Sanford Maine Inventory and Analysis

Version 3

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Shaping SANFORD SPRINGVALE 2025 Comprehensive Plan
A Blueprint for our Future

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Introduction

The Inventory and Analysis is intended to provide a foundation for the comprehensive planning process, and is a required component of comprehensive plans under the Growth Management Act. This document outlines existing conditions, recent trends, and constraints affecting the City, including land use patterns, housing, transportation, natural resources, economic conditions, public facilities, and the regulatory framework that shapes development. By grounding the plan in current data and local context, the Inventory and Analysis establishes a shared understanding of where Sanford is today and identifies challenges and opportunities that can be used to inform the vision, goals, and strategies developed later in the planning process.

This document draws on a range of local, state, and federal data sources to meet the State's Growth Management Act requirements for an inventory and analysis while also expanding on topic areas that are important to Sanford's local planning context. Sources include U.S. Census Bureau decennial census and American Community Survey estimates; state agency planning data; municipal records, ordinances, maps, permit information, and capital planning materials; regional plans and studies; prior City planning documents; and information provided by City staff, local partners, and subject-matter agencies.

Data sources for charts, tables, maps, and figures are identified in the accompanying captions, and full linked source information is included in the Sources section at the end of each chapter. Structurally, the Inventory and Analysis is organized by topical elements that align with state planning requirements and local priorities. Each chapter compiles state-required and other relevant data, maps, and narrative descriptions to describe existing conditions and recent trends..

Together, the Inventory and Analysis chapters serve as both a technical reference and a policy bridge between background information and future action. While largely descriptive in nature, this document intentionally highlights issues that require strategic attention, setting the stage for the plan's vision statement, goals, and implementation actions.

The Inventory and Analysis should be understood as a planning-level resource rather than a complete audit of every local condition, asset, or issue. Data sources vary in collection methods, geographic scale, update cycles, and level of precision. Some datasets represent estimates rather than exact counts; some local conditions may have changed since the data were collected; and mapped information should be interpreted at the scale for which it was prepared. In addition, several topics rely on the best available information at the time of drafting, supplemented by local knowledge and staff input where quantitative data are limited. For these reasons, the findings in this document are intended to identify patterns, constraints, opportunities, and questions for future policy discussion, not to serve as final engineering, legal, fiscal, or site-specific determinations.

1. Demographics

Introduction

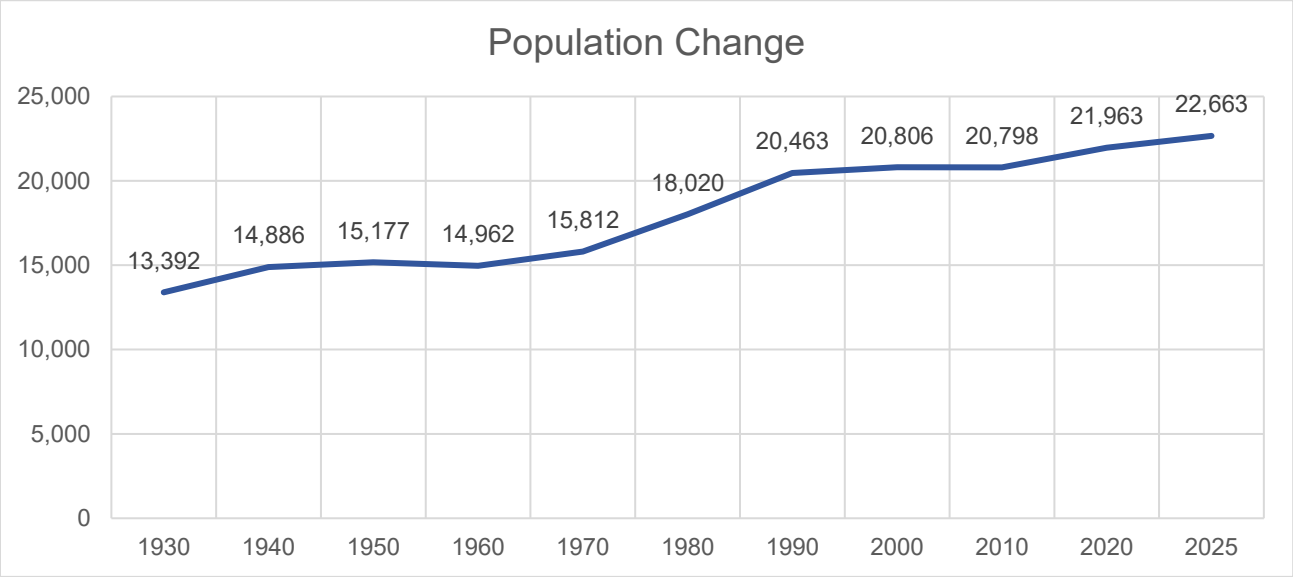
Sanford (the City) has experienced significant demographic change over the past decade, marked by population growth in the early 2010s, followed by a gradual slowing toward a more stagnant population trajectory in the future. Growth has been driven by migration, relative housing affordability, and regional economic activity, positioning Sanford as one of York County's (the County's) largest population centers. While population increases have continued through the early 2020s, long-term projections indicate that growth will level off and potentially decline slightly as broader County and statewide trends take hold, particularly population aging.

At the same time, Sanford's population is aging, with notable declines in youth and strong growth among residents age 65 and older. This is alongside modest gains in the working-age population. These shifts are reflected in household composition, school enrollment trends, and service needs, and they mirror patterns seen across York County and Maine (the State). While Sanford remains less racially and ethnically diverse than national averages, it is slightly more diverse than the County and State, with modest increases in some minority populations and foreign-born residents. Educational attainment and household incomes have improved over time, though income levels continue to lag behind regional benchmarks. Together, these trends present challenges, such as workforce constraints and increased demand for senior services, and opportunities to adapt municipal services, housing, education, and economic development strategies to support a changing and increasingly age-diverse community.

Population Change

In 2025, Sanford's population reached 22,663 people, marking growth from its 2020 Decennial Census count of 21,963 people and its 2010 Decennial Census count of 20,798 people. In the last decade, the City has experienced a period of moderate growth tied to increased domestic and international migration, housing affordability, and growing economic activity.

Figure 1.1: Total City Population (1930 – 2025)



Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 1930-2020; U.S. Census Bureau 2025 population estimates

Table 1.1 shows observed population changes for communities in York County between 2010 and 2020, based on Decennial Census Results. All but one listed community saw an increase in population between 2010 and 2020, with an average increase of 9% between 2010 and 2020 years.

Between 2020 and 2025, Sanford became the largest community in York County, passing Biddeford. Sanford is the eighth largest community in the State. Between 2020 and 2025, communities saw an average population increase of 5%.

Table 1.1: York County Population Increase

Place	2020 Total Population	2010 Total Population	Percent Change 2010 - 2020	2025 Total Population	Percent Change 2020 - 2025
Acton	2,671	2,447	9%	2,735	2%
Alfred	3,073	3,019	2%	3,188	4%
Arundel	4,264	4,022	6%	4,596	8%
Berwick	7,950	7,246	10%	8,436	6%
Biddeford	22,552	21,277	6%	22,399	-1%
Buxton	8,376	8,034	4%	8,681	4%
Cornish	1,508	1,403	7%	1,602	6%
Dayton	2,129	1,965	8%	2,182	2%
Eliot	6,717	6,204	8%	7,643	14%
Hollis	4,745	4,281	11%	5,003	5%

Place	2020 Total Population	2010 Total Population	Percent Change 2010 - 2020	2025 Total Population	Percent Change 2020 - 2025
Kennebunk	11,536	10,798	7%	12,152	5%
Kennebunkport	3,629	3,474	4%	3,717	2%
Kittery	10,070	9,490	6%	11,420	13%
Lebanon	6,469	6,031	7%	6,801	5%
Limerick	3,188	2,892	10%	3,575	12%
Limington	3,892	3,713	5%	4,173	7%
Lyman	4,525	4,344	4%	4,713	4%
Newfield	1,648	1,522	8%	1,693	3%
North Berwick	4,978	4,576	9%	5,355	8%
Ogunquit	1,577	892	77%	1,606	2%
Old Orchard Beach	8,960	8,624	4%	9,533	6%
Parsonsfield	1,791	1,898	-6%	1,837	3%
Saco	20,381	18,482	10%	21,159	4%
Sanford	**21,982**	**20,798**	**6%**	**22,663**	3%
Shapleigh	2,921	2,668	9%	3,025	4%
South Berwick	7,467	7,220	3%	7,941	6%
Waterboro	7,936	7,693	3%	8,219	4%
Wells	11,314	9,589	18%	12,094	7%
York	13,723	12,529	10%	14,293	4%

Source: Decennial U.S. Census, 2010, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau 2025 population estimates

Population Projections

State of Maine projections indicate the City's population is expected to remain relatively stable over the near term, followed by a gradual decline in later years. The State sites that population trends are driven by a projected statewide decline in natural population growth. Maine has a large population of adults age 65 and older, which has resulted in more deaths than births in recent years.[1]

State Projection Limitations

It is important to note that the Maine State Economist calculates population projections beginning with County-level projections. The methodology used for the County projections is the cohort-component method. This widely used methodology utilizes births, deaths, and migrations to advance each age-sex cohort through the projection period. It allows for specific survival and migration rates to be calculated for each age-sex cohort. Most City and town projections are

[1] Maine State Economist. April 2025. Maine City and Town Population Projections 2042. State of Maine. https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/sites/maine.gov.dafs.economist/files/inline-files/MaineCityTownPopulationProjection2042.pdf.

calculated by estimating a constant rate of growth for each municipality's share of their county population between 2018 and 2022 and then extrapolating this growth into the future. For York County, 2019 and 2022 estimates were used.

In all methodologies, the emphasis is on a community's growth as a share of its county's total growth. This is done to help ensure the town totals within a county equal the total county projection, but this can create some counterintuitive results. Towns with historical population growth in counties that are projected to grow may have projected population declines if that town's share of the county population has been declining, or if other towns in the county have been growing faster than the town in question. Projections should be used with caution, particularly in situations where the results seem unlikely. This is emphasized by the Maine State Economist, which encourages municipalities to limit the use of projections beyond 2032 if possible.

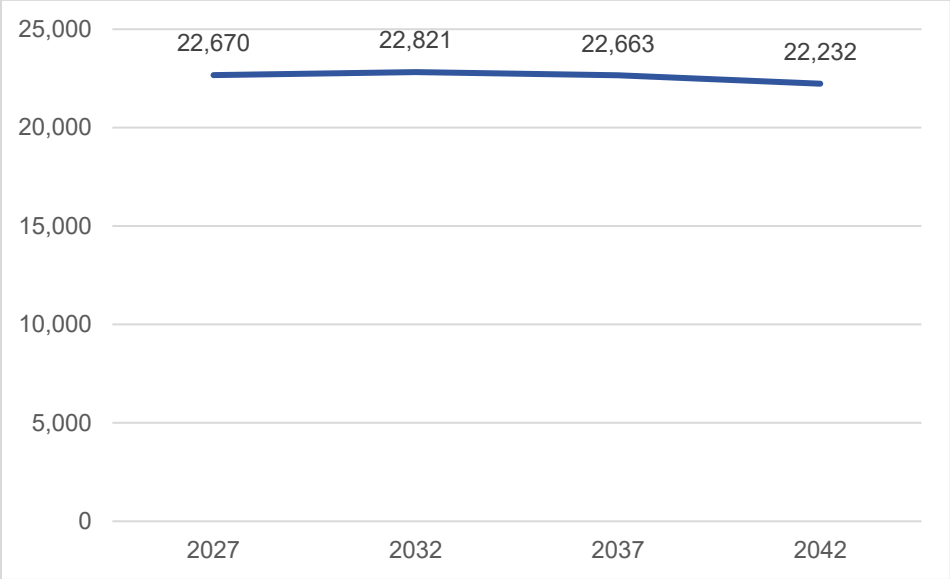
While longer-term demographic shifts are uncertain, the availability of housing has been a primary driver of population growth in communities across Maine. Sanford has a large number of units that have been approved by the Planning Board. These units are in various stages of permitting and construction. Should development trends continue, Sanford's future population would likely increase beyond current State projections.

Population Projection Data

The figures below were developed by the Maine State Economist in 2025 and use 2022 as the base year. They show projected population growth across York County based on base-year growth assumptions. As noted above, these projections have important limitations. Actual population change may be affected by factors beyond age, births, and deaths, including housing production, migration patterns, local development capacity, and broader economic conditions. Across Maine, communities that are actively building housing continue to experience growth, which may influence whether local population trends exceed baseline projections. Near-term projections are generally more reliable than longer-term projections because they are less exposed to uncertainty in housing markets, economic conditions, policy changes, and migration patterns.

Sanford is projected to see a slight population increase, prior to a slight decline. York County will continue to experience a slight but diminishing increase over the same period. In the next 15 years, projected regional shifts in age cohorts (see Figure 1.6) and the State's overall aging population are anticipated to be drivers of potential decline in Sanford and surrounding communities.

Figure 1.2: Projected City Population Change, 2027 – 2042



Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042[2]

Table 1.2: County Population Projections

Town	Base Population	Population projected				Total percent change
	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042	2022-2042
Acton	2,716	2,799	2,848	2,861	2,839	4.50%
Alfred	3,200	3,290	3,385	3,438	3,451	7.80%
Arundel	4,435	4,727	4,983	5,183	5,324	20.00%
Berwick	8,195	8,680	9,085	9,383	9,575	16.80%
Biddeford	22,463	23,082	23,191	22,984	22,501	0.20%
Buxton	8,508	8,681	8,759	8,718	8,574	0.80%
Cornish	1,550	1,647	1,727	1,786	1,825	17.70%
Dayton	2,181	2,279	2,353	2,397	2,414	10.70%
Eliot	7,160	7,640	8,183	8,638	8,999	25.70%
Hollis	4,888	5,146	5,355	5,500	5,583	14.20%
Kennebunk	11,866	12,341	12,728	12,955	13,033	9.80%
Kennebunkport	3,697	3,795	3,853	3,860	3,821	3.40%
Kittery	10,238	10,544	10,722	10,760	10,671	4.20%
Lebanon	6,644	6,949	7,189	7,340	7,406	11.50%
Limerick	3,436	3,764	4,123	4,441	4,712	37.10%
Limington	4,034	4,266	4,474	4,629	4,731	17.30%
Lyman	4,615	4,744	4,827	4,847	4,810	4.20%

[2] State of Maine population projections were released in April 2025 and use 2022 as the base year.

Town	Base Population	Population projected				Total percent change
	2022	2027	2032	2037	2042	2022-2042
Newfield	1,664	1,701	1,713	1,702	1,670	0.40%
North Berwick	5,146	5,361	5,544	5,658	5,708	10.90%
Ogunquit	1,600	1,803	1,972	2,121	2,248	40.50%
Old Orchard Beach	9,303	9,798	10,240	10,561	10,762	15.70%
Parsonsfield	1,815	1,804	1,775	1,721	1,645	-9.40%
Saco	20,883	21,984	22,847	23,433	23,752	13.70%
Sanford	22,243	22,670	22,821	22,663	22,232	0.00%
Shapleigh	2,987	3,134	3,245	3,317	3,351	12.20%
South Berwick	7,672	7,901	8,073	8,141	8,114	5.80%
Waterboro	8,085	8,330	8,482	8,522	8,463	4.70%
Wells	11,733	12,620	13,394	14,019	14,488	23.50%
York	13,993	14,441	14,742	14,852	14,789	5.70%

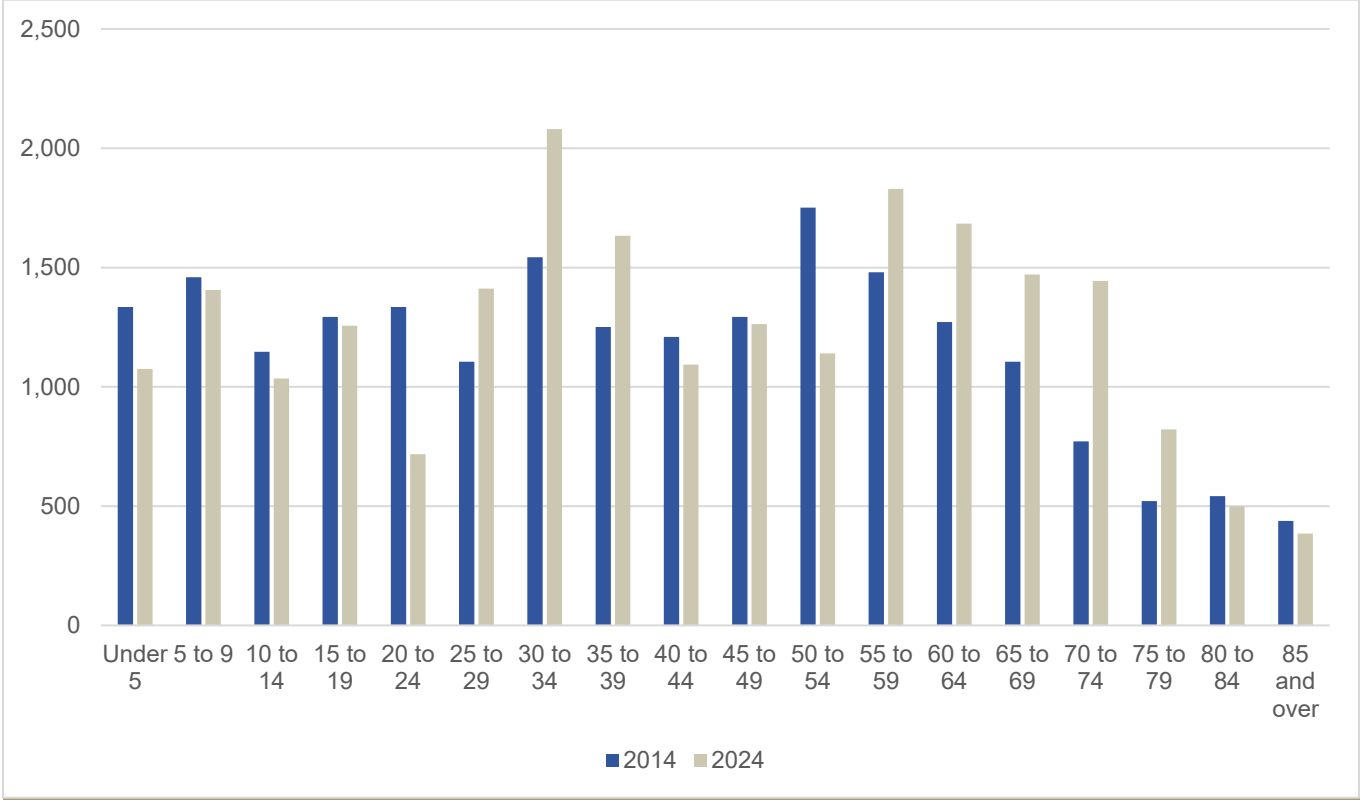
Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042

Age

Between 2014 and 2024, Sanford's population grew at a steady, gradual pace. During this time, the City also experienced a notable shift in its age composition. Mirroring trends seen in Maine and nationwide, Sanford is experiencing a decline in its youth population, paired with significant growth in its older population. In the last decade, the youth population (under 20 years) declined as both a percentage of the population and in total numbers. Figure 1.2 below shows this change in Sanford. The youth population decreased by 8.8%, while the number of residents over 65 years old increased by 36.8%. Despite the overall decline in the youth population, Sanford's working-age population (those between 20 and 64 years) increased by 5.0% between 2014 and 2024.

The City, York County, and the State of Maine have all experienced a decline in youth population and an increase in the number of older adult residents. Figure 1.3 depicts this regional progression. In addition, Sanford's median age increased from 39.8 in 2014 to 42.1 in 2024. This increase in median age (approximately 5.7%) was proportionally larger than median age changes in York County (3.6%) and Maine (2.9%). These median age shifts are in Figure 1.4 below.

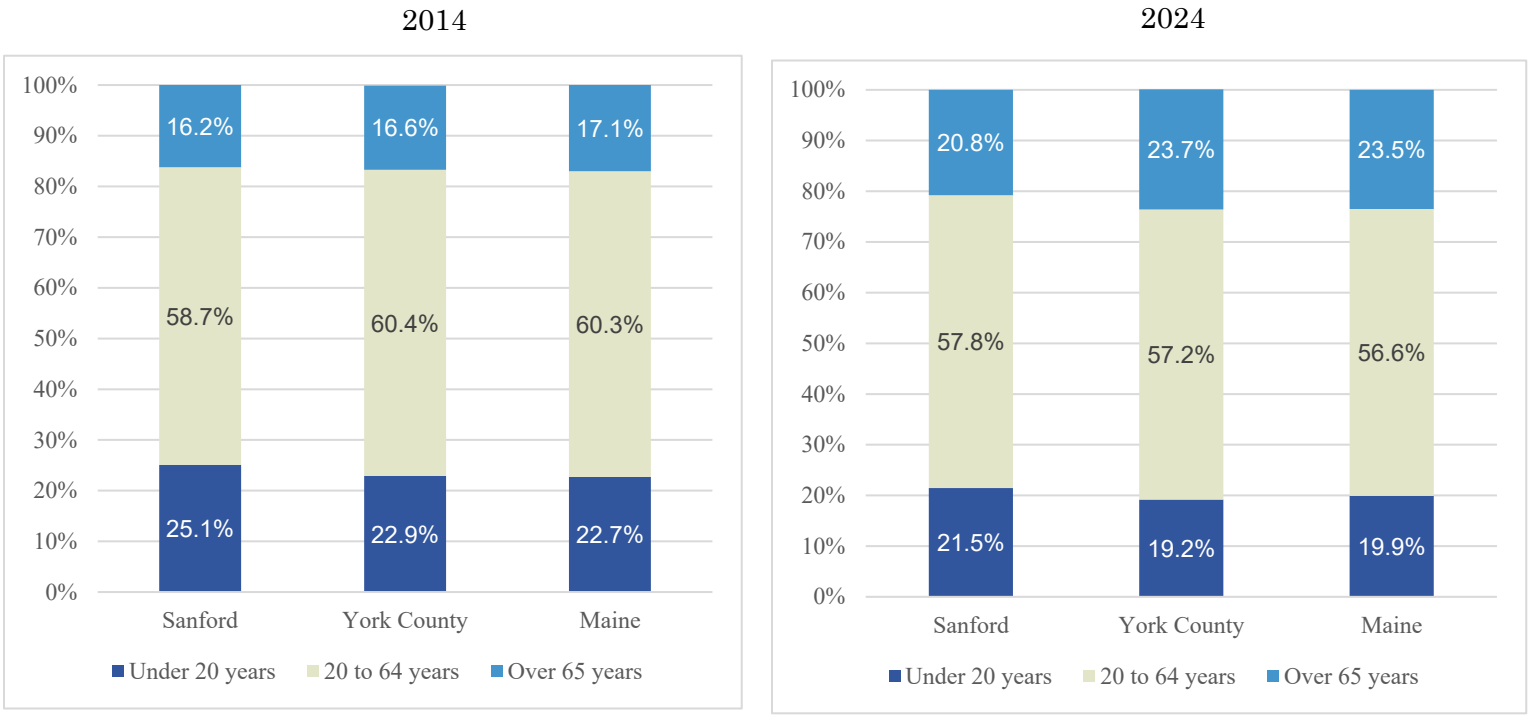
Figure 1.3: Sanford Population by Age Category



Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

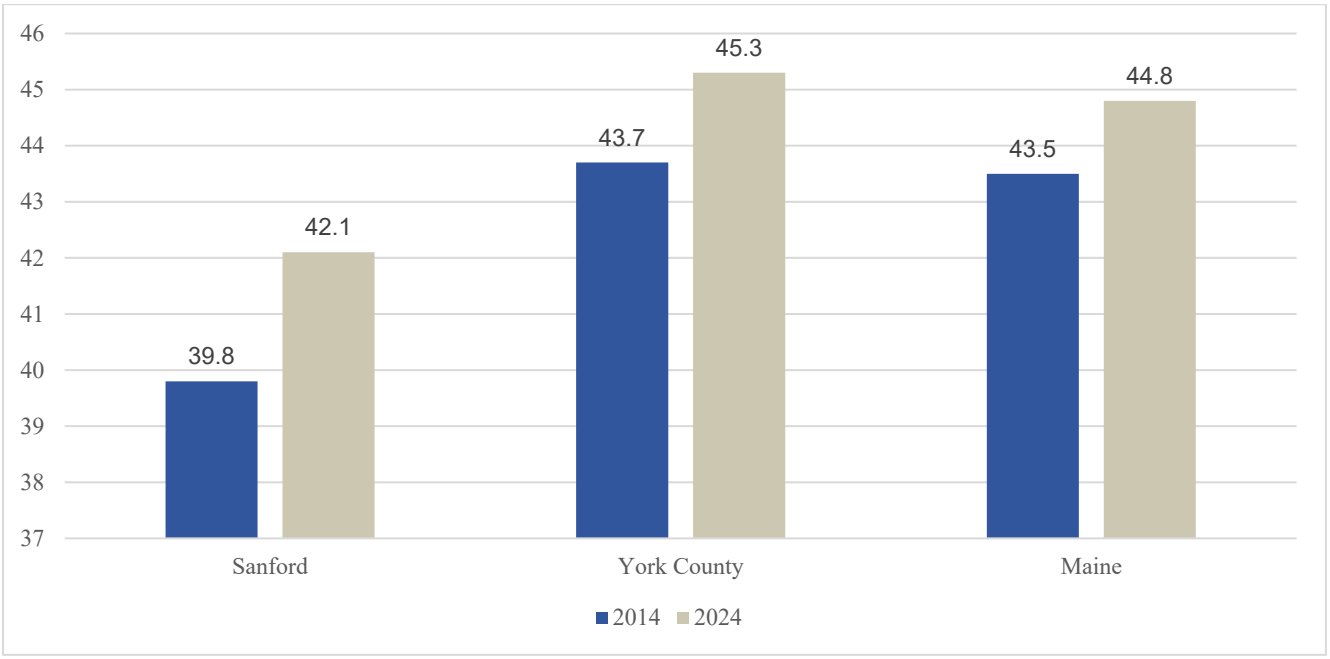
While York County's working-age population has increased, like Sanford, the State has seen a decline in residents aged 20 to 64. At the same time, the population age 65 and older continues to grow, resulting in a rising number of Maine residents retiring and exiting the labor force. As both the youth population and the core workforce shrink, fewer workers are available to fill job vacancies. This creates challenges for employers, slows down job growth, and reduces the number of working adults available to support services for children and older adults. Together, these dynamics place increasing pressure on the old-age dependency ratio in Sanford, York County, and statewide. For each person aged 65 and above, there are increasingly fewer people of working-age for these individuals to depend on.

