

City of Columbia

Ward Redistricting Recommendations

Report to Council
February 15, 2022

Local political subdivisions in the U.S. may reapportion voting districts to ensure equal populations. The City of Columbia has historically aligned this process with release of decennial census data. On November 1, 2021, the City Council appointed a reapportionment committee to provide recommendations to Council for new district boundaries.

Since the last ward map was adopted in 2011, the City's six wards have grown at different rates and are not equal in population. The City Charter states that ward boundaries shall contain as nearly as possible an equal number of inhabitants.

The 2020 Census reported that Columbia's population was 126,254. The average ward population (126,254 divided by 6) is 21,042. The object of redistricting is to increase or reduce ward populations to a figure close to the average.

Three wards – 1st, 5th, and 6th – have an excess of population above the average ward population.
Two wards – 2nd and 4th – contain significantly less than the average ward population.
The 3rd Ward is nearly the average population (see existing ward table, below).

Existing Ward Population

Ward	2020 Census	Ward Average	Difference
1st	22,158	21,042 (21,042.33)	1,116
2nd	19,689	21,042	(1,353)
3rd	21,052	21,042	10
4th	19,198	21,042	(1,844)
5th	22,207	21,042	1,165
6th	21,950	21,042	908
Total	126,254	126,254	(does not sum to zero due to rounding)

Committee Charge

Section 1:

- Seven members, a ward-based member selected by each council person and chair selected by mayor
- Committee established until final report is submitted to Council on Feb. 15, 2022

Section 2:

- Submitted report should include one or more recommendations for new ward boundaries with documentation of comparative population figures and geographic shifts.

Committee Charge

Section 3:

- The proposed boundaries will adhere to the following principles:
 - Ensure as equal a count of population per ward as possible.
 - The redistricting should serve the needs of existing neighborhoods, neighborhood associations, business districts, and other recognizable demographic features wherever possible.
 - The recommendation for redistricting should ensure wards are as compact and contiguous as possible.
 - Recommendations to ward changes should prioritize balancing population changes between the 2010 and 2020 decennial census and minimize change to existing boundaries.

Reapportionment Committee Members

Chair	Tracy Greever-Rice
Ward 1	Erica Ascani
Ward 2	Melissa DeBartolomeo
Ward 3	Kip Kendrick
Ward 4	Wiley Miller
Ward 5	Jeanne Mihail
Ward 6	Terry Smith

Nov. 1	Resolution established to create committee
Nov. 11	Membership announced
Dec. 13, 15, 21 & 27	Committee meetings/Work sessions
Jan. 5 & 13	
Jan. 19, 20, 24 & 25	Public information meetings (ARC, Lange MS, Rock Bridge Christian Church, City of Refuge)
Jan. 27	Committee review and recommendation development meetings
Feb. 3	Public hearing – POSTPONED (weather)
Feb 8	Public hearing (rescheduled)
Feb. 10	Committee meeting/Work session
Feb. 15	Recommendation report to Council (due date)
Feb. 21, 2022	Council report

Staff Support and Engagement

- Staff support and engagement was essential to completing the charge of this committee. Staff provided on-going, timely support for the work in the areas of:
 - Content knowledge of the redistricting process
 - Mapping/GIS support in both interactive and static form
 - Logistical and procedural support for public engagement planning and execution of committee meetings and public input events
 - Technical support for meeting IT, survey development and management, data collection and reporting of public input
 - Communications support for media releases, public input tool development, and meeting documentation.
- Supporting departments:
 - Community development
 - Information Technology/Geographic Information Systems
 - City Manager’s Office – Community Relations/City Communications

Development of Trials

In addition to Trials A and B, which were developed by staff for council review prior to establishing this committee, committee members were invited to propose additional trials. A Trial C was introduced by 5th ward committee member, Jeanne Mihail, with technical and mapping support by city staff and with input from committee members.

Trials A, B, and C all authentically attempt to hold in balance the four principles the committee was charged with upholding; equal population counts in wards (~ 21,000), serve the needs of existing groups, compactness and contiguousness of resulting wards, and minimization of change in wards between 2010 and 2020 boundaries. The first three principles represent historic and contemporary interpretation of the redistricting processes, and the latter adds input from the council.

Trials A and B define minimization of change in terms of minimizing the overall number of changes as well as the number of wards impacted by change, while Trial C defines minimization of change in terms of the scale of each change and minimizing the count of population change for each ward.

Trials A, B, and C were presented as included in the body of this report. It is important to note that based on the public input process, the staff and committee considered 'alternative' geographies to be considered by council in lieu of proposed individual changes within trials.

Review of Public Input

In addition to its own review, the committee focused on providing opportunities for public input using three strategies:

- Community-based public information meetings
- On-line comment collection
- Formal public hearing

For each of these strategies, consistent information in the form of maps and tabular descriptions of proposed changes in location and population were presented. Based on early public feedback, narrative summaries of these changes was also added for Trials A, B, and C. Complete public input is available in Appendix A.

