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Center City Reports
Leading the Way: Population Growth Downtown

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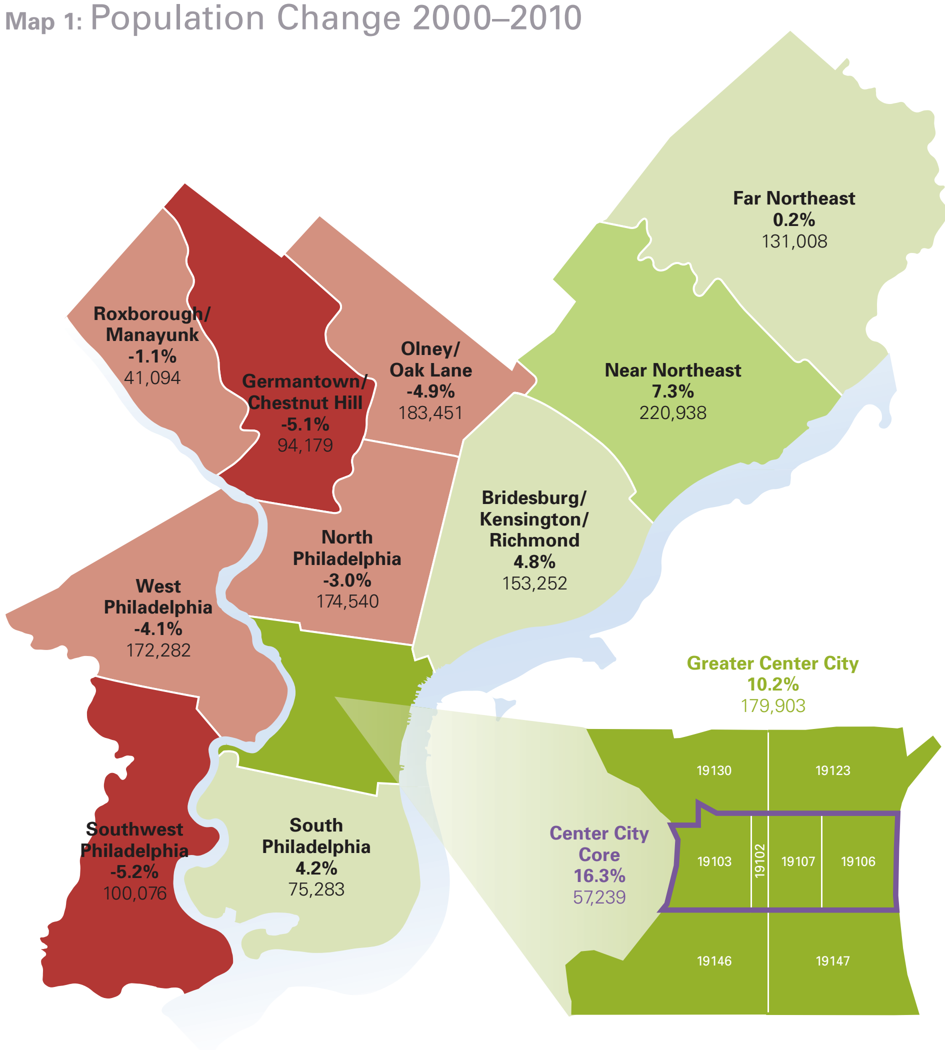
For the first time in 60 years, Philadelphia's population has grown, netting 8,819 new residents between 2000 and 2010, according to the 2010 Census. While many older portions of the city continued their long-term trend of population decline or transition with the white population decreasing by 6.9% citywide and the African-American population increasing by 2.2%, in several sections of the city, particularly in South and Eastern North Philadelphia, Asian and Latino immigration was sufficient to offset decline. Philadelphia's Asian population grew citywide by 52,684 (43.4%) in the last decade, while the Latino population grew by 66,073 (47.7%).[1]

But one of the largest, most visible and geographically concentrated growth stories occurred downtown. The addition of more than 12,000 new housing units since 1997 attracted 16,698 new residents into the eight ZIP codes that reach from Girard Avenue on the north to Tasker Street on the south, (referred to in this report as Greater Center City). This 7.8 square mile section of Philadelphia, which constitutes just 5.7% of the city's land area, now holds 11.8% of its residents (179,903), increasing by 10.2% in the last decade, faster than any other portion of the city.

In addition to Chinatown, the extended neighborhoods of Center City still retain a diverse mix of middle- and working-class residents: 54% Caucasian, 32% African American and 11% Asian. Greater Center City also contains more than 6,000 units of publicly subsidized housing. But the neighborhoods that surround the central business district and those adjacent to University City have increasingly become communities of choice for highly-educated residents – the young professionals and graying boomers who are the workforce of the post-industrial economy. Center City and University City today hold 51% of all private-sector jobs in Philadelphia. Clustered close, in the most densely populated portion of the city, downtown residents enjoy a vibrant live-work and walkable setting that is the hallmark of all successful

