Regional Data Bulletin

2020 Decennial Census Highlights

DELAWARE VALLEY **data**

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia region, established by an Interstate Compact between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey. Members include Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, plus the City of Chester, in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties, plus the cities of Camden and Trenton, in New Jersey.

DVRPC serves strictly as an advisory agency. Any planning or design concepts as prepared by DVRPC are conceptual and may require engineering design and feasibility analysis. Actual authority for carrying out any planning proposals rest solely with the governing bodies of the states, local governments or authorities that have the primary responsibility to own, manage or maintain any transportation facility.

DVRPC's vision for the Greater Philadelphia Region is a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable region that increases mobility choices by investing in a safe and modern transportation system; that protects and preserves our natural resources while creating healthy communities; and that fosters greater opportunities for all.

DVRPC's mission is to achieve this vision by convening the widest array of partners to inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making. We are engaged across the region, and strive to be leaders and innovators, exploring new ideas and creating best practices.

Background

The first substate level results from the 2020 Decennial Census results were released in mid-August 2021. This initial release includes the demographic attributes necessary for redistricting federal congressional districts, and contains some key variables that can be compared to prior decades' results to capture changes that have occurred in the region. While much more data will be released in the months to come, there are a number of potential 2020 data issues. These are discussed at the end of this document.

This analysis of the 2020 Census emphasizes county and municipal population trends in the nine-county Greater Philadelphia region. When examining municipal-level data, since Philadelphia itself is a municipality, Philadelphia's eighteen Planning Districts (referred to as "districts" in tables and figures) were used to gain insight into the dynamic changes within the city for subcounty analysis.

Key Findings

- The nation grew by 7.4 percent from 2010 to 2020—slower than the prior decade and near the historic lows of the 1930s.
- Greater Philadelphia's population grew by nearly 267,000 people or 4.7 percent, up from 4.4 percent the prior decade—closer to, but still below, national rates.
- The region's four New Jersey counties grew more slowly (3.6 percent) than the State of New Jersey (5.7 percent), while the region's five Pennsylvania counties, grew much faster (5.2 percent) than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2.4 percent). The region contributed 70 percent of all growth in the Commonwealth from 2010 to 2020, which grew statewide by just 2.4 percent.
- All counties had positive growth for the second straight decade, with Philadelphia and Montgomery counties accounting for half of all regional growth in the past decade.
- After gaining population for the first time in fifty years from 2000 to 2010, Philadelphia became the leading county in the region in terms of absolute growth, adding 77,800 people, or nearly 30 percent of all regional growth.
- Chester and Montgomery counties were tied for highest growth rates (7.1 percent), but Chester's gains were 54 percent lower when compared to the prior decade.

- The numbers indicate a resurgence of population in Core Cities and Developed Communities. Growing Suburbs and Rural Areas dominated growth two decades ago with an 83 percent share of population growth; they only made up 33 percent of the last decade's growth.
- Four Planning Districts in Philadelphia (Central, Lower North, South, and Central Northwest) and Trenton City were the top five locations in terms of absolute growth, but Philadelphia's Central District's growth surpassed the other four combined. It has experienced the highest absolute growth for two consecutive decades.
- The two top locations for percentage growth were the smallest municipalities by population. The seemingly large growth may have had more to do with "noise" added to the data to protect privacy than actual change. See the "Unanswered Questions" section at the end of this document.
- Some places on either the top 20 or bottom 20 lists by absolute or percentage change made the list more so for their increase or decrease in group quarters than for change in household population (for example, Glassboro Borough in Gloucester County was 10th in absolute and 8th in percentage change largely due to university dormitory construction, while Thornbury Township in Delaware County closed a juvenile detention center and reduced population at an adult correctional facility and dormitories).
- Fitting with national trends, non-Hispanic White alone population decreased as a share of total population for another decade; however, there are signs of that trend reversing in Philadelphia.
- The share of population identifying as Hispanic or Latino increased by 5.5 percent over the last two decades.
- Other major race or ethnicity groups on the rise for share of the region's population were Asian alone, non-Hispanic; Other race alone, non-Hispanic; and Two or more races, non-Hispanic.
- Although still growing, the share of the region's population identifying as Black or African American alone, non-Hispanic decreased slightly. It declined by 4.3 percent in Philadelphia's population share but increased by a 7.6 percent share of Delaware County's population.
- Mercer County topped the list for greatest shifts in race and ethnicity and became the second county (after Philadelphia) to no longer have a majority population of non-Hispanic White.
- Although most municipalities and districts are still majority non-Hispanic, White alone, the number has decreased.
- Black, non-Hispanic was typically the most prevalent group after White among municipal and district populations in the 2000 Census. In 2020, both Hispanic and Asian populations outnumbered Black for second-most prevalent. Two or more races had a significant rise for third-most prevalent.

Population Growth

The U.S. population grew by over 22.7 million between 2010 and 2020, with a growth rate of 7.4 percent—its lowest rate since the 1930s and down from the 9.7 percent growth it saw from 2000 to 2010. Table 1 shows statistics for the nine-county Greater Philadelphia region, its parent states, and its member counties. Figure 1 displays shifts in growth rates over the past two decades at the national, state, and regional geographic levels. The region grew by 4.7 percent, or nearly 267,000 people, from 2010 to 2020. This was up from the prior decade, when the region grew by more than 238,000 people or 3.4 percent. Half of the 2010–2020 growth occurred in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties. Compared to respective state growth, the regional

percentage was between the 3.6 percent increase for the four New Jersey counties and 5.2 percent increase for the five Pennsylvania counties. As seen in Figure 2, however, the region contributed more significantly to Pennsylvania's overall growth than New Jersey's. In the past decade, 70 percent of Pennsylvania's growth came from the five Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) member Pennsylvania counties—up from 38 percent in the prior decade. Twelve percent of New Jersey's 2010 to 2020 growth came from the region's New Jersey counties—down from 21 percent the prior decade.

Table 1: 20 Years of Change: Population by County and Other Geographies, 2000, 2010, and 2020

Area	Decennial Census Counts			Change 2000–2010			Change 2010–2020			Change 2000–2020		
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	Absolute	%	Share of Regional Growth	Absolute	%	Share of Regional Growth	Absolute	%	Share of Regional Growth
Burlington	423,394	448,734	461,860	25,340	6.0%	10.6%	13,126	2.9%	4.9%	38,466	9.1%	7.6%
Camden	508,932	513,657	523,485	4,725	0.9%	2.0%	9,828	1.9%	3.7%	14,553	2.9%	2.9%
Gloucester	254,673	288,288	302,294	33,615	13.2%	14.1%	14,006	4.9%	5.2%	47,621	18.7%	9.4%
Mercer	350,761	366,513	387,340	15,752	4.5%	6.6%	20,827	5.7%	7.8%	36,579	10.4%	7.2%
Four NJ Counties	1,537,760	1,617,192	1,674,979	79,432	5.2%	33.3%	57,787	3.6%	21.6%	137,219	8.9%	27.1%
State of NJ	8,414,350	8,791,894	9,288,994	377,544	4.5%	n/a	497,100	5.7%	n/a	874,644	10.4%	n/a
Bucks	597,635	625,249	646,538	27,614	4.6%	11.6%	21,289	3.4%	8.0%	48,903	8.2%	9.7%
Chester	433,501	498,886	534,413	65,385	15.1%	27.4%	35,527	7.1%	13.3%	100,912	23.3%	20.0%
Delaware	550,864	558,979	576,830	8,115	1.5%	3.4%	17,851	3.2%	6.7%	25,966	4.7%	5.1%
Montgomery	750,097	799,874	856,553	49,777	6.6%	20.8%	56,679	7.1%	21.2%	106,456	14.2%	21.1%
Philadelphia	1,517,550	1,526,006	1,603,797	8,456	0.6%	3.5%	77,791	5.1%	29.1%	86,247	5.7%	17.1%
Five PA Counties	3,849,647	4,008,994	4,218,131	159,347	4.1%	66.7%	209,137	5.2%	78.4%	368,484	9.6%	72.9%
Commonwealth of PA	12,281,054	12,702,379	13,002,700	421,325	3.4%	n/a	300,321	2.4%	n/a	721,646	5.9%	n/a
Nine-County DVRPC Region	5,387,407	5,626,186	5,893,110	238,779	4.4%	100%	266,924	4.7%	100%	505,703	9.4%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 1: National, State, and Regional Growth Rates by Decade

4.4%

3.4%

4.5%

9.7%

0%

2000 to 2010

2.4%

3.6%

4.7%

7.4%

0%

2010 to 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2: Regional Contribution to Statewide Population Growth by Decade

