

Chapter 1

Community Profile

Historical Background

The Town of North East is nestled at the head of the Chesapeake Bay on the North East River, in Cecil County. North of the Town lie two major roads, Route 40 and I-95, which have and will continue to have a profound impact on the growth in the North East area. Route 40 has developed commercially with restaurants, service stations, and similar auto-oriented uses. Commercial growth has occurred along MD 272, just north of Route 40, with the construction of North East Plaza in the early 1970's, the North East Commerce Center, and North East Station just south of Route 40.

Today, a Development District surrounds the Town of North East near the I-95/Route 40 corridor. Tourism continues to evolve into an economic force for the Town, attracting many visitors to the North East River with water-oriented recreational opportunities and the nearby Elk Neck State Park. According to park staff, Elk Neck State Park attracts 364,052 day visitors, 61,195 visitors for camping purposes and 3,607 visitors for cabin rental purposes annually.

Socio-Economic Background

Population Growth

Up until 1970, North East witnessed a steady increase in growth over each decade. However, in the decade 1970 - 1980, the Town population dropped by 349 or a decrease of 19 percent. This trend was reversed in the subsequent decade when the population reached 1,913 by 1990 and 2,733 in 2000.

Population Growth

	1980	1990	2000	Percent increase 1980-2000
Cecil County	60,430	71,347	85,951	42.2%
North East, election district	12,507	15,631	18,682	49.4%
North East, town	1,469	1,913	2,733	86.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

North East declined as a percentage of Cecil County between 1970 and 1990 (3.4 percent in 1970 to 2.7 percent in 1990). Between 1980 and 2000, North East climbed back to 3.2 percent of the County populations. If the trend continues and the Town of North East is approximately 3.2 percent of Cecil County's population, then the following projections can be made.

Population Projections

	2000	2010	2020
Cecil County *	85,951	99,600	103,300
North East, town **	2,733	3,187	3,306

* Source: Maryland Office of Planning

** Based on a 3.2 percent growth rate

Age/Sex

The age structure for North East changed little from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, over 70 percent of the Town's population was below the age of 45. Thirty-two percent was below the age of 18 and slightly less than 11 percent were 65 or older. Thirty-two percent of the population fell between the ages of 25 to 44.

In 2000, the median age of the Town population was 31.3, which is slightly over a year older than the median age in 1990. This compares to a median age in Cecil County of 35.5 and 36.0 in the State.

47.8 percent of the population was male and 52.2 females. The male female ratio was slightly higher in the age group 18 years and over and 65 years and older. In these two age groups combined, females were 44.4 percent of the total population and males were 37.1 percent of the total population.

Race

According to Census 2000, 93.8 percent of the Town's population is classified as white. Black and African Americans are the largest minority and make-up 3.2 percent of the Town's population. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin constitute 1.5 percent of the Town's population.

By way of comparison, Black or African Americans are 3.8 percent of the County population and 27.9 percent of the State population. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin are 1.5 percent of the County population and 4.3 percent of the State population.

Educational Attainment

The 2000 Census data for education has not yet been released. In 1990, of persons over 25 years of age, 74 percent possessed a high school degree. This compares with 72.2 percent for Cecil County and 78.4 percent for Maryland. 12.8 percent of the Town's population had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to 12.1 percent for Cecil County and 26.5 for Maryland.

Employment

With an unemployment rate of 5.5 percent in 1990, North East experienced higher unemployment than both Cecil County and the State.

1990 Labor Force

	Population	Percent in labor force	Percent unemployed
Maryland	3,736,830	70.6%	4.3%
Cecil County	54,369	68.1%	4.6%
North East	1,502	69.7%	5.5%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

1989 Income and Poverty Status

	Per capita income	Median Income			Persons living in poverty	
		Households	Families	Nonfamily Households	Number	Percent
Maryland	\$17,730	\$39,386	\$45,034	\$24,482	385,296	8.3%
Cecil County	\$14,314	\$36,019	\$40,420	\$18,696	5,206	7.5%
North East, town	\$14,448	\$29,647	\$32,143	\$20,990	170	8.9%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Although North East had a similar per capita income to the County, its incidence of poverty among persons, families, and female householders was higher. Poverty thresholds in 1989 ranged from \$6,310 for an individual to \$12,619 for a four person household with two children.

1990 Occupation of Employed

	Number of Persons	Percentage
Executive, administrative, & managerial	89	9.0%
Professional specialty occupations	106	10.8%
Technicians & related support occupations	42	4.3%
Sales occupations	95	9.6%
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	183	18.6%
Private household occupations	3	0.3%
Protective services occupations	31	3.1%
Service occupations, except protective & household	111	11.3%
Farming, forestry, & fishing occupations	16	1.6%
Precision production, craft, & repair occupations	144	14.6%
Machine operators, assemblers, & inspectors	67	6.8%
Transportation & material moving occupations	42	4.2%
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, & laborers	57	5.8%
TOTAL		100.0%
Private for profit wage & salary workers 16+	690	69.9%
Private not-for-profit wage & salary workers 16+	49	4.9%
Local government workers 16+	78	8.0%
State government workers 16+	52	5.3%
Federal government workers 16+	62	6.3%
Self-employed workers 16+	50	5.1%
Unpaid family workers 16+	5	0.5%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Persons per Household

According to early data published by the Census Bureau, average household size in the Town increased somewhat, from 2.36 persons per household in 1990 to 2.52 persons per household in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000 the average household size decreased in Cecil County, from 2.81 to 2.71 person per household. It also decreased in the State, from 2.67 to 2.61 persons per household.

Housing Characteristics

According to the Census 2000 the total number of housing units in North East increased from 847 in 1990 to 1,215 units, over a 43 percent increase. Of the 1,081 occupied units, 49 percent were owner occupied units. The average household size of owner occupied units was 2.63 persons per unit. The average household size of renter occupied units was 2.41. During the period 1990 to 2000, North East experienced a 4.0 percent vacancy rate for homeowner units and a 6.3 percent vacancy rate for rental units. Fifty-one units, or slightly more than 4 percent, were classified seasonal, recreational or occasional use housing.