

Roxbury Neighborhood Study



RECENT TRENDS & BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Population of Roxbury - 54,905

- Adult population- 43,502
- Children under 18 – 11,403

Population by Race and Ethnicity

Black* -	22,796	41.5%
White* -	7,182	13.1%
Hispanic or Latino -	16,728	30.5%
Asian* -	3,277	6.0%
Other races or multiple races*	4,922	9.0%

(*Non-Hispanic, single race) Above from 2020 U.S. Census, B.P.D.A., August 2021.

Income – The median household income in Roxbury was **\$30,534**, which is less than half the Boston median of **\$71,259** (and only 27% of the Back Bay household income). (-U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2015-19 5 yr. est.)

Trends – Between 2010 and 2020

- The overall population of Roxbury grew by over 5,000 or about 10%
- The Black / African American population declined by nearly 3,000 and its proportion of the overall Roxbury population dropped from 51.7% to 41.5%
- Both the number of Black adults and Black children dropped by about 1,500 (Some of the decline could be from more people choosing multiple races)
- The Hispanic or Latino population increased by over 3,000 (Most of this increase was an increase of adults rather than children)
- The number of Asians increased by 1,950; The number of people of “Other or multiple races” increased by 1,630 . The number of Whites increased by 1,434.
- The overall number of adults increased by 5,660 while children decreased 612

(Trends data from 2010 and 2020 U.S. Censuses, compiled by the B.P.D.A.)

Roxbury Children and Youth: (Census tracts 801, 803, 817, and 818 only)

Children under 5 years -	1,000
Children 5 to 9 years -	878
Children 10 to 14 years -	606
Youth 15 to 19 years -	748
Youth 20 to 24 years -	1,058

(U. S. Census, American Community Survey 2019 five year est.)



New Academy Estates

Housing – Roxbury has an unusually large percentage of housing units that are renter-occupied (**78%**) compared to owner-occupied (**22%**). This is the highest rate of any non-student neighborhood in the city. (The U.S. proportion of renter-occupied units is 36%.)

Roxbury has the third highest number of housing units of any Boston neighborhood – **22,034**. This was an increase of 2,075 units from 2010 to 2020. The average number of people per household is **2.47**.

Roxbury’s growth is poised to continue, with **2,711** new units of housing approved from 2010 through 2017 (including new residential units being added to the Whittier Choice Neighborhood project). In addition, **626** additional residential units have been proposed and are under review. If all 3,337 units are built, this could add 8,000 or more new residents to the Roxbury neighborhood.



Roxbury Community College is a state-supported two-year coed liberal arts institution, founded in 1973.

Educational Attainment – From 2000 to 2019, the share of adult residents without a high school degree fell from **32% to 23%**, while the share with a bachelor’s degree or more rose from **13% to 23%**. Even though the percentage of college graduates increased, it is still the second-lowest of any neighborhood and far lower than the percentage of college graduates in most neighborhoods and Boston as a whole (49.7%).

(Primary source of data: *Boston in Context: Neighborhoods*, Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA), 2021, based on the 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census and *Historical Boston in Context: Neighborhood Comparisons by Decade :1950-2015*, BPDA, December 2017.



Contemporary Roxbury

(photo: [Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building](#), the new headquarters for Boston Public Schools, in Nubian Square, Roxbury. [Photo](#) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

Boston's Roxbury neighborhood is home to many of the city's African American and Hispanic residents and offers many historic and contemporary assets to the city as a whole.

Community culture is celebrated through visual and performing arts, and in many houses of worship. Several parks, including Franklin Park with its [Zoo](#), greenspace, and Golf Course, offer recreational outlets to the community. [The Reggie Lewis Center](#) offers space for exercise and a world-class track and field venue.



[Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center](#)



[Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston](#) – The Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME) and Resurrection Lutheran Church in Nubian Square

As a result of several stages of community development and renewal, this neighborhood at the geographic center of the city is on the rise. New business and housing initiatives are renewing the Nubian Square and Grove Hall districts. Blue Hill Avenue is no longer a street full of vacant lots. Like many Boston neighborhoods, Roxbury is in transition. Long-term residents seek to benefit from positive changes, while preventing displacement and other negative effects of development and potential gentrification.

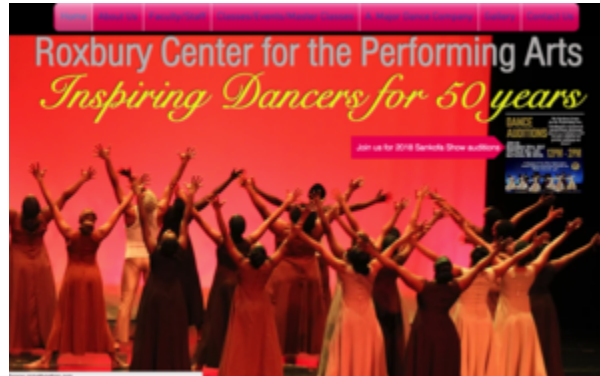


[First Church of Roxbury](#)



Franklin Park Golf Course

Roxbury Arts and Culture



Roxbury Center for the Performing Arts website

[The Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists](#) (NCAAA) is a gateway that "fosters and presents the finest in contemporary, visual and performing arts from the global Black world."

The [Roxbury Center for the Performing Arts](#) opened in 2005, and continues to celebrate the culture of the community through visual and performing arts.



The [Roxbury International Film Festival](#) is the largest film festival in New England that annually celebrates people of color.



The Roxbury Cultural District “identifies and recognizes Roxbury's cultural assets and establishes the tools, strategies, resources, and spaces that elevate the community of Roxbury as a living repository of arts and cultural expression—past, present, and future.” <https://roxburyculturaldistrict.com/>

Several new Nubian Square development projects will add arts and cultural components to the area (See Nubian Sq. Ascends, Nuba Urbanica & Nawn Factory)

INFORMATION SOURCE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

To keep up to date on new developments proposed for Roxbury and for projects approved by the Boston Planning and Development Agency, see the agency website. This is also a place where you can find information about upcoming and recorded meetings regarding community input and comments. During designated time periods community groups and individuals can give feedback on development proposals.



Roxbury – Boston Planning and Development Agency (click on Projects or Planning on the Roxbury menu on the left)

Nubian Square New Developments

While Nubian Square (formerly Dudley Square) has already seen significant changes in the last several years, the future will undoubtedly see an even greater transformation. Not all proposed developments come to fruition, but at least some of the following will have a major impact on the area as they are completed. Among the Christian organizations in the immediate area are the Center for Urban Ministerial Education, Twelfth Baptist Church, Resurrection Lutheran Church, the Salvation Army Roxbury Center, Holy Temple Church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Southern Baptist Church, and Zion Fire Baptized Holiness Church. These changes may also impact churches located between Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Blvd. How will these churches be impacted and how will they respond and take advantage of new opportunities as the area changes?

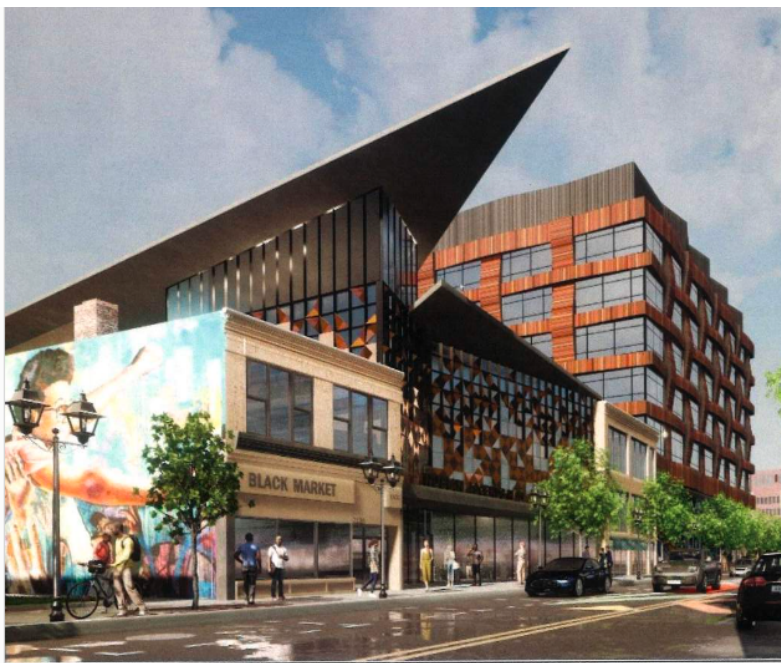
Projects in the Planning or Construction Process

1) **Nubian Square Ascends Project**

Led by Richard Taylor; on the site of the Blair Parking Lot.