2000 to 2010

21%

DVRPC NJ Counties

2010 to 2020

12%

DVRPC PA Counties

38%

70%
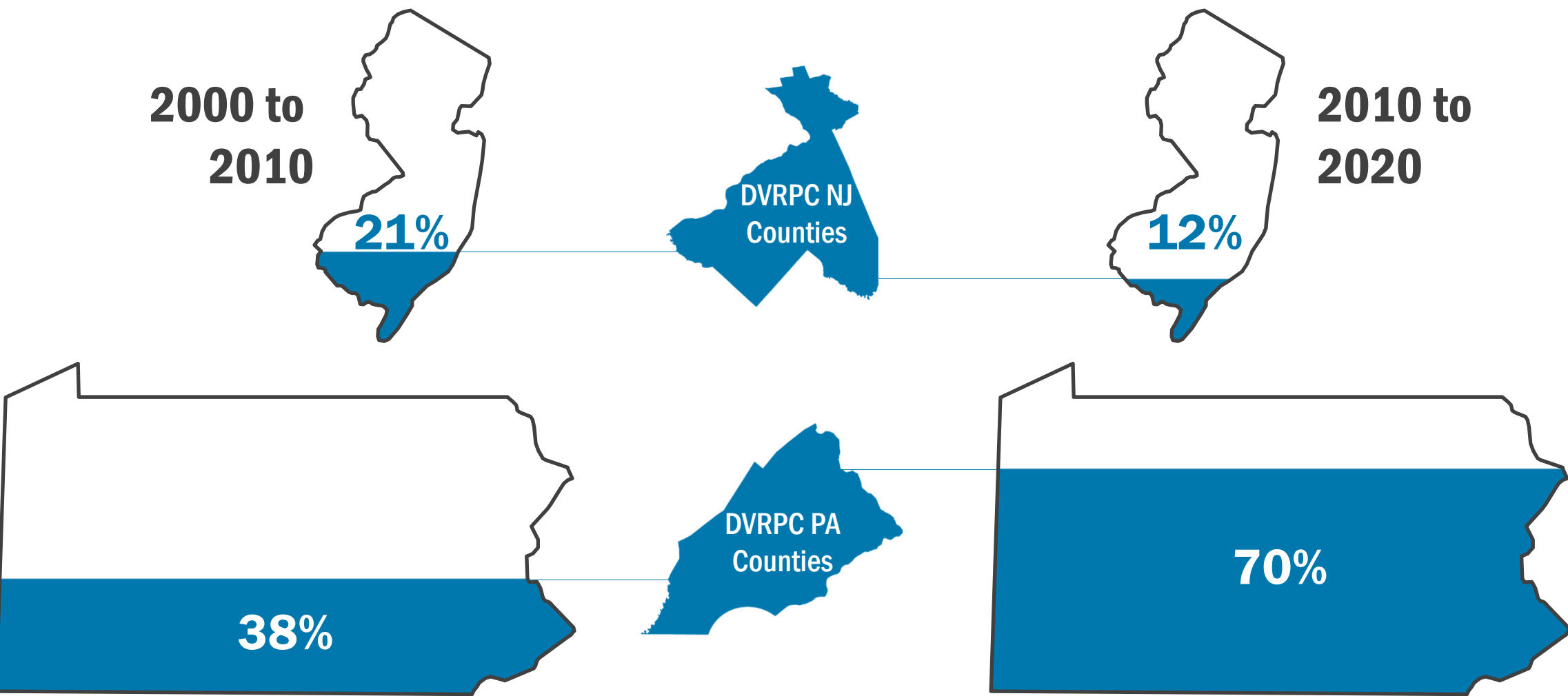
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

County Population Change in Region

Contrary to historical population declines in some counties in previous decades, every county in the region grew between 2010 and 2020.

Figure 3 tells the story of how county-level change impacted growth in Greater Philadelphia from 1980 to 2020. In the 1980s and 1990s regional growth was primarily held back by Philadelphia's declining population. That story changed substantially in the new millennium when Philadelphia grew again for the first time since the 1940s. Philadelphia went from the most negative growth in the region in the latter part of the last century to seventh-highest growth in 2000–2010, to the most growth from 2010 to 2020. With nearly 78,000 new residents in the last decade, Philadelphia surpassed all other counties in magnitude of growth. Delaware County followed a similar pattern but to a lesser degree. It had the eighth-highest growth rate for three decades—with negative, and then increasingly positive growth—moving up to the sixth-highest growth rate from 2010 to 2020.

Montgomery and Chester counties, tied for highest county growth rates (7.1 percent), have held onto top three rankings for absolute growth throughout the past four decades. From 2000 to 2010, Chester was the top-ranked county, bringing in more than a quarter of regional growth. Chester's growth slowed from 2010 to 2020 and was the third-highest in the region, with its growth only 54 percent of the prior decade's.

Similar to Chester, Gloucester County saw higher percentages of growth than many other counties, but the last decade saw a drop of more than half from the prior decade's growth.

Bucks and Burlington counties' share of regional growth dropped fairly significantly over the last 40 years.

Mercer and Camden counties, which had lower growth rates in some prior decades saw an uptick in the last decade, despite Camden's ranking of last place for growth. In fact, Camden County's doubled growth, from just under 5,000 to just under 10,000, is higher than each of the bottom three counties in the prior decade.

Subcounty Population Change

Connections 2050 Planning Areas (https://bit.ly/3mRkUBR) classify each municipality in the region into four categories:

- Core Cities;
- Developed Communities;
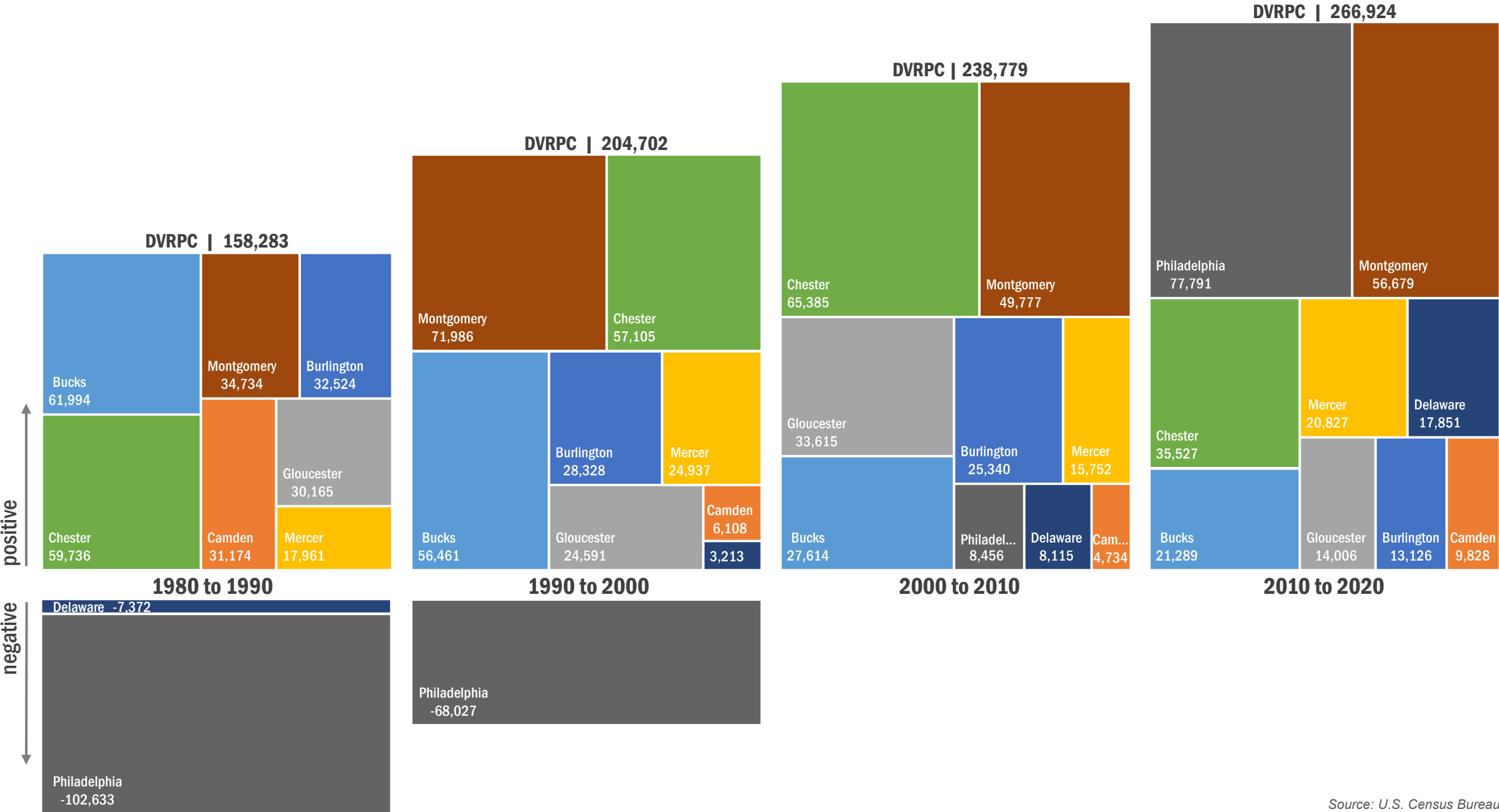- Growing Suburbs; and
- Rural Areas.

Figure 4 shows the dramatic change from the 2000–2010 period to the 2010–2020 period by this typology. Although Growing Suburbs and Rural Areas dominated growth two decades ago with an 83 percent share of population growth, they only made up 32.7 percent of the last decade's growth. Core Cities (largely carried by Philadelphia's growth but also by a healthy increase in the City of Trenton) made up nearly 29 percent of growth from 2010 to 2020, and Developed Communities made up almost 39 percent. This indicates an uptick in infill development in the region's more urbanized communities.

The rankings of the top and bottom municipalities in Figures 5 and 6 are by absolute and percentage change, respectively. Rankings range from 1 to 369—the sum of the region's 351 municipalities outside Philadelphia and the 18 Planning Districts within Philadelphia. Planning Area types are noted in the rankings by text color. The geographies' population growth rankings from the prior decade are shown in parentheses. Along with the total change in each geography, Figure 5 gives the change in two key components of the total population: household population and group quarters population. Group quarters include institutional categories, like correctional facilities and nursing homes, and non-institutional facilities, like dormitories and military barracks.

Figures 7 and 8 map the region's municipalities and districts, categorizing them by absolute and percentage change, respectively.

Four Philadelphia Planning Districts topped the absolute growth rankings for total population, with the Central (Center City) District dominating all others with a gain of 34,784 people. It ranked sixth for percentage growth with a nearly 30 percent gain over the decade. It has ranked number one for absolute growth for two consecutive decades. Lower North, South, and Central Northwest districts ranked second through fourth for total population growth, but eleventh place (North Delaware) and seventh place (University–Southwest) districts exceeded all but Central District's household population growth. These two districts gained 8,645 and 8,356 household residents, respectively. Their totals were dragged down by the loss of group quarters population. University–Southwest lost more than 3,000 dormitory residents—largely a switch to privately-owned university housing. North Delaware reduced its population in prisons and other institutional facilities by more than 4,000 over the last decade. With Lower Northwest District in fourteenth place, it is the last of the city's districts in the top 20. Four of the city's Planning Districts placed in the bottom 20 rankings—North, Upper North, West Park, and Lower Southwest—though their declines were less than the gains found in the growing districts.

