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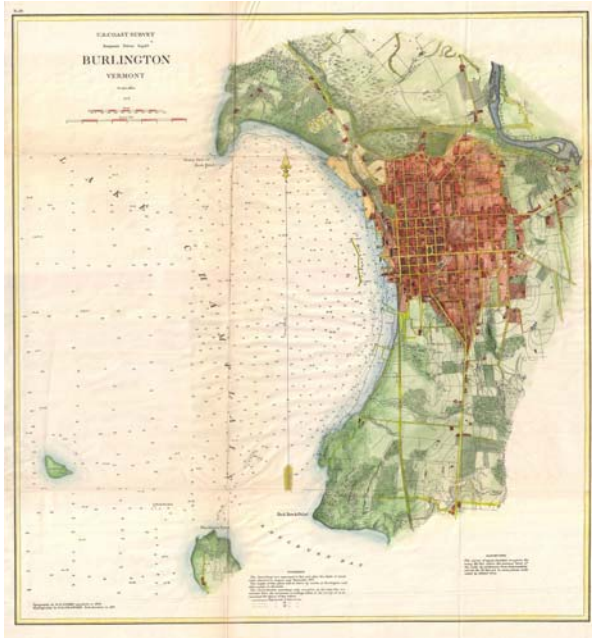
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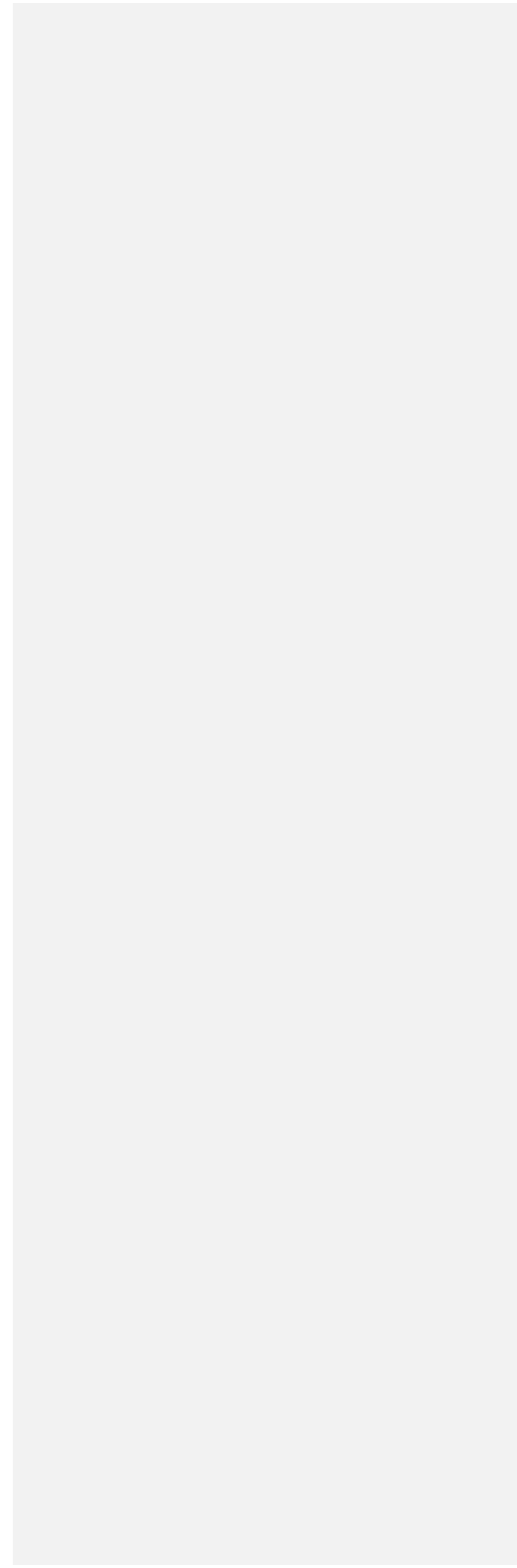
Re-Adopted by the Burlington City Council

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CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT



♻️ PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER ♻️



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Several smaller maps are incorporated into the relevant sections of the Plan as necessary.

Introduction

Burlington's "Municipal Development Plan" presents a vision for land use and development over the next ten to twenty years ~~period~~. It will prepare the city for growth, provide a reliable basis for public and private investment, and guide the city through the early twenty-first century. This plan has been prepared and adopted in accordance with the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (VSA Title 24, Chapter 117).

