

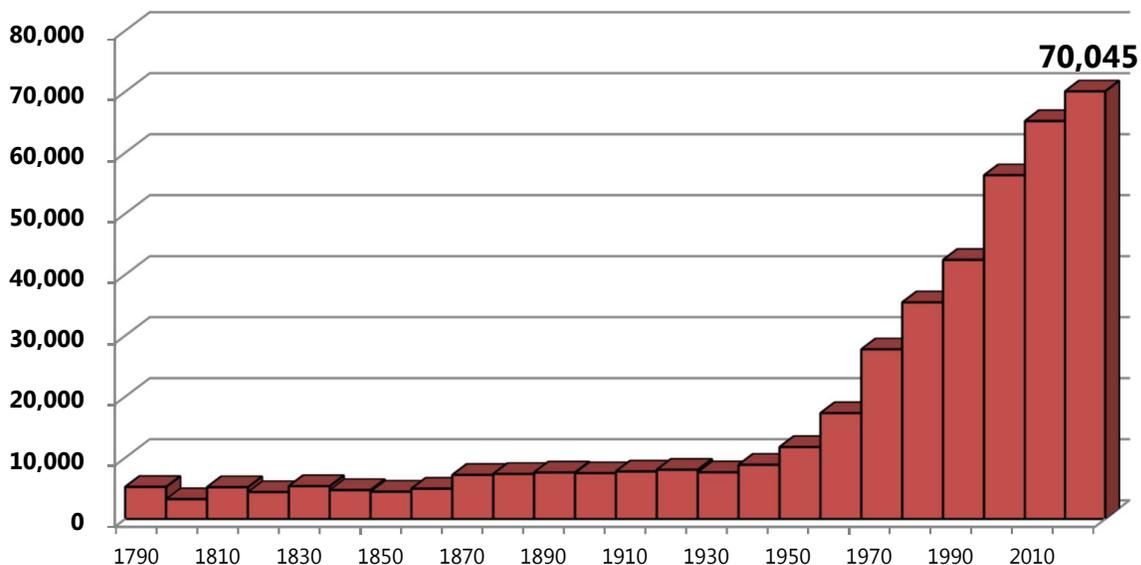
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND PROJECTIONS

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 and the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News VA NC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

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 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 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).

York County Population, 1790-2020



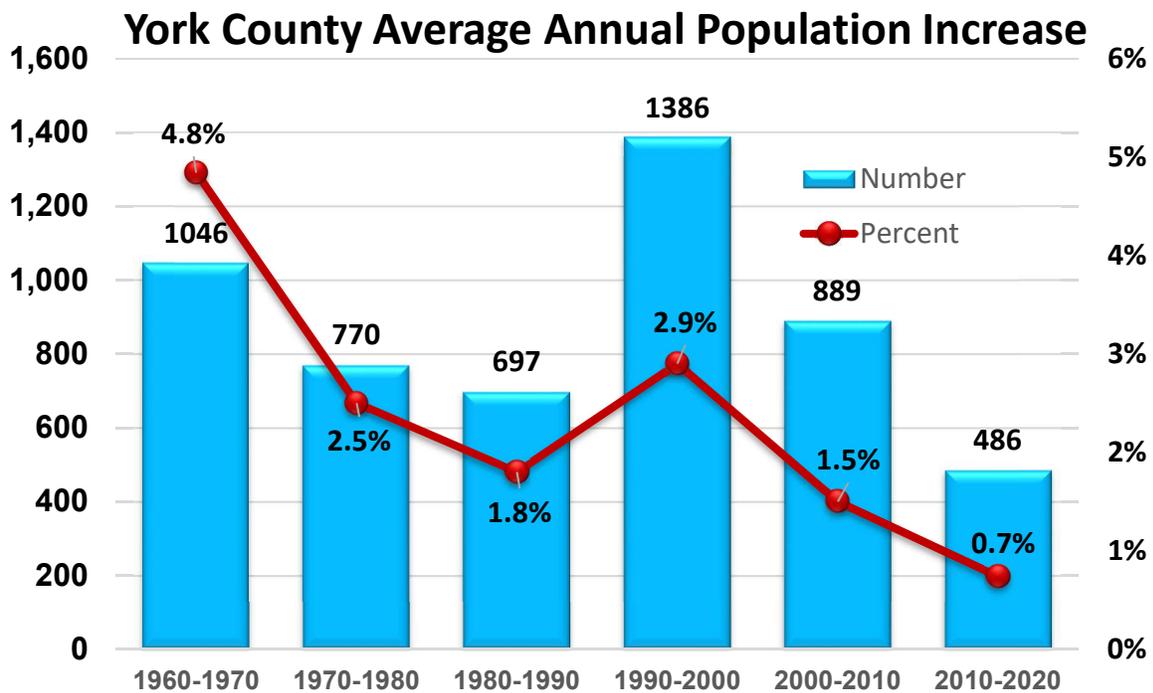
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Figure 1

