



COMING SOON:  
**Vintage 2023**  
**Population Estimates**

Boston's Population: 2025-2050 and Implications

*BPDA Research Division April 5, 2024*



**boston planning &  
development agency**

# Boston's Population: 2025-2050 and Implications

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- 1 The Importance of Population Projections
- 2 Boston's Population
- 3 Projection Methodology
- 4 2050 Projected Population
- 5 Revising the Population Projection and References

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**Population  
projections help  
inform decisions  
related to Boston's  
future**

**How many...**

**Housing units** will be needed to house Boston's population in the future?

**Schools** will be needed to educate Boston Public School's children?

**Senior centers** will Boston need to build?

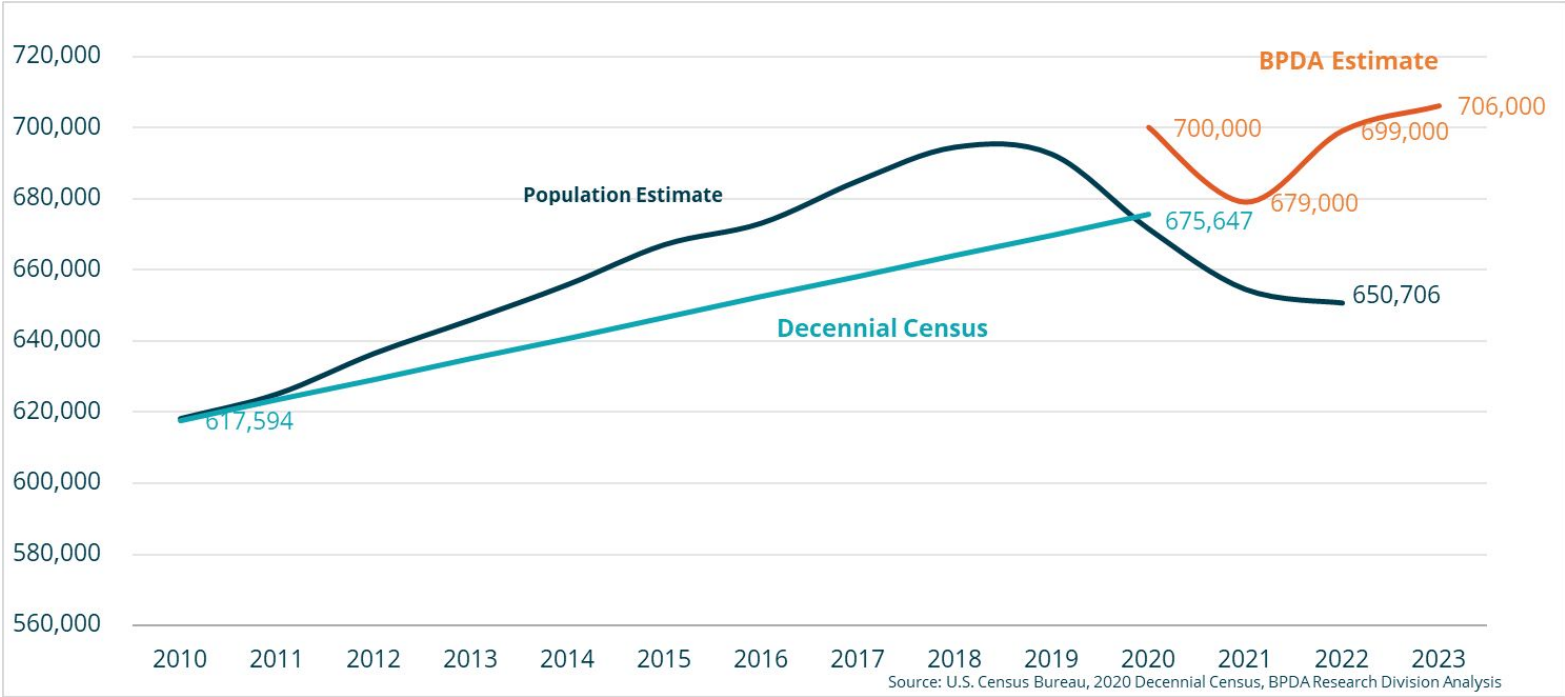
**Dorms** will Boston's colleges and universities need to build?

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# BPDA Research estimates Boston's current population to be ~700,000 - higher than Census estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, BPDA Research Division Analysis

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# Three factors drive population change:

