

Norris Square Community Profile



*The story of a neighborhood –
including its assets and challenges
– from the perspective of people
who live and work here.*

Welcome

"My interest is having the kids in the neighborhood realize the value of the neighborhood and say, "Wow, I think I'll stay here". - Patricia De Carlo

In what ways has the neighborhood of Norris Square changed over time? What assets and challenges do people in Norris Square most recognize and value? How are these similar or different from those identified by youth in their neighborhood?

We at Penn State Extension Philadelphia are grateful visitors to Norris Square. We are indebted to community members and leaders for allowing us to benefit from a long-term and varied commitment to Norris Square – beginning over 30 years ago (1990) with gardening assistance offered to the Las Parcelas Garden to our current community engagement internships.

This profile originated from community conversations. We were graciously accepted into partner offices, neighborhood member homes, and area park benches. It became clear that many community members we spoke with wished for a common language and more information about the neighborhood to assist with neighborhood improvements, grant writing, and program planning.

The aim and purpose of the profile is to offer information and data that community members can interact with to find ways to work together to address their day-to-day challenges. We value the knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise that every person can bring to this project.

We intend to demonstrate this project's potential to help strengthen and empower the Norris Square community. In addition, Penn State Extension intends to utilize the collective learning process of the Norris Square profile to develop an instructional guide for other interested communities and colleagues.

Introduction

As noted, the backbone of this profile are community conversations that uncovered assets: cultural and civic pride, availability of holistic services, and neighborhood empowerment. They also brought to light challenges: hunger, housing displacement due to gentrification, and lack of resources for collaboration amongst neighborhood nonprofits due to limited time and capacity.

What community assets and challenges do community members in Norris Square recognize and value most?

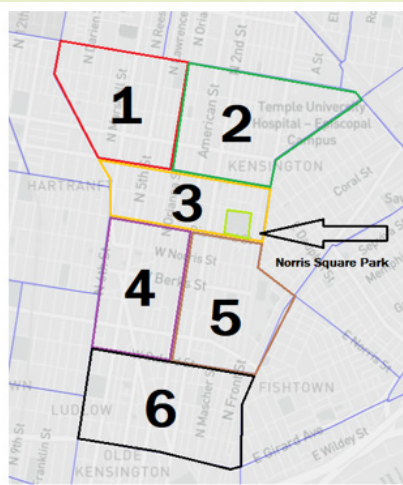
In addition to community conversations and listening sessions, the Norris Square Neighborhood profile has been built on a survey that was distributed throughout the neighborhood. The survey was completed by 81 participants, 51% of whom live in Norris Square and 69% of whom work in the neighborhood, between the ages of 13 and 88.

The survey asked participants questions about how they defined the neighborhood boundaries, what information they felt should be included in the profile, the likelihood that they would use the profile, and open-ended questions about their experience in Norris Square.

The geography used to represent Norris Square neighborhood was determined through neighborhood survey responses. Six census tracts, small, relatively permanent parts of a county or similar entity (U.S. Census Bureau Glossary) were selected to represent Norris Square neighborhood. Shown on the map below are the six census tracts and their locations:

Figure 1: Six Census Tracts Used in Norris Square Community Profile

Area 1	Dauphin Street to Lehigh Avenue + Germantown Avenue to 4th Street
Area 2	Dauphin Street to Lehigh Avenue + 4th Street to Kensington Avenue
Area 3	Diamond Street to Dauphin Street + Germantown Avenue to Front Street
Area 4	Oxford Street to Diamond Street + 6th Street to American Street
Area 5	Oxford Street to Diamond Street + American Street to Front Street
Area 6	Girard Avenue to Oxford Street + 6th Street to Frankford Avenue



Area 6 (Girard Avenue to Oxford Street + 6th Street to Frankford Avenue) was identified by only 16% of survey respondents as being a part of Norris Square Neighborhood. The data used to represent Norris Square includes Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Area 6 is not included when Norris Square is compared to Lower North Philadelphia, all of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania. Area 6 remains in this neighborhood profile to compare its changes to Norris Square.

About the Data: American Community Survey



Norris Square Neighborhood Project - Las Parcelas Garden

The information used in this profile also comes from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS). The American Community Survey is an ongoing questionnaire that provides information about Americans each year (3.5 million U.S. residents each year are surveyed).

The ACS samples the population every month of every year and asks more detailed questions than the US Census ten-year (decennial) survey, with topics focusing on education, employment, transportation, language, and others

Three yellow chevrons pointing down.

