and By Districts and Wards) *(Aug-Sept 2021)*
2. Current Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee meetings, feedback, and report *(Sept-early Nov 2021)*
3. City Council develops and approves plan. *(Nov 2021 –early Jan 2022)*
4. Public hearings and warnings 17 V.S.A. § 2645 *(Jan –Feb 2022)*
  - Two public meeting following City Council Approval
  - First Meeting must occur 10 days or more following public notice but no less than 30 days before the vote.
  - Second Meeting must occur 20 days before the vote or the ability to alter by City Council in response to meeting is waived.
5. Voter approval *(Town Meeting Day, March 2, 2022)*
6. Legislative action
  - House & Senate Government Operations Committee
  - Vote by General Assembly
7. Governor's approval

# **2020 Census**

## *Summary of Initial Data Release*



Meagan Tuttle, Jay Appleton

# What is in the Redistricting Dataset?

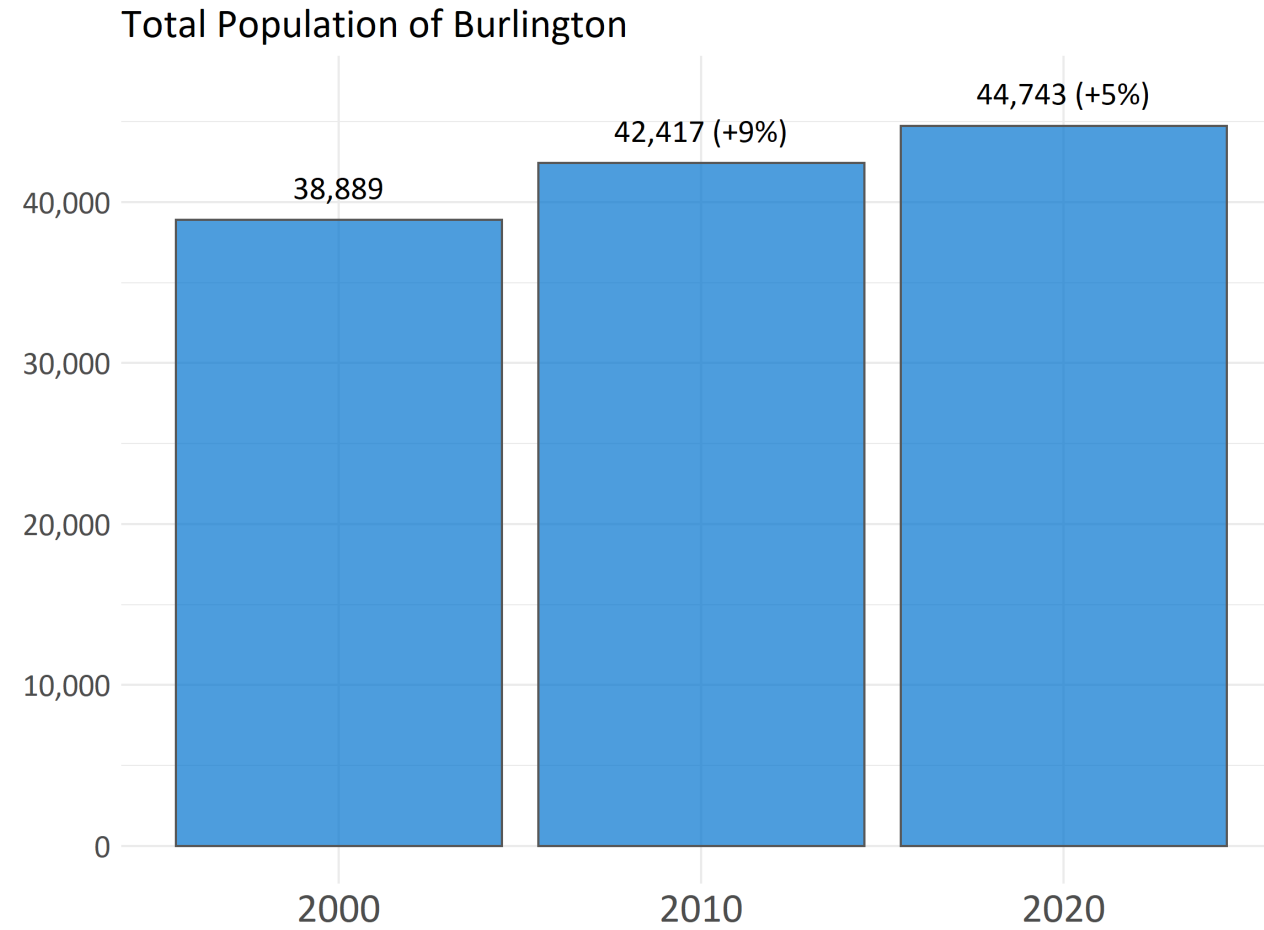
This dataset includes the following at multiple levels for city:

