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WEST ROXBURY

Census data: West Roxbury's minority populations boomed from 2000

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

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

As minority populations boomed, West Roxbury saw its white population decline over the past decade, according to census data released recently by the city.

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Between 2000-2010, West Roxbury grew by 1,691 residents, or 5.9 percent, to 30,446 residents, according to figures the Boston Redevelopment Authority compiled from US Census data.

The number of Hispanics/Latinos in West Roxbury nearly doubled, with an addition 1,264 residents; the Black/African American population rose by 1,241 residents, or 72.2 percent; and the Asian group climbed 81.5 percent with an addition of 884 residents.

The white population dropped by 1,728 residents, or 7.2 percent. In the latest data, whites represented 73.3 percent of all residents.

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

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- West Roxbury's minority populations boomed from 2000

"There's no question that family households have been replaced by people without kids," he said.

The portion of residents 18 years or older grew in all but five city neighborhoods; in West Roxbury, it slid from 80.3 to 79.2 percent. Citywide, the portion grew from 80 percent to 83 percent.

The total number of West Roxbury housing units rose over the past 10 years by 9.3 percent – to 13,547. Vacancies in West Roxbury climbed from 2.5 to 4.3 percent of the neighborhood's total housing stock. Allston-Brighton had the city's lowest vacancy rate in 2010 at 3.4 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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