This project was given the designation by the BPDA in Dec. 2020 and they submitted an initial project description as a Letter of Intent in March 2020

This will be a 348,000 square foot mixed use project with a cultural arts component



2) **Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology**

Proposed new site for the school is at 1003-1013 Harrison St. on the site of the old Harrison Supply business. The school plans a new three story building with 68,000 square feet.



Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology

3) Nawn Factory Building Redevelopment

This is a smaller development, renovating and expanding a historic structure into a dance studio with 11,000 square feet. The Roxbury Strategic Masterplan Oversight Committee has recommended this plan led by Jonathan Smalls.



Former Nawn Factory redevelopment

4) NUBA with Urbanica – Parcel 8 Development on Melnea Cass Blvd.

The BPDA chose and designated the NUBA proposal over two other proposals. The 105,000 square foot development would include 102 residential units, a space for an extension site of the National Center of Afro-American Artists and 10,000 square feet of commercial space. The residential units would all be geared towards people making between 30% and 120% of the Boston area median income. Seven units would be artists' live-work spaces.



NUBA Urbanica Development

5) 2147 Washington Street Development

This 100,000 square foot six story development would feature 74 residential units (62 rental units, 12 condos, incl. 8 income restricted) and retail space that would include a new space for the Haley House Bakery Café with an inner courtyard and artist spaces.



New Mixed Use Development at 2147 Washington St. with Haley House Bakery Café

6) 75 Dudley Street Home Ownership Project (75-81 Dudley Street)

Located opposite the Post Office at the intersection of Dudley St. and Shawmut Ave. This will include 20 affordable condo units and ground floor commercial space.



7) 40-50 Warren Street Development

This development will include 25 apartments, co-working space, and ground floor retail/restaurant programming. The project was approved in Sept. 2020 by the Boston Planning and Development Agency .



8) Rio Grande Development

This proposal has been under review for a few years, but has not been approved or moved forward yet. It would be a tall residential structure with an entertainment venue on the ground floor and other retail. To be located between Washington St. and Shawmut Avenue near Dudley Street. The picture is still a conceptual design, and if eventually built, may undergo changes.



9) Bartlett Place Development

Bartlett Place is primarily a large housing development which is located a few blocks up Washington Street from Nubian Square. The overall project plan includes 10 buildings with 323 residential units (129 owner occupied; 194 rental units). The first phases have been completed (Buildings B & E) and the later phases of the project are moving forward. The overall project includes 54,000 square feet of commercial and retail space.



Bartlett Place master plan and a few of the 10 buildings

- 10) 135 Dudley Street Development (Between the new B2 Police Station and the Library)**
 This mixed use development of 282,000 square feet will include two buildings of nine and four floors including 168 multi-family units (108 condos and 60 rentals) and 8,703 square feet of commercial space.



11) Tropical Foods & Madison Park Development, Parcel 10, phase 3

(2089 Washington St. near Melnea Cass Blvd.)

Currently the proposed development includes 114 residential units on 12 floors with 6,000 square feet of retail space, plus parking. This will include 70 affordable rental units and 44 mixed income condo units.



Parcel 10 Phase 3 next to Tropical Foods Store

12) 125 Warren Street Residential Project (opposite Twelfth Baptist Church)

Regent Development LLC is developing a 28 unit residential building of ~ 30,000 square feet with parking garage on the former Regent St. Church of God in Christ site.

125 Warren Street



13) 2451 Washington Street- Madison Park Development Corporation

This 16 unit residential building is opposite the B2 Police Station at the intersection of Shawmut Avenue. It includes at least 7 affordable home ownership units. Construction is complete on this project.

2451 Washington Street



14) 190 Dudley Street (near Hibernian Hall)

This will be a 5 story mixed use building with retail space on the 1st floor and 28 residential dwelling units on floors 2 through 5. This is BPDA approved

190 Dudley Street



15) 1127 Harrison Avenue Development

The proposed project located at 1127 Harrison Avenue in Roxbury will be a high efficiency, transit oriented co-living development measuring approximately 47,762 gross square feet, consisting of 94 micro-units with roughly 4,525 square feet of shared

amenity space, across (5) levels, standing 62 ft. in height. The development seeks to retain current commercial businesses at below market rent and expand the building vertically with small, efficient apartments and lower rents. Under review at the BPDA.



16) 10 Taber Street Project

(between Harrison and Washington Streets right in Nubian Square)

The project consists of a 6-story, mixed-use building that includes 45 residential apartment units, approx. 1,830 square feet of retail space, and 10 parking spaces.



10 Taber Street Mixed Use Project

17) Parcel P3 Next to the Whitter Street Health Center & Boston Police Headquarters

The city has released Requests for Proposals for this major development site, and because potential development could be the largest in this area, it bears watching for the future. P3 is a publicly-owned vacant piece of land. Due to its large size, proximity to public transit, major roads, and educational facilities, this site has the potential to contribute to the economic development in the Nubian Square area while advancing the community's commitments to affordable housing, arts & culture, and equity. The two current (2022) proposals for the site are from (1) Tishman Speyer and Ruggles Progressive Partners (Richard Taylor, Herby Duverne et al) and (2) HYM Investment Group and Our City at Peace (Rev. Jeffrey Brown, Gregory Minott, et al). Each of these proposals includes somewhere in the general range of 500 housing units, retail, office or lab space and space for a museum and / or community non-profit organization.



Tishman Speyer /Ruggles Progressive

HYM Investment Group/Our City at Peace

18) Drexel Village Development

This 300,000 square foot development at the corner of Melnea Cass and Tremont Street combines the government owned Crescent Parcel and the Catholic Archdiocese property of the St. Katharine Drexel Parish into a mixed used project. It will include 217 residential units, mostly larger rental apartments, with 70% income restricted for affordability. The development will also include cultural, social service, retail, and technology education space. Some of the first and second floor space will be designed for the St. Katharine Drexel chapel and social service ministries. The overall site will also include 65,000 square feet of park and open green space for recreation and the arts.



The Crescent Parcel with an overview of the designated development- Drexel Village

19) 84 Warren Street- Urban League / Madison Park Development Corp.

The Project includes the construction of an approximately 83,000 square foot mixed-use building, with approximately 65 income-restricted residential units (approximately 22 homeownership units and approximately 43 rental units), approximately 7,500 square feet of ground floor office/program space for the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts and on-site garaged parking for approximately 24 vehicles. The project is currently under review.



84 Warren Street (adjacent to Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, CUME building.)

Roxbury Churches

This is a partial list of churches in Roxbury. For more information on all churches see the online Boston Church Directory - <https://egcboston.secure.force.com/bcd/> (database)
or <https://www.egc.org/blog-2/2022/1/19/boston-church-directory> (map)

Rev. Manuel Comas

Asambleas de Iglesias Cristianas

5 Howard Ave.

Boston, MA 02125-2610

(617) 427-0960

(617) 427-9603 (facebook page)

<https://www.facebook.com/aicboston/>

Rev. Franklin Murray, Sr.