This profile uses five-year estimates which the ACS converts into data that is averaged over five-year periods. When comparing change over time in the profile, two five-year estimates are used: 2015 which includes 2011 through 2015, and 2020 which includes 2016 through 2020.



Norris Square Neighborhood Alliance Harvest Festival



Highlights & Results

The profile also includes figures and tables with population, quality of life, and economic information specific to the neighborhood, including possible changes that might have occurred in the neighborhood over time.

This profile covers a wide array of neighborhood interests, including overall population change, change in population by age, race, and ethnicity over time and across the chosen geographies, change in median household income by race and across geographies, change in education attainment by race and across geographies, change in median home value and rent, and change in the percentage of Spanish speakers in Norris Square.

Discussion questions are also included to help us explore what the information reveals about the neighborhood. See below for an abbreviated list of results that highlight neighborhood changes from 2011 to 2020. Feel free to turn to the pages listed next to each:

- ***From 2011 to 2020 in Norris Square, there was an increase in the number of children aged 5 to 17 who speak Spanish - [Page 5](#)***
- ***Approximately 49% of people in Norris Square spoke Spanish in 2020, compared to 11% in both Lower North Philadelphia and Philadelphia overall, and 5% across PA - [Page 6](#)***
- ***From 2011 to 2020, the overall Hispanic or Latino population in Norris Square decreased by 1043 residents (11%). During the same time period, the White population in Norris Square increased by 168 residents (4%) - [Page 7](#)***
- ***The Hispanic or Latino population in the area that includes Norris Square Park (Figure 5) increased by 22 persons (1%). The Puerto Rican population in that area decreased by 11 persons (1%). The Mexican population decreased by 42 persons (72%) - [Page 9](#)***

"I think there is a little bit of everything for everybody in Norris Square, depending on where you are at. You could be born here and have your last breath here and there is somewhere to turn to. It is like you are never alone."

-Jose Spellman-Lopez, former grower and educator with Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Spanish Speakers

The majority of neighborhood survey respondents were interested in learning more about languages spoken at home in Norris Square.

**Table 1. Change in Spanish-Speaking Residents by Age, Over Time:
Norris Square
2015 (2011-2015) and 2020 (2016-2020)**

Population	2015 (2011-2015)	2020 (2016-2020)	# Change	% Change
5 years and older (speak any language)	13,593	13,202	-391	-2.88%
5 years and older, Speak Only English	6,296	5,776	-520	-8.26%
5 years and older, Spanish Speaking	6,427	6,522	95	1.48%
5 to 17 years, Spanish Speaking	799	917	118	14.77%
18 to 64 years, Spanish Speaking	4,968	4,834	-134	-2.70%
65 and older, Spanish Speaking	660	771	111	16.82%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2020

Norris Square's largest population includes Hispanic or Latino residents, with Puerto Rican residents making up the largest total share of the population. **Table 1 shows how the number of Spanish speakers in Norris Square has changed by age, over time.** You can see the change in Spanish-speaking residents and the change in residents who speak only English over time, as well.

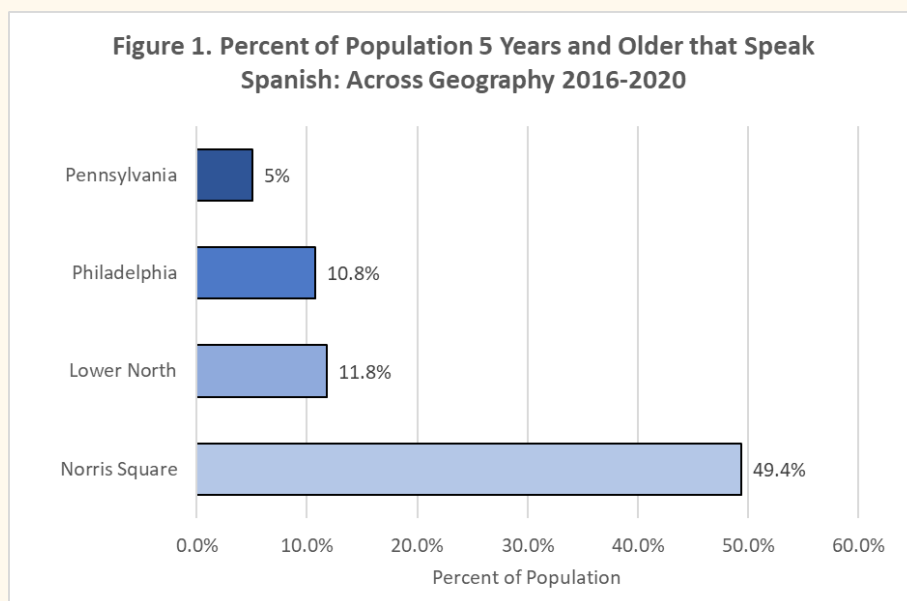
Key Observations:

