










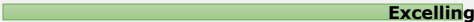


TOWN OF YORK

2020 Sustainability and Coastal Resilience Assessment

The Town of York strives to incorporate sustainability and resilience into all aspects of the community. Sustainability is a key goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. York defines sustainability as "a concept that recognizes the interrelatedness of the energy, environmental, economic, development, and civic health of the Town, and the importance of ensuring that future generations can share in the many of York's resources that exist today". In 2019, York joined a coalition of six towns in coastal York County to create the SMPDC Regional Sustainability and Resilience Program. The program aims to foster more sustainable and resilient communities in coastal York County by leveraging regional collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of local government action. To identify and direct sustainability and resilience efforts, the program is establishing a baseline of sustainability and resilience efforts and needs in individual communities and the Coastal York Country region. Through the work of the York Energy Efficiency Steering Committee, York has made significant strides in implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy for municipal operations. The Town has paved the way for renewable energy development with the adoption of the Sustainable Energy Efficient Buildings code. York also excels in watershed management practices and regulations.

Using the SMPDC Sustainability Progress Framework (SPF), York was evaluated on many strategies within twelve sustainability and resilience categories. Strategies were grouped into 22 indicators, shown below. York's status on each progress indicator ranges from "Not Yet Considered" to "Excelling". Explanations for each indicator and suggested next steps are detailed on the following pages.

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	STATUS
Climate	Establish a GHG emissions inventory, target, and plan	 Almost There
	Climate change vulnerability assessment	 Getting Started
Coastal Hazards	Integrate coastal risk reduction measures in zoning and regulations	 Making Progress
	Incorporate future climatic conditions into land use requirements and municipal policies	 Interested
Economic Development	Promote and support sustainability and resiliency actions for local businesses	 Interested
Energy	Reduce municipal fossil fuel consumption and implement municipal energy efficiency measures	 Making Progress
	Promote energy efficiency for residents and businesses	 Getting Started
	Support development of and access to renewable energy	 Almost There
Land Ecosystems	Promote and practice environmentally-friendly and sustainable landscape approaches	 Making Progress
Leadership	Participate as an active member of a national/regional sustainability and resilience network	 Excelling
Mobility	Promote and facilitate transit systems as well as bicycle and pedestrian networks	 Almost There
	Adopt a complete streets policy	 Getting started
	Support the electrification of the transportation system, leading by example with the municipal fleet	 Getting started
Municipal Operations	Formally adopt sustainability and resilience goals, policies, and strategies	 Making Progress
	Establish local financing strategies for sustainability and resilience activities	 Interested
	Incorporate sustainability and resilience criteria in municipal expenditure policies	Not yet considered
Sustainable Communities	Connect residents to resources and services that support well being and enhance community resilience	 Excelling
	Actively engage community members in local climate, sustainability, and resilience issues	 Almost there
Sustainable Development	Facilitate compact, mixed-use development that reduces environmental impacts and increases housing affordability	 Getting started
Waste & Recycling	Deliver sustainable and affordable waste management services	 Almost there
Water	Include Low Impact Development in performance and design standards	 Excelling
	Establish and enforce progressive watershed protection measures	 Excelling

2020 Sustainability and Coastal Resilience Assessment

Climate: York has made significant strides towards understanding the Town's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, completing both municipal and community-wide GHG inventories. The Town has set targets to reduce community and municipal GHG emissions 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 and is beginning to develop a Climate Action Plan that will guide mitigation strategies. A climate change vulnerability assessment and climate adaptation strategies will also be part of the Climate Action Plan.

NEXT STEPS:

- Standardize the municipal GHG inventory data collection process by tracking building energy consumption (i.e. with EnergyStar Portfolio Manager or through the finance department).
- Develop a Climate Action Plan with achievable actions to reduce community emissions.
- Conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment to evaluate non-coastal vulnerabilities.
- Ensure that climate adaptation and community resilience are incorporated into the Climate Action and Comprehensive Plans.

Coastal Hazards: Coastal hazards, especially storm surge and sea level rise, are of particular concern for York. The Town was the first in Maine to have a sea level rise chapter in its Comprehensive Plan and is committed to updating and refining the chapter in its forthcoming Plan update. York is participating in two projects assessing the economic and social impacts of storm surge and sea level rise and is working with DEP to evaluate the impact of its new seawall design on beach sediment dynamics.