Map 1: Population Change 2000–2010



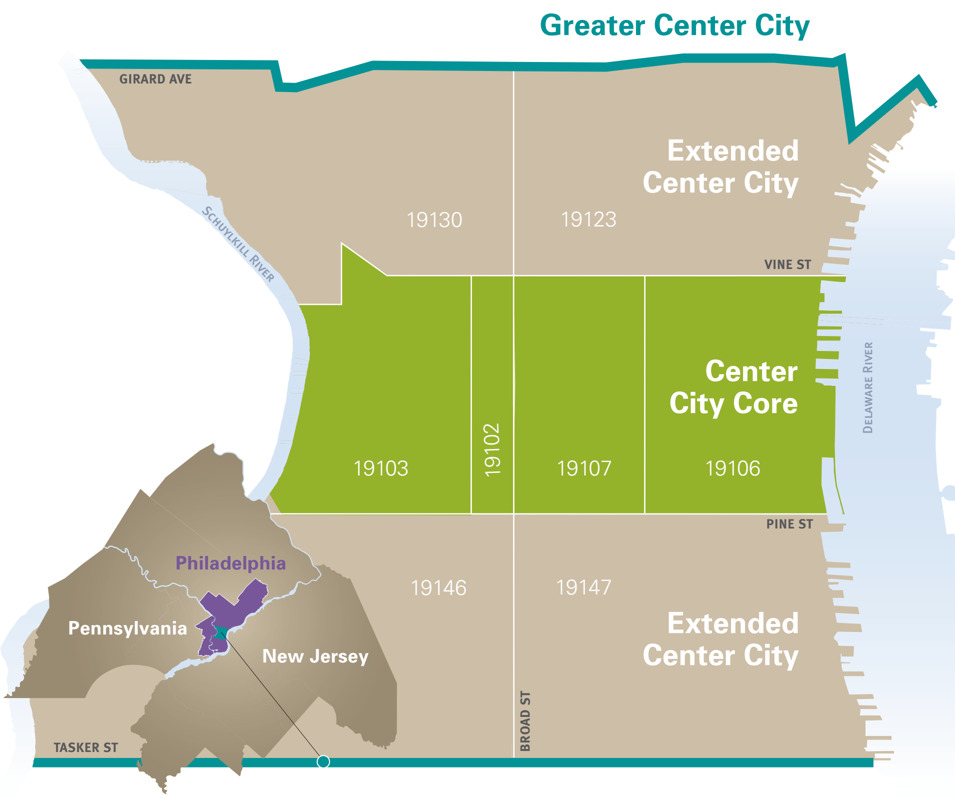
Percent Change in Population, 2000–2010
(Number on the map indicates current population)

More than -5% | -5% to 0% | 0% to 5% | 5% to 10% | 10% and more

Source: US Census Bureau

Population Growth Downtown

Map 2: Center City Geography (Core + Extended = Greater Center City)



Center City has experienced the largest rate of growth of any portion of the city and now has the highest population density with 36 persons per acre.

21st century cities. To sustain and expand this growth will require a new approach to Center City's public schools.

Redefining Center City

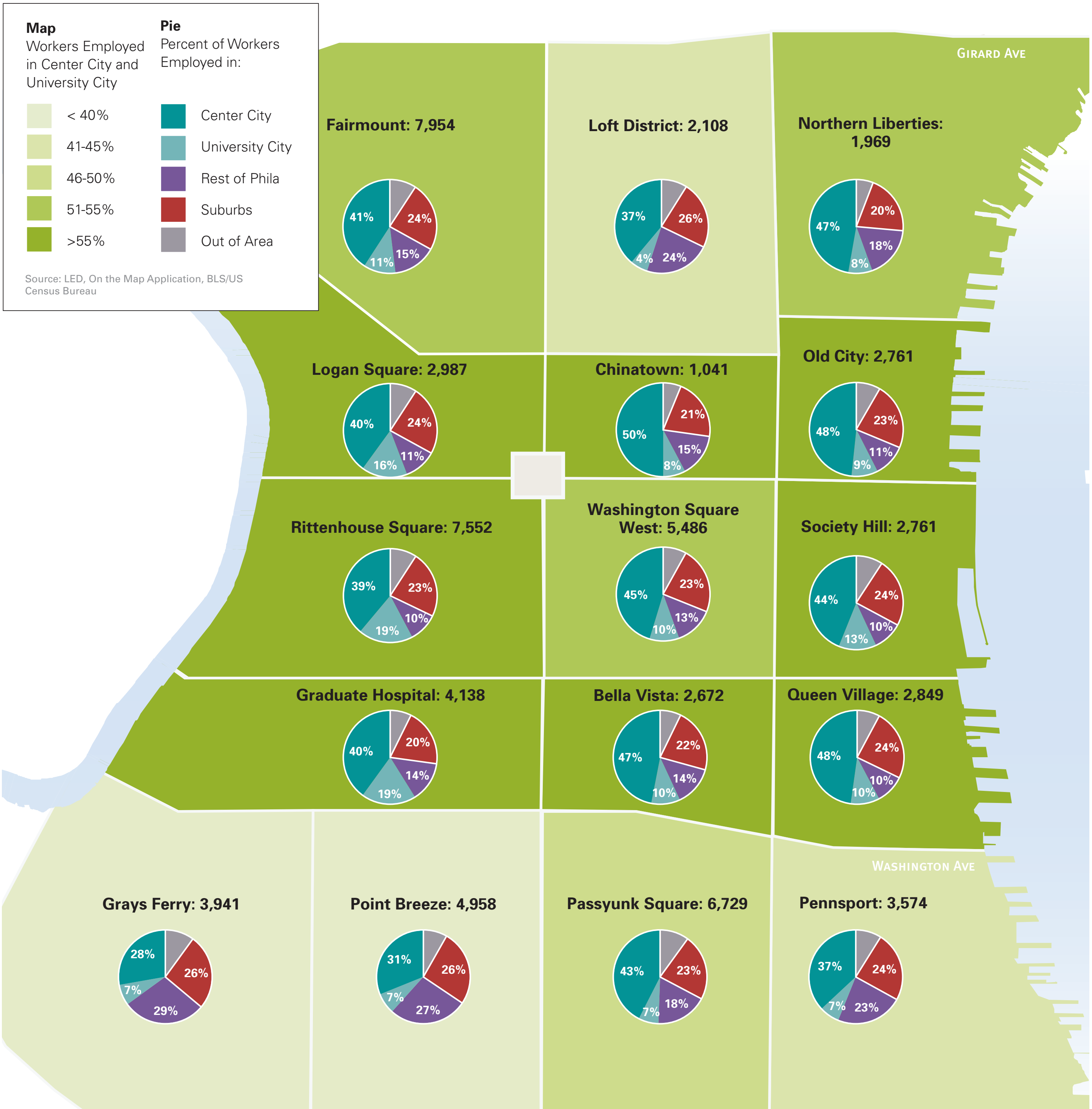
During the second half of the 20th century, residential Center City was traditionally defined as Vine Street to Pine Street, from the Delaware to the Schuylkill Rivers. This four ZIP code area is referred to in this report as the Center City Core (see map 2). The 2000 Census already had revealed the profound changes that were transforming adjacent neighborhoods. In 2002, the CCD's report, *Expanding the Boundaries of Center City,* noted how former working-class areas surrounding downtown were rapidly changing. Younger, more-educated and smaller households, oriented towards the post-industrial economy of Center City and University City, were filling vacant houses and land and converting empty warehouses in neighborhoods that once derived their livelihood from manufacturing and the waterfront. Initially, the population in these outer-ring neighborhoods continued to decline, even as the number of households and occupied units increased, because singles and couples were replacing larger and multi-generational families. But in the last 15 years, the Center City Core has diversified, adding new employment and a wide range of attractive leisure, shopping and dining opportunities.

