

## *Chapter VI*

### *Critical Issues for Competitiveness Assessment*

#### 6.1 Overview

York County offers many assets that position it for economic growth. At the same time, the County faces a number of issues it must contend with in order to attract the types of growth envisioned. These issues and potential methods for addressing them are discussed below.

#### 6.2 Workforce Development

York County faces three (3) broad workforce development issues. These issues include 1) aging of the population, 2) need for a diverse and educated workforce, and 3) need to enhance and market quality of life in the County to attract and retain a skilled workforce through the growth of the “Creativity Unleashed” initiative.

**Issue 1: The population is aging, and young people are leaving, creating a need to recruit younger workers to replace retiring employees.**

York County’s residents in prime working years are dwindling as more of the population enters retirement age.

Young workers, which will be of critical need to employers as many members of the existing workforce reach retirement age over the next ten (10) years, are decreasing in number. The proportion of workers of prime working age (e.g. 20 to 54), could fall from 48% to 45% by 2018. At the same time, the population of retirees and seniors is expected to increase, from roughly 27% to 32%.

These trends indicate that the County is losing its young workers, which will be needed to work in the innovative and creative fields of science and technology that are emerging across the nation and in York County. The loss of educated young workers could reduce York County’s competitiveness to attract knowledge-oriented firms and industries.

There is a need to attract and retain young workers.

This issue presents a need to further cultivate a high quality of life in York County, and to broaden the supply of amenities. Efforts to revitalize downtowns, instill agritourism and other agricultural diversions, to attract lively retail and restaurant offerings, and to provide high-quality mixed-use living and working environments will go far to strengthen York County’s pull to these young workers. The growth of the “Creativity Unleashed” campaign is critical in the branding efforts of York County. This initiative focuses on quality of place and presents the County as a prime region to build your career and your home. This is discussed further in Chapter IX.

**Issue 2: York County’s potential to attract a diversified set of industries depends on the cultivation of a well-trained, high-quality and diverse workforce.**

Industries with high growth potential all require scientific and technical skills.

Analysis of target industries in York County suggests that scientific and technology-oriented fields, including renewable energy, bio-medical, and health care, will have strong opportunities for expansion over the next ten (10) years. These industries are more resilient to recession than other industries. The growth of these industries presents an enhanced need for young workers with strong science and math skills. Thus, York County will have to focus on improving the aptitude of high school students in these critical fields.

There is a need to focus on expanding trades and science and technology training.

Altogether, the opportunities of these high-growth industries present a need for enhanced attention on expanding trades and technology training to be oriented to these fields. Such training would include skills training to fill gaps in manufacturing, which comprises much of York County’s existing employment base. In particular, there is a need to increase the labor force’s readiness for positions that are not on the production lines (e.g. engineers, toolmakers) and that should be in increasing demand over the next ten (10) years. There is also a major need to expand the pool of nurses in order to attract and expand the health care industry.

**Issue 3: Recruitment of a highly-skilled and creative workforce will require an enhanced image and appeal throughout York County.**

Highly educated and creative workers choose regions with high quality of life.

Households and creative workers that move to York County seek vibrant downtowns, scenic and recreational areas, and areas with unique character. This is positively impacted by York County’s “Creativity Unleashed” initiative.

There is a need to highlight and enhance York County’s amenities.

York County offers many desirable qualities, including charming historic towns and scenic agricultural and recreational areas, which function as amenity infrastructure that should be promoted and preserved. The revitalization of the County’s historic downtowns and small towns, including attraction and expansion of unique shops and restaurants, will help to attract a skilled workforce and a young workforce, as will the expansion of recreational attractions and agritourism (including wineries, bed and breakfasts, and farmers markets).

**6.3 Availability and Suitability of Sites**

With respect to land for office, retail and industrial expansion, York County has adequate space to grow, but still faces several challenges related to growth management. These issues include: 1) balancing residential growth with office, retail and industrial growth; 2) focusing growth into

downtowns, underused buildings and sites, and corridors rather than greenfield sites; and 3) targeting growth to areas served by infrastructure.