Figure 3: Forty Years of Change: Absolute Change in Regional Population by County by Decade

DVRPC | 158,283

Bucks
61,994

Chester
59,736

Montgomery
34,734

Burlington
32,524

Camden
31,174

Gloucester
30,165

Mercer
17,961

1980 to 1990

Delaware -7,372

Philadelphia
-102,633

DVRPC | 204,702

Montgomery
71,986

Chester
57,105

Bucks
56,461

Burlington
28,328

Mercer
24,937

Gloucester
24,591

Camden
6,108

3,213

1990 to 2000

Philadelphia
-68,027

DVRPC | 238,779

Chester
65,385

Montgomery
49,777

Gloucester
33,615

Bucks
27,614

Burlington
25,340

Mercer
15,752

Philadel...
8,456

Delaware
8,115

Cam...
4,734

2000 to 2010

DVRPC | 266,924

Philadelphia
77,791

Montgomery
56,679

Chester
35,527

Mercer
20,827

Delaware
17,851

Bucks
21,289

Gloucester
14,006

Burlington
13,126

Camden
9,828

2010 to 2020

positive

negative

Figure 4: Population Growth Share by *Connections 2050* Planning Area and Decade

Legend:
- Core Cities (dark blue)
- Developed Communities (orange)
- Growing Suburbs (green)
- Rural Areas (gray)

2010 to 2020 (outer ring): 28.8%, 15.9%, 27.8%, 4.9%

2000 to 2010 (inner ring): 67.9%, 38.6%, 15.1%, 1.1%
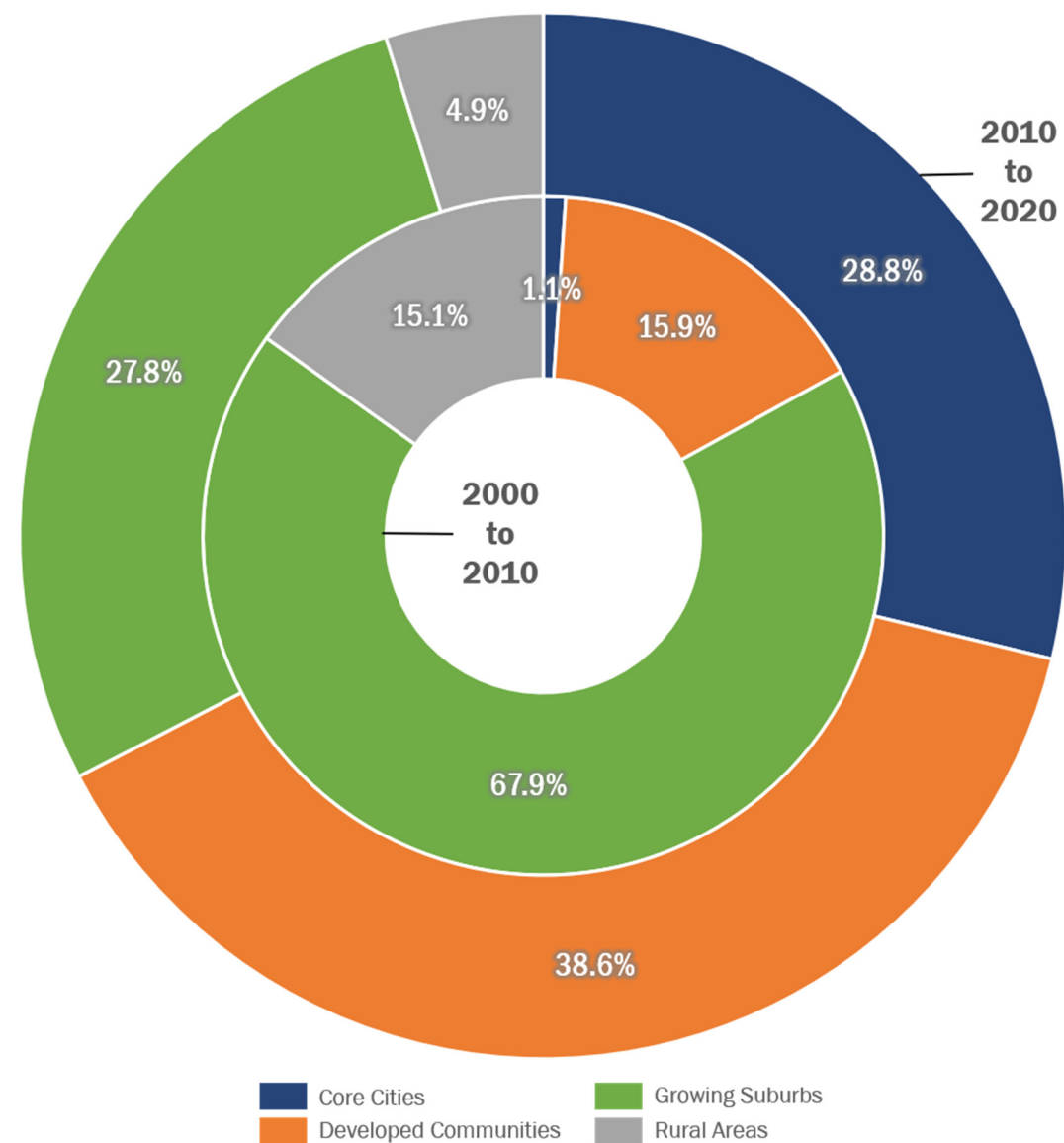
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The other Core Cities had mixed results for population change. Trenton gained almost 6,000 new residents, rising to fifth place after ranking 344th in the region during the prior decade, when it saw negative growth. Chester City was fourth from last with a decline of 1,367 people and Camden City second to last with a 5,553-person decline.

Seven Developed Communities made the top 20 list, most rising substantially from their prior decade's rankings: Lower Merion, Upper Merion, and Abington townships in Montgomery County; Lindenwold Borough and Cherry Hill Township in Camden County; Hamilton Township in Mercer County; and Upper Darby Township in Delaware County. Another seven made the bottom 20. With the exception of Lawrence Township in Mercer County, which was ranked 15 in the first 10 years of the century, the rest were fairly low-ranked in the prior decade. None of them lost substantial household population. Three gained household population but lost population in group quarters. New Hanover lost more than 1,700 federal prisoners at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst but gained nearly 400 residents in military barracks. Lawrence Township in Mercer County lost mostly dormitory population, and Woodbury City in Gloucester County lost prison population.

Growing Suburbs made both lists, four in the top 20 and three in the bottom 20. Glassboro Borough in Gloucester was in 10th place, up from 343rd, primarily driven by more than 4,000 students in new dormitories at Rowan University. East Whiteland Township and East Brandywine townships were Chester County's largest growers with about 3,000 new residents in each, and Upper Providence Township in Montgomery County was 20th. Perkiomen and New Garden townships in Montgomery and Chester counties were each of their counties' last- place municipalities for growth. Only New Garden Township made the bottom 20 list for percentage change. Thornbury Township in Delaware County had marginally positive household population growth but declined by over 1,000 persons from the closing of the Glen Mills Schools juvenile detention facility, declines at an adult prison, and a dormitory population drop at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania.

There were no Rural Areas in the top 20 absolute growers but four in the bottom 20 decliners: Tinicum Township in Bucks County, Waterford Township in Camden County, and Woodland and Pemberton townships in Burlington County.

In Figure 6, It should be noted that the top-ranked municipalities for percentage change, Tavistock and Pine Valley boroughs in Camden County, are also the region's smallest municipalities by population. Both surround golf courses. Tavistock had a population of five in 2010, and the 2020 result says it grew by four residents. Pine Valley went from a population of 12 in 2010 to 21 in 2020.

Figure 5: 20 Fastest-Growing and 20 Fastest-Declining Municipalities and Districts by Absolute Change, 2010–2020

	negative	positive	
1. Central, Philadelphia (1)		34,784	
2. Lower North, Philadelphia (232)		9,513	
3. South, Philadelphia (84)		7,095	
4. Central Northeast, Philadelphia (7)		7,058	
5. Trenton City, Mercer (344)		5,958	
6. Lower Merion Twp, Montgomery (359)		5,808	
7. University - Southwest, Philadelphia (361)		5,271	
8. Upper Merion Twp, Montgomery (67)		5,218	
9. Upper Far Northeast, Philadelphia (42)		5,044	
10. Glassboro Boro, Gloucester (343)		4,570	
11. North Delaware, Philadelphia (12)		4,448	
12. Lindenwold Boro, Camden (182)		4,028	
13. Hamilton Twp, Mercer (77)		3,833	
14. Lower Northwest, Philadelphia (353)		3,559	
15. Cherry Hill Twp, Camden (94)		3,508	
16. East Whiteland Twp, Chester (80)		3,267	
17. Abington Twp, Montgomery (350)		3,192	
18. East Brandywine Twp, Chester (110)		2,996	
19. Upper Darby Twp, Delaware (107)		2,886	
20. Upper Providence Twp, Montgomery (9)		2,872	

negative	positive	
-177		350. Burlington City, Burlington (189)
-177		350. Tinicum Twp, Bucks (320)
-180		351. Perkiomen Twp, Montgomery (46)
-211		352. Woodbury City, Gloucester (307)
-225		353. Lower Southwest, Philadelphia (144)
-228		354. Waterford Twp, Camden (196)
-231		355. Pitman Boro, Gloucester (332)
-244		356. Woodland Twp, Burlington (125)
-291		357. Bristol Twp, Bucks (351)
-316		358. New Britain Boro, Bucks (235)
-395		359. Lawrence Twp, Mercer (15)
-440		360. Franklin Twp, Gloucester (78)
-621		361. New Garden Twp, Chester (30)
-935		362. West Park, Philadelphia (366)
-1,009		363. Pemberton Twp, Burlington (349)
-1,018		364. New Hanover Twp, Burlington (360)
-1,124		365. Thornbury Twp, Delaware (109)
-1,367		366. Chester City, Delaware (363)
-2,461		367. Upper North, Philadelphia (369)
-5,553		368. Camden City, Camden (362)
-5,944		369. North, Philadelphia (365)

