

ECONOMIC BASE

This chapter is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the York Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to provide information about the local economy and labor force. This information is essential to inform decisions in several sections of the Comprehensive Plan, including economic development, fiscal policy, land use and transportation.

The text of this Chapter is organized into three sections: Constraints and Opportunities, Employment Base, and Labor Force.

Comprehensive Plans in Maine must comply with the legal requirements of state law, specifically Title 30-A §4326. The law establishes that land use policy must be based on information and analysis, and accordingly the law establishes that comprehensive plans must contain an Inventory and Analysis section. This Chapter is one part of the Inventory and Analysis section of the York Comprehensive Plan. This Chapter, and others being prepared at this time, marks a change in format for the Plan. The Inventory and Analysis section is being converted to a series of technical reports on individual subjects (population, housing, land use, natural resources, etc.). Each is complete as a stand-alone report on its specific subject, but taken as a set they comprise the complete Inventory and Analysis section. This new format should encourage the Town to keep the Plan up to date, and should increase public access to information contained in the Inventory and Analysis. During the transition from a single Inventory and Analysis section to a series of single-subject reports, some degree of overlap of content and information is expected. For purposes of interpretation, the most current document shall supersede any earlier version or chapter of the Inventory and Analysis section. When the entire set of Inventory and Analysis chapters is adopted, the 1999 Inventory and Analysis section of the York Comprehensive Plan can be repealed.

Constraints and Opportunities

The final portion of this chapter goes beyond the hard numbers considered in the preceding sections and offers a critical examination of the economic constraints faced by the Town of York and the key opportunities for future economic prosperity.

1. Economic Competitiveness

The Town of York possesses many unique characteristics that impact its economic competitiveness. It is a very desirable place to live and work for a number of reasons.

- It is located within a reasonable commuting distance from both Boston and Portland.
- It has a very diverse and appealing geography, with miles of oceanfront property, historic villages, rolling hills and thousands of acres of undeveloped wilderness.
- It is known both as a great place for families to raise children and for retirees to enjoy an active lifestyle.

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- It has been a summertime resort area for more than a century and has a strong tourism economy.
- It has a strong base of arts and cultural resources that are attractive to prospective residents and businesses

However, despite all of these assets, York also faces a number of challenges in building its future economic base:

- Real estate is very expensive in York, thus increasing the risk for prospective businesses.
- New Hampshire is perceived to have a more business-friendly environment than Maine, and York is located just a few minutes from the state border.
- The supply of developable commercial and industrial land is limited, and most large parcels near Maine Turnpike Exit 7 are already developed.
- A low unemployment rate limits the available labor pool for prospective new employers. *Depending on the future of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, there may be an immediate increase in the regional unemployment rate.*
- The gap between wages and housing prices in York is quite large, making it very difficult for employees in the area to find affordable housing.

In all probability, the high land values, limited supply of land and “disadvantage” of being located so close to New Hampshire will limit York’s marketability for larger-scale commercial and industrial development. However, York’s assets make it very appealing for smaller niche businesses and sole proprietors looking for an attractive place to live and work.

2. Tourism Issues

Tourism is undoubtedly a critical component of York’s economic base, and has been so for more than 100 years. The attractions of the Town’s coastline and historic villages continue to be appealing, and visitors continue return to town year after year. While tourism already contributes strongly to the local economy, there are many opportunities to further enhance its role as part of York’s future economic prosperity.

The first issue that can be improved is seasonality. As documented later in this report, lodging properties in York do 25 times more business in August than in January and restaurants do five times more business in August than in February. While summer will always be the peak season for tourism to York, there are still opportunities to improve the tourist economy in the shoulder seasons as well as in the winter season.

The Greater York Chamber of Commerce does market York for off-season visitation, and its selling points focus on winter being a “magical time” to visit the area. There are still many visitor attractions that remain open through at least part of the winter. Tourism can therefore be attracted in the off-season with the promise of historic attractions, fine dining and natural beauty without large crowds. Outdoor recreation in Southern Maine can also be marketed to off-season visitors.

Another market segment that can be grown is heritage tourism. York is Maine’s oldest town and contains many historic attractions such as the Old Gaol Museum, the George Marshall Store Gallery and Jefferds’ Tavern. These attractions can be marketed as part of tour packages with local inns and restaurants to off-season visitors.

The issue of daytrippers is also important to consider. York Beach, as the closest Maine ocean beach to Massachusetts, draws a high percentage of daytrippers in the summertime. From an economic standpoint, daytrippers are the worst kind of visitors—they add to traffic congestion and sanitation issues, but they don’t spend much money. Working with the Greater York Chamber of Commerce, an effort to convince more daytrippers to stay overnight would produce tremendous economic benefits to the Town and would create business opportunities as well.