NEXT STEPS:

- Incorporate the most recent projections of sea level rise, precipitation, marsh migration, and shoreline change in the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan update.
- Establish a coastal hazard overlay zoning district and accompanying development standards to direct development away from high-risk areas and ensure new and redevelopment in vulnerable areas are resilient.
- Amend the floodplain management ordinance to incorporate enhanced flood risk reduction measures such as accounting for cumulative improvement costs in the definition of substantial improvement and damage.
- Assess impacts of sea level rise and shoreline change on the Town's beaches and subsequent impacts to the local economy.
- Assess impacts of saltwater intrusion and groundwater rise caused by sea level rise on water supplies and infrastructure.

Economic Development: York has not yet taken specific actions to promote and support sustainability and resiliency actions for local businesses.

NEXT STEPS:

- Engage the business community on climate change and resiliency issues, potentially as part of SMPDC's EDA grant-funded project on coastal economic resilience.
- Support the establishment of a regional business sustainability award or recognition program.

Energy: Reducing municipal fossil fuel consumption has been a priority for York and the York Energy Efficiency Steering Committee (YEESC). Since an energy audit in 2011, many energy efficiency projects have been completed including air sealing, insulation, lighting upgrades, and rooftop solar. York requires all new municipal buildings to meet energy efficiency criteria under Article 9: Sustainable Energy Efficient Buildings. The Town has done some work promoting energy efficiency for residents and businesses, such as supporting weatherization programs through York Community Service Association. York has undertaken several strategies to support the development of renewable energy, such as adopting a Property Assessed Clean Energy Ordinance, adopting ordinances that facilitate small windmill and solar installations on private property, and pursuing a municipal solar farm on underutilized town properties.

NEXT STEPS:

- Finalize and release the Request for Proposals for municipal solar farms on the landfill sites.
- Work through the YEESC to connect residents and businesses to energy efficiency resources and educate the community about renewable energy options.
- Explore energy efficiency projects for municipal buildings with longer-term payback (e.g., windows, roofs, ductwork).

2020 Sustainability and Coastal Resilience Assessment

Land Ecosystems: The York Conservation Commission leads efforts to promote and practice environmentally-friendly and sustainable landscape approaches in town. The Commission is currently focused on the Town's beach trash policy, invasive plant strategies, a potential new pesticide policy, and proposing amendments to the Open Space Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

NEXT STEPS:

- Incorporate sustainable landscape approaches into municipal landscaping, such as: strategically planting trees to act as a buffer to filter air and water, limit stormwater runoff, and stabilize soil, manage lawns using natural products and low-impact practices, use integrated pest management strategies for municipal landscapes to reduce impacts from fertilizers and pesticides, and use native and sustainable landscaping on municipal properties.
- Encourage community-wide use of integrated pest management strategies through a pesticide policy or ordinance and/or community education programs.

Leadership: Through the efforts of the Board of Selectmen and YEESC, York is a member of ICLEI: Local Govts. for Sustainability, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy.

NEXT STEPS:

- Partner with local universities and schools to identify opportunities for research on sustainability issues such as identifying climate change vulnerabilities, supporting local and sustainable food systems, and developing waste reduction strategies
- Share information about municipal sustainability initiatives broadly in the community and externally through events, the town website, and active participation in sustainability and resilience networks.

Mobility: York strives to facilitate alternative transportation. With the support of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee, the Town drafted and adopted a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2017 and actively pursues strategies to promote bike and pedestrian safety. York coordinates on regional transportation through the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS). York is also interested in facilitating the electrification of the transportation system, exploring opportunities for public EV charging station installation and electric fleet vehicles. The Energy Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recommends the development of a Green Fleet Policy.

NEXT STEPS:

- Continue to promote safe and secure walkability and sidewalks along Route 1 and in the Nubble and beach areas.
- Ensure that Bike lanes or adequate shoulder space for bike safety is integral to all road projects.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy as recommended in the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Develop a Green Fleet Policy to prioritize the purchase of EVs and reduce municipal transportation emissions.
- Investigate local transit needs and opportunities to support an aging population, such as demand-response transit.