- **In 2016, there were 1,192 Spanish-speaking households in Norris Square in which all members 14 and older had some difficulty with English.**
- **In 2020 there was an overall decrease of 270 Spanish-speaking households that had some difficulty with English from 2012 to 2020.**
- **In Norris Square, there was an increase in the number of children aged 5 to 17 and the number of adults 65 and older who speak Spanish.**

Spanish Speakers

The majority of neighborhood survey respondents were interested in learning more about languages spoken at home in Norris Square.

Figure 1 shows how the Spanish-speaking population in Norris Square compares to Lower North Philadelphia, Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania. The bars shown in the figure represent the percentage of Spanish-speaking residents in each geography, with the percent representing data averaged from 2016-2020.



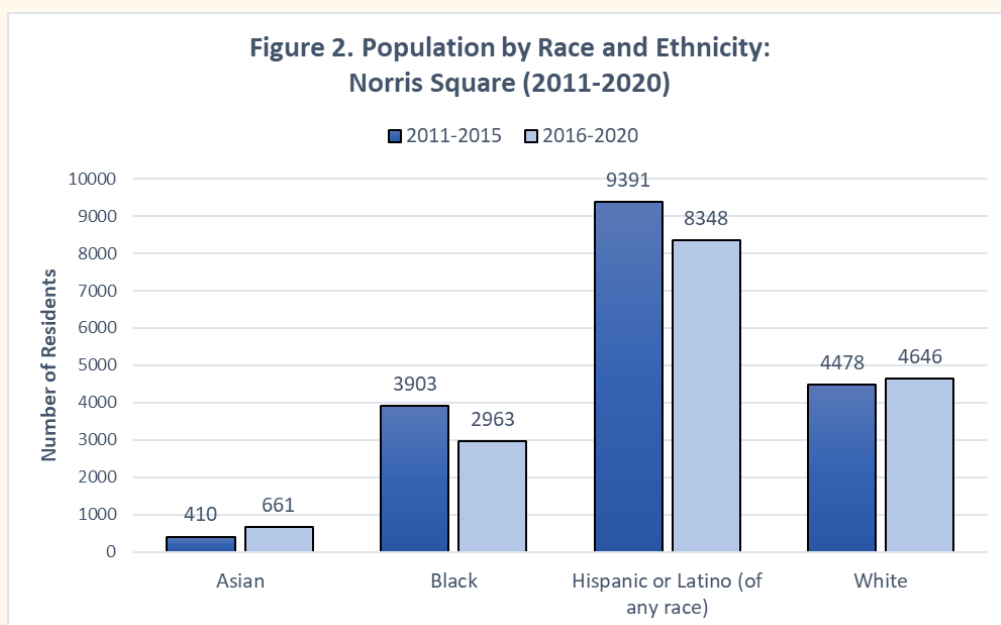
Discussion Questions:

- 1. What changes in the age of Spanish speakers have occurred in Norris Square?**
- 2. Are these results a surprise to you? If yes or no, why?**
- 3. What would explain the increase of Spanish speakers in older age groups? Does this suggest what type of people are moving into Norris Square?**
- 4. How does the percentage of Spanish speakers 5 years and older in Norris Square compare to other geographies?**

Approximately 49% of people in Norris Square spoke Spanish in 2020, compared to 11% in both Lower North Philadelphia and Philadelphia as a whole, and 5% across PA.

Population by Race & Ethnicity

Conversations with neighborhood members and neighborhood survey responses demonstrated that Norris Square residents are proud of the ethnic diversity of their neighborhood. 78% of survey respondents reported that this aspect of Norris Square makes their neighborhood stronger.



A breakdown of the racial and ethnic makeup of Norris Square is represented by **Figure 2 and 3** and includes the change in the number of individuals of a particular race or ethnicity from 2011 to 2020, as well as the rate of growth or decline experienced by each group over the ten-year period.

This bar chart demonstrates the change in population for the four most populous races or ethnicities in Norris Square.