Three primary perceptions and themes emerged via the public input process:

- Ward 1 is home to a disproportionate higher education student population.
- Neighborhood associations and historic neighborhoods, particularly in mixed-use areas, are important to maintain in consistent boundaries.
- While not explicitly a principle of redistricting, balancing of likely voters across wards is perceived as a public good and issue of equity.

As of 2/15/22	
	Public In Methods
On-line	
Ward 1	5
Ward 2	5
Ward 3	9
Ward 4	7
Ward 5	3
Ward 6	10
Sub-total	39
Meetings	
1/19/22	12
1/20/22	3
1/24/22	10
1/25/22	6
Sub-total	31
Letter	1
Total	71

Recommendations of Trials

To determine redistricting recommendations to Council, the committee engaged in the following process:

- Review of trials, supported by staff explanation, and discussion.
- Review of public input.
- A two-fold committee voting process for each Trial as well as for each proposed change within a trial:
 - A rank order vote
 - A majority vote
- The committee determined by consensus to not vote on the ‘alternative’ proposed changes because the ‘alternative changes’ were not consistently presented to the public for review.
- The ‘alternative’ proposed changes are discussed in this report for council’s consideration and are intended as responses to public input.
- Appendix C includes committee voting by rank order and majority for each change within a trial as well as comments submitted by committee members by ward.

Committee Votes by Trial – Rank Order

Please note the committee votes by trial by vote type. The rank order voting considered the following categories:

- 0 = Reject Transfer/Exchange
- 1 = Ambivalence toward Transfer/Exchange
- 2 = Support Transfer/Exchange

	Trial A	
	Rank	
Ward 1		1
Ward 2		1
Ward 3		2
Ward 4		1
Ward 5		0
Ward 6		2
At Large		0
Total		7

	Trial B	
	Rank	
Ward 1		1
Ward 2		2
Ward 3		1
Ward 4		2
Ward 5		1
Ward 6		2
At Large		1
Total		10

	Trial C	
	Rank	
Ward 1		2
Ward 2		0
Ward 3		0
Ward 4		0
Ward 5		2
Ward 6		0
At Large		0
Total		4

Committee Votes by Trial – Majority

Please note the committee votes by trial by vote type. The yes/no vote by Trial outcomes are as follows:

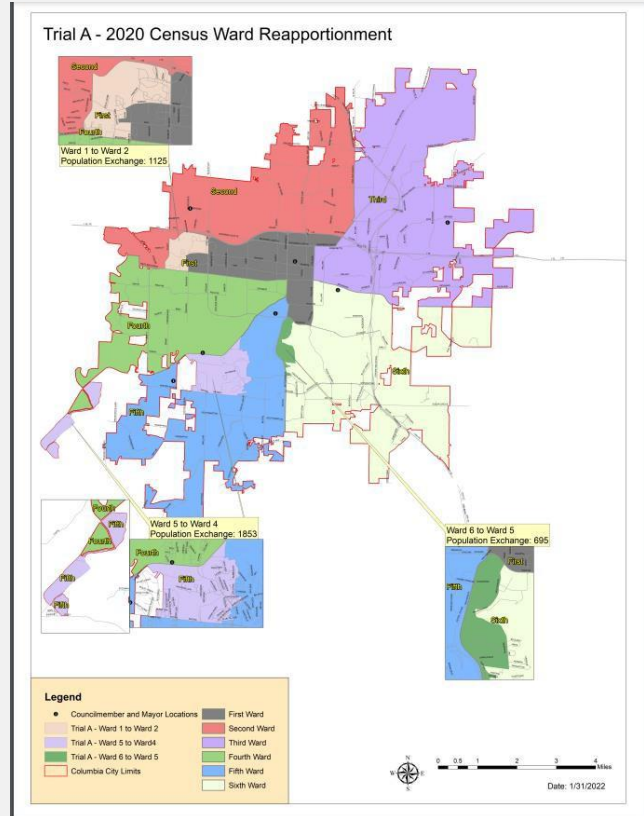
	Trial A			Trial B			Trial C	
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
Ward 1		x	Ward 1		x	Ward 1		x
Ward 2		x	Ward 2	x		Ward 2		x
Ward 3	x		Ward 3	x		Ward 3		x
Ward 4		x	Ward 4	x		Ward 4		x
Ward 5		x	Ward 5		x	Ward 5	x	
Ward 6	x		Ward 6	x		Ward 6		x
At Large		x	At Large		x	At Large		x
Total	2	5	Total	4	3	Total	1	6