History of Planning in Burlington

Land use planning has played a central role in shaping the City of Burlington since 1925 when voters authorized "the creation of a Municipal Planning Commission in accordance with Act No. 107 of the Laws of Vermont of 1921." This action eventually resulted in the city's first land use plan and zoning ordinance in 1947, a subdivision ordinance in 1955 to control the layout of city streets, and subsequent revisions to each as needed.

In the 1960's, the City undertook a major urban renewal program in an effort to revitalize the downtown area. Large tracts of land were created in the Central Business District (CBD) to be available for commercial development. However, urban renewal also eliminated neighborhoods, altered street patterns, and significantly changed the historic context of the downtown.

Since 1973, in accordance with the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (VSA Title 24, Chapter 117), a Municipal Development Plan for the City of Burlington has been prepared every five years. In 1988, the Vermont legislature amended the Act and other statutes affecting land use planning. Collectively known as "Act 200," these changes encouraged comprehensive planning at the state, regional and local levels, facilitated cooperation between communities, and offered a forum to resolve disputes. Communities that choose to plan must do so in an effort to address a common set of statewide goals. The 1991 *Burlington Municipal Development Plan* was Burlington's first plan to be guided by the goals of Act 200.

[A new approach to the update of the Municipal Development Plan, now branded planBTV, has recently been developed in Burlington. Instead of preparing an overall update every 5 years, the Department of Planning & Zoning is now constantly working on various area-wide master plans or topic specific plans that eventually update the relevant chapters of this plan. The recent 2013 Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan is a great example of this new approach, which will allow for a more in-depth look and understanding of the dynamics and character of each distinct city neighborhood.](#)

~~The C~~reation of a ~~Municipal Development Plan, planBTV~~ is greatly advanced ~~with-by~~ the inclusion of several ~~past and new~~ planning studies and technical reports prepared by various city departments. To the extent practical, these priorities are also included in this Plan. ~~A References and Resources Section is found at the end of the Plan to provide a listing of these reports and others that are relevant to the issues and proposals presented.~~

~~In addition to the Legacy Project, examples of new major plans include:~~

~~All of these plans are to be considered incorporated into this plan, and are adopted herein by reference:~~

- ~~Urban Reserve Interim Use and Stewardship Plan, October 1997~~
- ~~North Street Revitalization Plan, November 1998~~
- ~~Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan, December 1998~~
- ~~Climate Protection Plan, February 2000~~
- ~~Street Tree Master Plan, February 2000~~
- ~~Harbor Management Plan, October 2000~~
- ~~Open Space Protection Plan, October 2000~~
- ~~Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development, 20032008~~
- ~~planBTV-Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan 2013~~
- ~~planBTV-Open Space Protection Plan 2013~~
- ~~planBTV-Climate Action Plan 2013~~

~~All of these plans are to be considered incorporated into this plan, and are adopted herein by reference.~~

~~Much of the information for the maps in this Plan was analyzed, and the maps themselves developed, using the Planning and Zoning Department's Geographic Information System (GIS). GIS performs complex analyses of geographically related information and is capable of displaying that information in tabular or map formats. The City continues to maintain this system as an important decision and administrative support tool.~~

Purpose and Role of the Plan

A community's Municipal Development Plan, or "Master Plan," must be both visionary and strategic. The Master Plan outlines goals and objectives for the future and is the principal guide directing land use policy and decision-making. It defines the policies, programs and specific actions necessary to attain these objectives.

A Master Plan ~~is~~must be prepared every 5 years in accordance with state statute and has standing in statewide regulatory proceedings including Act 250. As mentioned above, Burlington's new approach to land use planning provides more frequent updates to the Municipal Development Plan with the preparation of area master plans or topic specific plans. All City plans and programs which effect land use and development, including the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Impact Fees and Capital Improvement Plan,

must be in conformance with the policies and directives found in the Municipal Development Plan.

For the vision presented in this plan to become a reality however, other steps must follow its adoption. These include:

- **revision of municipal ordinances and bylaws** to ensure the Plan's goals and policies are properly reflected, implemented and enforced;
- **development of a capital budget and program** to outline long-term public investment needs and commitments;
- **development of area-specific master plans, programs and policies** to offer more detailed and site-specific strategies for selected parts of the city;
- **ongoing evaluation** of plans, policies and programs; and
- **continuing community involvement** in the planning and governing process.

This Master Plan must be considered a "living document" and not placed on a shelf until the next revisions ~~are due in 2011~~. It will be continually reviewed, modified and expanded as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and opportunities. In fact, the process for revising this plan has already begun, and over the next 2-3 years a comprehensive re-write of the City's Master Plan will take place.

