



Saco, Maine City Profile

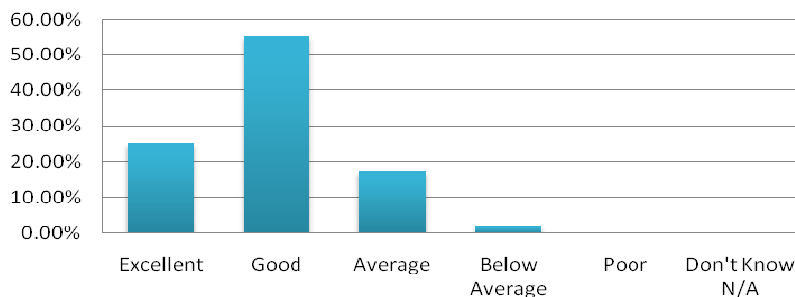
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Quality of Life

In November 2005 a random sample telephone survey of Saco residents was conducted by Strategic Marketing Services to assess resident satisfaction with Saco. Overall, Saco residents view their city as a positive place to live. Residents were asked to rate aspects of living in Saco based on a scale of one to five, with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent." Residents consistently rated Saco between excellent and good for questions pertaining to quality of life.

Resident's Overall Image of the City of Saco



City of Saco Overview



The City of Saco is located on Maine's southern coast, approximately 14 miles south of the City of Portland. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the recreational and cultural opportunities provided by Saco's beautiful beaches, the Saco River and the historic downtown and shopping district. Saco has been praised for retaining its small city character and high quality of life. Traditionally a mill city, Saco and its sister city of Biddeford grew during the 1800s and early 1900s as a major textile manufacturing center, but that industry declined following World War II. Since then, Saco's employment options have evolved through economic development opportunities created in city business parks, and through tourism and retail, while its proximity to the employment centers of Greater Portland have greatly influenced its residential development. On average, 125 new residences are built per year in Saco. The exciting 80 million dollar redevelopment underway in Saco's mill district demonstrates the city's commitment to encouraging economic development while honoring the unique history and character of Saco.

Average Resident Ratings

(1= "Poor" and 5="Excellent")

- **Image of Saco as a place to live** 4.33
- **As a place to raise children** 4.28
- **Overall quality of life** 4.16
- **Overall feeling of safety** 4.27
- **Overall quality of police services** 4.21
- **Overall quality of fire and ambulance service** 4.51

For more information about citizen satisfaction, please visit the City of Saco website at www.sacomaine.org



Attractions and Amenities

Miles of magnificent sandy beaches along the beautiful coastline, the Saco River, and natural areas and trails provide many opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking and biking. Saco also offers exceptional historical and cultural opportunities including an historic downtown, a museum and interpretive walks.



Historical and Cultural

Saco Museum: offers fine arts, decorative arts, and regional history exhibits (www.sacomuseum.org)

Dyer Library: houses the public library, Children's Room, and the Maine History Room and Genealogy Collection (www.sacomuseum.org)

Downtown Historical District: some 225 downtown properties are included in both a Local and National Register Historic District

Laurel Hill Cemetery: beautiful Victorian garden cemetery overlooking the Saco River

Thornton Academy: a Victorian era educational campus established in 1811 serves as the city's high school (www.thorntonacademy.org)

Saco Route 1 Corridor: home to two amusement parks as well as motels and campgrounds

Saco Museum Main Street Walk: interpretive panels along Main Street highlighting people and episodes in Saco's history (<http://www.sacomaine.org/archives/msw/index.shtml>)



Natural

Ferry Beach State Park: sandy beaches, ocean swimming, trails and picnicking

Saco River: excellent canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Boat launches are available at Riverfront Park and Diamond Riverside Park, as well as at Camp Ellis

Camp Ellis: scenic fishing port, breakwater and beach

The Saco Heath: a Nature Conservancy Preserve of over 500 acres with interpretive trails (www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/maine/preserves/art20273.html)

Saco Bay Trails: local non-profit organization maintaining approximately 18 miles of walking and hiking trails (www.sacobaytrails.org)

Eastern Trail: Saco is along the route of a proposed greenway from Portsmouth, NH to South Portland, ME. An on-road trail has been defined for current use as the greenway develops (www.eastertrail.org)

Parks: the city maintains approximately 100 acres of city parks and actively purchases natural areas



Education and Transportation



Education

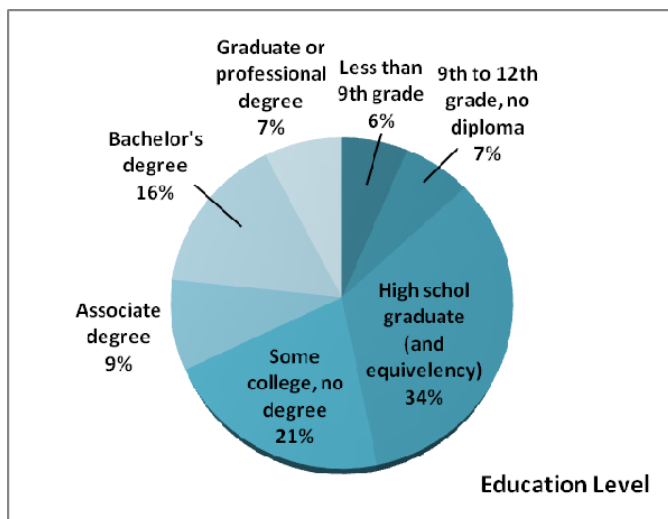
There are three elementary and one middle school in Saco with an April 2006 enrollment of 1807 students. For high school, most Saco students attend Thornton Academy (a private school) in Saco by way of a contractual agreement between the city and the Academy. The city is also served by a Roman Catholic elementary school.