Figure 1.4: Regional Age Breakdown, Sanford-York County-Maine



Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

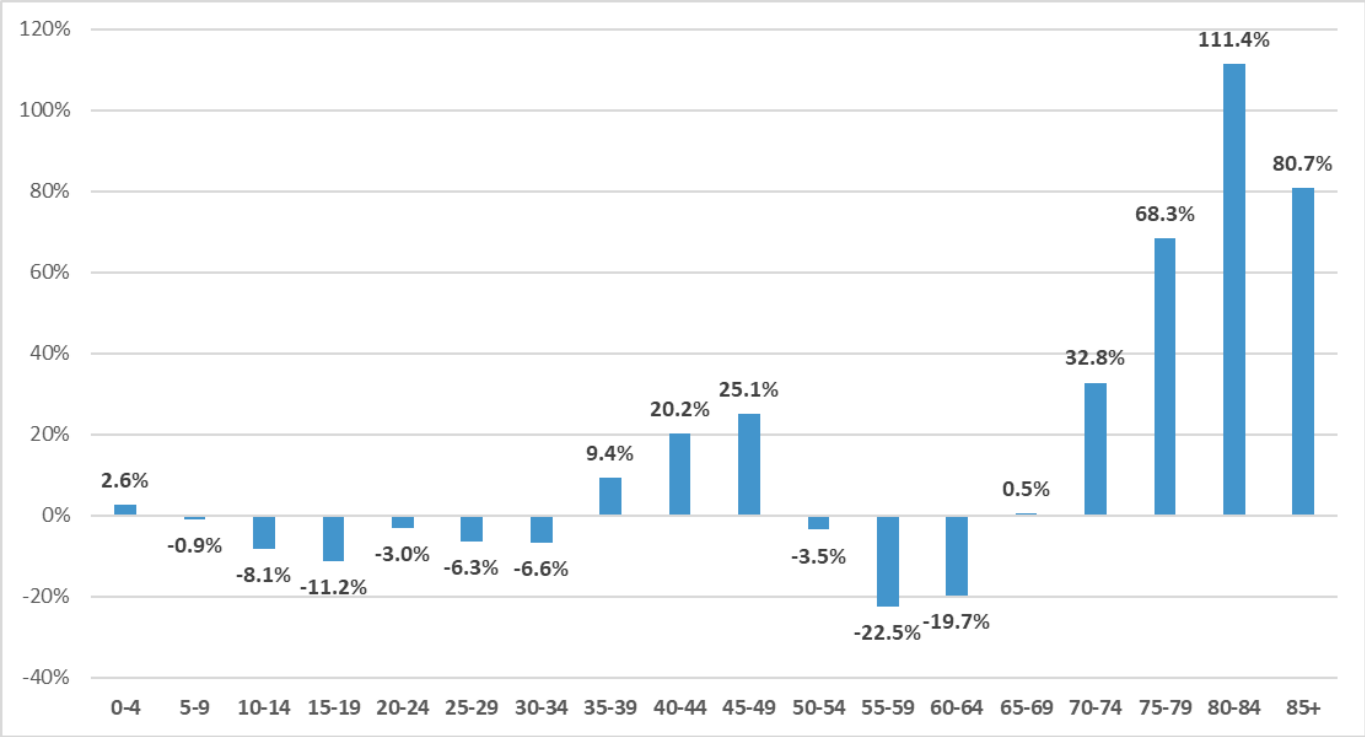
Figure 1.5: Median Age Change, Sanford-York County-Maine, 2014 – 2024



Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

While the State does not provide population projections by age cohort at the municipal level, estimated population shifts at the County-level indicate a continuing trend. Between 2022 and 2032, Maine anticipates a decline in all five-year age cohorts from 5 to 24 years and a significant increase in the population of residents 70 and over. Based on current trends in Sanford, a similar pattern is likely for the City.

Figure 1.6: York County Population Projections by Age Cohort, 2022 – 2032



Source: Maine State Economist, Population Projections 2042

Diversity

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau diversity index ranked Maine as the least diverse state in the nation. According to this measure, the probability that two randomly selected residents would be from different racial or ethnic backgrounds in Maine was 18.5%, the lowest in the country. Sanford, much like the broader York County region and the State, has a population that is predominantly white (see Table 1.2). As of 2020, approximately 89.6% of the City's population identifies as white alone. The second largest category is individuals who identify as two or more races, comprising 4.6% of Sanford residents.

Over the last decade, Sanford has remained a white community, with only slight change in its overall racial and ethnic makeup. Residents identifying as white or two or more races continued to represent the largest share of the population between 2010 and 2020. Although the City has seen small increases in the Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino populations, these shifts were modest, each rising by less than one percentage point over the decade. In the same

period, the number of residents identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, or some other race alone declined.

Table 1.3: Race and Ethnicity Over Time, Sanford-York County-Maine, 2010 – 2020

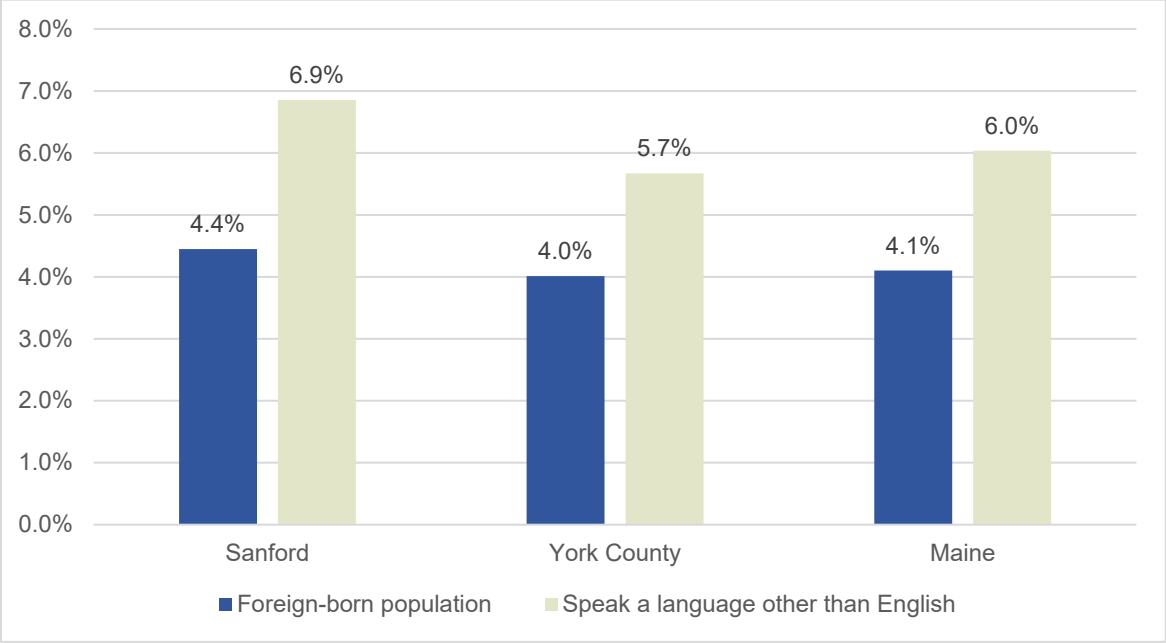
Race and Ethnicity	2010			2020		
	Sanford	York County	Maine	Sanford	York County	Maine
White Alone	93.9%	95.6%	94.4%	89.6%	91.5%	90.2%
Black or African American Alone	0.8%	0.5%	1.1%	1.3%	0.9%	1.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Asian Alone	2.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.8%	1.2%	1.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%	2.1%	1.9%	2.0%
Some Other Race Alone	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Two or More Races	2.1%	1.2%	1.4%	4.6%	3.8%	3.9%

Source: 2010 and 2020 U.S. Decennial Census

The racial and ethnic demographic trends in Sanford closely align with shifts seen at both the County and State levels. On average, Sanford exhibits greater racial and ethnic diversity than both York County and Maine overall. However, like local patterns, residents identifying as white or two or more races still make up the largest share of the population. At the same time, other racial and ethnic groups have experienced only modest growth or slight declines.

Languages spoken at home offer another lens into the community's cultural diversity. In 2024, 6.9% of Sanford residents ages five and older spoke a language other than English at home, down from 8.6% in 2014. Despite this decline, Sanford remains above the statewide average, where approximately 6.0% of residents speak a non-English language at home.

Figure 1.7: Diversity Indices, 2024



Source: 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

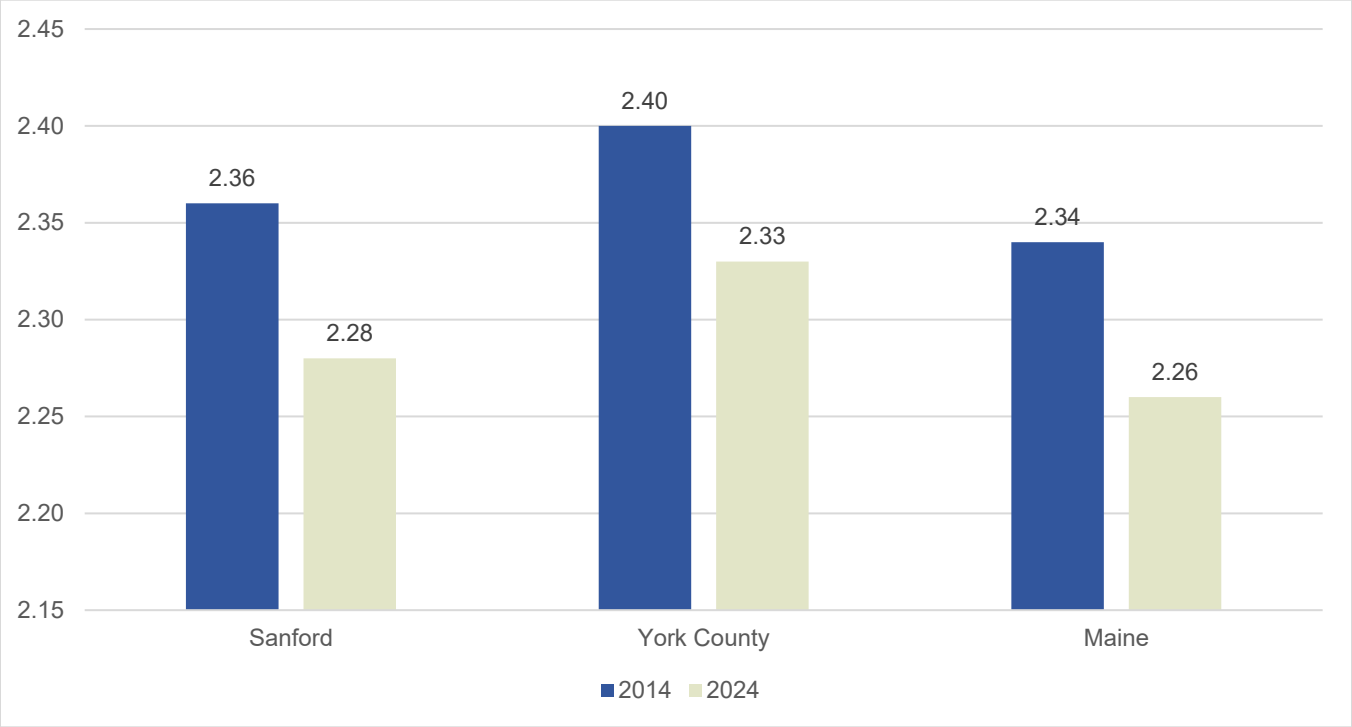
In 2024, 4.4% of Sanford residents were born outside of the United States, compared to 4.0% in York County and 4.1% statewide. While Sanford continues to sit slightly above the regional and State averages, the difference is small, indicating only a modest advantage in overall diversity.

Household Composition

The average household size in Sanford declined slightly from 2.36 in 2014 to 2.28 in 2024. In 2024, among Sanford's 9,626 households, 47.3% had at least one resident age 60 or older. This figure reflects an increase of approximately 11.6% in older-age households since 2014. At the same time, 25.8% of households had at least one person under the age of 18 in 2024, a decline of 4.9% over the decade. This shift highlights a continued aging trend within the community and a shrinking share of households with youth under 18.

These patterns mirror broader regional and statewide trends over the same period. York County's average household size decreased from 2.40 in 2014 to 2.33 in 2024, while Maine's fell from 2.34 to 2.26. Both the State and York County experienced similar increases in the share of households with residents over age 60, along with a notable decline in the proportion of individuals under 18 in households.

Figure 1.8: Change in Average Household Size, 2014 – 2024



Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

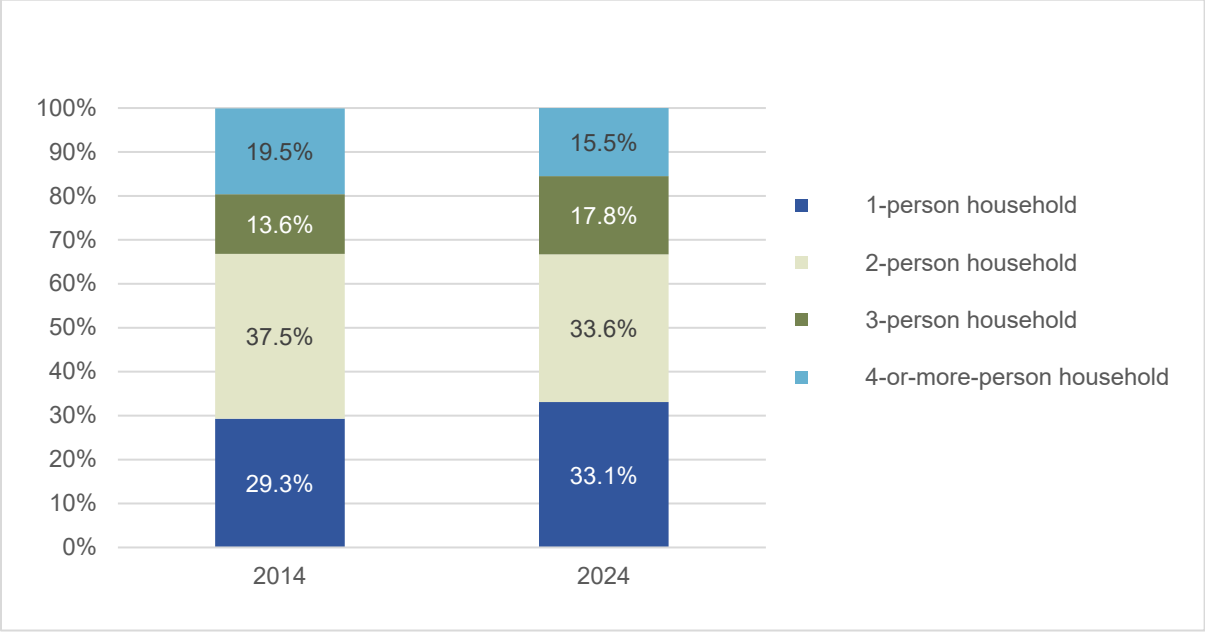
Table 1.4: Change in Household Demographics, 2014 – 2024

	2014			2024		
	Sanford	York County	Maine	Sanford	York County	Maine
Households with one or more people under 18 years	30.7%	27.6%	26.8 %	25.8%	24.0%	23.7%
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	35.7%	39.7%	39.6 %	47.3%	48.8%	47.8%

Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Sanford has also seen an increase in both one-person and three-person households, along with a decline in two-person and four-or-more-person homes. This shift is influenced by the City's aging population, an influx of working-age young adults, and a growing desire for independence among community members of all ages.

Figure 1.9: Household Type Distribution, Sanford, 2014 – 2024

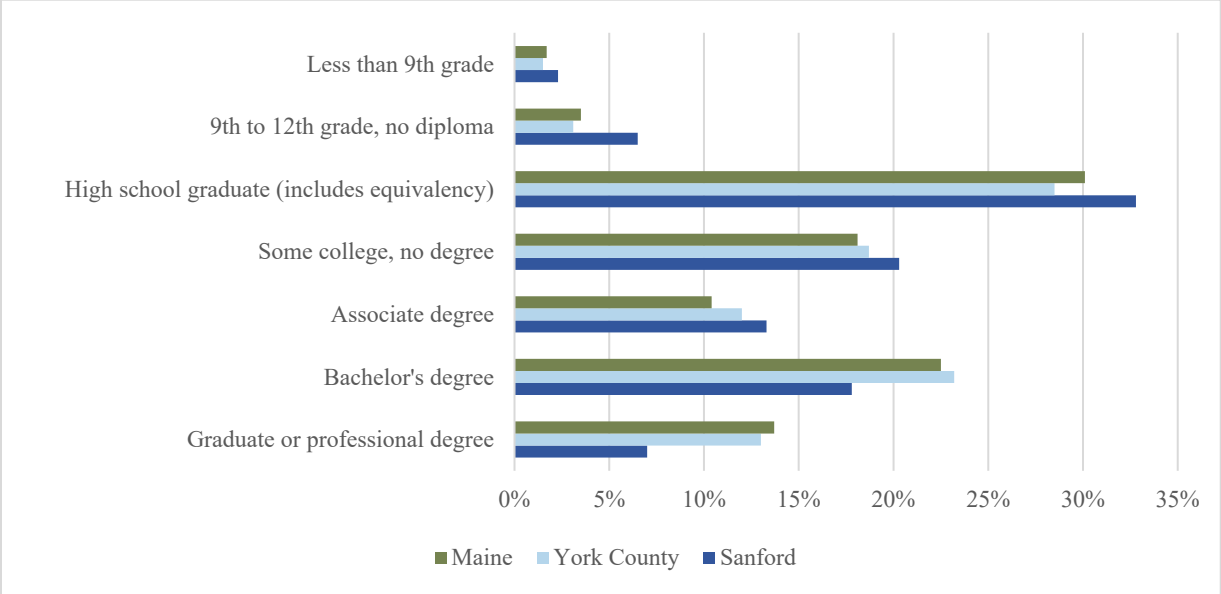


Source: 2014 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Sanford has seen overall gains in educational attainment between 2014 and 2024. While the share of residents age 25 and older with a high school diploma or higher remained steady at 91.3%, the proportion of those with bachelor's and graduate degrees increased notably. In 2024, 24.8% of residents held a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 17.5% in 2014; 7.0% held a graduate or professional degree, compared to 5.7% a decade earlier. This trend is broadly consistent with statewide patterns, though it differs from York County, where the share of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher has declined over the past decade even as the number of graduate degree holders has risen.

Figure 1.10: Highest Level of Educational Attainment, 2024



Source: 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

School Enrollment

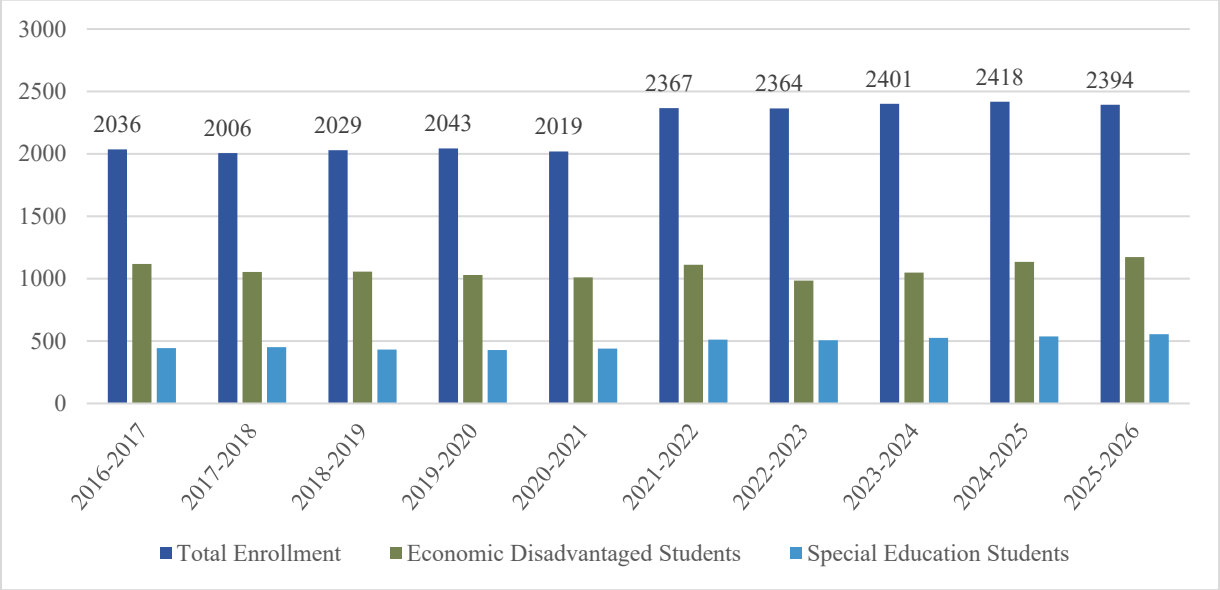
The number of Sanford residents aged three and older enrolled in school declined between 2014 and 2024. In 2024, 4,081 residents enrolled in school, down from 4,876 in 2014. This pattern mirrors trends across both the region and the State, where the number of residents enrolled in preschool through high school has also declined in recent years. This trend reflects an overall decrease in the youth population in Maine, York County, and the City of Sanford.

In Sanford, the Sanford Public School District serves a variety of schools, including Carl J. Lamb Elementary School, Sanford Pride Elementary School, Margaret Chase Smith Elementary School, Sanford Middle School, and Sanford High School. It also operates the Sanford Regional Technical Center and Sanford Community Adult Education.

While the overall number of Sanford residents age three and older enrolled in school has declined, enrollment within the Sanford Public School District has experienced moderate growth. Between 2016 and 2025, enrollment increased from 2,036 students to 2,418 students, followed by a slight decrease coming into the 2026 school year. The data suggests that, despite broader demographic shifts, local school enrollment has remained stable over the past decade.

The City experienced similar enrollment patterns within specific K-12 student groups, including those receiving special education services. The share of special education students in the Sanford Public School District increased from 21.8% in 2016 to 23.2% in 2026. In contrast, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students declined over the same period, dropping from 54.9% in 2016 to 49.0% in 2026.

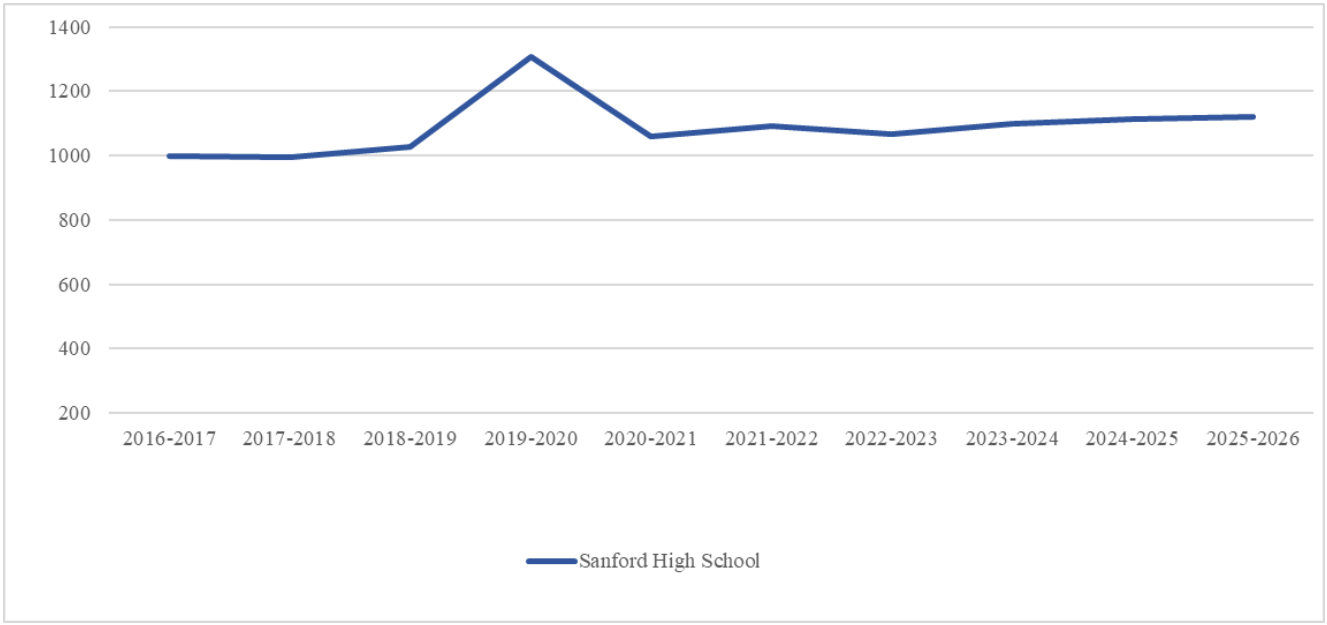
Figure 1.11: Publicly Funded Attending Students by School Year, 2016 – 2026



Source: Maine Department of Education

While complete data is available only for Sanford High School between 2016 and 2026, these figures still provide useful insight into broader enrollment patterns over the decade. Overall enrollment at Sanford High School increased by 2.5% during this period, reflecting modest growth even as the City-wide school-age population declined.

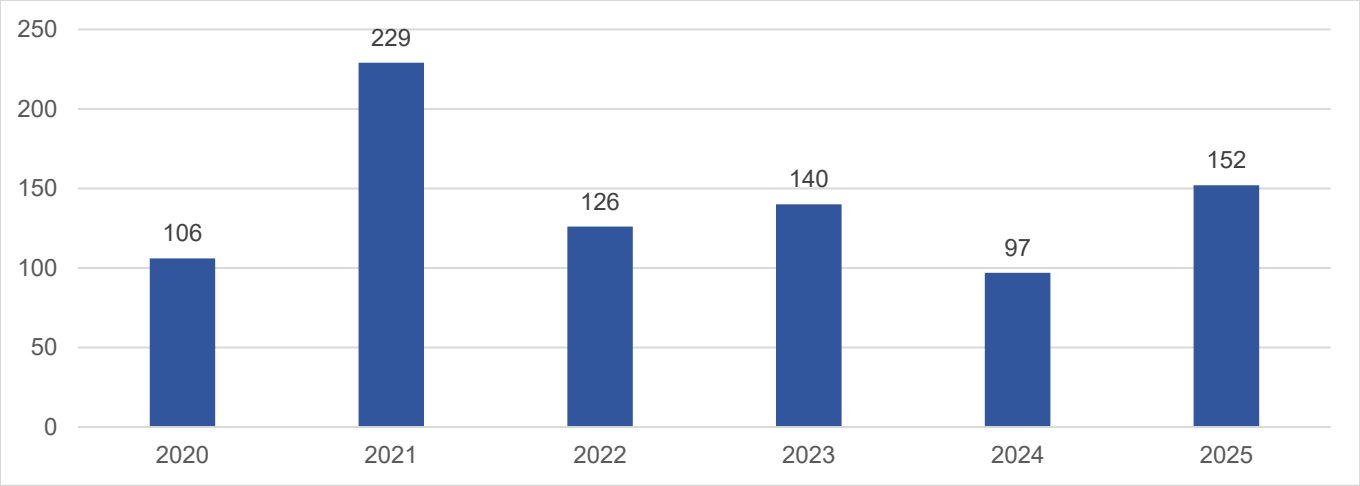
Figure 1.12: Sanford High School Enrollment Progression



Source: Maine Department of Education

The number of students receiving home instruction has fluctuated since 2020. In 2021, the total rose sharply from 106 to 229 students, likely a reflection of the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this peak, home instruction enrollment has alternated between decreases and increases every other year through 2025, indicating an unstable but gradually moderating trend.

Figure 1.13: Students Receiving Home Instruction, Sanford Public Schools

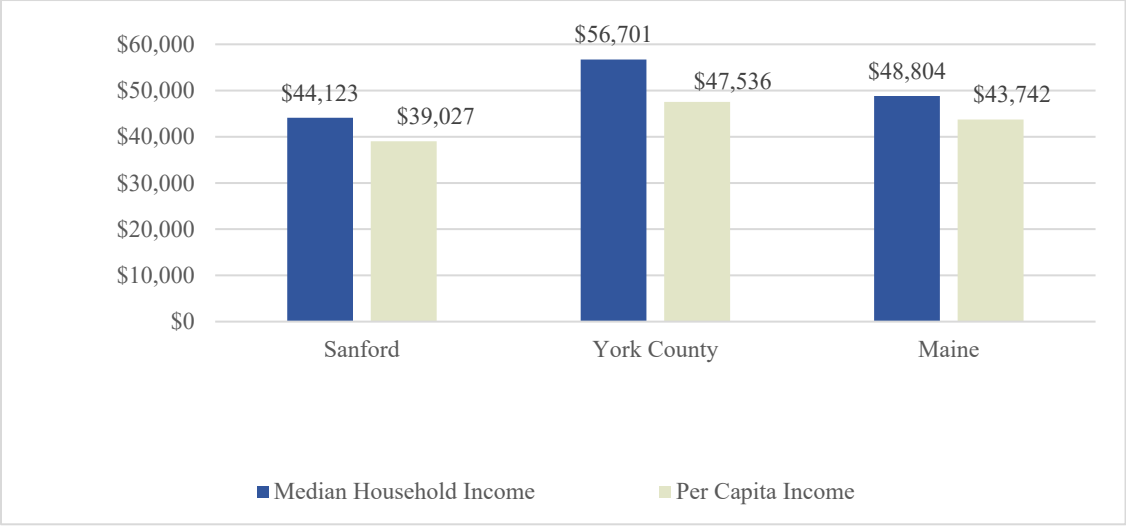


Source: Maine Department of Education

Income and Poverty

The median household income in Sanford has risen over the past decade, though it continues to trail estimates for both York County and the State. In 2014, Sanford's median household income was $44,123, compared to $56,701 in York County and $48,804 statewide.