Births

Deaths

Migration

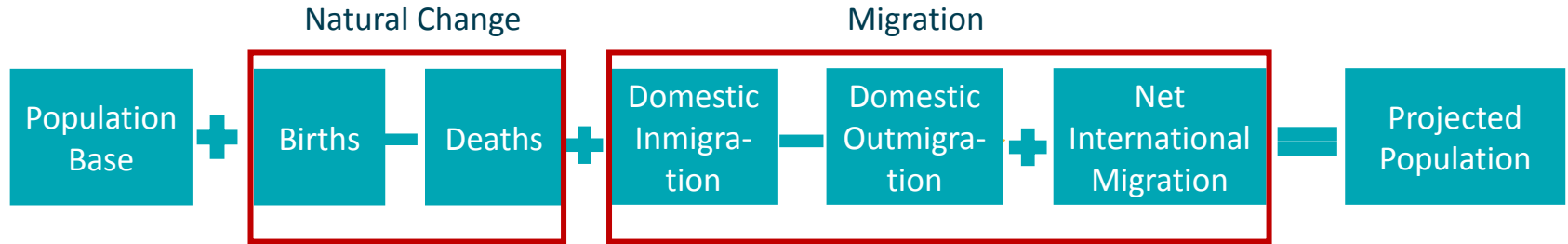
Natural Change

Migration



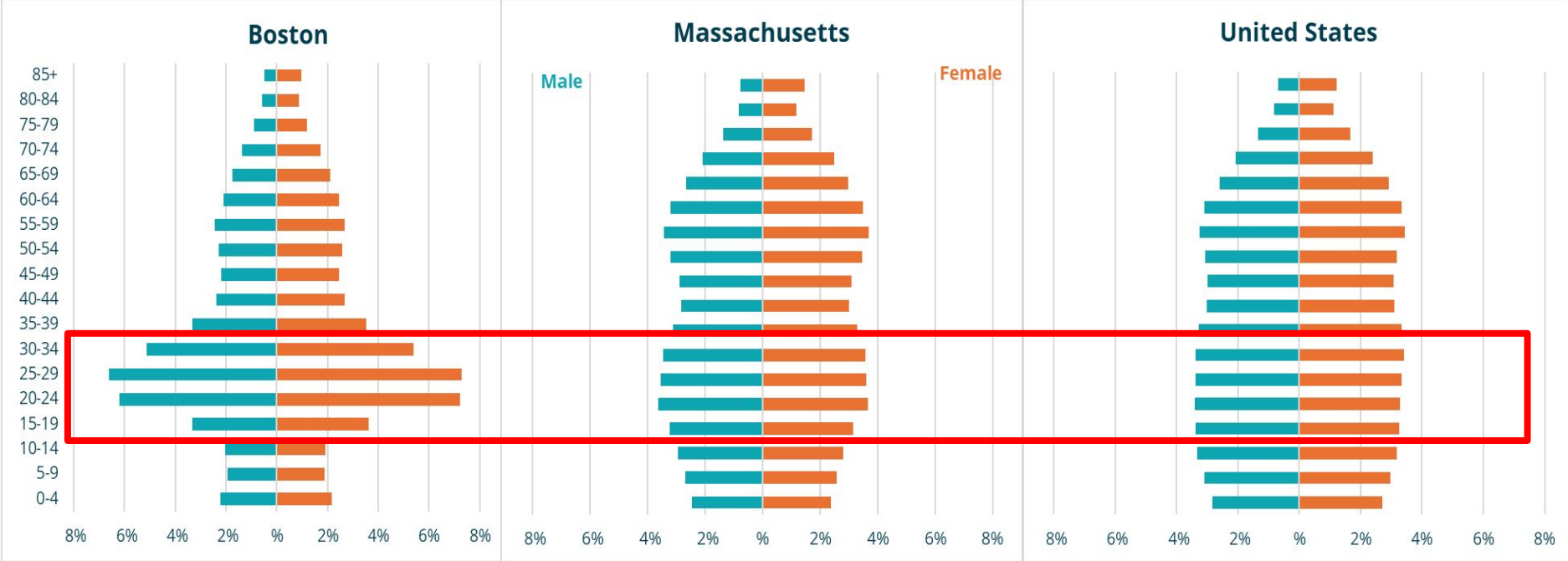


# POPULATION PROJECTION METHODOLOGY



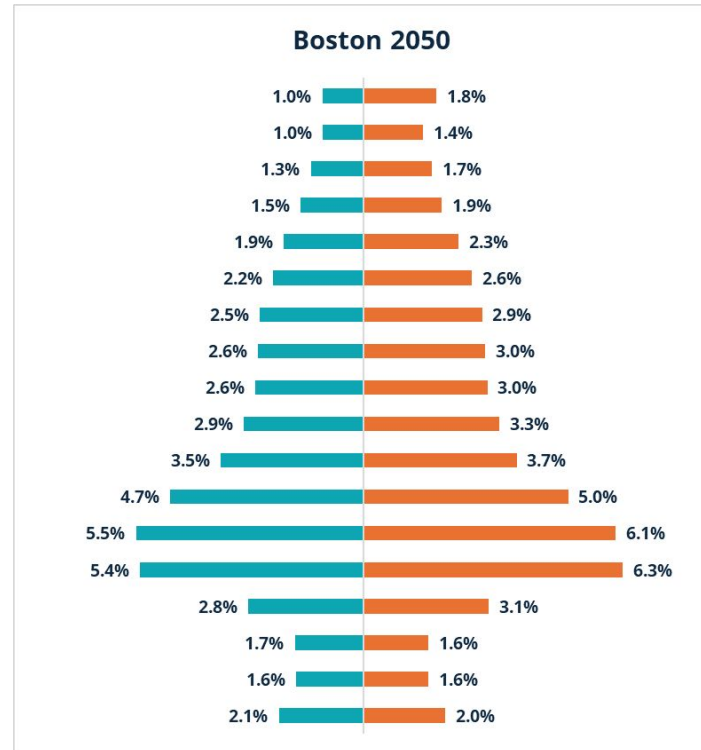
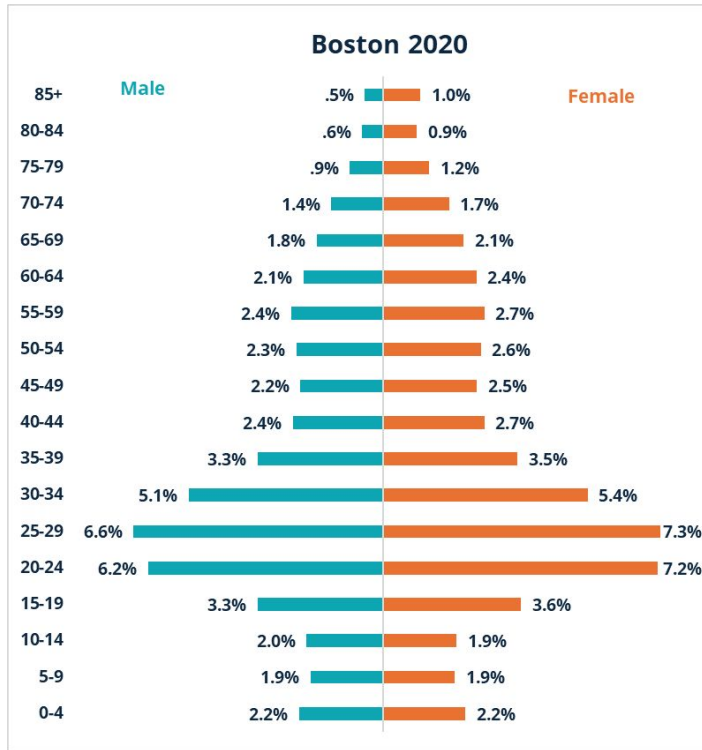
- **Age-specific fertility rates** from historical birth data 2019-2021 from Boston Public Health Commission and BPDA revised 2020 Census population.
- **Age-and gender-specific survival rates** from historical death data 2010-2021 from Boston Public Health Commission and BPDA revised 2020 Census and ACS population data.
- **Age- and gender-specific migration rates** from ACS 2010-2019 migration and population data optimized to 2020 and 2025 BPDA population estimates and then 2010-2019 and 2020-2025 rates are averaged.
- Apply these rates to the population base (2010 Decennial Census) to project Boston's population through 2050

# Boston's population has a different age structure than the rest of the country due to increased international and domestic migration starting at age 18