Saco is in close proximity to a number of quality higher educational institutions. Among these are:

- **University of New England (UNE)** located in Biddeford (about 3 miles).
- **University of Southern Maine (USM)** located in Gorham (about 16 miles) and Portland (about 17 miles). USM courses are also offered in Saco on site and via interactive television (ITV).
- **York County Community College (YCCC)** located in Wells (about 17 miles).

Resident Education Levels

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 87% of Saco residents over the age of 25 have at least a high school education.



Transportation

Saco is well-served by a strong transportation network including freight and passenger train service, convenient highway access, commuter and local bus service, and close proximity to airports.

Railroad

Saco is a stop on the Amtrak Downeaster service which offers a passenger rail connection between Portland, Boston and the Amtrak national system. A new train station is being built downtown in order to meet the needs of this expanding service. Freight rail is available in the city's industrial park.

Public Transportation and Highway Access

In addition to easy highway access off Exit 36 of the Maine Turnpike/I-95, Saco boasts convenient public transportation options by way of commuter and local bus service. The ShuttleBus Tri-Town Service provides bus service within Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach and the Intercity Service connects the Tri-Towns with Scarborough, South Portland and Portland. The ZOOM Turnpike Express is a commuter service that links Biddeford and Saco with downtown Portland.

Airports

Located approximately 14 miles from Saco, Portland International Jetport provides the closest airport for carrier operations.



Demographics and Business Climate

Economy and Business Climate

Saco's economy is strong and diverse. The area is home to numerous manufacturers, many of which are technologically driven. Signature products include anti-clonal antibodies, wood trusses, plastics manufacturing equipment, precision cutting tools, fuel tank monitoring equipment, and military arms. Because of the location along the magnificent southern Maine coast, tourism is also an important component of the area's economy.

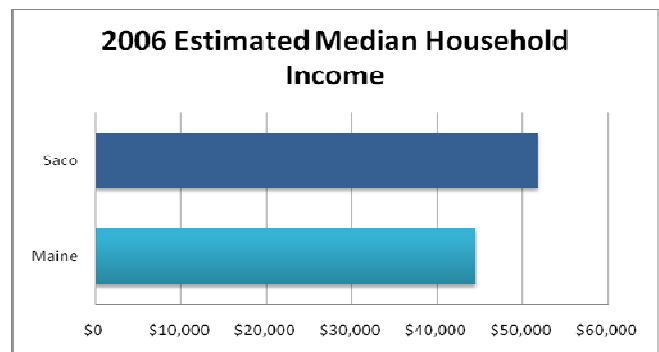
The City of Saco continues to promote economic development as it strives to expand its employment and tax base. Saco features high quality, fully-serviced business parks and an attractive and historic downtown Main Street retail and business district. Most of the areas in Saco that experience business growth are located within Pine Tree Zones (industrial parks and Saco Island) which are eligible for state incentives.

The Saco Development and Planning office and the Saco Economic Development Commission are happy to provide assistance and resources for site searches, permitting, and to act as the local government contact for businesses on any local matter. They may also offer suggestions for financing assistance and can determine if tax increment financing is available. Other local organizations that may help with financing or provide resources include the Biddeford Saco Area Economic Development Corporation (www.bsaedc.org) and Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce & Industry (www.biddefordsacochamber.org). Fully-serviced lots are available in the city's new Mill Brook Business Park.



Income and Home Prices

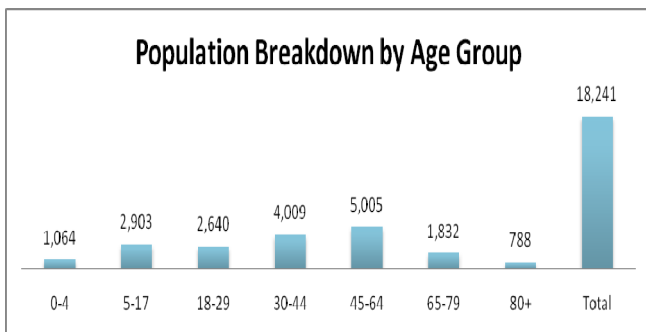
The median household income in Saco is above the state average and estimated at \$51,727* for 2006. The 2006 estimated median household income for Maine overall is \$44,488*.



Data Source: Claritas 2006 on Maine Housing website

Likewise, median home prices are above average for the state with an estimated value of \$209,950 compared to the State of Maine which is \$185,000 estimated for 2006.

Population



The Maine State Planning Office's projected population for Saco for 2007 is 18,241. The largest age group is between 45 and 64 years old.

The 2000 Census indicates that the median age is 37.2 and the population is 47.6% male and 52.4% female.

The city's population grows about 1% each year.