Creation of this Plan

~~The process for creating a Municipal Development Plan requires extensive research, analysis and collaboration at all levels in the city. The Plan must be comprehensive in its scope, yet as specific as possible in its direction. And most importantly, the Plan must reflect the needs and desires of the residents of the community.~~

REVISIONS SINCE 2001

~~Burlington's previous Municipal Development Plan was adopted in June of 2001. This was an update to the 1996 and 1991 Plans. The 1991 Plan was the last comprehensive re-write and the result of a three year process which included extensive citizen participation. The 1991 Plan was, by and large, written by the residents of the city—a fact in which Burlington takes great pride. The 2001 Plan incorporated the vision for the City developed by the **Burlington Legacy Project Action Plan**—again the result of an extensive public process.~~

~~This new document retains all of the 2001 plan's overall philosophy and priorities. Adopted in accordance with state statute (24 VSA §4387) as a readoption of the 2001 Plan, changes are limited to very brief updates to the following:~~

- ~~• projects that have been completed;~~
- ~~• projects, initiatives, or programs that have been substantially revised; and,~~
- ~~• projects, initiatives, or programs that may have been abandoned.~~

Revisions to the 2001 Plan also identify areas for future planning needed to address ongoing needs or redevelopment within the context of existing land use policy.

The Burlington Legacy Project – Building A Better Future For Burlington

Between the summer of 1999 and the spring of 2000, Burlington's citizens engaged in a community visioning process called "The Burlington Legacy Project." People from all of Burlington's neighborhoods came together to build a vision of the future. Led by a diverse group of people from all segments of the community, the project spent nearly a year tapping the wisdom of hundreds of Burlington residents who've shared their insights about our city, drawn from a rich vein of everyday experience.

The Legacy Project provides a roadmap for change that will guide Burlington in becoming the vital economic, social, and cultural hub of the region. It envisions our growth into a real city with both a significantly higher population and an outstanding quality of life, including a thriving business sector; full, high-wage employment; a vibrant downtown and waterfront; excellent housing opportunities; strong social supports; and an environment that is managed and protected with great care. The Burlington Legacy Project provides a blueprint for ongoing, community-wide dialogue about how to resolve these conflicts. It also calls for a strong spirit of collaboration with surrounding communities, for Burlington cannot be sustainable as a city if our region as a whole does not support this goal.

As a "roadmap for change," the Legacy Project creates a foundation for this and subsequent City Municipal Development Plans. The vision and many of the actions developed and put forth by the Legacy Project have been incorporated into this Plan to be adopted as part of the City's "official" land use and development policy. However, this is only an interim step in this process.

The next revision of the City's Municipal Development Plan will be the first complete and comprehensive re-write of the Master Plan since 1991. The Burlington Planning Commission is committed to undertaking a multi-year process that will advance the Legacy Project's vision for Burlington to the next stage by outlining more specific policies and land use plans that will facilitate the City's future growth and evolution as a sustainable community.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

Creation of a Municipal Development Plan is greatly advanced with the inclusion of several planning studies and technical reports prepared by various city departments. To the extent practical, these priorities are also included in this Plan. A *References and Resources Section* is found at the end of the Plan to provide a listing of these reports and others that are relevant to the issues and proposals presented.

In addition to the Legacy Project, examples of new major plans include:

- *Urban Reserve Interim Use and Stewardship Plan, October 1997*
- *North Street Revitalization Plan, November 1998*

- ~~▪ [Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan, December 1998](#)~~
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- ~~— [Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development, 2003-2008](#)~~
- ~~— [planBTV-Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan 2013](#)~~
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Burlington Demographic Profile

Commented [ST1]: Move the demographic profile to the APPENDIX.

This section presents a basic overview of some of Burlington's socio-economic trends. More detailed information pertaining to economic and housing characteristics can be found in those respective sections of the Plan, or in an appendix developed for the ~~2003-2008~~ [Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development](#) prepared as part of the City's participation in the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Act (HOME) programs.

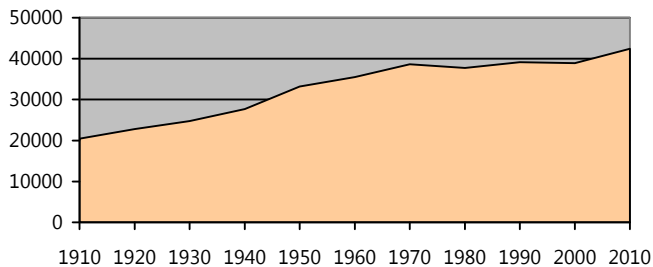
POPULATION

The City of Burlington remains Vermont's most populated community with a ~~2000-2010~~ (US Census) population of ~~38,889~~[42,417](#). This accounts for just over ~~26~~[27](#)% of Chittenden County's total population, and more than two times that of the state's next largest community – the Town of Essex.