A final point regarding tourism is the issue of housing for tourist-industry workers. As indicated above, labor force statistics show that most seasonal employees in York do not live in town while employed locally. If York seeks to maintain a strong tourism industry, providing for the housing of seasonal workers will be an important consideration.

Given its importance, it would be appropriate to study in greater detail the tourism-sector of York’s economy and the regional economy. This would facilitate a better understanding of the implications of public policy on this important sector of the economy for both its positive contributions and negative impacts.

3. Creative Economy

For the reasons outlined in the economic competitiveness section above, the Town of York is not well positioned to accommodate large-scale commercial or industrial growth in the future. The future economic prosperity of the Town will therefore need to focus on attracting, growing and retaining small businesses that fill niches in the regional and national economy.

The “Creative Economy” is defined as any individuals or businesses involved in arts, cultural or technological pursuits. State government has made the Creative Economy a centerpiece of statewide economic development efforts by emphasizing arts, education, and cultural aspects of Maine when recruiting prospective businesses. The Maine Arts Commission website lists three key roles in the state’s economy of Creative Economy individuals and businesses:

- An export industry closely connected to tourism and recreation.
- As a key element in Maine's quality of life.
- As a cluster of economic activity in its own right.

National research on this topic has established that creative individuals and businesses are drawn to places with a strong quality of life as defined by four factors: diversity, arts and culture “scenes”, universities and recreational opportunities. While York lacks immediate proximity to a major college or university, it certainly possesses the other factors. Of equal importance is York’s location in reference to the Boston area—it is located fairly close, but is less populated and offers a less hectic lifestyle.

York itself is already home to scores of creative resources. The Agamenticus Arts & Heritage project, conducted in 2000, inventoried arts and cultural resources in the York region and listed hundreds of artists, craftspeople, educators, musicians in York and its surrounding towns. This project is now gearing up to work on a regional arts and heritage planning effort to boost the visibility of the creative arts in the area.

Employment Base

In order to assess a community's economic prospects, the current job situation must first be understood. This section profiles the town's current job base and the types of employment found in York.

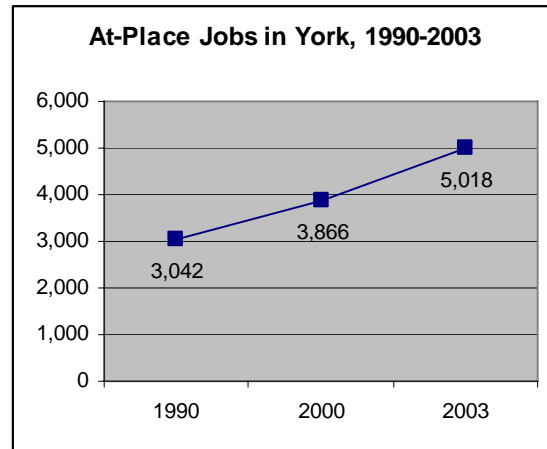
1. Employment Profile

A. EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY

York has a diverse economic base comprised mainly of smaller employers. For the year 2003, the Maine Department of Labor reports that there were 5,018 persons employed full-time in York at 523 different establishments. This represents an average of 9.6 employees per establishment.

For 2003, York County's total full-time employment was 60,455, so the Town of York accounts for 8.3% of all jobs in the county. The countywide average establishment size is 10.7 employees.

Employment in York has grown substantially since 1990, as shown by the chart to the right. The Maine Department of Labor reports that there were an average of 3,042 persons employed full-time in the Town as of 1990. This figure grew to 3,866 in 1997 and to 5,018 by 2003. The net change in jobs in the Town was 1,976, representing an overall growth rate from 1990-2003 of 65%. The compound annual job growth rate was 3.9%.



The local economy of York is heavily dominated by the Service and Retail sectors. According to Maine Department of Labor data, the top three employment sectors in York are Education & Health Services, Leisure & Hospitality and Trade, Transportation and Utilities. These three sectors employ 3,784 of the

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5,018 persons who work in York, or 75% of all employees. There is a far smaller share of Manufacturing jobs in York (6.6% of all jobs) compared with York County as a whole (17.8% of all jobs).

Table 1 below compares the employment profiles of the Town and the county.

