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City of Boca Raton

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Community Background Report

City of Boca Raton

Boundaries
North: C-15 Canal
South: Hillsboro Canal
East: Atlantic Ocean
West: Florida's Turnpike

Community Type: Municipality

History

The City of Boca Raton covers 18,944 acres and lies directly north of the City of Deerfield Beach (located in neighboring Broward County) and south of the City of Delray Beach. The city is located 47 miles north of Miami and 29 miles south of West Palm Beach. Boca Raton has a population of over 83,000 people.[1]

Boca Raton's name derives from the Spanish words "boca", which means inlet, and "ratón", which means mouse, but can also be used to describe a thief. According to eighteenth century maps, "Boca Ratones" or "Thieves' Inlet" referred to Biscayne Bay in Miami. However, during the next century, the term Boca Ratones was erroneously applied to Lake Boca Raton, and by the 1920s Lake Boca Raton's inlet became known as Boca Raton.

The earliest inhabitants of the area were the Tequesta Indians who lived by the shore of the Atlantic Ocean until the eighteenth century. Pioneers populated the area in the 1890s following the construction of the Florida East Coast Canal and the Florida East Coast Railway. A small agricultural community of Japanese pineapple farmers led by Joseph Sakai, known as the Yamato Colony, was formed in the area in 1904. The Yamato Colony was dispersed in 1908 when the pineapple crop was destroyed. In May 1925, the Town of Boca Raton was incorporated. At the town's request Addison Mizner, a prominent American resort architect, arrived in Boca Raton with the intention of designing a world-class resort community in the Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial style. In 1926 he designed Boca Raton's Cloister Inn, which functioned as an exclusive hotel, and continues to operate as the Boca Raton Resort and Club. Another of his notable designs was the Boca Raton City Hall building, which was completed by Delray architect William Alsmeyer in 1927.[2]

Boca Raton continued to grow as an agricultural community in the 1930s and early 1940s. In 1936, the Works Progress Administration built a federal airport, the Boca Raton Airport. In 1942, the Army established its only radar training school at the airport, on land that

is now part of the campus of Florida Atlantic University. This brought tens of thousands of army personnel to Boca Raton. In the 1960s, Boca Raton experienced a second land boom (the first was in the mid-1920s) and its population grew to nearly 30,000 residents by the end of that decade. In 1962, Florida Atlantic University was established on the site of the former army base. In 1981, the first personal computer was developed at the IBM facility in Boca Raton. In the 1980s and 1990s, the City of Boca Raton underwent several redevelopment projects including the renovation of the first Boca Raton Town Hall.[2]

Community Dynamics

In recent years the mayor and city council of Boca Raton have agreed on a strategic development plan for Boca Raton entitled "Strategic Plan 2010-2015-2025". According to the plan, "the Mission of the City of Boca Raton is to provide the highest quality of service to the community through responsible use of public resources to enhance our unique quality of life" The four specific goals of the strategic plan are: 1)a financially sound city, 2)a strong partnership with the community, 3)a sustainable city, and 4)world class municipal services.[3] The top budgetary priorities of the city relate to economic development and increased funding through land annexation.

In 2010 the city of Boca Raton was looking into annexing several areas, mainly at its northern borders. The last major Boca Raton annexations took place in 2003-2004, when the city incorporated the Town Center Mall and the surrounding area, as well as the Via Verde, Waterside at Boca Trail and Marina del Mar neighborhoods.[4] The proposed new annexation would enlarge the population of Boca Raton by 5%, but the city would remain the second largest in Palm Beach County, trailing West Palm Beach by a few thousand.

Demographic Highlights[5]

The population of Boca Raton has been increasing, and is projected to continue increasing.
In 2009, the population of Boca Raton was 78,697. It increased 5% in the years between 2000 and 2009, and is projected to increase another 1% by 2014.

The overwhelming majority of residents of Boca Raton are White and non-Hispanic.
In 2009, 89% of residents of Boca Raton classified themselves as White, 4% classified themselves as Black, and 3% classified themselves as Asian. Only 10% of residents of Boca Raton classified themselves as Hispanic. By 2014, Boca Raton's White population is projected to decrease slightly (from 89% to 88%), and its Black and Hispanic populations are projected to increase slightly (from 3.9% to 4.2% and from 10.5% to 11.7%, respectively).

Most residents of Boca Raton speak English and are native-born US citizens.
In 2009, 79% of residents of Boca Raton spoke English, and 80% of residents of Boca Raton were native-born US citizens.

Nearly 1/3 of residents of Boca Raton have a college degree.
In 2009, 29% of Boca Raton's residents had a college degree. 18% of Boca Raton's residents had a graduate degree.

The median household income in Boca Raton is considerably higher than in Palm Beach County.
In 2009, the median household income in Boca Raton was $82,256, compared to Palm Beach County's $62,114. The average household income in Boca Raton was $144,227, compared to Palm Beach County's $91,726, compared to the USA's $72,730.

The percentage of households in Boca Raton with an income of less than $15,000 is slightly lower than in Palm Beach County.
In 2009, only 7% of households in Boca Raton had an income of less than $15,000 annually, compared to 10% in Palm Beach County.

The percentage of households in Boca Raton with an income of $100,000 and over is considerably higher than in Palm Beach County.
In 2009, 42% of households in Boca Raton had an income of $100,000 and over, compared to 26% in Palm Beach County. During the same year, 19% of households in Boca Raton had an income of $200,000 and over, compared to 8% in Palm Beach County.

