

Pre & Post COVID Impact on Downtown Boston

This handout highlights key demographic, real estate, and mobility trends shaping Downtown Boston and Beacon Hill in the post-COVID era. These realities help us understand the opportunities and challenges for community life and outreach at the Paulist Center.

Population & Demographics

- Boston population: 652,000 (2022), down 3.4% since 2020 but stabilizing.
- Downtown neighborhoods, including Beacon Hill, have remained largely stable, with only minor population fluctuations.
- Majority-minority city: 56% Hispanic/Latino and/or non-white.
- Median age: 33.7 years — 38% of residents are young adults (18–34).
- 13% of the population are seniors (65+), a growing share.

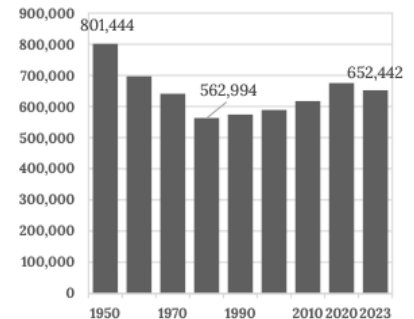


Figure 2 - Boston's Population
1950-2020 Census, 2023 ACS Estimate

Housing and Commercial Real Estate

- Median rent in 2024: \$2,800/month; condos \$745,000; single-family homes \$800,000.
- Two-thirds of units are rentals; affordability challenges persist.
- Downtown office vacancy: 20% (2024), well above pre-pandemic levels.
- Hybrid/remote work reshapes downtown rhythms — 18% fully remote by 2023.
- City launching office-to-residential conversion program (2025).
- Suffolk University has invested in residential programming. Since 2024 it offers a two-year housing guarantee for incoming freshmen. A new property at 101 Tremont Street will serve as a sixth residence hall, set to open in Fall 2026—expanding its housing capacity.

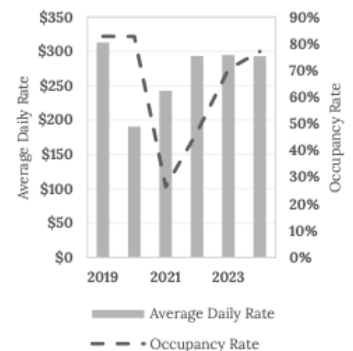


Figure 7 - Boston Average Daily Rate and Room Occupancy, 2017-2023, Pinnacle Advisory Group and BPDA Research Division

Transportation & Mobility

- 33% of households do not own a car; 41% commute without one.
- MBTA ridership is still 36% below 2019, affecting downtown foot traffic.
- Many people who previously used transit are now **more likely to drive** for discretionary trips.
- People working remotely often make more non-work trips than either fully remote or fully in-person workers. Many of these trips are to “third places”—like cafes, parks, or libraries—and are typically: shorter in distance, taken outside traditional peak hours and more likely to use sustainable modes of transport (walking or biking)

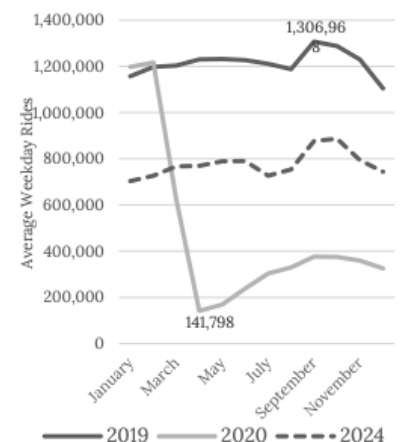


Figure 5 - MBTA Average Weekday Rides by Month, 2019, 2020, 2024

(Based on [boston.gov data](https://www.boston.gov/data) and developed in part using chatGPT)