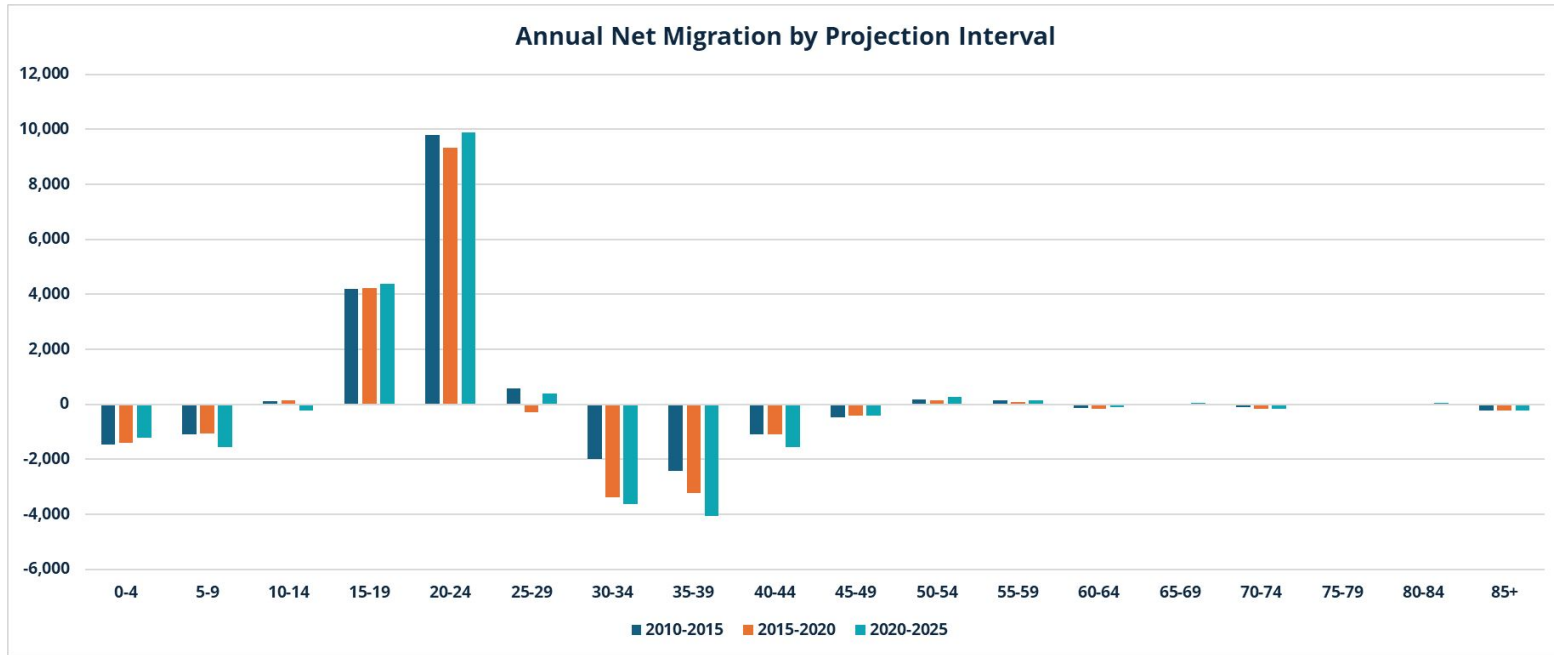
Source: 2020 Census, Boston BPDA adjusted, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Boston's population is projected to age, but retain its distinctive age structure



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census Adjusted, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis

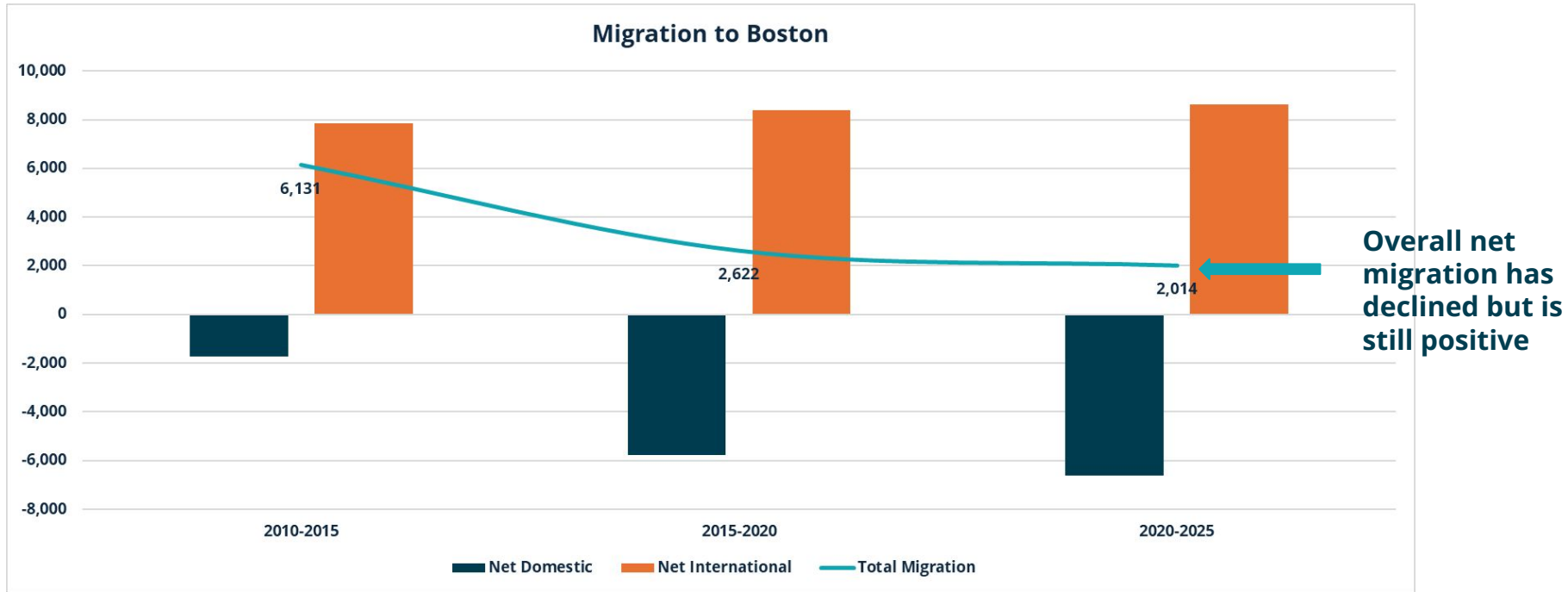
# Boston net migration is positive only among young adults. Children under 10 and adults 30-44 see significant out-migration