Figure 1.14: Median Household and Per Capita Income, 2014

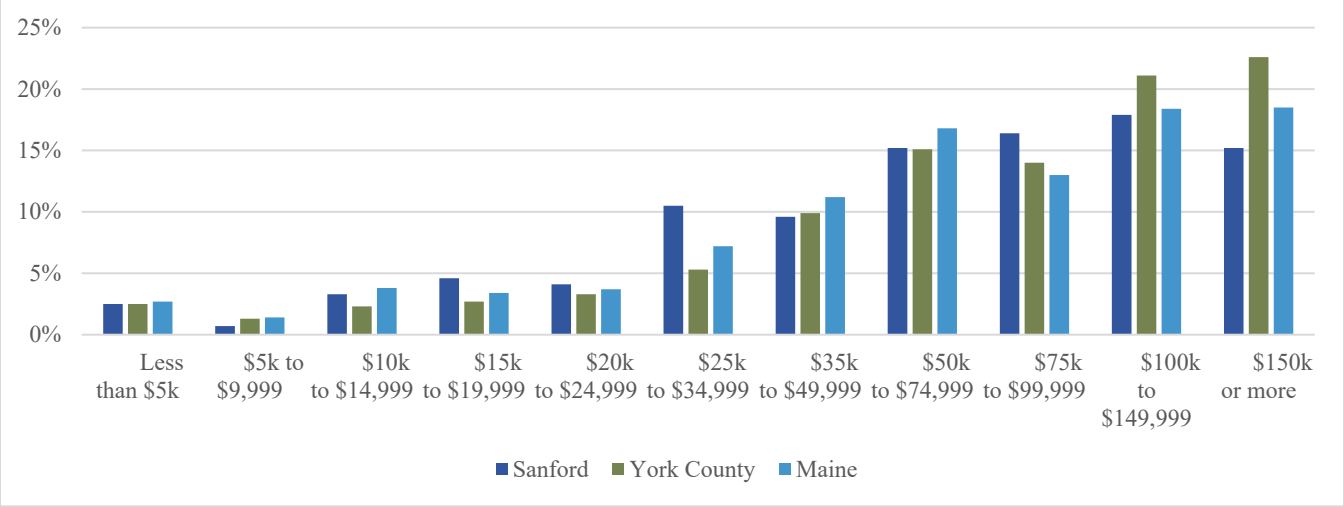


Source: 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

By 2024, Sanford's median income had increased to $72,524, while York County's rose to $88,333 and Maine's reached $74,733. These trends reflect Sanford's higher proportion of one-person and two-person households, which can contribute to a lower overall median income compared to areas with more multi-earner households. In addition, Sanford's per capita income remains lower than both York County and the State. These indicators suggest that the City's predominant household types are associated with lower average household earnings compared to the regional and statewide averages.

In 2024, most households in Sanford earned more than $75,000, with the largest share falling within the $100,000 – $149,000 income range. Despite these gains, household incomes in Sanford are still less than those in the broader region and the State. In both York County and Maine, households earned over $150,000 in 2024. This pattern mirrors conditions seen in 2014, underscoring a persistent gap in income levels between Sanford and the broader region and State.

Figure 1.15: Household Income, 2024



Source: 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Challenges and Opportunities

As the City of Sanford's population changes, municipal services are likely to be affected considerably in the coming 10 years. As the City's population continues to age, demand for senior-oriented services will grow, particularly in areas such as transportation, housing, home-accessibility support, and healthcare coordination. Sanford could also experience increasing pressure to expand social, recreational, and digital services that promote healthy aging and support the well-being of older residents. These could include enhanced community health programs, senior housing communities, and improved internet connectivity to facilitate at-home care. It could also lead to an increasing demand for assistance through local support networks, including Sanford General Assistance.

In addition, the State is seeing a decline in its population age 18 and under. In Sanford, the number of youth residents in Sanford may continue to decline over the next decade. If that trend continues, the City could see a reduced enrollment in public schools. Although current enrollment levels in the Sanford Public School District have not yet reflected this demographic shift, the downward trend in the population of residents under age 18 suggests that a future decline in school enrollment is possible.

Despite the challenges associated with Sanford's aging population and a declining youth cohort, these demographic shifts also present opportunities for the City. An increasing share of older residents could strengthen demand for new markets and industries. Senior-focused housing, accessible home-modification services, health and wellness businesses, and age-friendly transportation solutions all introduce new commercial opportunities for Sanford. This trend also creates opportunities to expand intergenerational programming, volunteer networks, and civic engagement initiatives that tap into the experience and availability of older adults.

At the same time, a smaller school-aged population may provide the City and school district with an opportunity to reallocate resources, explore new education models, and modernize older facilities to align with future needs. These changes allow Sanford to strategically reshape services, foster economic development in emerging sectors, and position the community to better support residents across all stages of life.

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2. Historic and Cultural Resources

Introduction

For centuries before European settlement, Indigenous peoples, known as the Wabanaki, used the rivers, wetlands, and uplands of what is now Sanford and Springvale for travel, fishing, hunting, and seasonal habitation. The Mousam River and surrounding water bodies provided reliable access to food and transportation and formed part of a broader network of Indigenous travel routes across southern Maine.

The land that Sanford exists on was purchased in 1661 from an Abenaki Chief named Fluellin by British Major William Phillips, who was an owner of mills in Saco. However, settlement did not occur until the 18th century, due to the French and Indian War (or the Seven Years War) as well as other conflicts between the settlers and the Indigenous stewards of the land. In 1739, a formal settlement was founded, which was shaped in large part by the area's natural resources. In 1768, Sanford was formally incorporated as a town, with the North Parish of Alfred recognized until 1794, when it split into its own town. Early settlers established farms on productive soils while timber harvesting and water-powered industry developed along the Mousam River and its tributaries. Mills, dams, and mill ponds were centers for early economic activity and directly influenced the location of housing, roads, and village centers.

The Mousam River provided power for a growing textile industry in the 18th and 19th centuries, with the establishment of Goodall Mills in 1865. In addition to lumber from its sawmills, the town was a center for cotton, wool, carpets, and shoe production. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Sanford and Springvale emerged as regional industrial centers. While the mills are no longer in operation, the settlement patterns that developed around them remain visible today in the built form and street layout of Downtown Sanford and Springvale.

By the mid-20th century, Sanford's economy began to change as manufacturing declined and growth shifted toward automobile-oriented development. Residential and commercial expansion increasingly occurred outside historic centers, leaving some older buildings underutilized while placing development pressure on previously undeveloped land. These trends have implications for both historic preservation and the protection of archaeological resources.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric archaeological resources include sensitive Native American sites dating to the period prior to European contact. Such sites may include seasonal camps, habitation areas, tool-making locations, and travel corridors. In Maine, these resources are most often found near canoe-navigable rivers and streams, along lake and pond shorelines, and on well-drained or sandy landforms.

In Sanford, the Mousam River corridor, associated mill ponds and lakes, wetlands, and other water bodies are considered to be likely areas of elevated archaeological sensitivity. The 2005 Sanford Comprehensive Plan notes that no comprehensive inventory of prehistoric

archaeological resources had been conducted. As of March 2025, Eight prehistoric archaeological sites are known in Sanford. Professional archaeological survey has been completed for a gravel pit project and several utility lines (power or gas lines), where five of these sites have been located. One site is in a residential neighborhood near Kimball Street.

Today, many sites may remain undocumented, and the absence of mapped sites should not be interpreted as an absence of archaeological significance. The Maine Historic Preservation Committee recommends a survey of the Mousam River Corridor be completed to identify such resources.

Historic Archaeological Resources

Historic archaeological resources generally date from the period of European settlement onward and may include former homesteads, farm complexes, foundations, industrial features, early road corridors, and river-related infrastructure. These sites often lack visible above-ground features but retain archaeological significance beneath the surface.

In Sanford, historic archaeological resources are most likely to be located near early settlement areas, along river corridors, at former mill sites, and along historic transportation routes. These resources reflect the community's agricultural and industrial development and provide important insight into Sanford's early settlement patterns and working landscape.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) maintains records of known historic archaeological sites; recent State data lists eight such sites in Sanford. However, a map and/or list of these sites is unavailable due to MHPC staffing issues. To develop the relevant City policies and protections, these records should be identified and publicized.

Historic Properties and Districts

Sanford and Springvale contain a wide range of above-ground historic resources that contribute to the local history and sense of place. These include historic mill buildings, civic structures, churches, historic homes, and more. The MHPC retains data on locally designated historic districts. MHPC utilizes the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which recognizes buildings and cultural resources worthy of preservation. The Register is a program of the National Park Service, but the MHPC oversees the administration of the registry program in Maine. All listed properties in the register must meet the criteria established by the National Park Service.

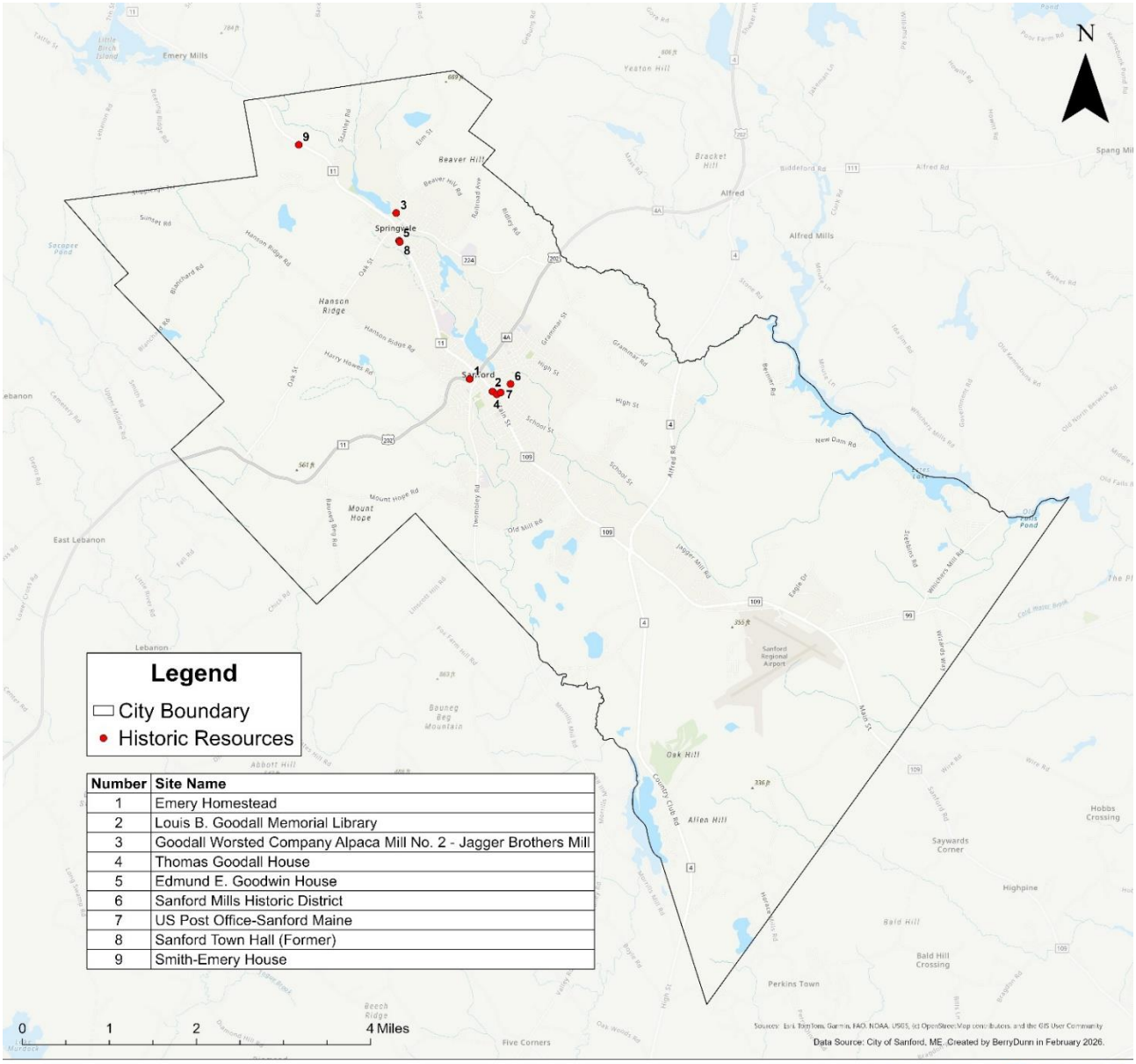
Several local properties and districts are listed on the NRHP, including the Springvale Historic District, the Springvale Public Library, and mill-related resources such as the Sanford Mill Yard/Goodall Mills. These properties are listed below, along with their locations and municipalities.

Table 2.1: Historic Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Name	Date Recognized	Location
Emery Homestead	June 22, 1980	1 and 3 Lebanon St.
Louis B. Goodall Memorial Library	January 24, 2008	952 Main St.
Thomas Goodall House	April 28, 1975	Near 938 Main St.
Edmund E. Goodwin House	November 9, 2015	503 Main St.
Sanford Mills Historic District	November 4, 2009	Bounded by Washington St., Pioneer Ave., Emery St., Heritage Crossing, and Weaver Dr.
U.S. Post Office-Sanford Maine	May 2, 1986	28 School St.
Sanford Town Hall (Former)	January 9, 2007	505 Main St.
Smith-Emery House	October 8, 1998	253 Main St.

Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Figure 2.1: Historic Resources



Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Historic Preservation in Sanford

The 2005 update to the Sanford Comprehensive Plan recognized historic and archaeological resources as important elements of the City's heritage. The plan encouraged a continuing partnership with the Sanford Historical Society. Some historic standards proposed in earlier planning efforts were never fully adopted and highlighted the adaptive reuse of historic structures as a key strategy for downtown revitalization.

The plan also acknowledged that increased development activity in rural areas raises the risk of disturbing undocumented archaeological resources. It stipulated that preliminary area reviews before construction would remain a requirement and recommended improving coordination with MHPC and strengthening review procedures.

The City's zoning ordinance outlines protections for the City's archaeological and historic resources. For archaeological resources, the zoning ordinance states that no municipal approval shall be issued for projects within any archaeological resource areas without MHPC notification and reconnaissance-level archaeological survey. The survey requirement applies to archaeological resources identified in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and are limited to abandoned mill sites along the Mousam River.

Historic property owners located in the following areas are encouraged to carry out any modifications in a manner that preserves the architectural and historic character of the structure. The owner is also encouraged to consult with the Historical Committee or Planning Department about the building and proposed modifications.

1. The triangle, which is the area from Central Park down Main Street to the Goodall Library along Elm Street, up School Street to its intersection with Washington Street. This area is located in the City center and is generally residential in nature. It includes the Goodall Mansion.
2. The area starting at the City Hall and continuing along the westerly side of Main Street to the Lebanon Street/Main Street intersection and down both sides of Lebanon Street to the Edison School. The district contains a variety of commercial and residential buildings constructed from 1880, including but not limited to Shaw's Hardware Store and Congregational Church, through the early 1900s.
3. The area on Main Street in Springvale from the demolished railroad overpass up to the Nichols House on the east side of the street and all of the structures on the west side of the street, ending at the Tripp House across from Holdsworth Park. This area contains numerous older residences.

Incentives for Historic Preservation

MHPC has several incentives for historic preservation projects. Properties listed on the NRHP or in locally designated historic districts are eligible for tax credit programs through MHPC. These include a Federal Tax Incentive Program for National Register-listed properties and three State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, which include a substantial rehabilitation credit, small project rehabilitation credit, and an affordable housing rehabilitation credit increase. These tax credits provide incentive for the rehabilitation of historic properties. Properties in locally designated historic districts are eligible for the state-level tax credit options. Additionally, there are several grants available through MHPC to make preservation projects more feasible.

Challenges and Opportunities

Historic resources face threats from neglect, inappropriate development, and demolition. The City has regulations in place to identify and protect known historic and archaeological resources during the site plan review process. The City has ordinances in place to protect known historic

assets throughout the City; however, additional surveying needs to be completed to identify resources that may not be protected under current ordinances.

Sanford's historic and archaeological resources face several challenges, including incomplete inventories. At the same time, these resources represent significant opportunities to further protect and develop Sanford's sense of place, history, and community. MHPC identified that no City-wide surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Sanford. MHPC also notes that the Mousam River valley should be surveyed for prehistoric archaeological sites.

Future archaeological survey should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Additionally, MHPC notes that a survey of Sanford's above-ground historic resources needs to be conducted in order to identify any other properties which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

As Sanford looks to its next 10 years, increasing surveying efforts and incorporating historic and archaeological considerations into planning and development review will help see these resources protected and thoughtfully integrated into the community's topography.

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3. Land Use

Introduction

The City spans roughly 50 square miles, featuring a mix of rural landscapes, historic villages of Sanford and Springvale, and commercial and industrial uses. The City's land use pattern was heavily influenced by early development along the Mousam River. Development was largely concentrated in Downtown Sanford and spread north to Springvale. Since the height of industrialization and manufacturing in the City, development has spread from concentrated cores into rural areas. Development trends from the 1960s and onwards encouraged further development in rural areas and in auto-oriented patterns due to the rise of the automobile. Recent housing development has increased in Downtown Sanford, particularly multi-family housing.

History of Development in Sanford

Historically, development in Sanford was compact and centered along the Mousam River, where sawmills and later textile mills supported the growth of dense, walkable urban centers in Sanford and Springvale. For nearly 200 years, residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses were concentrated in these villages, making them interior York County's primary urban center. As late as 1960, despite the decline of the textile industry, approximately 89% of the City's population lived in the built-up areas of Sanford and Springvale, close to schools, churches, stores, and employment.

Since that time, development has steadily dispersed outward. Census data illustrates a consistent decline in the share of residents living in the urban centers, falling from 89% in 1960 to 66% by 2000.

Nearly 80% of new housing built between 1990 and 2000 was located in rural parts of town, reflecting both the age and size limitations of older downtown housing stock and market demand for newer, larger homes. Residential development has spread incrementally and, more recently, through leapfrog patterns into former farmland, woodlands, and upland areas throughout Sanford's 50.36 square miles.

Commercial and industrial land uses have followed a similar outward shift. Downtown Sanford, once the primary commercial center for the community and surrounding towns, has seen activity disperse across the City.

Manufacturing, service, and retail uses have increasingly located along Route 109, particularly in South Sanford, contributing to a more auto-oriented and spatially dispersed development pattern. This redistribution of population and economic activity has required the City to adapt how it provides public services and facilities.

Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan is a required component of a comprehensive plan. The future land use plan outlines a vision for how land should be used in the future, not just how it is used today. It is visionary in nature and is often broader than a zoning map.

The Maine Growth Management Act requires comprehensive plans to include a future land use plan, which should outline growth areas, transition or limited growth areas, and non-growth or rural areas.

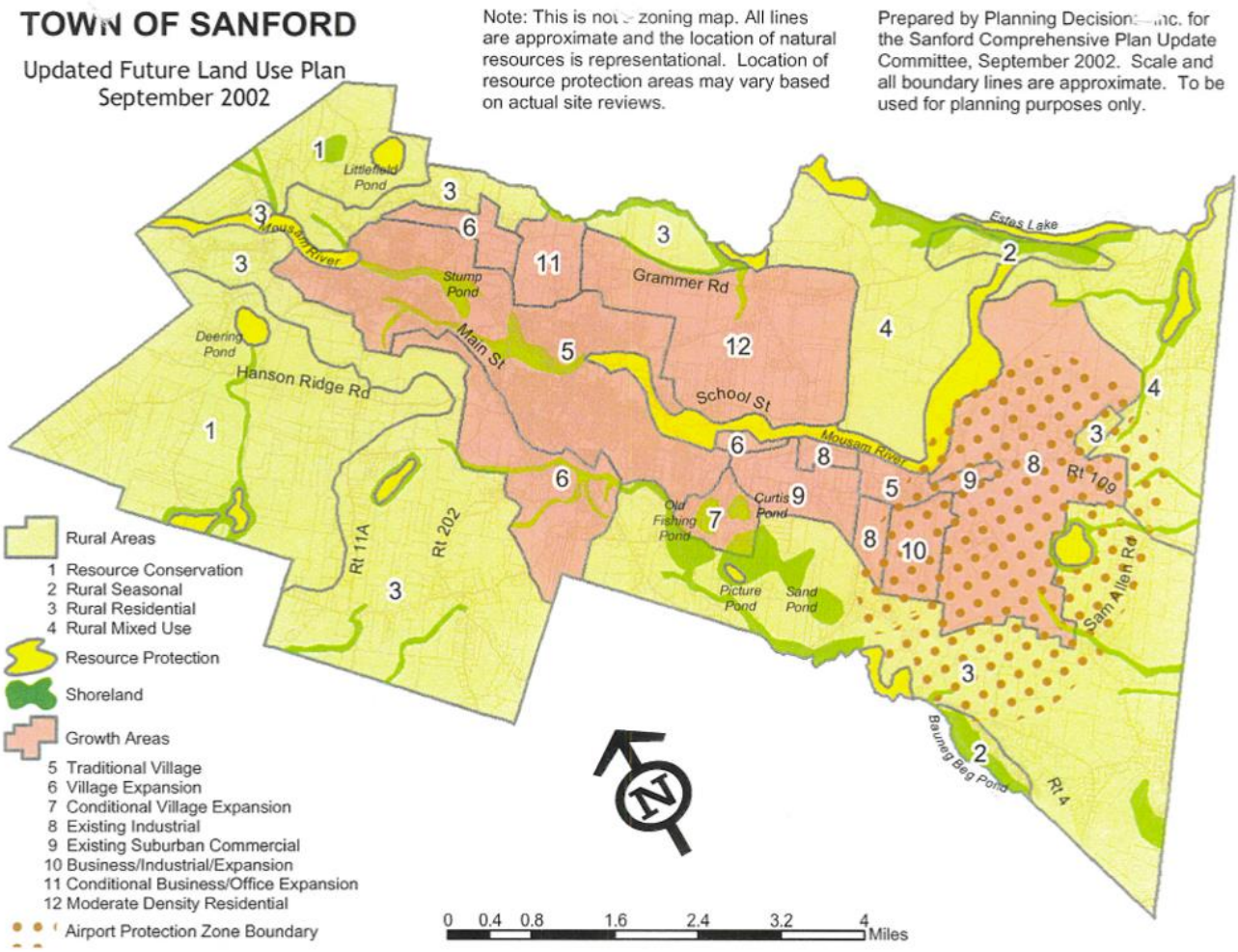
The Growth Management Act defines growth areas as “an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed.”

The Growth Management Act defines non-growth or rural areas as “a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted.”

The Growth Management Act defines limited growth or transition areas as “an area that is designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area.”

The City’s 2005 Future Land Use Plan also has several land use categories, which provide more detail for each growth, limited growth, and rural area. These land use categories outline the vision for a specific area and include descriptions and narrative that will guide future zoning updates.

Figure 3.1: Future Land Use Plan 2005 Comprehensive Plan



Source: City of Sanford 2005 Comprehensive Plan

The City's Future Land Use Map includes the following growth area land use categories:

1. Traditional Village – Includes Downtown Sanford and Springvale and a small part of South Sanford
2. Village Extension – Includes the areas just north of Downtown Springvale, southwest of Downtown Sanford, southeast of Downtown Sanford
3. Conditional Village Expansion – Includes an area south of Downtown Sanford
4. Existing Industrial – Includes industrial areas in South Sanford and the Airport
5. Existing Suburban Commercial – Includes small pockets on both sides of Main Street in South Sanford
6. Business/Industrial Expansion – Includes an area just north of the Airport

7. Conditional Business/Office Expansion – Includes an area along Route 202 on Sanford's border with Alfred
8. Moderate Density Residential – Includes areas between School Street and Grammar Road

The City's Future Land Use Map includes the following rural area land use categories:

1. Rural Conservation – Includes areas in northern Sanford
2. Rural Seasonal – Includes areas in certain floodplains along the City's western and eastern borders
3. Rural Residential – Includes areas along Sanford's southern and western borders and a small area on the northern border near Downtown Springvale and Sanford
4. Rural Conservation – Includes areas along Sanford's southern and eastern borders

Additional protections were outlined for Shoreland Zone and resource protection areas. These areas largely follow water bodies, wetlands, and vernal pools.

Zoning

The City of Sanford Zoning Ordinance establishes the regulatory framework for land use and development within the City to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. Administered by the Code Enforcement Department and the Planning and Development Department, the ordinance implements the goals and policies of Sanford's Comprehensive Plan by organizing land uses into zoning districts, defining permitted and conditional uses, and setting dimensional, performance, and design standards for development. The ordinance also provides procedures for site plan review, special exceptions, and nonconforming uses, and includes overlay and specialized districts to address unique areas such as the Airport, industrial areas, and mixed-use centers.

The City has eight zoning districts: Airport Development, Contract Zones, Industrial Business, Industrial Reuse, Residential Development, Rural Mixed Use, Rural Residential, and Urban.

Industrial uses are broadly allowed in three areas of Sanford, including the Airport Development, Industrial Business, and Industrial Reuse zones.

A variety of commercial uses are permitted throughout the City but vary in intensity and type of commercial use. Commercial uses are allowed in all zones, but commercial uses are more common in the Industrial Business, Industrial Reuse, Rural Mixed Use, Urban, and Airport Development zones. Limited commercial uses are allowed in the Rural Residential and Residential Development zones.

Residential uses are allowed in the Rural Residential, Rural Mixed Use, Residential Development, Urban, and Industrial Reuse zones.

Table 3.1: Base Zoning Classification (in Acres)

Zone	Classification	Total Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Airport Development	Industrial	1,752	5.63%
Contract Zone	Contract	86	0.28%
Industrial Business	Industrial/ Commercial	1,688	5.42%
Industrial Reuse	Industrial	210	0.67%
Residential Development	Residential	2,700	8.67%
Rural Mixed Use	Residential/ Commercial	5,120	16.44%
Rural Residential	Residential	17,522	56.27%
Urban	Residential/ Commercial	2,060	6.62%
Total		**31,138**	**100%**

Source: City of Sanford Zoning Map

Administration of Sanford's land use regulations are specified in the City's Code of Ordinances, with local review authority varying by type and scale of regulation. The City's Planning and Development Department reviews applications for development, sets long-term goals for the community, and coordinates with other City departments to help ensure that decisions regarding development are aligned with the City's land use policies and goals. Planning is also responsible for administering the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinances, promoting urban design principles, and managing the City's historic resources.

The Code Enforcement Department reviews all permit applications and conducts inspections throughout the City to determine compliance with the City's ordinances.

