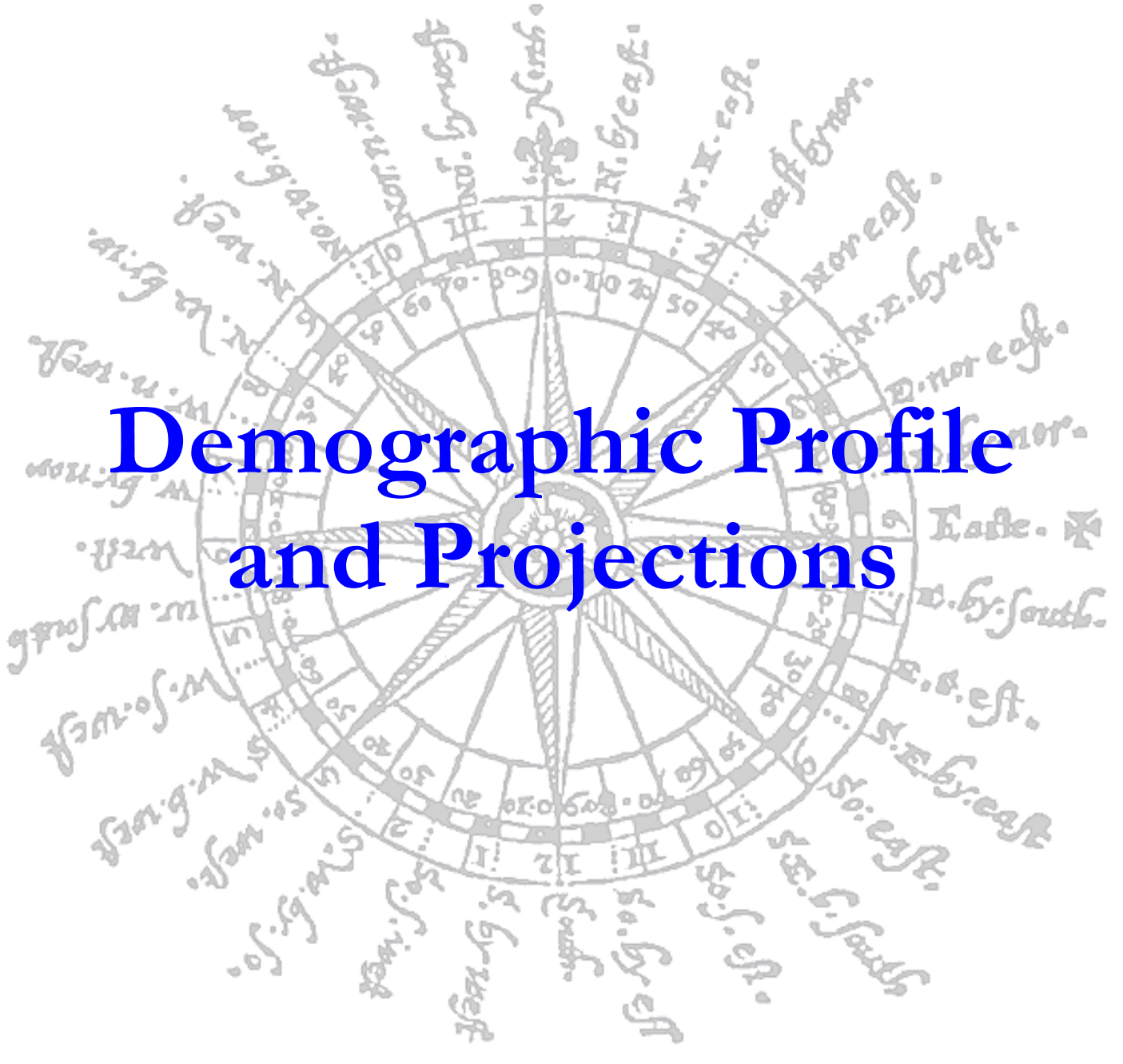




# Demographic Profile and Projections

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND PROJECTIONS

## INTRODUCTION

York County is located in the Virginia Coastal Plain on a peninsula formed by the James and York Rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. The Peninsula also includes James City County and the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg, all of which adjoin York County. The County and the Peninsula are part of the greater Hampton Roads region, which also includes the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight County, Southampton and Surry, as well as the Town of Smithfield. The boundaries of Hampton Roads correspond fairly closely with the boundaries of the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News VA NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, except that the MSA includes Mathews County and Currituck County, North Carolina and does not include Franklin, Smithfield, and Southampton County.

The Census Bureau divides York County into thirteen census tracts for the purposes of data collection and reporting. The three northernmost tracts (506, 507, and 508) encompass what is referred to in this plan as the upper County, while the remaining tracts constitute the lower County. Within the County are several areas and communities that have no defined legal boundaries but whose general location is commonly known to the citizens. Foremost among these is historic Yorktown, which is the County seat and is located in census tract 505, as is the Lackey community, located along Old Williamsburg Road (Route 238) across from the Naval Weapons Station. The upper County, excluding the Naval Weapons Station, is often referred as the "Bruton (Magisterial) District." Grafton, which is generally bounded by Goodwin Neck Road, Chisman Creek, Oriana Road, and the Poquoson River, includes census tract 503.03 and portions of tracts 503.01 and 503.04. That portion of the County located south of the Poquoson River and Harwoods Mill Reservoir is considered Tabb, which includes tracts 502.03, 502.04, 502.05, 502.06, and the portion of Tract 503.01 south of Oriana Road. Other communities include Seaford (Tract 504.02), Dandy (in Tract 504.01), and Dare (in Tract 503.04). Tract 506 in the upper County consists almost entirely of Federal property, including the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, Cheatham Annex, and Camp Peary.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### Population

York County is home to approximately 63,000 people and ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in population among the state's 95 counties and 29<sup>th</sup> among the 134 cities and counties. In land area, however, York County is the third smallest county in Virginia, making it the sixth most densely populated county. The County's population has been growing steadily for many decades, but the rate of population increase has varied from decade to decade. So far in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the County has grown by an average of approximately 2.2% annually, less than the 2.9% average annual increase experienced during the 1990s. The 1960s were the County's highest growth decade, with an average annual population increase of 4.8%.