It has also become too expensive for many first-time, home-buying households. Simultaneously, rising fuel costs are changing commuting patterns and residential preferences. As a result, nearly every neighborhood adjacent to the core, extending south to at least Tasker Street and north to Girard Avenue, has experienced both household and population growth (6.8%). These communities (defined as Extended Center City) have become more densely settled by younger residents, many of whom are choosing to stay as they have children. In chart 1 on page 4, the Bella Vista neighborhood typifies this transition most clearly, losing population and gaining households in the 1990s, but adding both in the last decade. In areas like Point Breeze and Grays Ferry, disinvestment has slowed significantly, but still outpaced reinvestment trends in 2010.

At the same time, the core neighborhoods of downtown experienced even more dramatic population growth (16.3% in the last decade and 26.6% since 1990). The 10-year tax abatement, passed in 1997, facilitated the conversion of vacant industrial and underutilized office space to residential use, and the 2000 expansion of the abatement prompted significant new construction. Blocks that had been devoid of people after 5 pm in the 1990s, now thrive with new residents enjoying restaurants and outdoor cafes.

In the 2002 report, Extended Center City was defined using three criteria: markedly smaller households (1.6 persons per household, as compared to 2.4 persons citywide), areas marketed by brokers and developers as "Center City" and neighborhoods that had experienced housing value appreciation far in excess of citywide trends. But a new data source released in 2010 jointly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the US Census Bureau, *Local Employment Dynamics: On the Map,* provides a far more precise indicator, making it possible to map

Map 3: Neighborhood Workers Employed in Center City and University City



Population Growth Downtown

Chart 1: Population by Neighborhood, 1990–2010

Neighborhood	Population 1990	Population 2000	Population 2010	Percent Change 1990-10	Percent Change 2000-10
Core					
Chinatown	2,458	2,488	5,266	114.2%	111.7%
Logan Square	5,633	6,883	8,436	49.8%	22.6%
Old City	2,073	2,650	3,478	67.8%	31.2%
Rittenhouse Square	19,158	19,173	20,769	8.4%	8.3%
Society Hill	5,715	5,808	6,215	8.7%	7.0%
Washington Square West	10,177	12,209	13,075	28.5%	7.1%
Core Total	**45,214**	**49,211**	**57,239**	**26.6%**	**16.3%**
Extended					
Bella Vista	5,784	4,577	5,581	-3.5%	21.9%
Fairmount	20,885	21,386	22,676	8.6%	6.0%
Graduate Hospital	10,702	10,624	11,613	8.5%	9.3%
Grays Ferry	14,791	14,156	13,129	-11.2%	-7.3%
Callowhill/Loft District	7,400	5,396	7,429	0.4%	37.7%
Northern Liberties	3,792	3,954	6,112	61.2%	54.6%
Passyunk Square	19,825	20,211	21,815	10.0%	7.9%
Pennsport	10,800	10,807	11,209	3.8%	3.7%
Point Breeze	19,097	17,843	16,618	-13.0%	-6.9%
Queen Village	4,436	4,396	4,839	9.1%	10.1%
Waterfront	400	644	1,643	310.8%	155.1%
Extended Total	**117,912**	**113,994**	**122,664**	**4.0%**	**7.6%**
Greater Center City Total	**163,126**	**163,205**	**179,903**	**10.3%**	**10.2%**

In the last decade, Chinatown has become significantly more economically diverse, adding 977 units of market rate housing, 80% of which are condominiums.

where people living in a specific geographic area journey to work. (See page 3.)