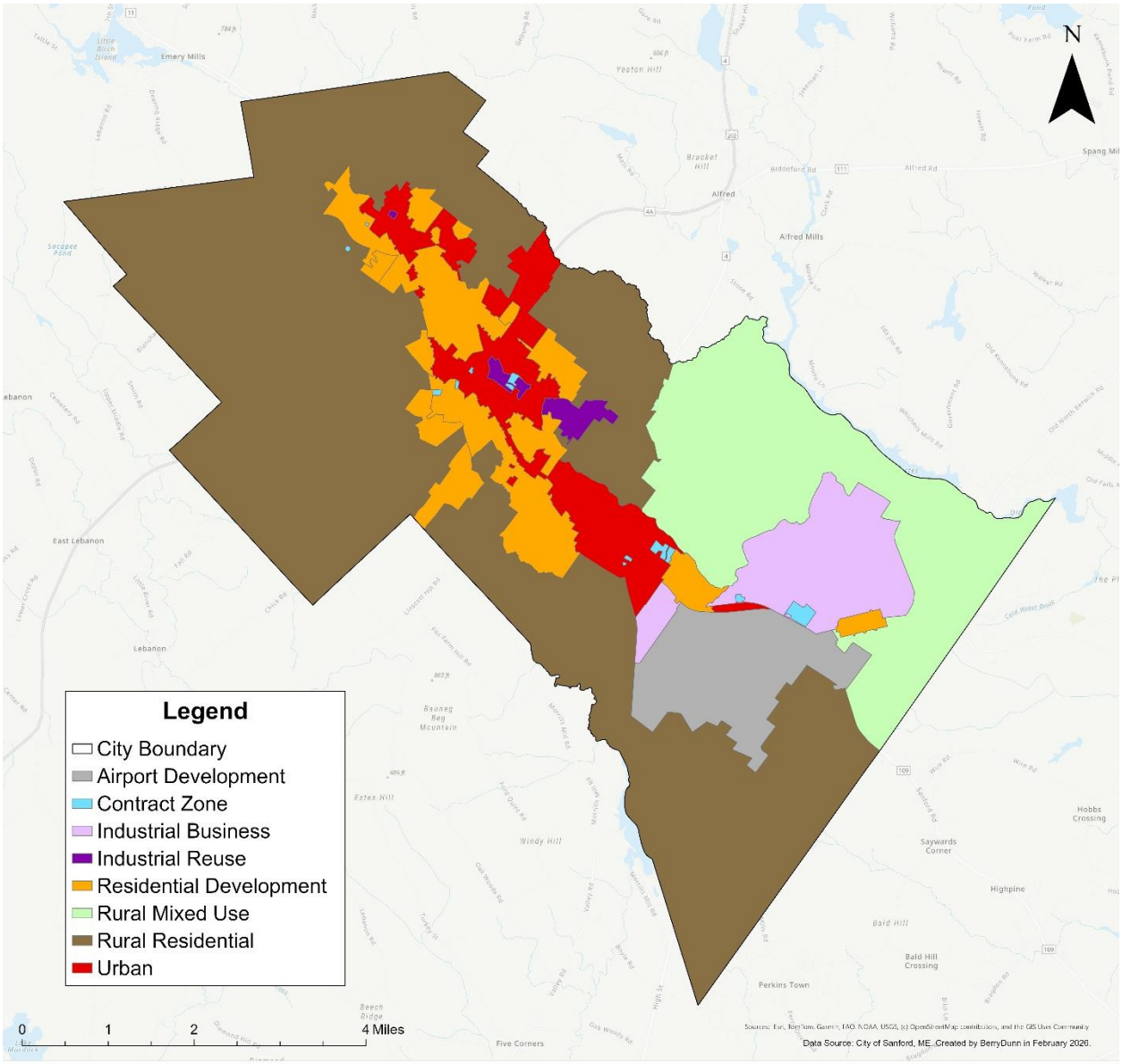
The City has several boards and committees that help facilitate the development process. The Design Review Committee supports development review in Sanford's two District Overlay Zones – one in Downtown Sanford and one in Springvale Village. Most development or exterior improvements on properties located in one of these zones require review.

The goal of the Design Review Committee is to help applicants understand the basic design strategies that have been adopted in the two Design District Overlay Zones in the City's Zoning Ordinance, and to encourage new development and renovation within these zones.

The Planning Board's responsibility is to review and act upon all subdivision requests; to hear and decide "conditional use" permit requests; to help draft new or amend relevant land use ordinances; and to review and assist in developing policy, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning Board of Appeals hears and decides administrative and dimensional variance appeals. City Council has final decision-making authority over certain development applications, including contract zones.

Figure 3.2: Sanford Zoning Map



Source: City of Sanford

Zoning Districts

Contract Zones

Sanford authorizes the use of contract zoning as a discretionary tool that allows the City Council to approve development subject to site-specific conditions when the proposed project is unusual in nature or uniquely located. Contract zoning is intended to address situations where standard

zoning regulations alone are not sufficient to help ensure compatibility with surrounding uses or to achieve broader public benefits.

Any contract zoning amendment must be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and must result in development that is compatible with existing and permitted uses in the original zoning district.

Under the City's zoning ordinance, contract zoning is implemented through a formal agreement approved concurrently with the rezoning. This agreement establishes binding conditions and restrictions related to the physical development and operation of the property, such as permitted uses, scale and density, site design, construction timing, open space preservation, performance guarantees, and enforcement mechanisms. These conditions may be more restrictive than standard zoning requirements and run with the land, binding future property owners unless expressly removed by City Council action.

Contract zoning applications are reviewed by the Planning Board, include public hearings, and may be coordinated with site plan or subdivision review. Where shoreland areas are involved, any modification of Shoreland Zoning standards requires approval from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The decision to approve contract zoning rests with the City Council and does not create any entitlement or vested rights for an applicant.

Residential Development

The Residential Development Zone is designed to provide areas in the City for the extension of a compact pattern of residential development in areas with public water and sewer access. This zone allows for six units per acre and a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet. Density bonuses in this zone could let a property owner develop up to 10 units per acre – a roughly 6,000 square foot minimum lot size.

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential zone provides areas that promote high-quality Rural Residential environments in places throughout Sanford that cannot be served by water and sewer systems. These areas preserve the City's rural landscapes and promote a lower-density residential development pattern. This zone allows for one dwelling on two acres – a roughly 40,000 square foot minimum lot size. Homes on large lots or cluster developments (subdivisions with small-lot sizes that allow for greater preservation of open space).

Rural Mixed Use

The Rural Mixed Use Zone provides area that foster a working, rural environment, including a mix of low-density residential uses and traditional rural uses, like agriculture, forestry, and recreation uses. Similar to the Rural Residential zone, the Rural Mixed Use Zone allows for a density of one dwelling unit per two acres.

Urban

The Urban Zone provides areas for commercial centers in more dense areas of the City. The goal of this zone is to promote a dense pattern of development consistent with existing urban and commercial centers in Sanford. The development is characterized by mixed-use

developments and a streetscape that encourages reduced traffic speeds and increased walkability. There is no minimum lot size in this zone. The urban zone requires a maximum 20 foot front setback, but there are currently no rear or side setback requirements that apply to lots.

Industrial Reuse

The Industrial Reuse Zone fosters the continued use, reuse, and development of existing mill complexes and under-utilized industrial areas. The zone promotes a mix of residential and non-residential uses to foster a dense, mixed-use environment. There are no density or lot size limits in this zone.

Industrial Business

The Industrial Business Zone provides areas for traditional industrial and business park development in areas where sewer and water supply are available. Minimum lot sizes in this district are 40,000 square feet. Street frontages must be well planned and maintained, and residential buffer strips must be maintained.

Airport Development

The Airport Development Zone organizes land uses in and around the Airport to promote efficient airport operations. All land use and development in this zone shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, without limitation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules and regulations, Maine Department of Transportation rules and regulations, and Airport lease agreements. There are two subdistricts in this zone

1. Airport Development (AD) Airport Subdistrict. All the land area owned by the City or private property owners that is used for Airport runways and Airport runway direct access activities with controlled access
2. AD Support Subdistrict. All the land area located in the AD Zone but not in the AD Airport Subdistrict.

The Airport Manager is involved in the review process for development in this zone to help ensure that airport regulations are followed and airport use is uninterrupted.

Overlay Districts

Sanford has several overlay districts that further refine zoning districts. Shoreland and resource protection overlays are described in section 5, Water and Natural Resources.

Airport Approach Overlay Zone and Airport Clear Zone

The purpose of this overlay district is to promote the compatibility of land uses in the vicinity of the Airport, to prevent interference with the safe and efficient operations of the Airport, and to protect the public at large. The Clear Zone is defined as areas in the inner approach surfaces of the runway or as clear zones. The Airport Approach Protection Overlay Zone consists of the area lying within the limit of the conical surface as shown in the Ultimate Airport Layout Plan (UALP), as may be amended from time to time. Uses in these overlay districts shall not inhibit

airport operations, including obstructions to visibility, landing, takeoff, or maneuvering of aircrafts.

Rushton Street Institutional Controls Overlay I and II

The purpose of these overlays is to protect the City's implementation of remedial control measures at the former Rushton Street Landfill site. The goal of these areas is to prevent additional surface or groundwater contamination, prevent exposure from the landfill itself, and comply with Paragraph 37 of the Administrative Order by Consent signed by the City and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection on November 11, 1999.

Design District Overlay Zones

Sanford has two design overlay zones – one in Downtown Sanford and one in downtown Springvale. Any exterior modification on a lot that is located in a Design District Overlay Zone shall require review by the Design Review Committee and recommendation to the designated reviewing committee or staff.

The objectives for Downtown Sanford have shifted over time, toward an increased emphasis on serving a wider range of commercial activities and an increasing residential population. These design standards are intended to help the owner, developer, architect, and other consultants understand the basic design goals set for development in the Sanford Downtown Design District Overlay Zone and provide the City with a yardstick against which new projects can be measured.

Sanford Downtown Design District Overlay Zone offers visitors a focal point for services aimed at both visitors, residents, and workers of the surrounding area. Sanford Downtown design standards are intended to promote the characteristic qualities of its historic setting.

The purpose the Springvale Village Design District Overlay Zone is to provide a tool to preserve the village feel of Springvale and respect its sense of history for generations to come. These standards are intended to help ensure that new, expanded, and rehabilitated development is designed and built in a manner compatible with the character of Springvale Village in terms of scale, aesthetic, and visual effect.

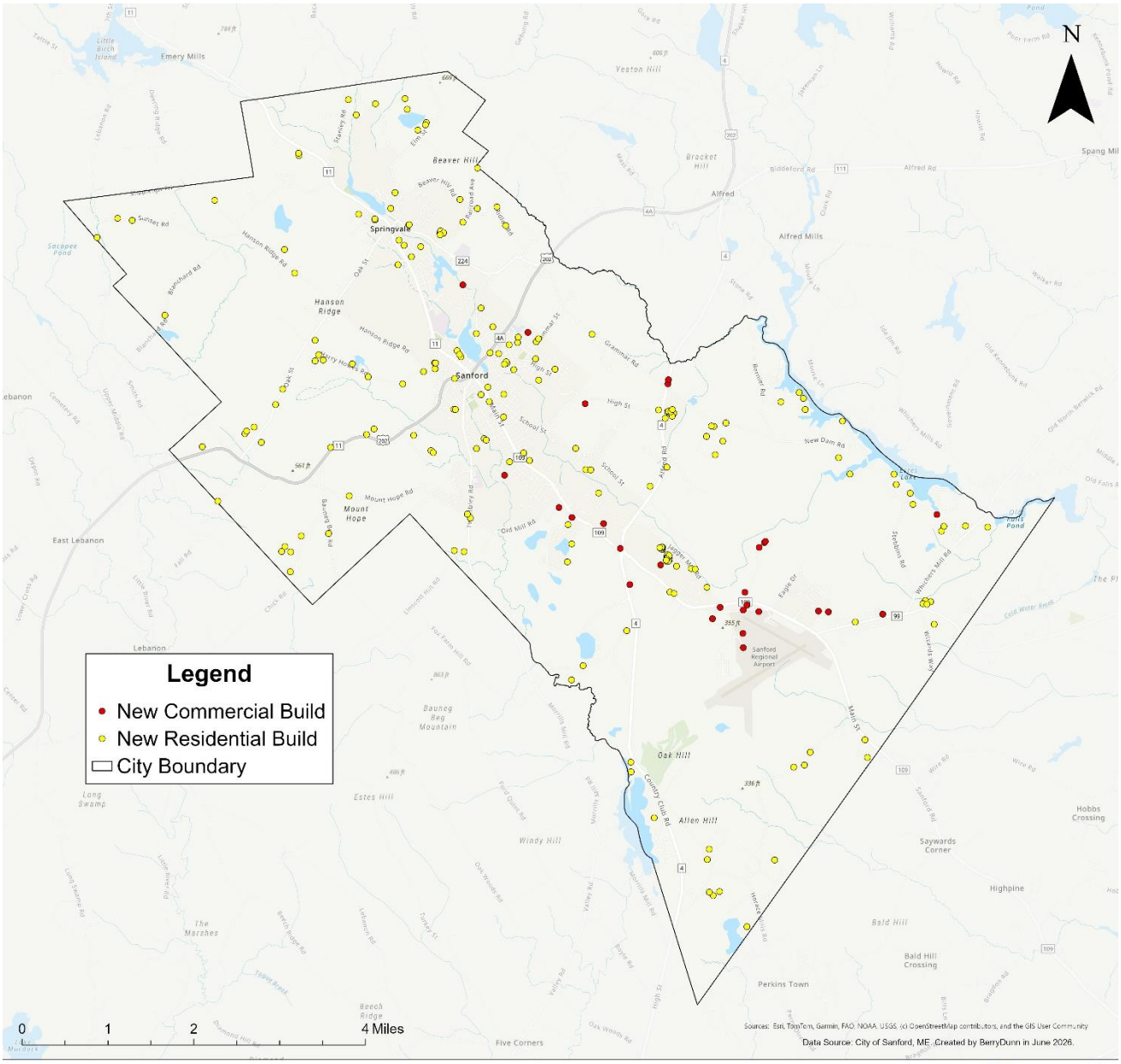
Recent Development

Historical development in Sanford has been heavily concentrated in and around Downtown Sanford, downtown Springvale, south Sanford, and major corridors connecting these areas. The City has seen a variety of growth in the last 10 years, with developments spreading throughout the City boundary. This section outlines recent development, showing total residential and commercial units permitted for occupancy (documented through certificate of occupancy data) and brand new residential and commercial units. Units permitted for occupancy combines brand new construction that is approved for occupancy with units created through alterations or additions to existing structures to show the full breadth of net units permitted for occupancy in Sanford.

As the City continues to grow and new housing is proposed and constructed, land use policies should continue to be evaluated to help ensure that policies encourage development in desired

areas and that certain areas are protected for scenic, recreational, and environmental purposes. Figure 3.3, below, shows the location of brand new units created in Sanford since 2020. Subdivisions were consolidated into a single dot for clarity. Data on total units created can be found in subsequent sections. New Construction has occurred throughout the City, not just in designated growth areas.

Figure 3.3: New Developments, 2020 - 2025



2020 - 2025 New Development

Source: City of Sanford Building Permit Data

New Construction

Development approvals have resulted in 568 new housing units created over the last five years through new construction and alterations. Sanford's Planning Board has approved over 600 additional housing units that are in various stages of the permitting and construction process. New residential unit data captures single-family, duplex, and multi-family housing units created each year. The City also issues renovation permits for commercial and residential units that can also result in new units being created.[3]

Sanford has seen variability in brand new commercial development as well. Commercial permits, similar to residential permits, peaked in 2021, likely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Development of new commercial businesses has declined since 2021 and has remained relatively consistent throughout the past decade.

Table 3.1: Permits Issued for New Construction

Unit Type	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
New Single-Family Units	33	35	27	34	44	40
New Two-Family Units	2	0	2	0	0	0
New Multi-Family Units	38	21	97	0	40	0
New Mobile Home Units	5	4	4	6	6	5
Residential Conversion/Alteration/ Addition	90	4	8	4	14	0
Accessory Dwelling Unit	6	1				
Total Residential Units Permitted	172	65	138	44	104	45
Total New Commercial Permits Issued	4	3	1	9	11	5

Source: City of Sanford Building Permit Data

Units Permitted for Occupancy

Certificates of Occupancy are issued on a project when the final inspection for a construction project is passed. Table 3.2, below, shows certificates of occupancy issued for residential units.

Year	Number of new units issued a certificate of occupancy
2015	43
2016	40
2017	48

[3] Brian Boisvert. October 10, 2025. "Sanford is Building: City Outpaces Housing Goals." *Sanford Springvale News.* Accessed March 10, 2026. https://sanfordspringvalenews.com/sanford-is-building-city-outpaces-housing-goals/.

Year	Number of new units issued a certificate of occupancy
2018	69
2019	101
2020	32
2021	75
2022	45
2023	85
2024	118
2025	103

Source: City of Sanford Building Permit Data

Recent Legislative Changes

In 2025, the Maine Legislature enacted LD 1829, which is designed to increase housing production statewide. The legislation impacts density limits, zoning, and how communities control growth.

The law is intended to remove local regulatory barriers to housing production and increase the supply of housing statewide by establishing minimum zoning allowances. Among its key provisions, LD 1829 requires municipalities to allow at least three dwelling units per residential lot in all areas where residential uses are permitted, and at least four dwelling units per lot in designated growth areas or areas served by public water or sewer.

The law also restricts minimum lot size and dimensional standards for multi-unit development, strengthens the affordable housing density bonus by allowing qualifying projects to exceed height limits, and limits the ability of municipalities to require Planning Board review for developments with four or fewer dwelling units.

Currently, most of Sanford's zoning districts do not meet the base density that must be allowed under LD 1829. The Urban and Industrial Reuse Zones allow for this level of density; however remaining residential zoning districts to not.

LD 997 was also enacted in 2025 and further advances the State's housing production goals by requiring municipalities with zoning to allow residential uses in areas zoned for commercial use. The law prohibits municipalities from excluding residential development solely on the basis of commercial zoning, effectively eliminating commercial-only zoning districts.

Sanford has several mixed-use districts, including the Urban, Industrial Reuse, and Rural-Mixed Use Zones. Based on the City's use table, there are no standalone commercial districts.

In 2022, the Maine Legislature signed LD 2003 into law. This legislation was also designed to address statewide housing shortages by allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on most residential lots, permitting up to four residential units on lots in designated growth areas, and promoting density bonuses for affordable housing.

The City quickly adopted zoning changes to implement this law and has seen some ADU development in recent years.

Challenges and Opportunities

Sanford faces the challenge of reconciling its historic pattern of compact, village-centered development with decades of outward, auto-oriented growth that has dispersed housing, commercial activity, and public investment across a large geographic area. Continued residential expansion into rural and formerly undeveloped lands has increased the cost and complexity of providing infrastructure, services, and transportation, while also contributing to the underutilization of existing housing stock, commercial space, and infrastructure in Downtown Sanford and Springvale.

At the same time, this pattern has placed pressure on farmland, forests, and natural resources that contribute to the City's rural character and environmental health. These trends present an opportunity for the City to refocus future growth in areas already served by public water, sewer, and transportation networks, particularly within established urban centers, village extensions, and redevelopment areas such as former mill sites and commercial corridors.

Recent changes in state land use law, combined with Sanford's existing mixed-use districts, design overlay zones, and Industrial Reuse areas, create new opportunities to encourage infill development, mixed-use redevelopment, and a greater diversity of housing types while reinforcing walkability, economic vitality, and efficient land use. By aligning its future land use plan and zoning framework with these conditions, Sanford can better balance growth, reinvestment, and resource protection while advancing a more sustainable and resilient development pattern.

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4. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Introduction

Parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces serve an essential role within the Sanford community by providing diverse indoor and outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors. The City maintains a comprehensive network of parks, trails, conservation areas, and amenities designed to accommodate sports, fitness, and a variety of community programs. These resources facilitate year-round recreational engagement and contribute significantly to the overall quality of life in Sanford.

Municipal Parks and Programming

The City of Sanford provides an array of recreational amenities, including parks, trails, and natural areas. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the ownership and maintenance of numerous natural turf sports fields throughout the park system, designated primarily for use by youth sports leagues. A prominent facility within this system is Goodall Park, a baseball stadium that hosts the Sanford Mainers, a summer collegiate baseball team. Beyond athletic fields, the City maintains sport courts, playgrounds, shelters, and a skatepark to accommodate diverse interests. The parks are available for rental, with the Department facilitating over 450 park rentals in 2025. The facilities most frequently reserved included Blouin Fields (125 rentals), Goodall Park (64 rentals), and Witham St. Fields (53 rentals).

The Veteran's Memorial Gym serves as the principal indoor recreation venue, featuring a regulation court and multipurpose rooms. It regularly hosts programs, such as pickleball, basketball, walking time, and toddler activities, and experiences high rental demand, particularly during the winter season.

In addition to the programs above, the Parks and Recreation Department runs camps throughout the summer and during school vacation weeks. These programs utilize Memorial Gym and different park sites for a mix of indoor and outdoor activities. All camps offer a reduced rate for residents, and financial aid is available for the summer camp.

A table of estimated daily program attendance, sorted by program type, is shown below.

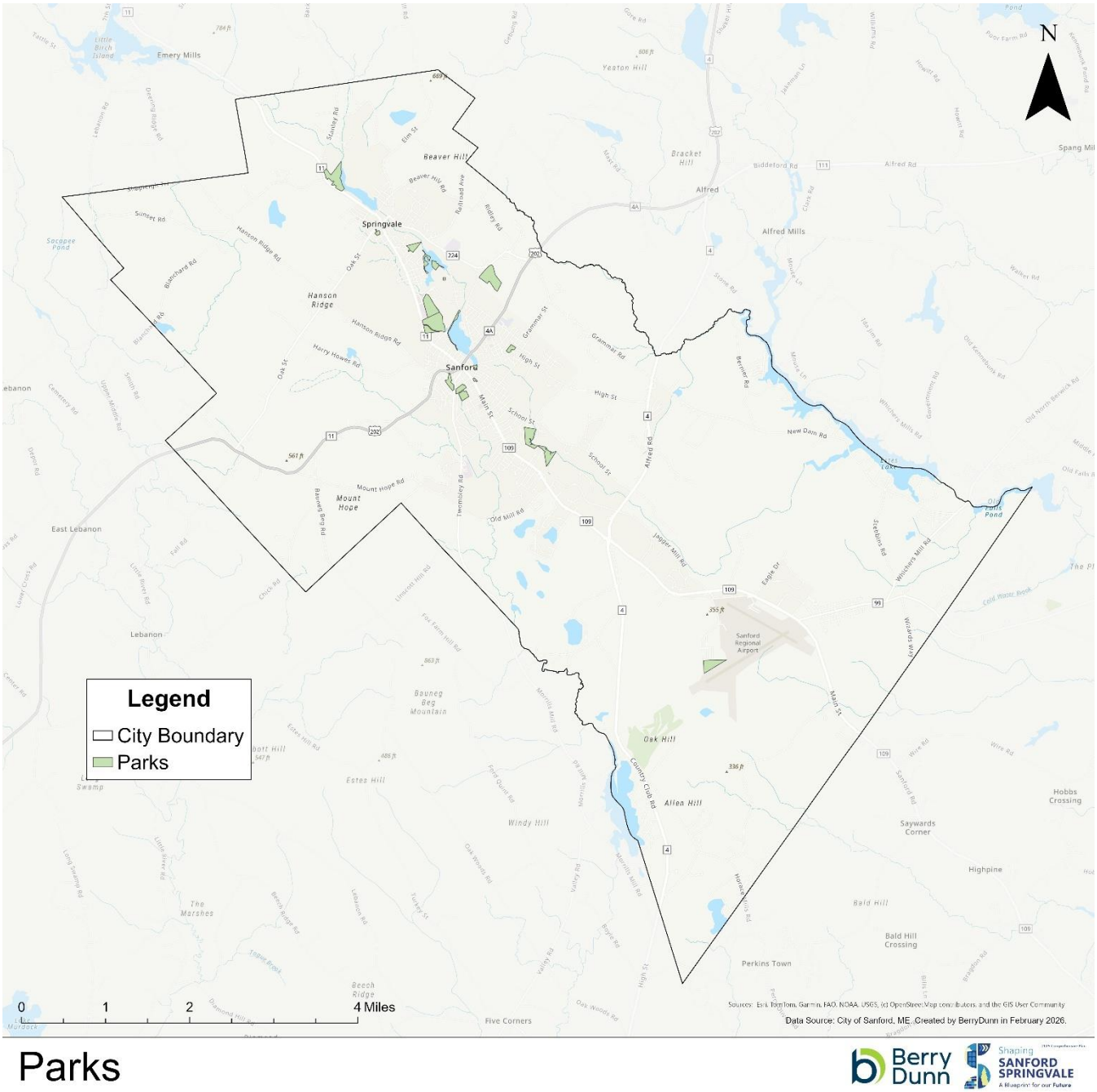
Table 4.1: Daily Recreation Program Attendance

Program Type	Daily Participants
Youth and Adult Basketball	20 – 30
Volleyball	20
Line Dancing	15

Program Type	Daily Participants
Walking	8
Toddle Time (morning and evening)	10 – 15
Pickleball	35
Summer Sport Camps (Golf, Archery, Fly Fishing)	6 each
Summer Camp	180
Vacation Camp	50

Source: City of Sanford

Figure 4.1: Municipal Parks



Source: City of Sanford

Non-Municipal Facilities and Programming

Non-municipal recreation plays an important role in expanding access to recreational opportunities in Sanford beyond City-operated facilities. Local schools help support this network

by allowing community use of playgrounds and athletic fields during non-school hours, extending opportunities for outdoor play and informal sports throughout the year.

Sanford also benefits from several privately operated indoor recreation and wellness facilities. The Sanford-Springvale YMCA provides a wide range of fitness classes, designated swimming times, and before- and after-school programs. Complementing these offerings, the YMCA Trafton Senior Center operates as a separate facility focused on older adults, providing fitness programming, social activities, and meal services tailored to seniors.

In addition to organized facilities, Sanford's natural surroundings and private recreational amenities further enhance local options. Nearby lakes offer convenient access for boating and fishing, while winter conditions support cross-country skiing and snowshoeing on local trails and open spaces. Golf is available at the privately operated Sanford Country Club, adding another recreational option for both residents and visitors. Together, these non-municipal resources contribute to a diverse and well-rounded recreational landscape in Sanford.

Trails, Natural Areas, and Open Space

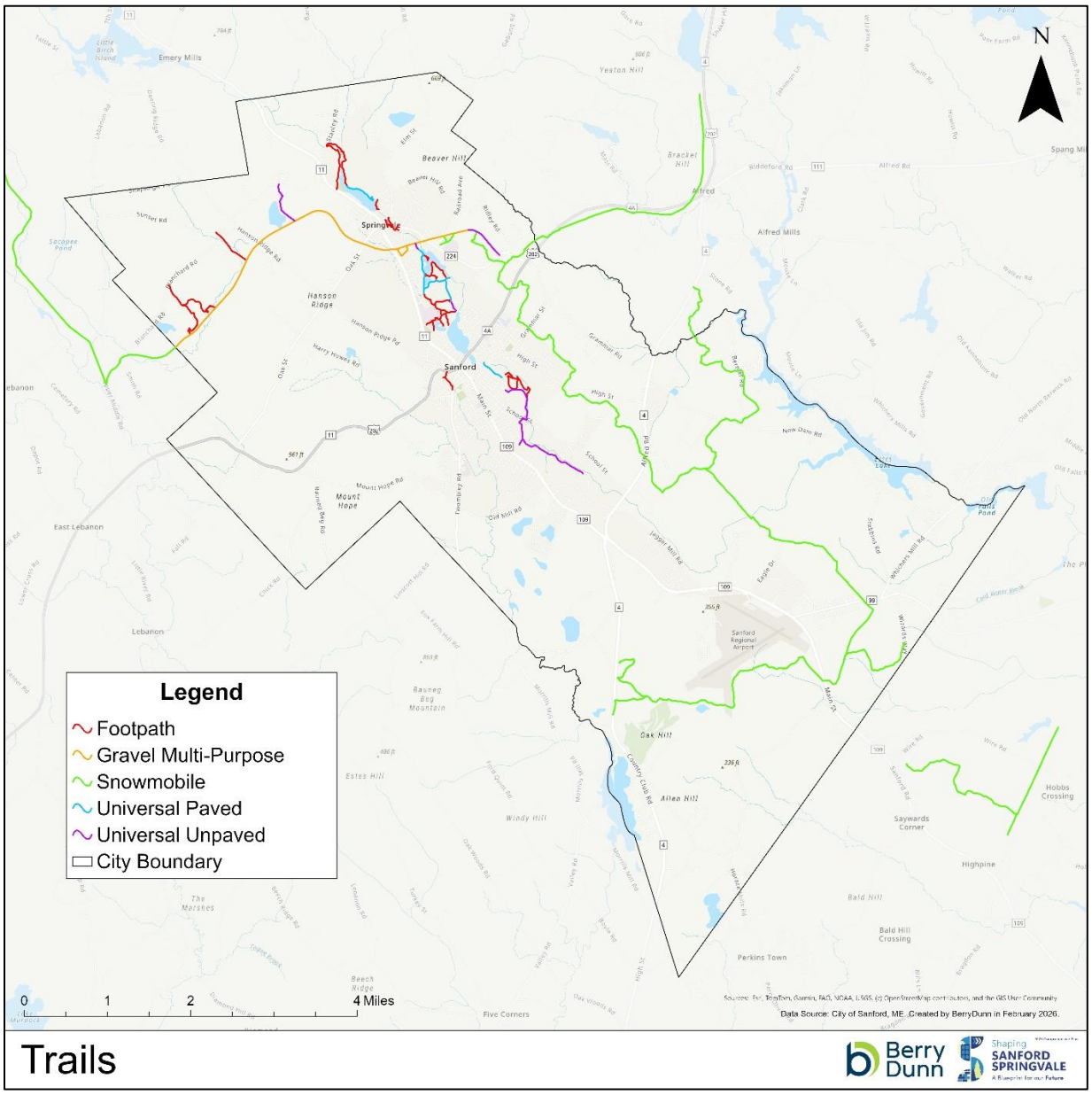
Sanford features a range of trails that offer recreational activities and beautiful views. Highlights include the Mousam Way trail network and the Sanford-Springvale Rail Trail. The Mousam Way Trails were developed by local community efforts to expand recreation access along the Mousam River. Many parks in Sanford are located beside the Mousam River and are connected by the Mousam Way Trails. The Sanford-Springvale Rail Trail stretches six miles on gravel, following the path of an old railroad cutting through Springvale and across the City.