**Table 1
Employment Profile, Town of York and York County, 2003**

	Town of York		York County	
	No. of Jobs	% of Total Jobs	No. of Jobs	% of Total Jobs
Construction	206	4.1%	3,114	6.0%
Manufacturing	330	6.6%	9,275	17.8%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	819	16.3%	12,041	23.1%
Information	50	1.0%	733	1.4%
Financial Activities	171	3.4%	2,214	4.2%
Professional & Business Services	246	4.9%	2,062	4.0%
Education & Health Services	1,677	33.4%	9,656	18.5%
Leisure & Hospitality	1,288	25.7%	9,820	18.8%
Other Services	135	2.7%	1,641	3.1%
Other Categories	96	1.9%	1,615	3.1%
Total Jobs	5,018	100.0%	52,171	100.0%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

B. SEASONALITY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

York’s local economy is largely seasonal. Fluctuations in employment in the two largest sectors, Retail and Services, reflect this fact. Table 2 below displays Maine Department of Labor data for 2003 on monthly full-time employment.

**Table 2
Town of York Full-Time Employment by Month, 2003**

Month	Retail	Service	Other Sectors	Total
January	793	1,993	748	3,534
February	802	2,039	725	3,566
March	817	2,029	710	3,556
April	965	2,205	823	3,993
May	1,185	2,411	971	4,567
June	1,447	2,606	1,058	5,111
July	1,738	2,690	1,221	5,649
August	1,729	2,658	1,211	5,598
September	1,493	2,483	1,142	5,118
October	1,269	2,516	1,098	4,883
November	1,094	2,512	1,071	4,677
December	996	2,510	1,092	4,598
Seasonal Variation (Peak vs. Crater)	219%	135%	172%	160%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Retail in particular is subject to seasonal variations, as employment ranged from as little as 802 jobs in February to as many as 1,738 in July—a variation of 219%. Service is less seasonal (135% variation), but the absolute difference of jobs in the summer is still very significant: there were about 700 more jobs in July than in January. The smaller sectors also demonstrated a great deal of seasonality. The Manufacturing sector by itself ranged from 216 jobs in March to 468 in July—a variation of 217%.

More discussion of seasonality in the economic base is found under the Retail & Tourism heading below.

C. HOUSING INDUSTRY

As a community with a growing population, the residential construction industry in York is also a significant contributor to the local economy. Although only about four percent of people employed in York are in the construction industry, there are other employment categories driven by the housing market, including Financial Activities (including Realtors), Professional and Business Services and Other Services. Also, many of the homebuilders who are active in York are based in other communities, so local employment data do not include these businesses.

Maine Department of Labor does report on specific industry sub-categories related to the housing industry. Here are data for 2003 on a few such sub-categories:

- Real Estate: 78 employees
- Construction of Buildings: 75 employees
- Specialty Trade Contractors: 112 employees

Another way to look at the impact of the construction industry is to examine the dollar value of new development. According to U.S. Census Bureau data for the Town of York, the total cost of new residential construction in the Town for 2004 was \$13.1 million. (Data from the Town Assessor indicates the value of this construction is closer to \$50 million.) Assuming that half of the costs were for labor, the total payroll for construction jobs in York would be about \$6.55 million.

With an average annual salary for construction jobs of \$32,300 (see below), this volume of construction would support about 203 jobs in the Town of York. This figure is almost exactly the same as the reported number of construction jobs in York of 206. How the higher values for the Assessor would affect the labor figures has not been determined, but may warrant additional study should the need for more accurate data arise.

2. Earnings

For the year 2003, the average weekly wage for persons employed in the Town was \$547 (equivalent to an annual salary of \$28,400). The countywide average weekly wage was \$534 (\$27,800 annually).

Table 3 below compares weekly and annual earnings for 2003 by employment sector for the Town of York and York County.

**Table 3
Earnings by Major Industry in York and York County, 2003**

	Town of York		York County	
	Avg Weekly Wage	Avg Annual Salary	Avg Weekly Wage	Avg Annual Salary
Construction	\$662	\$34,400	\$622	\$32,300
Manufacturing	\$435	\$22,600	\$745	\$38,700
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	\$469	\$24,400	\$465	\$24,200
Information	\$571	\$29,700	\$606	\$31,500
Financial Activities	\$731	\$38,000	\$634	\$33,000
Professional & Business Services	\$735	\$38,200	\$742	\$38,600
Education & Health Services	\$704	\$36,600	\$592	\$30,800
Leisure & Hospitality	\$336	\$17,500	\$279	\$14,500
Other Services	\$433	\$22,500	\$395	\$20,500
Total Jobs	\$547	\$28,400	\$534	\$27,800

Note: Average wages may be influenced by seasonal factors, bonus and retroactive payments, high proportions of part-time workers, or large amounts of overtime work

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Earnings in Education & Health Services, York's largest employment sector, are fairly strong, with an average weekly wage of \$704 (annual salary of \$36,600). However, earnings for Leisure and Hospitality (\$336 weekly, \$17,500 annually) and Trade, Transportation and Utilities (\$469 weekly, \$24,400 annually) are low. The highest paying employment sectors in the Town of York, Financial Activities and Professional & Business Services, only account for eight percent of all jobs in the Town.