- Total population and population 18+
- Race and ethnicity
- Total housing units, occupied vs. vacant

Additional population and housing datasets, and cross-tabulations, will be released on a rolling basis in 2022.



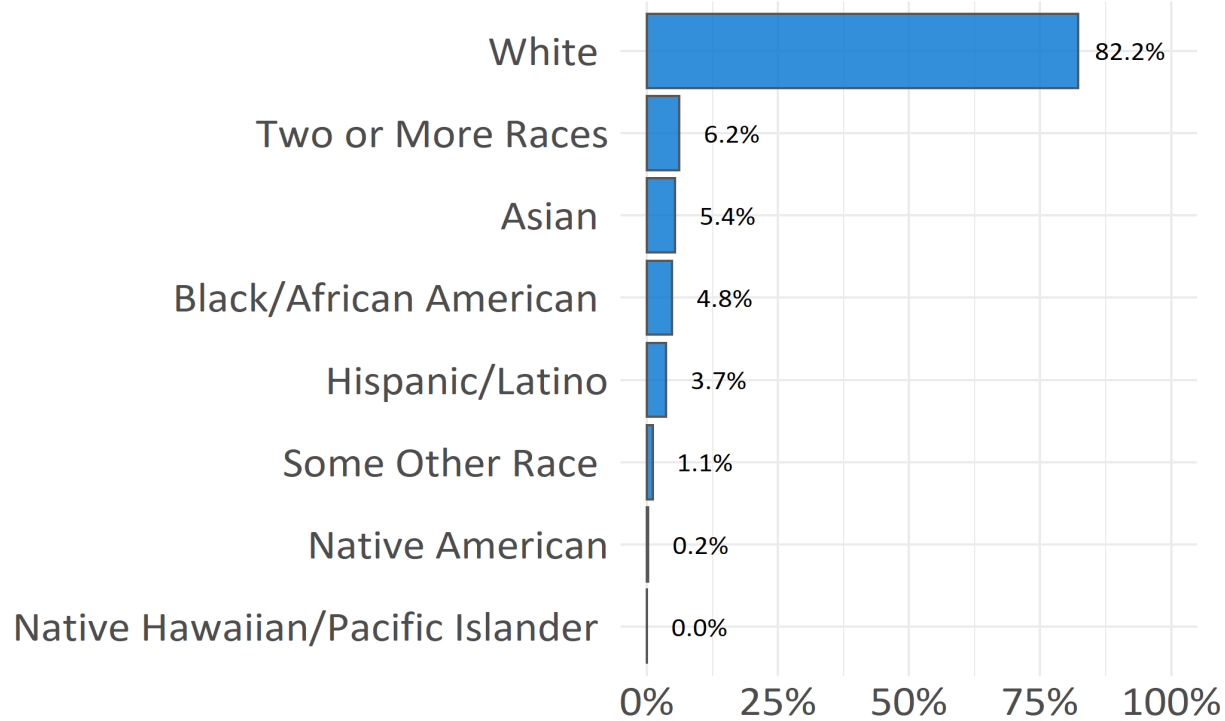
# City Population, 2000-2020



Explore population changes in all VT towns: <https://vcgi.vermont.gov/data-release/2020-census-data>