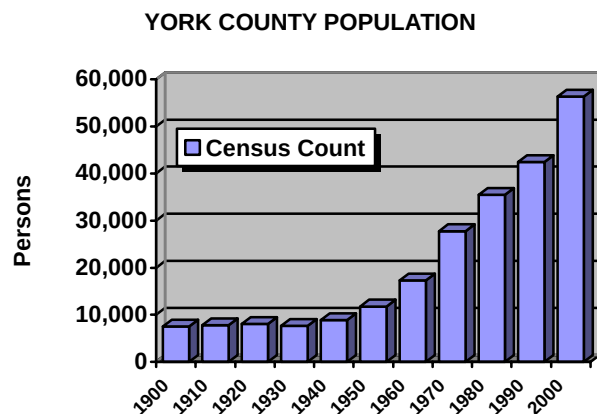
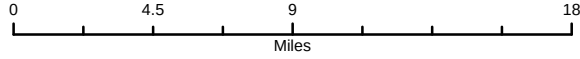


Figure 1



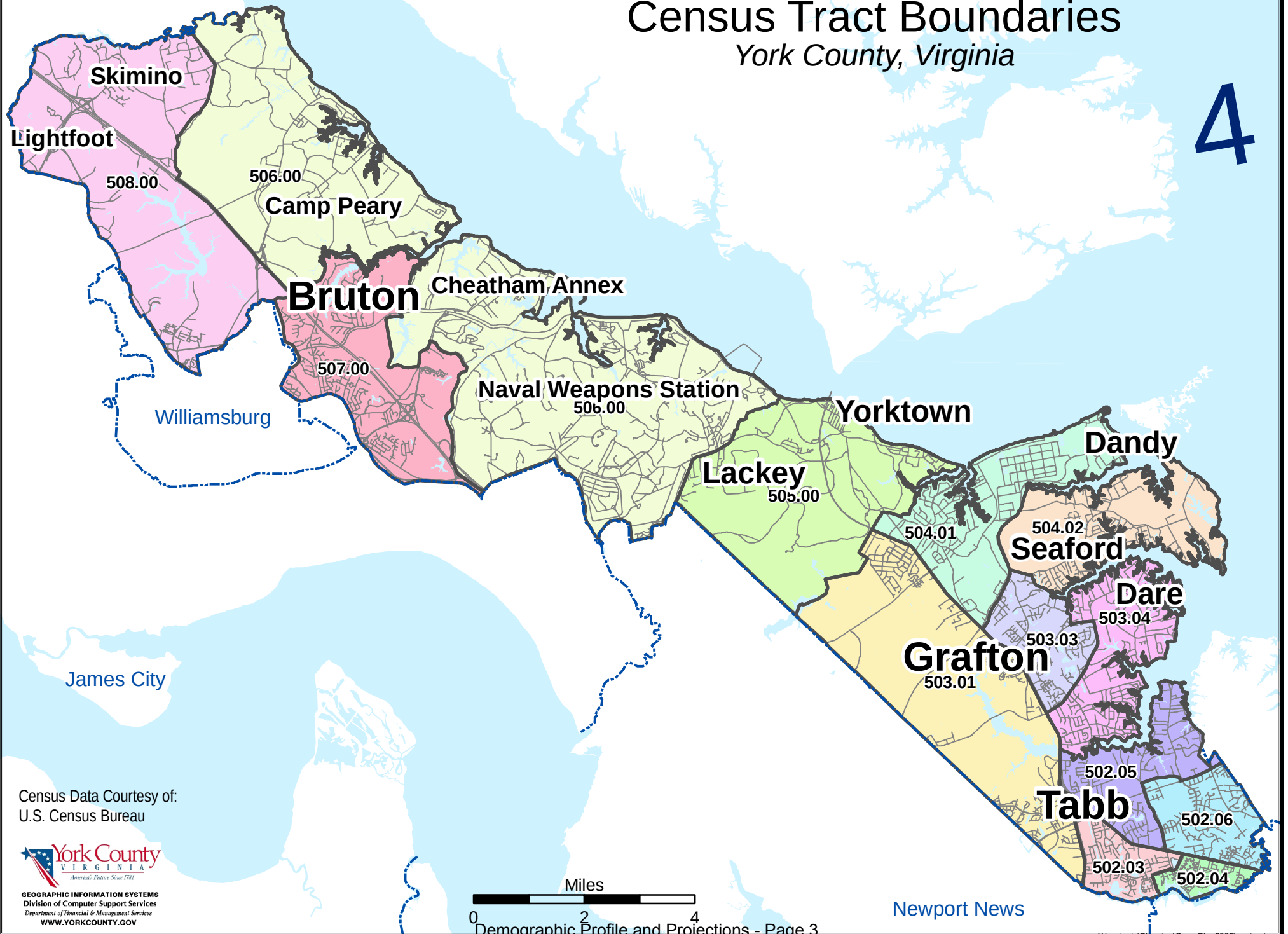
# York County and the Surrounding Area



# Census Tract Boundaries

## York County, Virginia

4



Census Data Courtesy of:  
U.S. Census Bureau



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Although annual resident births in York County regularly outnumber deaths, the vast majority of the County's population growth – approximately 75% in recent years – is due to net migration, which is the difference between the number of people moving into a community and the number moving out. Most of the growth, and most of the net migration, has taken place in the lower County, which offers more residential land with fewer development constraints than the upper County, where public water and sewer are not as widely available and the roadway network is more severely limited. Ninety-two percent of the population growth in the County between 1990 and 2000 was in the lower County.