While York's wages are higher than those of York County as a whole, the at-place earnings in the Town do not match up with its high per capita and household income levels. As reported in the Population Chapter, the Town of York's median household income exceeds the county's by 28%, and the Town's per capita income level is 45% higher than the county's. The difference in wages between the Town and the county is just 3%.

The split between personal and household incomes and local wages can be explained by commuting patterns. This issue is discussed further in the Labor Force section of this Chapter.

3. Major Employers

A. EMPLOYERS IN YORK

York’s local economy is primarily comprised of small businesses, with few large employers in the Town. Aside from York Hospital, no other private employer in York has more than a few hundred jobs. Table 4 below lists the largest employers in York.

B. MAJOR REGIONAL EMPLOYERS

York is located less than 10 miles from Portsmouth, New Hampshire and within 25 miles of Biddeford and Sanford, the two largest employment centers in York County. As such, many York residents commute to a variety of other locations in Southern Maine and Seacoast New Hampshire. There are several major employers (more than 1,000 jobs) located in the region surrounding York. These employers are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4
Major Employers in Surrounding Region, 2005
(1,000 Employees or More)

Employer	Location	Jobs
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard	Kittery, ME	4,800
University of New Hampshire	Durham, NH	2,750
Liberty Mutual Insurance	Portsmouth, NH	2,750
General Electric	Somersworth, NH	2,000
Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Systems	North Berwick, ME	1,700
Sears Roebuck & Co.	Newington, NH	1,400
Southern Maine Medical Center	Biddeford, ME	1,100
Tyco International	Exeter, NH	1,000
Portsmouth Regional Hospital	Portsmouth, NH	1,000

Source: Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission

In May 2005, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard was placed on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list by the federal Department of Defense. Though this decision is not yet final, it seems likely that the Shipyard may be closed. The potential closure of the Shipyard would have a major negative effect on the regional economy, as more than 4,000 civilian employees would be out of work.

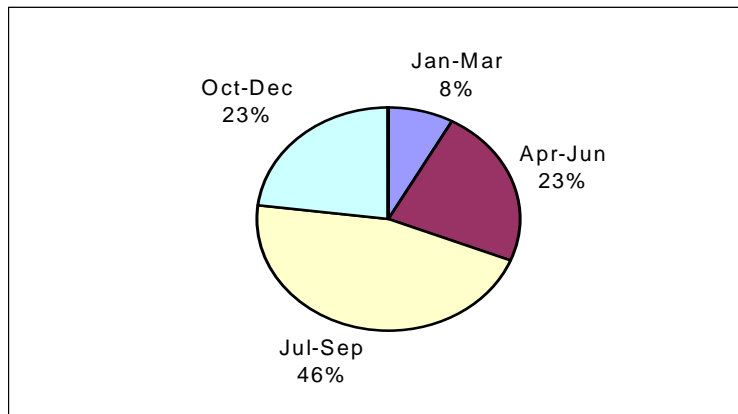
Looking locally, there are presently 239 residents of the Town of York who are employed at the Shipyard. Within the Town of York, many retail and service businesses would likely see downturns in business as a result of the loss of earnings from resident employees at the Shipyard. The local Comprehensive

Planning process in York will therefore necessarily have to monitor the situation with the Shipyard.

4. Retail and Tourism

The York region widely known as a tourism destination, and the local economy is strongly tied to tourist activity. Tourism in York, as in most of Maine, is heavily seasonal. The Maine Office of Tourism surveys visitors to the state each year and reports data at the regional level. York is located in the Southern Maine Coast tourism region, which also includes the balance of York County. The following chart shows the seasonality of visitors to the region according to the 2003 report by the state.