Bethel Baptist Church

18 Saint James St.

Roxbury, MA 02119-3218

(617) 445-0584

Website: <https://www.bethelbaptistchurchroxbury.com/>

Rev. Reginald Smalls

Bethel Pentecostal Church

112 Humboldt Ave.

Roxbury, MA 02121-1213

(617) 427-4317

<https://www.facebook.com/Bethel-Pentecostal-Church-1405669456360875>

Also: Bethel Bible Institute of Boston - <https://bbiboston.org/> 617-427-3948

Bishop Joe L. Swilley

Bethlehem Healing Temple

428 Blue Hill Ave.

Roxbury, MA 02121-4303

(617) 442-4848

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Bethlehem-Healing-Temple/100010170844191>

Pastor: Rev. Soliny Vedrine

Boston Missionary Baptist Church

(Eglise Baptiste Missionnaire de Boston)

336 Dudley St.

Roxbury, MA 02119-3365

(617) 427-4448

Email- bostonmissionary@comcast.net

Website: www.mybmbc.org

Pastor: Rev. Gregory Groover

Charles Street AME Church

551 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02121-1806
(617) 442-7770
Email: info@csamechurch.org or ggroover@csamechurch.org
Website: <https://www.csamechurch.org/>

Senior Pastor: Rev. Neville Haye

Church of God of Prophecy

270-272 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 427-7766 / 7609
Website: <http://cogop.us/>

Rev. Dr. Evan C. Hines

Eliot Church of Roxbury

120 Walnut Ave.
Roxbury, MA 02119-1857
(617) 445-7525
Email: theeliotrox@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.eliotroxbury.org/>

Rev. Kevin Weeks

Emmanuel Temple Pentecostal Church

471 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02121-1399
(617) 442-8500
Email: emmanueltpc@aol.com
Website: www.facebook.com/EmmanuelTempleYouthDept

Ethiopian Evangelical Church

2566 Washington St.
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 427-1440
Email: info@eecboston.org

Pastor Benjamin Cardichon

First Haitian Baptist Church of Boston

397 Blue Hill Ave.
Roxbury, MA 02121-4309
(617)-427-4103 or (617) 427-1028
<https://www.facebook.com/fhbcboston>

Bishop Dr. Samuel B. Hogan, Sr.

Good Shepherd Church of God in Christ

18 Whittier Street
Roxbury, MA 02120-3103
(617) 445-6016
Email: sbhshepherd@aol.com
Website: <http://good-shepherd-church-cogic.e-zekielcms.com/> or <http://www.goodshepcogic.org/>

Pastor A. Livingston Foxworth

Grace Church of All Nations

33 Elm Hill Ave.
Roxbury, MA 02121
(617) 238-7057
info@gcoan.org
Website: <https://www.gcoan.org/>

Pastor A. J. Beech
Greater Anointing Harvest Church
20 Charlotte Street
Boston, MA 02121
617-287-2144
info@gahcministries.com
<https://www.facebook.com/Greater-Anointing-Harvest-Church-134887153212370/>

Pastor William E. Dickerson, II
Greater Love Tabernacle Church
101 Nightingale Street
Boston, MA 02124-1705
(617) 740-9480
greaterlovetab@aol.com
Website: <https://www.grltabernacle.org/>

Bishop Dr. Arthur F. Jack
Holy Tabernacle Church
70 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02121-3152
(617) 427-8022
info@holyltab.org
Website: <https://www.holyltab.org/>

Pastor Marcella Charles
Immanuel Church of the Nazarene
806 Blue Hill Ave.
Boston, MA 02124-1606
(617) 825-1766
www.facebook.com/dorchester.immanuel

Rev. Jose Osorio
Iglesia de Jesu Cristo el Buen Samaritano, Roxbury
547 Dudley Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 427-2718

Pastor Noel Torres
Iglesia Samaria Evangelica
367 Dudley Street
Roxbury, MA 02119-3366
(617) 541-9117

Rev. Miniard Culpepper
Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church
155 Humboldt Ave.
Roxbury, MA 02121-1707

(617) 427-0905

pleasantchurch2@aol.com

Website: <https://pleasanthillchurchofboston.com>

Pastor: Rev. Davi Hernandez

Restoration City Church

10 East Cottage Street

Roxbury, MA 02125-2631

(617) 445-2008

contact@restorecitychurch.org

Website: <https://www.restorecitychurch.org/>

Pastor: Rev. Miriam Sedzro

Resurrection Lutheran Church

94 Warren Street

Roxbury, MA 02119-3209

(617) 427-2066

Rev. Liz Walker

Roxbury Presbyterian Church

328 Warren Street

Roxbury, MA 02119-1814

(617) 445-2116

info@roxburypresbyterianchurch.org

<https://roxburypresbyterianchurch.org/>

Pastor James M. Harrison, Jr.

Southern Missionary Baptist Church

29 Winthrop Street

Roxbury, MA 02119-2390

(617) 445-6354

[contact.scboston@gmail.com](mailto:contact.sbcboston@gmail.com)

<http://www.scboston.org/>

Rev. Art J. Gordon

St. John Missionary Baptist Church

230 Warren Street

Roxbury, MA 02119-2261

(617) 427-5205

stjohn.mbchurch@verizon.net

Website: <https://www.sjmb-bos.org/>

Pastor: Rev. Albert Whitaker

St. Mark's Congregational Church

200 Townsend Street

Roxbury, MA 02121-1289

(617) 442-0481

stmarkcom16@gmail.com or revwhita3@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/StMarkBoston/>

Pastor: Dr. Larry Green, Sr.

Timothy Baptist Church

35 Highland Street

Roxbury, MA 02119-1559
(617) 445-3820
tbc@timothybaptistchurchma.com
<http://www.timothybaptistchurchma.com/>

Sr. Pastor: Rev. Willie Bodrick, II; Rev. Rev. Arthur Gerald, Pastor Emeritus

Twelfth Baptist Church

160 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02119-3201
(617) 442-7855
office@tbcboston.org
<https://tbcboston.org/>

Also in Roxbury:

Dean Virginia Ward
Campus for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME)
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston
90 Warren Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
617-427-7293
cumeinfo@gcts.edu
<https://www.gordonconwell.edu/boston/>



Dr. Michael Haynes and
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Twelfth Baptist Church

History of Roxbury



1600s

Roxbury was initially settled as a separate town in 1630 with its center near Eliot Square. William Pynchon, who later founded Springfield, was one of the early leaders along with Thomas Dudley. The name “Rocksbury” came from the many outcroppings of puddingstone in the area (since known as Roxbury Puddingstone). Between 1631 and 1640, many Puritans, including Rev. John Eliot, came to Roxbury from the town of Nazeing in Essex County, east of London. By 1632 Roxbury residents had built the First Church of Roxbury on the site of the present church building. In August of 1645, John Eliot and the leaders of Roxbury founded a school which came to be known as the Roxbury Latin School. This independent school has been in continuous operation ever since, making it one of the two or three oldest schools in the country.

John Eliot, the teacher and pastor of the church, became known as “the apostle to the Indians” through his efforts to learn the Algonquian language, translate the Bible, and establish Praying Indian Villages. His translation of the Bible was published in 1663, the first Bible printed in America.¹ In all, Eliot established 14 Praying Indian Villages throughout the area. He also helped edit the *Bay Psalm Book*, the first book published in America.

By the middle of the 17th century, Roxbury was a thriving community of 120 houses and 350 cattle.² The residents were mostly engaged in farming and growing fruit trees, including the famous Roxbury Russet apple trees. The early streets of Roxbury were Dudley Street, Washington Street, Warren Street, Centre Street, and Roxbury Street. Roxbury’s Washington Street held a strategic position since it was the only land route into Boston. Thus Roxbury played an important role in trade, and transportation. During the first two centuries, Roxbury included what is now West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.

¹ Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God was the title in Algonquian.

² Edward Johnson, *Wonder Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England* (London: Angel in Cornhill, 1654)), quoted in F. Washington Jarvis, *Schola Illustris: The Roxbury Latin School, 1645-1995* (Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 1995)25.



The Shirley–Eustis House is a National Historic Landmark, built in Roxbury as a summer residence for Governor William Shirley between 1747 and 1751.

<https://www.shirleyeustishouse.org/the-property>

1700s

Two of Roxbury’s notable houses from the 1700s are still standing. In 1747 William Shirley, the Royal Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony and Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in North America, built his mansion in Roxbury. The house was later confiscated by Americans and used as a barracks and hospital for soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Later William Eustis, a governor of Massachusetts in the 1820s, lived in the house and hosted Lafayette there. The Shirley-Eustis House is located at 31 Shirley Street (See - <https://www.shirleyeustishouse.org/>). The second 18th Century house is the Dillaway-Thomas House which was built on John Eliot Square in 1750 as a parsonage for the First Church. During the Revolutionary War Siege of Boston in 1775, it served as the headquarters for the commanders of the American forces.

(<https://www.mass.gov/locations/roxbury-heritage-state-park>)

Joseph Warren, a Roxbury native, was among the most important leaders of the movement for independence, dispatching Paul Revere and William Dawes on April 18, 1775, leading Massachusetts to declare independence from Britain, and becoming President of its provisional government in May 1775.