Planning Area Type

Core Cities	Growing Suburbs
Developed Communities	Rural Areas

Ranking from 2000–2010 decade
in parentheses ()

Population Type

■ Population in Households
■ Population in Group Quarters

Value Label: Total Population Change
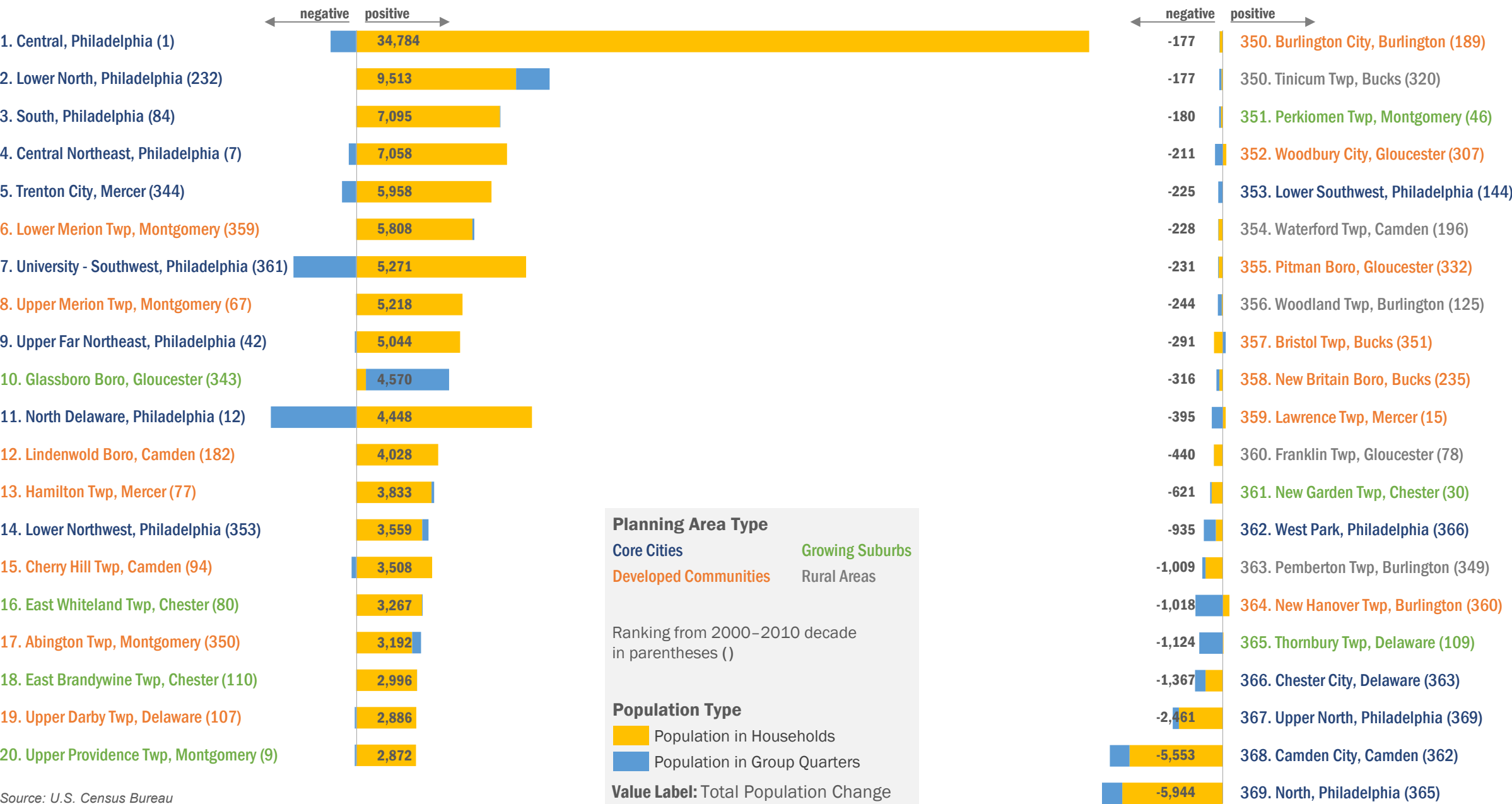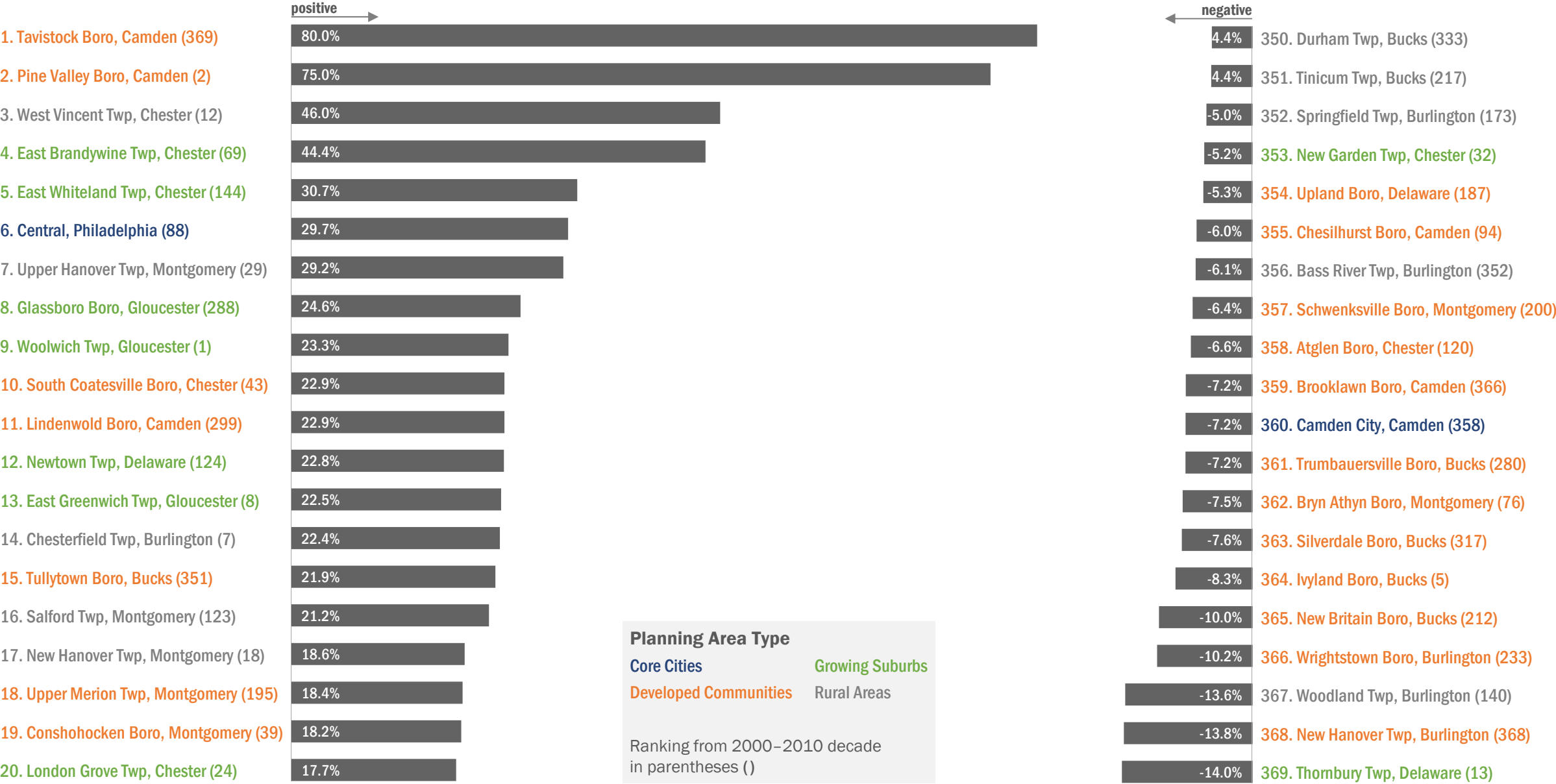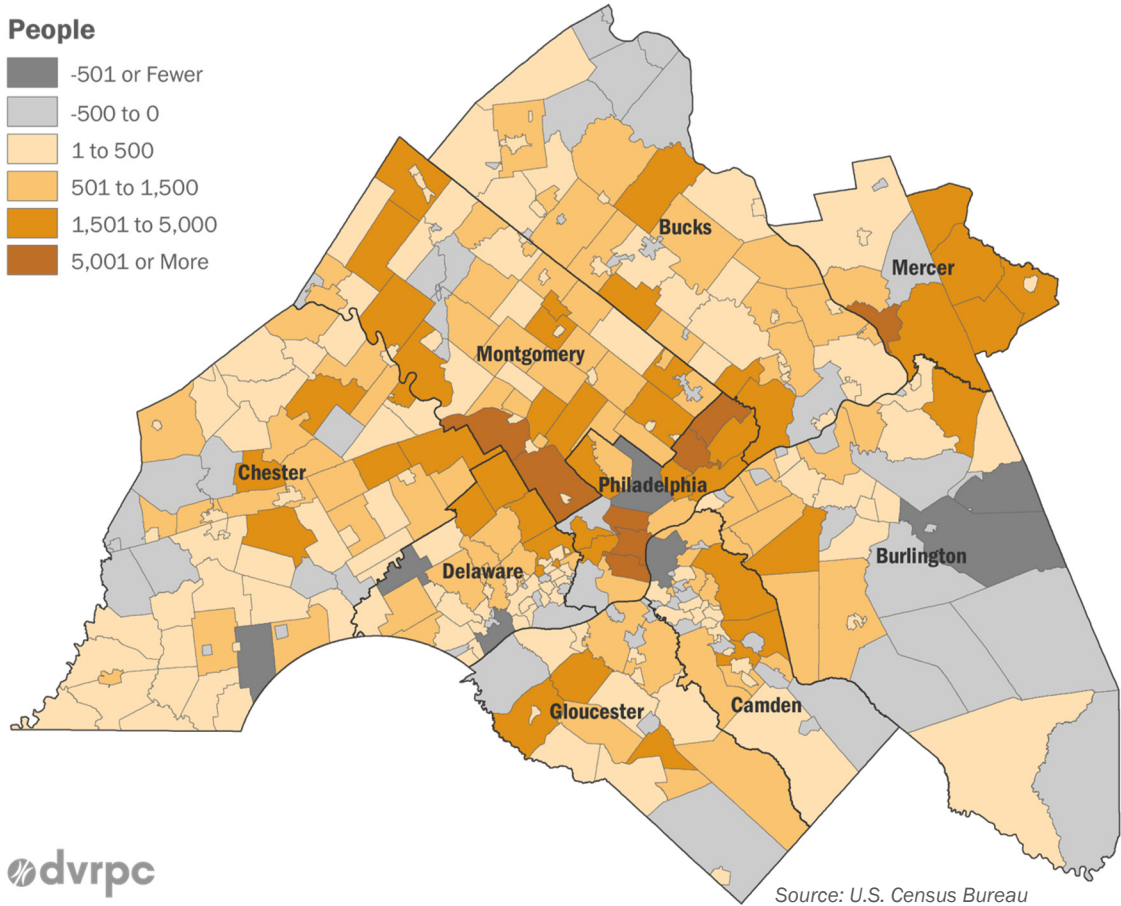
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