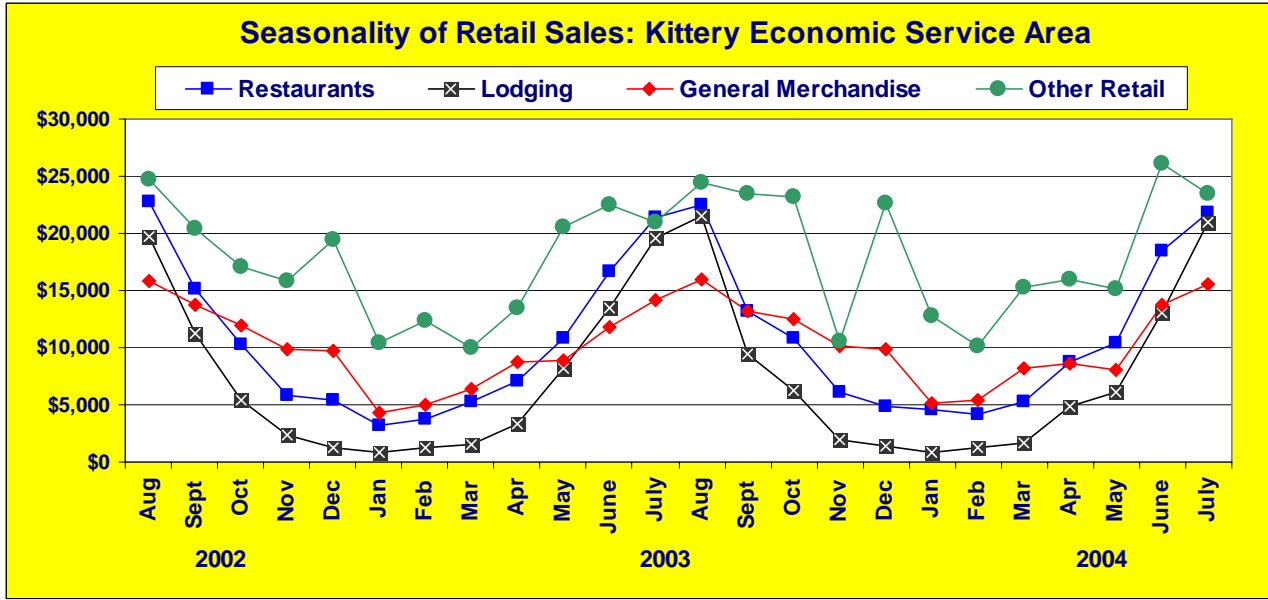
Seasonality of Visits to Southern Maine Coast Region, 2003



As would be expected for a beach resort area in a northern climate, 46% of visits to the region occur in the months of July through September. The shoulder seasons of April-June and October-December each draw 23% of yearly visitation. The winter months of January through March are by far the slowest, as only 8% of visits come at this time of year.

The most recent report available for the Southern Maine Coast region is for 2003. In all, 19.4 million trips were made to the region, of which 16.0 million (82%) were day trips, 1.1 million (6%) were pass-through trips and 2.3 million (12%) were overnight trips. The two most popular activities for visitors to the region were shopping and touring. Shopping is primarily the focus of daytrippers—among overnight visitors, shopping did not even make the top seven activities. This is a significant change from historical trends, when a more common pattern was extended stays by visitors.

The Maine State Planning Office collects monthly retail sales information at the Economic Summary Areas (ESA) level. It is clear from this information that the economic base of York and its surrounding area is affected very strongly by seasonal visitation. The two charts below illustrate seasonal fluctuations in retail sales for the 24-month period from August 2002 through July 2004 for the Kittery ESA (Kittery, York, Wells, Ogunquit, Eliot).



As would be expected, the Dining and Lodging industries are subject to large fluctuations. Lodging sales peaked in August 2004 at about \$21 million; in January of the same year, Lodging sales only represented \$821,000, a variation of 2500%. Dining sales similarly ranged from \$4.2 million in February 2004 to \$21.8 million in August 2004, a variation of 520%.

Most other types of retail experience these fluctuations as well, though the fluctuations are not as pronounced as for Dining and Lodging. Even General Merchandise, typically a more stable sector, fluctuated from \$5.1 million to \$15.6 million from the low month to the peak month in 2004—a variation of more than 300%.

Total retail sales in the Kittery ESA exhibit a 400% fluctuation from the peak season to the crater season in any one year. In 2004, total sales were at \$21.1 million in February and at \$81.9 million in August. Clearly, all sectors of the retail economy of York and its surrounding area are heavily seasonal.

Over time, York’s share of the Kittery area’s total retail sales has increased, but its share of lodging and restaurant sales has not. From 1996 to 2003, York’s share of retail sales in the Kittery Economic Summary Area (ESA), which includes Kittery, York, Eliot, South Berwick, Wells and Ogunquit, grew from 17.7% to 22.2%. During this same period, though, York’s share of the regional restaurant and lodging sales only increased by a tenth of a percentage point—from 21.1% to 21.2%.

Table 5 below shows retail sales trends from 1996-2003 for the Kittery ESA and the Town of York.