At this time, Roxbury was a strategic position for the American forces because it controlled the only road out of Boston and had commanding hilltop positions near the meetinghouse and the present Fort Hill Tower (Cochituate Stand Pipe). At the latter site, the American forces built a strong earthwork defense called the Roxbury High Fort. During the summer of 1775, the British subjected the town to heavy canon bombardment with flaming bombshells which eventually damaged or destroyed many buildings. General Washington reviewed the troops in Roxbury several times and by that winter 3,800 soldiers were being sheltered there.³



The

³ Richard Frothingham, *A History of the Siege of Boston*, 6th edition (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1903),107, 291.

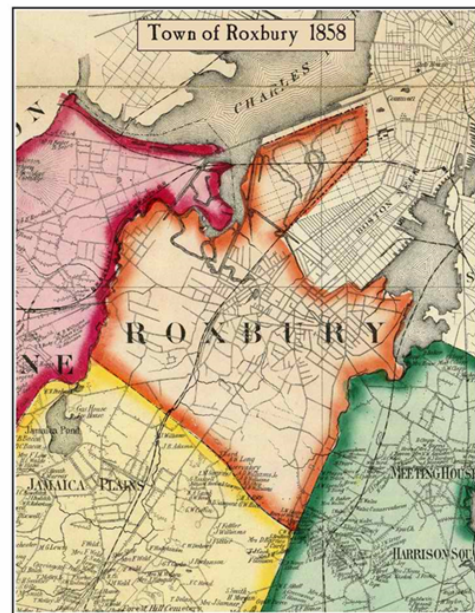
parting stone in Roxbury indicating where the roads to Providence and Cambridge/Watertown divided or parted.

1800s

In 1804, the present First Church of Roxbury was built on the same site as the previous four church buildings. In 1811, Roxbury had 428 houses, 79 shops, 12 tanneries, 2 grist mills, one cotton and woolen mill, one other mill, and 42 slaughter houses.⁴ The first grist mill had been built on Stony Brook in 1639 by the Pierpont family. By the first half of the nineteenth century, Roxbury had become a major center for the tanning industry. This led naturally to a large growth in the production of shoes and boots. The old Norfolk House, which was built in 1786 by Joseph Ruggles, was purchased and expanded by the Norfolk House Company in 1825-26. The Norfolk Company also established a line of coaches running hourly to Boston in 1826. In 1821 the Baptist Church in Roxbury began. It later changed its name to Dudley Street Baptist Church and in 1852 built a prominent new church building in Dudley Square, eventually becoming one of the largest Baptist churches in the city. In 1834, the Boston and Providence Railroad was built down along the Stony Brook Valley (now the Southwest Corridor Park and MBTA Orange Line).

In the 1820s and 1830s, a number of large estates near the business district were sold to developers who laid out streets and started adding new buildings and homes. Some of these early Greek Revival style homes still survive in the Highland Park and Mount Pleasant areas. The Alvah Kittredge House, built in 1836 on the site of Roxbury Lower Fort and later owned by noted architect, Nathaniel Bradlee, is located now at 10 Linwood Street. The Edward Everett Hale House built in 1841 is located at 12 Morley Street. The town grew rapidly during the 1800s, more than tripling in population between 1830 and 1850 and nearly doubling again in the next twenty years.

With the growth in size and complexity of the town, Roxbury decided to incorporate as a city in 1846. In 1851, a large proportion of Roxbury's land area was set off as an independent West Roxbury. Then in 1868, after some debate and a vote, Roxbury was annexed to the city of Boston. By that time, the two cities had essentially merged in Lower Roxbury with a continuity of buildings, businesses, and increasingly dense population. After the annexation, the Cochituate Stand Pipe (Fort Hill Tower) was built in 1869 as a water tower to provide better water service to Roxbury homes. In general, the annexation was viewed as a way to coordinate and improve various public services.



During the Civil War, Roxbury threw its support behind the cause, supplying 3,271 soldiers, 12,000 pieces of extra clothing, and over a half a million dollars.⁵ William Lloyd Garrison, well known abolitionist and founder of the *Liberator*

⁴Francis Samuel Drake, *The Town of Roxbury* (Boston: Municipal Print Office, 1908), 52.

⁵ Francis S. Drake, "Roxbury in the Last Hundred Years," 578-79.

newspaper, lived for a number of years in Roxbury. The William Lloyd Garrison House, called “Rockledge,” was built in the 1840s at 125 Highland Avenue and is now owned by Emmanuel College. Another notable home was Abbotsford, the Victorian Gothic style villa of Roxbury Puddingstone, which was built in 1872 for the wealthy industrialist, Aaron Davis Williams, Jr. Later this would become a school for delinquent boys and then the Museum of the National Center of Afro American Artists.

In the later nineteenth century, one of the most notable companies in Roxbury was L. Prang & Company, an influential publisher whose color prints and cards were well known all across America. By 1870, there were 5,000 Irish residents in Roxbury, most living in Lower Roxbury.⁶ Between 1870 and 1900, additional lower middleclass Irish families moved into lower Roxbury, followed by German, Latvian, Scandinavian, Canadian and Jewish immigrants. In the late 1880s, electric trolley service began to serve Roxbury, providing inexpensive and fast commuting for workers of moderate means. At that time the rail lines were consolidated under a single company, the West End Street Railway, which expanded the trolley service extensively. This led to further residential development in Roxbury.

1900s

The extension of the Boston Elevated Railroad to Dudley Street Station in 1901 spurred business development in Dudley Square (now renamed Nubian Square), as well as the general development of Roxbury. Dudley Square, which had long been a commercial hub of Roxbury, was formerly known as “Dove’s Corners,” named after William Dove, a merchant “By the turn of the 20th century, the area had a bustling mix of department stores, residential hotels, silent movie theaters, banks, and even a bowling alley.”⁷ One of the largest and most famous stores in Dudley Square was Ferdinand’s Blue Store. The store, which had started in 1869 in a wooden building, expanded in 1895 with its landmark, five-story limestone and yellow brick building designed by John Lyman Faxon.⁸ By 1922 Ferdinand’s had added an eight story building, was a million dollar business, and was the largest furniture store in New England.⁹



With the large Irish population in the areas around Dudley Square, the Hibernian Hall, built in 1913, soon became a center of Irish social life. For the next several decades, hundreds of Irish young people and adults would come to the hall for lively dancing and band music.

⁶ Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 95.

⁷ Boston Landmarks Commission, “Roxbury History,” Exploring Boston’s Neighborhoods series, www.boston-online.com/roxhist.html

⁸This building has been renovated and expanded with new construction to become the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building which houses the Boston Public School administrative offices.

⁹ “From a Twenty Thousand Dollar Business to a Million,” *The Home Furnisher*, 1922, 3. (Available online at www.discoverroxbury.org).

Beginning in 1972, the Opportunities Industrialization Center bought Hibernian Hall and created a job training center for the African American community. Over the next twenty years, thousands were trained and prepared for better jobs. The building is now used by the Roxbury Center for the Arts and other cultural events. (See the 100th Anniversary Video - <http://www.madison-park.org/what-we-do/arts-culture/hibernian-hall/>).

By the 1920s, several hundred blacks had moved to upper Roxbury, and in 1926, St. Mark Congregational Church moved to the corner of Humboldt Avenue and Townsend Street.¹⁰ Under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Leroy Laviscount, the church grew and in the 1930s built the St. Mark Social Center which included a gymnasium, game rooms, and bowling alley. In 1939, Charles Street AME Church also moved to upper Roxbury. As a result, two residential districts of African Americans began to grow around these two churches. However, in 1930, Roxbury as a whole was only about 14% black, mostly concentrated in three census tracts. The other two were in parts of Lower Roxbury. About 14% of Roxbury's residents were white of native born parents, while over 70% were either foreign born or children of foreign born parents.¹¹ The heads of families in Roxbury were about 22% Irish, 17% Canadian, and 22% Russian 1930.¹²

With migration from the South, Roxbury's black population grew and expanded in the neighborhood over the next five decades. The 1960s and 1970s were characterized by the growth of African American religious, social, and cultural institutions in Roxbury, and confrontations over urban renewal and social justice issues. A peaceful vigil and sit-in at the Grove Hall Welfare Office in June 1967 developed into three days of rioting along Blue Hill Avenue. This led to fires and abandonment, and it took several decades before reinvestment brought renewal and redevelopment to that area. Other renewal efforts involving the city and community groups brought changes to the neighborhood somewhat sooner. The Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan drastically altered the central part of upper Roxbury, and what became the Madison Park Development Corporation guided community development in Lower Roxbury. The Madison Park High School Campus and the new Roxbury Community College campus came out of some of the community organizing efforts of those times. The Reggie Lewis athletic facility also became an important asset to the community, filling out the area.