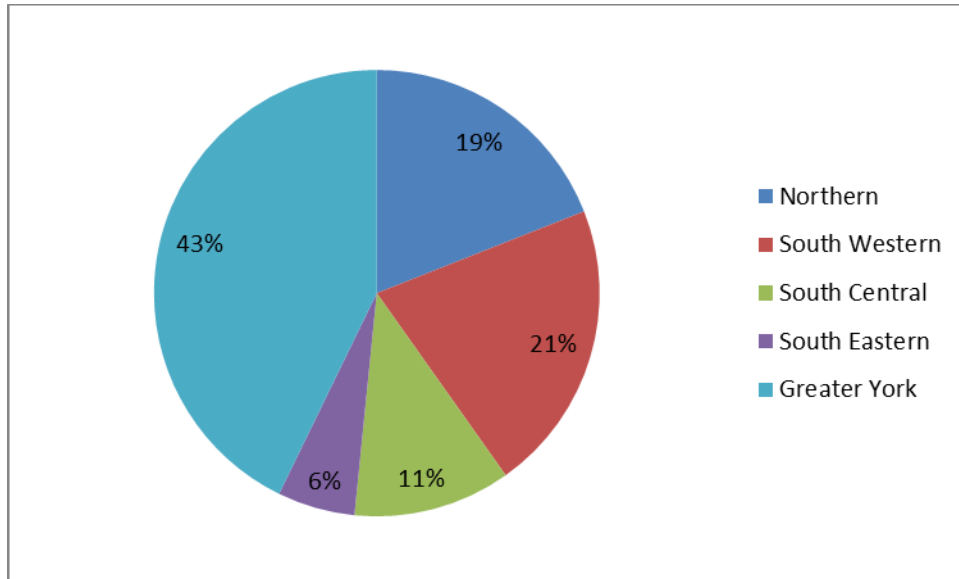
**Issue 1: York County has experienced growth contrary to population declines in other parts of Pennsylvania, but residential development has dominated recent growth out of balance with office, retail and industrial development.**

Residential development has outpaced office, retail and industrial development in recent years.

With its affordability and access to the broader mega-region that spans Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC, York County has been a strong choice for new residents and residential development over the past several years. Such recent demand, coupled with relatively less rapid office, retail and industrial development, has led to an imbalance between residential development and office, retail and industrial development. Some municipalities have experienced more rapid residential growth than others, and some have experienced relatively higher levels of residential growth than office, retail and industrial, leading to growth disparities across municipalities.

Residential development, without a mix of office, retail and industrial development to offset the tax burden created from residential growth, can put pressure on a municipality's fiscal health. It can also strain local school systems and health care facilities. At the same time however, new residents can also expand the labor pool and add disposable income to an area, thereby making the area more attractive for employers and retail and service establishments. As shown in Exhibits 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4, the amount of residential permits issued in 2012 for new development greatly exceeds the amount of commercial and industrial permits issued during that year.