Population

York County is home to an estimated 71,491 people, according to the official 2022 population estimates produced by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, and ranks 19th in population among the state’s 95 counties and 30th among the 133 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 675 persons per square mile. The population of the County was fairly stable for the first 140 years of its history (see **Figure 1**), 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 continued ever since, although the average annual population increase, which peaked during the 1990s, declined in the 2000s and 2010s (see **Figure 2**). There are many factors contributing to the declining population growth, including reductions in allowable housing densities that took effect in 1995 with the rewrite of the County's Zoning Ordinance, the shrinking supply of developable land, and the great recession of 2008.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2019) Virginia Population Estimates

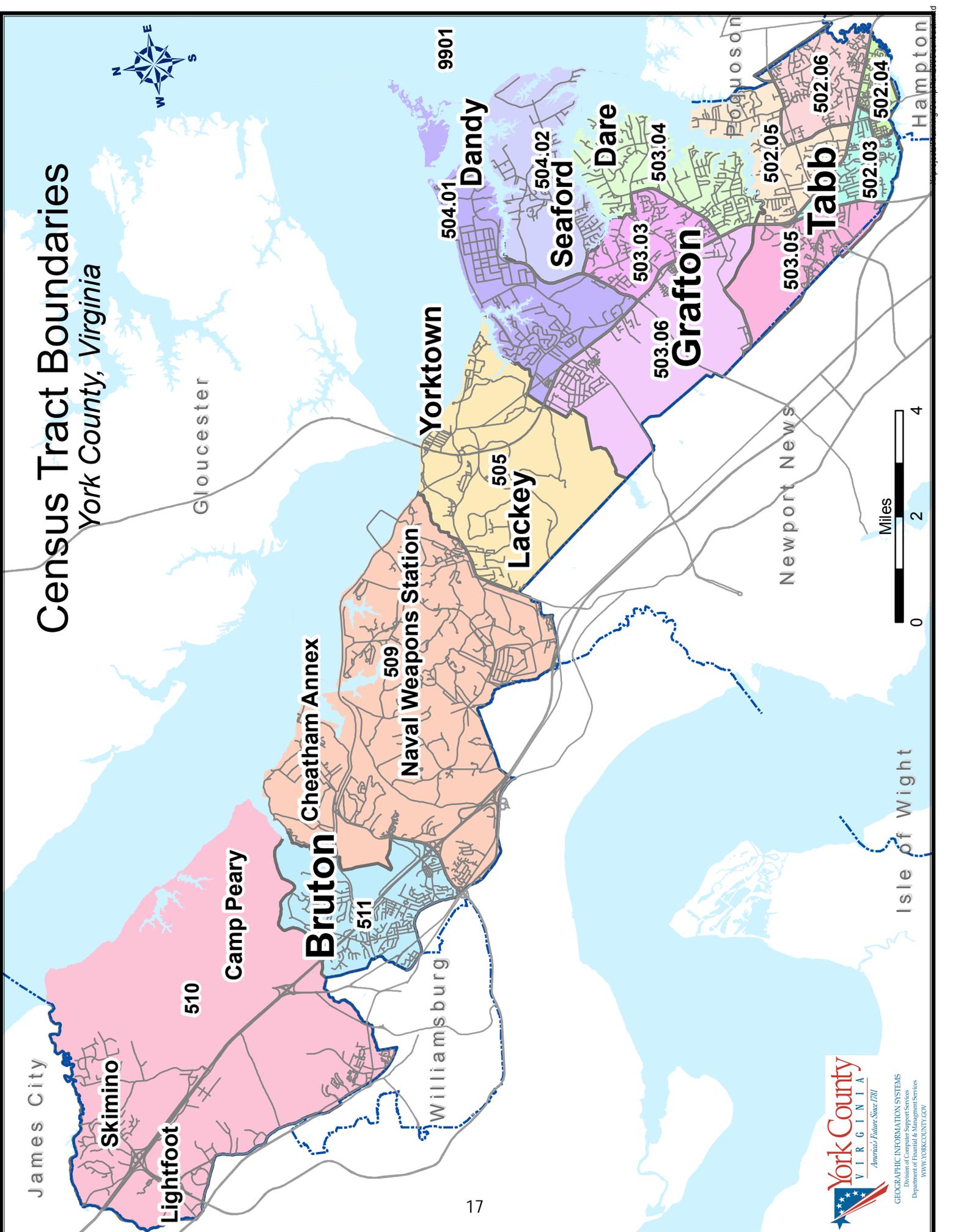
Figure 2

Despite York County's decline in population growth from 2010 through 2020, it remains one of the faster-growing localities in the region. On the Peninsula, only James City County, with a 16.8% increase in population (11,245 residents), surpassed York County's 7.5% increase (4,858 residents). The Peninsula as a whole grew by 4.8% (almost 23,000 residents), while the Virginia Beach MSA, which is ranked 38th in population among MSAs in the U.S., experienced a 4.3% increase (72,203 residents). Statewide, the population grew by 7.9% (630,369 residents) during this period.

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. York County is the only locality on the Peninsula where both components have contributed significantly to population growth since 2010. In James City County and Williamsburg, practically all of the population growth is attributable to net migration, which is likely a reflection of the large number of seniors in those two jurisdictions and, in Williamsburg, the large college student population; in fact, James City County had more deaths than births between 2010 and 2020 (a net natural decrease of 324). Poquoson also had more deaths than births, with a net natural decrease of 165. In Hampton and Newport News, the opposite trends occurred; both cities experienced significant net natural

Census Tract Boundaries

York County, Virginia



increase, but these increases were greatly offset – or, in the case of Hampton, more than canceled out – by significant levels of net out-migration.