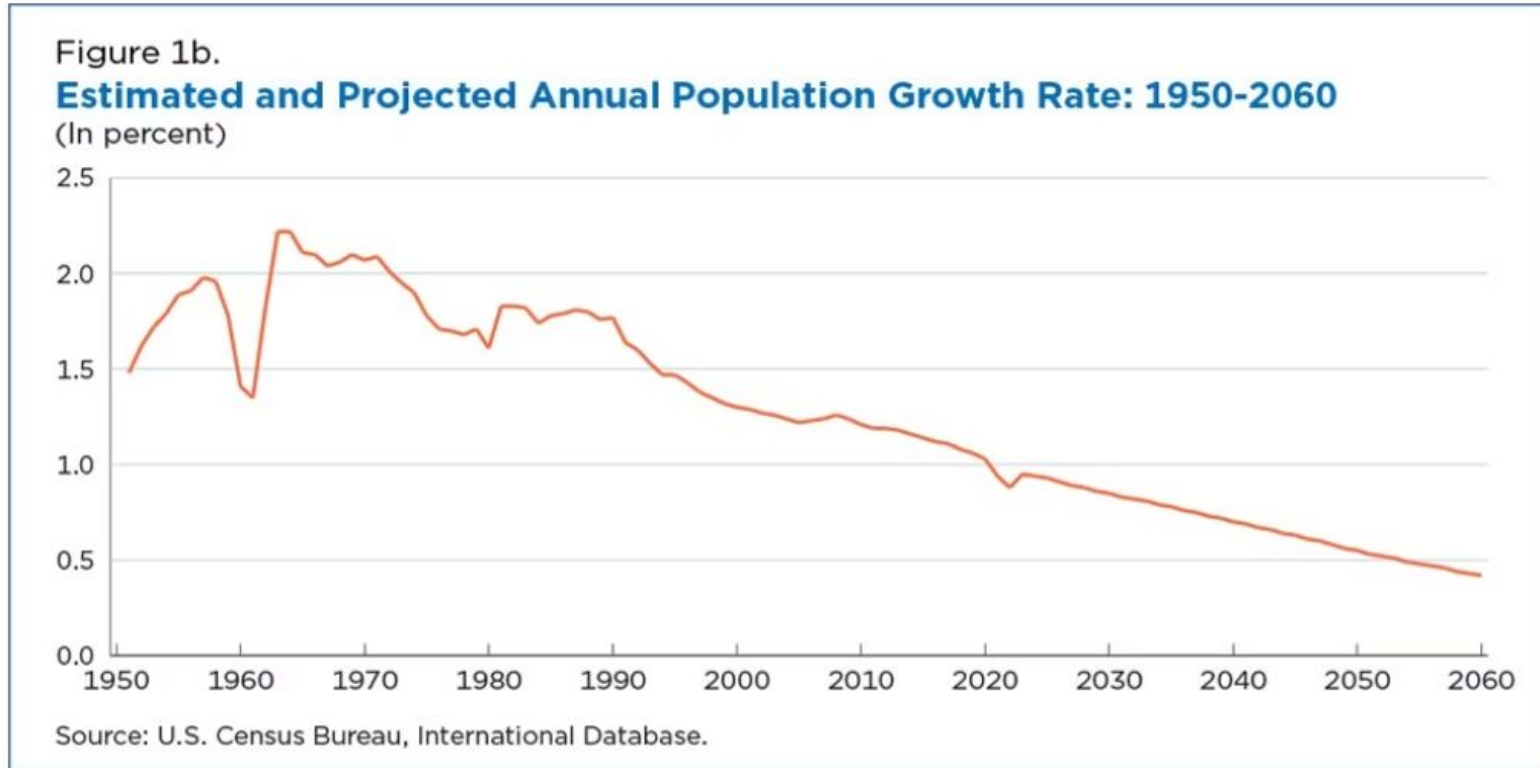
Source: BPDA Research Population Projection, *BPDA Research Division Analysis*

# Boston's population growth depends on immigration:

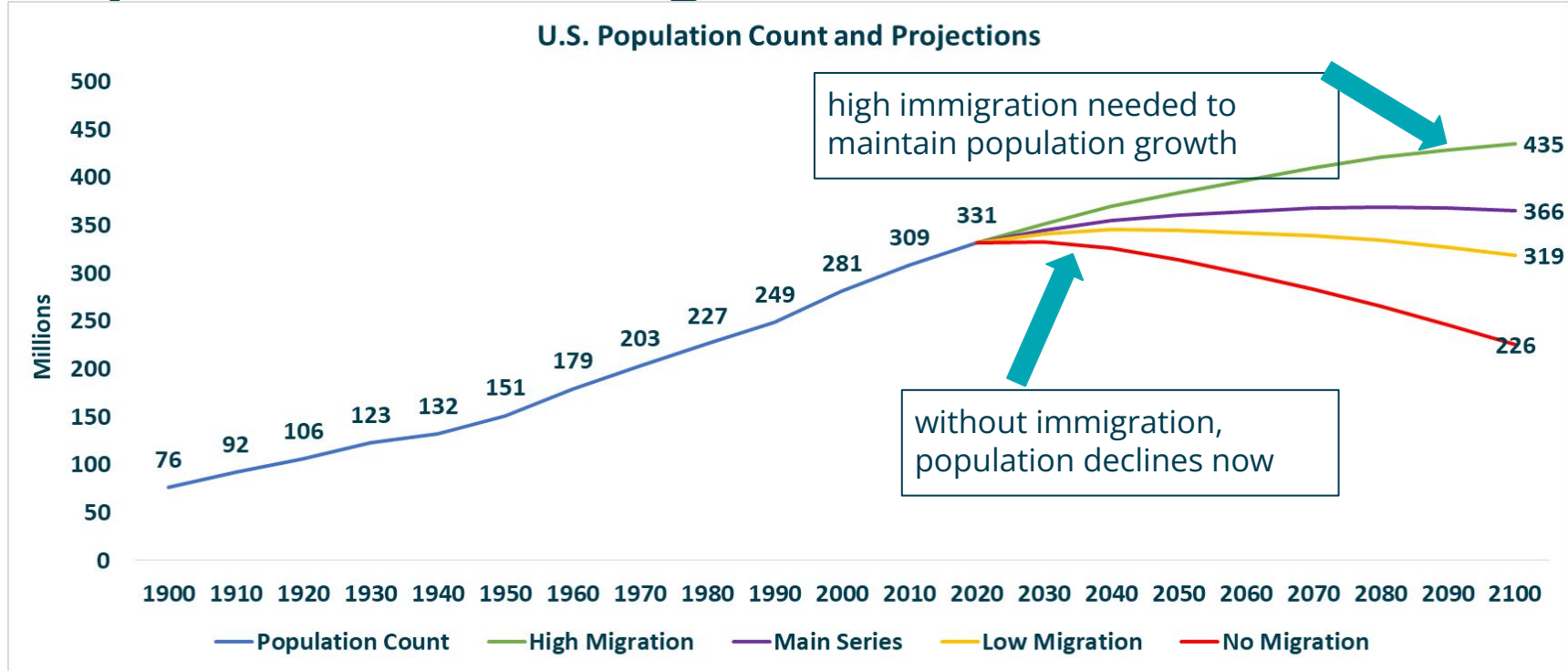
Net international migration remains positive, but net domestic migration has become increasingly negative over the past decade