**Exhibit 6-1: Residential New Building Permits – 2012**



*Source: York County Planning Commission*

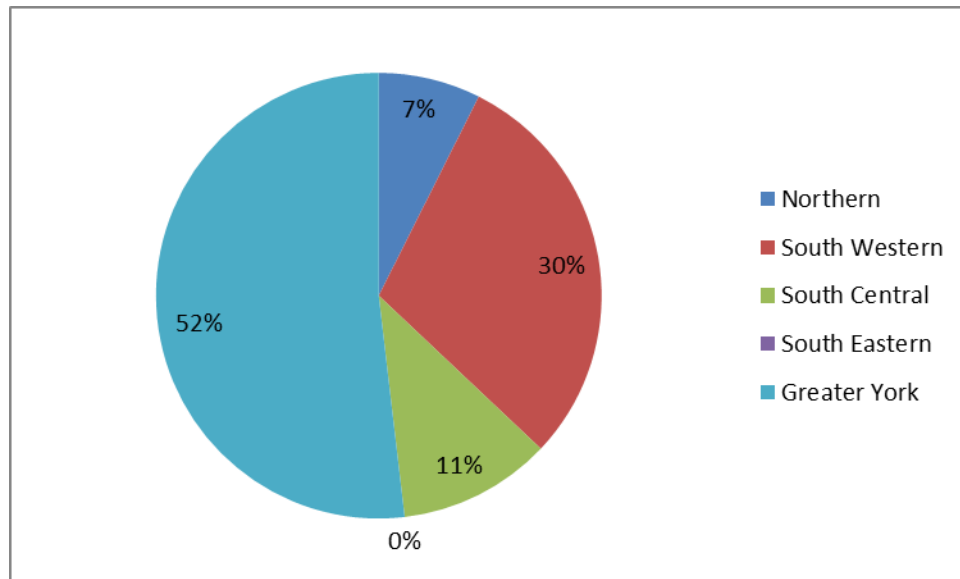
| Exhibit 6-2: 2012 Residential New Building Permits (Units)<br>York County Regional Distribution |            |             |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Northern  | 125        | 19%         |
| South Western   | 139        | 21%         |
| South Central   | 75         | 11%         |
| South Eastern   | 37         | 6%          |
| Greater York  | 281        | 43%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>657</b> | <b>100%</b> |

*Source: York County Planning Commission*

| Exhibit 6-3: Commercial, Industrial, & Public Space New Building Permits (Units) York County Regional Distribution |           |             |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Northern   | 2         | 7%          |
| South Western  | 8         | 30%         |
| South Central  | 3         | 11%         |
| South Eastern  | 0         | 0%          |
| Greater York   | 14        | 52%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>27</b> | <b>100%</b> |

*Source: York County Planning Commission*

**Exhibit 6-4: Commercial, Industrial, & Public Space New Building Permits (Units) York County Regional Distribution**



*Source: York County Planning Commission*

There is a need to manage growth and to consider innovative growth management techniques to address imbalances.

The mismatch between residential growth and commercial, public space, and industrial growth presents a need to enhance commercial, public space, and industrial growth and to manage residential development in order to achieve a stronger balance between households and jobs. Planning experts recommend a jobs-to-housing balance of 1.3-1.7:1 (for every household, it is recommended that a community offer 1.3 to 1.7 jobs) for healthy and sustainable communities. In 2013, the Department of Labor indicated a job count of 172,170 with a census count of 168,128 households making the jobs-to-housing balance 1.02:1.

Regional planning presents one (1) avenue to address the impacts of imbalanced growth across municipalities. Adoption of a Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to an Intergovernmental Cooperative Planning Agreement, affords the participating municipalities the opportunity to share land uses. If the participating municipalities subsequently enter into an Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement, they may also share tax revenues and fees, as well as adopt a transfer of development rights program whereby development rights can be transferred from one municipality in the region to another municipality in the region covered by the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

**Issue 2: New growth is occurring in more rural areas, though urban and downtown revitalization, adaptive reuse, and corridor development is desired.**

Greenfield sites are being developed in rural areas despite strong interest in agricultural preservation, and in revitalizing existing downtowns and focusing growth in existing industrial parks and along main transportation corridors.

There will be a need to continue to protect/preserve agriculture and steer growth away from rural areas over the next decade, as growth will likely continue to be fueled by industry expansion. Over the next ten (10) years, there should be strong opportunities to expand office, retail and industrial establishments in York County. York County would be better served if growth were focused on redevelopment opportunities, brownfields, and downtown revitalization.

There is a need to focus office, retail and industrial growth to areas targeted for reuse and to steer such growth away from rural areas.