The County's population is highly concentrated in the lower County, which represents 48% of the County's land area but is home to approximately 78% of its residents. Almost 60% of the land in the upper County is federal property that is largely uninhabited (U.S. Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and Camp Peary) 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) military family housing complex.

Age, Race, and Sex

The median age in York County is approximately 39.7 years, more than three years older than it was in 2000 and more than eleven years older than in 1980. The median age has increased over the past five decades as a result of the aging of the post-war baby boom generation born between 1946 and 1964 when birth rates were remarkably high. York County ranks third on the Peninsula in median age, behind James City County (47.1) and Poquoson (43.2).

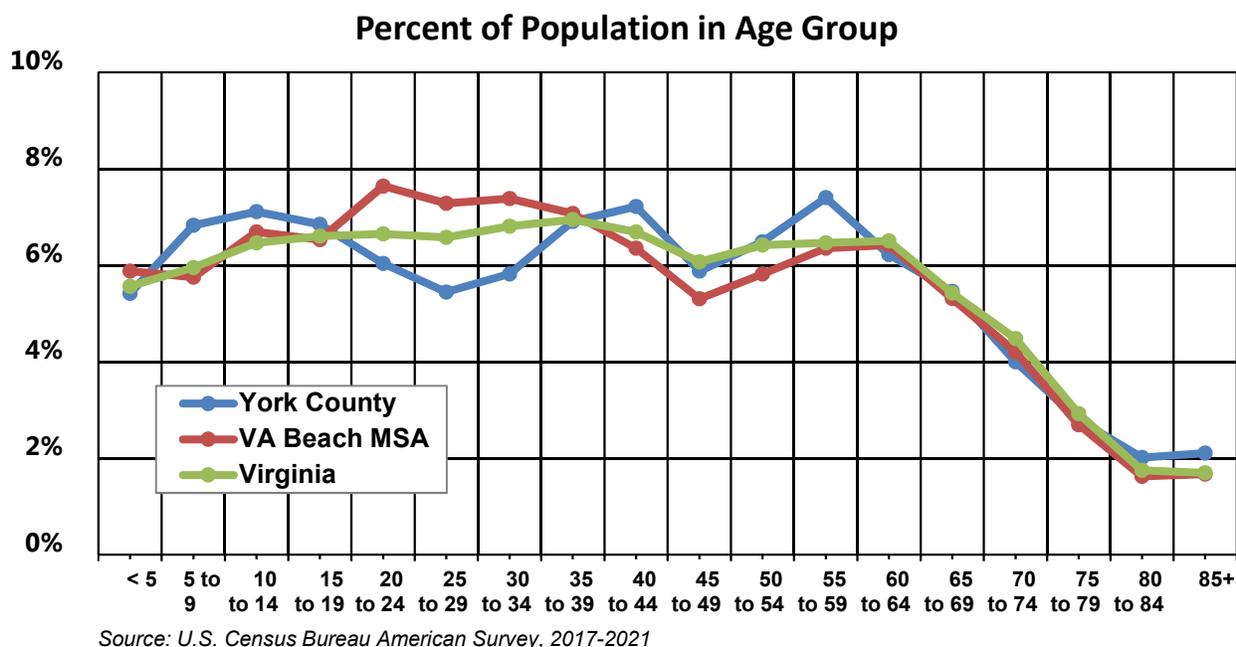


Figure 3

Compared to the state of Virginia and the Virginia Beach metro area as a whole, York County has a high median age, with a larger proportion of residents in their forties, fifties, and sixties as well as those in their teenage years, as shown in **Figure 3**. The County has comparatively few residents in their twenties and thirties – so-called “millennials” born between 1981 and 1996 – while the proportion of seniors (defined as those aged 65 and older) is essentially the same in the County, the metro area, and the state. The senior population is one of the faster growing age groups in York County, more than doubling since 2000 and while the total population grew by 23.7%. As a result, seniors as a proportion of the total population increased from 9.2% to 16.4%.

The racial composition of the County's population, as shown in **Table 1**, has been fairly stable over time, although there has been some increase in racial diversity over the decades. Since 2000, whites have decreased from 80.0% to 68.9% of the population, while blacks remained at about 13% and Asians increased from 3.2% to 6.1%. Other races – including American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians

and other Pacific Islanders, and others – constitute a combined total of 2.7% of the population, while almost a tenth of the County’s residents identify themselves in multiple racial categories.

