

# 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, and Virginia Beach, and the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Surry, as well as the Town of Smithfield. York County is also part of the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News VA NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, includes all of the Hampton Roads localities except Franklin, Smithfield, and Southampton County, and also includes Mathews County and Currituck County, North Carolina.

The Census Bureau divides York County into fourteen census tracts for the purposes of data collection and reporting (see the Census Tract Map). The three northernmost tracts (509, 510, and 511) encompass what is commonly referred to as the upper County, while the remaining tracts constitute the lower County. The upper County, excluding the Naval Weapons Station, is often referred to as the "Bruton (Magisterial) District." Within the County are several areas and communities that have no defined legal boundaries but whose general location is commonly recognized by 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. Grafton, which is generally bounded by Goodwin Neck Road, Chisman Creek, Oriana Road, and the Poquoson River, includes census tract 503.03, 503.04, and a portion of Tract 503.06. 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 503.05. Other communities include Seaford (Tract 504.02), Dandy (in Tract 504.01), and Dare (in Tract 503.04).

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

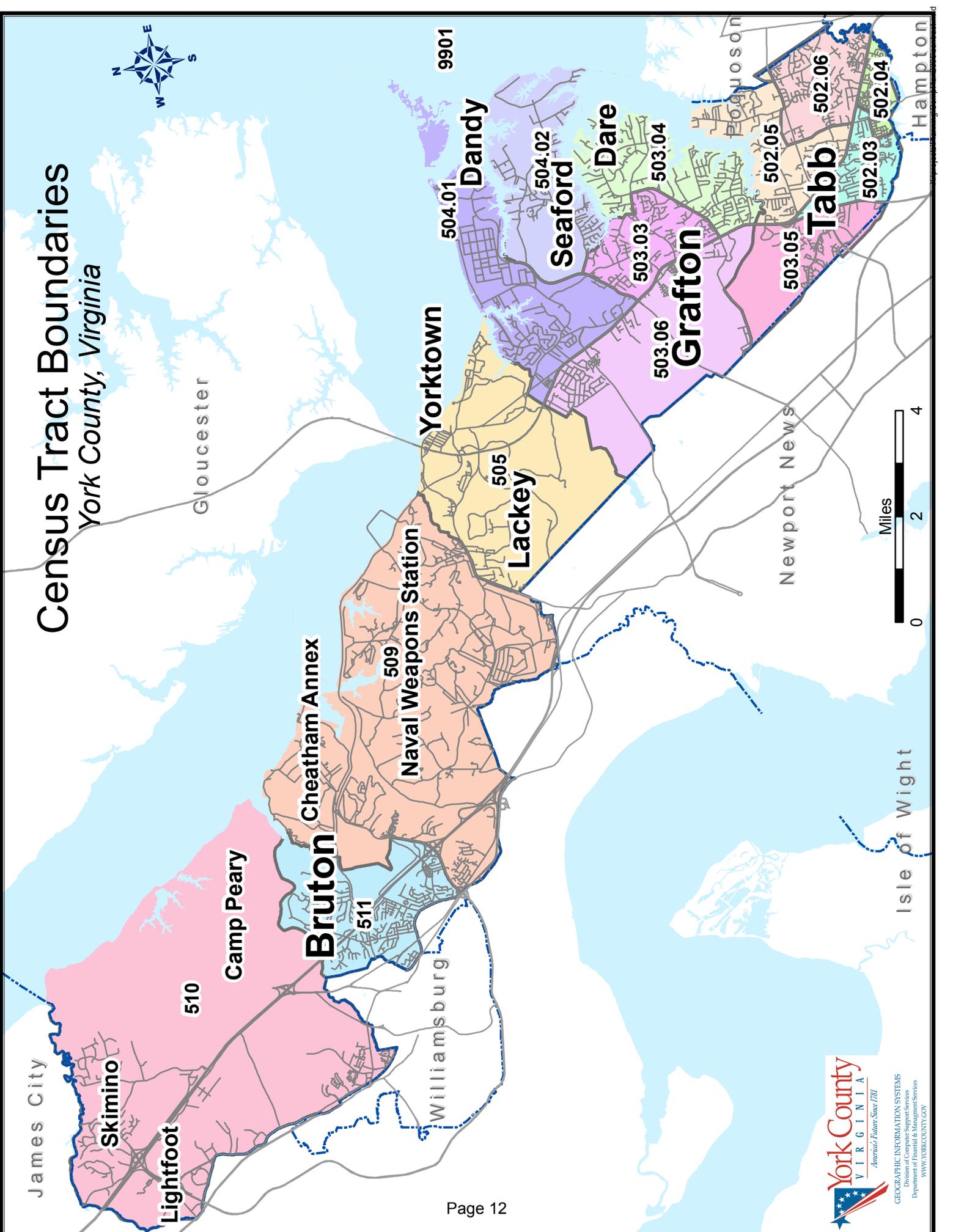
### Population

York County is home to approximately 67,000 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, with approximately 620 persons per square mile. The population of the County was fairly stable for the first 140 years of its history, growing from 5,233 in 1790 to 7,615 in 1930 – an average increase of 17 residents per year. Population growth accelerated in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s and has been fairly steady ever since, although the rate of population increase has varied from decade to decade. The population grew by almost 6,971 (19.7%) during the 1980s, 13,863 (32.7%) in the 1990s, and 8,890 (15.8%) between 2000 and 2010.