# Slowing global population growth will impact international migration to Boston

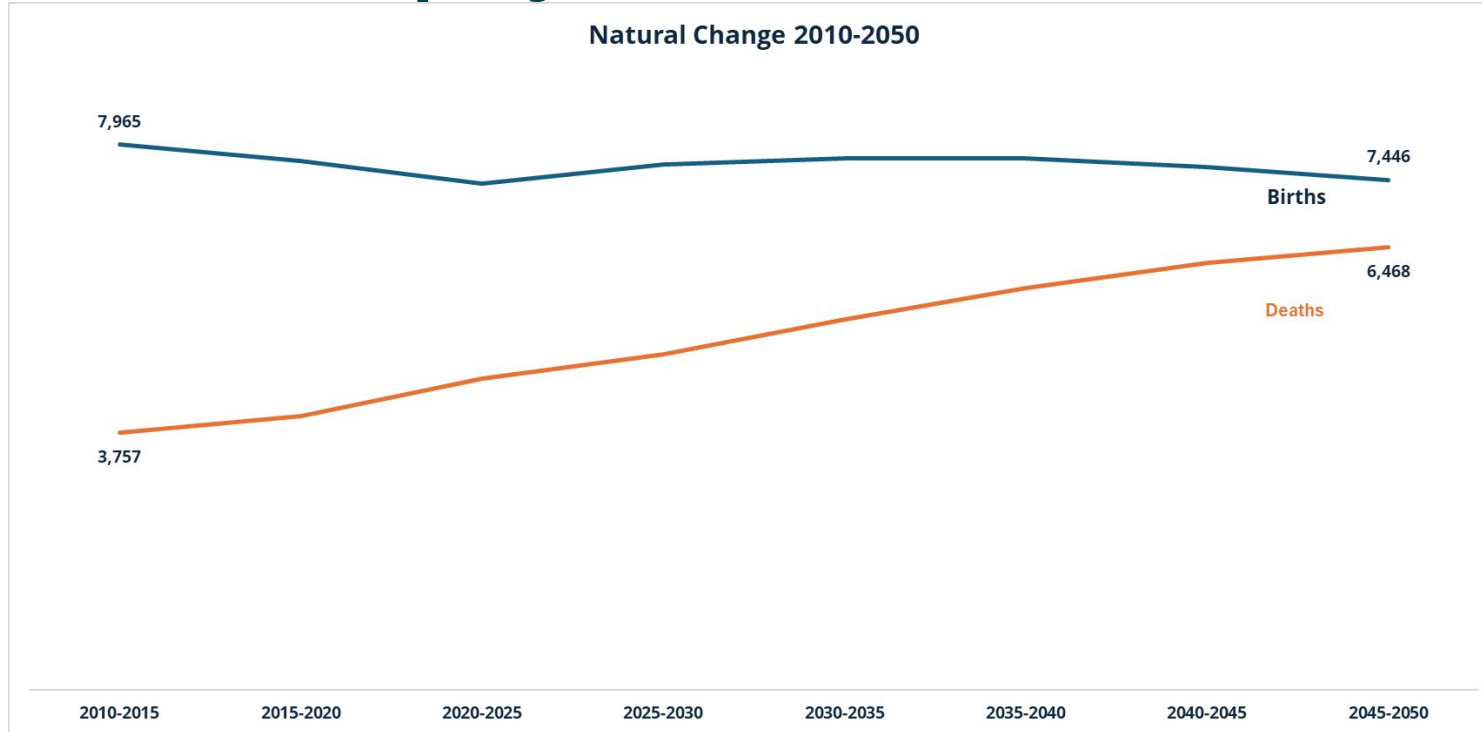


# Slowing national population growth will impact domestic migration to Boston



Source: U.S. Census Bureau & BPDA Research Division

# Boston's births are projected to decline while deaths are projected to increase



Source: BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis

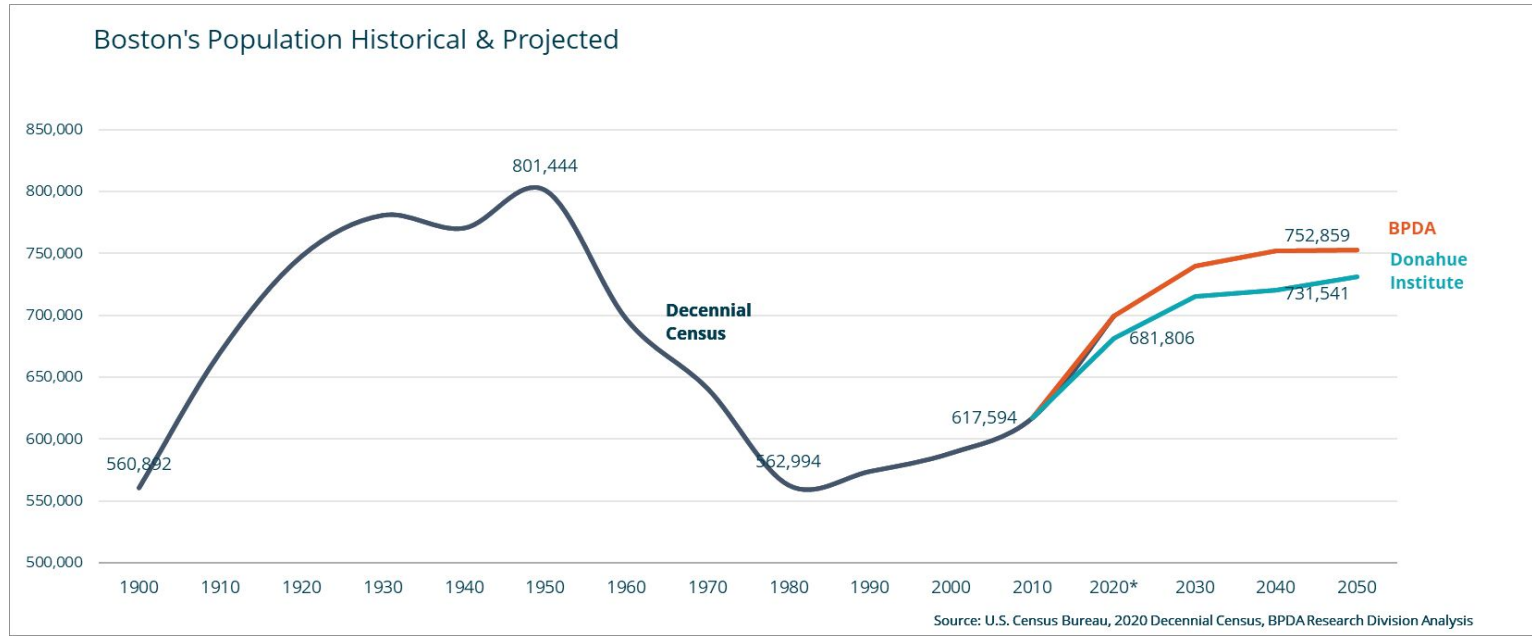


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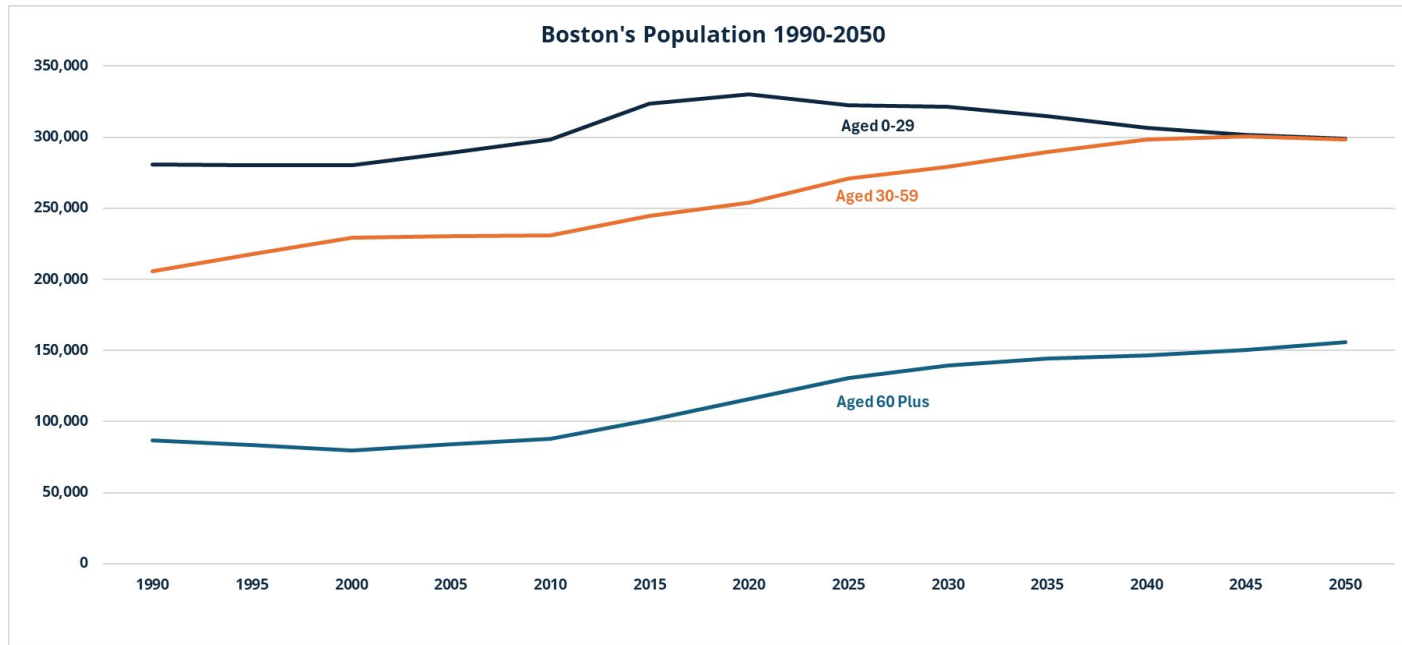