8

Figure 6: 20 Fastest-Growing and 20 Fastest-Declining Municipalities and Districts by Percentage Change, 2010–2020

positive →

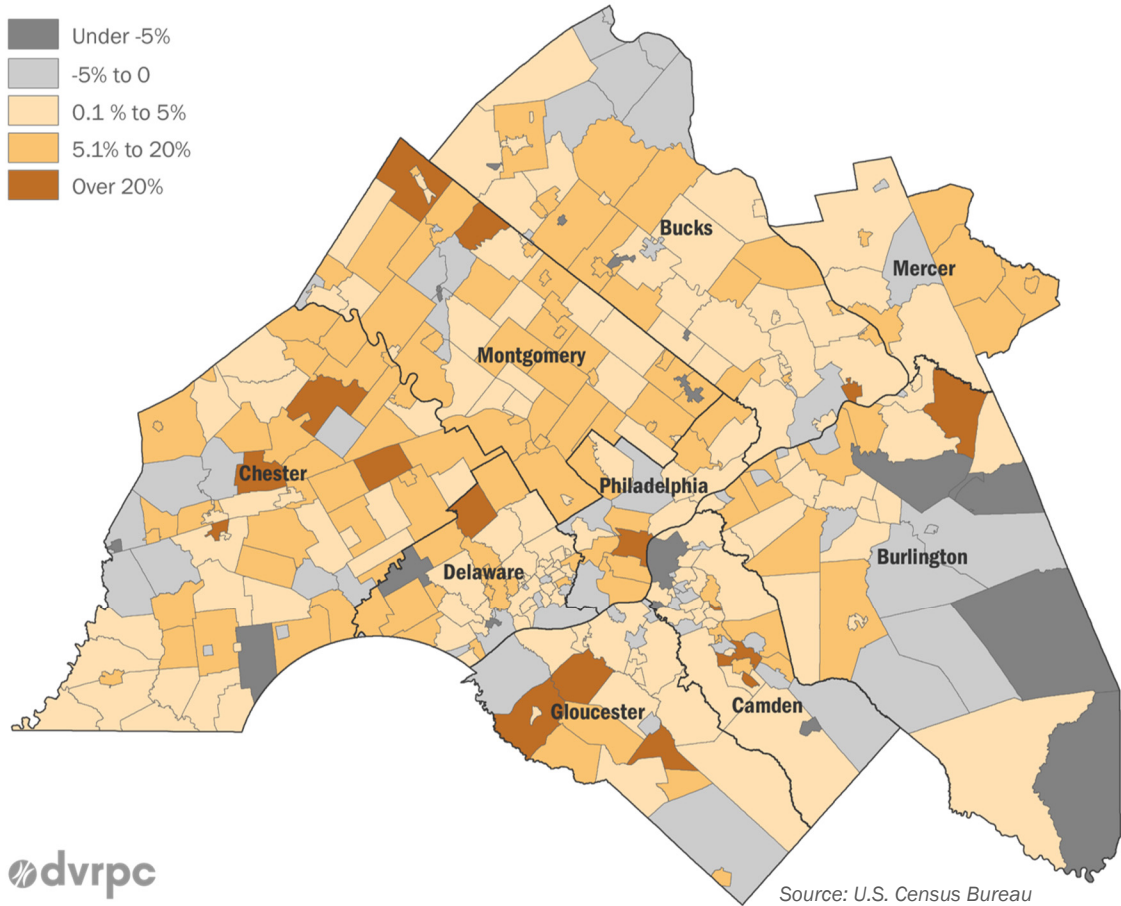| Rank	Municipality	Percentage
1. Tavistock Boro, Camden (369)		80.0%
2. Pine Valley Boro, Camden (2)		75.0%
3. West Vincent Twp, Chester (12)		46.0%
4. East Brandywine Twp, Chester (69)		44.4%
5. East Whiteland Twp, Chester (144)		30.7%
6. Central, Philadelphia (88)		29.7%
7. Upper Hanover Twp, Montgomery (29)		29.2%
8. Glassboro Boro, Gloucester (288)		24.6%
9. Woolwich Twp, Gloucester (1)		23.3%
10. South Coatesville Boro, Chester (43)		22.9%
11. Lindenwold Boro, Camden (299)		22.9%
12. Newtown Twp, Delaware (124)		22.8%
13. East Greenwich Twp, Gloucester (8)		22.5%
14. Chesterfield Twp, Burlington (7)		22.4%
15. Tullytown Boro, Bucks (351)		21.9%
16. Salford Twp, Montgomery (123)		21.2%
17. New Hanover Twp, Montgomery (18)		18.6%
18. Upper Merion Twp, Montgomery (195)		18.4%
19. Conshohocken Boro, Montgomery (39)		18.2%
20. London Grove Twp, Chester (24)		17.7%

← negative

Percentage	Rank	Municipality
4.4%	350. Durham Twp, Bucks (333)	
4.4%	351. Tinicum Twp, Bucks (217)	
-5.0%	352. Springfield Twp, Burlington (173)	
-5.2%	353. New Garden Twp, Chester (32)	
-5.3%	354. Upland Boro, Delaware (187)	
-6.0%	355. Chesilhurst Boro, Camden (94)	
-6.1%	356. Bass River Twp, Burlington (352)	
-6.4%	357. Schwenksville Boro, Montgomery (200)	
-6.6%	358. Atglen Boro, Chester (120)	
-7.2%	359. Brooklawn Boro, Camden (366)	
-7.2%	360. Camden City, Camden (358)	
-7.2%	361. Trumbauersville Boro, Bucks (280)	
-7.5%	362. Bryn Athyn Boro, Montgomery (76)	
-7.6%	363. Silverdale Boro, Bucks (317)	
-8.3%	364. Ivyland Boro, Bucks (5)	
-10.0%	365. New Britain Boro, Bucks (212)	
-10.2%	366. Wrightstown Boro, Burlington (233)	
-13.6%	367. Woodland Twp, Burlington (140)	
-13.8%	368. New Hanover Twp, Burlington (368)	
-14.0%	369. Thornbury Twp, Delaware (13)	

Planning Area Type

Core Cities   Growing Suburbs

Developed Communities   Rural Areas

Ranking from 2000–2010 decade
in parentheses ()

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 7: Absolute Population Change by Municipality and Districts, 2010–2020

People
- -501 or Fewer
- -500 to 0
- 1 to 500
- 501 to 1,500
- 1,501 to 5,000
- 5,001 or More

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 8: Percentage Population Change by Municipality and Districts, 2010–2020

- Under -5%
- -5% to 0
- 0.1 % to 5%
- 5.1% to 20%
- Over 20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The 2020 results for such small municipalities are suspect due to the U.S. Census Bureau's new Differential Privacy policy discussed at the end of this document. In order to protect these small boroughs from having identifying information about individual residents, Differential Privacy adds "noise" through simulated persons and households. In these locations the addition of one household would make a large impact on percentage growth. The race and Hispanic origin results also lend credence to the potentially significant influence of Differential Privacy "noise" in these two places. Tavistock, for instance, goes from three households with all White alone, non-Hispanic members in 2010 to two households with a population that is 44 percent White alone, non-Hispanic; 22 percent

Hispanic, and 11 percent (one person each) for three non-Hispanic racial groups: Black or African American alone, American Indian or Native Hawaiian, and two or more races.

Six locations on the Figure 5 top 20 list for absolute change also appear in Figure 6 for percentage change. This shows that the growth was significant by number and likely changed the character of the municipalities and districts in a significant way. East Brandywine and East Whiteland townships in Chester and Glassboro Borough in Gloucester led the Growing Suburbs in both rankings. Central District in Philadelphia had absolute growth greater than the second-

through fifth-ranked geographies combined, and with almost 30 percent growth it went from the fourth to first most populous district in Philadelphia and remained larger than any municipality in the region outside of Philadelphia. Lindenwold Borough in Camden County and Upper Merion Township in Montgomery were the Developed Communities on both lists.

Beyond the locations already discussed, three other municipalities climbed into the top 20 percentage growth this past decade after ranking beyond 100th place in the prior decade. Salford Township in Montgomery County and Newtown Township in Delaware County were ranked 123rd and 124th in the previous decade but went to 16th and 12th place in 2010–2020. Tullytown Borough in Bucks County went from 351st place to 15th place with a nearly 22 percent population increase in the last decade.