The County's population is highly concentrated in the lower County, which represents 48.2% of the County's land area but is home to 80.5% of its residents. Almost 60% of the land in the upper County is federal property that is largely uninhabited (Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and Camp Peary, which have a total population density of approximately 35 persons per square mile) and helps to keep the overall population density low. The County's highest population density is in Census Tract 502.04, which is home to the Langley Air Force Base's "Landings at Langley" (formerly Bethel Manor) family housing complex. In the year 2010, this complex had a population density, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, of more than 7,500 persons per square mile; the population density of the County as a whole is 620 persons per square mile.

# Census Tract Boundaries

## York County, Virginia



## YORK COUNTY POPULATION

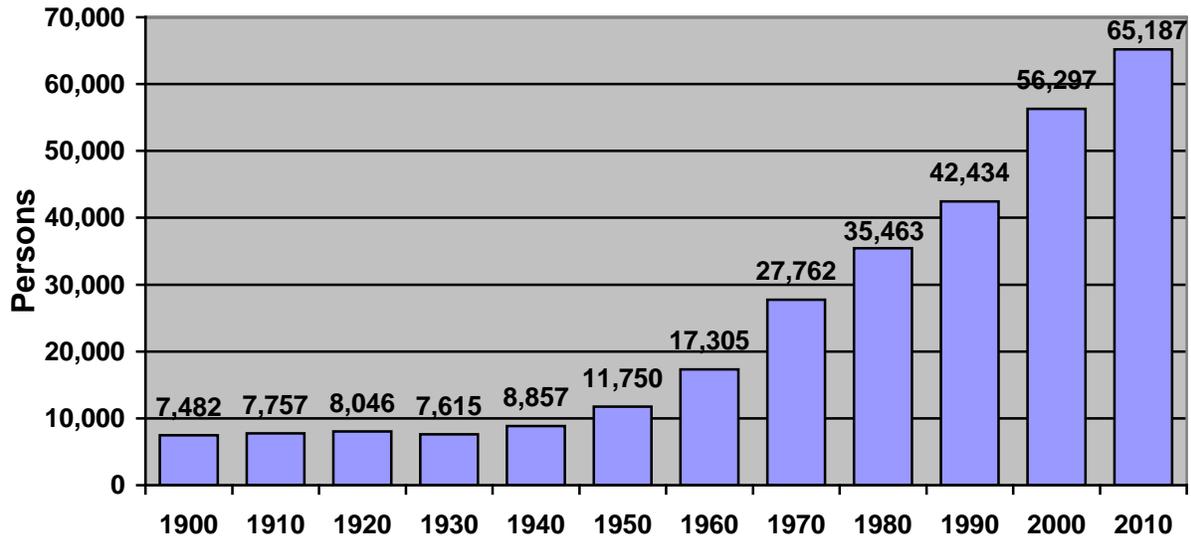


Figure 1

The two components of population growth are net natural increase – the difference between the number of resident births and deaths – and net migration, the difference between the number of people moving into and out of a community. Although annual resident births in York County regularly outnumber deaths, most of the County’s population growth – 64.4% between 2000 and 2010 – is the result of net migration. Most of the County’s growth over the past several decades, and most of the net migration, has taken place in the lower County, which almost doubled in population from 26,861 in 1980 to 52,432 in 2010, while the upper County grew from 8,602 to 12,755. Net migration has been greater in the County than in the state as a whole, where net natural increase and net migration each account for half of the population growth from 2000 to 2010.