York County Population by Race and Hispanic Origin				
	2000		2020	
Population by Race	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	56,297	100.0%	70,045	100.0%
White alone	45,038	80.0%	48,251	68.9%
Black or African American alone	7,533	13.4%	8,930	12.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	195	0.3%	258	0.4%
Asian alone	1,829	3.2%	4,297	6.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	65	0.1%	140	0.2%
Some other race alone	509	0.9%	1,482	2.1%
Two or more races	1,128	2.0%	6,687	9.5%
Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total:	56,297	100.0%	70,045	100.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	54,788	97.3%	64,909	92.7%
Hispanic or Latino	1,509	2.7%	5,136	7.3%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Table 1

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 Census Bureau survey data, 7.3% of York County’s residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin, up from 4.4% in 2010 and 2.7% in 2000. Meanwhile, within the Virginia Beach metropolitan area and the state as a whole, Hispanics represent 7.5% and 10.5% of the population respectively.

Females outnumber males in the County by 51% to 49%. This gap is likely to widen over the years, 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 55.1% of those aged 65 and over and 67.0% of those aged 85 and over are women.

Household Composition

According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, families – defined as a householder living with one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption – represent 73.4% of all County households.¹ The vast majority of these families – 83.0% (60.9% of all households) – are married-couple families, despite increases in other types of living arrangements such as single-parent families, unrelated people living together, and people living alone. York County has the highest proportions of both families and married-couple families on the Peninsula, and their prevalence is reflected in the County’s relatively large average household size, which, at 2.68 persons per household, is the highest on the Peninsula and higher than the state average of 2.60 and the Virginia Beach metropolitan area average of 2.49.

Almost all York County residents – 98.6% in 2020 – live in households, either with one or more family or non-family members or alone. There are, however, 1,015 County residents who live in group quarters such as military quarters, nursing homes, group homes, and transitional homes. Most of York County’s group quarters population (79.5%) lives in military quarters. Group quarters also include college student housing and correctional facilities, of which there are none in York County.

¹ 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.

Labor Force and Unemployment

Not surprisingly, population growth in York County has been accompanied by steady growth in the civilian labor force, which grew from 31,326 in 2010 to 31,945 in 2021 – an increase of 2.0%. This labor force is well educated; according to the Census Bureau, 96.2% of York County residents 25 and older hold at least a high school diploma, and 52.1% of these high school graduates (50.0% of the 25-and-older population) have gone on to earn at least a bachelor’s 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 2021 York County’s annual unemployment rate was 3.3%, while the jobless rate was 4.5% in the Virginia Beach MSA, 3.9% statewide, and 5.3% nationally.

A large majority of employed County residents (68.3%) do not work in the County. On the Peninsula, only Poquoson has a lower proportion of residents whose place of work is in the same locality as their home. According to the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization’s analysis of Census Data, the largest share of the County’s out-commuters work in Newport News (38%), followed by Hampton (31%) and James City County (9%). Approximately 9% work in south Hampton Roads. By comparison, of the 65% of workers who commute to York County, most live in Newport News (32%), James City County (23%), and Hampton (9%).

Approximately one-fifth of the Peninsula’s 20,399 military personnel live in York County, where armed forces personnel represent a larger share of the 16-and-older population (7.7%) than in any other Peninsula locality. According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, between the 2006-2010 and 2017-2021 survey periods, the number of military personnel residing in the County declined in both number (from 4,608 to 4,216) and percentage (from 9.2% to 7.7% of the 16-and-older population).

Income

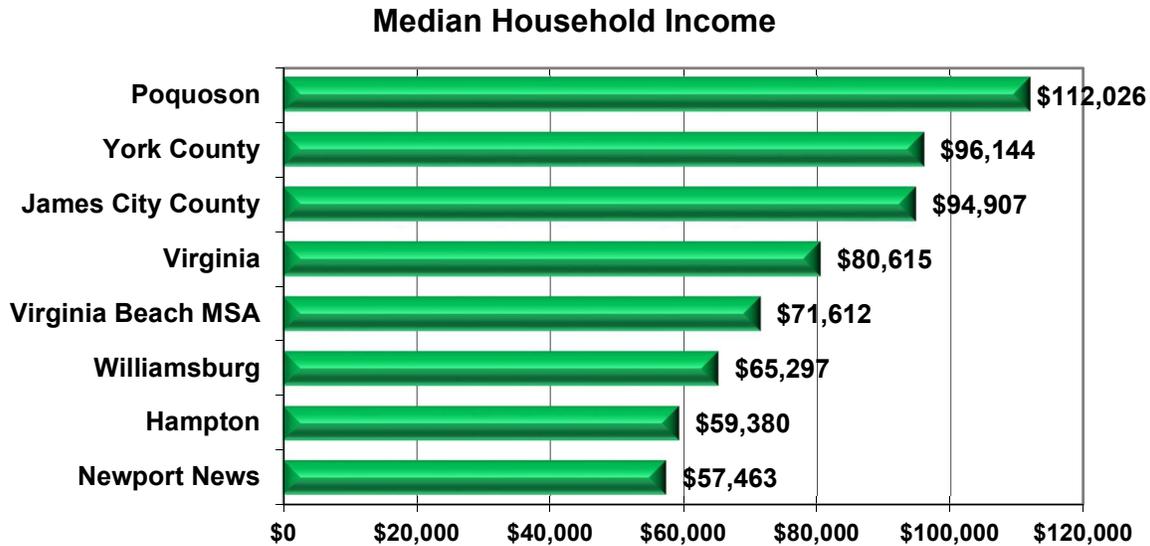
According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for 2014 through 2018, the median household income in York County is slightly over \$90,000. Not surprisingly, incomes generally are highest among married-couple families, which often have multiple income earners, and lowest among non-family households, which include persons living alone or with an unmarried partner (see **Table 2**).

INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2018 INFLATION ADJUSTED DOLLARS)				
	Households	Families	Married-Couple Families	Nonfamily Households
Total	25,517	19,009	15,874	6,508
Less than \$10,000	3.00%	1.40%	0.50%	8.10%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1.50%	1.10%	0.20%	2.80%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.60%	1.40%	0.60%	10.30%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4.70%	2.70%	1.10%	11.10%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	9.20%	6.40%	6.00%	18.40%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.30%	15.00%	13.10%	19.40%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16.00%	16.50%	16.70%	14.50%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22.00%	26.10%	28.50%	9.50%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10.80%	13.20%	15.20%	3.90%
\$200,000 or more	12.80%	16.30%	18.20%	2.00%
Median income (dollars)	\$93,356	\$107,790	\$118,209	\$48,830
Mean income (dollars)	\$110,666	\$125,404	No Data	\$65,023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016-20

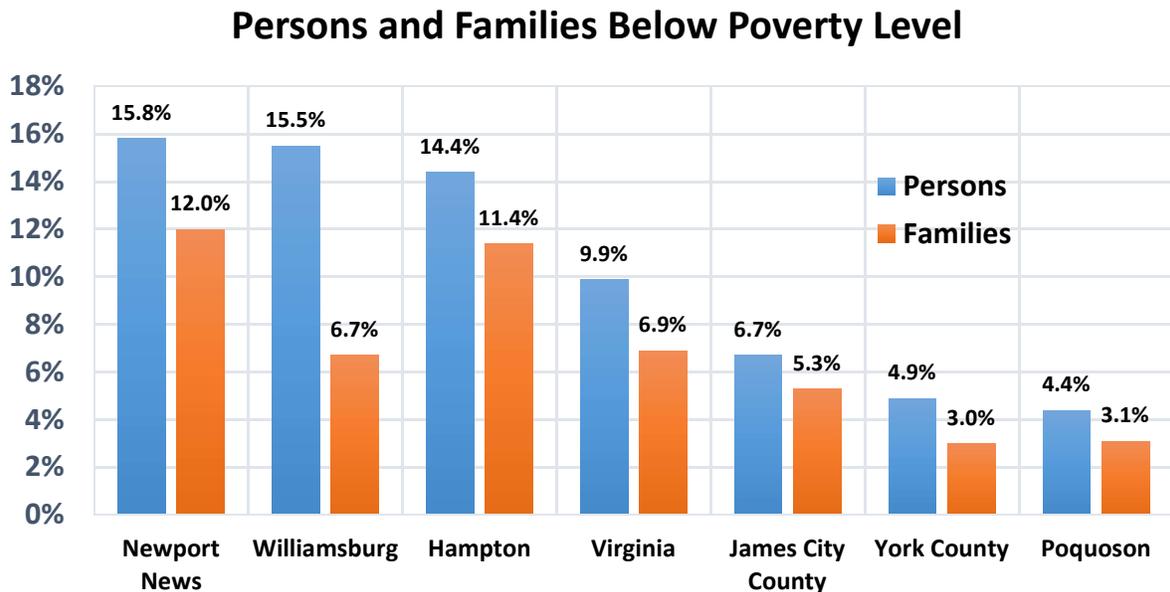
Table 2

As shown in **Figure 4**, York County is one of the most affluent jurisdictions in Hampton Roads, with a median household income well above the Virginia Beach metropolitan area and state median household incomes of \$71,612 and \$80,615 respectively, and second only to Poquoson on the Peninsula. Likewise, as shown in **Figure 5**, York County has relatively low poverty rates compared with surrounding jurisdictions and the state as a whole.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Survey, 2017-2021