In more recent years, various parts of Roxbury have continued to make progress through excellent community involvement in organizations like the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, residents working on the New Academy Estates, and the Oversight Committee of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. The creation of that important plan to provide structure and guidance to future development grew out of many focus group meetings, community working group meetings, and neighborhood-wide public workshops involving many community residents.

Between 2001 and 2005, the old Academy Homes II development was razed and rebuilt as a tenant-owned cooperative of new townhouses along Washington Street near Egleston Square. Another major improvement to the area took place with the replacement of the old Orchard Park Projects with the 524 units in the new townhouses of Orchard Gardens.

¹⁰Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 60.

¹¹Boston Council of Social Agencies. *Social Statistics by Census Tracts, 1930*. Boston: 1933.

¹² *Ibid.*

Also, in recent years Nubian Square itself has experienced considerable revitalization with the renovation of several key buildings including the renovation and expansion of the Ferdinand building and the completion of a new police station. The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan¹³ and Plan Dudley Square provide a vision for the future based on community principles, values, and assets leading to concrete goals in many aspects of community life. With continued involvement of the community and cooperation between community organizations, schools, churches and government entities, these goals can be achieved.

Resources on Roxbury History

Roxbury Historical Society- <http://roxburyhistoricalsociety.org/>

The Roxbury Historical Society headquarters are located at the Dillaway Thomas House in the Roxbury Heritage State Park.

Lower Roxbury Black History Project, Northeastern University- Between 2007 and 2009 Lolita Parker and her son London Parker-McWhorter recorded audio and video oral history interviews of over 40 Roxbury residents and collected artifacts and documents for this project. These are available online at - <https://roxbury.library.northeastern.edu/>

Northeastern University also has digitized over 2,400 photos from the Freedom House Collection and placed them on the web to provide a visual history of Roxbury over the last half century.

Available online at: <https://freedomhouse.library.northeastern.edu/>

Historical Maps of Roxbury – to view (and/or purchase) two maps with detailed historical notes see Ed McCarthy’s artistic creations at:

<http://www.historicalboston.com/Roxbury-1852.htm> and

<http://www.historicalboston.com/Roxbury-2012.htm>

Other historical Roxbury maps are available at MapJunction- <https://www.mapjunction.com/>

General Books on Roxbury

D.A.R., Roxbury Chapter. *Glimpses of Early Roxbury*. Boston: Merrymount Press, 1905.

Drake, Francis S. *The Town of Roxbury : Its memorable persons and places, its history and antiquities, with numerous illustrations of its old landmarks and noted personages*. Roxbury, Mass., 1878; reprint. Bowie, Md., 1994.

Ellis, Charles M. *The History of Roxbury Town*. Boston: Samuel Drake Pub., 1847.

Keyes, Langley Carleton, Jr. *The Rehabilitation Planning Game: A Study in the Diversity of Neighborhood*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1969.

Mitchell, Rudy. *Greater Dudley Neighborhood*. Boston: Emmanuel Gospel Center, 2010.

¹³ The Roxbury Strategic Master Plan final report and related documents are available online at: <http://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roxbury-strategic-master-plan>

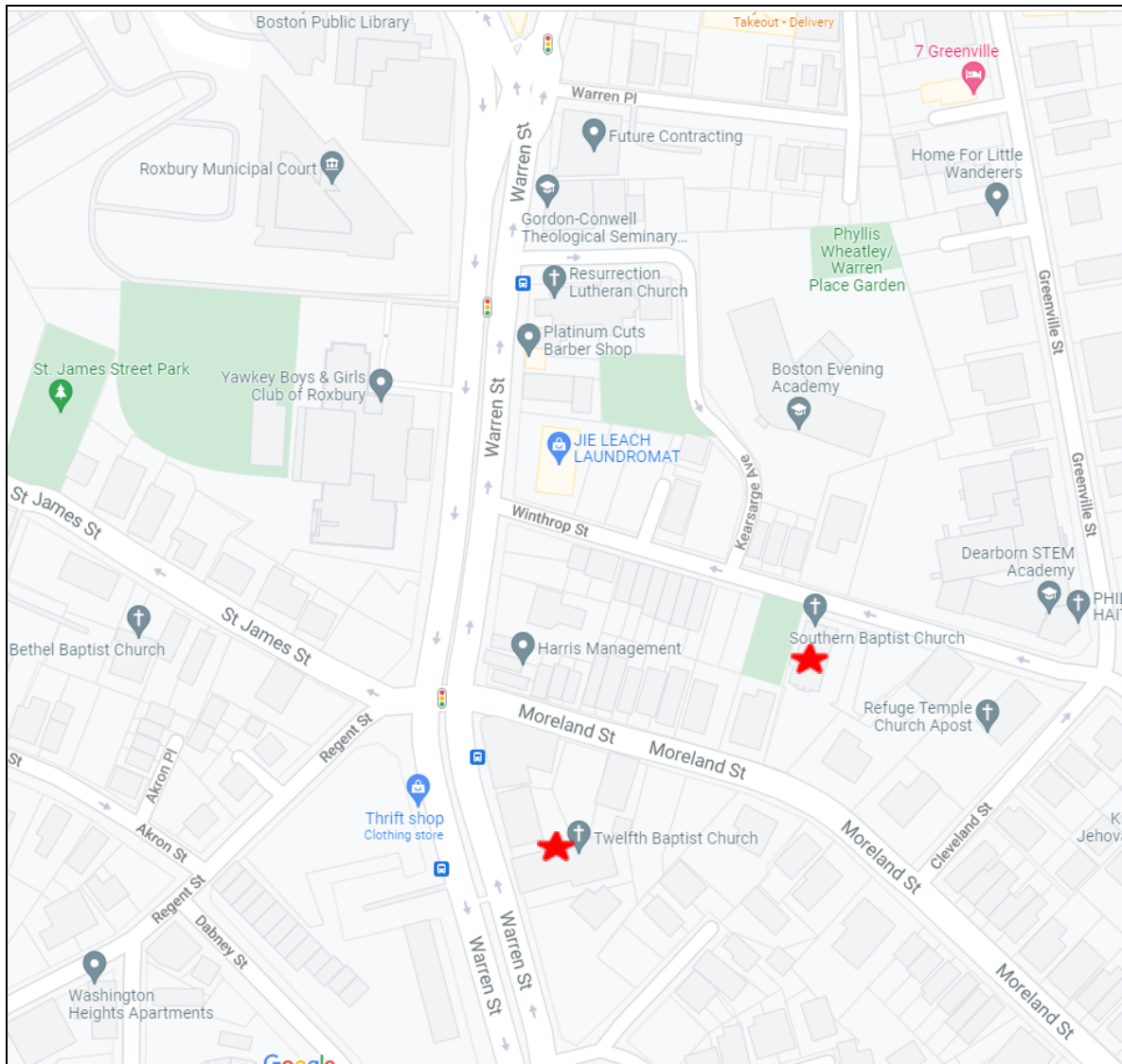
Pierce, Dick. *Roxbury : A Brief History of its People, Places and Things*. Roxbury, Mass.: Roxbury Heritage Foundation, 2005.

Sammarco, Anthony Mitchell. *Roxbury*. Images of America Series. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 1997.

Sammarco, Anthony Mitchell. *Roxbury: Then and Now*. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.