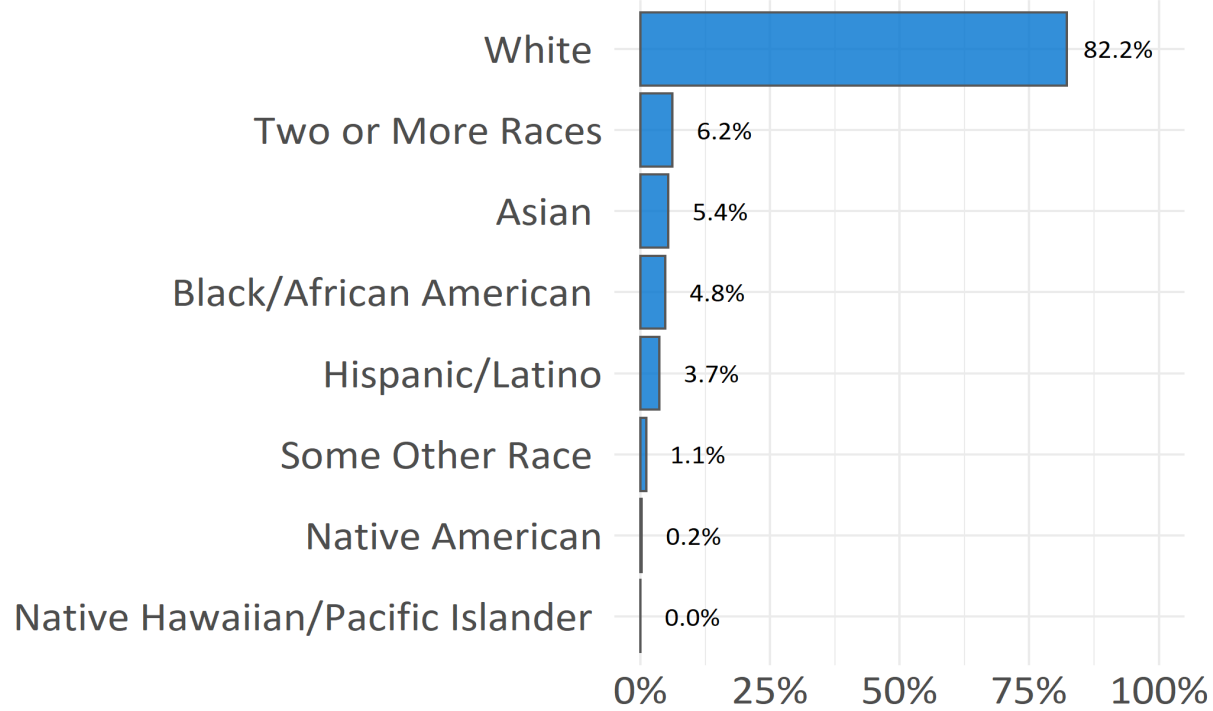
# Race & Ethnicity, 2020

Population of Burlington by Race and Ethnicity