Table 5
Retail Sales Trends, 1996-2003 (in \$millions)

Year	Kittery Econ. Summary Area*			Town of York			York % of Region	
	Total Retail Sales	Restaurant & Lodging Sales	Rest./Lodg. as % of Total	Total Retail Sales	Restaurant & Lodging Sales	Rest./Lodg. as % of Total	Total	Rest/Lodg
1996	\$433.7	\$162.4	37.4%	\$76.9	\$35.1	45.6%	17.7%	21.6%
1997	\$453.5	\$167.5	36.9%	\$80.1	\$36.5	45.6%	17.7%	21.8%
1998	\$485.2	\$177.0	36.5%	\$86.0	\$40.0	46.5%	17.7%	22.6%
1999	\$525.4	\$191.4	36.4%	\$98.0	\$43.1	44.0%	18.6%	22.5%
2000	\$538.0	\$197.3	36.7%	\$107.3	\$45.7	42.6%	19.9%	23.2%
2001	\$532.5	\$201.8	37.9%	\$111.6	\$46.9	42.0%	21.0%	23.2%
2002	\$549.6	\$216.5	39.4%	\$122.8	\$49.8	40.5%	22.4%	23.0%
2003	\$550.0	\$214.3	39.0%	\$122.1	\$46.4	38.0%	22.2%	21.7%
\$ Change	\$116.3	\$51.9		\$45.2	\$11.4			
% Change	26.8%	32.0%		58.8%	32.4%			

* Kittery ESA includes Kittery, York, Eliot, South Berwick, Wells and Ogunquit

Source: Maine State Planning Office

5. Natural Resource-Based Industries

York has a long and rich history of farming, forestry and fishing/lobstering activities as part of its local economy. Although large sections of the Town have now been converted for residential and commercial uses, farming, forestry and fishing still remain important segments of the local economy. Though these resource-based industries do not represent large-scale economic engines, they are an integral part of the Town’s identity.

There are comparatively few people employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries in York. According to monthly data reported by the Maine Department of Labor, employment in these industries varies by season. In 2003, employment in these sectors ranged from 64 jobs in March to 134 in July. Regardless of the season, these jobs average about two percent of total townwide employment at all times of the year.

As of 2005, agricultural production in York is primarily limited to two large farms (Blaisdell’s cattle farm and Zacharias’ produce farm) and one small truck farm (Stony Acres). There are also a number of smaller organic and hobby farms in town. The Greater York Chamber of Commerce operates a farmer’s market on Saturdays in the summer months. This market allows local farmers and growers to reach residents and visitors.

Forestry remains an essential part of York’s economy. As of 2005, there are 17 properties containing about 875 acres that are registered as Tree Growth in the state’s current use taxation program. Many of these sites are being actively harvested. Most registered Tree Growth properties have been in this program for more than 25 years. Just five of the 17 properties (accounting for 189 acres) have been added since 1980. Properties registered as Tree Growth range in size from 19 acres to 166 acres.

Fishing and lobstering remains a small but important presence in the York Harbor area. There are a few commercial fishing and lobstering boats operating in the Town. Recreational boating also contributes strongly to the local economy, as it supports both marine-based businesses as well as restaurants, inns, stores and other tourism-related businesses. There are a total of 475 moorings for recreational boating available within the Town of York.

A number of lodging properties in York have docks and mooring space available for customers as well. There are also many private properties along the York River with private docks.

Labor Force

Of equal importance in assessing the local economic base is the status of York's labor force. This section takes a look at the resident population of York that comprises the local labor force.

1. Employment and Unemployment

York's resident labor force has grown substantially over the past 15 years. In 1990, there were 5,060 members of the local labor force; by 2004 there were 7,171. This increase of 2,111 persons represents a total change of 41.7% and a compound annual growth rate of 2.5%.

Table 6 on the next page and shows labor force, employment and unemployment trends for York from 1990 through 2004.

The number of employed residents has grown at a similar rate as the labor force, an indication of a stable unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in York has remained low over the past 15 years, peaking at 4.6% in 1992 at the height of the recession. The countywide unemployment rate reached 7.0% percent at the same time.

Following the end of the recession of the early 1990s, the labor force began to grow again for the rest of the decade and unemployment fell as well. Beginning in 2001, unemployment increased again, reaching as high as 4.0% in 2003 before falling back to 2.6% in 2004. The apparent leap in the size of the labor force between 2000 and 2001 is due to a larger than expected population count from the 2000 Census. In reality, the growth in the size of the labor force was probably much more gradual.