Since 1960, Burlington's population has experienced a series of "ups and downs" with only small real increases over time. Between 1970 and 1980, Burlington witnessed a 2.4% population decline which was later offset by a 3.8% increase between 1980 and 1990. The Census ~~2000-2010~~ population represents a ~~0.69~~[1](#)% ~~decrease~~[increase](#) since ~~1990~~[2000](#). ~~This figure however is disputed by City officials. A decrease in overall population directly conflicts with local population estimates and growth of housing units over the past decade. The City will be taking active steps in the immediate term to challenge and correct these figures to reflect a more accurate population of the City. This sudden increase in population during the last decade follows the national trend of people migrating back to the inner cities. In fact,~~

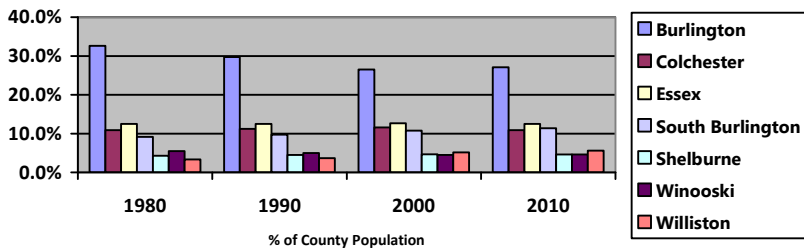
[downtown Burlington has seen an even more significant increase in residents with 23% in the last decade.](#)

Burlington's Population 1910-2010



The actual population number is less important than the trends experienced within the larger region however. Burlington's marginal population fluctuations are in contrast to population growth experienced by other communities in Chittenden County, and is indicative of continuing suburbanization within the region.

Population Shifts - Chittenden County (1980-2010)



As illustrated here, Burlington's population as a percentage of the County's has experienced a steady decline [over the past 30 years between 1980 and 2000, but is now seeing a resurgence, beginning to see its share of the county's population increase.](#) The communities of South Burlington, Williston, Colchester and Shelburne have absorbed the largest shares. [This trend is predicted to continue unless there are coordinated efforts to manage and redirect growth within the region.](#)

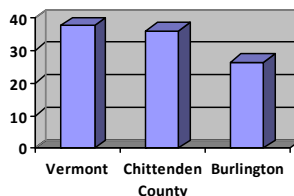
The Chittenden County [Regional Planning Commission](#) and the [Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) have [has](#) recently collaborated on the creation of a new Economic and Demographic Forecast for the six northwestern counties of Vermont¹. This forecast projects future population growth, employment and housing demand through 2035.

Population projections, by design and practice, are “best estimates” at a given point in time, of what the future may bring. They typically involve a complex array of assumptions, and combine relationships between employment trends, net migration and natural population increases. While they are an important planning tool, projections should be used with great caution – particularly the smaller the community and the longer the time horizon. The following chart illustrates a range of possible populations based on related trends.

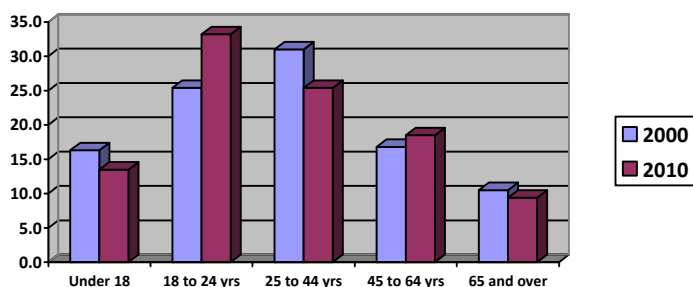
However, Burlington’s population is not the whole growth story.

Burlington’s population is young. The median age in Burlington is [29.226.5](#) years old as compared to the state median of 37.7. [The graph below shows how younger kids under 18 are becoming a smaller part of the population, while the 18 to 24 years old \(college student\) have increased considerably as a proportion of the overall city residents.](#)

Median Age (2010 Census)



Burlington Population by Age (2000 & 2010)



[ADD more comments...](#)

¹ “Economic and Demographic Forecast: Northwest Vermont and Chittenden County, 2000 to 2035 and Beyond,” prepared by Economic & Policy Resources, Inc. for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization, September 2000.

With demographic trends towards smaller families, growth of housing must also be considered. Growth in housing has consistently exceeded population growth since 1960. The city continues to be an attractive place to live - especially as people are drawn to the many amenities the city has to offer including convenient access to shopping, services and employment opportunities.

Burlington's population is diverse. 71.7 percent of Burlington's residents identify themselves as non-white, and 2.6 percent of the population are of two or more races.