| <b>YORK COUNTY POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT<br/>1980-2005</b>                                                                                      |        |        |         |        |         |        |         |                     |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| Census Tract                                                                                                                                     |        | 1980   |         | 1990   |         | 2000   |         | 2005<br>(Estimated) |         |
| 1980 &<br>1990                                                                                                                                   | 2000   | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number              | Percent |
| 502.01                                                                                                                                           | 502.03 | 6,919  | 19.5%   | 7,949  | 18.7%   | 4,848  | 8.6%    | 6,630               | 10.6%   |
|                                                                                                                                                  | 502.04 |        |         |        |         | 6,819  | 12.1%   | 6,960               | 11.2%   |
| 502.02                                                                                                                                           | 502.05 | 2,877  | 8.1%    | 5,781  | 13.6%   | 4,340  | 7.7%    | 4,620               | 7.4%    |
|                                                                                                                                                  | 502.06 |        |         |        |         | 5,062  | 9.0%    | 5,560               | 8.9%    |
| 503.01                                                                                                                                           | 503.01 | 2,792  | 7.9%    | 3,296  | 7.8%    | 6,663  | 11.8%   | 7,730               | 12.2%   |
| 503.02                                                                                                                                           | 503.03 | 5,794  | 16.3%   | 8,708  | 20.5%   | 5,366  | 9.5%    | 5,940               | 9.5%    |
|                                                                                                                                                  | 503.04 |        |         |        |         | 4,525  | 8.0%    | 5,030               | 8.0%    |
| 504.01                                                                                                                                           | 504.01 | 2,332  | 6.6%    | 2,989  | 7.0%    | 3,113  | 5.5%    | 3,260               | 5.2%    |
| 504.02                                                                                                                                           | 504.02 | 3,184  | 9.0%    | 2,976  | 7.0%    | 3,432  | 6.1%    | 3,540               | 5.6%    |
| 505                                                                                                                                              | 505    | 2,963  | 8.4%    | 2,130  | 5.0%    | 2,466  | 4.4%    | 2,740               | 4.4%    |
| Lower County                                                                                                                                     |        | 26,861 | 75.7%   | 33,829 | 79.7%   | 46,634 | 82.8%   | 52,010              | 82.9%   |
| 506                                                                                                                                              |        | 1,383  | 3.9%    | 1,234  | 2.9%    | 520    | 0.9%    | 520                 | 0.8%    |
| 507                                                                                                                                              |        | 4,844  | 13.7%   | 4,711  | 11.1%   | 6,196  | 11.0%   | 7,090               | 11.1%   |
| 508                                                                                                                                              |        | 2,375  | 6.7%    | 2,648  | 6.2%    | 2,947  | 5.2%    | 3,210               | 5.1%    |
| Upper County                                                                                                                                     |        | 8,602  | 24.3%   | 8,593  | 20.3%   | 9,663  | 17.2%   | 10,820              | 17.1%   |
| Total County                                                                                                                                     |        | 35,463 | 100.0%  | 42,422 | 100.0%  | 56,297 | 100.0%  | 62,830              | 100.0%  |
| Note: Census tract boundaries change over time. As a result, three of the tracts from the 1980 and 1990 Censuses were split for the 2000 Census. |        |        |         |        |         |        |         |                     |         |
| Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, and 2000 figures) and York County Planning Division (2005 estimates)                                    |        |        |         |        |         |        |         |                     |         |

**Table 1**

## **Age, Sex, and Race**

The 2000 median age in York County was 36.5 years, almost four years older than it was in 1990 and eight years older than in 1980. The population is getting older, on average, as it is all over the country, because of the aging of the post-war baby boom generation born between 1946 and 1964 when fertility rates were remarkably high. The baby boom was followed by a “baby bust” period that brought lower fertility rates, causing a “bulge” in the age distribution of the population. Meanwhile, medical advances have increased the average life expectancy from 71 in 1970 to 75 in 1990, and the Census Bureau projects that it will increase to almost 78 by the year 2010. (The senior population, defined as those aged 65 and older, increased by 62% from 1990 to 2000 while the total population grew by 33%.) The cumulative effect of these trends has been to raise significantly the median age both in York County and nationally.

