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BEACON HILL

Census data: Beacon Hill population rose 3.5 percent from 2000

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 6, 2011 12:30 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Beacon Hill saw its population grow by 3.49 percent over the past decade, according to census data recently released by the city.

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Between 2000 and 2010, Beacon Hill, including the West End, saw its population rise to 13,103 residents, making it one of the smaller neighborhoods in the city. The smallest is the North End, at 10,131 residents, according to figures the Boston Redevelopment Authority compiled from U.S Census Bureau data.

Accounting for the Beacon Hill's growth, numbers show 254 additional Asian residents and 224 more Latino residents last year compared with 2000.

Offsetting those gains were declines in Beacon Hill's African American and white populations which dropped 1.8 and 0.8 percent, respectively. Despite dipping nearly four percentage points, Beacon Hill continues to hold the second-highest ratio of white residents among city neighborhoods at 81.8 percent, trailing only the North End's 90.1 percent.

There was growth within the other racial and ethnic category counted for census purposes. The Asian population represented 8.9 percent of Beacon Hill's total, up from 7.2 percent in 2000; the Latino segment rose from 3.2 to 4.8 percent of the neighborhood's makeup, according to the data. The American Indian/Alaska Native dropped from 17 to 8 residents, while the Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander population grew from none to one resident.

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percent over decade

Boston's population grew by 4.8 percent in the past decade to hit 617,594. The Hub remained a "majority-minority" city as 53 percent of

residents are of a non-white race/ethnicity while 47 percent are white. In Boston, 47 percent of residents are white, 22.3 percent are Black/African American, 17.5 percent are Hispanic/Latino, and 8.8 percent are Asian.

While Boston gained over 41,000 people age 18 years and older, the city lost around 13,000 residents under 18. The 11-percent drop was among the most notable statistics for research director at Boston think-tank MassINC Benjamin Forman.

"There's no question that family households have been replaced by people without kids," he said, adding that a trend of fleeing families can often be a sign of gentrification.

The portion of residents 18 years or older grew in all but five neighborhoods; but in Beacon Hill it declined from 93 to 92.5 percent. Citywide, that slice grew from 80 to 83 percent.

The total number of housing units in Beacon Hill grew over the past 10 years by around 2.7 percent to 8,909. However, vacant housing jumped in the meantime from 7 to 9.8 percent, giving the neighborhood the third-highest housing vacancy rate among city neighborhoods, trailing only Back Bay at 13.2 percent and Downtown at 16.2 percent.

Citywide, housing grew by around 25,000 units, or 8 percent, however, vacancies also rose by 60 percent. Around 5 percent of Boston homes were empty in 2000; in 2010, around 7.25 percent of housing was vacant.

Boston's neighborhoods have no officially-defined boundaries, according to the BRA. In order to sort census data by neighborhood, the city department said it used a combination of ZIP codes and zoning boundaries to define each neighborhood's borders.

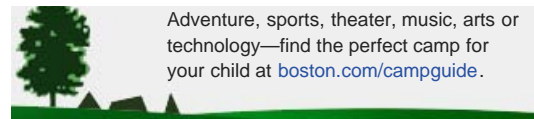
While the neighborhoods the city has mapped out for census number crunching by-and-large match how most perceive Boston's configuration, the city acknowledged some may dispute how the BRA has defined where neighborhoods begin and end.

"Everyone has their own definition of 'their' neighborhood -- the best part about Boston is there is such pride in the question -- and therefore there are no official boundaries because if there were, we'd have 617,594 different opinions," said spokeswoman Susan Elsbree.

The department plans to release additional maps and is also fielding individual requests to have data provided based on customized neighborhood boundaries.

To simplify city data analyzed for this report, Boston.com grouped, as follows, smaller neighborhoods and districts into other, larger areas creating a total of 18 city subsections: Beacon Hill includes the West End; Downtown includes Chinatown and the Leather District; Roxbury includes Mission Hill and the Longwood Medical Area; South Boston includes the South Boston Waterfront; and the South End includes Bay Village. The Harbor Islands -- with a combined population of 640 and 535 residents during the 2000 and 2010 census, respectively -- were not used in this analysis.

However, raw data is still available here for each smaller neighborhood, district and islands that the BRA defined.



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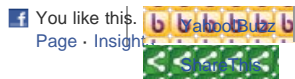
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