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DORCHESTER

Census data: Dorchester lost most residents among city neighborhoods

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 6, 2011 05:46 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Despite remaining the most populous Boston neighborhood, Dorchester lost the most residents over the past decade, according to census data recently released by the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD NUMBERS

Select a neighborhood below from the dropdown to see a breakdown of Census statistics.

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Between 2000 and 2010, Dorchester lost 4,365 residents, according to figures the Boston Redevelopment Authority compiled from U.S Census Bureau data.

The 4.5-percent population decline made Dorchester one of only four city neighborhoods that saw its population decrease. Only Mattapan, at 5.3 percent, and Roslindale, at 5.5 percent, saw higher percentage declines.

In the midst of the overall decline, the neighborhood's Latino and Asian populations grew by 18.9 and 7.4 percent, respectively. Latino residents comprised 13.8 percent of the neighborhood's population in 2010, up from 11 percent. Asians represented 11.6 percent last year, up from 10.3 percent in 2000.

However, Dorchester's white population plummeted by 12.7 percent over the past decade, and the Black/African American segment declined by 7.1 percent. White residents made up 28 percent of the total population last year, down from 30 percent in 2000, while African American residents now comprise 37.3 percent of the neighborhood – a one percentage point decline from 2000.

The Dorchester Reporter [challenged the population loss](#), saying the BRA "may have shorted Dorchester's population by tens of thousands of people," according to the

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newspaper's calculations.

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

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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 more 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; in Dorchester it grew from 72 to 76.6 percent. Citywide, that portion grew from 80 to 83 percent.

With the most residents, the neighborhood also maintains the most residences. The total number of housing units in Dorchester grew over the past 10 years by around 5.2 percent to 36,777. However, vacant housing also rose from 4.9 to 8.5 percent of total housing there.

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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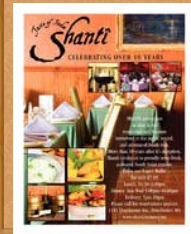
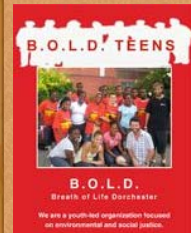


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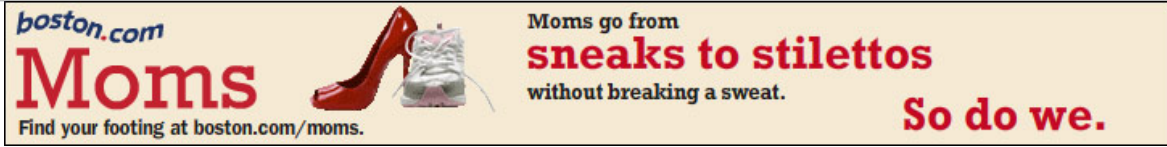
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