### **Age, Race, and Gender**

The 2010 median age in York County was 39.4 years, almost three years older than it was in 2000 and nearly eleven 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 birth rates were remarkably high. The baby boom was followed by a “baby bust” period of lower birth rates, causing a “bulge” in the age distribution of the population. In addition, medical advances have increased the average life expectancy. The cumulative effect of these trends has been to raise significantly the median age both in York County and nationally.

The senior population represents one of the faster growing age groups in York County. The number of residents aged 65 and older increased 54.5% from 2000 to 2010 while the total population grew 16.3%. As a result, seniors as a proportion of the total population increased from 9.1% to 12.1%. During this same period, the number of children under the age of 18 in the County increased 5.3%, but declined from 29.1% to 26.4% of the total population.

The racial composition of the County’s population has been fairly stable over time, with whites representing about 81.6% of the population in 2000 and 79.3% in 2010. Blacks increased from 14.1% to 14.8% of the population between 2000 and 2010, while Asians increased from 4.0% to 6.4%. Other races – including American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other

Pacific Islanders, and others – constitute a combined total of 3.3% of the population.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that beginning with the 2000 Census, people have the option of identifying themselves in multiple racial categories, so direct comparisons with race data from previous censuses are not exact. In the 2010 Census, 2.9% of the population fell into more than one racial category, up from 2.0% in the 2000 Census.

The Hispanic proportion of the County’s population is growing but is still relatively small compared to the rest of the state and the metropolitan area. According to the 2010 Census, 4.4% of York County’s residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin, up from 2.7% in 2000. Meanwhile, within the Virginia Beach metropolitan area and the state as a whole, Hispanics represent 5.4% and 7.9% of the population respectively.

Females outnumber males in the County by 51.1% to 48.9%. This disparity has widened over the years, and will likely continue to do so, because of the continuing growth in the senior population and the fact that women have a higher average lifespan than men. It should be noted that 55.6% of those aged 65 and over are women.

### **Household Composition**

According to the 2010 Census, families – defined as a householder living with one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption – represent 77.9% of all County households.<sup>2</sup> (A household includes all the people occupying a housing unit, whether or not they are related to each other. Unlike families, households also include people living alone and unrelated people living together.) The vast majority of these families – 81.8% (63.7% of all households) – are husband-wife families, despite increases in other types of living arrangements such as single-parent families, unrelated people living together, and people living alone. The prevalence of families in York County, and husband-wife families in particular, is reflected in the County’s relatively large average household size, which, at 2.70 persons per household, was the highest on the Peninsula in 2010 and higher than the averages for both the state (2.54) and the metropolitan area (2.55).

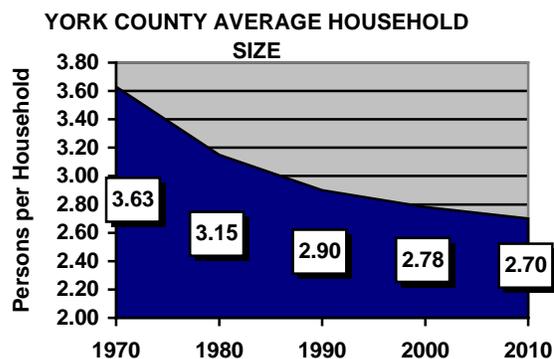


Figure 2

Almost all York County residents – 99% in the 2010 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 2010 Census, there were 648 York County residents living in group quarters, 511 of them in military quarters (241 at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center and 270 at Naval Weapons Station/Cheatham Annex), 114 in nursing homes, and 23 in other types of housing. The size of the group quarters population has been fairly stable over the past few decades, increasing from 510 in 1990 to 627 in 2000 and 648 in 2010.

<sup>1</sup> The racial statistics reported here are based on “Race Alone or in Combination with other Races” and therefore include residents who identify with multiple racial categories in each of those categories.