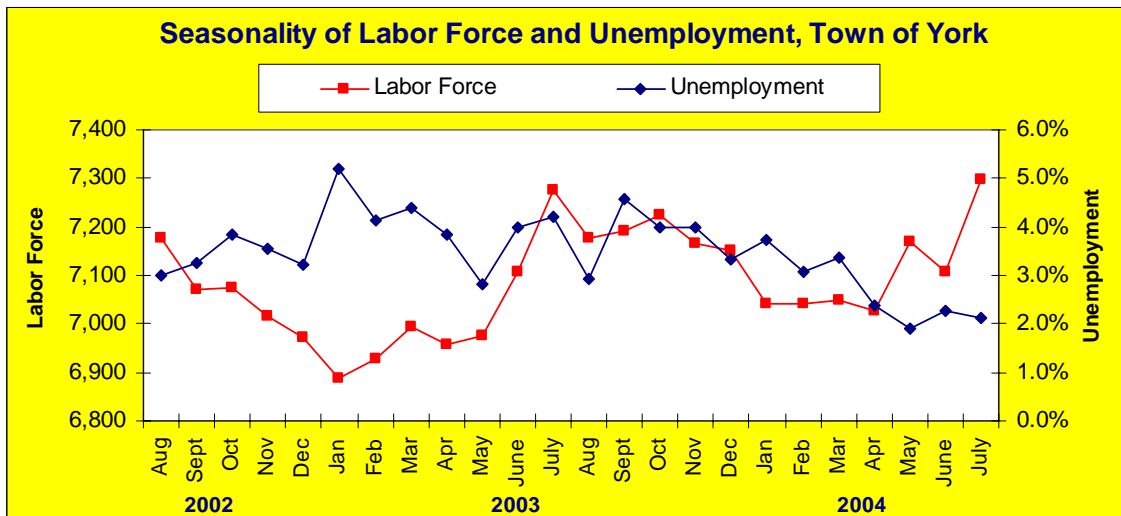
Table 6
Town of York Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1990-2004

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)
2004	7,171	6,988	183	2.6%
2003	7,086	6,807	279	3.9%
2002	6,999	6,791	208	3.0%
2001	6,969	6,849	120	1.7%
2000	6,917	6,826	91	1.3%
1999	5,620	5,544	76	1.4%
1998	5,463	5,397	66	1.2%
1997	5,501	5,409	92	1.7%
1996	5,522	5,422	100	1.8%
1995	5,274	5,153	121	2.3%
1994	5,049	4,888	161	3.2%
1993	5,213	5,029	184	3.5%
1992	5,381	5,134	247	4.6%
1991	5,308	5,096	212	4.0%
1990	5,060	4,913	147	2.9%
Num Change	2,111	2,075	36	
% Change	41.7%	42.2%	24.7%	
CAGR	2.5%	2.5%	1.6%	

Source: Maine Department of Labor

The unemployment rate for York as of 2004 was 2.6%. This rate compares with the countywide average of 4.0% and the Kittery Labor Market Area’s average of 3.3% (the Labor Market Area includes Kittery, York, Eliot, South Berwick, Berwick).

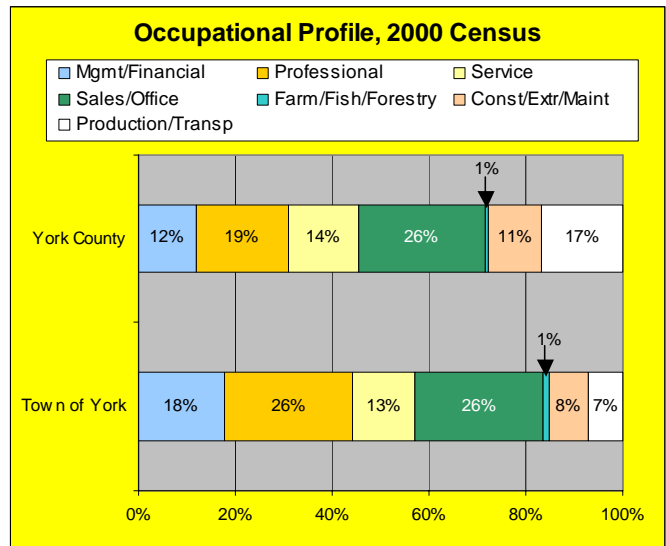
In a town with a heavily seasonal job market, it is also worth examining seasonal labor force and unemployment. The following graphic shows this information for York for the 24-month period covering August 2002 through July 2004.



