

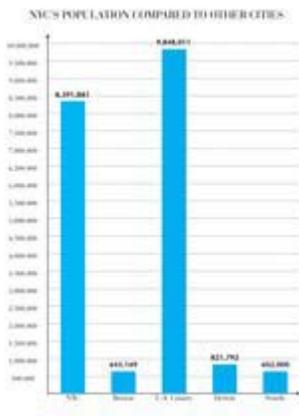


City braces for population growth

by Ben Medeiros

Published February 17, 2011

Using data from the recent census, the New York City Department of City Planning has predicted the city's population will exceed nine million people by 2030.



Rebecca Cheong

Census findings reported by DCP's population division show that the city's net growth of 383,600 people over the past decade "is the product of a large population 'churn,' with substantial domestic losses being offset by large international inflows and natural increase."

"Most population growth normally happens through birth," said Aaron Terrazas, policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

The percentage of children who have at least one foreign born parent is also increasing. According to data from the American Community Survey, nearly one-third of children in New York have one foreign born parent, up from only 20 percent in 1990.

New York's current and projected growth have already caused issues for zoning and land use. The city addressed some of its recent zoning efforts when it released the 2011 Zoning Handbook earlier this month. According to DCP's press release, about a fifth of the city, or 9,400 blocks, has been rezoned.

The DCP is working to adjust zoning plans to increase affordable housing development and access to transportation. Recent studies by the Furman Center found that 73 percent of rezoning between 2003 and 2007 was in areas within a half-mile walk from public transit like the subway and LIRR.

"While the city is consciously trying to increase the residential capacity in areas where there is transit, there is some evidence that we may be reducing access to transit," said Caitlyn Brazill, director of policy and communications at the Furman Center for Real Estate and Policy at NYU.

Another factor in the demographic shifts in the city will be the preferences of "Generation Y" residents, who are "by and large very much in favor of urban living," said John McIlwain, senior resident fellow for housing at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C.

"One challenge Gen Y will have is that they have high levels of unemployment and high levels of college debt," McIlwain said.

Though he said the city has tried to create more housing options, the problem of affordability remains.

"It's the old middle class rental challenge that New York and all cities have been facing," McIlwain said.

A version of this article appeared in the Thursday, Feb. 17 print edition. Ben Medeiros is a contributing writer. E-mail him at cstate@nyunews.com.