



## Staten Island's growth rate slows; reasons are unclear

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Staten Island's population nudged up to 470,467 in 2011, an increase of 1,737 from the 2010 U.S. Census, according to numbers released yesterday.

It turns out to be a growth rate of 0.37 percent, meaning we're the slowest-growing borough, and trailing the state's growth rate of 0.45 percent.

The figures -- estimates based on analysis of birth, death and migration rates -- represent a stunning turnabout for the borough: The Island's population grew by 5.6 percent between 2000 and 2010, and the borough notched the honor of the fastest-growing county in New York State between 1990 and 2000, when the number of people living here increased by a blistering 17 percent.

"It doesn't surprise me that we've slowed down, given the economic crisis," said Jonathan Peters, a professor of finance on College of Staten Island and Census expert. "But I'm not convinced this is permanent; this may be transitory. You may see some more growth in the next three to five years."

Figures released yesterday showed a significant number of Islanders moved out of the borough during the 15-month period from April 2010 to July 2011 -- with 1,637 leaving for other parts of the country.

"It's getting a little rougher to be on Staten Island economically," said Peters, "There is no transportation here, so if you can't afford a car, you lose a lot of mobility, and it's better in other parts of the city. You're not being protected against the cost of fuels, tolls, housing."

According to the figures, the slower growth here is also attributable, in part to the aging population. There were 4,391 deaths here, and 7,067 births.

By comparison, in a younger borough like Brooklyn, there were about two births for every death.



Staten Island Advance File Photo

Early Sunday crowd at the Richmond County Fair. Census data show that Staten Island's population has increased; however, the rate of growth signals an overall downturn -- a dramatic departure from the two previous decades.

The New York City population is estimated to be 8,244,910 -- a jump of 0.85 percent over the decennial census. **City officials last week lost a battle** with the Census to redo its 2010 count for the city. The director of the Department of City Planning's population division, Joseph Salvo, said the U.S. Census Bureau is on track with its latest population estimates.

"The results ... confirm our contention that the city is growing, notably in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, portions of which were the subject of our challenge to the 2010 Census," he said. "Increases were more modest in the Bronx and Staten Island, the two boroughs with the highest reported levels of growth last decade and places where we think the Census Bureau did a good job enumerating people."

Among the 50 fastest-growing metropolitan areas over the last decade, only 24 of them were also among the 50 fastest-growing since the 2010 Census.

"Our nation is constantly changing, and these estimates provide us with our first measure of how much substate areas have grown or declined in total population since Census Day, April 1, 2010," Census Bureau Director Robert Groves said. "We're already seeing different patterns of population growth than we saw in the last decade."

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