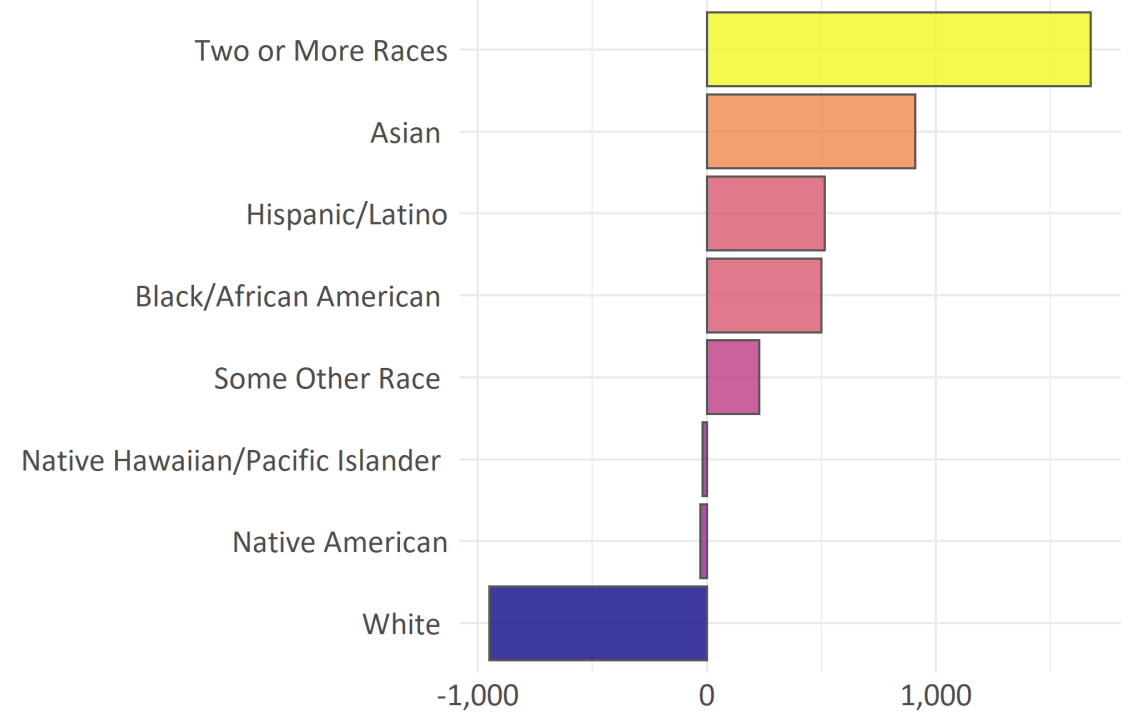


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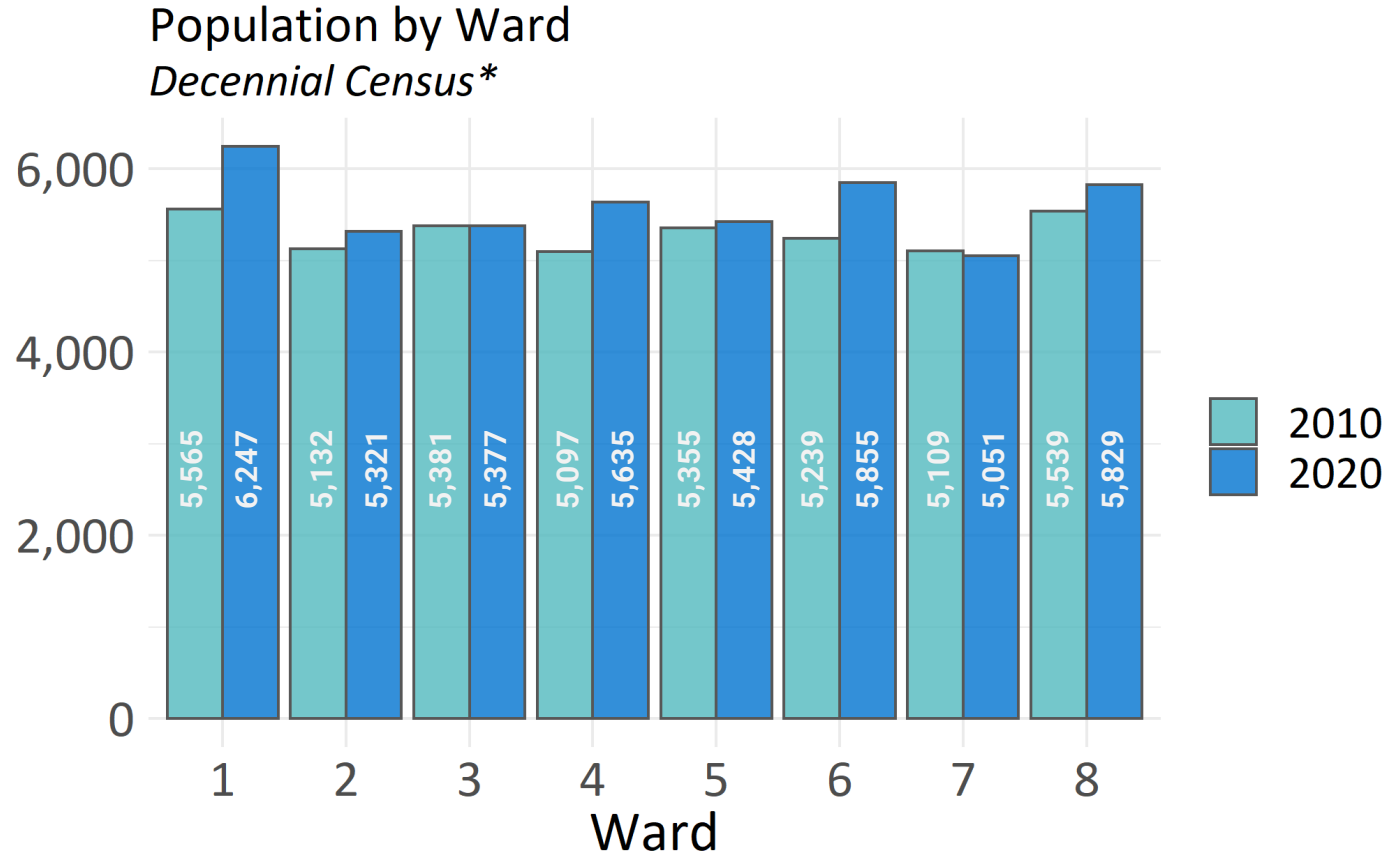