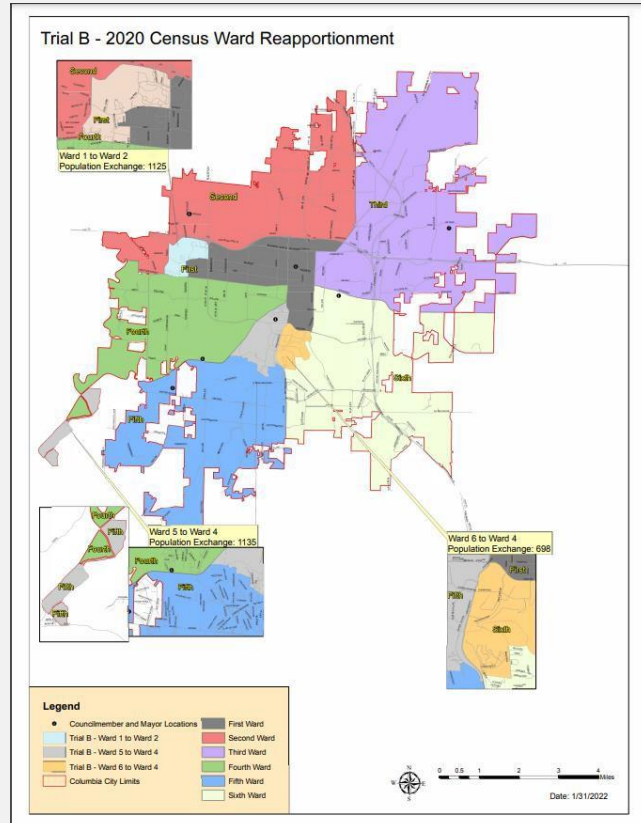
Transfers/exchanges

- 1,125 from 1st Ward to 2nd Ward
- 1,853 from 5th Ward to 4th Ward
- 695 from 6th Ward to 5th Ward
- No change to 3rd Ward

Resulting populations

1 st Ward	21,033
2 nd Ward	20,814
3 rd Ward	21,052
4 th Ward	21,051
5 th Ward	21,049
6 th Ward	21,255
Total	126,254



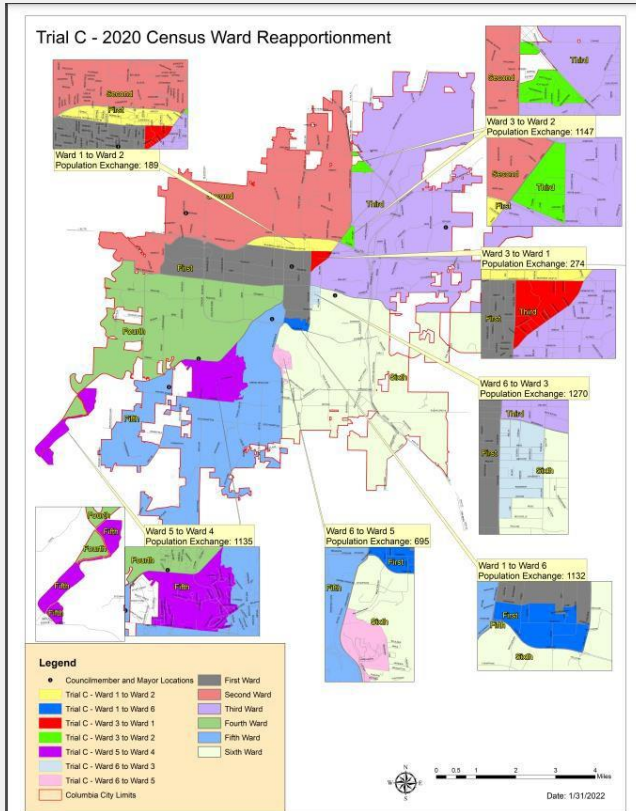


Transfers/exchanges

- 1,225 from 1st Ward to 2nd Ward
- 1,135 from 5th Ward to 4th Ward
- 698 from 6th Ward to 4th Ward
- No change to 3rd Ward

Resulting populations

1 st Ward	21,033
2 nd Ward	20,814
3 rd Ward	21,052
4 th Ward	21,031
5 th Ward	21,072
6 th Ward	21,252
Total	126,254



Transfers/exchanges

- 1,132 from 1st Ward to 6th Ward
- 189 from 1st Ward to 2nd Ward
- 274 from 3rd Ward to 1st Ward
- 1,147 from 3rd Ward to 2nd Ward
- 1,270 from 6th Ward to 3rd Ward
- 1,853 from 5th Ward to 4th Ward
- 695 from 6th Ward to 5th Ward