Six locations are found in the bottom 20 in absolute and percentage change. The magnitude of change in bottom 20 declining areas is generally not as significant as the top 20 growth areas, ranging from a 5 to 14 percent decline. This sort of drop could indicate municipal fiscal distress or lead to it. However, this is less true in municipalities where decline is driven by drops in group quarters, such as Thornbury Township in Delaware County and New Hanover Township in Burlington County. Among the bottom 20 list of Figure 6, half had household population declines of 5 percent or more. Camden City in Camden County was the only Core City to make this list. Two Rural Areas declined—both in Burlington County: Springfield and Bass River townships. The remaining were Developed Communities with significant household population decline: Chester County's Atglen Borough, Camden County's Brooklawn Borough, and Bucks County's Silverdale, Trumbauersville, and New Britain boroughs. Wrightstown Borough in Burlington County lost more than 10 percent of its household population.

Racial and Ethnic Shifts

A major story of national- and local-level census analysis is the growing racial and ethnic diversity of the country. Figure 9 displays the region's share of major race and ethnicity groups tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau for the region as a whole and for each of the nine counties.

Population identifying as White alone, non-Hispanic has declined nationally, in the region, and in all of its counties over the past two decades. The regional share of this group has dropped by 11.5 percent, from 69.7 percent in 2000 to 58.2 percent in 2020. Mercer County had the largest shift in this group, dropping more than 20 percent in the county's share of major race and ethnicity groups. It became the second county in the region, after Philadelphia, to no longer have a White, non-Hispanic majority. The county with the least change for non-Hispanic, White alone was Philadelphia, dropping a total of 8.2 percent share. Most of that was observed between 2000 and 2010. From

2010 to 2020, the share only dropped by 0.6 percent. Although its White population, at only 34.3 percent, is the lowest share for any county in the region, its decline may be reversing.

The group to gain the largest increase in regional population share over the past 20 years has been the Hispanic or Latino population of any race. It increased 5.5 percent regionally. Bucks County added less than 4 percent to its share of this group, while Mercer County added 12 percent.

Asian alone, non-Hispanic gained the second-most share of the region's demographic makeup. It went from a 3.5 percent to 7.2 percent share. Again, Mercer was the leader in share shifts, with an increase of 7.6 percent for this group. Gloucester's increased share of 1.6 percent was least in the region.

Although still a small share, non-Hispanic people identifying as some other race alone or two or more races had significant gains. The regional share of some other race alone increased by 0.4 percent from 0.1 percent in 2000, and two or more races' share increased to 3.6 percent from 1.3 percent.

Non-Hispanic Black or African American alone residents saw a decline in share, regionally, albeit a slight decline of 0.3 percent. The total count of this group increased by more than 81,000 people, but other groups had more significant growth. This group saw the most variation in share by county, with a mix of positive and negative change. Notably, Philadelphia's share of its non-Hispanic Blacks dropped by 4.3 percent, from 42.6 percent of the county in 2000 to 38.3 percent in 2020. This was a loss of more than 32,000 residents in this group. Meanwhile Delaware County added almost 48,000 non-Hispanic Blacks. Its share went from 14.4 percent to 22 percent, a 7.6 percent share increase.

The maps in Figures 10–15 help visualize the dynamics of these major race and ethnicity groups at the municipal and district level over the last 20 years. Figures 10 and 11 show the most prevalent groups for each location in 2000 and 2020, respectively. In 2000, more than 94 percent—or 348—of the region's municipalities and districts had non-Hispanic Whites as their most prevalent group. Only 20 locations, primarily in Core Cities, had non-Hispanic Blacks as their most prevalent. Beyond that, only one municipality, Milbourne Borough in Delaware County, had a different most prevalent group—non-Hispanic Asians.
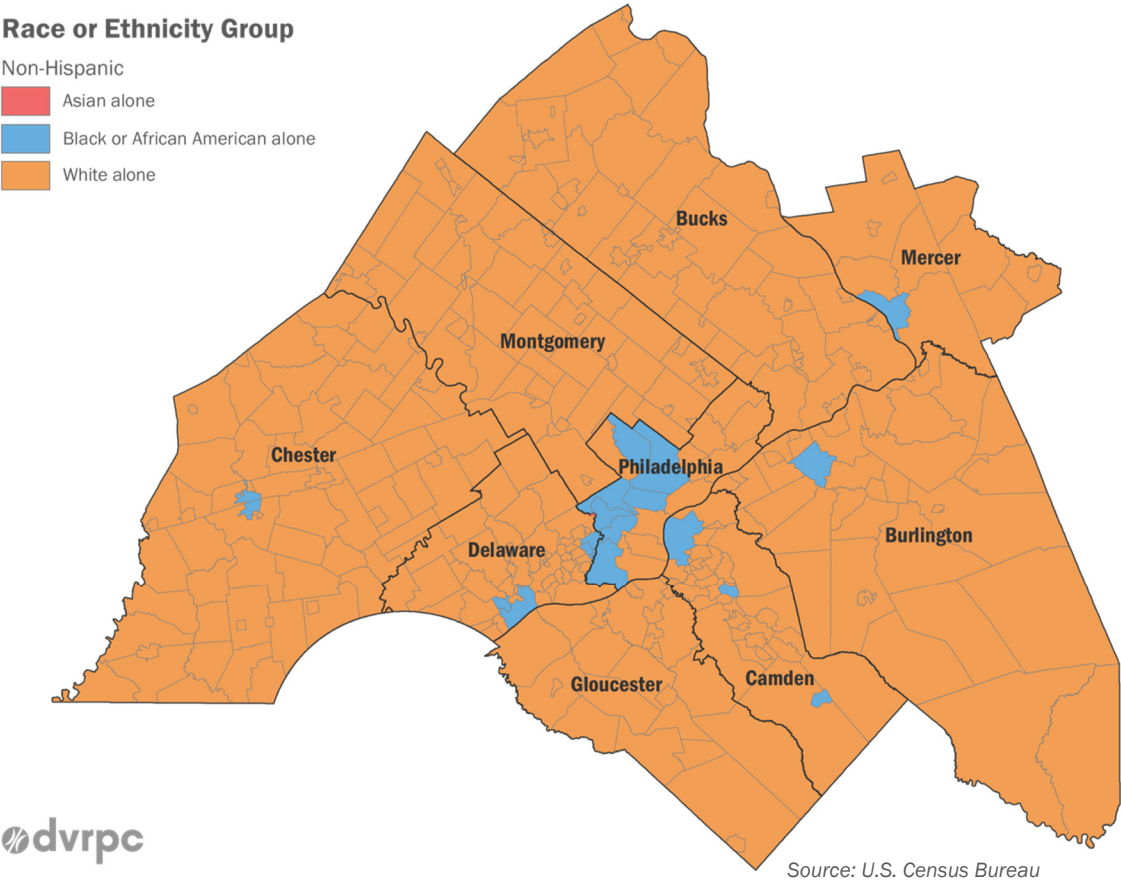
By 2020, there were 13 fewer municipalities and districts with non-Hispanic Whites as their largest group. Non-Hispanic Blacks rose to the highest share of 23 locations but in some places that were previously most prevalent Black or White, Hispanic or Latino population became more prevalent. Hispanic went from zero to nine municipalities and districts as most prevalent by 2020. Asian population became the most prevalent group in West Windsor Township of Mercer County.

Figure 9: Distribution of Race and Ethnicity Groups by Region and County; 2000, 2010, and 2020
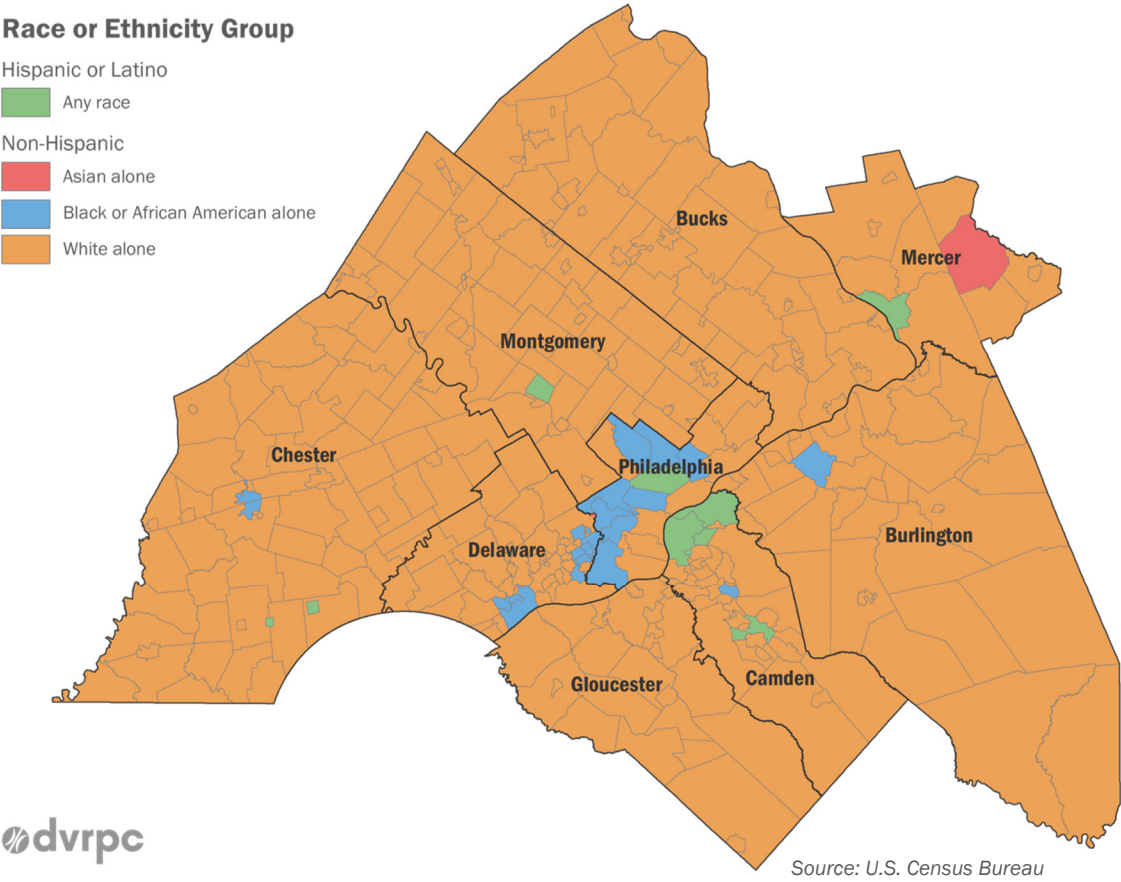