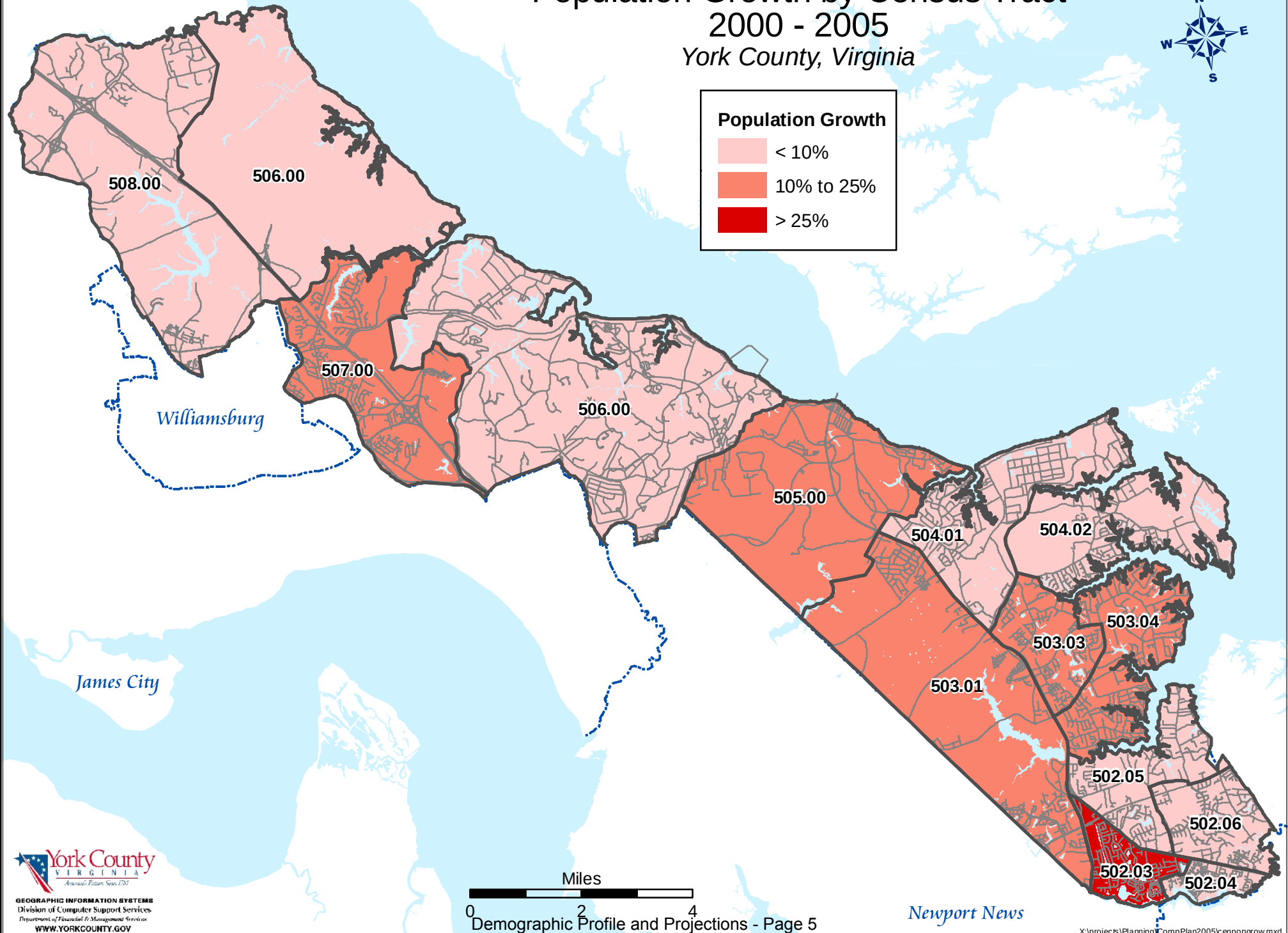
The racial composition of the County's population has been fairly stable over time, with whites representing about 81% of the population in both 1990 and 2000. Although the number of black residents increased 14% between 1990 and 2000, the black proportion of the non-white population fell from 83% to 67% while the Asian population nearly doubled in number, climbing from 12% to 16% of the minority population. It should be noted that in the 2000 Census, for the first time, people had the option of identifying themselves in multiple racial categories, so direct comparisons with racial data from previous censuses are not exact.

