

CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF UPDATED INVENTORIES

A. Population and Demographics

- Changes in Saco’s population, where residents choose to live and work, and what services they are likely to need or desire are important to the City’s future. As Saco’s population has increased, the City’s role in the economic region has changes, as evidenced by Saco’s incorporation into the Portland metropolitan area. Housing trends show a preference for locations that allow easy commuting, and Saco is more and more a bedroom community for Portland. However, the City still retains a strong commercial center. These dual roles need to be kept in mind as Saco looks to the future.
- Taking a conservative approach based on permitting since 2008, Saco will likely add at least 300 more housing units by 2020. It may very well be more. Where and how that development occurs as well as what form it takes are key issues for the community.
- Saco has grown and become more attractive to workers outside the City leading to rapid growth in housing prices (with a pause during the recession) for much of the past decade. Fostering housing within a range of prices and of different types is an important challenge for the City.
- As Saco’s role as a commuting suburb has increased, the area west of the Turnpike has faced increasing residential development pressure because of its access to the regional road network. Maintaining the rural areas of the City could become more difficult.
- As more people are commuting to the Portland area than are working in Saco, Greater Portland has begun to replace Saco as the commuting population’s center for commerce and entertainment. Attracting some of these households into Downtown Saco will be important for the vitality of the City.
- School enrollment projections predict a slow annual decline. Existing school capacity should be adequate to meet demand. However, if the decline becomes more pronounced, pressure to reevaluate and possibly consolidate school services may grow. As the State and the community grapple with the implications of school consolidation, the City will need to continue to evaluate the best

ways to provide educational services for the community.

- Smaller household sizes coupled with a growing population have created more demand for housing and for different types of housing. The number of younger households with children is decreasing. Maintaining a balanced population and providing the housing that each population type desires will be important to fostering a diverse population and a vital community.
- Saco's population is aging. The oldest members of the Baby Boom generation have reached retirement age with more joining them each year. Over the next decade this may create demand for additional retirement housing options with smaller units. In the twenty-year timeframe this will translate into a demand for additional elderly housing and eldercare facilities and increase the demands on certain of the City's services. Addressing these changes will be an important issue for the City over time.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES

A. Population and Demographics

State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl. (Growth Management Act)

Local Goals: To accommodate growth in a manner that maintains the character of the City.

To assure that a diversity of people is able to continue to live in Saco.

Pursuant to these goals, the policies of the City of Saco are:

1. The City should assure that residential growth is accommodated in appropriate locations that are properly zoned and able to be provided with public services.
2. The City should continue to provide for the construction of a wide range of housing at a variety of densities and types to assure that a diversity of people can continue to live in the City including younger households and families. The City will need to influence development to include the amenities that younger people are looking for if the City wishes to attract them.