While citywide, an average of 20% of the working residents of every neighborhood are employed downtown, in both the core and extended neighborhoods of Center City, the average more than doubles to over 40%; another 11.2% work in University City. Thirty-eight percent of these residents walk to work, 21% rely on public transportation, while 4% rely on a bicycle for their commute.

Development Continues

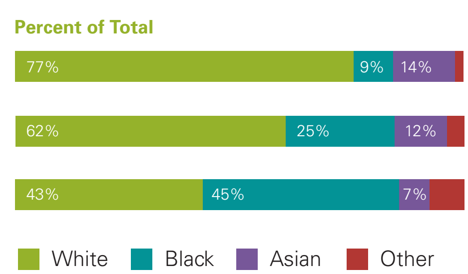
While the market has slowed significantly since its 2007 peak, last year there were still 25 single-family homes, seven condominium and seven apartment projects completed in Greater Center City. Rental demand remains strong and houses priced below $300,000 still sell relatively quickly. This year, downtown will add another 181 rental units, 52 condominium units and 217 single-family houses, so the trends detailed in chart 1 on this page continue.

Demographic Changes

Core neighborhoods like Washington Square West, Rittenhouse Square,

Chart 2: Racial Composition, 2010

Geography	Total	White	Black	Asian	Other
Core	57,239	44,321	4,951	8,287	1,199
8 ZIP	179,903	110,977	44,470	21,751	7,879
Philadelphia	1,526,006	655,021	686,870	106,720	125,264



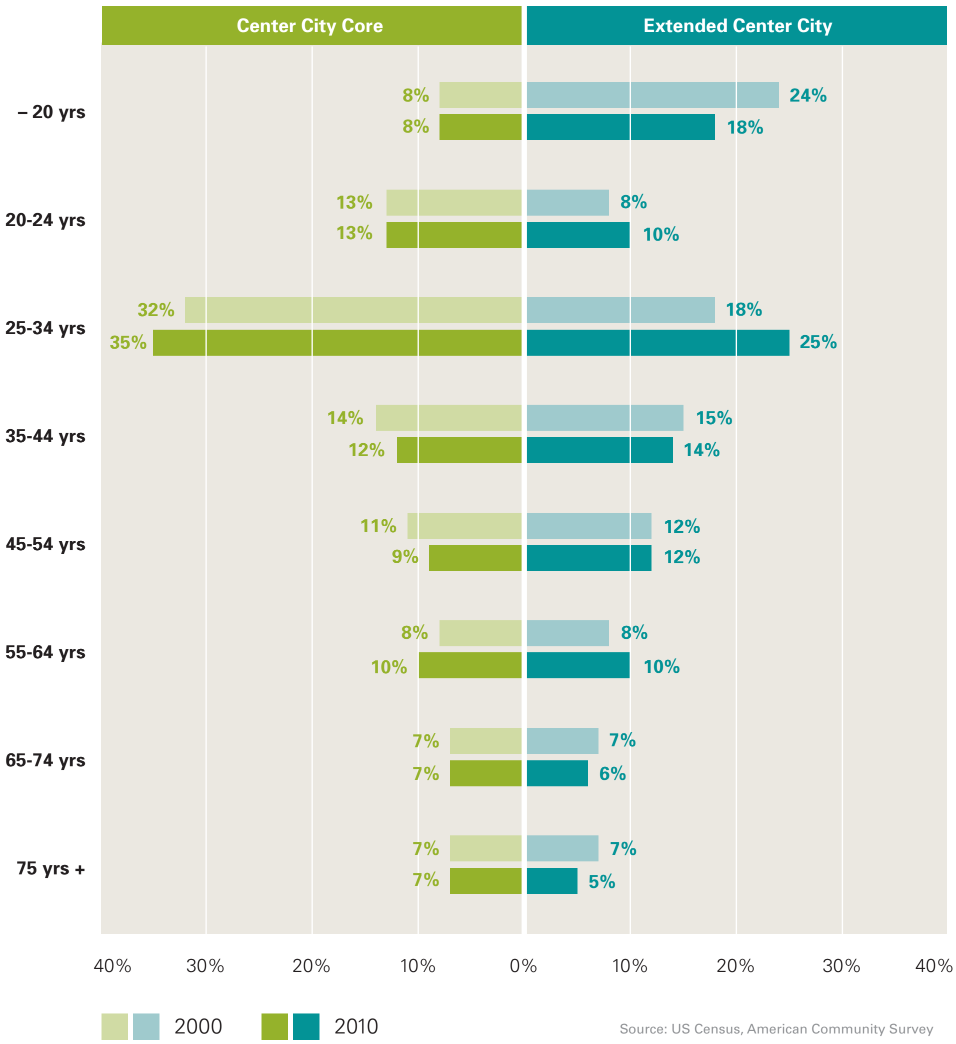
Due to the tabulation approach used by the US Census on the question of race, the sum of the individual groups slightly exceeds the total population because of the ability of respondents to identify multi-racially.

and Society Hill went through profound demographic changes several decades earlier and contain a broad mix of single- and multi-family, rental and ownership options. As a result, the 16.3% rate of population growth in the last decade occurred across all age groups, with 25-34 year olds increasing modestly from 32% to 35% of the population (more than double the citywide and nationwide average) and those over 55 increasing from 22% to 24%; but there were only minor changes in the ratio of other age cohorts (charts 3 and 4).