# Population Growth by Census Tract 2000 - 2005 York County, Virginia



## Population Growth

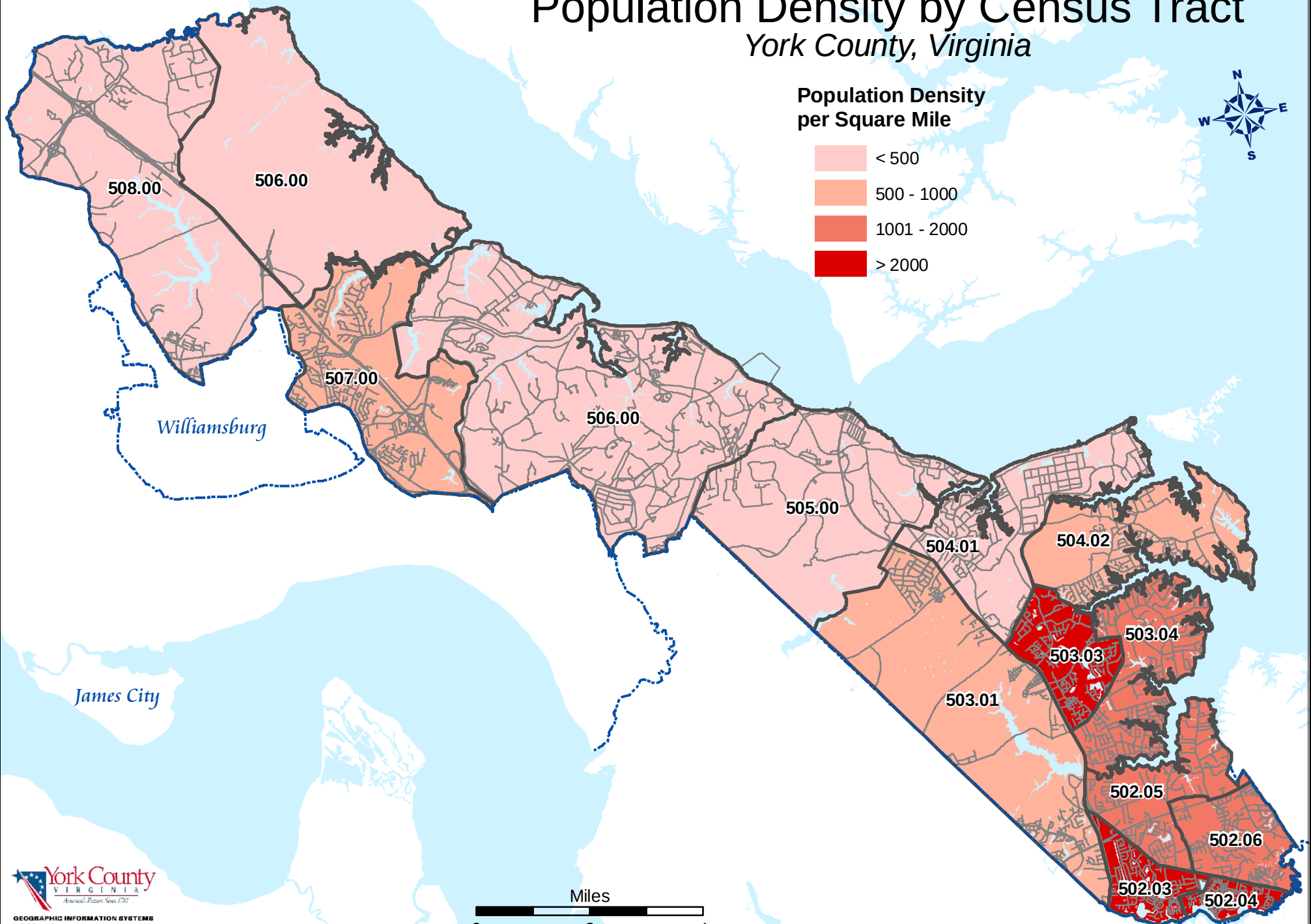
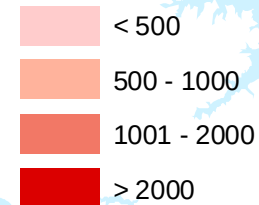
- < 10%
- 10% to 25%
- > 25%



# Population Density by Census Tract

## York County, Virginia

Population Density  
per Square Mile

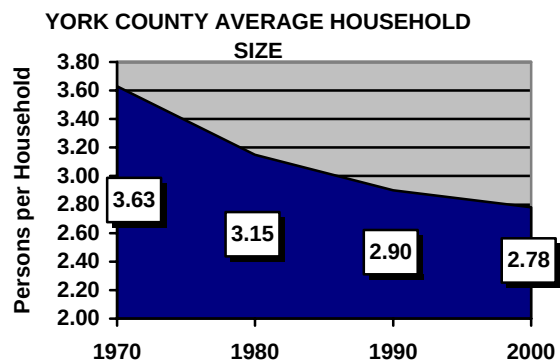


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## **Households and Families**

About two-thirds of the County's estimated 22,350 households are married-couple families, despite an increase in other types of living arrangements such as single-parent families, unrelated people living together, and people living alone. The prevalence of married-couple families in York County is reflected in its relatively large average household size, which, at 2.78 persons per household, was the highest on the Peninsula in 2000 and higher than the averages for both the state (2.54) and the metropolitan area (2.60). Families as a percentage of all households have fallen over the years, dropping from 82% in 1990 to 79% in 2000.



**Figure 2**

## **Group Quarters Population**

Most York County residents – 98.9% in the 2000 Census – live in households, either with one or more family or non-family members, or alone. There are, however, some who live in group quarters such as military quarters, nursing homes, group homes, and transitional homes. According to the 2000 Census, there were 627 York County residents living in group quarters, 372 of them in military quarters (the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center and Cheatham Annex), 118 in nursing homes, and 137 in various other types of housing. As a proportion of the total population the group quarters population has been fairly stable, falling only slightly from 1.2% in 1990 to 1.1% in 2000.

## **Labor Force and Unemployment**

York County's civilian labor force, which grew by about 40% between 1992 and 2003, is well educated. York County leads its Peninsula neighbors with 92% of its adult population holding at least a high school diploma. Forty percent of these high school graduates have gone on to earn at least a bachelor's degree, and 16% of the County's adult residents hold a graduate or professional degree. The high level of education in the County is reflected in the types of jobs its residents hold. Forty percent of the County's employed residents in 2000 held professional or managerial occupations.

The military share of the County's labor force is shrinking, though not dramatically. As of 2000, there were 3,501 County residents serving in the armed forces. Although military personnel in the County increased in number by 25% between 1990 and 2000, the military's share of the labor force fell slightly from 12.4% to 11.8%.

York County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the metropolitan area, and it consistently trails the regional, statewide, and national rates. In 2003 York County's average unemployment rate was 2.5%, while the jobless rate was 4.3% in the metropolitan area, 3.9% statewide, and 6.0% nationally.