Wilson, Micah. "Race, Land, & Power: A Spatial History of Roxbury, MA through Displacement and Resistance." December 16, 2019. Online at:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6692b8b353a94eb3aa6b37e54581dfa7>

Roxbury Demographics

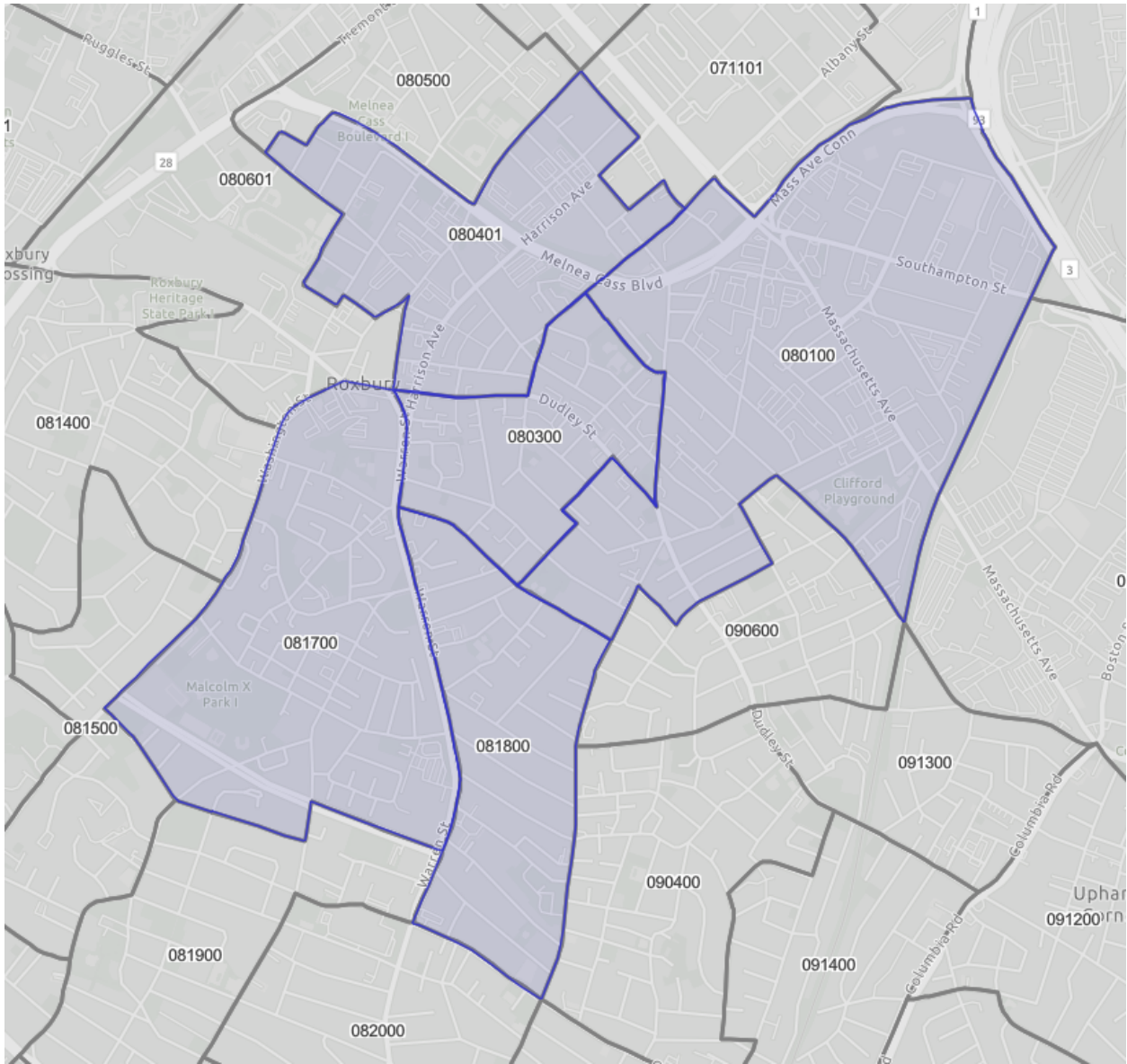


Map showing Twelfth Baptist Church and Southern Baptist Church

Roxbury Demographics for:

Selected Tracts: 801, 803, 804.01, 817, and 818,

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,



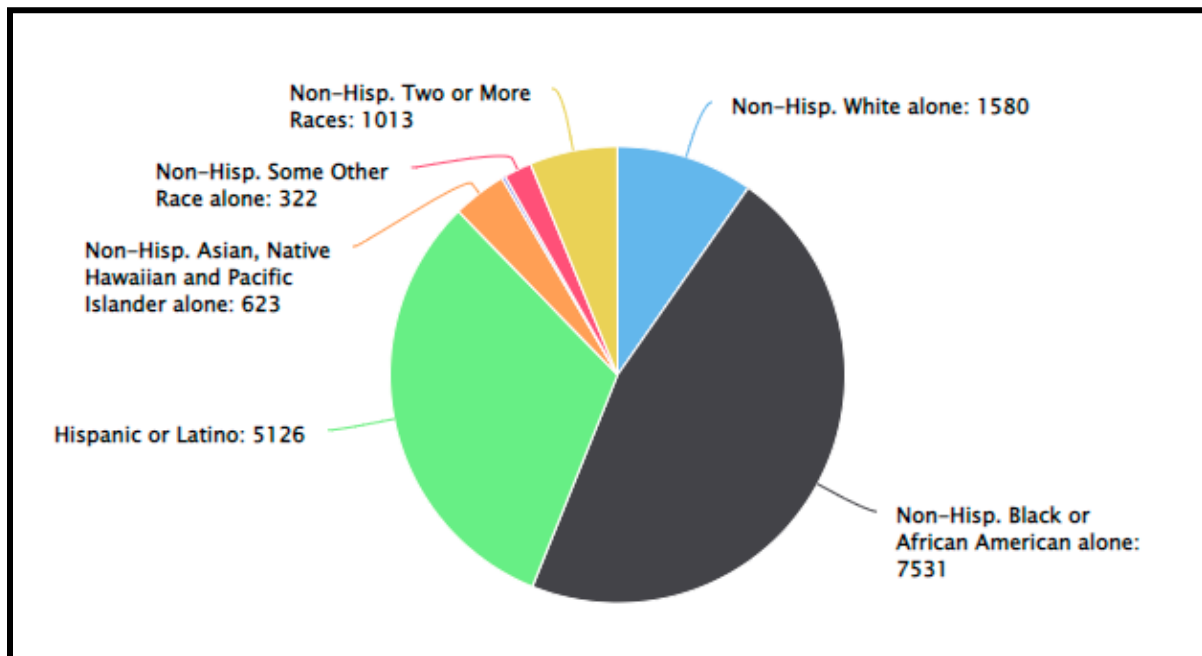
Youth and Children in Census Tracts 801, 803, 817, 818

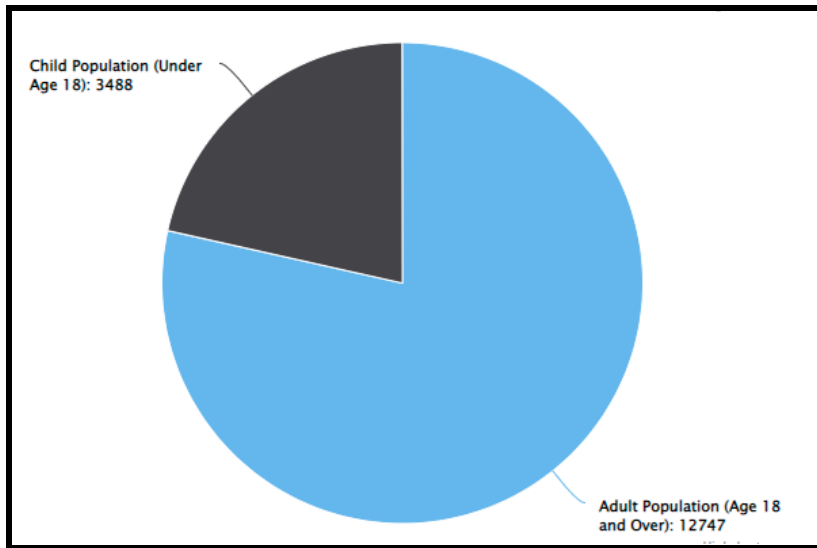
Census tract	Under 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-14 yrs.	15-19 yrs.	20-24 yrs
801	79	165	184	147	326
803	207	173	40	108	132
804.01	208	214	202	240	260
817	289	247	133	335	449
818	425	293	249	158	151
Total	1,208	1,092	808	988	1,318

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,

2020 Decennial Census (Redistricting Data), BPDA MyCensus Viewer
 For the area combining Census Tracts 801, 803, 804.01, 817 and 818