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# Boston's population growth is projected to **slow**, and **population may decline** if international and domestic migration fall



# Boston's middle-aged population ages 30-to-59 will grow to equal the under 30 population

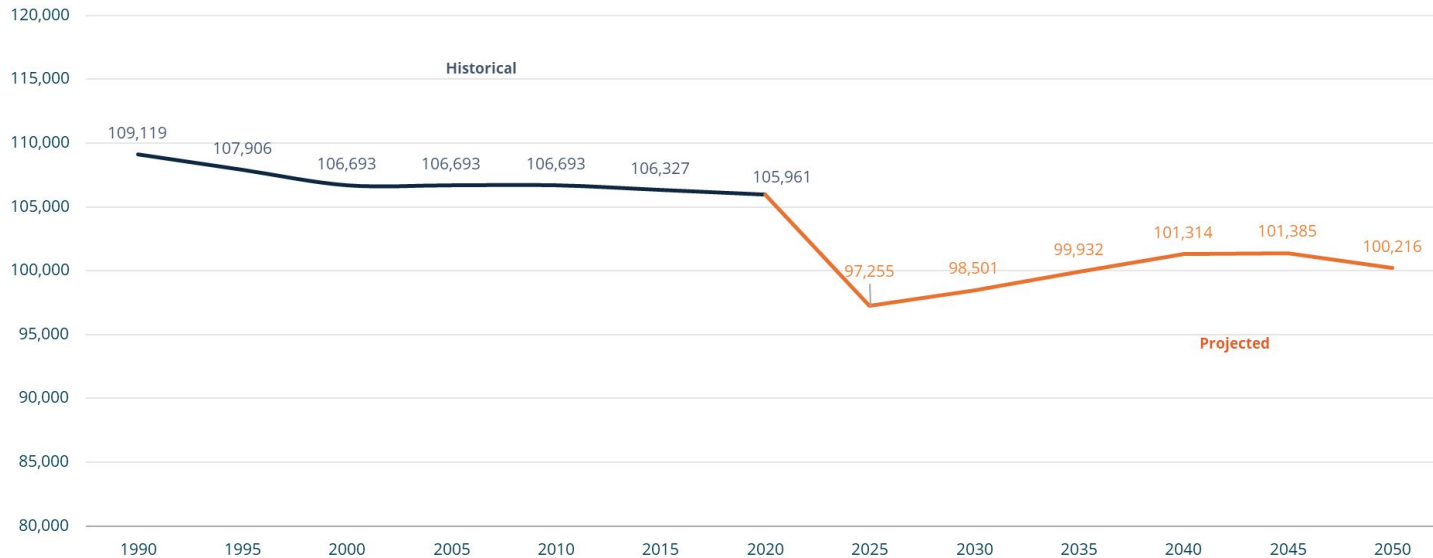


Source: 1990-2020 Decennial Census & 2025-2050 BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Population of children will **decline** due to low birth rates and significant outmigration