Figure 4

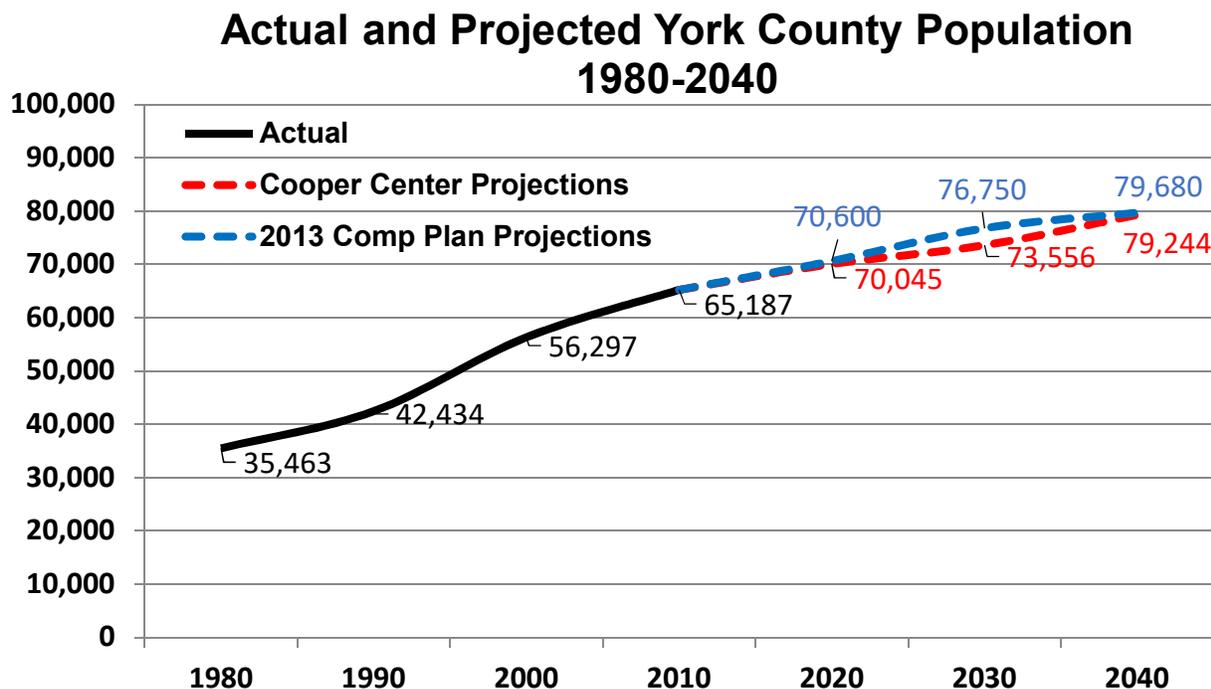


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Survey, 2017-2021

Figure 5

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

In July 2022, the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service developed the official population projections for every city and county in Virginia for the years 2030, 2040, and 2050. The Cooper Center’s methodology projects future population based on past growth rates using a combination of linear and exponential extrapolation methods. This methodology does not account for such things as the amount of available land in the locality, zoning, environmental constraints, etc., so for the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, the York County Planning Division developed a set of population projections to the year 2035 (extrapolated to 2040 in the chart below) utilizing a “modified exponential” model of growth that takes these factors into account.² Both sets of projections are shown in **Figure 6**. As the chart illustrates, the two different methodologies yielded very similar results, providing a realistic forecast of the County’s growth over the next twenty years or so.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Charting the Course to 2035: The County of York Comprehensive Plan*, and University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2022) *Virginia Population Projections*

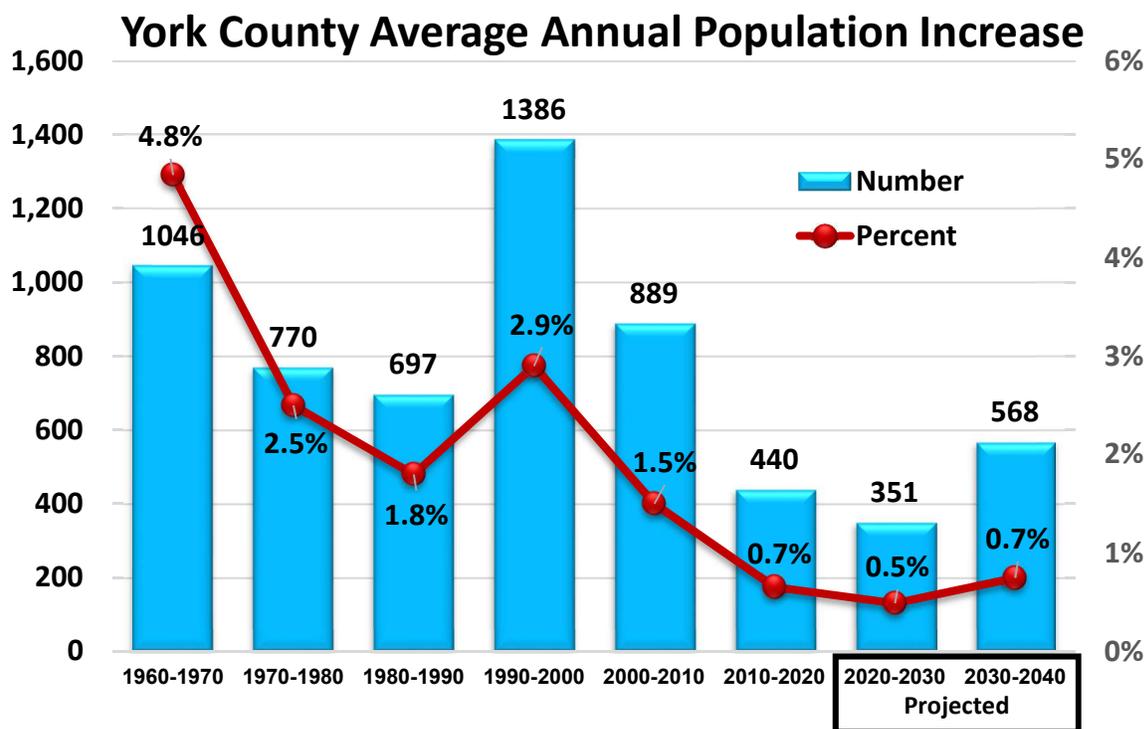
Figure 6

Under both sets of projections, York County’s population is expected to grow to approximately 80,000 residents by the year 2040 – an increase of about 10,000 residents over the next twenty years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.66%, which is slightly higher than the County’s average annual growth rate during the 2010s. The main difference between the state and County projections has to do with the timing of growth: whereas County’s projections indicate that growth will accelerate in the 2020s and then slow down in the 2030s as the supply of developable residential land decreases, the Weldon Cooper Center projects slower growth in the 2020s followed by increased growth in the 2030s.