The more dramatic shift in the age composition has occurred in the four ZIP codes of Extended Center City (19123, 19130, 19146 and 19147) that roughly correspond to the Queen Village, Fairmount, Passyunk Square, Northern Liberties, and Graduate Hospital neighborhoods. In those areas, there was a significant drop in nearly all age cohorts, while the number of 25-34 year olds increased by 10,153, expanding from 18% to 25% of the population.

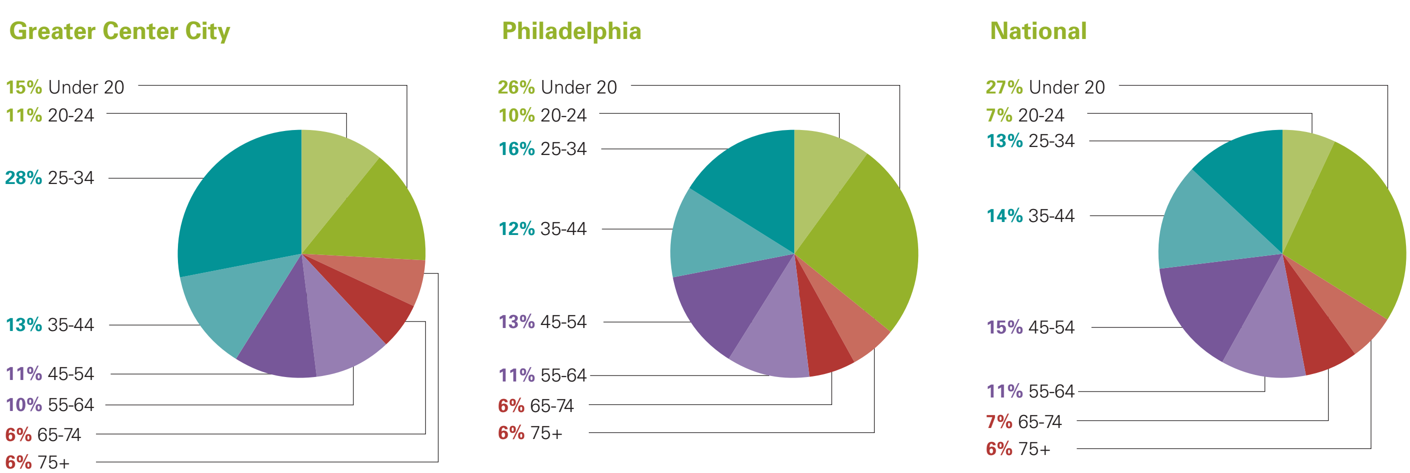
The transformation in Extended Center City neighborhoods is reflected in educational levels as well. Using the latest estimates from the US Census Bureau's American Comm-

Chart 3: Age Breakdown



Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Chart 4: Age Cohorts, 2010 Center City has more than twice the national average of residents ages 25-34.



Population Growth Downtown

Chart 5: Center City Residential Development by Number of Units and by Type

Source: CCD, 2011

unity Survey, the already large share of 25-34 year old residents with a bachelor's degree or more in the Center City Core increased slightly in the last decade to 86%. (Citywide, the increase was from 18% in 2000 to 22% in 2010.) It rose modestly for all other age groups as well in the core. But in Extended Center City, that percentage rose from 42% in 2000 to 58% in 2009, with similar rates of increase across all age groups.

Income statistics tell much the same story (charts 3 and 7). Between 2000 and 2010, median household income dramatically outpaced the rest of the city, rising 49% in the core and 55% in the expanded area, as compared to citywide growth of 25%. The reason that Extended Center City has a higher median household income ($61,082 compared to $59,345) is because the core includes a large number of apartments for college students, as well as a significant number of retirees reporting little salaried income. This significant increase in purchasing power is one of the main factors that accounts for the steady growth in retail establishments across all of Greater Center City.

The Challenge for the Next Decade: Retaining Families with Children

According to data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 20,553 children were born to Greater Center City parents between 2000 and 2010.[2] The proliferation of baby-strollers on sidewalks, in parks and playgrounds, as well as the dramatic growth in pre-school programs throughout Center City, are the most visible signs of this trend. The 2010 Census offers confirmation that these parents are staying. In chart 8, popula-

Chart 6: Educational Attainment (Percent with at least a BA)

