

The Future of Chocolate City

Population Change in Washington, DC

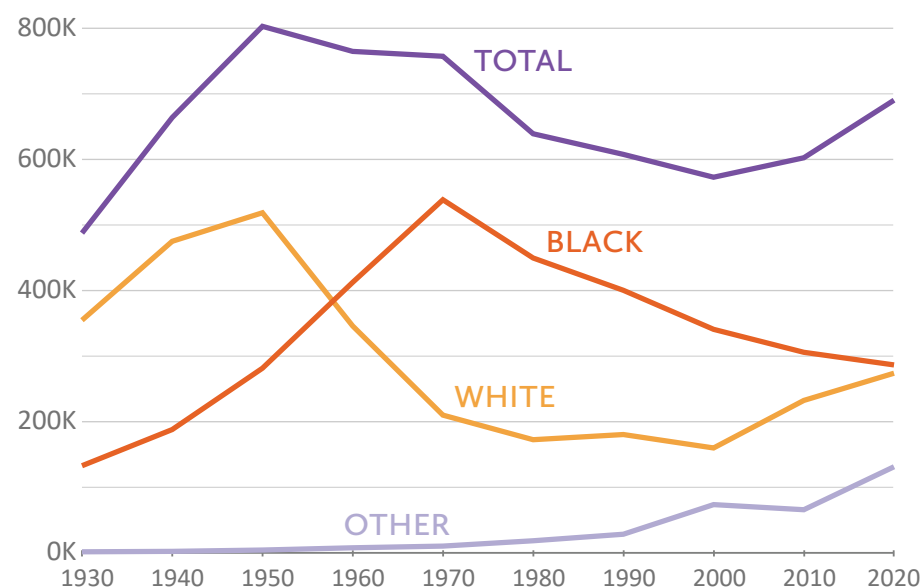
In the 1960s and 70s, DC garnered the moniker "Chocolate City." At the time, the city was 70% Black. Since 2000, DC's total population has risen while the Black population continues to fall. DC's white population marked a quick upward trend from 2000 to 2010 and continued to increase through the 2020 Census. As of 2020, no one group holds a simple majority in the district. White and Black populations are almost equal at 38% and 41%, respectively.

At a neighborhood level, these population shifts are drastic. In 1970, 72% of census tracts were majority Black. In 2019, just 46% of census tracts were majority Black, while 42% were majority white.

If current patterns hold, by the time the 2030 Census is taken Black Washingtonians will no longer be the largest group in DC. To support its Black residents, DC will have to learn how to lift up a marginalized neighborhood without gentrifying it and othering those very residents.

Washington, DC Population by Race

1930 to 2020



Palisades/Georgetown

Sitting in the westernmost part of the NW quadrant, these neighborhoods are historically white and typically home to wealthy politicians, academics, and other **powerful Washingtonians**.

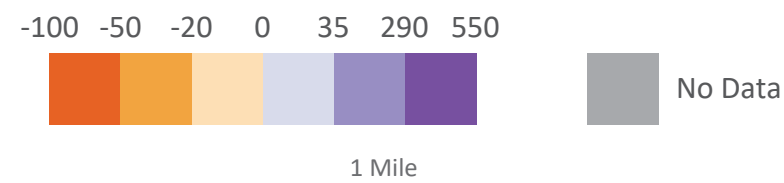
These census tracts have seen proportionally large increases in their Black population. The dark purple census tracts in this area were less than **2%** Black in 1970. In 2019, each tract was still under **10%** Black.

Shaw/U Street

Located in the NW quadrant of the city, the Shaw/U Street neighborhood was once known as "**Black Broadway**" and has been a hub for cultural and economic life for Black Washingtonians since the 1930s.

Census tracts that were as much as **99.5%** Black in 1970 were just **20%** Black in 2019. Revitalization projects have led to rent increases and an influx of young white professionals

% Change in Black Population 1970 to 2019



Aileen Clarke, 2021
Data: US Census Bureau, Natural Earth, NHGIS, Open Data DC
Projection: US Contiguous Albers Equal Area Conic
Central Meridian: 77°W, Standard Parallel 1: 38.86° N, Standard Parallel 2: 38.93° N

Anacostia

Located across the Anacostia River in the SE quadrant of the district, Anacostia was once home to **Frederick Douglass**. It's been majority Black since the end of WWII.

Neighborhoods here have seen less demographic change since the 1970s but have lost population overall. Of 46 tracts south of the river, **78%** shrunk from 1970 to 2019. Half of the 46 tracts shrunk by **25%** or more.