Municipal Operations: York formally adopted a sustainability goal in its current Comprehensive Plan (Goal 1.4) and is planning on incorporating sustainability as a key theme in the next Comprehensive Plan update. Many of the Town's sustainability efforts are supported by work of the YEESC, Bike and Pedestrian Committee, and Conservation Commission. A town-wide Sustainability Policy has been drafted, but not yet approved. York does not have regular financing strategies in place for sustainability and resilience activities outside of committee budgets. Sustainability and resilience criteria are not incorporated into York's municipal expenditure policies.

NEXT STEPS:

- Ensure York's sustainability goals remain in the Comprehensive plan update and consider adding resilience as a key theme.
- Explore strategies such as Power Purchase Agreements, leases, and Energy Savings Performance Contracts to finance renewable energy systems and energy efficiency projects for municipal buildings.
- Budget and plan for long-term energy efficiency equipment upgrades (i.e. boilers and chillers for heating and cooling, window, door and rooftop replacements, and modified ductwork).
- Integrate sustainability and resiliency into capital planning criteria by evaluating each project for its influence on York's environmental, economic, and social sustainability and for its resilience to coastal and climate change impacts.

2020 Sustainability and Coastal Resilience Assessment

Sustainable Communities: York partners with York Community Services Association to connect residents to vital community services that enhance wellbeing and community resilience, such as general assistance and family services. The Town supports local food access through the York (Gateway) Farmers' Market and the York Community Garden. The Energy Steering Committee and private organizations lead many outreach and education events about climate, sustainability, and resilience issues.

NEXT STEPS:

- Take emergency management lessons from Covid-19 pandemic to increase community preparedness and resilience, such as revising emergency ordinances, policies and procedures and improving inter-municipal coordination and collaboration.
- Support the acceptance of SNAP/EBT benefits and the York (Gateway) Farmers' Market.
- Develop online materials for the community about sustainability initiatives and allied organizations and govt. agencies.
- Support the York Community Garden to increase accessibility and develop standards for use.

Sustainable Development: York has made significant efforts to promote more affordable housing through the Zoning Ordinance, including a workforce affordable housing requirement in the development standards for subdivisions, provisions for converting buildings to affordable apartments, a York Village Affordable Elderly Housing Overlay District, and a Workforce Affordable Housing Overlay District. The Open Space Conservation Subdivision requirement serves to conserve environmentally important and ecologically significant features.

NEXT STEPS:

- Consider revising and/or developing codes to promote sustainable building and site practices.
- Explore incentives for green building in new construction and re-construction as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan Energy Chapter.

Waste & Recycling: York provides curbside trash and recycling pick up to residents, as well as recycling services at the Town's transfer station. The Town has taken a lead in discouraging single-use plastics, banning plastic bags in 2015 and banning polystyrene foam in 2019. York also has a mandatory recycling ordinance that applies to single and multi-family residences. The Recycling Committee leads outreach and education activities and is actively looking for opportunities for community composting programs.

NEXT STEPS:

- Provide recycling and composting infrastructure at public places.
- Explore a construction and demolition recycling policy to keep these materials out of landfills and ensure they are recycled.
- Continue to explore community composting program (at the York Community Garden, transfer facility or through a third-party) and education to residents and businesses.

Water: As an MS4 community and active member of the Southern Maine Stormwater Management Group, York has adopted enhanced stormwater management regulations and policies. The Town has implemented a number of exemplary water quality protection measures, including wetlands and watershed protection ordinances, the York River Watershed project, and Cape Neddick River Watershed restoration and protection projects. The Town also has ordinances requiring the use of low impact development (LID), periodic pump out of septic systems, and open space subdivisions provisions requiring development designs centered around conserving open space, ecological features, and the natural environment.

NEXT STEPS:

- Enhance existing land use regulations requiring the use of LID for stormwater management for all development and redevelopment projects by developing performance standards and LID criteria.
- Adopt an ordinance limiting and/or prohibiting the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.
- Adopt a policy that all municipal development projects will utilize LID techniques and green infrastructure.
- Incorporate future precipitation projections in land use regulations and amend stormwater design standards to address both peak flow and volume.