

Submitted by Councilwoman Myers #21-00786
Gentrification

Sunday, August 29, 2021

2020 CENSUS

Pensacola grew 4.6% in decade

But 16% of Black residents moved outside city limits

Jim Little Pensacola News Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK ? FLORIDA

Black residents in Pensacola moved out of the city and into other parts of the county during the past decade, numbers from the 2020 U.S. Census show.

While the population of the city of Pensacola grew by 4.6% in the past 10 years from 51,923 to 54,312, the number of Black residents calling the city home fell by 16.2% or 2,361 people.

Many of the census designated places that surround the city limits of Pensacola in Escambia County saw a corresponding rise in the number of Black residents.

Myrtle Grove saw an increase of 15.4% in Black residents from 2,925 to 3,376. Bellview saw a 34.6% increase in Black residents

See **CENSUS**, Page 2A



New homes and vacant lots for sale dot the downtown Pensacola landscape on Aug. 26.

TONY GIBERSON/TGIBERSON@PNJ.COM

The census tract that covers central downtown shows that the population there increased by 43.9% from 1,603 to 2,306 ? the fastest growing area in the city. The number of Black residents there fell by 28.3% from 722 to 518, while the number of white residents increased by 101.3% from 770 to 1,550.

Census

Continued from Page 1A

from 4,280 to 5,762. Ferry Pass saw an increase in Black residents of 15.3% from 4,434 to 4,904.

The Beulah area, officially designated by the Census Bureau as Census Tract 36.03 in Escambia County, saw a 137.3% increase in Black residents from 381 to 904. The Beulah area was the fastest-growing census tract in Escambia County, seeing an overall growth rate of 63.4% and adding 4,217 new residents for a population of 10,870.

Santa Rosa County too saw a large increase in its Black population. Overall, the county grew by 24.2% and the number of Black residents increased by 34.5% from 8,205 to 11,035. Black residents now make up 5.9% of Santa Rosa County's population.

While the 2020 census saw a dramatic increase in the number of people identifying themselves as two or more races, including in Pensacola where the number increased by 220.3% to 3,827 residents, the decrease in Black residents and the corresponding increase in the surrounding county areas show that Black residents have left the city during the past decade.

Brian Wyer, president and CEO of the Gulf Coast Minority Chamber of Commerce, said that anecdotally he's seen Black families move out of the city. "In the Belmont-DeVilliers area, I've definitely seen a lot of houses that would've been here for a long time that are being sold and townhouses being built up," Wyer said. "A lot of those houses were Black residents that used to be here and now many of them have moved out of the area."

Making matters worse, Wyer said, Black-owned businesses have struggled to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many business owners to close and often move out of the city.

"It has hit the community really hard, and it has had a generational effect," Wyer said.

Pensacola City Councilwoman Teniade Broughton said the biggest issue she's heard from her constituents is that many consider moving out of the city for better schools and because of the lack of affordable housing. The data from the Census shows that those issues are having an impact on the city, Broughton said.

"As long as race and class are tied, we are going to see African Americans pushed out," Broughton said. "Our displacement isn't new to our history.

There's a long history associated with African American displacement in Pensacola. This shows that we haven't addressed it."

Councilwoman Sherri Myers has long advocated for the city to fund a study of how the city's population, especially in its Urban Core, is changing. The census tract that covers central downtown shows that the population there increased by 43.9% from 1,603 to 2,306 ? the fastest growing area in the city.

The number of Black residents there fell by 28.3% from 722 to 518, while the number of white residents increased by 101.3% from 770 to 1,550.

Just to the west, the Tanyard and Sanders Beach area saw a growth rate of 3%, but a decrease in Black residents of 27.3% from 1,060 to 771. The number of white residents grew by 22.1% from 1,286 to 1,570.

Myers said the study should look at the reasons why some people are leaving their communities and what government policies need to change to help solve the problem.

"What does the government need to do to step in and work with developers and property owners to stabilize low-income communities," Myers said "? So that people can stay in their neighborhoods rather than leaving."

Jim Little can be reached at jwlittle@pnj.com and 850-208-9827.



Older single-family homes feel the pinch as newly constructed homes and vacant lots for sale dot the landscape in traditionally minority neighborhoods of downtown Pensacola. TONY TGIBERSON@PNJ.COM