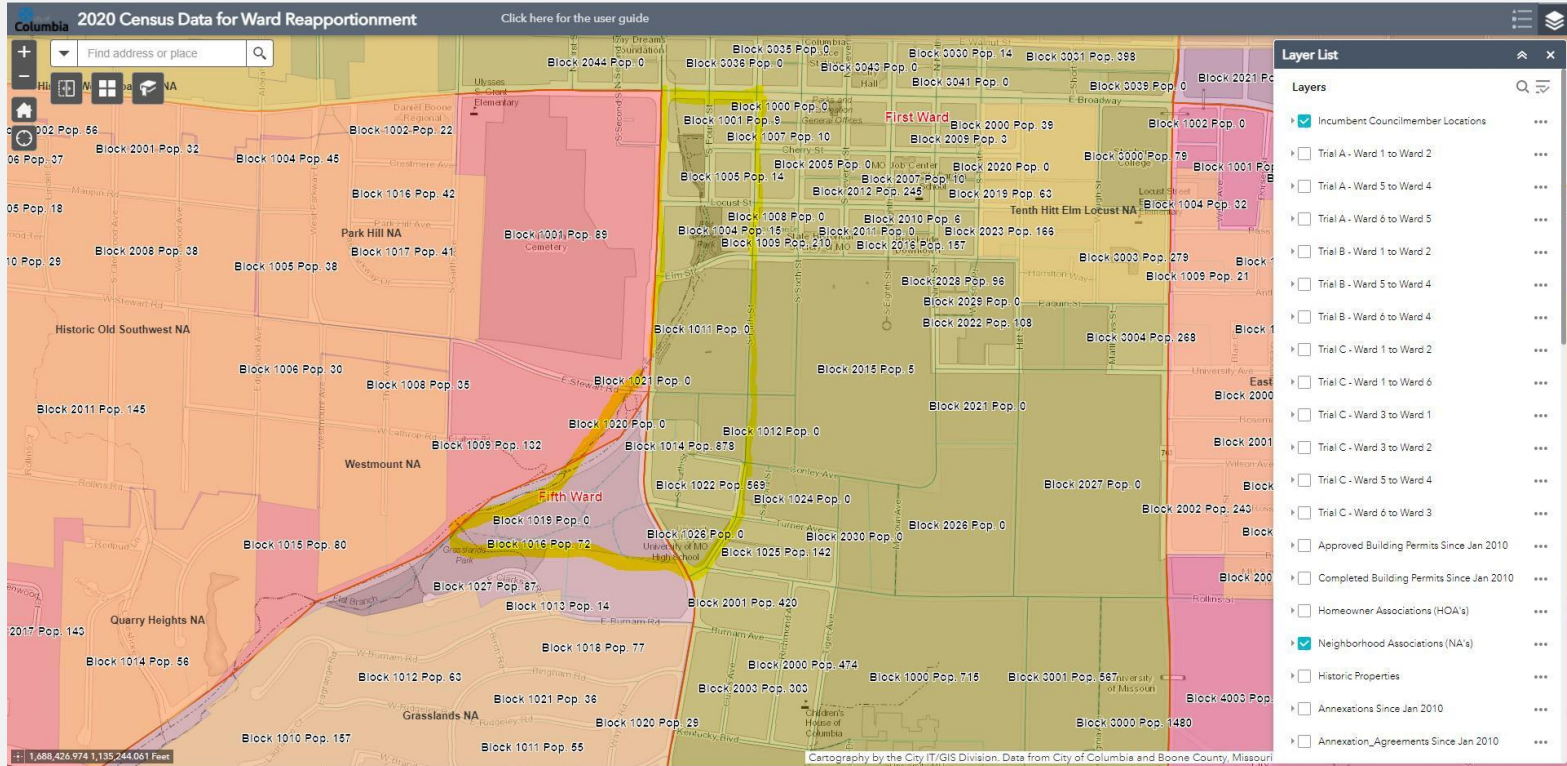
Resulting populations

1 st Ward	21,111
2 nd Ward	21,025
3 rd Ward	20,901
4 th Ward	21,051
5 th Ward	21,049
6 th Ward	21,117
Total	126,254

