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SOUTH END

Census data: South End population spiked 12 percent over decade

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 6, 2011 12:00 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The South End's population grew 12-percent in the last decade, according to census data recently released by the city.

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Between 2000 and 2010, the South End grew by 2,784 residents, or 12 percent, to 25,889 residents, according to figures the Boston Redevelopment Authority compiled from U.S Census Bureau data.

The growth was led by a 2,219 increase, or 18.2 percent, in white residents and a 1,035 increase, or 31.3 percent rise, in the Asian population. The Black/African American segment dropped 17 percent, or 642 residents in the South End. It was the highest proportional drop in Black/African American residents citywide. Meanwhile, the Hispanic/Latino demographic grew by 115 residents, or 3.6 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 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 in people under 18 was among the more notable statistics for research director at Boston think-tank MassINC Benjamin Forman.

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have been replaced by people without kids," he said.

The portion of total residents 18 years or older grew in all but five neighborhoods; in the South End it dipped from 88 to 87.8 percent. Citywide, that ratio grew from 80 to 83 percent.

The total number of South End housing units rose markedly over the past 10 years by 13.2 percent – the city’s third-highest rate over that span – to 14,485. Meanwhile, vacancies in the neighborhood climbed, albeit slight comparatively, from 5.6 to 5.9 percent of its total housing stock.

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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