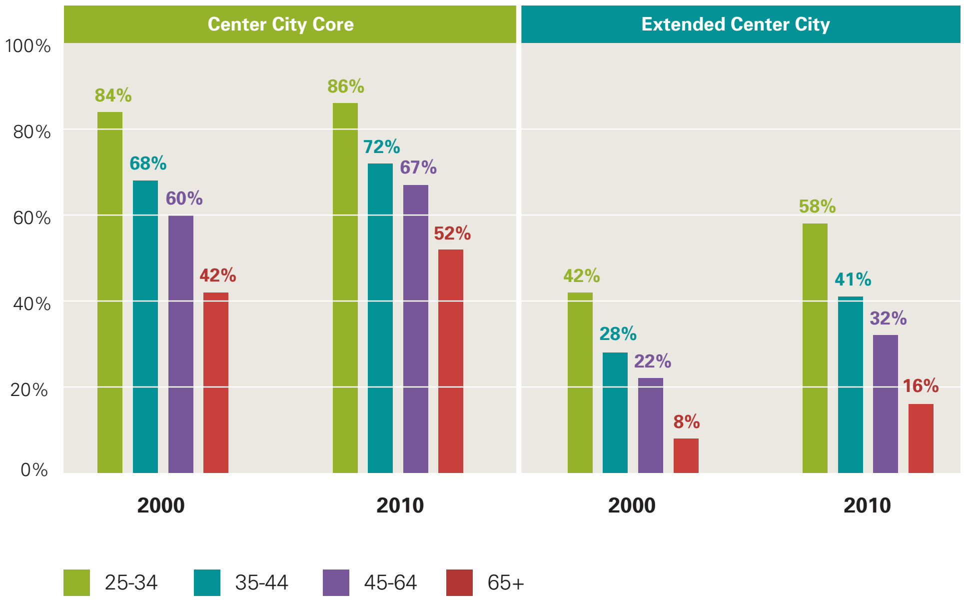
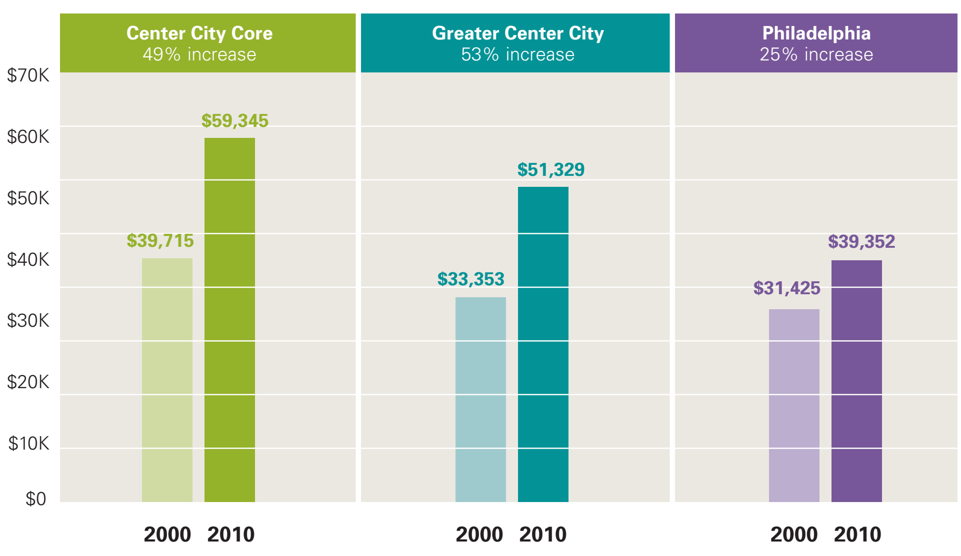


Chart 7: Median Household Income



tion data has been organized by the catchment areas of the Philadelphia School District and reveals similar patterns of transformation in both Core and Extended Center City.

In the three catchment areas that broadly correspond to Core Center City, there was a 15.7% increase in the number of school age children between 2000 and 2010, while at the same time there was a 33.6% decrease in the extended area. But a look to the immediate future reveals a coming demographic wave: a 66% increase in potential school age children in the core and a 32.1% increase in the extended area, *if these families decide to stay.*

The Role of Schools

Philadelphia competes in a global economy in which knowledge, not manual dexterity or strength, determines success. But if the passport to prosperity is a college degree, Philadelphia is woefully lagging. Only 17.9% of our adults have college degrees, compared to the national average of 25% among the hundred largest cities. Among our East Coast competitors, 27% of New York's adults, 36% of Boston's and 39% of Washington's have college degrees. So it shouldn't be surprising that Philadelphia experiences slower job growth and higher poverty than our East Coast peers.

To grow smarter, Philadelphia has two equally important tasks: (1) significantly increase the performance of children currently in public schools, motivating them to complete a high-school degree, and insuring they are prepared to succeed in college; (2) keep the impressive number of young, college-educated professionals already in Greater Center City as they have children by providing them with competitive and responsive schools.

Population Growth Downtown

Addressing the first challenge is a primary mission of the School Reform Commission in that 80% of the children in the District come from economically disadvantaged families. Despite recent controversies that surrounded the former superintendent, test scores have been rising and a new paradigm is emerging that is neutral on whether these schools should be publicly managed or run as charters. In current parlance, troubled schools can be turned around by charters or by publicly managed Promise Academies. The goal remains the same: increasing student performance.

But in recent years, the School District has under-emphasized an older paradigm: the neighborhood elementary school as a community anchor. This has particular importance to Center City. A great deal of attention has been given to the stabilizing effect that the Penn Alexander School has had in University City. But in the Meredith School in Queen Village, Philadelphia may have a more replicable model of success, because it has been achieved without the help of a major institution, like the University of Pennsylvania.

At Meredith active parents, dynamic leadership from the principal and committed teachers have combined to achieve success: 87% of the school age children who live in the catchment area attend this economically and racially integrated, neighborhood school, where students from all backgrounds have high-achievement scores. Queen Village also has one of the highest percentages of households with school-age children in Greater Center City. By contrast, only 35% of the school age children in the Bache-Martin catchment area in Fairmount attend their neighborhood school.[3] Here and in similar neighborhoods, parents face the difficult

Chart 8: School Age Children by Catchment (5-14 yrs old)

School	2000	2010	Change	Percent Change
Greenfield	578	613	35	6.10%
McCall	553	728	175	31.60%
Meredith	249	256	7	2.80%
Core Schools	**1,380**	**1,597**	**217**	**15.72%**
Arthur	596	224	-372	-62.40%
Bache-Martin	866	520	-346	-40.00%
Jackson	1284	1025	-259	-20.20%
Kearny	442	251	-191	-43.20%
Nebinger	436	382	-54	-12.40%
Spring Garden	525	526	1	0.20%
Stanton	739	280	-459	-62.10%
Waring	696	501	-195	-28.00%
Extended Schools	**5,584**	**3,709**	**-1,875**	**-33.58%**
Greater Center City Total	**6,964**	**5,306**	**-1,658**	**-23.80%**