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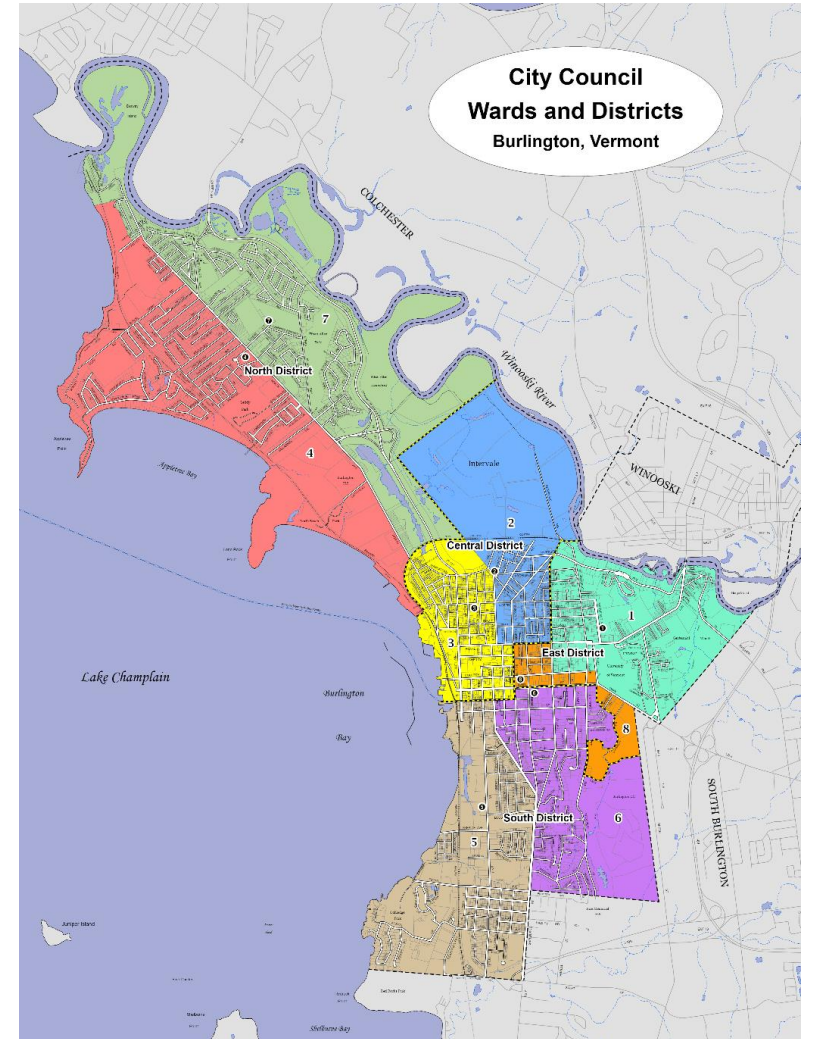
Change in Population since 2010 By Race and Ethnicity