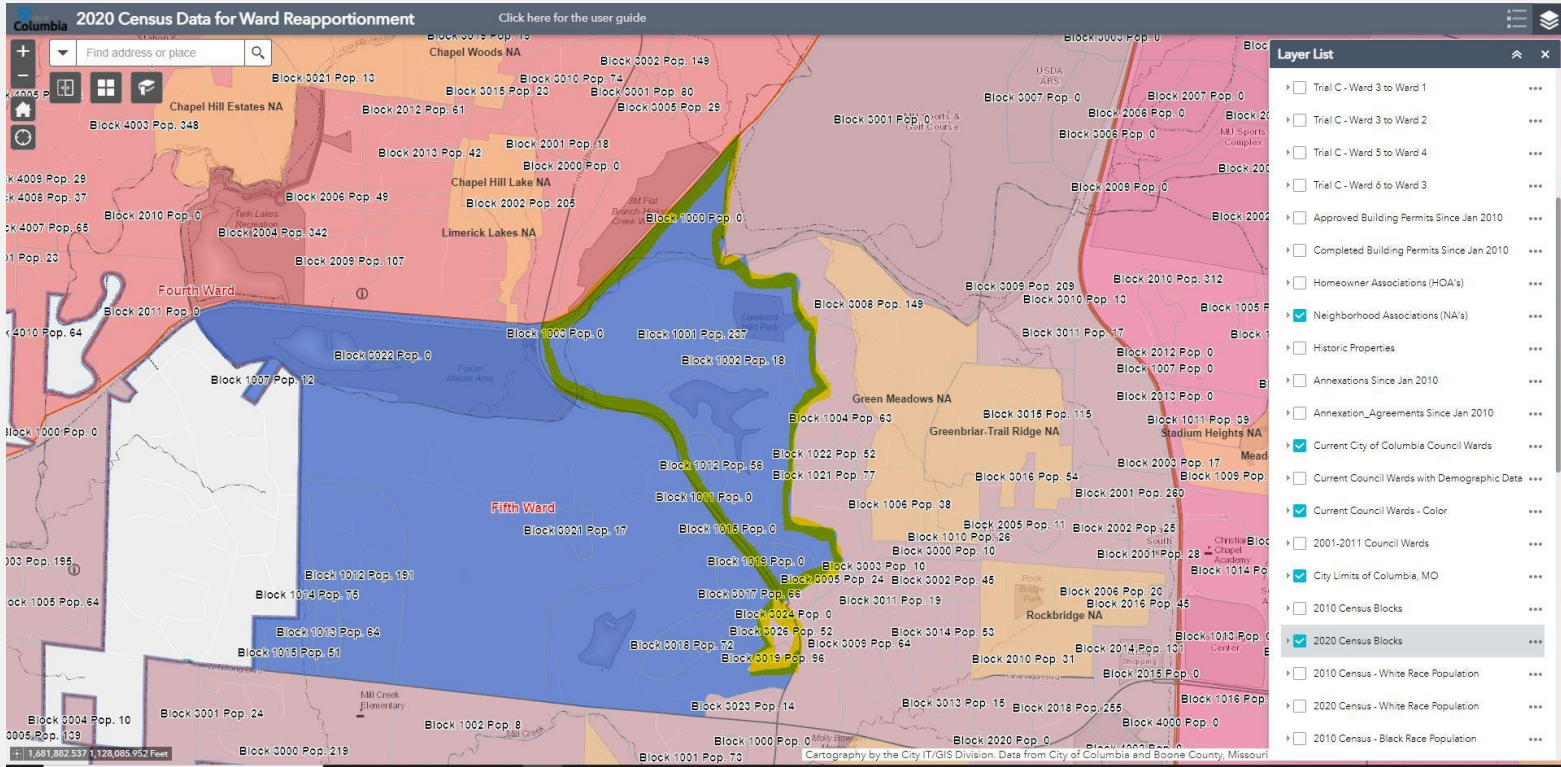
Alternatives

- The following maps are some areas that could be considered as alternatives to parts of Trial Maps A, B, and C.
- These alternatives have not been presented to public as Trials, but were discussed at the February 8th public hearing.
- The alternatives were also informally discussed with committee during work sessions.
- The alternatives emerged in response to public input submitted via the public information sessions and via the on-line input tool. Three persistent themes emerged through the public input process as important issues to citizens from various constituencies:
 - Student housing area 1st ward
 - 5th Ward transfer area boundaries
 - Alternatives to transfer of part of East Campus to 3rd (Trial C)

