

Collaborative House Map (10/13/21)

Explanations and Rationale

We set out to meet the goals required by law for compact, contiguous districts with a +/- deviation from the ideal population of 4287 of 8% or less.

We also to the greatest extent possible listened to and applied public input to how we drafted this map.

The LAB distributed to the public a detailed survey to discover what Vermonters want their legislative districts to look like. With over 630 responses, 75% stated that they prefer single member House districts to multi-member districts. 60% stated that they believe all districts should be single member. The overwhelming percentage of unsolicited emails the LAB received also indicated a strong preference for single member districts.

90% of respondents to the survey stated that making districts conform to Town borders was an important factor the LAB should take into account when drawing maps (followed by school district lines), but by a margin of 65% to 35% indicated that it was better to split a town border in order to create two single member districts than to maintain that border within a two-member district.

Respondents

Testimony from Vermont's Racial Equity Director also supported single member districts, noting the historic use of multi-member districts for purposes of racial gerrymandering, and their general tendency to disadvantage minorities.

We made an effort to meet specific requests from local testimony, for example:

- Removing sections of Burlington from Winooski.
- To “put Corinth with its physical, cultural, environmental, and economic partner towns (Topsham, Bradford, Washington, Chelsea, Vershire)”, and to break these towns away from Williamstown.
- To realign Huntington with Chittenden County as opposed to Washington County. We couldn't do this entirely, but by making the current two-member district, which is Washington County heavy, into two single member districts, Huntington's pairing with Buell's Gore, Bolton and the western portion of Waterbury gives more equal weight to the Washington and Chittenden County portions of the district.

We identified all towns that can exist as single-town/single member districts as “ideal” districts. Prioritized keeping existing districts that still meet population protocols (ie. Bradford, Fairlee,

West Fairlee) and maintaining the current boundaries of two member districts, but dividing them into two single member districts (ie. Barre Town and Barre City).