



METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

**Committing to Prosperity:
Moving Forward on the Agenda to Renew Pennsylvania**

**Metro Profile: York
March 2007**

This profile provides key economic and demographic trend information on the York metropolitan area relating to “Committing to Prosperity,” an update of the 2003 Brookings Institution report, “Back to Prosperity.” To read the entire report, other regional summaries, and a rural policy brief, see www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/committingtoprosperity.htm. For any questions or comments, please contact Rebecca Sohmer at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program (rsohmer@brookings.edu / 202-797-6085).

The Trend: The York metropolitan area continues to grow

York is the fastest growing metropolitan area in the state

In 2005, the York metropolitan area (consisting of York County) had a population of 408,800—over 27,000 (7.1 percent) more people than in 2000. This represents an accelerated rate of population growth compared to the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, the metro’s population grew rapidly at an annualized rate of 1.18 percent per year; since 2000, that already fast rate of growth has increased to 1.38 percent per year.

The York metro area’s population is becoming more diverse due to minority gains

Metropolitan York, like the rest of the state, saw its population become more diverse between 2000 and 2005. The metro’s strong overall population growth coincided with an even stronger 27.2 percent increase (8,600) in its minority population. Over half the increase in York’s minority population owed to gains in the Latino population. In fact, the 39.6 percent increase in Hispanics was the second-largest among the state’s metropolitan areas.

Metro Area	Annualized population growth rate, 2000–2005
York	1.38%
Reading	1.33%
Allentown	1.29%
Lancaster	0.83%
State College	0.70%
Harrisburg	0.57%
Philadelphia	0.21%
Erie	-0.03%
Sharon	-0.12%
Williamsport	-0.28%
Scran.W.B./Haz.	-0.30%
Altoona	-0.37%
Pittsburgh	-0.37%
Johnstown	-0.49%
Pennsylvania	0.24%
United States	1.05%

York’s migration patterns show accelerating net in-migration

According to IRS county-to-county migration data, the York metro netted over 26,000 people from migration between 1994 and 2005, due in part to people moving in from Maryland. Almost half of that total is from the most recent three years: 12,700 more people moved into the York metro area than moved out between 2002 and 2005.

The Trend: The York metro area is still spreading out—and hollowing out

Metropolitan York's older communities are still hollowing out

Between 1990 and 2000, the city of York lost population, while its boroughs, first- and second-class townships grew. The trend continued between 2000 and 2005, but the city's rate of population loss slowed. The city of York went from an annualized decline of 0.32 percent per year to 0.22. Meanwhile, the boroughs went from 0.55 percent annual gain in the 1990s to 0.85 percent annual gains. Metro York's first-class townships grew 1.78 per year in the 1990s, but slowed to 1.18 percent per year between 2000 and 2005. The metro area's second-class townships are also growing: 1.55 percent per year in the 1990s and 2.44 percent per year between 2000 and 2005.

The vast majority of York's housing permits are still issued in second-class townships

Housing data shows that metropolitan York's residential building activity continues to occur mainly in second-class townships. Between 1995 and 1999, 2,888 permits were issued in the metro's city, boroughs, and first-class townships while 7,450 were issued in second-class townships. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of permits issued in older places increased 24 percent to 3,593, but permits issued to second-class townships rose even faster—31 percent—to 9,792.

York's population trends coincide with a large loss of rural land

A large population increase in the York metro area in the 1990s coincided with a loss of 83,700 acres of rural land. And between 1980 and 2000, the loss was much greater: York lost 225,200 rural acres in this time, a 76.8 percent loss. Whereas metropolitan York's total developable land was 52.7 percent rural in 1980, by 2000 that share had fallen to just 12.2 percent.

The Trend: Metropolitan York's job growth outpaces the state

York's job growth has slowed since 2000, but still exceeds the state rate

Metropolitan York's 1.12 percent annualized rate of job growth in the 1990s outpaced the 0.96 percent state rate. Between 2000 and 2006, employment growth slowed, but York's 0.67 percent annualized growth rate exceeded Pennsylvania's 0.18 percent rate. And at 1.89 percent per year, metropolitan York's post-recession gain of 11,200 jobs between 2003 and 2006 outpaced all but the Reading metropolitan area.

York continues to lose manufacturing jobs but shows strong growth in a number of industries

Like the rest of the state, metropolitan York continues to lose manufacturing jobs, though its 17.9 percent decline in this sector between 2000 and 2006 was less than the state's 22 percent drop. The York metropolitan area experienced its largest percentage gains in educational and health service, government, and wholesale trade, with 21.9, 19.8, and 10.9 percent gains, respectively—far exceeding state performance in these sectors.