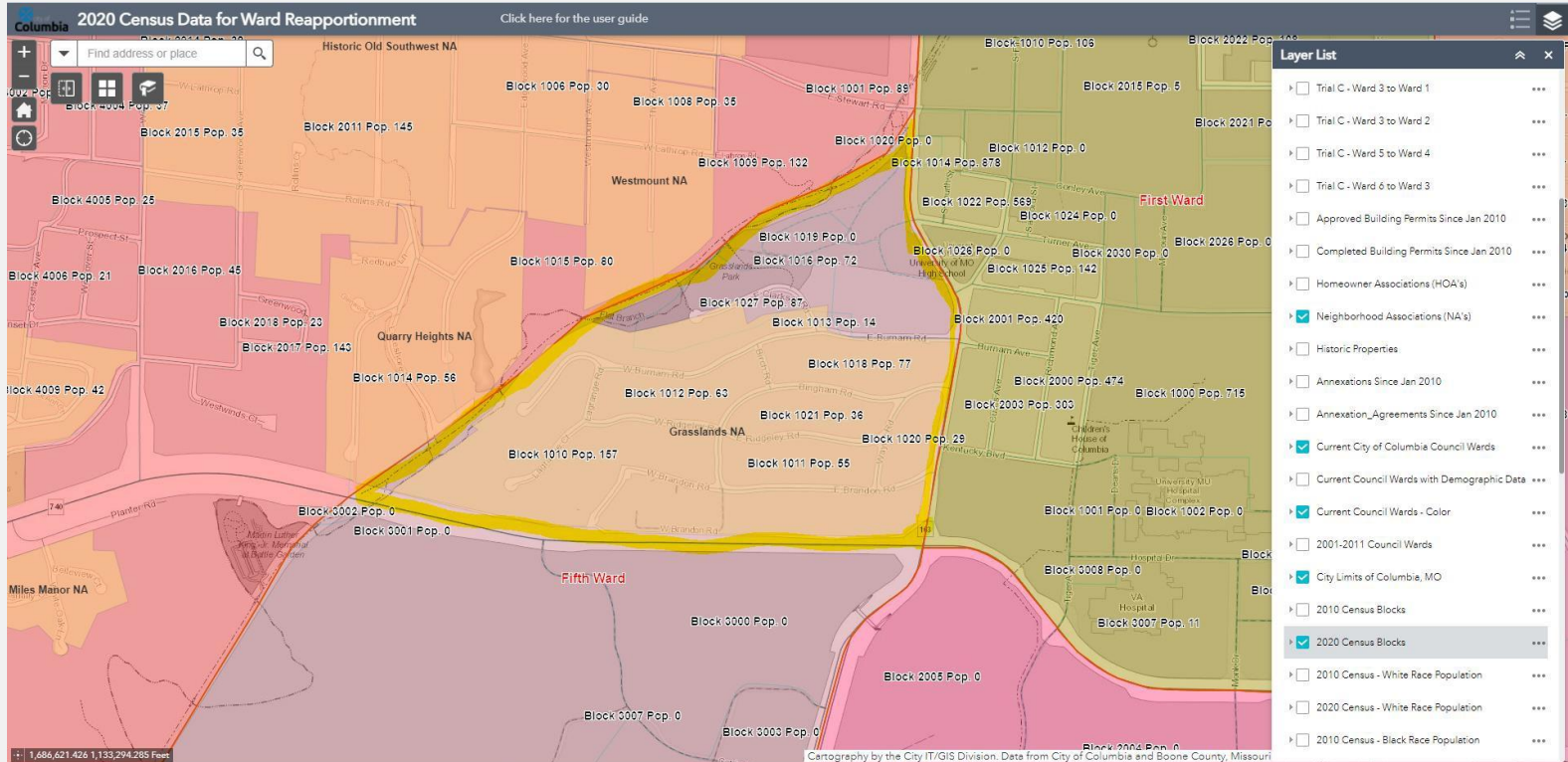
Alternative area: 1st to 4th



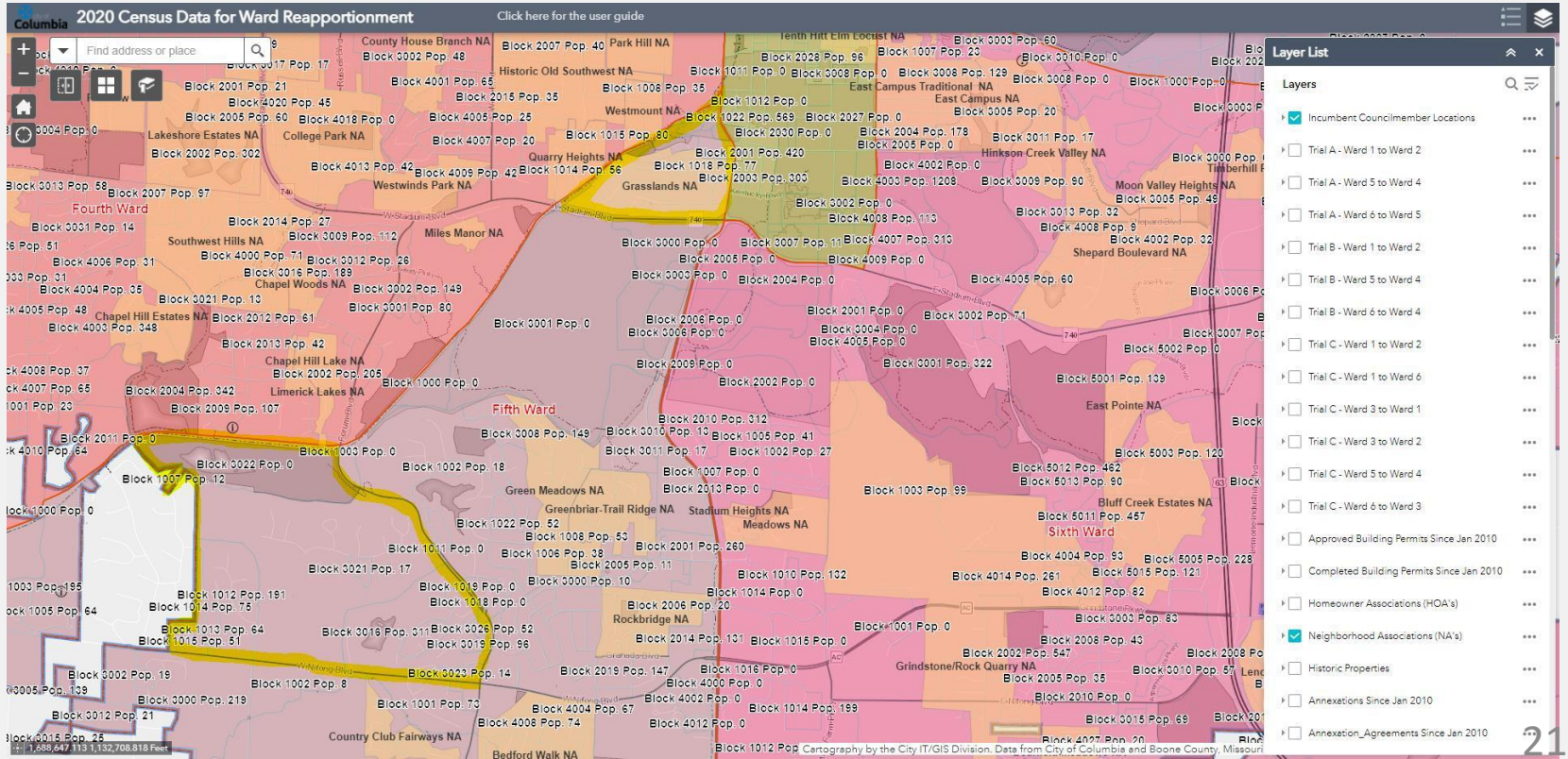
Alternative area: 5th to 4th



