

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS LIZ BREADON, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON,
FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS CURRENT POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND PREPARATION FOR THE 2030 DECENNIAL CENSUS

- WHEREAS*, Population projections inform crucial decisions related to Boston’s future, such as the housing units needed to house the future population, school facilities needed to educate the City’s children, community centers to provide programming, dormitories to house students of colleges and universities, and more; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Projections take into account cohort birth, death, and migration rates; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The United States Census Bureau conducts the federal decennial census as an official count of every person and household, and initial figures from the 2020 Census enumerated a population of 675,647 residents in the City of Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The American Community Survey is Census Bureau survey providing on a yearly basis vital and more detailed demographic data on jobs and occupations, educational attainment, veteran and disability status, homeowners and renters, language spoken at home, commuting patterns, poverty status, and more; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Census Bureau also conducts an annual Population Estimates Program between each decennial census, known as intercensal estimates, calculated using a “population base” determined by the results of the last decennial census, which takes into account population change including births, deaths, and migration; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Census Bureau also conducts annual Housing Unit Estimates, beginning with the results of the last decennial census and factoring in a local government unit’s reported building permits and new residential construction; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The official decennial census enumeration not only determines the population base for future population estimates, but postcensal population estimates are also used to determine the distribution of billions of dollars in state and federal funding, and are used by public officials, planners, policymakers, and researchers to assess past and present conditions to plan for the future; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Research Division of the City of Boston Planning Department recently issued a presentation demonstrating the Division’s population projections from 2020 to 2035 for Boston’s population by age group; *and*

- WHEREAS,* Analysis conducted by the Research Division found that in the 2020 Census, “Allston’s population fell by 5.9 percent, with a 40 percent decline in the group quarters population, suggesting that the college dorm population of Allston may not have been correctly counted in the wake of the pandemic evacuation”; *and*
- WHEREAS,* The City of Boston successfully challenged the 2020 Census enumeration of the population in group quarters to show a net undercount of 6,290 residents in dormitory and correctional facilities, correction for which would more accurately reflect Boston’s 2020 population base as 681,937 individuals; *and*
- WHEREAS,* Annual population estimates continue to undercount the age 18 to 24 population compared to the decennial census, and, in addition to the group quarters population, there are concerns about undercounts of the household population across Boston, adjustments for which could more accurately reflect Boston’s 2020 population as closer to almost 700,000 individuals; *and*
- WHEREAS,* In addition to official census figures, supplemental sources for insightful demographic data can include real estate databases, the City’s annual resident listing, annual reports of student enrollment and housing submitted pursuant to the University Accountability Ordinance; *and*
- WHEREAS,* The Research Division presentation projects that Charlestown, the South Boston Waterfront, and Allston will experience the highest percentage population growth from 2024 to 2035; *and*
- WHEREAS,* The next federal decennial census will be in 2030 and preparation at the Census Bureau is underway to ensure a complete count, providing crucial opportunities for state and local input on program design through field tests and stakeholder engagement; *and*
- WHEREAS,* Demographic data is a public asset, essential for informing complex policy decisions such as service delivery, targeted allocation of public funds and resources, strategic responses to crises, measure success, improve the efficiency of government programs, and due diligence must be paid to ensure its accuracy; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*
- ORDERED:* That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss current population projections and preparation for the 2030 decennial census, and that representatives of City departments, including the Research Division of the Planning Department, the UMass Donahue Institute, and interested members of the public be invited to attend.

Filed on: February 26, 2025