	Total Population	Adult Population (Age 18 and Over)	Child Population (Under Age 18)
Non-Hisp. White alone	1,580	1,474	106
Non-Hisp. Black or African American alone	7,531	6,032	1,499
Hispanic or Latino	5,126	3,689	1,437
Non-Hisp. Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone	623	556	621
Non-Hisp. American Indian and Alaska Native alone	40	24	16
Non-Hisp. Some Other Race alone	322	222	100
Non-Hisp. Two or More Races	1,013	750	263
Total	16,235	12,747	3,488





Population in Group Quarters

Universe: Population in group quarters

	Population
Correctional facilities for adults	726
Juvenile facilities	34
Nursing facilities/Skilled-nursing facilities	0
Other institutional facilities	0
College/University student housing	0
Military quarters	0
Other noninstitutional facilities	707
Total	1,467

Total number of Housing Units in this area: 6,362

Universe: Housing units

	Count
Occupied	5,924
Vacant	438
Total	6,362

2015-2019 Census Information

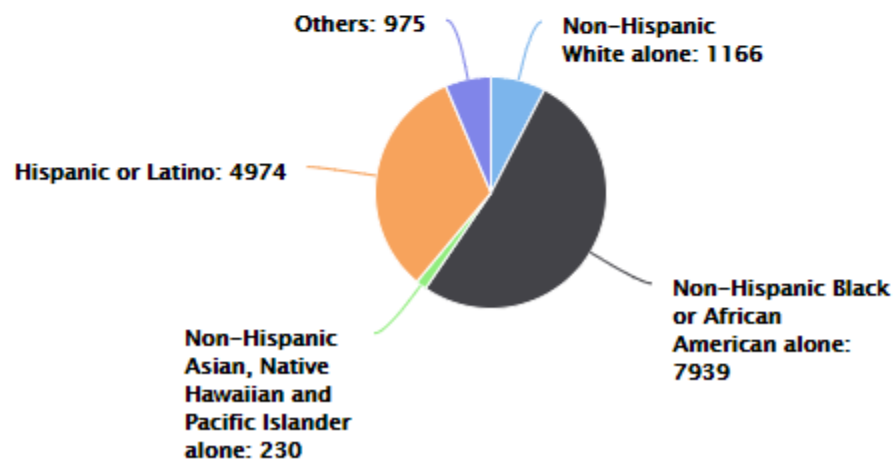
Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
2015 - 2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
Selected Tracts: 801, 803, 804.01, 817, and 818,

Race/Ethnicity

Table ID: B03002

Universe: Total population

Race/Ethnicity	Count
Non-Hispanic White alone	1,166
Non-Hispanic Black or African American alone	7,939
Non-Hispanic Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone	230
Hispanic or Latino	4,974
Others	975
Total	15,284



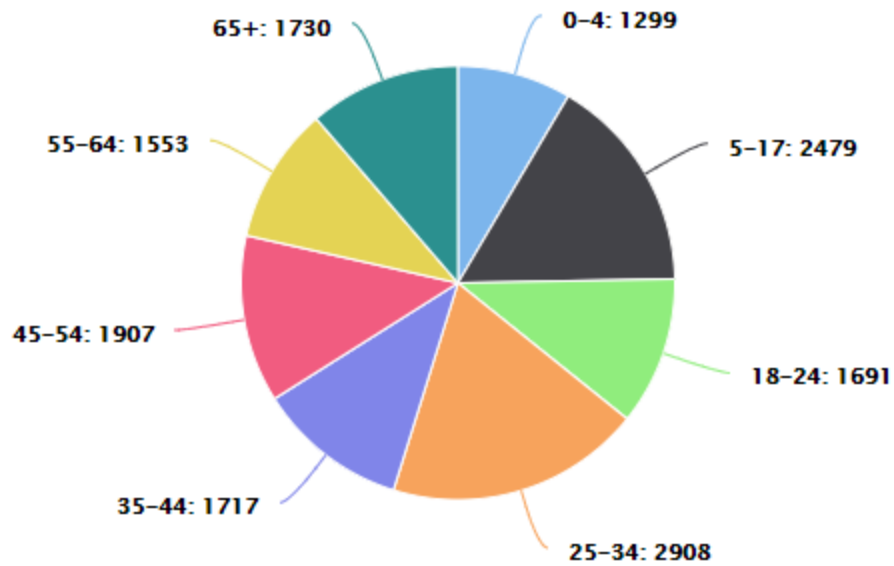
Population by Age



Table ID: B01001

Universe: Total population

Age	Count
0-4	1,299
5-17	2,479
18-24	1,691
25-34	2,908
35-44	1,717
45-54	1,907
55-64	1,553
65+	1,730
Total	15,284



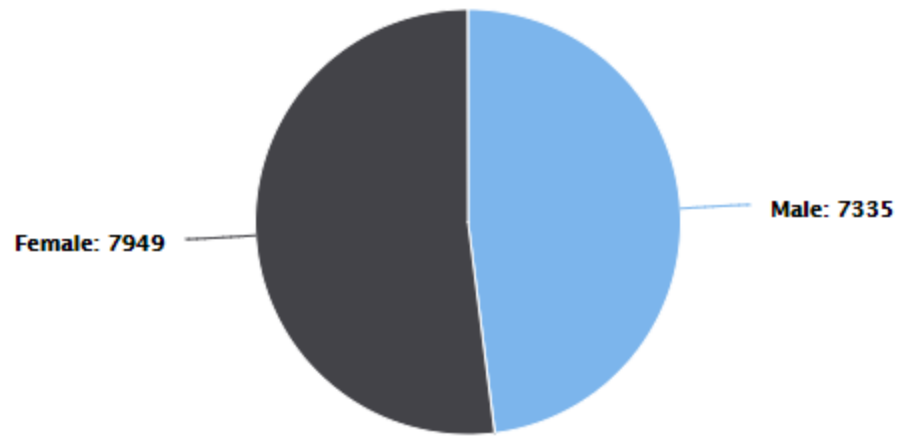
Gender



Table ID: B01001

Universe: Total population

Gender	Count
Male	7,335
Female	7,949
Total	15,284



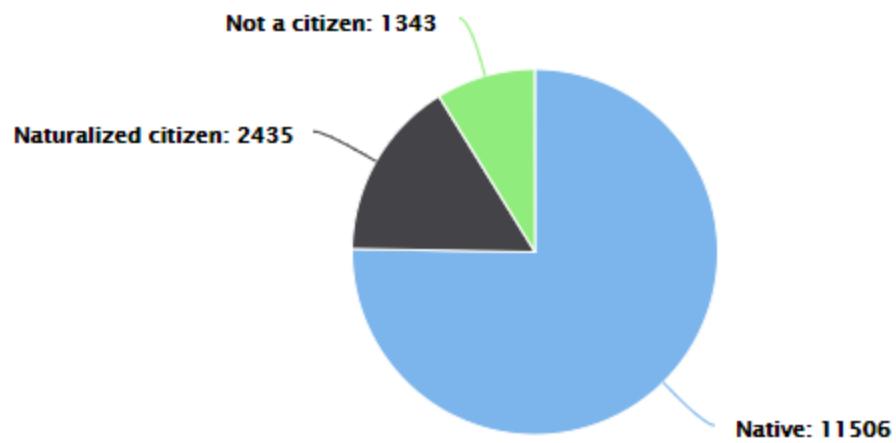
Nativity



Table ID: B05002

Universe: Total population

Nativity	Count
Native	11,506
Naturalized citizen	2,435
Not a citizen	1,343
Total	15,284