Chart 9: Future School Age Children by Catchment (-5 yrs old)

School	2000	2010	Change	Percent Change
Greenfield	519	760	241	46.40%
McCall	427	814	387	90.60%
Meredith	154	257	103	66.90%
Core Schools	**1,100**	**1,831**	**731**	**66.45%**
Arthur	251	301	50	19.90%
Bache-Martin	457	567	110	24.10%
Jackson	602	1,000	398	66.10%
Kearny	216	227	11	5.10%
Nebinger	167	252	85	50.90%
Spring Garden	206	299	93	45.10%
Stanton	371	352	-19	-5.10%
Waring	346	458	112	32.40%
Extended Schools	**2,616**	**3,456**	**840**	**32.11%**
Greater Center City Total	**3,716**	**5,287**	**1,571**	**42.28%**

choice that confronts so many families: incur the cost of private school or depart for the suburbs.

Independent Schools

Well over 70% of children enrolled in the elementary grades at Philadelphia's three downtown independent schools – St. Peter's, Friends Select and the Philadelphia School – live in the neighborhoods of Greater Center City. In the last two decades, all three of these institutions have significantly expanded and have added pre-school programs. For children of families from higher-income professions, or who benefit from the support from grandparents, these schools provide a very high quality educational experience. Through generous scholarships, funded in part by parent and alumni contributions, many children from less-advantaged families also attend. But for many middle-class families, and for those in professions with more moderate compensation, tuition expenses, especially if they have more than one child, are beyond their reach.