## Boston Population Aged Under 18

Historical & Projected



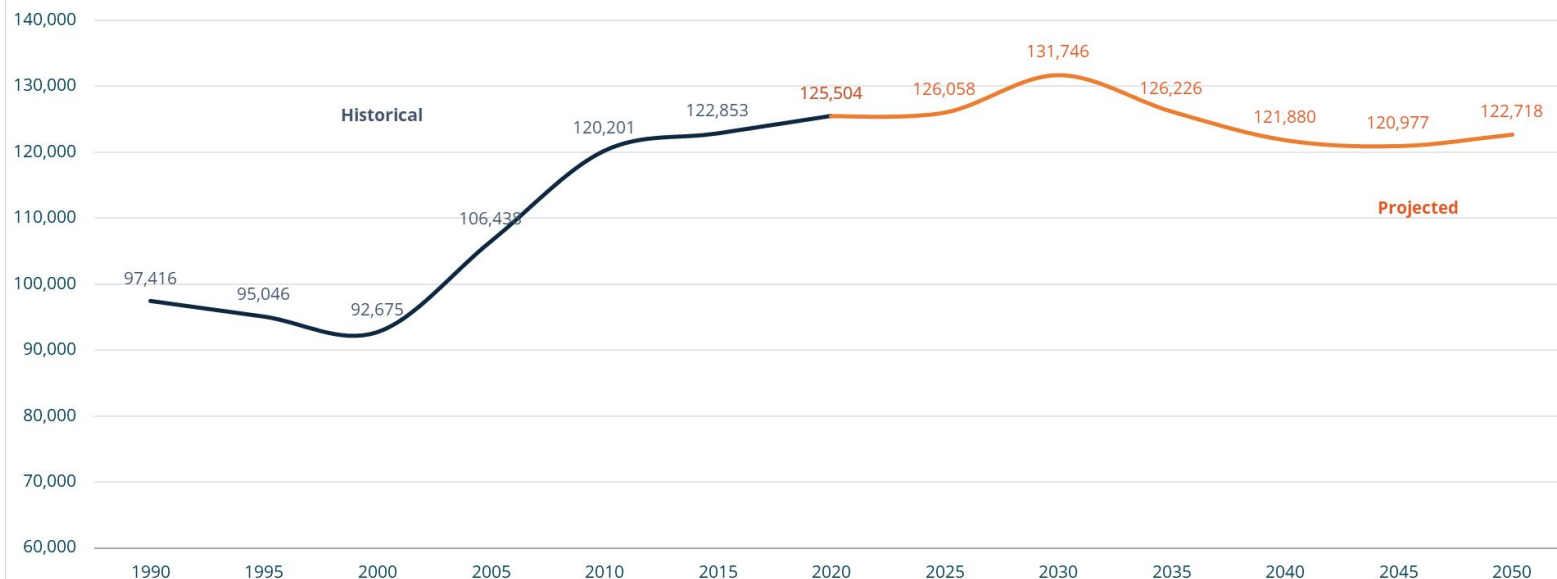
Source: Decennial Census & BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Population Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Boston's young adults will peak in 2030

## Boston Population Aged 18-24

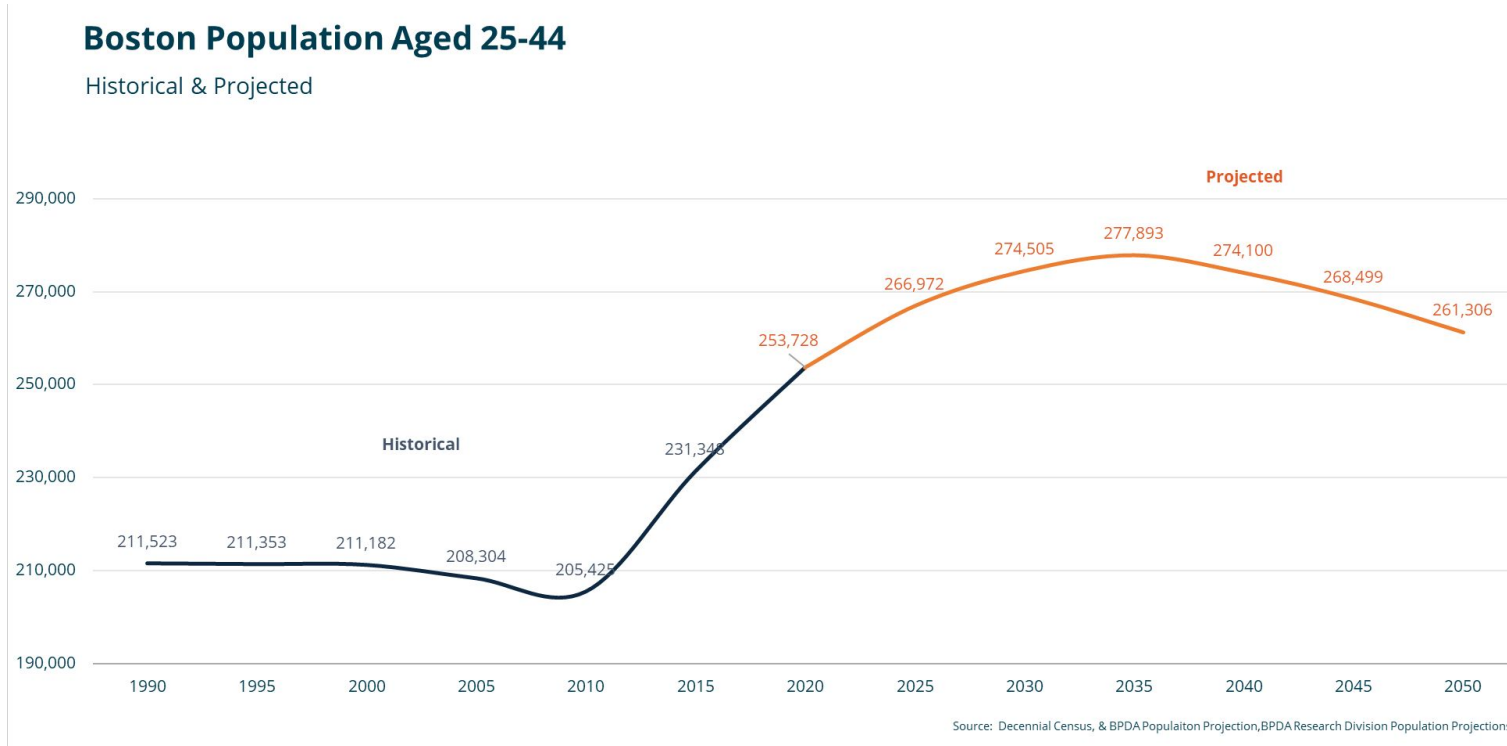
Historical & Projected



Source: Decennial Census & BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Population Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division