# Population by Ward, 2020



\*Adjusted for a data error related to UVM dorm location.

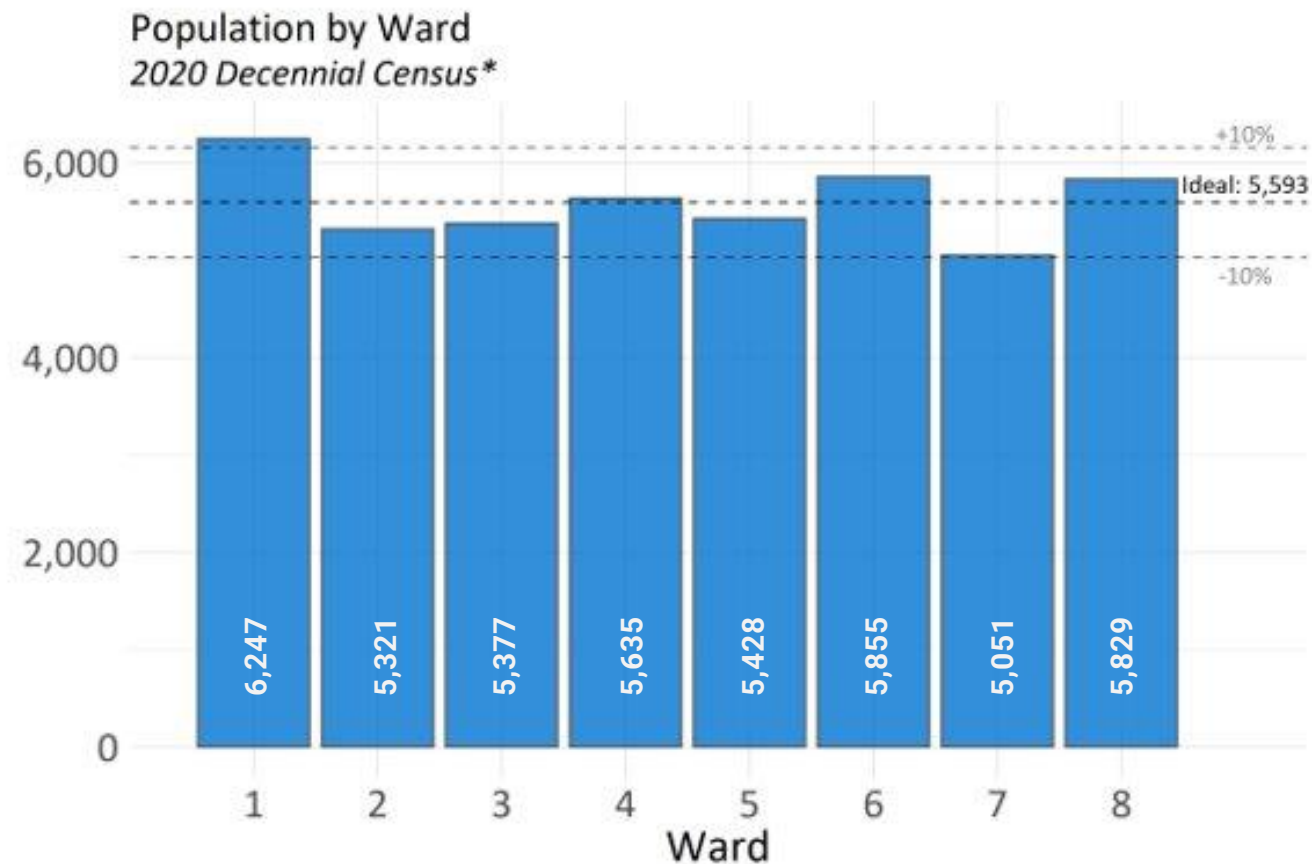


# Population by Ward, 2020

“Ideal size” is calculated by dividing the City’s total population by 8 Wards.