<sup>2</sup> The Census Bureau does not count same-sex married couples as families unless there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption. Same-sex couple households with no relatives of the householder present are considered nonfamily households. “Nonfamily households” consist of people living alone and households that do not have any members related to the householder.

## **Labor Force and Unemployment**<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, population growth in York County has been accompanied by steady growth in the civilian labor force, which grew from 26,607 in 2000 to 34,049 in 2011 – an increase of 27.6%. This labor force is well educated; according to the Census Bureau, York County leads its Peninsula neighbors with 95% of its adult population holding at least a high school diploma (see **Table 1**). Forty-four percent of these high school graduates (or 42% of the adult population) have gone on to earn at least a bachelor's degree, and 20% of the County's adult residents hold a graduate or professional degree.

York County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the metropolitan area, and it consistently trails the regional, statewide, and national rates. In 2011 York County's average unemployment rate was 5.4%, while the jobless rate was 7.0% in the metropolitan area, 6.2% statewide, and 8.9% nationally. On the Peninsula, the 2011 unemployment ranged from 5.3% in Poquoson to 14.0% in Williamsburg; the overall jobless rate for the Peninsula as a whole was 7.4%.

<b>YORK COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>	
Population 25 years and over	100%
Less than 9th grade	1.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	3.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	20.6%
Some college, no degree	21.6%
Associate's degree	10.5%
Bachelor's degree	22.0%
Graduate or professional degree	19.8%
Percent high school graduate or higher	94.6%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	41.8%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2010</i>	

**Table 1**

According to the Census Bureau, the vast majority of York County's employed residents – approximately 72% – work outside the County. On the Peninsula, only Poquoson has a lower proportion of its residents whose place of employment is in the same locality as their residence (22%); at 58%, Newport News has the highest. For Hampton, James City County, and Williamsburg, the figures are 47%, 42%, and 48% respectively.

More than a fifth of the Peninsula's military personnel (22.1%) live in York County, where armed forces personnel represent a larger share of the labor force than in any other Peninsula locality. Although military personnel in the County increased in number by 31.6% between 2000 and 2010, the military's share of the labor force fell slightly from 11.8% to 9.2%.

## **Income**

York County is one of the most affluent jurisdictions in Hampton Roads, with a median household income (in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars) of approximately \$81,100, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. This is well above both the metro area and state median household incomes of \$57,600 and \$61,400 respectively, and second-highest on the Peninsula, behind Poquoson. Likewise, York County has lower poverty rates than the metro area and the state and the lowest poverty rates on the Peninsula, with 3.9% of residents and 3.2% of families living below the poverty line.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a person is considered unemployed (or jobless) if he or she:

- Has no employment but is available for work and;
- Has engaged in any specific job-seeking activity within the past four weeks, such as registering at a public or private employment office, meeting with prospective employers, checking with friends or relatives, placing or answering advertisements, or writing letters of application; or
- Was waiting to be called back from a job from which he or she has been laid off; or
- Was waiting to report to a new wage or salary job within 30 days.