The development and adoption of the Mousam Way Trails led to the establishment of two organizations in 1999: the Sanford Trails Committee and the Mousam Way Land Trust. The Trails Committee has played a critical role in expanding the trail network, leveraging donations, volunteer contributions, and cooperative efforts with the City. Many trails traverse natural areas owned by the Mousam Way Land Trust, which is dedicated to preserving open spaces throughout Sanford. Notable reserves include Hall Environmental Reserve, McKeon Environmental Reserve, and GreatWorks Environmental Reserve. Hall Reserve encompasses Deering Pond and links to the rail trail, while McKeon Reserve offers an additional 2.5 miles of trails and also connects to the rail trail. GreatWorks Reserve is situated in South Sanford, adjacent to Sand Pond.

In addition to the properties held by the Mousam Way Land Trust, there are a variety of protected open spaces in Sanford. One significant site is the Sanford Community Forest in western Sanford. The 457-acre site was acquired by Three Rivers Land Trust in 2021, and the natural area was opened to the public in 2025. The Community Forest has existing connections to the rail trail, and there are plans to expand the trail network on the site.

In 2020, the Trails Committee completed a Trails Master Plan to identify priorities for maintenance and expansion, including new links like the "Downtown Connector" joining trail segments. A map below shows the current trails, grouped by surface type; many footpaths are also open to mountain biking.

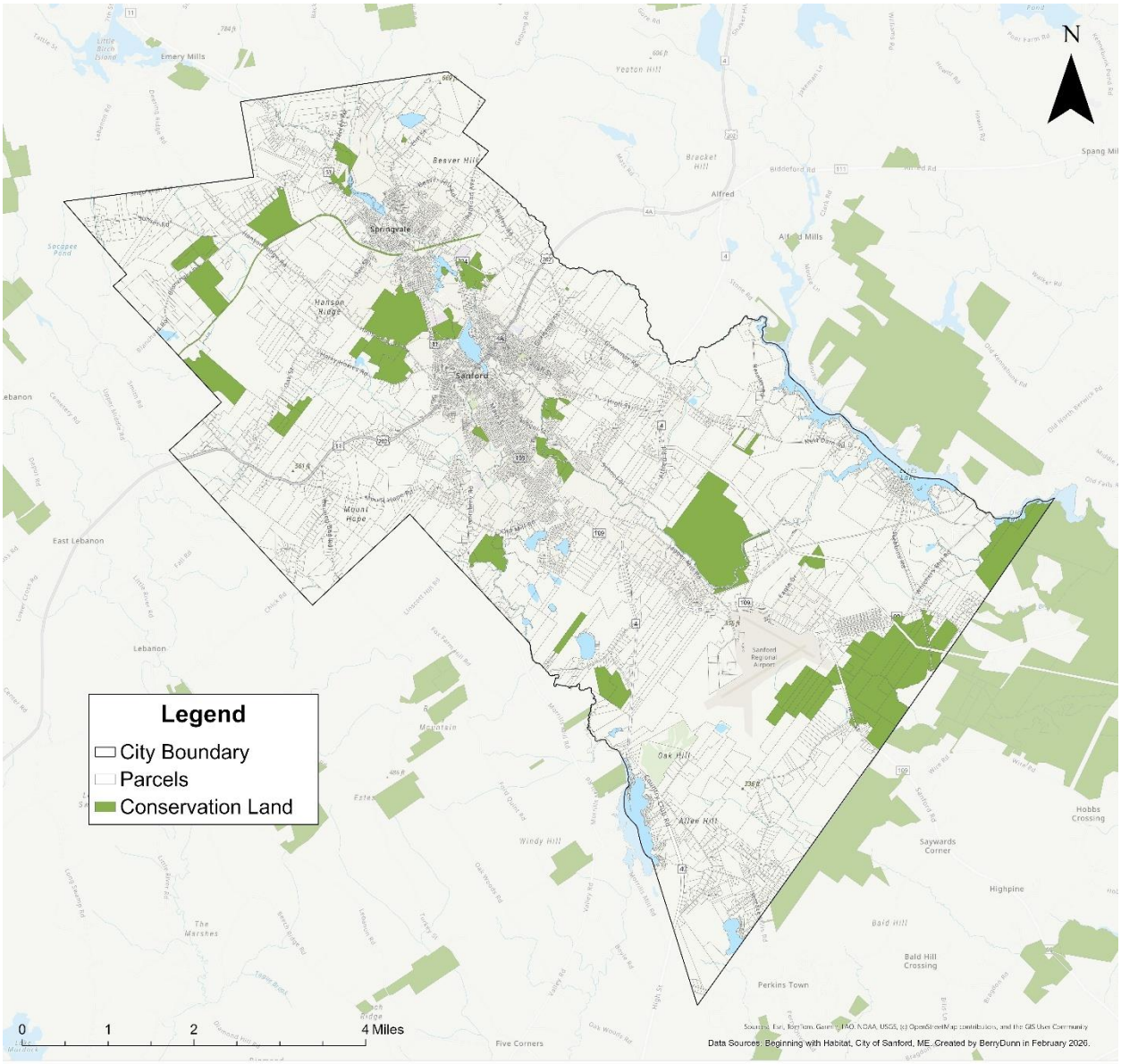
Figure 4.2: Trails in Sanford



Source: City of Sanford, ME

A prominent goal of the Trails Master Plan is the Eastern Trail Connector, linking Sanford's trail network to the Eastern Trail. The project would include improvements to grade and shape improvements for five miles of snowmobile trails, compact gravel spreading, and additional signage and bollards. Alongside longer distance trails that connect beyond Sanford, Eastern Trail connectivity would increase recreational activity through Sanford and drive foot traffic into the City.

Figure 4.3: Conservation Land



Source: City of Sanford, ME

Challenges and Opportunities

The City of Sanford is committed to providing a variety of year-round recreation opportunities while efficiently allocating resources to support diverse community needs. In 2017, the City completed a Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan that identified limited field space and deferred maintenance throughout the park system as major challenges. The plan recommended that the City consider the use of bonds to fund larger projects due to the department's low

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) allocation and strong public support for park maintenance and improvements.

Since adoption of the master plan, the Parks and Recreation Department has implemented several recommendations; however, progress continues to be constrained by available funding. Limited field and facility space remains a persistent challenge, with Memorial Gym experiencing continuous demand from fall through spring, leaving little flexibility for expanded programming.

Department staff also identified challenges related to staffing limitations and deferred maintenance needs, including court resurfacing, field lighting upgrades, and improvements to the skate park. While the City is interested in expanding offerings—such as additional community events and enhanced child care services—sustaining and funding these programs without significantly increasing registration fees remains a concern. Rising operational costs have further impacted the department's ability to add programs and hire staff to support them.

Communication with community members was also identified as an area for improvement. Recent staffing changes, including the addition of a City communications coordinator and a new recreation coordinator, have positioned the City to make meaningful progress in this area.

Embracing existing partnerships presents a continuing opportunity for the City. The Trails Committee and the shared-use of school athletic fields for youth sports have been instrumental in supporting Sanford's recreational offerings. The City currently manages athletic facilities, while youth sports leagues are responsible for programming. By improving communication and coordination with these organizations, the City could enhance service delivery and explore new revenue opportunities. Additionally, it is important for the City to avoid duplication of programs offered by non-municipal providers, such as the YMCA.

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5. Natural Resources

Overview

A thorough understanding of Sanford's natural environment and its relationships with the built environment is essential for making land use decisions and meeting community goals. Sanford has a long history of commitment to its natural resources. Historically, the Wabanaki people used the Mousam River and surrounding streams to hunt, fish, and travel throughout the region. Over time, the river and its falls became the focus of industrial development, powering mills that shaped the economy and settlement patterns of the City of Sanford and the Village of Springvale. Today, Sanford's water and natural resources remain central to the community, supporting drinking water supplies, wildlife habitat, and recreation. At the same time, these resources are under increasing pressure from residential and commercial development, redevelopment of historic sites, and growing regional traffic. Sanford's natural and water resources include freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and aquifers. The City of Sanford is committed to protecting the quality of these natural and water resources, while also balancing the needs of growth and development.

Watersheds

A watershed is defined as the land that channels and directs water, including snowmelt and rain, to the rivers, water streams, and creeks. The channeled water is key to the overall health and well-being of communities. This water is later discharged into the ocean or a bay, and while it flows may impact people, land, and wildlife. The water that falls into this watershed often accumulates pollutants as it moves through different landscapes, which may negatively affect the watershed's ecology and connected water surfaces. Watersheds play a role in the regional ecosystem and require intergovernmental coordination of management efforts, as this area blurs municipal boundaries. The hydrology and natural landscapes are affected as development and pervious surfaces increases.

The water that flows through Sanford's land drains into two National Estuarine Research Reserves, a National Wildlife Refuge, and significant wildlife habitat managed by the Maine Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy.

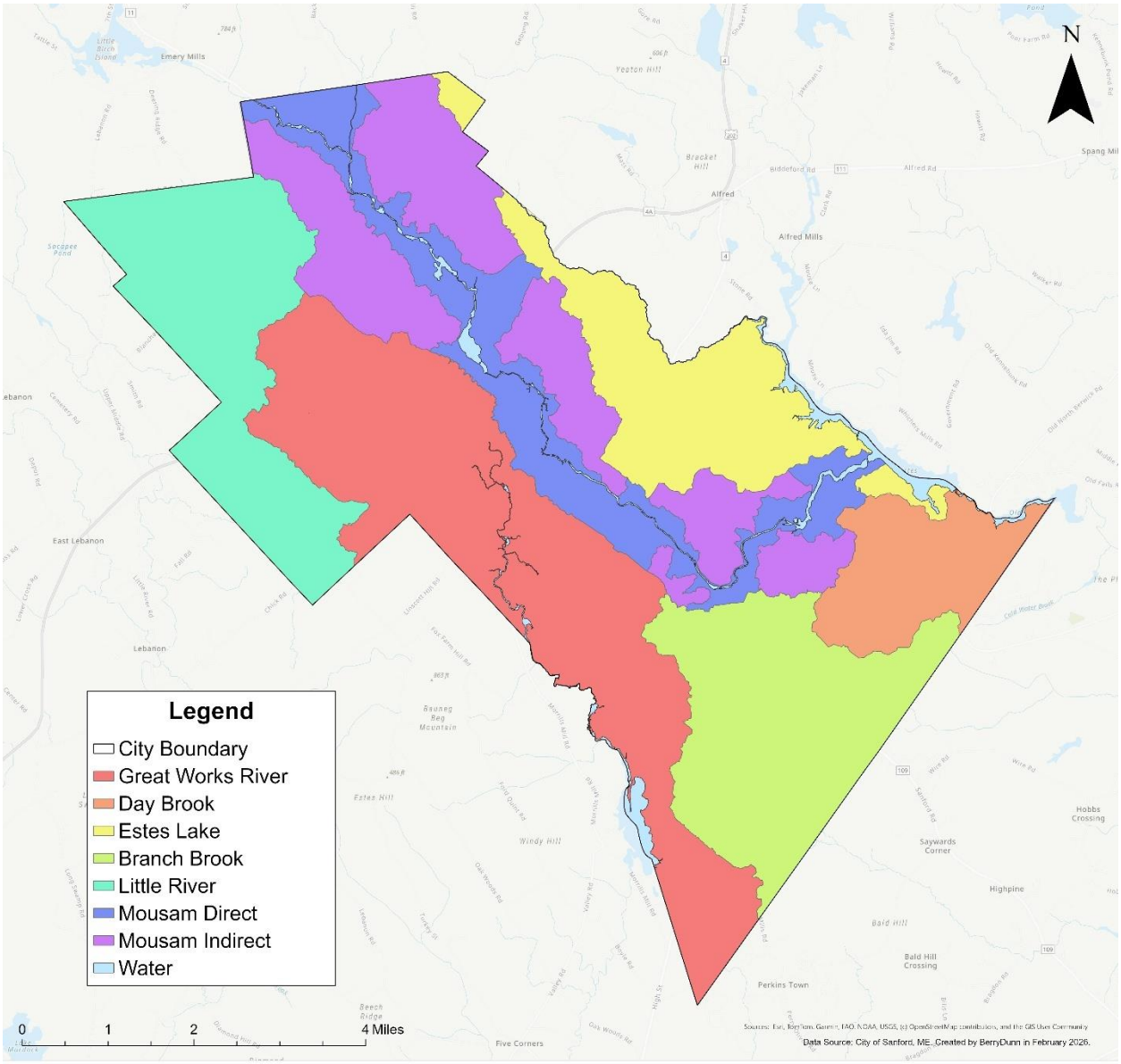
Sanford sits at the confluence of several watersheds to the local major water resources as seen in Figure 5.2. The map identified the following water basins within Sanford:

- Great Works River
    - Goodall Brook (within Great Works River)
- Day Brook
- Estes Lake
- Branch Brook

- Little River
- Mousam Direct
- Mousam Indirect Watershed

The Great Works watershed is the largest one that cuts through the City; a majority of this portion that cuts through the City is identified as Goodall Brook. In 2014, the City adopted the Goodall Brook Watershed Management Plan in cooperation with York County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The plan includes special efforts to improve water quality and the health diversity of aquatic organisms. Other watersheds are also listed under the Nonpoint Sources (NPS) Priority Watershed lists, including Estes Lake and Bauneg Beg Lake. Branch Brook is a drinking water source for Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District (KKW), and ongoing coordination will be needed to help ensure adequate protection for this watershed and drinking water source.

Figure 5.1: Watersheds in Sanford



Source: City of Sanford, ME

Surface Waters

Sanford is a City with an abundance of surface water bodies, including lakes, ponds, rivers, and wetlands. Sanford has a range of natural water resources, primary features include Estes Lake, the Great Works River, and Goodall Brook. Maintaining the health of the varying types of water bodies is crucial for the ecological, social, and recreational value that these features provide to the City.

Ponds and Lakes

- Allen Pond
- Bauneg Beg Lake: This is one of the lakes in Sanford that is listed under the threatened lakes priority list, noted to be a sensitive water body according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan.
- Beaver Hill Pond
- Curtis Pond
- Deering Pond
- Estes Lake: This is another lake in Sanford that is listed under the threatened lakes priority list, noted to be a on the watch list as a sensitive water body according to the DEP.
- Little Ell (L) Pond
- Littlefield Pond
- Little Long Pond
- Mill Pond
- Mud Pond
- Number One Pond: is an artificial pond, it is typically about three (3) feet deep. Given Sanford's industrial history, any sediments from the pond are likely classified as hazardous waste. It is not used for swimming or boating. The City holds annual waterski shows in the summer and minor ice-skating opportunities in the winter as downtown attractions. There is very little recreational use of the pond otherwise. Should the waterski show end, there have been discussions on the long-term merits of removing the dam, allowing the Mousam River to return to its natural course (perhaps 20 feet wide), and cap the remaining pond bed area as a potential City park, playing field, or other public recreational use.
- Number Two Pond: just to the northwest of Number One Pond
- Old Falls Pond
- Old Fishing Pond

- Picture Pond
- Pond-in-the-River
- Round Pond
- Sand Pond
- Stump Pond: with removal or eventual failure of the current aged stone and wood cribbing dam, Stump Pond would likely drain and cease to exist. The City is currently soliciting a plan for a dam inventory and maintenance plan which will be tied into the forthcoming Drainage Capital Improvement Plan being developed between the Department of Public Works and Planning Department.
- Sunken Pond
- Treatment Pond (East)
- Treatment Pond (North)
- Treatment Pond (South)
- Treatment Pond (West)
- Trout Pond

Rivers and Streams

- Branch Brook
- Canes Brook
- Dog Brook
- Goodall Brook: this brook is listed under the impaired streams priority list, due to the results of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) assessment.
- Great Works River
- Hay Brook
- Merriland River
- Middle Branch Mousam River
- Mousam River
- Perkins Brook
- Perkins Marsh Brook

Water Quality

The Maine DEP Biological Monitoring Program assesses the health of rivers, streams, and wetlands by evaluating the composition of resident aquatic benthic macroinvertebrate and algal communities. The purpose of the program is to assess the health of a water body based on the abundance and diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrates and algae present. When waterbodies are polluted or disturbed the abundance and diversity of the organisms are negatively impacted. For example, a polluted stream will often lack pollution-sensitive organisms like mayflies and stoneflies and will have more pollution-tolerant organisms like snails and leeches.

Maine DEP's Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan was issued in 2020. Nonpoint source pollution (NPS) has a major impact on Maine's waterbodies (lakes, rivers, streams, and marine waters). Unlike pollution from point sources, such as industrial and sewage treatment plants, nonpoint source pollution is a result of diffuse sources. It is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground and picking up natural and human-made pollutants, such as fertilizer, road salt, sediment, oil, and bacteria. Eventually, these contaminants end up in waterbodies, where they can threaten drinking water supplies, cause nuisance algal blooms, diminish recreational activities, and endanger aquatic habitats. The Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan outlines goals and approaches for protecting and restoring water quality statewide and at the watershed level.

Goodall Brook is listed under the impaired streams priority list due to a TMDL assessment according to the DEP Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan. The TMDL report states that the brook does not meet the water quality standards for the aquatic life criteria of Class B freshwater streams because of a habitat assessment and benthic macroinvertebrate bioassessment. The TMDL Assessment Summary of Goodall Stream suggests that the percentage of impervious surface land cover within the watershed contributes to the impairments through habitat loss, erosion, and pollutants associated with urban stormwater runoff. In response to the DEP assessment, the City of Sanford published the Goodall Brook Watershed Based Management Plan which outlines best management strategies such as stream habitat improvements, and the installation of structural and non-structural stormwater treatment practices. Strategies within the Management Plan include:

- Educational outreach to public and local businesses
- Reduction of winter salt applications
- Creation of a City Land Stewardship Plan
- Maintenance of stormwater basins
- Adoption of a Conservation Plan
- Development of a plan to separate the stormwater and sanitary sewer system

Although the plan is centered around the health of Goodall Brook, these actions will improve and protect all waterbodies within Sanford. Since the publication of the Management Plan, the City of Sanford has been overseeing phases of the restoration project to attain Class B water quality standards.

The City does not fall under federal and state regulations for stormwater management, meaning the City does not currently hold a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit or

Stormwater Management Plan. However, the Goodall Brook Watershed Based Management Plan is a proactive measure to maintain its water resources. Additionally, the City is developing a Drainage Capital Improvement Plan, set to be completed by the summer of 2026.

Stream Crossings

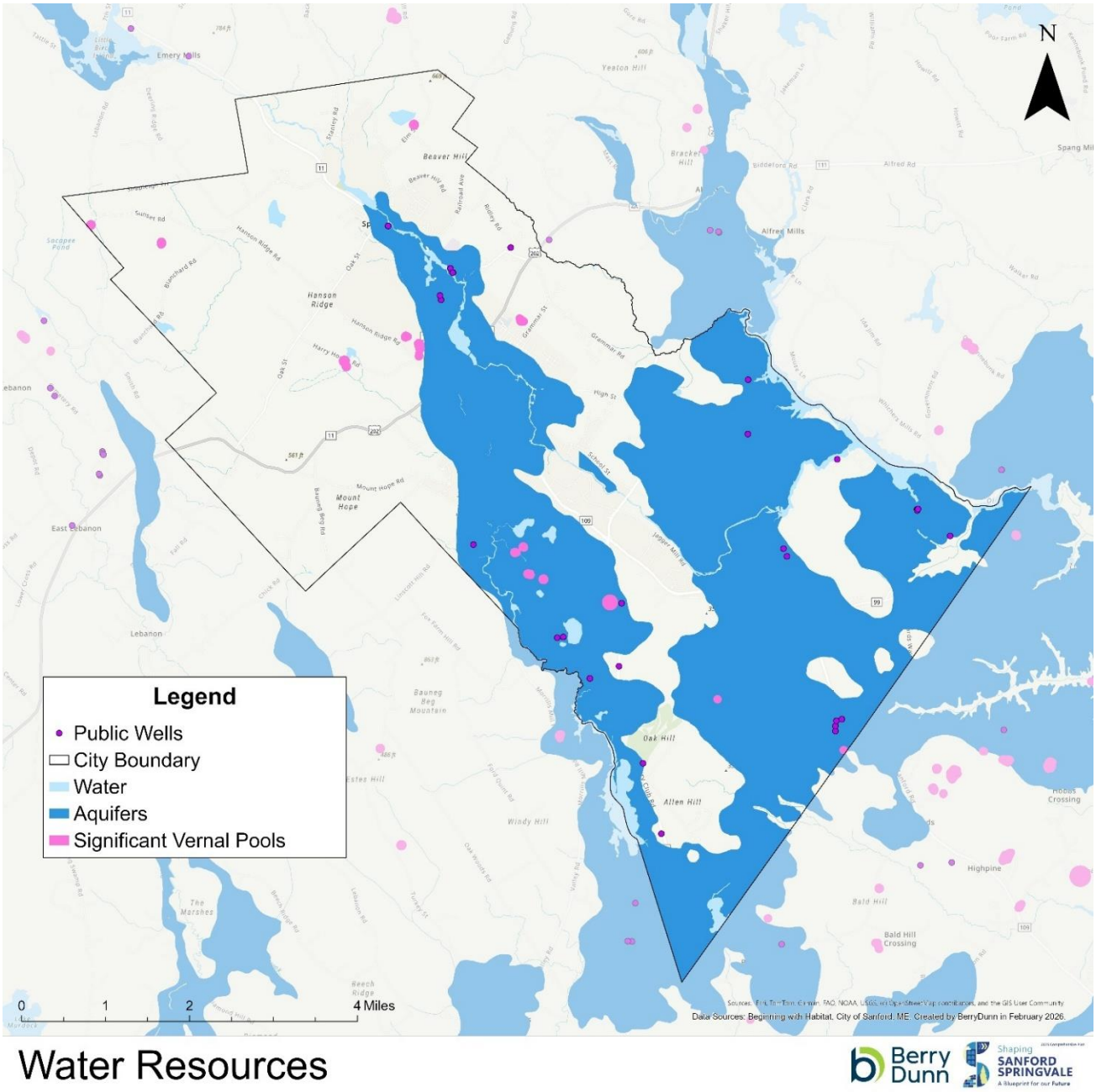
Stream crossings are utilized to maintain the continuity of streams to help ensure volume control, accommodate wildlife, and protect stream health. Stream continuity is crucial to stream health and creatures that depend on streams, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Typical stream crossing problems include undersized crossings, and shallow crossings or perched crossings that are easily blocked by debris which creates scouring, erosion, and high flow velocities; and limit habitat and migration. There are 99 culverts that convey streams across roads and other structures in Sanford, as shown on the Maine Stream Habitat Viewer. Sanford has a variety of road stream crossings that have barriers, potential barriers, and no barriers; or are unknown. There are also eight dams in Sanford which disrupt stream continuity.

Wetlands

Wetlands are natural features that are identified by hydric soils, a high-water table (for a portion of the year), and hydrophilic plants. These habitats are key for water quality, flood control, protection from erosion, and support wildlife. Wetlands are located across the City of Sanford with large surfaces located south of downtown in the Airport region, which include freshwater emergent wetlands, freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, riverine, ponds, and vernal pools.

Vernal pools are considered seasonal naturally occurring wetlands, given that they are inland water bodies that appear between winter and spring. These features provide a vital breeding habitat for native species. Wetlands are primarily concentrated West of Sanford (around the series of ponds close to Great River Works), and North of Downtown close to Number One Pond.

Figure 5.2: Water Resources in Sanford



Source: City of Sanford, ME

Floodplains

While an inland community, nuisance flooding and flooding from severe spring/summer and fall/winter weather events pose a risk to Sanford particularly in developed areas within the floodplain and where stormwater infrastructure is undersized. The York County Hazard Mitigation Plan analyzed the flood risk within communities, ranging from very low to very high.

The City's GIS portal shows the most up to date Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood boundaries.[4]

Seasonal Conditions Flooding

As Sanford typically has clean gravel soils that are excessively well-drained with rapid stormwater infiltration rates, stormwater typically infiltrates without significant accumulation. Occasionally, Sanford experiences extreme flooding under the following conditions: a large volume rainstorm when the winter frost is still in the ground. This creates an impermeable layer so that stormwater cannot infiltrate. For this reason, any areas that stormwater is expected to safely infiltrate, the point of infiltration must be placed below the frost line.

Areas in Sanford determined to be at medium, high, and very high risk of flooding including the following:

Medium Risk

- Northerly side of High Street between the Mousam River and Spruce Street (Mousam River).
- Southerly side of Mousam River is between Jagger Mill Road, Main Street, Kennebunk Road, Whichers Mill Road, Stebbins Road, and New Dam Road (Mousam River).

High Risk

- Sections of High Street, School Street, and Heritage Crossing northeast and North of Downtown (Mousam River).
- Westerly side of River Street, between Spartan Drive and the Water Department facility (Mousam River and Stump Pond).
- Southerly side of High Street is between River Street and Bates Street (Mousam River).
- West side of Route 109/Main Street

Very High Risk

- Southerly side of School Street between Breton Avenue and Route 4 (Mousam River and Sanford High School).

In addition to the locations identified above the diversion of water from a brook's original channel into backyard drainage systems along Brook Street has been difficult for the City to maintain, creating significant flood risks for residences on Brook Street. Many of the areas of risk for flooding in Sanford contain residential uses, commercial developments, forested land, and critical facilities such as the Department of Public Works facility and electrical infrastructure. Sanford has a total of approximately 185 miles of public roadway maintained by the City's Department of Public Works. The City is responsible for repairing these roads following flood

[4] City of Sanford. n.d. "City of Sanford GIS Portal." *City of Sanford.* Accessed March 10, 2026 https://www.axisgis.com/SanfordME/

damage. Much of Sanford's stormwater drainage system is formerly a combined sewer overflow system, large portions of which are approaching or past its expected service life. Due to budget constraints, improvements to the system are typically only completed on an emergency basis. See Chapter 11 for more information on Sanford's infrastructure.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the water that accumulates from rain and snowmelt, which is stored underground in between the rocks and cracks that form through large solid rock layers. The pervious surface that is filled with water is the aquifer. The type of soil, development, and impervious surfaces impact the amount of water that soaks into the ground, thus impacting the ability of the aquifer to recharge. Sanford has a significant land surface designated as an aquifer, ranging from South-West to North-East of the City along the primary water features. The aquifer improves the quality of water, but land use changes can affect the wells that provide the community with water. Sanford hasmore than 15 public water supply sources located across various neighborhoods, nine of which are within the Sanford Water District.

Most of the aquifers within the City are identified as having a potential well yield of about 10–50 gallons per minute (GPM), meaning they could yield a moderate water supply in that range. However, several surfaces are designated with land use risks. Moderate-risk aquifer areas are located south of the City near Allen Pond and Branch Brook, where mostly unconfined sand and gravel aquifers with permeable soils and shallow water tables lie close to surface waters and are overlain by residential and suburban development. High risk aquifer areas are located North and East of the City, surrounding the wastewater outfall in Downtown Sanford around Stump Pond, east of the Airport, and around the old sand and gravel pits along New Dam Road. Sanford Water District has mentioned that the location of the City's Snow Storage Location (permitted by MaineDEP) may risk the quality of the groundwater in the respective wellhead protection zones. The Department of Public Works is investigating site relocation options prioritizing potential parcels outside of the wellhead protection zone and proximate to the Public Works facility and the urban areas downtown where snow removal is required.