Most of York County's employed residents do not work in York County. According to the 2000 Census, more County residents work in Newport News (26.7% of the County's employed residents) than in any other locality, followed by Hampton (24.0%) and York County (23.4%). This is a reversal from the 1990 Census, which showed that a 30.2% plurality of the County's employed residents also worked in the County. Since then, the number of County resident-workers increased very slightly (by 3.7%), while there were significant increases in the number of residents working in Newport News, Hampton, James City County, Norfolk, and areas outside

of the Hampton Roads region. Williamsburg is the only locality in the region that experienced a decline in the number of workers commuting from York County.

| York County Residents by Place of Work, 2000 |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Place of Work                                | 1980          |               | 1990          |               | 2000          |               |
|                                              | Number        | Percent       | Number        | Percent       | Number        | Percent       |
| Hampton                                      | 4,140         | 29.1%         | 5,472         | 25.5%         | 6,880         | 24.0%         |
| James City County                            | 446           | 3.1%          | 263           | 1.2%          | 1,954         | 6.8%          |
| Newport News                                 | 3,084         | 21.6%         | 5,429         | 25.3%         | 7,640         | 26.7%         |
| Poquoson                                     | 91            | 0.6%          | 168           | 0.8%          | 270           | 0.9%          |
| Williamsburg                                 | 2,663         | 18.7%         | 2,079         | 9.7%          | 1,672         | 5.8%          |
| York County                                  | 3,053         | 21.4%         | 6,460         | 30.2%         | 6,697         | 23.4%         |
| <b>Peninsula</b>                             | <b>13,477</b> | <b>94.6%</b>  | <b>19,871</b> | <b>92.8%</b>  | <b>25,113</b> | <b>87.7%</b>  |
| Chesapeake                                   | 15            | 0.1%          | 39            | 0.2%          | 284           | 1.0%          |
| Gloucester County                            | 115           | 0.8%          | 196           | 0.9%          | 241           | 0.8%          |
| Norfolk                                      | 343           | 2.4%          | 394           | 1.8%          | 1,033         | 3.6%          |
| Portsmouth                                   | 37            | 0.3%          | 85            | 0.4%          | 281           | 1.0%          |
| Suffolk                                      | 0             | 0.0%          | 0             | 0.0%          | 156           | 0.5%          |
| Virginia Beach                               | 42            | 0.3%          | 170           | 0.8%          | 170           | 0.6%          |
| <b>South Hampton Roads</b>                   | <b>552</b>    | <b>3.9%</b>   | <b>884</b>    | <b>4.1%</b>   | <b>2,165</b>  | <b>7.5%</b>   |
| Surry County                                 | 12            | 0.1%          | 43            | 0.1%          | 70            | 0.2%          |
| Other Richmond MSA                           | 47            | 0.3%          | 147           | 0.7%          | 367           | 1.3%          |
| Elsewhere                                    | 158           | 1.1%          | 478           | 2.2%          | 921           | 3.2%          |
| Outside Hampton Roads                        | 217           | 1.5%          | 687           | 3.2%          | 1,358         | 4.7%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>14,246</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>21,420</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>28,636</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Table 2

## Income

York County is one of the most affluent jurisdictions in Hampton Roads, with a 1999 median household income (as reported in the 2000 census) of \$57,956. Between 1989 and 1999, the median household income in York County increased by 44%, but when adjusted for inflation, the \$17,593 increase translated into a *real* increase of \$2,237 – the largest increase on the Peninsula. Similarly, York County has the lowest poverty rate on the Peninsula as reported in the 2000 Census, with 3.5% of the population living below the poverty line. The overall poverty rate for the Peninsula is 10.7%

## POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS

### Methodology

There are many different ways to project the future population and many different agencies that use them. One of the more commonly cited projection series was developed by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), which periodically publishes long-range population projections for all of Virginia's counties, cities, metropolitan statistical areas, and planning districts. Another source is the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), which, as part of its role as the transportation planning agency for the region, recently published a set of 2030 population projections for all localities in the Hampton Roads region. However, neither the VEC model nor the HRPDC model takes into account local factors that can significantly affect the rate of population growth. For these reasons, the housing and population projections in this plan were developed by the York County Planning Division.

The size of the population is a function of many factors, the principal one being the number of housing units. As in the 1999 plan, future housing unit totals were projected by the Planning Division using a *modified exponential* model of growth that assumes there exists an upper limit to the number of housing units that can be built in York County.<sup>1</sup> Land is a finite resource, and the amount of land that can be developed residentially is further limited by zoning, the availability of public water and sewer service, and environmental constraints such as wetlands and steep slopes. To project the future number of housing units, the model reduces this upper limit by the product of unused capacity (potential future units) and the unused capacity ratio, which is the rate at which undeveloped residential land is assumed to remain undeveloped.

The housing and population projections in this plan are based on the following assumptions:

- Land use designations and housing densities prescribed through zoning and the Comprehensive Plan will not change significantly in the next 20 years. It is estimated that the County has sufficient developable residential land to realistically accommodate a maximum of approximately 31,400 housing units. This figure is the “upper limit” mentioned above, by which unused capacity is calculated as the difference between it and the number of actual housing units.
- The average household size in the County will decline at a progressively decreasing rate, falling to approximately 2.65 persons per household by 2025.
- The on-base population at Camp Peary, Cheatham Annex, and the Naval Weapons Station will be relatively stable over the twenty-year period, while the number of people residing in group homes, transitional homes, nursing homes, and similar facilities will grow slightly. Accordingly, the County’s group quarters population is expected to grow as a percentage of the total population, reaching approximately 1,000 residents – or 1.3% of the total – by 2025.
- Housing vacancy will remain relatively stable over the twenty-year period.