To determine if Wards are of roughly equal size:

- population of each Ward relative to the ideal size
- % deviation between the most and least populous Wards



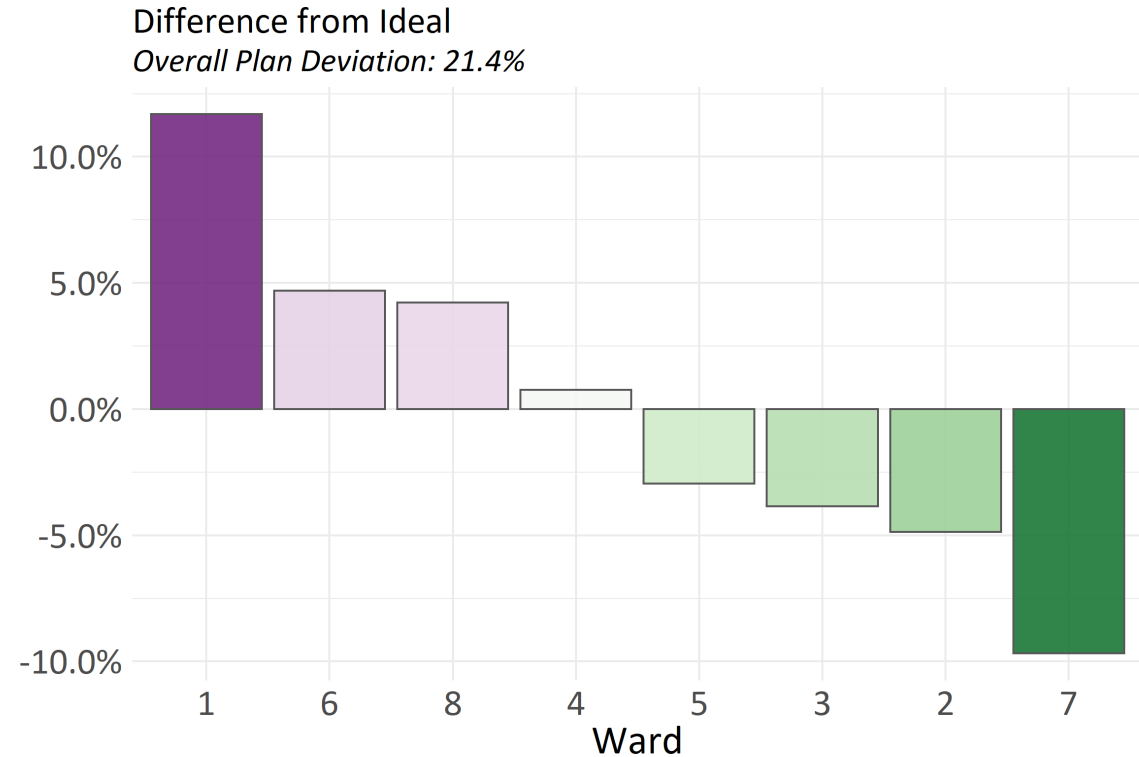
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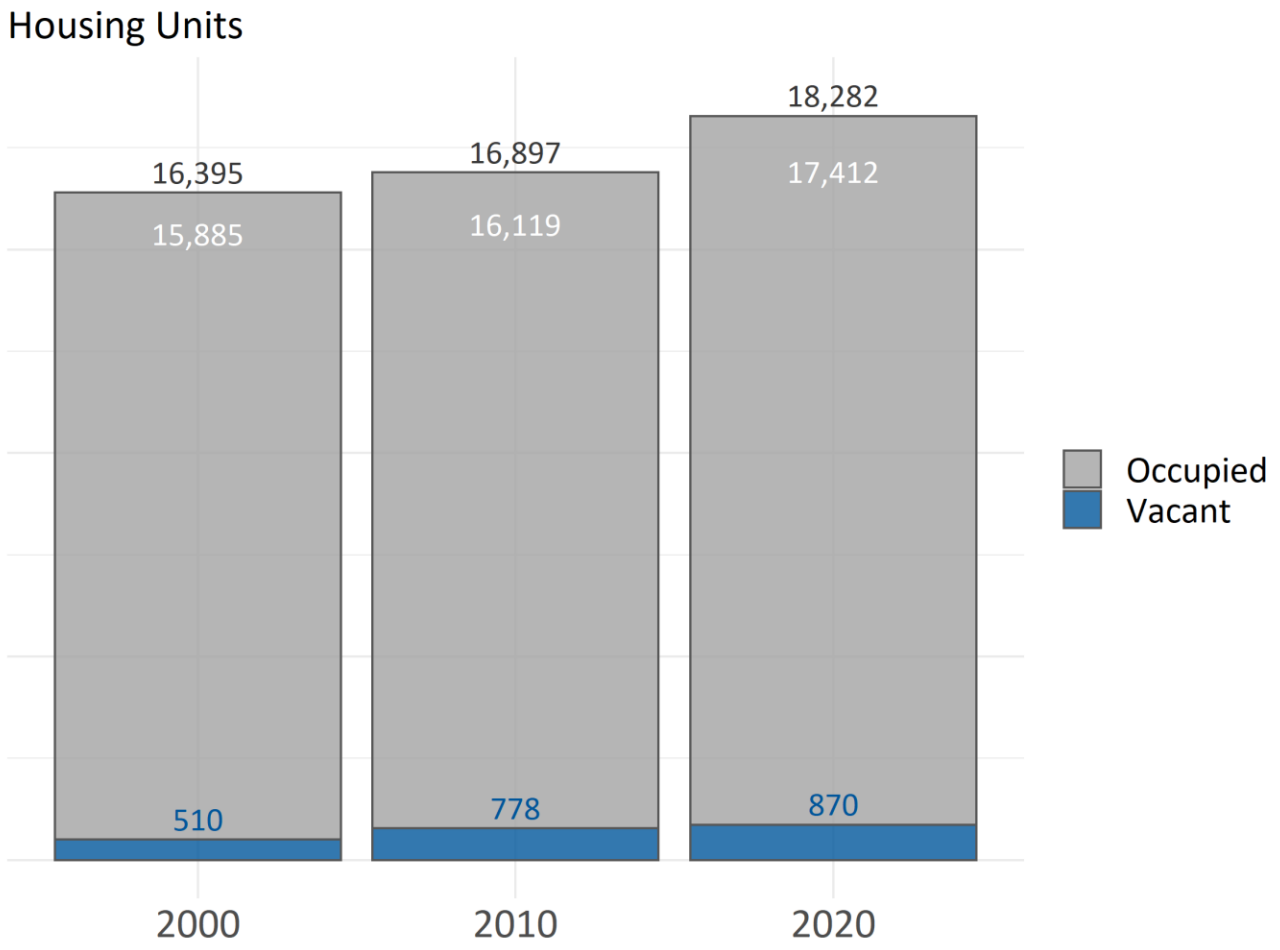
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*2020 Decennial Census, adjusted for a data error related to UVM dorm location.*

# Total Housing Units, 2000-2020



# Committee's Input Meetings

## **Committee Discussion Topics:**

- Dates and locations
- Facilitating the Meetings
- How to get the word out
- Questions for community input

## ***Draft* list of information needed to present at Meetings:**

- What is redistricting & why are we doing it (including Ward populations)
- Current Wards Map, Map of 7 Wards/14 Councilors prior to 2013
- Others?



# Committee's Input Meetings

## 2010 Redistricting Considerations

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