Key Observations:

- **From 2011 to 2020, the overall Hispanic or Latino population in Norris Square decreased by 1043 residents (11%). During the same time period, the White population in Norris Square increased by 168 residents (4%).**

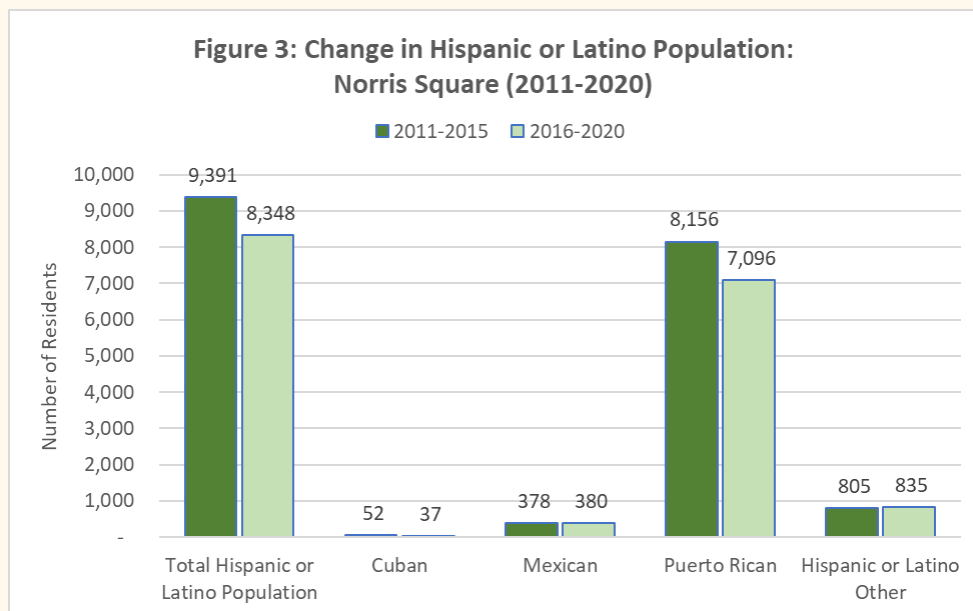
People have been pushed away and the identity that has been established for the last 40 years in this neighborhood is disappearing little by little. It is a cycle, there are plenty of good things here, but the reality is it's changing. It could be for good, for bad, we will know better in the future.

– Eliezer Vila, Director of Compliance, Norris Square Neighborhood Alliance (now Xiente).

Population by Race & Ethnicity

Conversations with neighborhood members and neighborhood survey responses demonstrated that Norris Square residents are proud of the ethnic diversity of their neighborhood. 78% of survey respondents reported that this aspect of Norris Square makes their neighborhood stronger.

To understand how the Hispanic or Latino population has changed in Norris Square over time, we can see how the number of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic or Latino residents in Norris Square have changed (see **Figure 3**).



Key Observations:

- From 2011 to 2020, the overall Hispanic or Latino population in Norris Square decreased by 1,043 residents (11%). During the same time period, the White population in Norris Square increased by 168 residents (4%).
- As you can see in Figure 3, between 2011 and 2020 there has been a decrease in the number of Puerto Rican residents in Norris Square and a slight increase in the neighborhood's Mexican population.