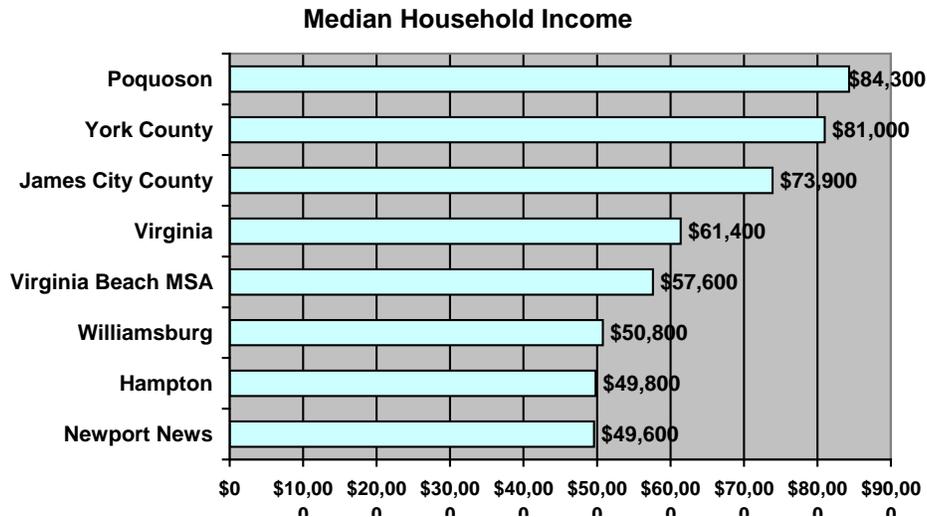


Figure 3

## POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTIONS

### Methodology

The population and housing projections in this Plan were developed by the York County Planning Division utilizing the same basic methodology that was used for the 1999 and 2005 Comprehensive Plan projections. This methodology recognizes that the size of the population is a function of the number of housing units, the average household size, the vacancy rate, and the number of people living in group quarters (military barracks, nursing homes, etc.). Future housing unit totals have been projected using a “modified exponential” model of growth that assumes there is an upper limit to the number of housing units that can be built in York County.<sup>4</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 various environmental and other constraints such as wetlands, steep slopes, and utility easements. 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.

An underlying assumption of this projection methodology is that 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 35,600 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. It should be noted that this maximum build-out figure is predicated on the availability of public water and sewer service; in those areas not served by public water and/or sewer, the minimum lot size requirement typically is higher, which means that fewer lots can be developed than the zoning would normally allow.

The projection methodology also assumes that the average household size in the County will continue to decline at a progressively decreasing rate, falling to approximately 2.6 persons per household by 2035. The vacancy rate, in contrast, fluctuates with the housing market and thus

<sup>4</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.

has not followed any clear trend: in York County, the overall vacancy rate was 4.1% in 1980, 5.3% in 1990, 3.4% in 2000, and 5.8% in 2010. These projections are based on an assumed vacancy rate of 5%, which appears reasonable based on historical data.

Multiplying the projected number of housing units by the average household size and the occupancy rate (100% minus the vacancy rate) yields the projected household population, to which must be added the projected group quarters population. As noted earlier, York County’s group quarters population has been fairly stable for the past twenty years; however, the Marine Corps recently announced plans to consolidate its Security Force Regiment (825 Marines, sailors, and civilians) at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, and it is reasonable to assume that the growing senior population will generate demand for more skilled nursing facilities and/or nursing homes in the County. For these reasons, it is assumed that the group quarters population will grow to approximately 1,500 residents by 2025.

### Housing Units

Housing construction in the County has followed a fairly linear pattern for most of the past two decades, which, if it were to continue, would result in over 37,000 housing units in the County by 2035. However, there is only so much land, and construction cannot reasonably be expected to continue indefinitely at the current rate. As indicated above, it is estimated that there is enough buildable residential land in the County, based on current zoning and the land use designations in this Plan, to support about 35,400 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.

