Barre City Housing Needs
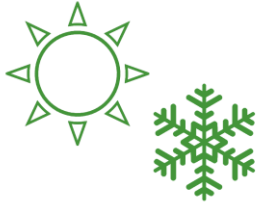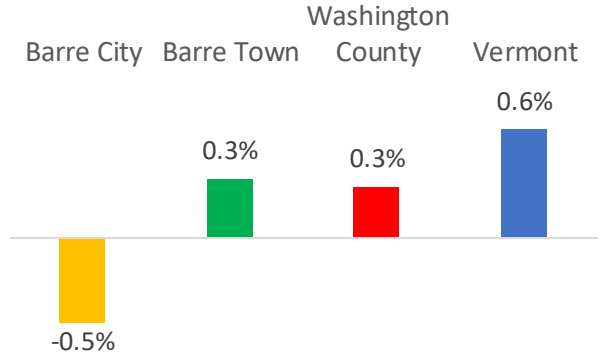
The City of Barre is home to 3,949 households as of the 2020 Census. Barre City has more households than any other town in Washington County.

47% of households own their homes, while 53% are renters. Owning a home in Barre is far less common than in Washington County as a whole, which has a homeownership rate of 70% or than in Barre Town which has a homeownership rate of 82%.

The latest Census estimates show no homes in Barre City used as seasonal or vacation homes, compared to 13% for Washington County as a whole. As of June 2021, 10 homes in the Barre area were listed as short-term rentals.
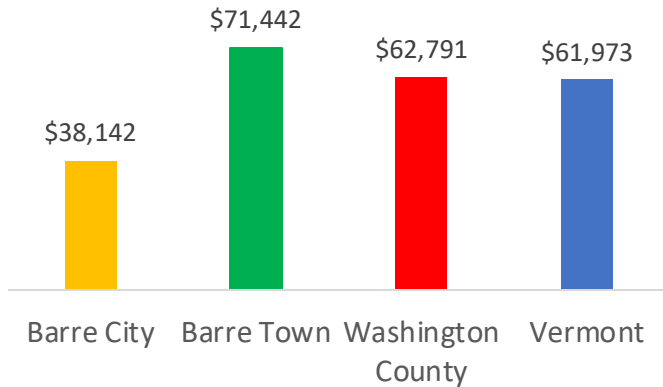
The median household income in Barre City is $38,142 which is lower than the median income for the county and the state. The Barre City homeowner median income is $60,578 while the renter median income is $26,092.

Median household income

Barre City	Barre Town	Washington County	Vermont
$38,142	$71,442	$62,791	$61,973

The year-round population of Barre City has declined slightly, losing an average of 19 households per year in 2010-2020. Conversely, Washington County's population increased by an average of 82 households per year. Barre Town increased by an average of 9 households per year.

Average annual household growth, 2010-2020

Barre City	Barre Town	Washington County	Vermont
-0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%

Around 29% of Barre residents both live and work in the town. This is more resident workers than in Barre Town.

Barre City

Living here

Working here

2,871 people live here, but work somewhere else

1,173 people live and work here

2,829 people work here, but live somewhere else

Barre City is the site of employment for 13% of the county's work force—just slightly under Barre Town and Montpelier.
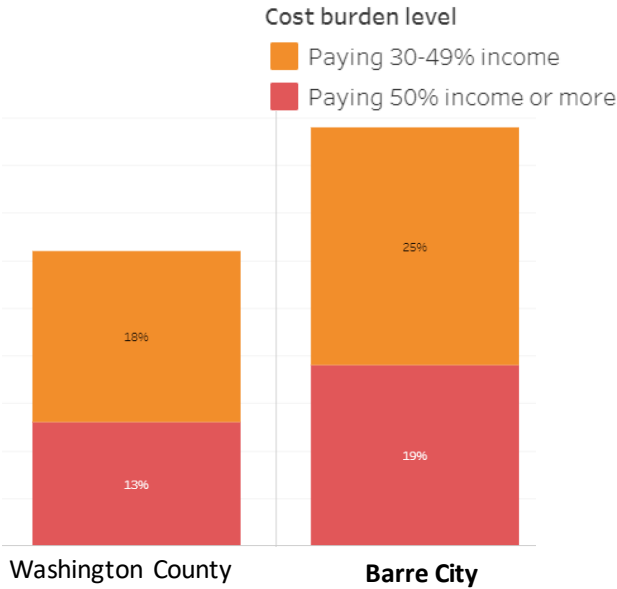
% of town's workforce that live in a different town

Barre City
71%

About 44% of Barre households are cost-burdened, spending at least 30% of their income on housing costs. About 19% spend at least half their income on housing. This makes it difficult for them to afford other necessities like food, childcare, and healthcare. In comparison, 31% of Washington County residents are cost-burdened. Both Barre City renters and owners experience cost-burden at higher rates than the county and the state as a whole.
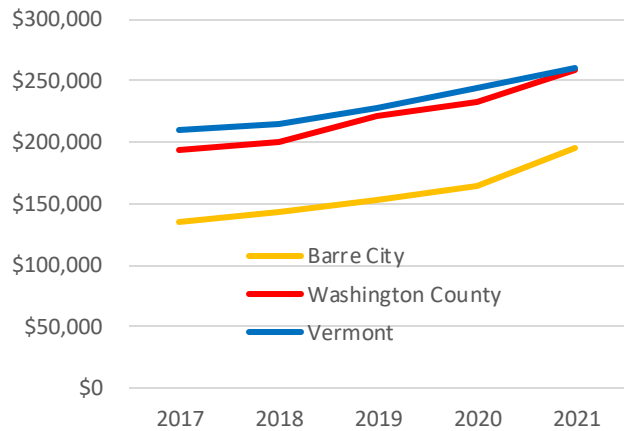
Percentage of households with unaffordable housing

Cost burden level
- Paying 30-49% income
- Paying 50% income or more

Washington County — 18%, 13%
Barre City — 25%, 19%

Why are so many Barre City households paying too much for housing? Although the median rent in Barre City prior to the pandemic ($739) was lower than rents across Washington County, vacant homes statewide have become scarcer, putting upward pressure on rents.

The median price of homes sold in Jan-June 2021 in Barre City of $195,875 was 19% higher than in 2020. Although the median price remains lower than in Washington County as a whole, Barre's recent price jump reflects greater net demand to live in the City. It would still take an annual salary of at least $53,000 to afford the median Barre City home in 2021.

Median non-vacation home price

- Barre City
- Washington County
- Vermont

(2017 – 2021)

More information

- ☐ www.housingdata.org/profile
- ☐ VT Housing Needs Assessment 2020 full report
- ☐ VT Housing Needs Assessment 2020 chapter on Washington County

Barre has the oldest housing stock in Washington county and in Vermont (with the exception of Fairhaven). The median year built of all residential buildings in the Barre City is 1942. Half of the city's residential buildings were built before 1940.

How can we make our town more affordable and vibrant?
- Support additional development of decent, perpetually affordable, mixed-income apartments that include supportive housing for the homeless.
- Restart or replicate the Rental Rehab program operated by Downstreet to improve housing quality and supply of affordable apartments.
- Create a Housing Committee to work in tandem with Homelessness Task Force. Could focus on increasing affordability of homes for missing middle households.
- Identify underutilized parcels ideal for housing and align local land use regulations, fees and approval process to promote housing development in these areas.
- Identify ways to align statewide 2020 Accessory Dwelling Unit changes with local housing needs when incorporating into local bylaws and practices.
- Consider using local ARPA funds for housing.
- More at www.housingdata.org/toolbox.