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources help define a community and celebrate significant landscape features. They are attributes that give a community identity and make a place appealing to live. These resources include natural views, vistas, and cultural assets. Key scenic resources in Sanford include Mount Hope, Hanson's Ridge, and the Mousam River. However, the many rural landscapes of Sanford, including the wetlands, ponds, lakes, and rivers contribute to the beauty and appeal of the City. The City's Trails system connects most of Sanford's scenic resources. Many of these areas run through the Shoreland Zone.

Shoreland Zoning

The City established an overlay district 250 feet from the normal high-water line of any designated ponds, rivers, significant natural resource areas, or upland edges of freshwater wetlands. It is also mapped within 75 feet of the normal high-water line of a stream. Chapter 270 of the City of Sanford's Code details the rules and regulations of the zone and requires special

review and permitting for development within the Shoreland Zone. The primary purposes of the zone are to:

- Maintain safe and healthful conditions
- Prevent and control water pollution
- Protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird habitat, and other wildlife habitat
- Protect historic and commercial resources
- Protect visual and physical points of access to inland waters
- Anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas

The Shoreland Zoning is divided into two primary districts:

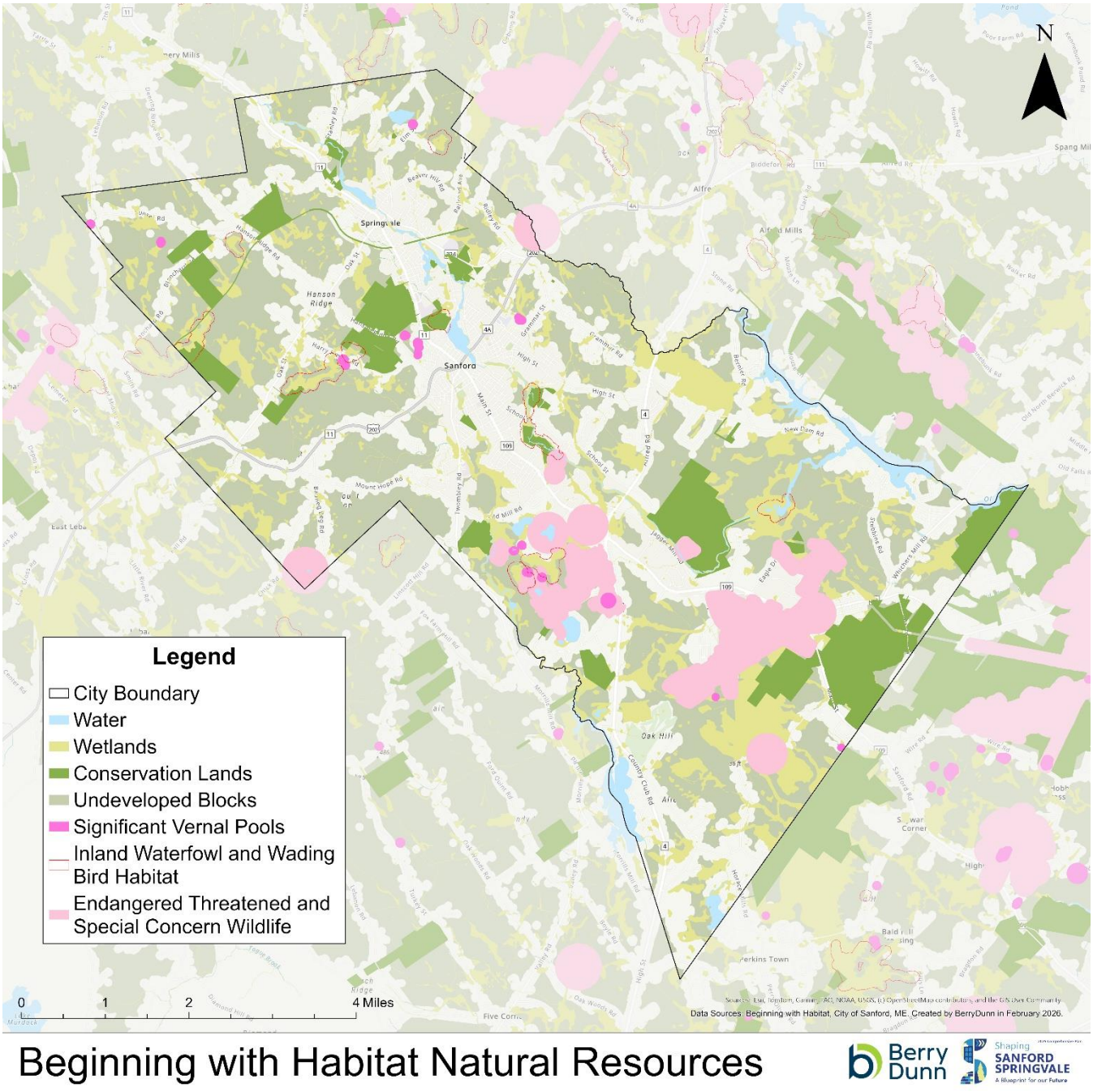
- **Resource Protection Zone**: The standards of the Resource Protection Zone apply to all areas designated as “Resource Protection” on the Official Shoreland Zoning Map.
- **Shoreland Overlay Zone**: The standards of the Shoreland Overlay Zone apply to all other shoreland areas not included within the Resource Protection Zone. This zone also includes two development zones:
    - General Development Shoreland Zone 1
    - General Development Shoreland Zone 2

The Shoreland Zoning includes specific permit requirements and bulk and use regulations within each of the following districts of the overlay.

Critical Habitat

The Beginning with Habitat (BwH) mapper indicates that the City of Sanford contains extensive inland aquatic and upland habitats that support diverse wildlife and plant communities. In both upland and wetland areas, there are swaths of forest cover and conservation lands that connect Sanford to surrounding towns and cities. The BwH map identifies several significant habitat types, including wetlands, vernal pools, inland waterfowl and wading bird habitat. The wetlands, significant vernal pools, and stream corridors provide seasonal breeding habitat for amphibians and invertebrates which help maintain water quality within the local environment. The City also contains rare and exemplary natural communities and ecosystems, such as Atlantic white cedar swamps, hemlock swamps, and pitch pine barrens as well as a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered species, including several bird and snake species that depend on these habitats. The continued maintenance of contiguous conservation lands, wetland and stream buffers, and limiting development in the areas of rare natural communities are key strategies for conserving Sanford’s critical habitats while accommodating future growth.

Figure 5.4: Habitat Areas in Sanford



Source: Beginning with Habitat

Challenges and Opportunities

As the City of Sanford continues to experience development pressure, the protection of its natural and water resources from development is a significant concern. The City is proactive in the conservation of open areas and natural resources in upland and wetland environments. The

protection of these natural areas is key in managing flooding, specifically of the undeveloped floodplain wetlands which retain and hold water during flood events. The City currently has the Goodall Brook Watershed Based Management Plan to address the water quality concerns of Goodall Brook. Although the plan includes strategies that will benefit water quality throughout the City, consideration should be given to creating a Stormwater Management Plan to address the specific needs of the various water resources within Sanford. The City of Sanford should continue to work toward a balance between the conservation and management of its abundant water resources with the need for growth and development.

With the construction of the new Sanford High School and 50MW solar array at the Sanford Seacoast Regional Airport, the City became aware of several potential endangered species present in the area. Future developments should take precautions and seek review by MaineDEP.

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6. Agriculture and Forestry

Overview

Agricultural lands and forests are valuable landscapes offering economic, environmental, and social benefits for a community. These natural resources are key to residents and native species, by contributing to local produce, protecting water resources, offering recreational opportunities, and providing habitat for wildlife.

In terms of environmental benefits, farmlands aid in protecting wetlands, in groundwater recharge by allowing water to move downward in the water table, and in maintaining air quality. Forests also are vital to the City's environmental health, providing similar benefits as farmland. Properly managed forested lands are critical to stabilizing soil, providing clean air, and absorbing water runoff. Through different types of vegetation and tree species that grow on farms and forests, these landscapes provide a habitat for various insects and animals and contribute to carbon sequestration.

Considering economic and social benefits, farmlands preserve rural areas while diversifying the economy in Maine. The success of the agricultural industry aids in supporting a variety of businesses, ranging from manufacturing, fuel, veterinary services, supply stores, and local retailers. Farmland and forestry industries provide residents with job opportunities across Maine, while forests also provide recreational opportunities. The forestry industry is known historically to be one of Maine's largest industries that contributed greatly to the local economy through different employment opportunities for foresters, lumber companies, truckers, mechanics, and manufacturers. Both industries have witnessed a decline over the years, but with the shift in new innovative investments, these industries are starting to resurge. Land Conservation Resources

The State has created different mechanisms to support these industries, such as the Forest Recovery Initiative, which has allowed for creative solutions (e.g., biomass, mass timber, advanced manufacturing) to encourage growth in forestry operations. In 2024, the Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan proposed a set of resiliency strategies, some of which focused on preserving the State's natural resources, such as the working lands. Within the plan, Strategy E, Protect the Environment and Natural and Working Lands and Waters in Maine, outlines seven goals that can also guide Sanford when thinking of agriculture and forestry lands. The goals outlined include the following:

- Increasing the total acreage of conserved natural and working lands in the State to 30% by 2030
- Developing new incentives to increase forest carbon storage
- Increasing the amount of food consumed in Maine from State food producers to 30% by 2030
- Reducing food loss and waste by 50% by 2030

- Supporting farming, forestry, and fishery industries in Maine with adapting to climate change
- Improving the monitoring of inland and coastal and marine ecosystems to increase resilience
- Reducing and capturing methane emissions from Maine's waste sector

Several land trusts in the area are structured to build on these climate resiliency goals for working lands in the City.

The Sanford Springvale Mousam Way Land Trust is one of the local nonprofit organizations that aims to provide livable habitats for plant and animal life in the area. This organization can apply its mission with public education, research, and protection of significant natural resources, unique sites, scenic vistas, and farmland. Some of the protected lands, such as the Libby Cedar Reserve, Town Farm Easement, Hall Environmental Reserve, and McKeon Environmental Reserve, are significant features in Sanford. Many of these properties are home to agricultural and forestry activities, including the Sanford Community Garden within the Community Center, the Sanford Community Forest, and several types of trails allowing the public to explore Sanford's natural environment.

Three Rivers Land Trust also prioritizes building healthier communities through conservation of wild and working landscapes. Many of its protected farmlands and easements in Sanford are in the Hanson Ridge area and south of the City along Route 109.

Agriculture

Farmland Resources

According to the Three Rivers Land Trust Comprehensive Plan, the southwestern area of Maine, which includes York County, is known to have a rich agricultural history with stone wall remnants, barns, and grange halls. Although the region has witnessed a decline in past years, all orchards, fields, and pastures are in the process of being revitalized through state, City, and community efforts to support farmers' agricultural operations.

According to the most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture Census (2022), the State profile indicates that the number of farms reached its peak in 2012 with 8,173 farms and started declining since reaching 7,036 farms in 2022. York County contributes 4% to the State's agriculture sales. The County profile indicates 689 farms in 2022; the County witnessed a 6% decrease in the number of farms and a 17% decrease in farmland acres since 2017. When better understanding the agricultural market data changes between 2017 and 2022, York County experienced a 49% increase in farm-related income and an 11% increase in market value of products sold, while net cash farm income decreased by 66%.

Local Farms

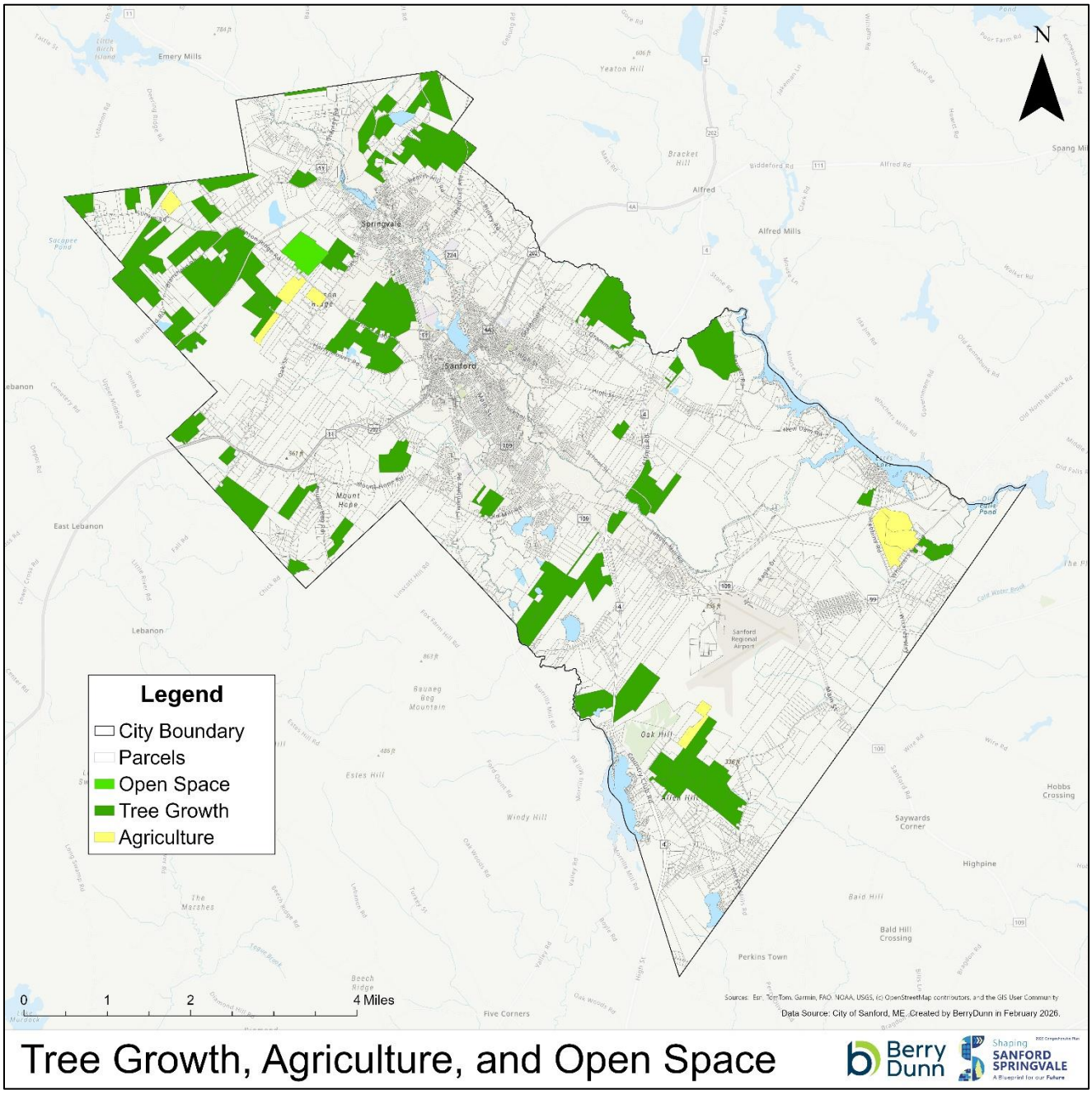
Sanford is rich in agricultural lands and has a range of farm types such as cropland, pastureland, and other farmlands, which include the following based on local assessor land use data:

- Edible Horticulture
    - Four Parcels
    - Total Assessed: 21,600
    - Three Owners
- Field Crops
    - Four Parcels
    - Total Assessed: 80,800
    - Three Owners
- Pasture
    - Five Parcels
    - Total Assessed: 39,100
    - Four Owners
- Farmland Tree Growth
    - Three Parcels
    - Total Assessed: 9,300
    - Three Owners

These agricultural, open space, and tree growth tax program parcels are illustrated in Figure 6.1. Some of the conserved lands in Sanford include agriculture lands that are used as working farms and, in some cases, provide open spaces for developed areas. Some of these farms in the City are the Hanson Farm (McDougal's Orchard) and the Noon Family Sheep Farm.

Much of the City's land remains undeveloped, with some under protection of different organizations and owners. A significant portion of the unique farmland soils and prime farmland are located mainly within Rural Residential zones, and rural mixed-use zones with some of the existing farmlands are adjacent to the City's urban core. This condition allows the City to expand on its existing land uses and consider where agricultural lands can thrive.

Figure 6.1: Tree Growth, Agriculture, and Open Space



Source: City of Sanford, ME

Agriculture Support

Farmland Current Use Tax Program

The State of Maine offers four current land use programs, farmland, open space, tree growth, and working waterfront, offering property owners a reduction in their property's assessed value. To qualify for the farmland program, property owners must have five contiguous acres of land used for farming, agriculture, or horticulture, which also contributes to at least $2,000 gross income from these uses.

In 2024, Sanford had a total of 179 farmland acres enrolled in the State tax program, spanning eight parcels with a valuation of $143,500. The registered farmlands have fluctuated slightly over time with a decrease of farmland in Sanford since 2014, which recorded 196 acres across nine parcels. Across this 10-year period, Sanford recorded the highest number of farmlands in 2023, with 201 acres across eight parcels valued at $216,300. This significant decrease of 33% between 2023 and 2024 follows the overall decline of the industry across the State.

Table 6.1: Agriculture Current Land Use Program Data

Year	Number of Parcels	Farmland Acres	Total Farmland Valuation
2024	8	179	$143,500
2023	8	201	$216,300
2022	6	175	$140,000
2021	8	199	$164,700
2020	8	199	$164,700
2019	8	199	$164,700
2018	8	199	$164,700
2017	7	192	$156,600
2016	6	192	$131,000
2015	7	192	$156,600
2014	9	196	$158,800

Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, Farmland (2024-2014)

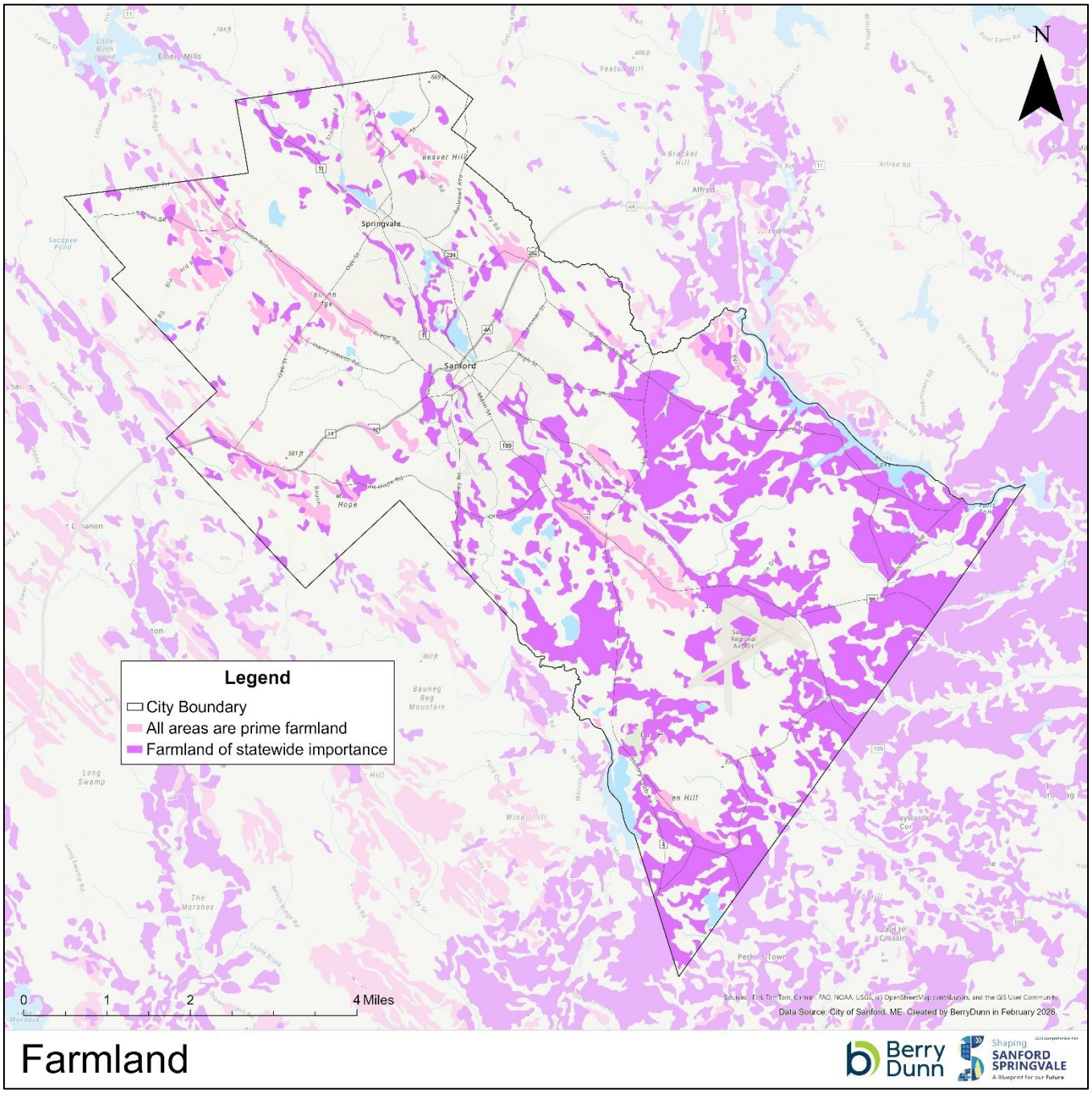
Additional State Support

The Maine Department of Agriculture and Forestry (DACF) has several resources, such as technical assistance programs and grant programs, in addition to the State's current use tax programs for farmland. Some of the available State grants include the Farms for the Future Program, Agricultural Development Fund, Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund, and Dairy Improvement Fund. These various programs aim to enhance the viability, profitability, and sustainability of the different agricultural markets and products.

Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance

Prime farmland is defined as areas with the ideal combination of physical and chemical composition for producing agricultural products such as food, fiber, feed, or crops. These areas shown in Figure 7.2 can vary from pastureland, rangeland, cropland, forest land, and others that are not intensely built. As defined by the National Soils Survey Handbook, prime farmland consistently produces high crop yields when managed well. Sanford has a significant portion of land designated as farmland, with 1,629 acres of prime farmland areas and 10,922 acres of statewide importance. Collectively, farmland accounts for over 40% of the land in Sanford. Farmland of statewide importance does not meet the standards set for prime farmland; however, these areas still have favorable characteristics for growing crops.

Figure 7.2: Farmland of Statewide Importance and Prime Farmland



Source: City of Sanford, ME

Prime farmland areas emerge as large surfaces across all regions in Sanford. These areas are identified along Main Street (Route 109), Hanson Ridge Road, School Street, Sunset Road, Elm Street near Littlefield Pond, along Country Club Road 3 in Allen Hill, and Lebanon Street near Mount Hope. Farmland of statewide importance is concentrated in large surface areas along the southern border of Sanford and in smaller surface areas up to the northern border. This

distribution signifies that Sanford is rich in soil composition and farmland potential in the southeast to central regions (near the intersection of Route 109 and 4).

See Section 12, City Facilities and Services for information about food assistance programs and the Sanford farmer's market.

Forest Resources

According to the Three Rivers Land Trust Comprehensive Plan, the southwestern area of Maine that includes York County is known to be one of the State's highest commercially valuable timberlands. The types of forests in the area, including Northern Red Oak and Eastern White Pine Forests, support local forestry services, boosting loggers', truckers', and foresters' efforts.

Given Sanford's rural character and current land use, many parcels remain forested with multiple parcels enrolled in the State's current tax use program.

Tree Growth Current Tax Use Program

As mentioned earlier, the State of Maine offers a Tree Growth Program, which provides property owners with benefits if they have 10 acres of forested land that is used for commercial harvesting. The aim of this program is to retain and better manage forests by restricting these lands from development and encouraging best practices. To qualify for this program, a forest management and harvest plan must be prepared.

In 2024, Sanford had a total of 2,876 wooded acres enrolled in the State tax program, spanning 95 parcels with a valuation of $1,234,206. As of 2024, the City has 544 acres of softwood, 659 acres of hardwood, and 1,673 acres of mixed wood, making it the primary type of forested land in Sanford (58% of total tree growth acres). A notable decrease in registered tree growth acres has been recorded in Sanford over the past decade, with 3,505 acres across 116 parcels in 2014 (approximately 17% decrease). Across this 10-year period, Sanford recorded the highest number of tree growth acres in 2015, with 3,512 acres across 115 parcels valued at $1,066,363.

Table 6.2: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary – Tree Growth

Year	Number of Parcels	Softwood Acres	Mixed Wood Acres	Hardwood Acres	Total Acres	Total Land Value
2024	95	544	1,673	659	2,876	$1,234,206
2023	96	603	1,699	728	3,031	$1,245,464
2022	110	599	1,773	715	3,087	$1,320,196
2021	109	609	1,916	882	3,407	$1,468,154
2020	106	601	1,918	874	3,393	$1,461,232

Year	Number of Parcels	Softwood Acres	Mixed Wood Acres	Hardwood Acres	Total Acres	Total Land Value
2019	107	570	1,961	890	3,420	$1,448,855
2018	110	600	1,903	916	3,418	$1,457,518
2017	113	602	1,946	913	3,460	$1,425,124
2016	113	592	1,935	956	3,483	$1,375,197
2015	115	617	1,947	948	3,512	$1,066,363
2014	116	640	1,916	949	3,505	$1,089,609

Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, Tree Growth (2024 – 2014)

In terms of forest management and harvesting, the Maine Practices Act regulates local forest operations and timber harvests. The time of harvest varies based on the location, environmental conditions, and objective. These operations and management practices require careful consideration and proper planning to achieve the landowner's goals. Through the Municipal Planning Assistance Data, Table 6.3 outlines the summary of timber harvests in the City of Sanford in 2025. This data indicates the sharp increase in harvesting activity since the reports between 1991 and 2001.

Table 6.3: Harvest Area by Town (Acres), Summary of Timber Harvest Information for the Town of Sanford (Issued 2025-04-09)

Year	Selection	Shelter Wood	Land Use Change	Clearcut	Totals	# of Reports
1991 – 2001	2,850	235	225	97	3,407	126
2002 – 2011	3,604	636	279	75	4,594	143
2012 – 2021	4,889	708	317	107	6,021	156
Total	**11,343**	**1,579**	**821**	**279**	**14,022**	**425**

Source: Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service. Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Maine Forest Service

Forest Management

The Maine Forest Service Best Management Practices (BMPs) for woodlot management outline regulatory and voluntary strategies to improve timber harvesting effectiveness. In addition to the BMP, the WoodWISE Program is one of Maine's support programs for forested lands. WoodWISE offers financial assistance for forest management planning (Woodland Resource Action Plan) to provide information on the current conditions and possible value in the wooded landscape. This program is offered to help landowners with 10 or more forested acres to apply stewardship practices.

Challenges and Opportunities

Sanford is a City with extensive undeveloped lands and working landscapes, rooted in a rural character that preserves a strong connection to the land. As regional conditions continue to change, the City will need to focus its efforts based on the growing challenges but also seize potential opportunities that arise.

With Sanford's population growth, farmland and forested lands are vulnerable to fragmentation as they compete with residential and commercial land uses. The decline in these industries across the City and State, in addition to the increase in operational costs, affects the current market for landowners, which grows the financial strain on farmers and harvesters. The recorded changes in climate will require adopting new resiliency strategies and updating current management practices to maintain crop productivity and forest sustainability.

Despite the challenges and regional production decline, Sanford has a strong foundation in farmland and forest working landscapes and is witnessing an increased demand for local products. State programs, regional land trusts, City efforts, and conservation policies can continue to support current management efforts, protect prime farmland soils, and preserve the

rich forested areas. Innovative and emerging markets, such as biomass, are expected to expand with current needs, which can also offer economic returns for landowners. Sanford has the opportunity to balance its future growth while protecting these critical working landscapes and improving management practices.