## **Housing Units**

As shown in **Figure 3**, housing construction in the County has followed a remarkably linear pattern in the past fifteen years, adding an average of 553 units per year from 1990 through 2004.<sup>2</sup> If residential development were to continue at this rate for the next 20 years, there would be approximately 35,000 housing units in the County by the year 2025. But, there is only so much land, and construction cannot continue indefinitely at the current rate. As indicated above, there is not enough buildable residential land in the County to support more than about 31,400 units. New home construction will continue, but the average annual increase in housing units will likely decline as the County approaches build-out because the cost of residential land rises as its supply falls, while increasingly the vacant land that remains has constraints that make it difficult to develop and thus reduce the number of units per gross acre.

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<sup>1</sup> See Donald A. Krueckeberg and Arthur L. Silvers, *Urban Planning Analysis: Methods and Models* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), pp. 264-266, and Richard K. Brail, *Microcomputers in Urban Planning and Management* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1987), pp. 66-69.

<sup>2</sup> Figure does not include housing units located in Census Tract 506 because of the absence of reliable housing data for the Naval Weapons Station, Cheatham Annex, and Camp Peary.

## York County Housing Units, 1990-2004

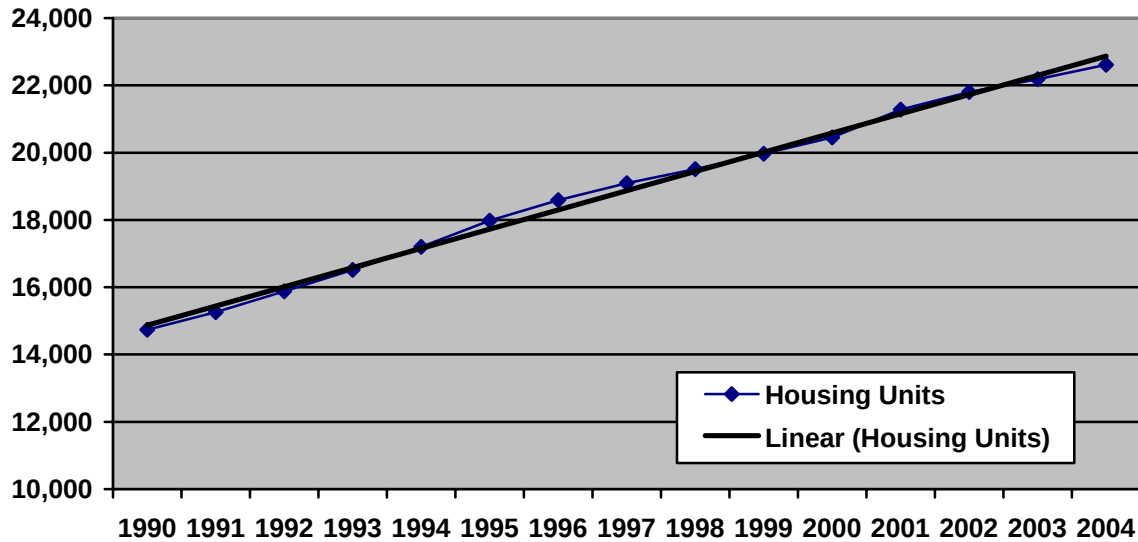


Figure 3

It is projected that approximately 6,130 new homes will be built in York County in the next twenty years. About three quarters of this construction – 4,600 units – will take place in the lower County, which continues to offer a greater supply of residential land with fewer development constraints than the upper County. However, the upper County will attract a growing share of the County's new home construction as public water and sewer service is extended to unserved areas and as the supply of developable land in the lower County diminishes. Housing construction in the upper County is projected to continue at a fairly steady rate through 2025, adding 1,520 new units and expanding the housing stock by 36%. The housing stock is projected to grow by 24% in the lower County and 26% in the County as a whole.

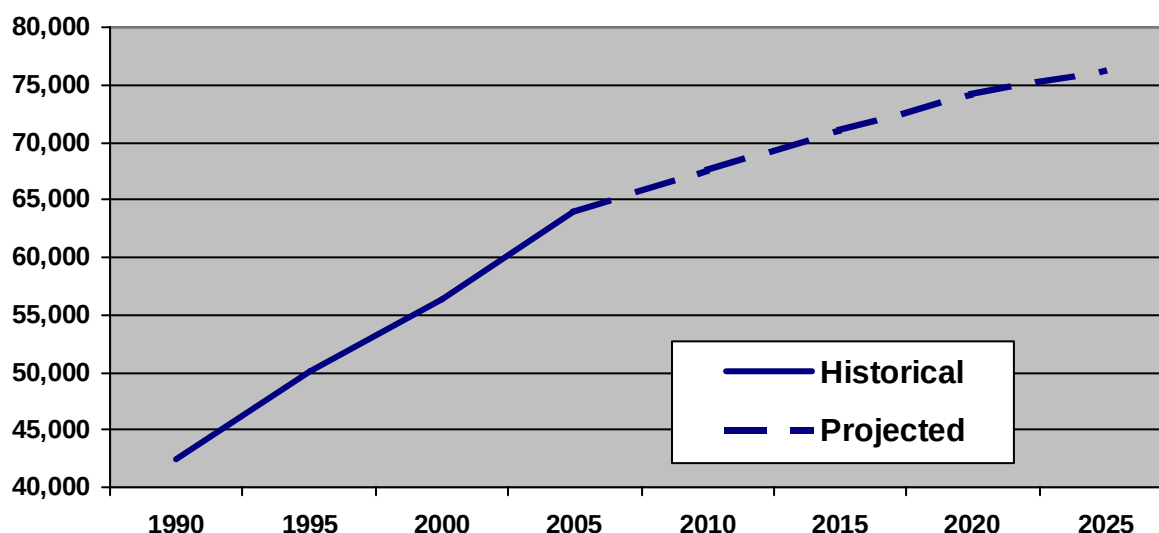
| HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED YORK COUNTY HOUSING UNITS AND POPULATION: 2000-2025            |               |            |               |            |               |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Year                                                                                    | Upper County  |            | Lower County  |            | Total County  |            |
|                                                                                         | Housing Units | Population | Housing Units | Population | Housing Units | Population |
| 2000                                                                                    | 3,737         | 9,663      | 16,964        | 46,634     | 20,701        | 56,297     |
| 2005                                                                                    | 4,180         | 10,820     | 19,100        | 52,000     | 23,270        | 62,820     |
| 2010                                                                                    | 4,600         | 11,900     | 20,700        | 55,800     | 25,300        | 67,700     |
| 2015                                                                                    | 5,000         | 12,800     | 22,000        | 58,400     | 27,000        | 71,200     |
| 2020                                                                                    | 5,300         | 13,700     | 23,000        | 60,600     | 28,300        | 74,300     |
| 2025                                                                                    | 5,700         | 14,300     | 23,700        | 62,000     | 29,400        | 76,300     |
| Note: Figures may not add because of rounding.<br>Source: York County Planning Division |               |            |               |            |               |            |