# Boston's younger working age population will peak in 2035

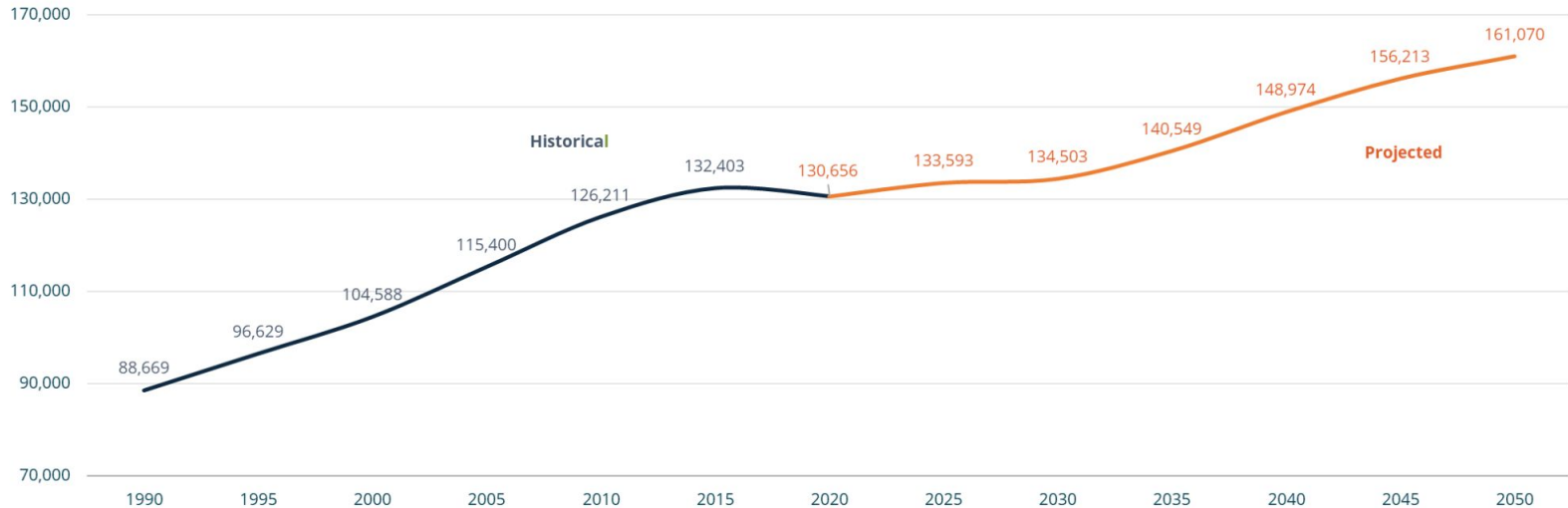


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Boston's older working age population continues to grow during this period

## Boston Population Aged 45-64

Historical & Projected



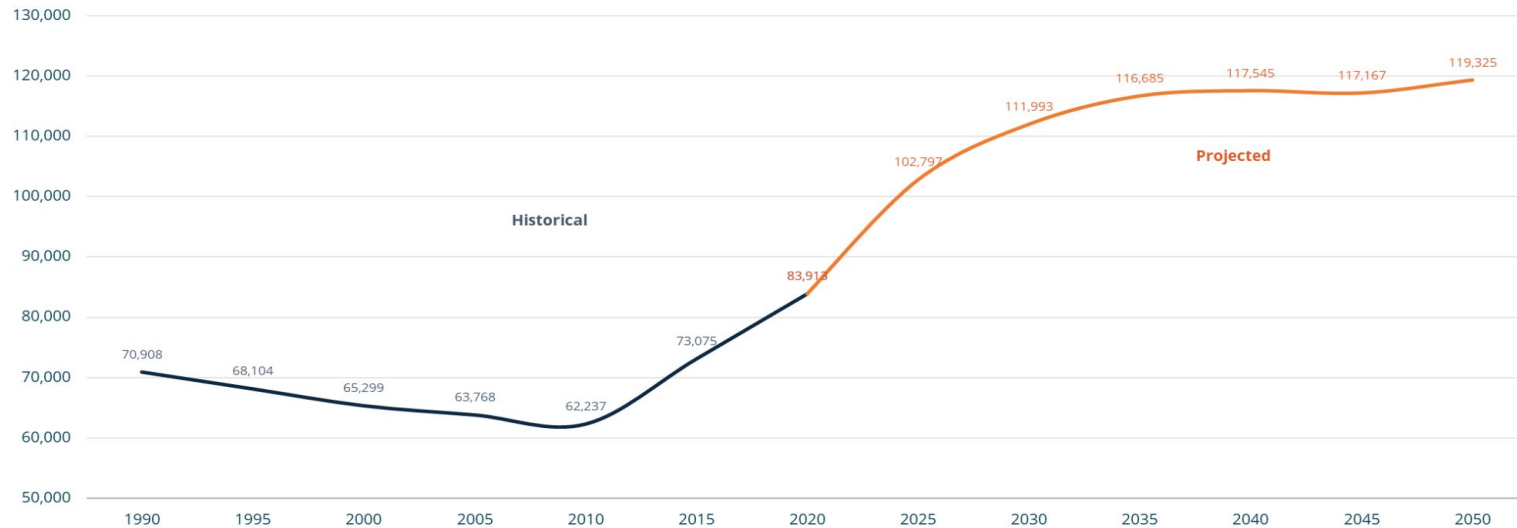
Source: Decennial Census, & BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Population Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Boston's older population **increases** rapidly until 2035 and then levels off as all Boomers enter this age group

## Boston Population Aged 65 & Older

Historical and Projected



Source: Decennial Census, & BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Population Projections

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis



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# Projections involve two kinds of **judgements**:

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- Learning from the past (while monitoring the contemporary situation). This kind of judgement is data intensive based on documentable current conditions and historic relationships
- Estimating what is different in the future is a matter of looking at the reactions to an interaction among existing trends (not guess)

*As conditions change, we will update our estimates and change future population projections*

# Today's best understanding of Boston's population:

The data used in this population projection can be updated and revised  
population projections will be produced when new data are available

## *Updates*

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- *Yearly BPHC birth and death data*
- *Yearly school-aged population from BPS*
- *Quarterly housing data from Mayor's Office of Housing and BPDA*
- *2028 U.S. population projections*

*Updated data  
will change  
future  
population  
projections*

# References Demography

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**General Demographic Trends** - Ezra Klein Podcast – Interview with Jennifer D. Sciubba, author of *8 Billion and Counting: How Sex, Death and Migration Shape Our World*. This podcast provides an overview of demographic trends and examines some implications of them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW63FmvX5Qo&list=PLdMrbgYfVI-szepgVpArP0obwYgbKdfvx&index=2>

**Declining Births and the Impact on the College “Enrollment Cliff”** - The enrollment cliff is a demographic trend that will disrupt higher education starting in 2026. The number of births peaked in 2007 and each year has continued to decline. Colleges and universities are planning for a shrinking number of high school graduates. This Vox article shows how a similar demographic trend was avoided a couple of generations earlier because of rising college enrollment (demography is not destiny), and how this present trend can affect regions of the country differently (policies seldom effect all equally).

<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/23428166/college-enrollment-population-education-crash>

**Japan and Declining Population** - New York Times has covered the declining population in Japan for over a decade. These stories give some indication of the effects that declining population can have on a country. Any search of the paper with Japan and declining population results in a variety of articles. Here is one of the impacts on housing.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/24/world/a-sprawl-of-abandoned-homes-in-tokyo-suburbs.html>

# Migration, Public Health and Economic Development

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**Public Health and Economic Development and Population Growth** - Hans Roslin – Short video on the relationship between public health and economic development on human health over the last 200 years, with a hint of the importance of inequality within countries, Hans Rosling's 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes - The Joy of Stats - BBC Four

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbkSRLYSojo>

**An Economic Assessment of International Migration** - Research paper by Don DeVoretz providing an economic assessment of immigration policies of different countries.

<https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/1217>

**Overview of International Migration in the United States** – Freakonomics recently produced a series of podcasts on international migration that debates the economic motivations of immigration and examines why the United States has changed in its orientation towards international migration since 1980.

<https://freakonomics.com/podcast-tag/the-true-story-of-americas-supremely-messed-up-immigration-system/>