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7. Economy

Introduction

The Mousam River played the central role in Sanford's initial settling and its economic activity in the ensuing generations. Characterized chiefly by the ebb and flow of market forces on the manufacturing industry, Sanford's economy has historically shown resilience in a rapidly evolving environment.

Recognized for its manufacturing heritage, Sanford's industrial legacy establishes a context for current sector strengths and future reuse opportunities. A robust foundation composed of a diverse array of manufacturers in both Sanford and the surrounding region provide a stable footing for the local economy, with ample opportunity to capitalize on emerging industry sectors and technology in the coming years.

The Mousam River in the vicinity of Sanford was employed industrially beginning in the early 18th century, initially powering grist mills and sawmills. By the early 19th century, the textile industry began to emerge along the river, culminating in the expansion of an existing flannel mill after Thomas Goodall consolidated a number of independently owned facilities. The primary mill yard of what became the Goodall's Sanford Mills Company now constitutes the Sanford Mills Historic District.

Thomas Goodall established his mill operations in Sanford in 1867. Goodall had immigrated from England and previously built a successful mill operation in nearby New Hampshire. A period of elevated activity at the Sanford Mills began in 1885, and through the turn of the 20th century the town experienced dramatic growth tied directly to the success of these operations. During this period, Sanford's textile products became widely renowned. Also in this time frame, the Jagger Brothers Mill was constructed in 1906, with expansions to company facilities continuing into the mid-20th century.

In 1944, the Goodall Worsted Company—known for producing the mohair and cotton blend fabric marketed as "Palm Beach Cloth"—merged with Sanford Mills, a manufacturer of mohair and wool velvets and imitation fur fabrics, to form Goodall-Sanford Inc. In 1955, then-owner Burlington Mills Company sold the complex, and the facilities were never again operated as a unified mill. Jagger Brothers purchased the Maine Alpaca Mill in Springvale in 1956, and yarn spinning operations continued there under subsequent ownership until 2019. The firm ended production at that time and pivoted to support the creation of a new business, Worsted Spinning New England, which would operate under new management.

Presenting both challenges and opportunities, the mill buildings distinctly characterize Sanford, from their earliest conceptions as employment and production sites to their indelible visual presence on the landscape today. In 2017, the five-story rear building of the former Stenton Trust Mill site was engulfed in a fire following arson activity, leading to the demolition of the remaining buildings on the site in 2018. Further, urban renewal erased much of Sanford's historic urban fabric outside of the mill districts, as fundamental transformations of both Springvale and Sanford downtowns were implemented.

Sanford's evolution from a one-industry town into a more diversified economy began in the latter half of the 20th century. The local economy in Sanford now includes a wide range of manufacturers and other sectors, such as Tom's of Maine, Rubb Building Systems USA, and additional employers, including healthcare and regional-serving retail. Manufacturing, retail trade, and construction have all experienced job growth in Sanford in recent years. Sanford Airport is also an essential asset, being an active and expanding hub for transportation and logistics. Regionally, Sanford benefits from proximity to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which employes more people from Sanford than any other community.

Recent Economic Development Planning

Market Analysis

A market analysis was conducted by RKG Associates in 2025. The purpose and intent of the plan was to establish a roadmap to address Sanford's core constraints while positioning the City for long-term economic growth. Key themes that emerged from the study include the following:

- Sanford serves as a dual-role community: both a residential hub and an employment center, with a strong legacy in manufacturing.
- Recurring challenges include out-commuting, housing affordability, aging infrastructure, and competition with Portland and Portsmouth.

The study defined Sanford and York County as the core market areas for the purposes of comparison and reviewed the following:

- Socioeconomic data
- Labor market analytics and job estimates
- Commercial real estate fundamentals
- Visitor/spending behavior

Qualitative inputs including interviews and committee engagement were incorporated as part of strategy framework development.

Key findings about Sanford's current economic conditions included the following:

- Population and income are rising, with post-COVID-19 growth linked to remote work and in-migration from higher-cost markets.
- Sanford remains a net exporter of workers but also draws workers from nearby towns.
- Competitive strengths cluster in manufacturing, retail trade, and construction, with job growth outperforming national expectations in several of these sectors.
- Manufacturing output is notably driven by sub-sectors like plastics/rubber, fabricated metals, and food manufacturing.

- Workforce shortages show up most acutely in healthcare, construction, and transportation/material moving, while some professional/managerial areas show relative oversupply.
- Housing affordability is an economic constraint, with rising rents and home prices tightening options for key worker groups.

Key Strategic Directions and Recommendations

The Market Analysis' central proposal is to organize action through the following four lenses, establishing a structure meant to align policy, capital, and partnerships:

1) Planning strategies aimed at placemaking and site readiness, including pre-development work, utility planning, access planning, and coordinated marketing. This effort also includes strengthening downtown as a connected set of "activity nodes," improving pedestrian connectivity and urban design to increase visit duration and spending.

2) Regulatory strategies including conducting a zoning audit/cleanup to reduce inconsistencies and streamline pathways to permitting, and adapting other regulatory frameworks as needed to facilitate desired development.

3) Financial strategies designed to catalyze investment, including expanding use of tools like tax increment financing (TIF) and incentivizing downtown reuse/redevelopment.

4) Partnership and collaboration strategies, including formalizing workforce partnerships with York County Community College (YCCC), local schools, and regional training providers to align skills pipelines with employer needs. Other key partnerships were proposed, including enhancing coordination with Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Sanford Airport, and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

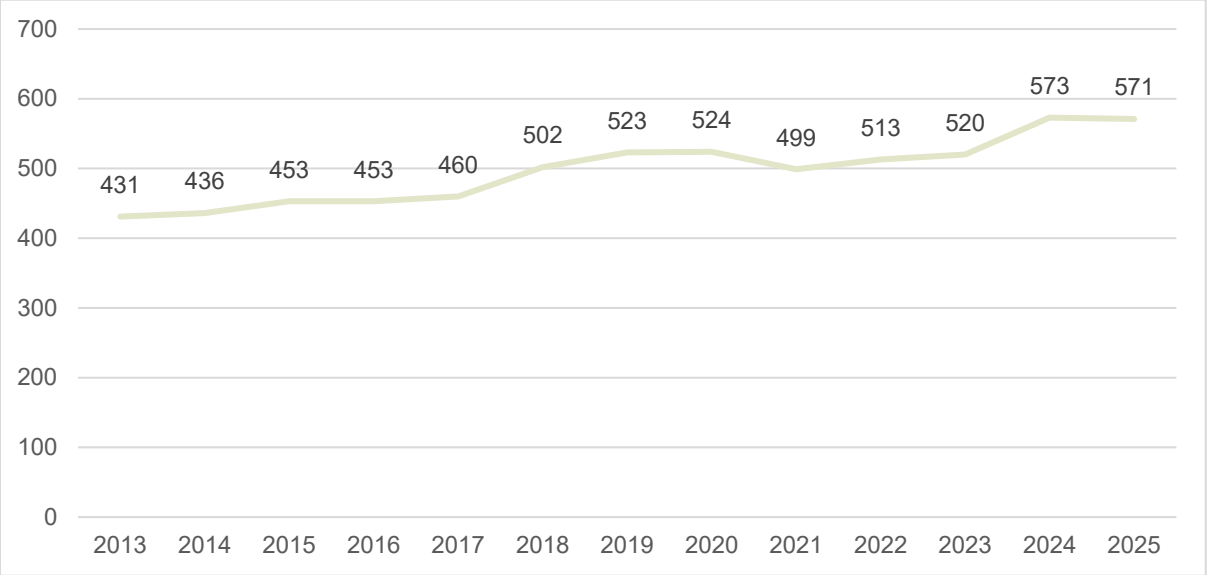
Regional Economy

The second most populous community in York County, Sanford is a designated service center whose economic role is closely tied to the surrounding region. Sanford benefits from the broader regional economy, including the economic impact of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and York County. This influence is reflected indirectly through regional defense-industry activity, which has been cited as generating more than $1.4 billion in economic impact and linking Sanford's training capacity to shipbuilding and defense employment. This key regional anchor also plays a substantial role in shaping commuting patterns and housing demand trends.

From 2013 to 2024, the number of Sanford residents employed at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has increased from 431 to 573. This figure remained relatively stable from 2024 to 2025, with 571 total residents employed in 2025. [5]

[5] Alana Schaeffer. September 2026. "Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Impact Report." Portsmouth, NH: Seacoast Shipyard Association.

Figure 7.1: Sanford Residents Employed at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard



Source: Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Impact Report 2013 – 2024

In 2024 and 2025, more Sanford residents were employed at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard than any other community. Sanford employed slightly less employees at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard than Rochester, NH in 2023 and 2022, but remained the second largest resident cohort.

Table 7.1: Top Commute Origin for Employees at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

No.	City/Town	Employees
2020		
1	**Sanford/Springvale**	**524**
2	Portsmouth, NH	517
3	Rochester, NH	482
4	Dover, NH	471
5	Kittery/Kittery Point	448
2021		
1	**Sanford/Springvale**	**499**
2	Rochester, NH	478
3	Kittery/Kittery Point	438
4	Berwick	437
5	Dover, NH	427
2022		
1	Rochester, NH	528
2	**Sanford/Springvale**	**513**
3	Berwick	416
4	Kittery/Kittery Point	415
5	Dover, NH	408
2023		

No.	City/Town	Employees
1	Rochester, NH	529
2	**Sanford/Springvale**	**520**
3	Kittery/Kittery Point	418
4	Berwick	416
5	Dover, NH	413
2024		
1	**Sanford/Springvale**	**573**
2	Rochester, NH	527
3	Dover, NH	469
4	Kittery/Kittery Point	453
5	Berwick	433
2025		
1	**Sanford/Springvale**	**571**
2	Kittery/Kittery Point	446
3	Berwick	431
4	South Berwick	371
5	Lebanon	319

Source: Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Impact Report 2020 – 2025

Just as important to Sanford's economic state is access to large labor markets: Sanford lies within Maine's largest labor market in Portland and borders New Hampshire's second-largest labor market in Strafford County, including Rochester, Dover, and Somersworth, as well as eastern Rockingham County around Portsmouth.

York County, in its own right, has a robust regional economy, with manufacturing comprising a core component of it. The table below shows the top privately-owned employers in York County, with the largest being RTX Corporation in North Berwick with an estimated employment of over 2,000 workers. RTX Corporation manufactures aircraft engines and engine parts. Educational institutions and hospitals are also key components of the region's economy, including MaineHealth locations in Biddeford and Sanford; the University of New England in Biddeford; and York Hospital in York.

Numerous manufacturing operations have a home in York County. Many smaller in scale, the number and diversity of these businesses establish a baseline resilience for the economy, buffering it from sharp cyclical swings or disruptions in any one particular sector. Within a predictable 45-minute drive, more than 250,000 workers are employed across the economic spectrum in York County at companies such as Tom's of Maine, The Baker Company, Roehm America, IDEXX Laboratories, Pratt & Whitney, Flemish Master Weavers, Hussey Seating, and numerous small- to medium-sized, technology-driven growth companies.

Table 7.2: York County Major Privately-Owned Employers

Employer	City/Town	Industry	Estimated Employment Range
RTX Corporation	North Berwick	Manufacturing	2,001 – 2,500
MaineHealth	Biddeford	Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,001 – 1,500
University of New England	Biddeford	Educational Services	501 – 1,000
York Hospital	York	Healthcare and Social Assistance	501 – 1,000
Nestlé Waters USA	Hollis	Manufacturing	1 – 500
Corning Incorporated	Kennebunk	Manufacturing	1 – 500
Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Saco	Retail Trade	1 – 500
Hussey Seating Co	North Berwick	Manufacturing	1 – 500
Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Sanford	Retail Trade	1 – 500
MKRDY Ogunquit LLC	Ogunquit	Accommodation and Food Services	1 – 500
Demoulas Super Markets Inc	Biddeford	Retail Trade	1 – 500
Funtown Splashtown USA	Saco	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1 – 500
Kevin Inc	Saco	Retail Trade	1 – 500
Shaw's Supermarkets Inc	Saco	Transportation and Warehousing	1 – 500
Fiber Materials Inc	Biddeford	Manufacturing	1 – 500

Employer	City/Town	Industry	Estimated Employment Range
Kyocera AVX Components (Biddeford)	Biddeford	Manufacturing	1 – 500
General Dynamics Armament Systems Inc	Saco	Manufacturing	1 – 500
MaineHealth	Sanford	Healthcare and Social Assistance	1 – 500
Stonewall Kitchen LLC	York	Manufacturing	1 – 500
Thornton Academy	Saco	Educational Services	1 – 500
Hannaford Bros Co	Saco	Retail Trade	1 – 500
Great Works Properties Inc	South Berwick	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1 – 500
Ogunquit Playhouse Foundation	Ogunquit	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1 – 500
Kennebunk Savings Bank	Kennebunk	Finance and Insurance	1 – 500

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Table 7.2 shows 2024 employment levels in York County, along with job growth trends and the location quotient for each industry sector. Location quotient is a measure used to gauge the competitiveness of an industry sector in a market by comparing the concentration of employment in that industry sector with national averages. In York County, the industry sectors of manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting show the most competitiveness, followed by retail trade and arts, entertainment, and recreation, which also have an employment concentration above national averages.

Job growth indicates another dimension of regional industry competitiveness. Industry sectors with positive job growth over the previous five years indicate that they are gaining strength in the market. Industries that are already competitive and have gained some strength constitute leading industries upon which the economy is founded. Manufacturing leads in this regard, and agriculture, construction, and arts and entertainment also fall in this category. Some industries lack an above-average concentration of employment but experienced growth in the last five years. These industries would be considered emerging and possible candidates for diversifying

the employment base as they grow, potentially comprising a more competitive role in the region's economy in years to come. Two industries showed substantial growth in the last five years and would qualify as emerging industry sectors in the market; these industries are management of companies and enterprises, and professional, scientific, and technical services.

Table 7.2, below, highlights data from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy.

Table 7.3: York County Employment and Competitiveness by Industry Sector

NAICS Sector	2024 Employment	Five-Year Job Growth Percentage	Location Quotient
NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing	15,340	4%	2.34
NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services	11,003	1%	1.51
NAICS 62 Healthcare and social assistance	10,563	5%	0.85
NAICS 44-45 Retail trade	10,066	4%	1.26
NAICS 61 Educational services	7,281	3%	1.07
NAICS 23 Construction	4,589	19%	1.07
NAICS 54 Professional, scientific, and technical services	3,511	32%	0.63
NAICS 92 Public administration	2,439	5%	0.61
NAICS 56 Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	2,422	7%	0.51
NAICS 81 Other services (except public administration)	2,019	0%	0.84

NAICS Sector	2024 Employment	Five-Year Job Growth Percentage	Location Quotient
NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing	1,839	2%	0.48
NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,811	11%	1.19
NAICS 52 Finance and insurance	1,597	-3%	0.49
NAICS 42 Wholesale trade	1,488	-4%	0.47
NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	887	127%	1.37
NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises	752	50%	0.56
NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing	717	0%	0.57
NAICS 51 Information	690	5%	0.44
NAICS 22 Utilities	349	0%	0.79
NAICS 21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	81	13%	0.27

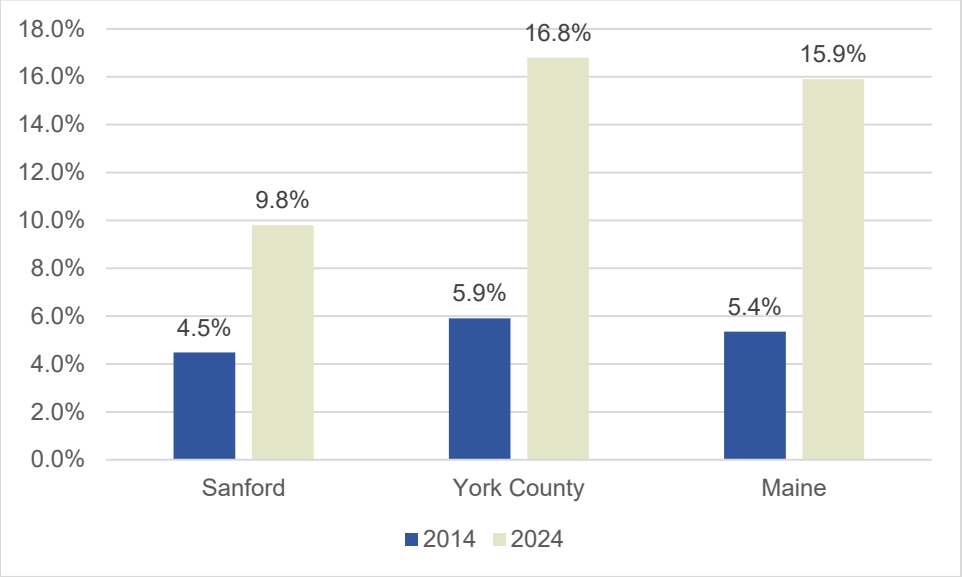
Source: Maine Department of Labor, U.S. Census

Work-From-Home and Migration Dynamics

Working from home has gained substantial popularity in recent years, notably driven by the 2020-2022 global pandemic, advancing communication technology, and households moving from higher-cost markets like the Boston Metro. As of 2014, 4.5% of Sanford's workers worked from home, lagging rates of nearly 6% in York County and mirroring a rate of 5.4% statewide. Data from 2024 shows a greater than doubling of the portion of remote workers based in Sanford to nearly 10% of employees. However, the comparison geographies saw a notably higher increase in remote workers, with 16% of workers statewide in Maine working from home

and nearly 17% of York County employees working remotely, portending a continuation of growth of this phenomenon locally.

Figure 7.2: Worked From Home (Workers 16 Years and Over)



Source: U.S. Census

Education and Workforce Pipeline

YCCC is a valuable component of Sanford's local workforce development pipeline. The table below lists the number of annual graduates on average across a variety of educational and vocational programs. Studies in general human services tops the list, followed by business administration and liberal arts and sciences. The institution also graduates students in veterinary technology and registered nursing. Looking ahead, ongoing coordination between Sanford and YCCC is expected to result in an expansion of training and educational services centered on electrical trades and advanced manufacturing located in a Sanford instructional facility. Program growth in trades aligned with in-demand sectors will elevate the role that this institution plays in local workforce readiness.

Table 7.4: YCCC Graduates by Program

Course of Study	Total
Human Services, General	33
Business Administration and Management, General	27
Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	22
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant	20
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	20
Animation, Interactive Technology, Video Graphics, and Special Effects	10

Course of Study	Total
Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	10
Agricultural and Domestic Animal Services, Other	8
Forensic Social Work	8
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General	7
Education, General	6
Network and System Administration/Administrator	5
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General	4
Accounting	3
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	2
Computer Science	1
Culinary Arts/Chef Training	1
Gerontology	1

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Employment by Industry

As of 2024, about 7,700 workers were employed at Sanford-based businesses. The leading industry represented was retail trade, employing about 1,500 workers, followed by healthcare and social assistance, representing 1,450 workers, and manufacturing, which employed 1,000 workers. This composition of industry employment reflects Sanford's critical role as a service center to the surrounding rural towns, which do not have the infrastructure to support extensive shopping areas or medical facilities. Ongoing manufacturing operations in Sanford are robust and represent a critical component of the economy.

Table 7.5: Sanford Employment by Industry Sector, 2024

Industry Sector	Average Employment
Retail Trade	1,551
Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,450
Manufacturing	1,000
Accommodation and Food Services	648
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	434
Construction	298

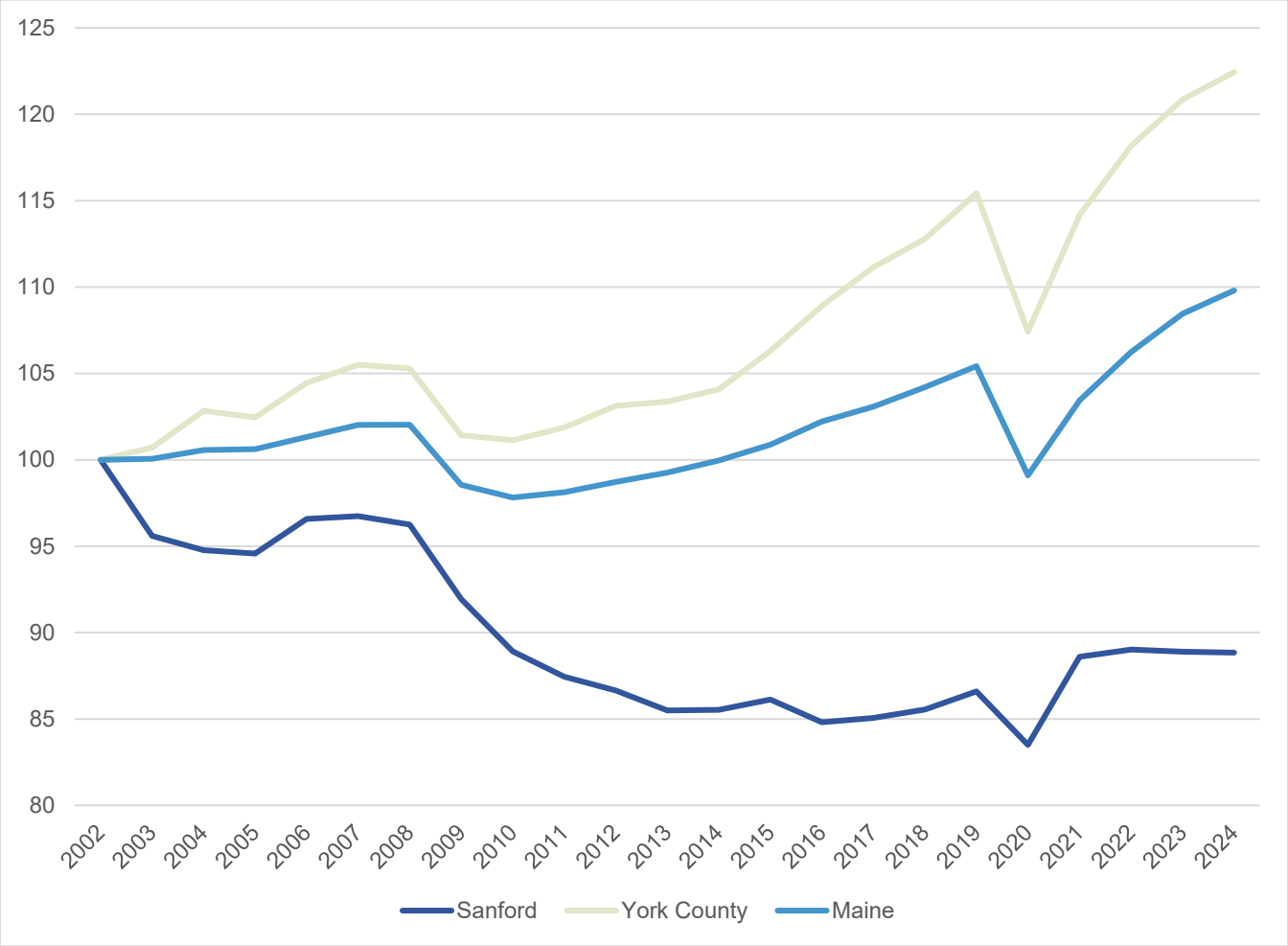
Industry Sector	Average Employment
Public Administration	268
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	233
Finance and Insurance	220
Transportation and Warehousing	141
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	141
Wholesale Trade	139
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	104
Information	99
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	91
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	67
Utilities	33

Source: Maine Department of Labor

Job Growth

In 2002, nearly 8,700 workers were employed in Sanford. Reflecting the tapering of some legacy manufacturing operations in the intervening years, employment levels have decreased almost continuously since that time frame. Job totals dropped to a low of just over 7,200 in 2020, reflecting the dip in employment levels across all geographies related to the pandemic response. Post-pandemic, employment levels have been effectively flat at around 7,700. By comparison, employment levels in York County and the State gained ground in that same time frame. York County, in particular, experienced notable growth in employment levels beginning in 2014 through 2019, leading up to the pandemic response. Job totals in York County recovered fully by around 2022 to meet and exceed earlier employment levels peak pre-pandemic, with recent trends indicating some tapering in growth.

Figure 7.3: Job Growth Index (2002 Employment Level = 100)

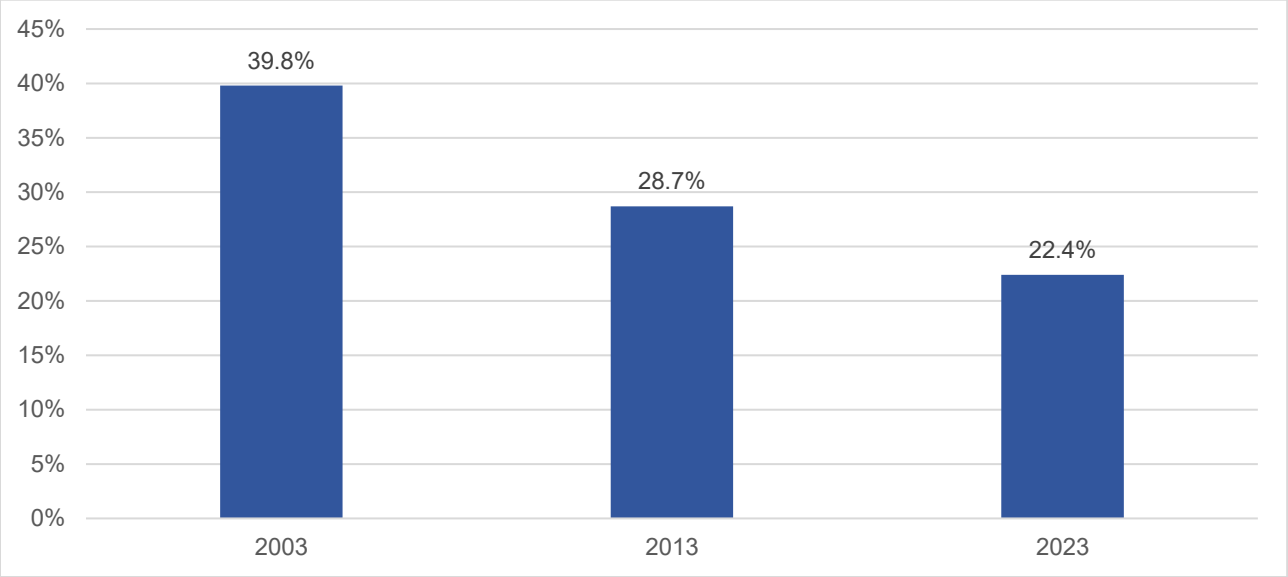


Source: Maine Department of Labor

Commuter Patterns

The percentage of employed Sanford residents who both live and work in the City reflects the degree to which Sanford's economy provides suitable employment for its population. In 2003, nearly 40% of employed Sanford residents lived and worked in the City. This substantial proportion reflects the robust job market in Sanford just before a number of operations closed. As of 2013, 28.7% of Sanford residents lived and worked in the City, a notable decrease of more than 10%. In 2023, the rate decreased again to 22.4%. This trend reflects the need for Sanford residents to commute outside the City to other locations in the region for jobs that meet their needs.

Figure 7.4: Percentage of Employees Living and Working in Sanford



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Today, even more so, Sanford is a net exporter of workers. Of Sanford's 7,000 jobs as of 2023, about 4,800 of them are held by commuters from other towns. In comparison, about 8,000 Sanford residents commute outside of City limits to other locations for their place of employment. The origins of Sanford-based workers are widely distributed, with the most common locations being Biddeford, Saco, and Portland. Similarly, the most common destinations for Sanford residents to commute are Portland, Biddeford, and North Berwick, followed by South Portland and Saco.