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Hispanic or Latino

- Any race

Non-Hispanic

- American Indian and Alaska Native alone
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
- White alone
- Some other race alone
- Two or more races

Figure 10: Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2000

Race or Ethnicity Group

Non-Hispanic
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- White alone

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 11: Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2020

Race or Ethnicity Group

Hispanic or Latino
- Any race

Non-Hispanic
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- White alone

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figures 12 and 13 show the second-most prevalent group in each municipality and district for 2000 and 2020. In 2000, non-Hispanic Blacks were the second-most prevalent group in more than half the geographies. By 2020, this dropped to just under 28 percent. Hispanic population surpassed Blacks as the group with the higher count of second-most prevalence—a 34.1 percent share. Asian second-most prevalent jurisdictions and districts rose to nearly a quarter of the region, and 30 locations had two or more races as their second-most prevalent group. Whites were second in 21 places.

Third-most prevalent groups are displayed for 2000 in Figure 14 and in Figure 15 for 2020. Hispanics claimed the most locations at this level of prevalence for both years, with 161 in 2000 and 149 in 2020. Non-Hispanic Blacks and Asians each were third-most prevalent in about a quarter of places in 2000, with 94 and 85 locations, respectively, but Asians' rise to second-most in a lot of locations by 2020 dropped their count to only 33 municipalities and districts in 2020. Blacks went down to third place (71 geographies) for third ranked, but two or more races rose significantly from third place (23 locations) in 2000 to second (103 locations) in 2020.
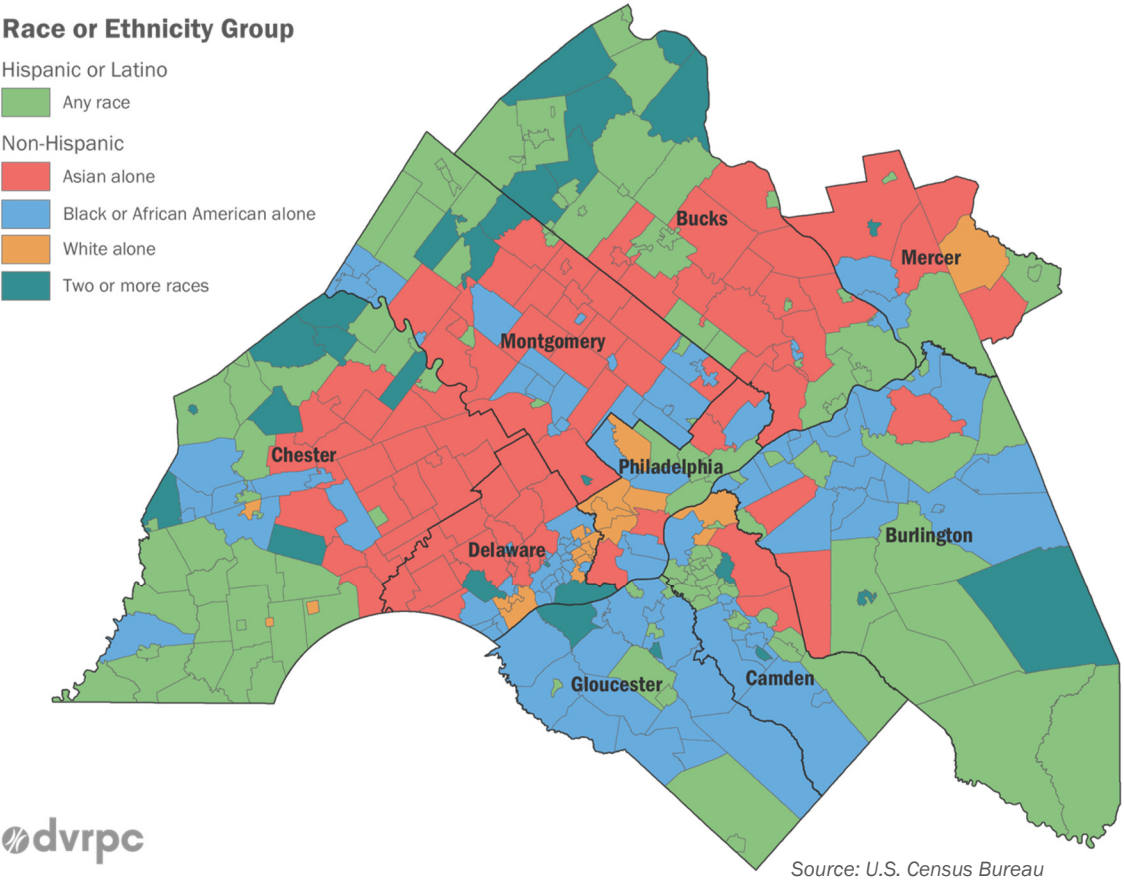
Figure 12: Second-Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2000

Race or Ethnicity Group

Hispanic or Latino
- Any race

Non-Hispanic
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- White alone
- Two or more races
- N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 13: Second-Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2020

Race or Ethnicity Group

Hispanic or Latino
- Any race

Non-Hispanic
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- White alone
- Two or more races

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
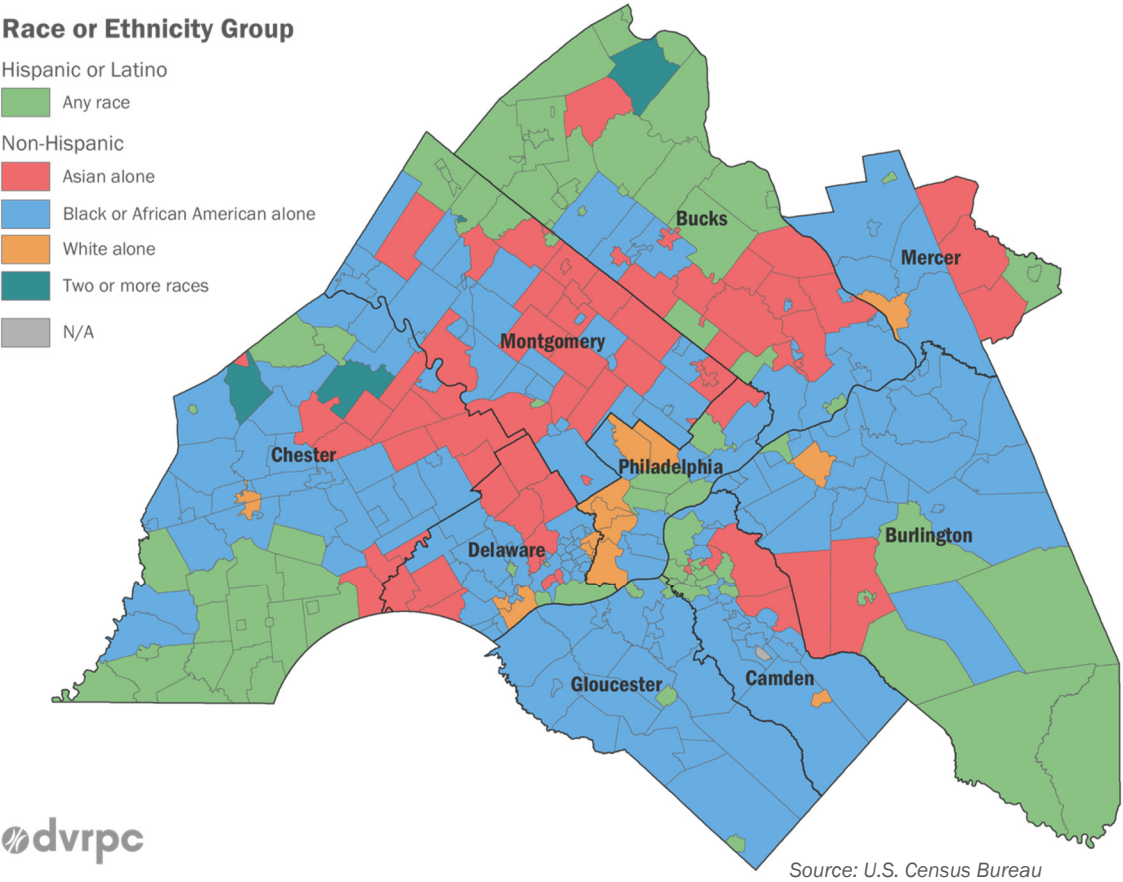
Unanswered Questions

There are some key issues with the 2020 census, some of which may be difficult to quantify. The year 2020 brought many challenges around the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the United States, one of these challenges was collecting the constitutionally required decennial count, which is intended to represent the state of the U.S. population on April 1, 2020. Census field operations were halted for public safety before, during, and after that date. Although operations resumed and were extended for nearly the remainder of the year, many questions remain about the quality of the data due to the extraordinary circumstances of collection, as well as proposed and actual changes made by the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2020 count. Among them:

- Did the residential locations of households on April 1, 2020, represent "normal" conditions or temporary housing for some, in response to the pandemic (e.g., college students at parent[s]' homes instead of on or near campus, families staying in vacation homes, persons staying with family/friends, or short-term rentals)?
- How much did operational interruptions and changes impact data collections and data quality? So far, the national- and state-level response rates for 2020 generally indicate