### York County Housing Units Historical and Projected, 1990-2035

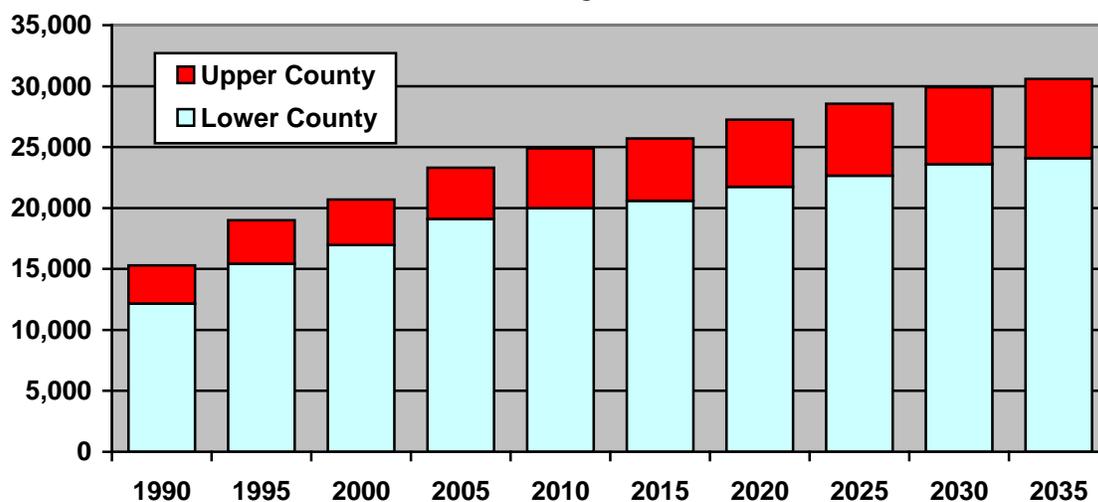


Figure 4

As noted in **Figure 4** and **Table 2**, it is projected that approximately 5,800 new homes will be built in York County in the next 22 years. Most of this construction – 4,150 units – is expected take place in the lower County, which continues to offer more residential land with fewer development constraints than the upper County. However, the upper County could experience a growing share of the County’s new home construction if development results in public water and sewer service extensions 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 2035, adding 1,650 new units and expanding the housing stock by 32.6%. The housing stock is projected to grow by 20.5% in the lower County and 22.9% in the County as a whole.

## Population

With the construction of 5,800 housing units, York County's population is projected to grow by almost 13,000 residents in the next 22 years, reaching approximately 78,200 by 2035 (see **Table 2**). Almost two-thirds of this growth is projected to be in the lower County, where the population is projected to increase by approximately 7,900 residents (14.9%) between 2010 and 2035. In the upper County, an additional 4,800 residents are projected by 2035, representing an increase of over one-third (37.8%). It should be noted that these projections are lower than the projections in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This is primarily a reflection of the downturn in new home construction that began in 2006 and deepened with the prolonged national economic recession that began in 2008.

### York County Population Historical and Projected, 1990-2035

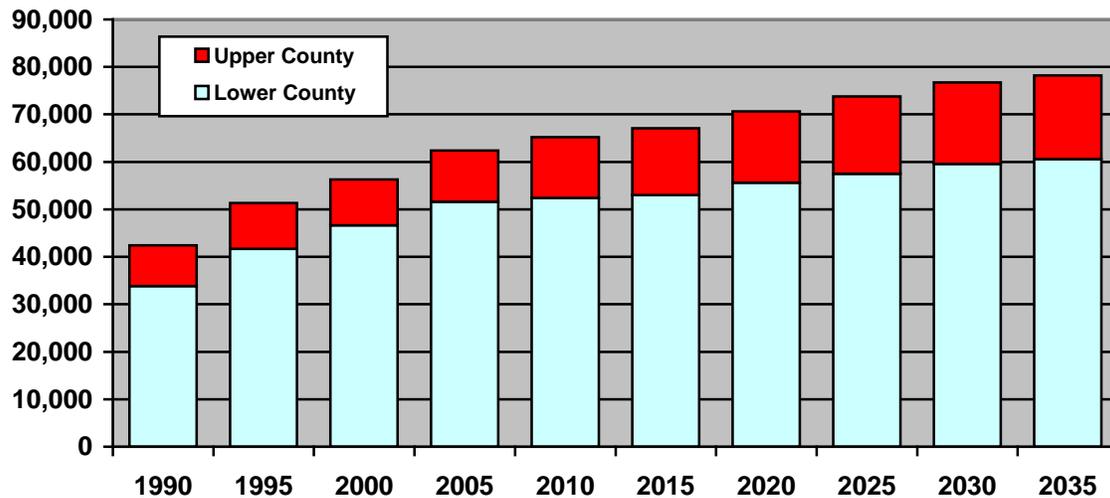


Figure 5

#### HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED YORK COUNTY HOUSING UNITS AND POPULATION: 2000-2035

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	4,200	10,800	19,100	51,600	23,300	62,400
2010	4,900	12,755	20,000	52,432	24,900	65,187
2015	5,100	14,100	20,600	53,000	25,700	67,200
2020	5,500	15,000	21,750	55,600	27,250	70,600
2025	5,900	16,250	22,650	57,500	28,550	73,750
2030	6,300	17,150	23,600	59,600	29,900	76,750
2035	6,500	17,600	24,100	60,600	30,700	78,200

Figures may not add because of rounding.  
Source: York County Planning Division

Table 2

For purposes of comparison, population projections that were recently developed by the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) are presented in **Table 3** below. The Cooper Center, under contract with the Virginia Employment Commission, released population projections in November 2012 for all Virginia localities, while the HRPDC produces population projections for all localities in Hampton Roads as part of its role in support of the development of the Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Cooper Center projections are for 2020, 2030, and 2040, while the HRPDC projects only for the horizon year of the LRTP – 2040, in this case – although “unofficial interim” projections for 2020 and 2030 are also included. As **Table 3** shows, The projections produced for this Comprehensive Plan are somewhat lower than those produced by the Cooper Center but are fairly consistent with the HRPDC’s 2040 projection. The Cooper Center, it should be noted, models future population as a function of past population using Census population data from 1950 through 2010. The model does not take into account such things as zoning, available land area, or community-specific growth/development plans, which are critical factors in predicting a locality’s future growth, particularly a small locality such as York County with a diminishing supply of developable residentially zoned land.