Overall, the growth of new establishments will offer opportunities to focus office, retail and industrial development into targeted redevelopment areas, into buildings targeted for adaptive reuse, into downtowns, into brownfield sites, into existing industrial parks, and along major transportation corridors. Strategic redevelopment projects can improve the existing infrastructure to productive reuse while also increasing the tax base.

**Issue 3: Growth should occur where infrastructure can support new development.**

Infrastructure , including transportation and utilities, is an important criterion for most new and expanding businesses in selecting sites for expansion.

For many established manufacturers, the availability, reliability and cost (in terms of price and time travel) of local utility and transportation infrastructure is a major criterion in site selection decisions. In York County, stakeholders and community members have expressed a strong desire for new office, retail and industrial development to be focused first where infrastructure is readily available and has capacity to service new growth. They have indicated that while transportation corridors in the County are attractive for growth, the impacts of growth on capacity and levels of service are of concern.

There is a need to ensure that areas targeted for future growth offer sufficient capacity from an infrastructure standpoint.

The desire for growth to occur in areas already served by infrastructure presents a need to broadly assess the capacity of the existing transportation network and local utilities to take on new customers.

As part of the market and land assessment conducted in Chapter V to inform the York County Economic Development Plan, an assessment was conducted of sites' access to transportation facilities (i.e. access to an uncongested major arterial highway, defined as those with a volume/capacity ratio of less than one (1) in the County's Transportation Plan) and general availability of water and sewer service (i.e. no systemic constraints as identified through the subjective assistance of water and sewer providers). The assessment concluded that the County appears to have adequate infrastructure capacity to support the level of economic growth (i.e. office, retail and industrial) projected to occur over the next ten (10) years. However, if the market demand for space in the County exceeds the projections in the Plan and such sites are developed more rapidly than projected, the need to reassess infrastructure capacity for other sites could emerge. The development of such sites should therefore be tracked and monitored over time in order to anticipate potential need to re-evaluate infrastructure over time.

#### **6.4 Economic Development and Marketing**

Though York County already offers a strong economic development program, there are areas where enhancements may be needed. These include: 1) enhancing collaboration and coordination of organizations; and 2) offering more efficient approvals processes.

**Issue 1: Numerous organizations and governments are involved in economic development, but there is a need for enhanced collaboration and communication.**

With 72 municipalities involved in planning and economic development, York County presents a unique challenge and need for collaboration and communication.

The collaboration between YCPC and YCEA on the York County Economic Development Plan provides a starting point for the type of interaction needed throughout the County. The process in creating the Plan has revealed many individual municipal efforts in growth management and economic development planning, and there is a need to highlight such efforts.

There is a need for a champion and coordination at the County level to allow individual municipalities and organizations to learn from the successes of others. Enhanced cooperation, collaboration and communication would best leverage limited funds for economic development, in that joint programs may be pursued (for instance, joint marketing programs).

**Issue 2: Economic development would be enhanced with more efficient governmental approvals processes that consolidate processes and create a single point of contact.**

The timeliness and responsiveness of local governments to development can enhance an area's competitiveness to targeted industries.

York County has identified industry clusters to target for business recruitment, retention, and expansion. For many of the manufacturing industries York County has identified as targets, overall cost of doing business, including regulatory approval processes, is an important factor.

Multiple visits to code offices and long wait times are frustrating to developers and business owners, and lengthy approvals processes can create an anti-development climate. This issue is not limited to the local level, as developers have noted that State approvals are equally if not more cumbersome than municipal processes.

Overall, there is a need to identify techniques to make governmental approvals processes more efficient at the local and State levels in order to enhance the County's competitive position for economic growth. There may be opportunities to consolidate inspection and code enforcement processes, and to identify single municipal points of contact to assist business owners and developers through approval processes.

### *6.5 Summary*

While York County offers many strengths that position it for economic growth, there are critical issues in the workforce, land/sites, and economic development arenas that require strategic action to enhance York County's competitiveness. It is imperative that these critical issues remain the focus of York County's economic development initiatives.