Figure 14: Third-Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2000
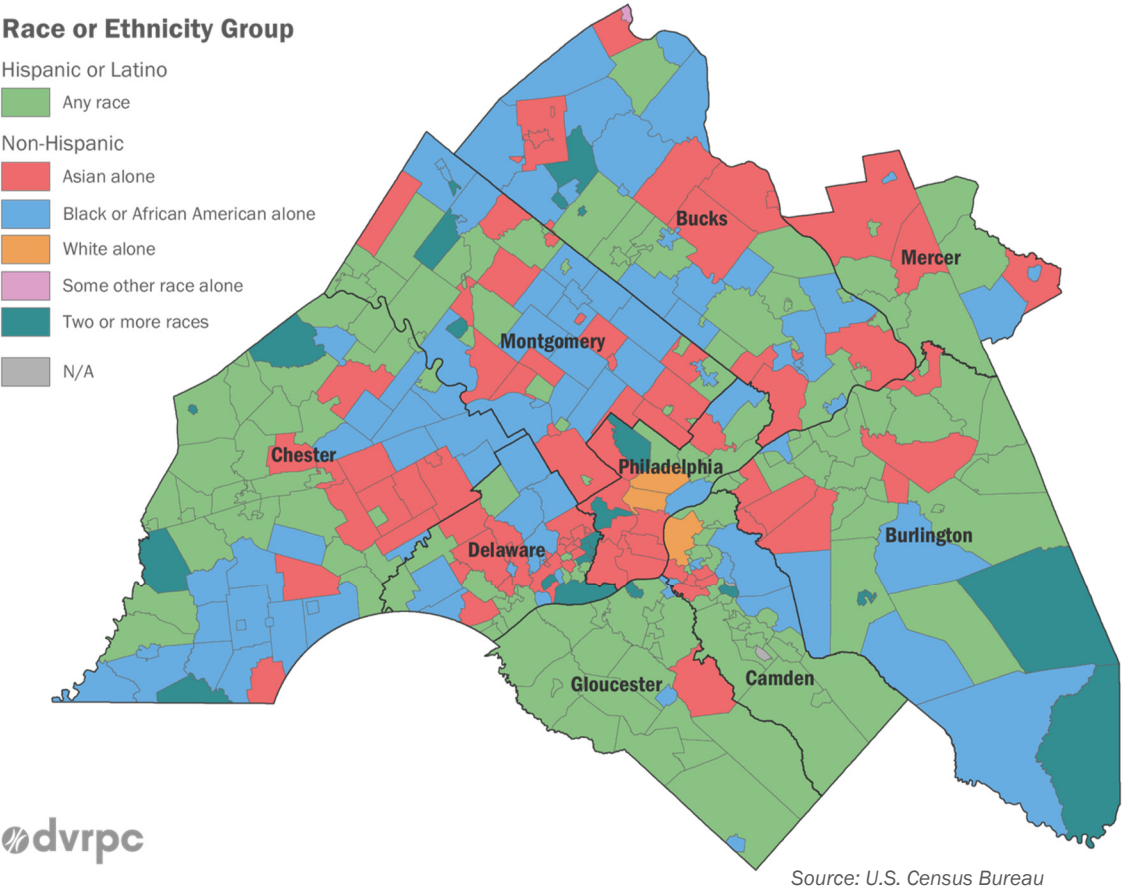
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 15: Third-Most Prevalent Race or Ethnicity Group by Municipality and District, 2020
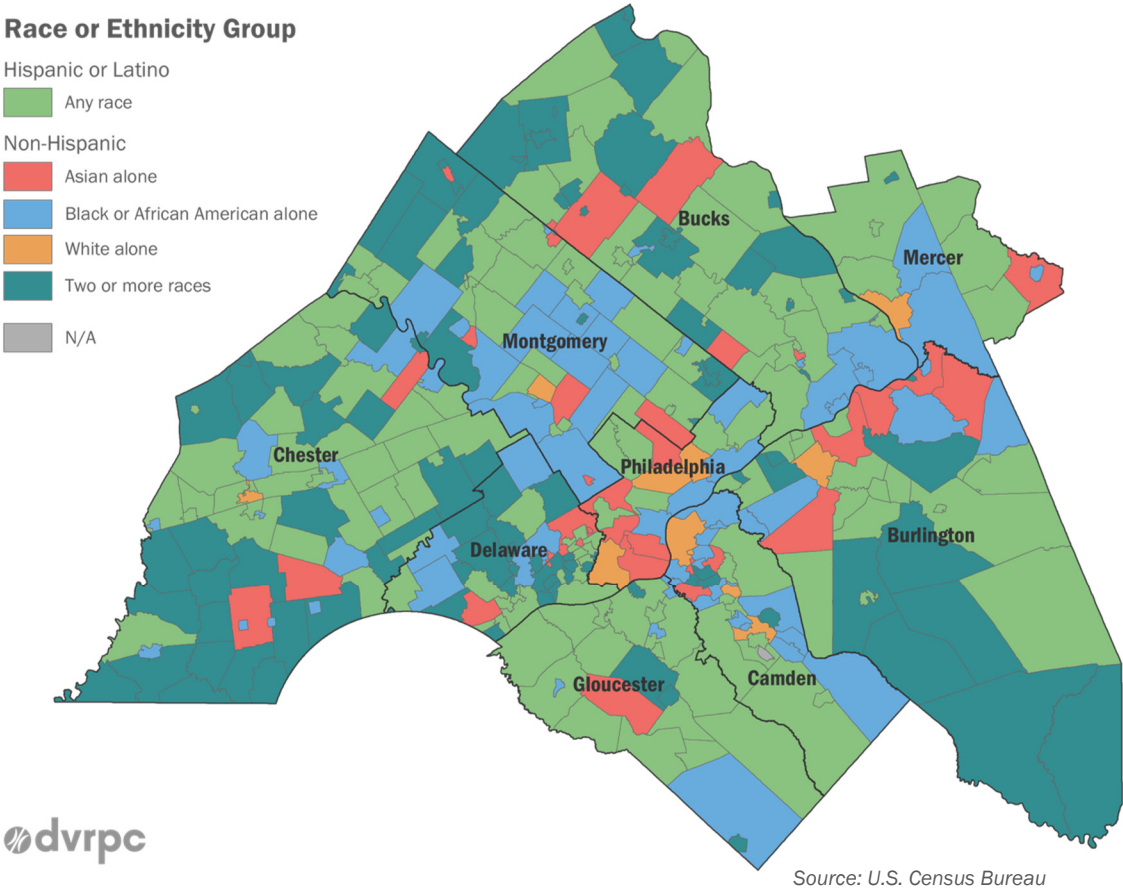
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

participation on par with prior years, but the response to particular questions of age, Hispanic origin, and race were down. How did this play out at the local level within the region?

- To what extent was the lack of response on demographic characteristics due to confusion and fears caused by the prior administration's efforts to add a citizenship question to the census, despite the addition's ultimate rejection?
- There were minor changes made to the race and Hispanic origin questions to improve response accuracy. Can the 2020 data be directly compared to prior decennial products?

- The U.S. Census Bureau introduced a Differential Privacy policy that adds "noise" or simulated households and population attributes to prevent actual residents from being identifiable in the data. It is already known that this will throw off the accuracy of the count, particularly at smaller geographies, but to what degree did it impact data quality? The Bureau is expected to release more information on this in the coming months.

Finally, between decennial counts, the Bureau releases estimates of population levels through their Population Estimates Program (PEP). Rather than a count, these estimates use records on births, deaths, residential address changes, and international migration to determine likely

population attributes for intervening years between counts. DVRPC uses the PEP estimates—and attributes from the American Communities Survey that conform to the PEP estimates' county and municipal totals—for socioeconomic analyses and as base-year data for Board-adopted population forecasts. In 2010, the regional decennial count was marginally lower (0.5 percent) than the PEP estimates for 2010 but generally on par, with the exception of undercounting Montgomery County (–1.3 percent) and overcounting Philadelphia (2.1 percent).

For 2020, the decennial count was significantly higher than the 2020 PEP estimates. The PEP estimates were undercounted by –2.5 percent regionally. At the county-level the PEP undercount ranged from –1.4 percent in Chester County to –5.2 percent in Mercer County. The PEP releases had pointed to increased deaths, fewer births, and declining international migration in years leading to 2020. The region continues to lose population to domestic migration but at lower numbers than in previous decades. The discrepancies between the 2020 Decennial Census and PEP are difficult to reconcile. Are regional trends in declining birth rates, decreasing international migration, and higher death rates less of a factor than suggested by the PEP? The Philadelphia decennial count was higher than the PEP by more than 25,000 residents. The PEP had Philadelphia gaining population significantly at the beginning of the past decade but dropping into negative annual change in 2019 and 2020. Did Philadelphia only have positive annual growth through the prior decade or did it still end with slow or negative growth, but the growth at the beginning of the decade was much higher than the PEP estimated?

Conclusion

The DVRPC region grew more and at a faster rate in the last decade than it has during the past several previous decades. However, it continues to lag behind national growth rates. The growth that is occurring is leading to a much more diverse population by race and ethnicity. Much of this growth is occurring in the region's Core Cities and Developed Communities, consistent with the regional land use vision identified in the Connections 2050 Plan. However, many questions remain about the 2020 Census data. Further research is needed to better understand what the 2020 Census is telling us about the region's population, and how it is changing. As additional data emerges, DVRPC will continue to analyze the results and conditions in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Report Title: Data Bulletin # 22012: 2020 Decennial Census Highlights

Abstract: The first sub-state level results from the 2020 Decennial Census results were released in mid-August 2021. This report highlights key findings from that release by county, municipality, and in Philadelphia's planning districts. Topics cover changes in total, household, and group quarters populations, as well as change by major race and ethnicity groups.

Staff Contact:

Ben Gruswitz
Manager, Socioeconomic and Land Use Analytics
Phone: 215-592-1800
E-mail: bgruswitz@dvrpc.org

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
190 N Independence Mall West, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520
www.dvrpc.org