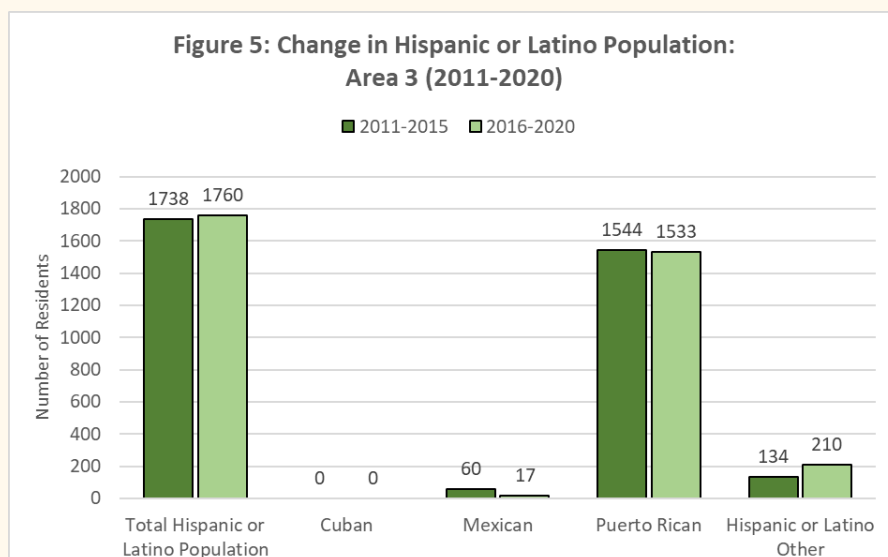
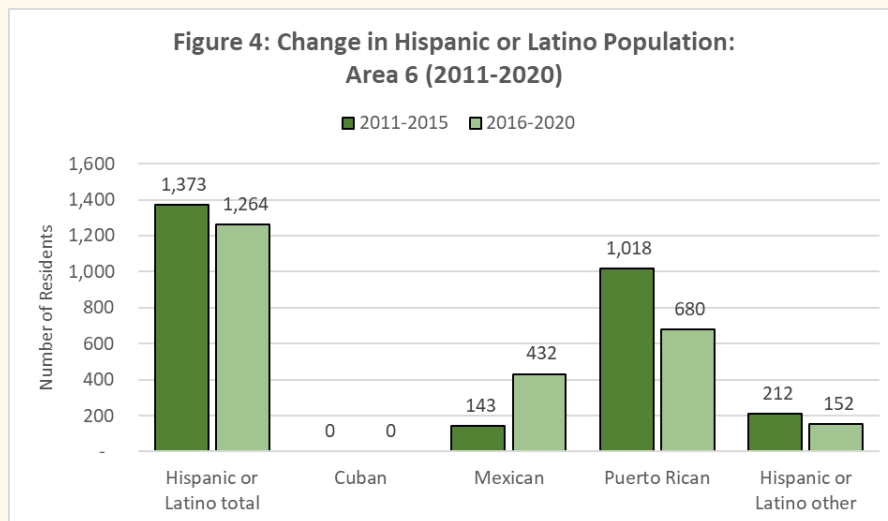


Note: Hispanic or Latino Other is defined by the Census Bureau as "Another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin" (for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.).

On the next page, Figures 4 and 5 show how the area of the neighborhood south of Norris Square (Figure 4) and the area that includes Norris Square Park (Figure 5) has changed based on the Hispanic or Latino population.

Population by Race & Ethnicity

Conversations with neighborhood members and neighborhood survey responses demonstrated that Norris Square residents are proud of the ethnic diversity of their neighborhood. 78% of survey respondents reported that this aspect of Norris Square makes their neighborhood stronger.



Key Observations:

- From 2011 to 2020, the Hispanic or Latino population in the neighborhood south of Norris Square (Figure 4) decreased by 109 persons (8%). The Puerto Rican population in that area decreased by 338 persons (33%). The Mexican population increased by 289 (202%).
- The Hispanic or Latino population in the area that includes Norris Square Park (Figure 5) increased by 22 persons (1%). The Puerto Rican population in that area decreased by 11 persons (1%). The Mexican population decreased by 42 persons (72%).

Population by Race & Ethnicity

Conversations with neighborhood members and neighborhood survey responses demonstrated that Norris Square residents are proud of the ethnic diversity of their neighborhood. 78% of survey respondents reported that this aspect of Norris Square makes their neighborhood stronger.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. In what ways has the race and ethnic composition of Norris Square residents changed over the past ten years (Figure 2)? What might have led to any changes that you see?**
- 2. Which Latino or Hispanic groups had the most significant increase and decrease of residents in Norris Square (Figure 3)?**
 - a. How does this compare to changes that occurred at the census tract level (Figures 4, 5, & 6)?**
 - b. What might explain any similarities or differences that you see?**
- 3. What do you think the race and ethnic makeup of Norris Square residents will look like in 5 years? 10 years? Why do you think that?**
- 4. Most neighborhood survey respondents feel that diversity in Norris Square makes the neighborhood stronger. How do you think the population changes in Figures 2-6 affect diversity within the neighborhood?**
- 5. In your experience, has the neighborhood culture or sense of neighborhood changed over time? What has been gained (if anything), and what has been lost (if anything)?**
- 6. How is the neighborhood adapting or responding to changing cultures and identities within the neighborhood? What opportunities do you see? What challenges might exist?**

Acknowledgments

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This project is being led by Penn State Extension and the Penn State Center for Economic and Community Development. All partners value the knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise that every person can bring to this project. Our intent is to demonstrate the potential for this project to help strengthen and empower the Norris Square community.