An underlying assumption of both sets of projections is that there will be sufficient buildable land in the County available for residential development to accommodate the projected amount of population

² 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.

growth, and that appears to be the case. Currently there are more than 2,700 future residential units of all types – single-family detached homes, townhouses, rental apartments, and condominiums – in the development pipeline. This represents the total number of planned housing units in residential developments that are either under construction or under subdivision or site plan review by the County. It also includes those residential projects that the Board of Supervisors has authorized through approval of either a rezoning or Special Use Permit application but for which a subdivision or site plan has not yet been submitted to the County for review. Based on the mix of unit types and the average household size in the County for various types of units, it is estimated that the 2,700 future units currently in the pipeline will generate approximately 7,000 additional residents – roughly 80% of the projected population growth over the next twenty years. It should be noted that not all new homes are built in new developments. Each year there are approximately 25 to 40 single-family detached homes built on “infill” lots – small, scattered vacant sites that are surrounded or essentially surrounded by existing development – which would be expected to add over more than 500 new homes over the next twenty years. Based on this information and the amount of vacant residential land remaining (which is discussed in the Land Use element), the population projections through 2040 are not unrealistic given the amount of buildable land available.

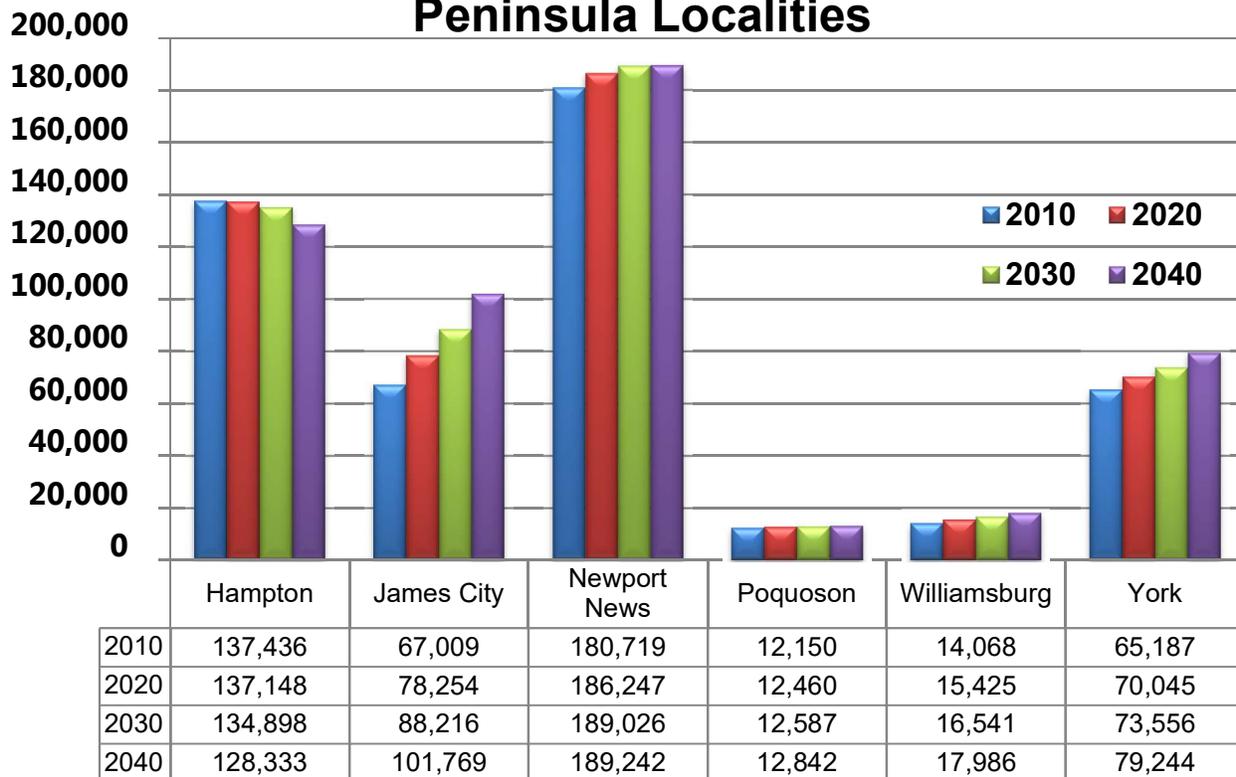


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2022) Virginia Population Projections

Figure 7

As shown in **Figure 8**, the Weldon Cooper Center projects that York County will experience greater population growth than most of its Peninsula neighbors, with the exception of James City County, which has been the fastest-growing locality in Hampton Roads and the eleventh fastest-growing in the state since 2010. Between 2020 and 2040, the Peninsula is projected to grow by almost 30,000 residents, with net increases of 23,515 residents in James City County, 9,199 in York County, 2,995 in Newport News, 2,561 in Williamsburg, and 382 in Poquoson. These population gains are expected to be partially offset by a net population decrease of 8,815 in Hampton. Based on these projections, the three Historic Triangle localities – James City County, Williamsburg, and York County – will see their combined share of the Peninsula’s total population grow from its current level of 32.8% to 37.6% by 2040.