Thinking Differently

Across Center City parent groups have formed to help improve the

Philadelphia School District Catchment Map

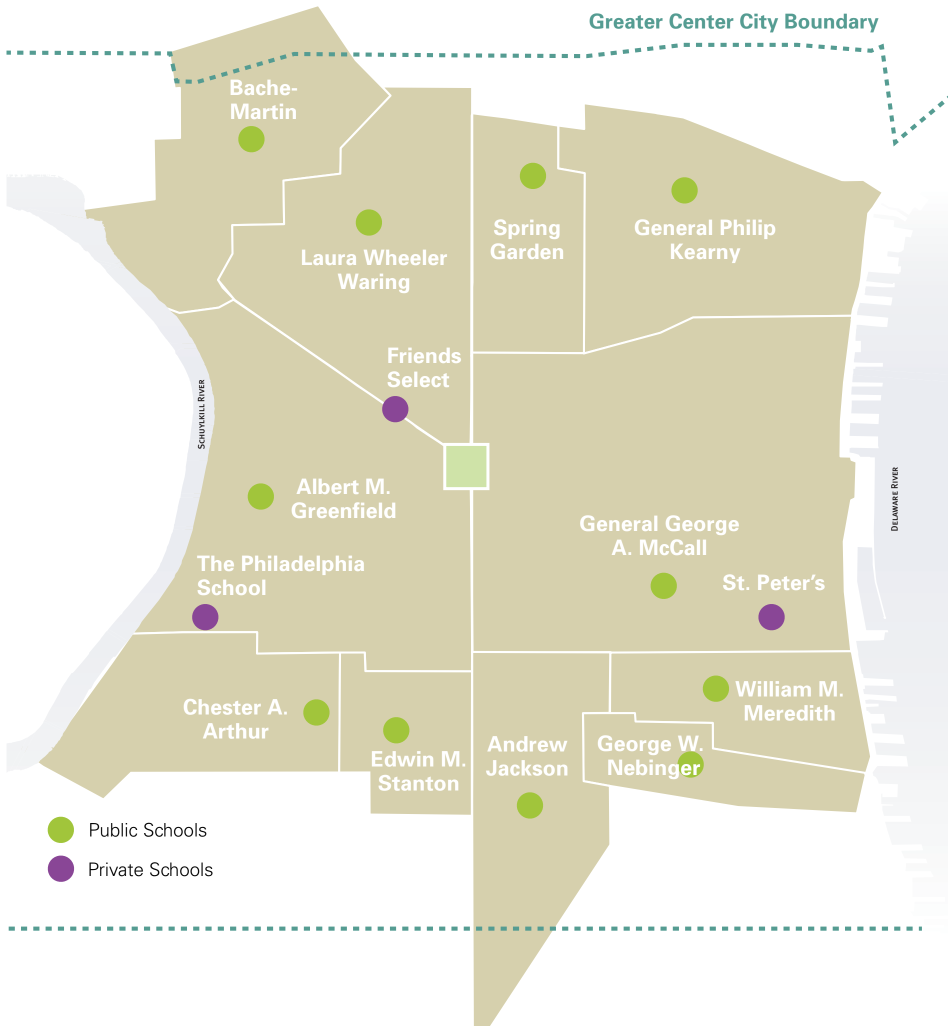


Chart 10: School Catchment Area and Enrollment

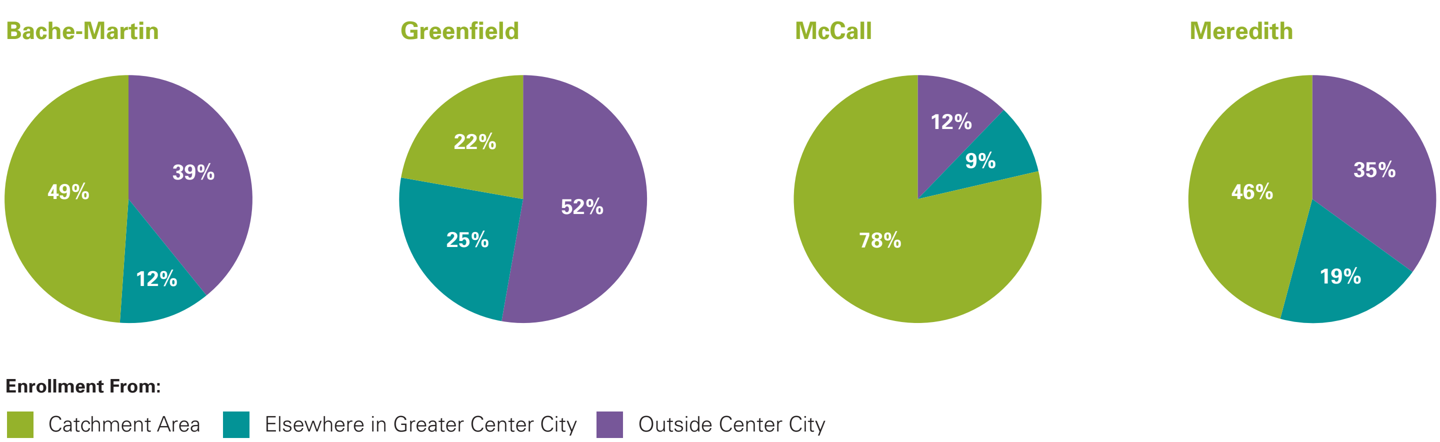


Chart 11: Ethnic Composition by School Catchment, 2010

Race	Greenfield	McCall	Meredith
African American	52.2%	18.1%	24.9%
White	30.9%	15.8%	60.6%
Asian	5.6%	59.9%	5.5%
Latino	4.2%	1.9%	4.7%
Other	7.2%	4.2%	4.3%

basics at their neighborhood public schools, bringing new energy and new resources to a beleaguered District. Even in the midst of recent budget cutbacks, their wish lists of items that cost real money are relatively modest. They seek to insure that these schools have appropriate security, school nurses and art teachers, diverse language programs, attractive and landscaped play-yards, and a basic, non-institutional "curb-appeal." But they also seek recognition of these schools as some of the most economically and racially integrated public schools in Philadelphia. They want principals who are responsive to parents, who are encouraged to take initiative and have the flexibility with some of their resources to tailor programs to the specific needs of their school. Most important, they would like a Vallas-era policy reinstated in which parents who apply from outside the catchment area are informed of the school's admission decision well before they are required by local private schools to make a non-refundable deposit for the fall.

In his recent book, *The Cosmopolitan Canopy,* sociologist Elijah Anderson highlights those handful of places in Center City, like the Reading Terminal Market and Rittenhouse Square, where people from very different economic and ethnic backgrounds come together and by observing each other, sharing common experiences and interacting, they acquire the knowledge and tolerance of difference that is essential to a diverse democracy. Several of Center City's schools already are such places for both parents and students. Unlike the mandated integration of the 1970s, many of Center City's new parents have chosen the city and public schools precisely because they want to raise their children in a diverse and cosmopolitan environment.

As a recent Pew Research Center report on the Millennial generation noted, the demographic that is coming of age in American cities today is not only far more diverse than their parents, Millenials are far more open to social and racial differences than earlier generations.[4]

The demographic opportunity thus exists today to underwrite the stability of the expanding ring of Center City neighborhoods, to retain for the city a growing share of well-educated workers and tax-payers and to attract into the public schools a growing share of middle-class families whose advocacy and energy can broaden the lobby for improved public education in Philadelphia. To guard against wholesale "gentrification" of downtown schools as the school age population of these neighborhoods grow, the School District can preserve integration by reserving at least 30% of each grade for students from outside the catchment area and outside Greater Center City. At the same time, through the implementation of charters and Promise Academies, the District can target resources to troubled neighborhood elementary schools in the catchment areas adjacent to Center City that parents are avoiding in the effort to find better schools downtown.[5]

Every neighborhood deserves an elementary school that provides a safe and secure setting, serves as an anchor institution for the community and provides a quality educational experience. This is not an either/or choice for the School District: it can serve families whose only choice is the public school, while simultaneously craft policies to attract families with the means for mobility, but who want to stay.

Conclusion

To sustain downtown population growth, many other factors matter: safe and clean streets, attractive parks and recreational facilities, competitive taxes and high-quality transportation options. But for the first time in more than a half-century, demographic, social and economic factors are tilted Philadelphia's way. With new leadership at the School District, there is not a moment to lose.

1 Philadelphia's 2010 population was 1,526,006; 42% African American, 37% White, 12% Latino or Hispanic, 6% Asian and 2% other.

2 Data provided by the Health Commissioner, City of Philadelphia.

3 Data on catchment area enrollment provided by the School District of Philadelphia.

4 Pew Research Center, MILLENNIALS A Portrait of Generation Next: Confident, Connected, Open to Change, February 2010

5 A mapping of enrollment patterns for many downtown elementary schools suggests that attendance from outside the catchment area is not randomly spread across the City, but rather comes from adjacent communities along public transit lines.