Many residents of Boca Raton work in the finance, insurance, real estate/rental and leasing sectors and the professional, scientific, management and administrative sectors.
In 2009, 13% of residents of Boca Raton worked in finance, insurance, real estate/rental and leasing, as compared to 9% in Palm Beach County, and 17% worked in the professional, scientific, management and administrative sectors, as compared to 13.5% in Palm Beach County.

Transportation Trends[3]

Most employed residents of Boca Raton own a motorized vehicle and travel no more than 30 minutes to work. Only 25% of employed residents travel more than 30 minutes to work. As much as 8% of residents of Boca Raton work at home.

The tables below illustrate projected transportation trends in the City of Boca Raton:

Average household transportation costs:
2009: City, $9,999.71/County, $9,162.52
2014: City, $12,209.90/County, $11,276.10

Average household transportation costs for public transportation:
2009: City, $780.65/County, $607.69
2014: City, $995.05/County, $783.55

Forecasted travel time to work for the employed population, 2014:
Work at home: City, 8 percent /County, 5 percent
Less than 15 minutes: City, 33 percent/County, 20 percent
15-29 minutes: City, 35 percent /County, 37 percent
30-59 minutes: City, 20 percent /County, 31 percent
60+ minutes: City, 5 percent /County, 7 percent

Forecasted means of transportation to work for employed individuals, 2014:
Car, Truck, Van to Work: City, 88 percent / County, 92 percent
Public Transportation to Work: City, 3 percent / County, 1 percent
Other Transportation to Work: City, 1 percent / County, 2 percent

Forecasted number of vehicles per household, 2014:
No vehicles: City, 3 percent / County, 6 percent
1 vehicle: City, 37 percent / County, 41 percent
2 vehicles: City, 46 percent / County, 42 percent
3 vehicles: City, 12 percent / County, 9 percent
4+ vehicles: City, 2 percent / County, 2 percent

Special Events

St. Mark Greek Festival - In January Boca Raton's St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church organizes Greek Festival on Yamato Road, celebrating with food, pastries, live music and dancing, along with tours of the sanctuary and amusement rides. Call (561) 994-4822 for more information.

All Florida Juried Competition - In June Boca Raton's Mizner Park showcases prominent and emerging Florida artists working in all media at the state's oldest annual juried competition. Call (561) 392-2500 for more information.

Shriek Week – Shriek Week is organized by the City of Boca Raton in October. A week of kooky crafts, funny shows, and the Haunted Ghost Town of Crooked Creek awaits. Call (561) 347-3900 or go to http://www.sugarsandpark.org/ShriekWeekInfo.htm for more information.

Boca Raton Holiday Tree Lighting - More than a million twinkling lights, an appearance by Santa, food, entertainment and more start the holiday season at Mizner Park Amphitheater. Call (561) 393-7806 or go to http://www.ci.boca-raton.fl.us/rec/specialevents/holidays.shtm for more information.

The City of Boca Raton maintains a website, http://www.ci.boca-raton.fl.us/rec/specialevents/ , which lists all special events taking place in the city.

Business Landscape

The Boca Raton Community Redevelopment Agency was established in 1980, when the City Council designated 344 acres in downtown as a community redevelopment area. The purpose of this designation was to stop the deterioration of Boca Raton's downtown area and to redevelop it in order to attract visitors. In 1986 the CRA started a public initiative to stimulate redevelopment of downtown Boca Raton by developing a master plan, which included numerous infrastructure improvements and provided a detailed framework within which redevelopment could occur. The CRA's website, http://www.downtownboca.org/, provides information on the activities of the CRA and lists announcements about events in downtown Boca Raton.

Many residents (19%) of Boca Raton are employed in the Educational, Health and Social Services sectors, followed by 16% employed in the Professional, Scientific, Management and Administrative sectors. Among Boca Raton's major employers are IBM Corporation, Tyco Safety, ADT Worldwide/Tyco International, Jarden Consumer Solutions, Siemens, Signet Diagnostic Imaging and Rexall Sundown. [6]

Boca Raton Community Hospital is one of the premier medical centers in Florida, with 400 licensed beds, 700 physicians, a nursing and support staff of 2,000, and over 1,200 volunteers.[7] West Boca Medical Center is another hospital that serves Boca Raton. The medical center currently has 500 physicians who contribute to this award-winning health care facility.[8]

Sources

[1] City of Boca Raton. 2010. Area Profile: Our History.
http://www.ci.boca-raton.fl.us/city/areaprof/history.shtm

[2] Boca Raton Historical Society. 2009. A Journey through Boca Raton 1895-2006.
http://www.bocahistory.org/boca_history/br_history_timeline.asp

[3] Strategic Plan for Boca Raton 2010-2015-2025. http://www.ci.boca-raton.fl.us/city/pdf/StrategicPlan.pdf

[4] Sun Sentinel. June 2010. Boca Raton considers annexing northern areas to boost tax revenue.
http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/boca-raton-considers-annexing-northern-areas-to-boost-756390.html

[5] Unless otherwise noted, all statistics cited in this section downloaded from www.simplymap.com

[6] Palm Beach County Business Development Board. Palm Beach County's Top Employers.
http://www.bdb.org/index.php?submenu=facts_business_environment&src=gendocs&ref=top_employers&category=facts_and_figures

[7] The Boca Raton Community Hospital. http://www.brch.com/home.aspx

[8] The West Boca Medical Center. http://www.westbocamedctr.com/en-us/aboutus/pages/default.aspx