The size of the labor force does get somewhat smaller during the winter months, but not significantly. The size of the labor force only varies by about 300 people, compared with the variation in seasonal employment of roughly 2,000 jobs. This disparity is an indication that most seasonal employees in York do not live in town while employed in town. This suggests a need for additional seasonal housing to better serve local businesses.

2. Occupational Profile

As would be expected for a community with a high household income level, members of the York labor force are far more likely to be employed in management and professional occupations (44%) than are all York County workers (31%). The Town's share of service, sales/office and farming/forestry/fishing workers is similar to that of the county. The one occupational category in particular for which the county has a higher concentration than the Town is Production, transportation and material moving, which encompasses most manufacturing sector jobs. For all of York County, 17% of the labor force is employed in these occupations—the figure is just 7% for the Town of York.



3. Workforce Development

As documented in the Population chapter, about 38% of the Town's adult residents have at least a Bachelor's degree and another 10% have Associate's degrees. While these educational attainment figures far surpass county and state averages, over half of York's adult population lacks any sort of college degree.

Although York High School is considered one of Maine's top secondary schools, a fairly modest percentage of recent graduates have continued on to post-secondary education compared to other schools in the area (see Table 7). From 2000 through 2003, 66.6% of York High School graduates continued on to post-secondary education. In other words, one-third of graduates of recent York High School have gone directly into the workforce.

Table 7
Percentage of Graduates Continuing to Post-Secondary Education

Graduation Year	High School Name			
	York	Marshwood	Wells	Kennebunk
2003	60.7%	75.5%	62.9%	72.6%
2002	71.5%	70.1%	64.3%	72.8%
2001	69.5%	57.5%	73.5%	73.6%
2000	64.9%	55.7%	62.6%	64.9%
Averages	66.6%	64.7%	65.8%	71.0%

Workforce development resources are available to York residents mainly through York Adult Education and York County Community College in Wells. The adult education program includes many different types of academic and vocational education. The most direct vocational training offered by York Adult Education is a Certified Nursing Assistant program. The program offers other courses in computer skills, resume writing and job interviewing skills.

York County Community College is part of Maine’s community college system and offers a range of career-oriented programs. The College offers both Associate degrees and Certificates in fields such as accounting, business administration, hotel/restaurant operations, drafting, computer support and digital media. In 2005, the Community College surveyed manufacturing and hospitality industry employers in the region and found that the labor pool in the area lacks the basic reading and writing skills needed for many jobs, and that this lack of basic skills is a hindrance to economic growth.

4. Commuting Patterns

In terms of population, York is the fourth largest municipality in York County. However, it only ranks sixth in terms of at-place jobs and its jobs-to-workers ratio of 0.67 is the tenth highest in the county. York is now primarily a commuter suburb, with its working residents’ places of employment primarily being in the Portland area, the New Hampshire seacoast and, increasingly, Massachusetts. Table 8 shows where York commuters work and where York employees live.

Table 8
Commuting Destinations of York Residents, 2000 Census **Places of Residence of York Employees, 2000 Census**

Town	Commuters	% of Total	Town	Commuters	% of Total
Town of York	2,236	35.1%	Town of York	2,236	52.6%
Other York County	1,305	20.5%	Other York County	1,489	35.0%
Other Maine	382	6.0%	Other Maine	134	3.2%
New Hampshire	1,701	26.7%	New Hampshire	360	8.5%
Massachusetts	657	10.3%	Massachusetts	26	0.6%
Other	96	1.5%	Other	7	0.2%
Total	6,377		Total	4,252	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

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The statistics in Table 8 support the assertion that York is more of a commuter town than a service center. Only 35% of York’s resident commuters work in town and only another 21% work elsewhere in York County. The Portland area is not a major magnet for York commuters—just 6% commute north of York County to other locations in Maine.

York residents are far more likely to work in New Hampshire (27%) and Massachusetts (10%) than to the north. Portsmouth is actually the top commuting destination for York residents aside from York itself, as 14% of York commuters work in either Portsmouth or Newington. Another notable fact is that more York residents actually commute to Boston (89) than to Biddeford (83).

On the flip side, 88% of people employed in York also live in York County (53% actually live in town). Few people from New Hampshire or the Portland area commute into York. Of the top five places where York employees live, four are York’s immediate neighbors—Wells, Kittery, South Berwick and Eliot.

As more and more York residents commute to New Hampshire and Massachusetts, commuting times are increasing as well. The 2000 Census reports that York’s median commute time in 2000 was 27.1 minutes. This is up substantially from the 1990 time of 21.2 minutes, an increase of 22%. In 1990, just 11% of York commuters traveled more than 45 minutes each way to work. By 2000, 19% of commuters had commutes this long.