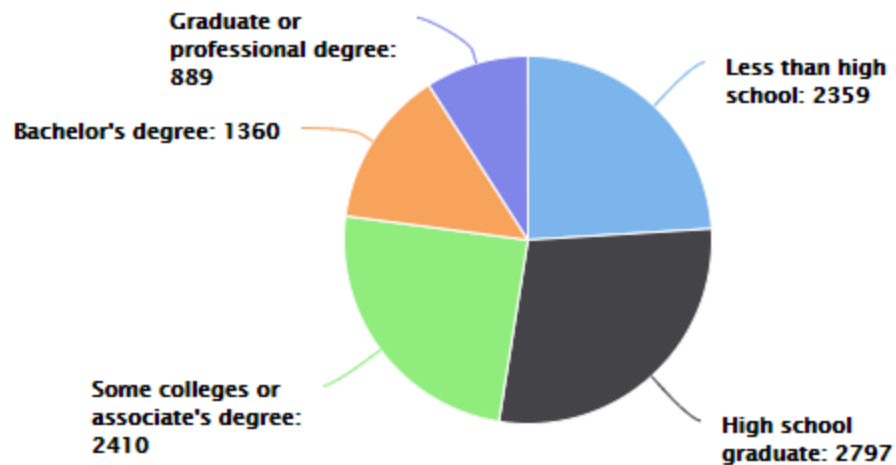
Educational Attainment



Table ID: B15003

Universe: Population 25 years and over

Educational Attainment	Count
Less than high school	2,359
High school graduate	2,797
Some colleges or associate's degree	2,410
Bachelor's degree	1,360
Graduate or professional degree	889
Total	9,815

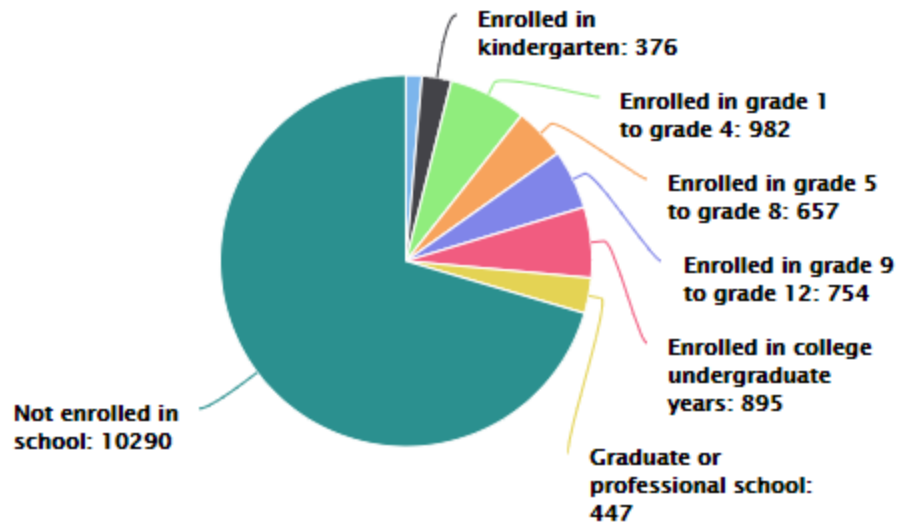


School Enrollment by Level

Table ID: B14001

Universe: Population 3 years and over

School Level	Count
Enrolled in nursery school preschool	201
Enrolled in kindergarten	376
Enrolled in grade 1 to grade 4	982
Enrolled in grade 5 to grade 8	657
Enrolled in grade 9 to grade 12	754
Enrolled in college undergraduate years	895
Graduate or professional school	447
Not enrolled in school	10,290
Total	14,602



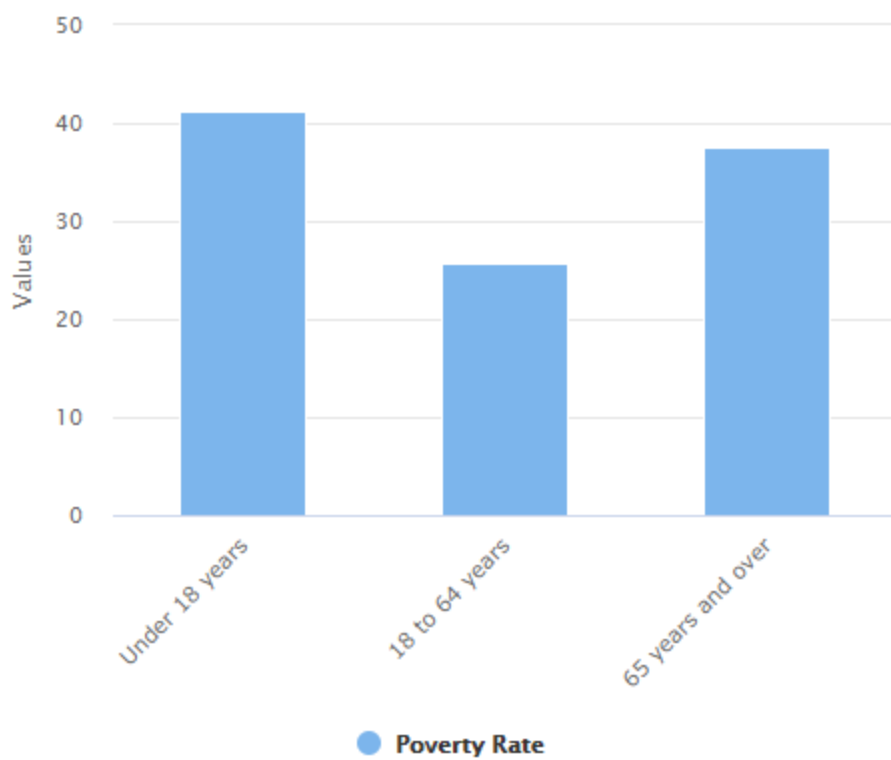
Poverty Rate



Table ID: B17001

Universe: Population for whom poverty status is determined

Age	Poverty Rate
Under 18 years	41.22
18 to 64 years	25.63
65 years and over	37.47
Total	31.01



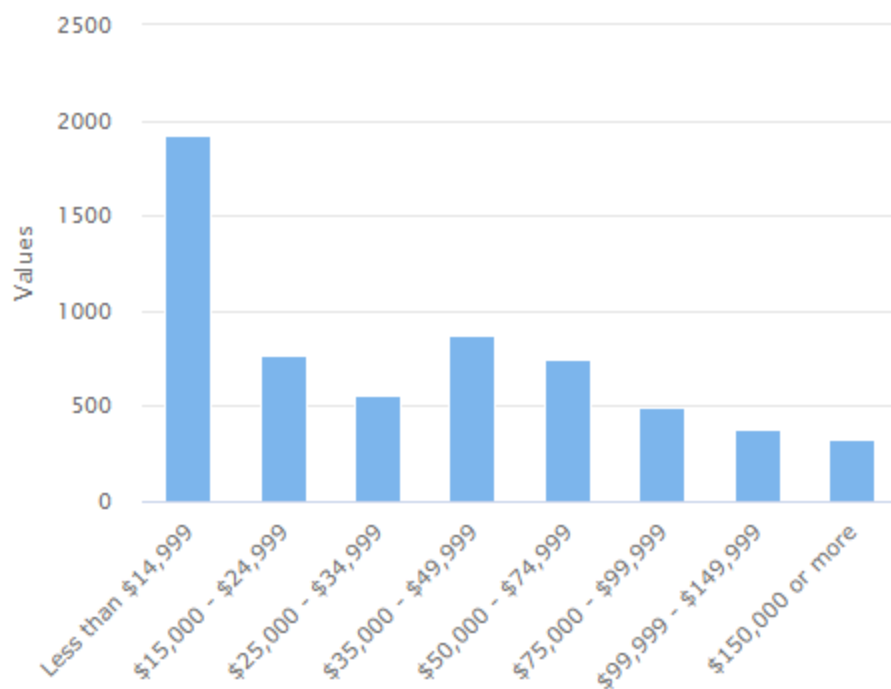
Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2019 Inflation-adjusted Dollars)



Table ID: B19001

Universe: Households

Household Income	Count
Less than \$14,999	1,922
\$15,000 - \$24,999	772
\$25,000 - \$34,999	557
\$35,000 - \$49,999	869
\$50,000 - \$74,999	748
\$75,000 - \$99,999	490
\$99,999 - \$149,999	378
\$150,000 or more	322
Total	6,058



Renter Costs as a Percentage of Household Income by Income Level in the Past 12 Months

Table ID: B25106

Universe: Occupied housing units

Household Income	Renter Costs < 30% Household Income	Renter Costs >= 30% Household Income	Total
Less than \$20,000	320	1,522	1,842
\$20,000 to \$34,999	283	523	806
\$35,000 to \$49,999	295	464	759
\$50,000 to \$74,999	325	118	443
\$75,000 or more	504	13	517
Zero or negative income	N/A	N/A	267
No cash rent	N/A	N/A	57
Renter-occupied housing units	N/A	N/A	4,691