Table 3

## **Population**

With the construction of over 6,300 housing units, York County's population is projected to grow by more than 13,000 residents in the next twenty years, reaching approximately 76,300 by 2025 (see Table 3). Almost three quarters of this growth will be in the lower County, where the population is projected to increase by almost 10,400 residents (18.8%) between 2005 and 2025. In the upper County, an additional 3,500 residents are projected by 2025, representing an increase of over one-third (36.7%). It is estimated that by 2025, the County will have reached about 94% of its residential build-out capacity, with the potential for approximately 2,000 additional units, approximately 1,100 in the upper County and 900 in the lower County.

### **York County Historical and Projected Population, 1990-2025**



**Figure 4**

It should be noted that these projections are somewhat lower than those published by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC); for York County, the VEC projects the population will grow to 68,800 by 2010, 80,000 by 2020, and 91,000 by 2030. These projections appear to be unrealistically high. Since the adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan* in 1991, one of the guiding principles of the County's land use and zoning policy has been that there should be enough residentially zoned land at sufficient densities to realistically support a maximum population of about 80,000. This was one of the goals of the comprehensive revision of the Zoning Map and Ordinance that occurred in 1995, and a build-out analysis conducted by the Planning Division in 2002 found that the 80,000 is still a realistic projection of the County's so-called "maximum build-out population."<sup>3</sup>

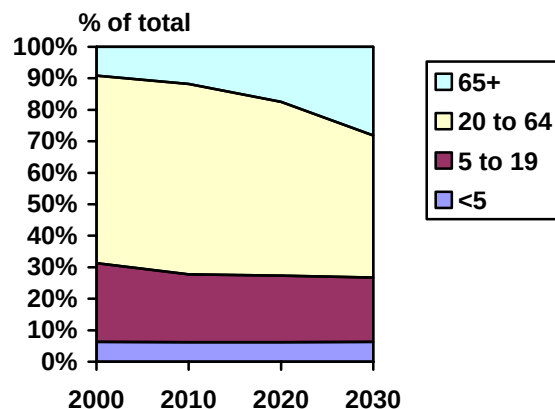
More reliable than the VEC projections are the population projections recently developed by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) for all localities in the Hampton Roads region, which included input from the respective localities. As the regional agency responsible for preparing the long-range transportation plan for Hampton Roads, the HRPDC develops population and employment projections for all the localities in Hampton Roads in order to predict where future traffic will be going. One advantage of these projections over the VEC projections

<sup>3</sup> *Toward 80,000: An Analysis of York County's Residential Growth Potential*, York County Planning Division, September 20, 2002

is that they incorporate input from the respective localities and thereby take into consideration such things as local land use and zoning policy that are not incorporated into the VEC projections. For York County the HRPDC projects that the population will reach 80,500 by 2030.

Although the VEC's projected numbers for York County may be unrealistic, the projections by five-year age group probably give a fairly accurate picture of the likely future age distribution of the population, by percentage if not by number. The VEC projects that the County's senior population (65 and older) will increase from 9.1% of the total population in 2000 to 28.1% by 2030. This is the inevitable result of the aging of the "baby boom" population, the leading edge of which – those born in 1946 – will turn 65 in 2011. At the other end of the age spectrum, the school- and preschool-age population will also continue to grow but at a much slower pace. Those County residents aged 19 and under, though increasing in number, will actually shrink as a percentage of the total population, declining from 31.3% in 2000 to 26.7%.

**York County Age Distribution**



**Figure 5**

## **Conclusion**

Strong and steady population growth over the past fifty years, most of it driven not by births but by migration, stands as testimony to York County's identity as a desirable place to live, particularly for families with children. Although the number of York County residents who also work in the County continues to rise, the County remains largely a suburban "bedroom community" of largely well-educated people who commute to high-paying jobs located within more urban employment centers outside the County, primarily Hampton (NASA-Langley Research Center) and Newport News (Newport News Shipbuilding, Oyster Point).

The decades ahead will bring continued population growth with more and more people moving into the County. Many of these new residents will likely be retirees – members of the "baby boom" generation who will begin to reach age 65 in 2011 and swell the ranks of the senior population thereafter. Not until 2029 will the youngest of these "baby boomers" turn 65. The changing age makeup of the population will have profound impacts on our public services and facilities, housing, the labor market and many other aspects of life not just in York County but across the country.