<b>POPULATION PROJECTION COMPARISONS</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>York County Planning Division</b>	<b>Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service</b>	<b>Hampton Roads Planning District Commission</b>
2010	65,187	65,187	65,187
2015	67,200	-	-
2020	70,600	75,590	71,800
2025	73,750	-	-
2030	76,750	86,321	78,200
2035	78,200	-	-
2040	-	97,627	82,700
<b>Note:</b> The HRPDC produces only an “official” 2040 projection for the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The 2020 and 2030 figures represent <i>unofficial intermediate</i> forecasts only.			

**Table 3**

Unlike the other projection series, the Cooper Center’s population projections are disaggregated into five-year age cohorts, thus providing a general picture of the expected future age distribution of the population. According to these projections, the County’s senior population (65 and older) will increase from 12.1% of the total population in 2010 to 15.8% by 2020 and 19.5% by 2030, then drop to 18.2% by 2040 (see **Figure 6**). The growth of the senior population is the inevitable result of the aging of the “baby boom” population, the leading edge of which – those born in 1946 – began to turn 65 in 2011. At the other end of the age spectrum, the school- and preschool-age population is also expected to experience much less growth. The Cooper Center projects that the proportion of County residents aged 19 and under will grow from 24.0% in 2010 to 27.6% in 2020 and level off thereafter (27.5% by 2020 and 27.8% by 2030).

## York County Projected Age Distribution

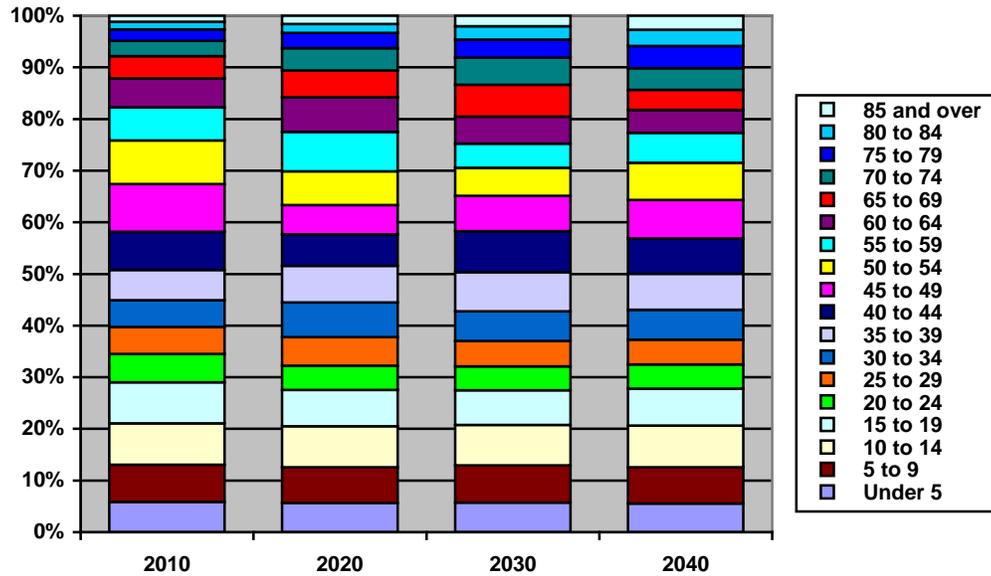


Figure 6

### Conclusion

Strong and steady population growth over the past fifty years, most of it driven 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 well-educated people who commute to high-paying jobs located within more urban employment centers outside the County, such as Hampton (NASA-Langley Research Center, Langley Air Force Base), Newport News (Newport News Shipbuilding, Oyster Point), and south Hampton Roads.

The decades ahead are expected to 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 began to reach age 65 in 2011 and will 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 public services and facilities, housing, the labor market and many other aspects of life not just in York County but across the country.