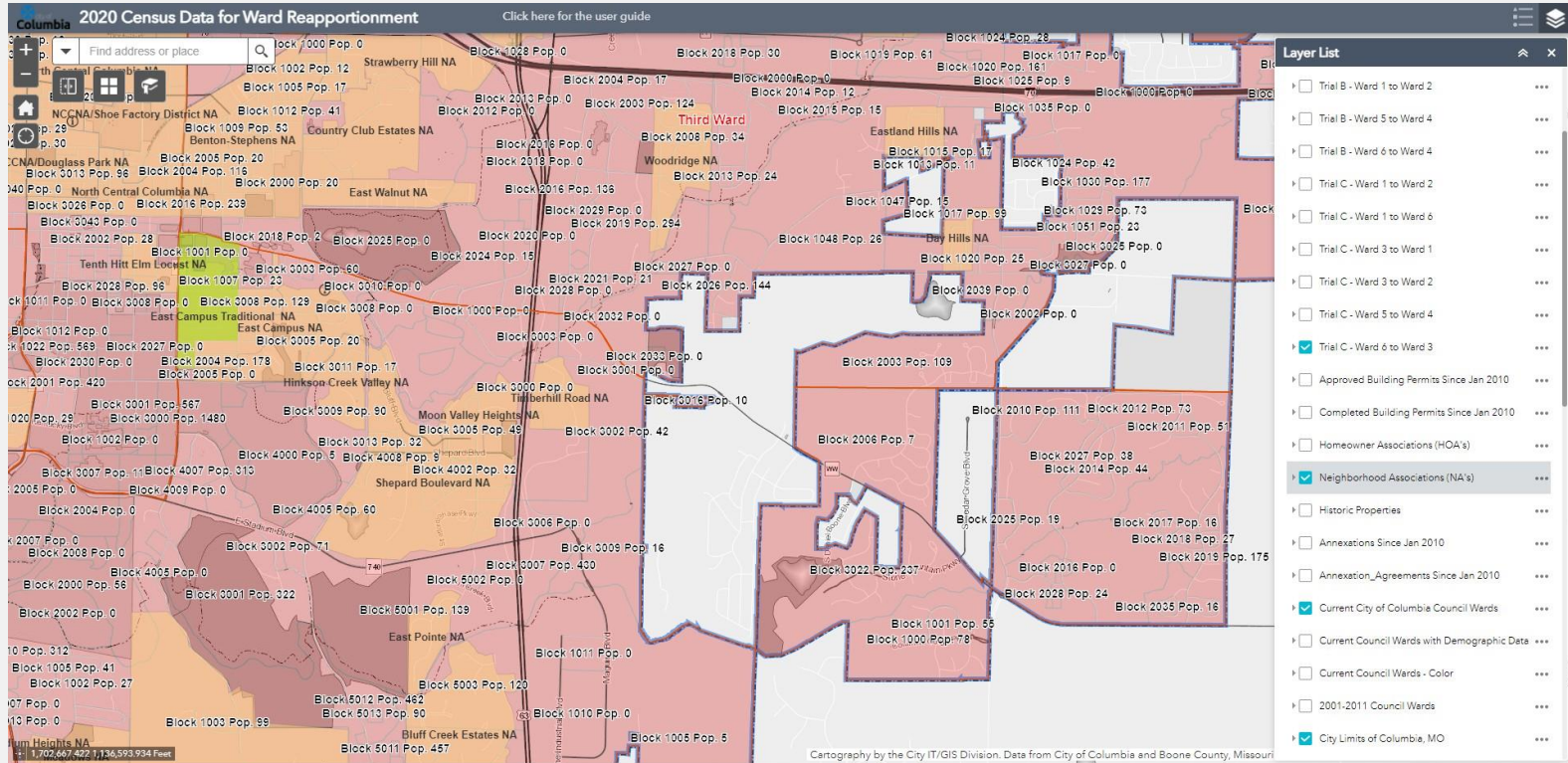
Alternative area 5th to 4th



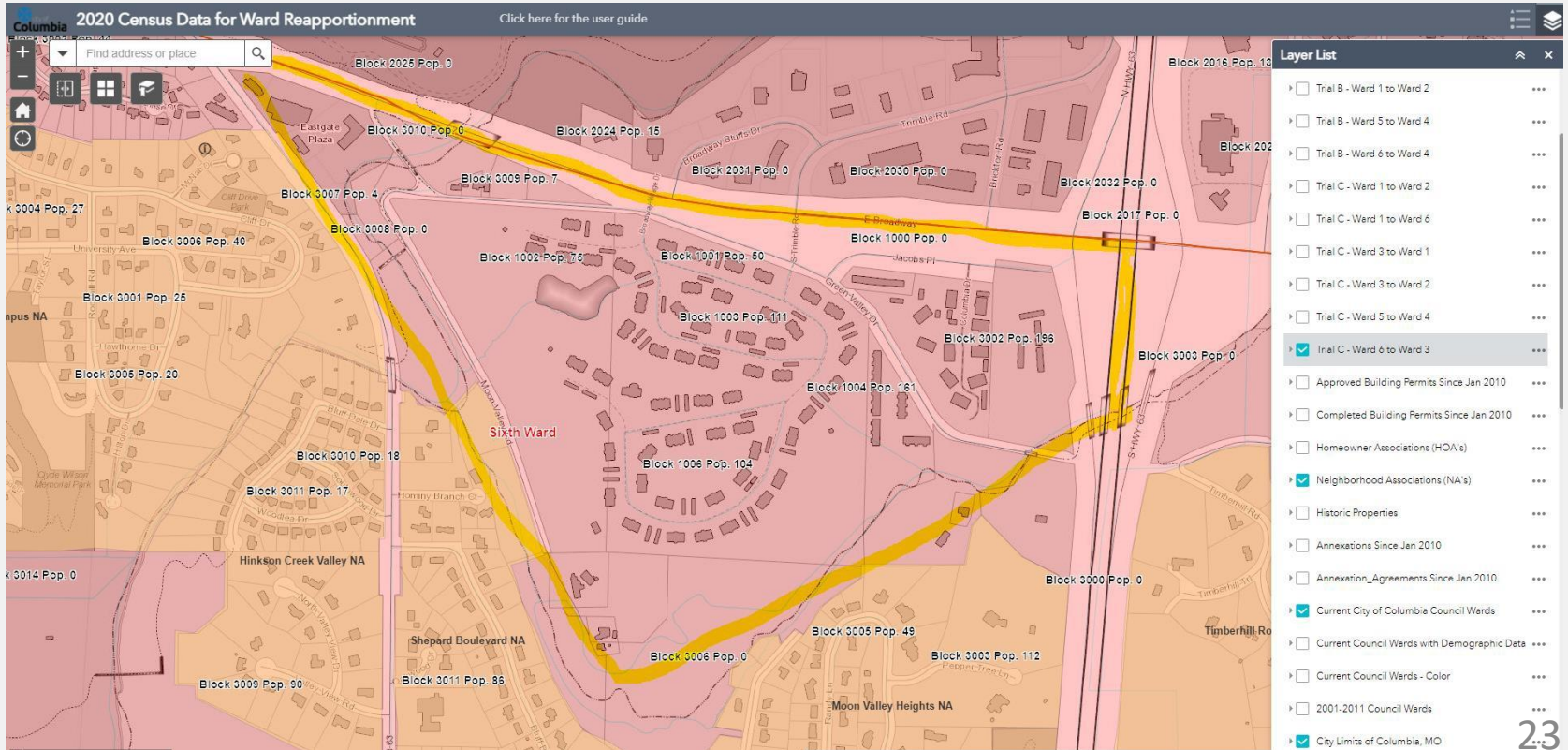
Alternative area: 5th to 4th



Alternative areas 6th to 3rd overview



Alternative area 6th to 3rd



Alternative area 6th to 3rd