Actual and Projected Population Peninsula Localities



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2020) Virginia Population Projections

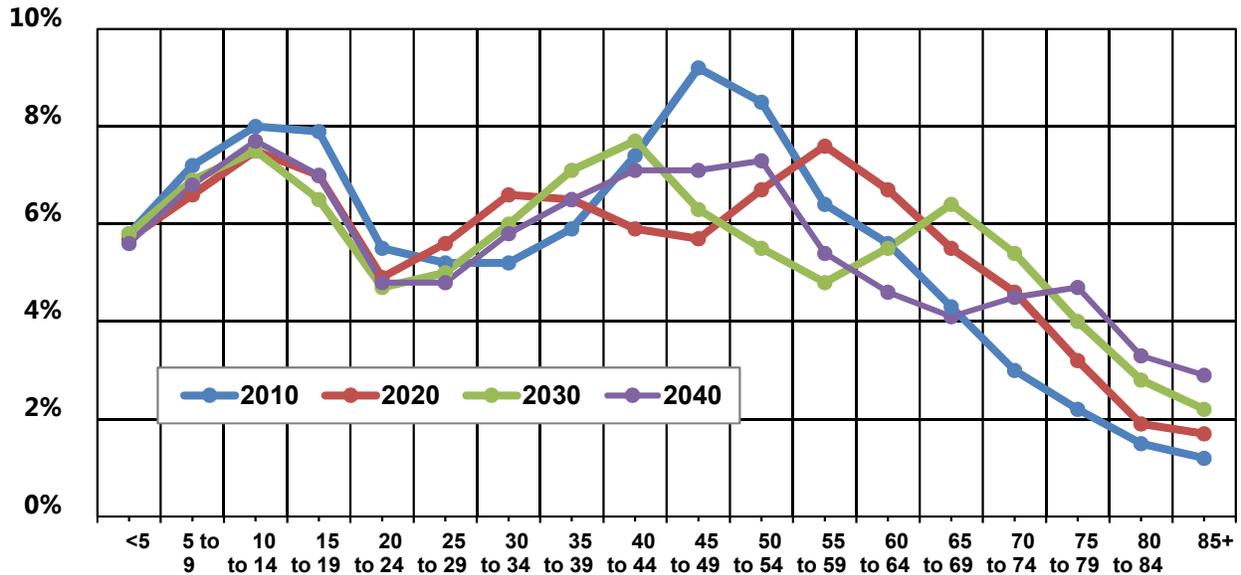
Figure 8

The Weldon 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.³ According to these projections, York County’s senior population (65 and older) will increase from 12.1% of the total population in 2010 to 16.8% by 2020 and 20.8% by 2030, and then drop to 19.6% by 2040 (see **Figure 8**). The population of older seniors who are more likely to have special health care, housing, and transportation needs – those age 75 and above – is projected to increase steadily over the next two decades, growing from 7% of the population in 2020 to 11% by 2040. 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-age population is expected to remain fairly steady as a percentage of the total population. The Cooper Center projects that the proportion of County residents age 5 to 19 will decline from 23.2% in 2010 to 21.1% in 2020, drop further to 20.9% by 2030, and increase to 21.5% by 2040. In terms of raw numbers, both age groups are projected to see continuous growth over the next twenty years, with net increases of 2,500 school-age and 4,000 senior residents between 2020 and 2040.

³ The Virginia population projections by demographic characteristics, such as by age group and sex, rely on the 2020 Census data as a benchmark and are therefore not available because the U.S. Census Bureau has not released the 2020 Census data by five-year age groups and by sex. The age projections presented here are from the Weldon Cooper Centers previous set of projections, released in July 2019.

Percent of York County Population by Age Group



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group. (2019) Virginia Population Projections

Figure 9

CONCLUSION

Strong and steady population growth over the past eighty years, much of it driven by net migration of people into the County, stands as testimony to York County’s identity as a desirable place to live, particularly for families with children and less so for young adults in their twenties and thirties. Although a plurality of people who work in York County also live in the County, 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 Newport News (e.g., Newport News Shipbuilding, Oyster Point, and Jefferson Lab) and Hampton (e.g., NASA-Langley Research Center and Langley Air Force Base).

The decades ahead are expected to bring continued population growth with more people moving into the County and births continuing to outnumber deaths. While the aging of the “baby boom” generation, combined with the migration of retirees into the County, will continue to swell the ranks of the senior population, the overall age distribution of the population is not expected to change dramatically. The proportion of school-age children, while declining somewhat, is still projected to remain relatively high over the next twenty years. These population and demographic trends will have profound impacts on public services and facilities, housing, the labor market, and many other aspects of life in York County.

