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JAMAICA PLAIN

## Census data: JP's Hispanic, black populations plunged

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 6, 2011 11:00 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

**The Latino and black populations in Jamaica Plain dropped sharply over the past decade, according to Census data recently released by the city.**

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Between 2000-2010, Jamaica Plain's overall population dropped 1.85 percent to 37,468 and was one of just four city neighborhoods that saw overall population figures decrease, according to figures the Boston Redevelopment Authority compiled from U.S Census data.

JP's lost 1,041 Hispanic/Latino residents, a 9.9 percent decline, and 862 Black/African American residents, a 14.6 percent decline.

Meanwhile, the neighborhood's white population grew by 1,031, or 5.4 percent, and the number of Asians increased by 144 people, or 9.5 percent, from 2000.

white residents make up 53.8 percent of JP's total population residents. In 2000, that figure was just under 50 percent.

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. 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 Asian.

While Boston gained over 41,000 people age 18 years and older, the city lost around 13,000 youth 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

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populations boomed from 2000 have been replaced by people without kids," he said, adding that a trend of fleeing families can often be a sign of gentrification.

The ratio of total residents 18 years or older grew in all but five neighborhoods; in JP it grew from 80.4 to 83.1 percent. Citywide, that ratio grew from 80 to 83 percent.

The total number of housing units in JP rose over the past 10 years by 5.5 percent to 16,797. Housing vacancies increased in the neighborhood from 5 to 5.3 of the total housing stock, however the vacancy rate was relatively stable compared to elsewhere in the city.

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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