Table 7.6: Origins of Sanford Workers, 2023

City or Census Designated Place (CDP)	Count	Share
Sanford City, ME	2,342	32.8%
Biddeford City, ME	211	3.0%
Saco City, ME	153	2.1%
Portland City, ME	119	1.7%
Lake Arrowhead CDP, ME	95	1.3%
Rochester City, NH	81	1.1%

City or Census Designated Place (CDP)	Count	Share
Old Orchard Beach CDP, ME	63	0.9%
Kennebunk CDP, ME	55	0.8%
Lewiston City, ME	44	0.6%
North Berwick CDP, ME	43	0.6%
All Other Locations	3,927	55.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

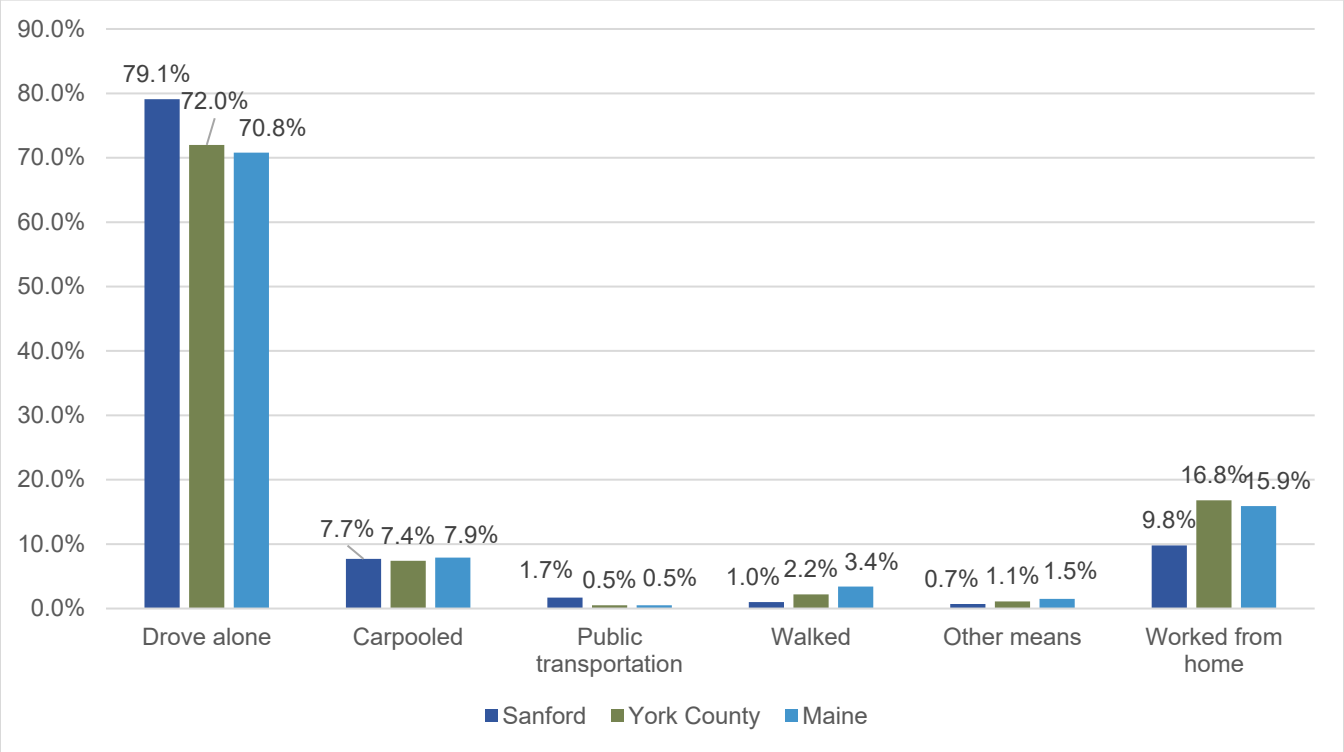
Table 7.8: Destinations of Working Sanford Residents, 2023

City or CDP	Count	Share
Sanford City, ME	2,342	22.4%
Portland City, ME	783	7.5%
Biddeford City, ME	504	4.8%
North Berwick CDP, ME	498	4.8%
South Portland City, ME	322	3.1%
Saco City, ME	262	2.5%
Kennebunk CDP, ME	249	2.4%
Portsmouth City, NH	241	2.3%
Westbrook City, ME	201	1.9%
Dover City, NH	172	1.6%
All Other Locations	4,870	46.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Sanford residents who commute to work largely drive alone, representing 79% of commuters, with nearly 8% commuting by carpool and less than 2% taking public transportation. A greater percentage of Sanford residents take public transportation in comparison to York County and the State at large, while a smaller percentage of Sanford residents walk to work.

Figure 7.5: Mode of transportation to work, 2024

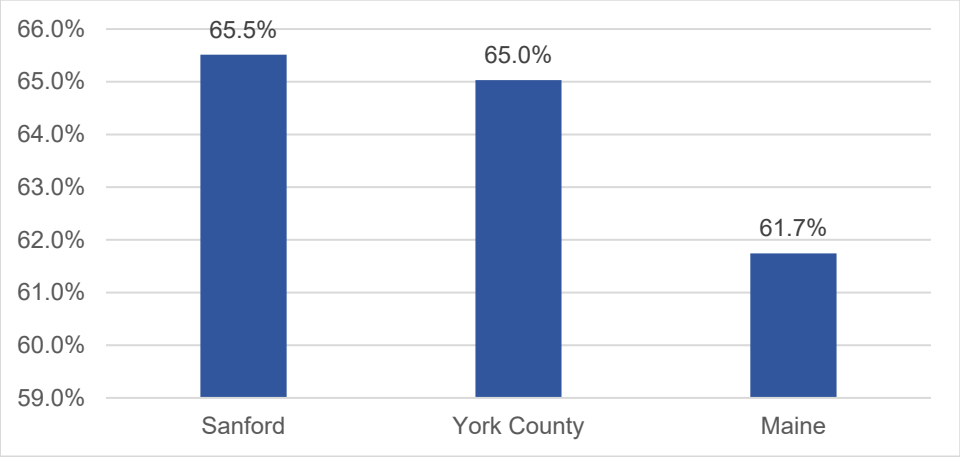


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Labor Force Trends

Sanford's labor force participation rate (LFPR) is 65.5%, which is comparable to that of York County (65%). Labor force participation in Sanford exceeds Maine (61.7%). LFPR represents available workforce capacity in the locality. Higher rates represent a more robust talent pool and workforce availability.

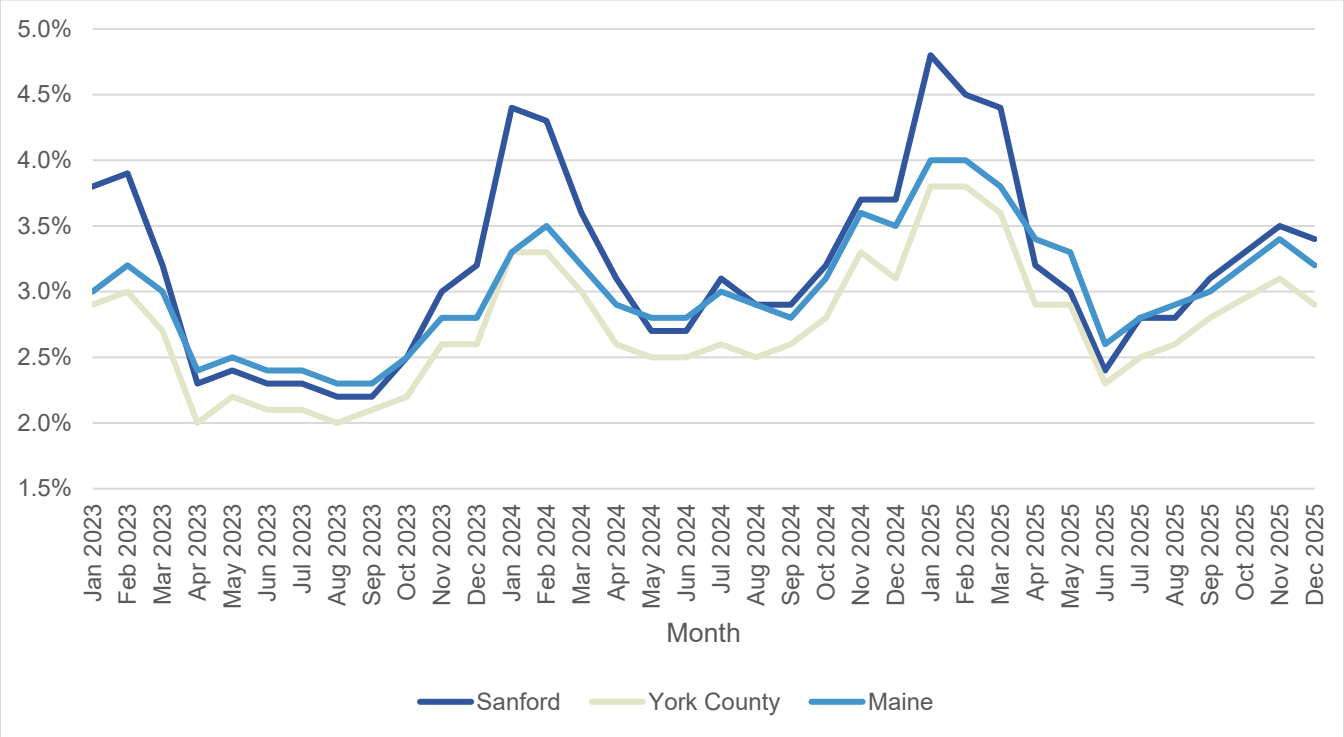
Figure 7.6: LFPRs, 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Unemployment rate trends in Sanford show sharp seasonality, with unemployment rates peaking in the December through February time frame. Seasonal peaks experienced by Sanford are more dramatic than those seen in the comparison geographies, with rates jumping one to two points between September and January in 2023 and 2024. Notably, Sanford's unemployment rate in late 2025 peaked at 3.5%, demonstrating lessening seasonality and a tightening labor market.

Figure 7.7: Unemployment Rates

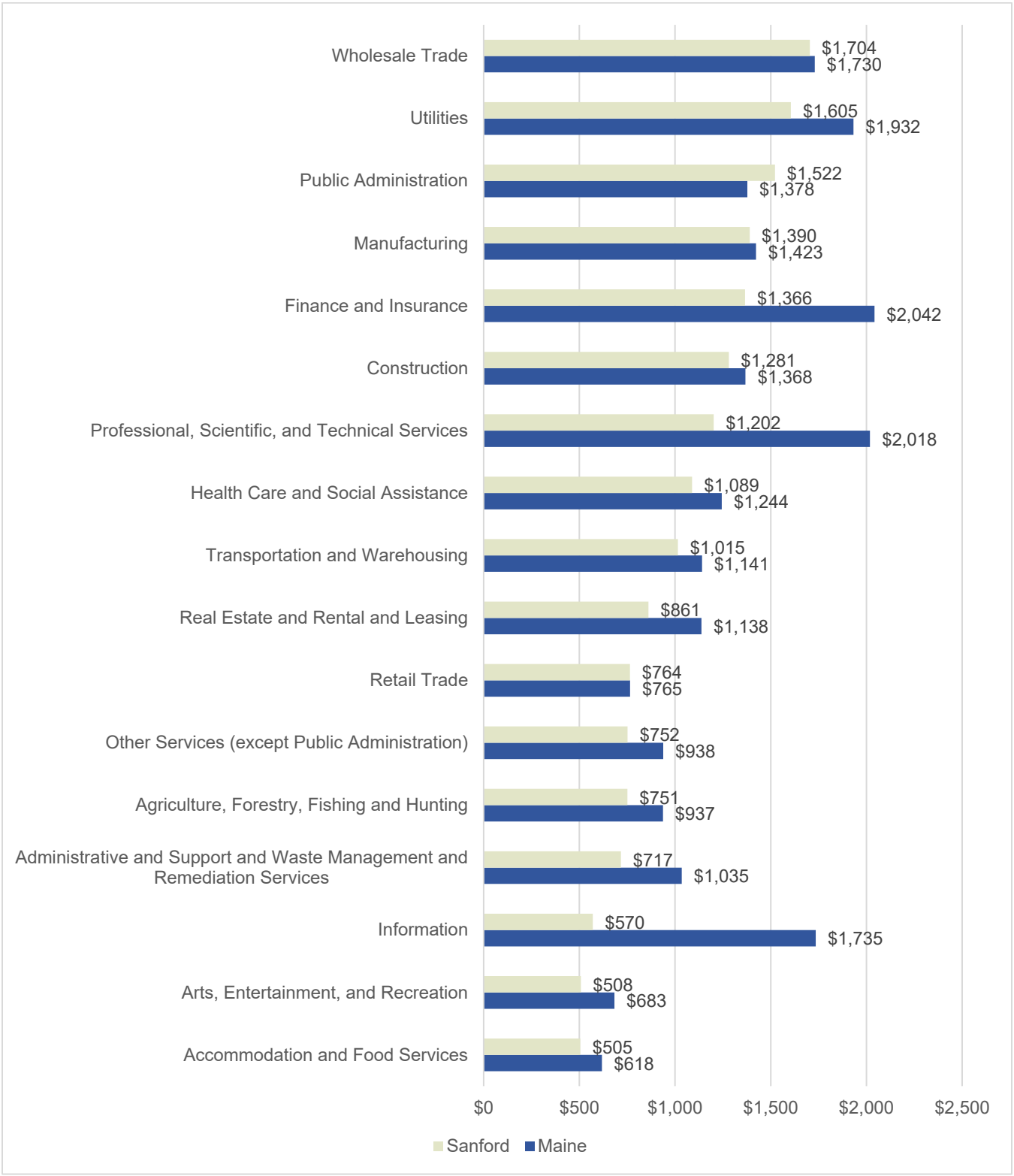


Source: Maine Department of Labor

Wages

Wages paid to Sanford workers lag statewide averages in a number of key industries. The highest-paying industries across the State include finance and insurance; professional, scientific, and technical services; utilities; and information. In all of these industries, wages paid across the State, on average, substantially exceed wages paid in the same industries in Sanford. Sanford wages also lag in a number of lower-wage industries, including agriculture; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services. However, wage rates for the retail trade industry are the same in both geographies.

Figure 7.8: Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2024



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Commercial Development and Growth Areas

From 2015 to 2020, commercial permits approved in Sanford averaged between five and six each year. In 2021, total commercial permits issued in Sanford jumped to 11 from just five in the previous year. Nine permits were approved in 2022, with commercial permit activity decreasing in the ensuing years. Key commercial projects in recent years include an approved 10,000 sq ft warehouse/office building on Country Club Road, industrial expansion on Cyro Road, and facilities associated with use of the Airport.

Identified in the 2025 Market Analysis and Economic Development Action Plan, a number of districts and locations in Sanford are candidates for expanded commercial and industrial growth. Both Sanford and Springvale downtowns are framed as reinvestment assets for economic vitality, with an emphasis on mixed-use redevelopment, including upper-story housing conversions, through reuse and infill strategies. Midtown Mall is seen as an activity gap, which is an opportunity to improve pedestrian activity and urban design. Achieving this transformation to attract and retain a more vibrant tenant mix is essential for increasing foot traffic, encouraging longer visit durations, and elevating consumer spending.

Targeting Sanford's large industrially zoned tracts for industrial expansion includes a focus in the near term on an initial set of priority industrial sites, with undeveloped industrial land positioned for development readiness in the longer-term. Desired uses include modern industrial operations, such as manufacturing. However, adapting utilities and infrastructure to meet market-based industrial space needs is necessary.

Repurposing Sanford's older mill stock is viewed as a core redevelopment strategy. Through adaptive reuse that supports modern business needs and possibly mixed-use configurations, revitalization of these sites would be catalytic for Sanford's economy.

Sanford's areas designated as Urban, Airport Development, Industrial Business, and Industrial Reuse zones offer opportunities for commercial development. The 2024 Airport Layout Plan for Sanford Seacoast Regional Airport identifies three sites across 6.5 acres available for development in the Airport Development Zone, with a priority for airport-related uses as well as alternative options such as mixed-commercial or industrial uses.

Economic Development Financing Tools

Tax Increment Financing Districts

Sanford currently uses municipal TIF districts to provide financial assistance to applicable development projects and to direct incremental property tax revenue generated by the new investment to fund special projects, programs, and initiatives.

TIF districts allow the City to shelter the increased property valuation within the district from computation of its state subsidies (general purpose aid to education and municipal revenue sharing) and County tax assessments. TIF districts are used to encourage development by allowing some or all property tax revenue generated by new development to be used to supplement project costs, through credit enhancement agreements (CEAs), and for targeted

City economic development initiatives for the community as a whole, such as road and sidewalk infrastructure and utilities. Sanford has 18 active TIF districts, listed in Table 8.7.

Table 7.8: Active TIF Districts

Name	Term (Years)	TIF Start	TIF End	Acreage	Original Assessed Value	Taxable Valuation
Central Park Residences	25	7/1/2023	6/30/2048	0.661	$282,900	$1,008,500
Flemish Master Weavers (f/k/a Rainbow Rugs)	30	7/1/1996	6/30/2026	11.89	$1,206,538	$11,846,900
Kennedy Center	15	7/1/2012	6/30/2027	1.68	$191,600	$959,400
Marland Hall	15	7/1/2018	6/30/2033	0.89	$211,600	$1,964,300
Mousam Falls Apartments	15	7/1/2020	6/30/2035	0.84	$172,600	$1,860,400
Mousam River Solar	30	10/16/2024	6/30/2054	140.25	$377,500	$2,057,500
New England Truck Tire Centers	15	3/4/2014	6/30/2028	3.5	$584,300	$1,374,000
Roberts and Main Apartments	30	7/1/2025	6/30/2055	0.883	$537,500	$1,307,100
Route 109 Development Corridor	20	7/1/2006	6/30/2026	149.17	$2,807,600	$25,253,000
Rubb, Inc.	30	7/1/2009	6/30/2039	16.7	$1,074,200	$2,996,500
Sanford Airport Omnibus	30	7/1/2020	6/30/2050	333	$2,007,690	$8,089,700
Sanford Downtown Omnibus	30	7/1/2006	6/30/2036	95.995	$33,172,900	$47,113,510

Name	Term (Years)	TIF Start	TIF End	Acreage	Original Assessed Value	Taxable Valuation
Sanford Institution for Savings	30	7/1/2009	6/30/2039	0.63	$565,900	$2,420,500
Sanford Mill Redevelopment	20	9/28/2012	9/27/2032	0.73	$0	$4,785,900
Sanford Property Holdings	30	7/1/2011	6/30/2041	4.92	$475,200	$7,554,500
Sanford Summer Commons Senior Care	20	7/1/2021	6/30/2041	11.42	$254,900	$16,150,100
St. Ignatius Affordable Housing	17	7/1/2016	6/30/2033	1.54	$0	$6,044,600
Upper Nasson Apartments	20	7/1/2023	6/30/2043	25.64	$271,800	$6,229,400

Sources: Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Municipal Tax Increment Financing Inventory (MTIF) as of 3/21/25 and Sanford Assessor's Office

TIF funds have been used and plan to be used for projects such as road and sidewalk improvements, economic development programs (including staff salaries, marketing costs, and other operating expenses), affordable housing development, recreational trail development, professional services costs for administering TIF districts, and other public infrastructure projects.

In FY 2025, the City captured $2.53 million in incremental revenue generated by new value growth within active TIF districts. While a portion of this sheltered revenue is reimbursed to developers through CEAs, the City has also strategically used TIF funds to support economic development and infrastructure improvements, including sidewalk and parking investments that enhance access and support long-term growth.

Maine's TIF program limits TIF districts to a maximum of 5% of a municipality's total land area and 5% of its total assessed valuation. As of FY 2025, Sanford's 18 TIF districts account for approximately 2.6% of the City's total land area, remaining well below the statutory acreage threshold. However, the valuation captured within TIF districts, at approximately 5.28%, exceeds the State's allowable limit. As a result, the City's ability to establish new TIF districts is currently constrained and will remain so until existing districts expire, are amended, or become inactive.

The City should continue to review TIF district revenue capture rates and assess the likelihood of using TIF revenues for specific purposes related to the design and construction of projects. Furthermore, the City should review the real growth assumptions within current TIF districts and related impacts to valuation increase assumptions to allow for greater accuracy of estimates.

Challenges and Opportunities

Sanford's diverse manufacturing base, accessible regional location, and desirable infrastructure together provide a strong foundation for continued investment and economic activity in the local economy. Prominent headwinds include housing costs, workforce availability, and obstacles repurposing key assets such as mill buildings and downtown districts adversely impacted by urban renewal and market forces.

Workforce development is central to continued economic progress. Sanford competes for workers, firms, and investment within a regional market shaped by larger employment centers. Post-pandemic labor dynamics have reduced predictability in hiring and retention. Further, housing availability and affordability constrain the City's ability to sustain workforce growth.

Workforce shortages are concentrated in the sectors most critical to Sanford's service center function and growth capacity. Labor scarcity limits expansion of essential services, slows construction projects, and constrains business growth.

An essential strategy is to treat workforce development as core economic infrastructure: align education and training providers with the specific occupations showing the highest unmet demand. Expand employer engagement (Business Retention and Expansion) to identify near-term workforce barriers and address them through coordinated programs.

Reinvestment in the downtown area, in conjunction with ongoing infrastructure upgrades, will play an important role in enhancing the vitality of this asset. Substandard property conditions, disinvestment, and vacancies are a weight on downtown revitalization. Attracting a more vibrant business mix will require public and private investment.

Building an effective downtown reinvestment toolkit blends standards and incentives, linking clearer property expectations, targeted assistance, and structured pathways for reuse. Using public realm upgrades and placemaking to increase demand can reinforce programs that facilitate private investment, elevating the downtown appearance and experience for shoppers and visitors over time.

As momentum builds, growth must be managed so it reinforces local services, housing stability, and downtown vitality rather than creating new cost burdens. Population growth can support stronger retail and service offerings, but only if housing, infrastructure, and downtown capacity keep pace.

Part of this overall approach is attracting and retaining highly compatible industry sectors and young professionals. Manufacturing modernization can provide durable, higher-wage jobs and strengthen the tax base. Business attraction and retention should be focused around sectors that align with existing strengths (advanced manufacturing, logistics-adjacent activity, and skilled trades). Deepening partnerships between employers and workforce institutions can translate training capacity into placement and retention.

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8. Housing

Introduction

An unintended consequence of the pandemic response in 2020 has come to characterize the housing market in Sanford. A push to escape urban areas resulted in new residents leaving northeastern metropolitan areas and relocating to the relatively more rural areas of southern Maine, some moving to the area as remote workers and others purchasing second homes. New residents to the region were attracted specifically to Sanford because of the availability of commercial amenities, the broadband network, and relatively more affordable home prices as compared to communities along the shoreline. With this increase in demand for housing, prices increased dramatically—notably, a jump in prices in 2023 of more than 25%. This rise has occurred alongside price gains in the surrounding region and many communities in southern Maine. Multiple forces have served to complicate efforts to construct housing to meet demand, including workforce availability shortages and increased costs of supplies. The lack of available affordable housing, or attainable housing, serves to exacerbate issues facing this community, including workforce availability, economic growth, and aging in place.

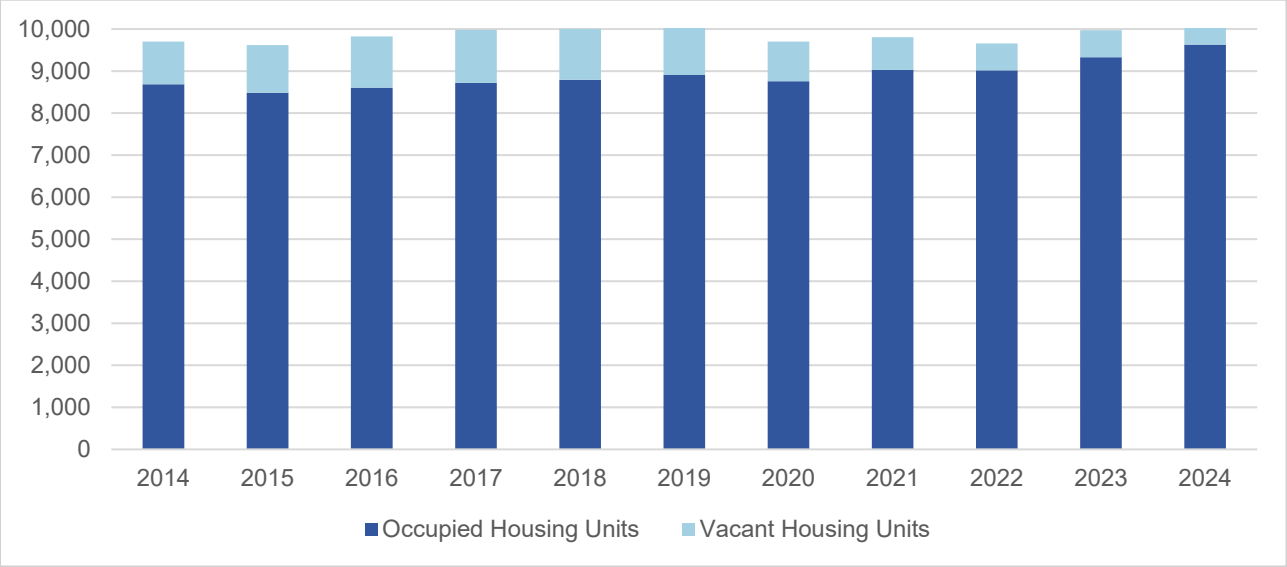
Housing Stock

Sanford had around 9,700 total housing units in 2014 and added nearly 550 units over 10 years, an increase of 5.6%. In contrast, the total number of housing units across York County increased by 8% in the same 2014 – 2024 time frame. Statewide, Maine gained only 3.7% in this 10-year window.

In recent years, housing vacancies have shrunk to a multiyear low, providing further evidence of intense pressure on housing supply. Vacancy rates ranged between 10.5% and 12.6% from 2014 to 2019, decreasing to just under 10% in 2020. Since then, rates have tightened noticeably and averaged 6.0% in 2024, reflecting continued strong demand over that five-year time frame.

The City's Land Bank oversees the distressed and dangerous properties program and has had success in addressing dilapidated properties in recent years. The program is very active and is a critical component to addressing problematic disinvestment and, on a property-by-property basis, enhancing the available quality housing stock in the City.

Figure 8.1: Sanford Total Housing Units (Occupied and Vacant)



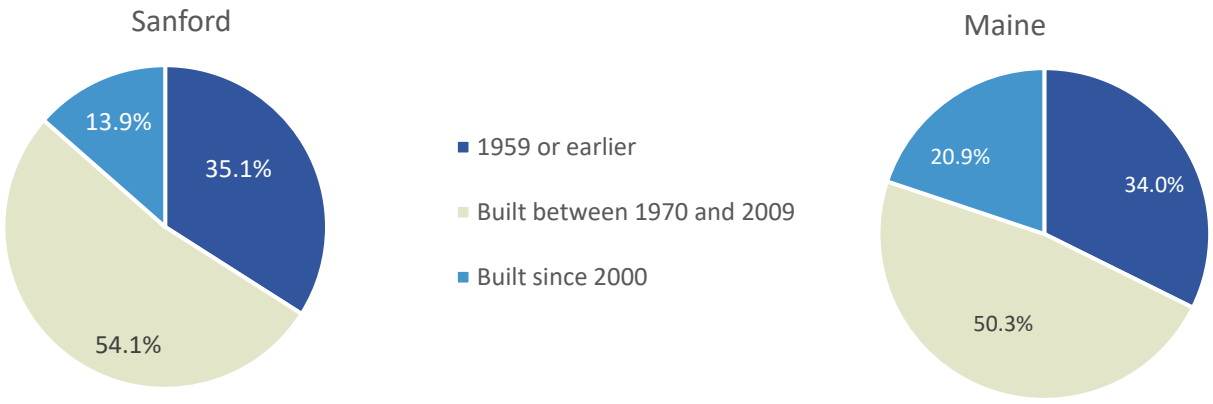
Source: U.S. Census

Age of Housing Stock

Like many Maine communities, Sanford's housing stock is aging. Nearly 35% of Sanford housing units were built in 1959 or earlier. About 54% of units were built between 1970 and 2009, slightly higher than the proportion in the State, in which just over half of the units were built in this time frame. Just under 14% of Sanford homes were built since 2000. Over time, older housing stock creates a continuous need for investment from homeowners in terms of maintenance and rehabilitation, as well as in addressing outdated systems and energy conservation measures.

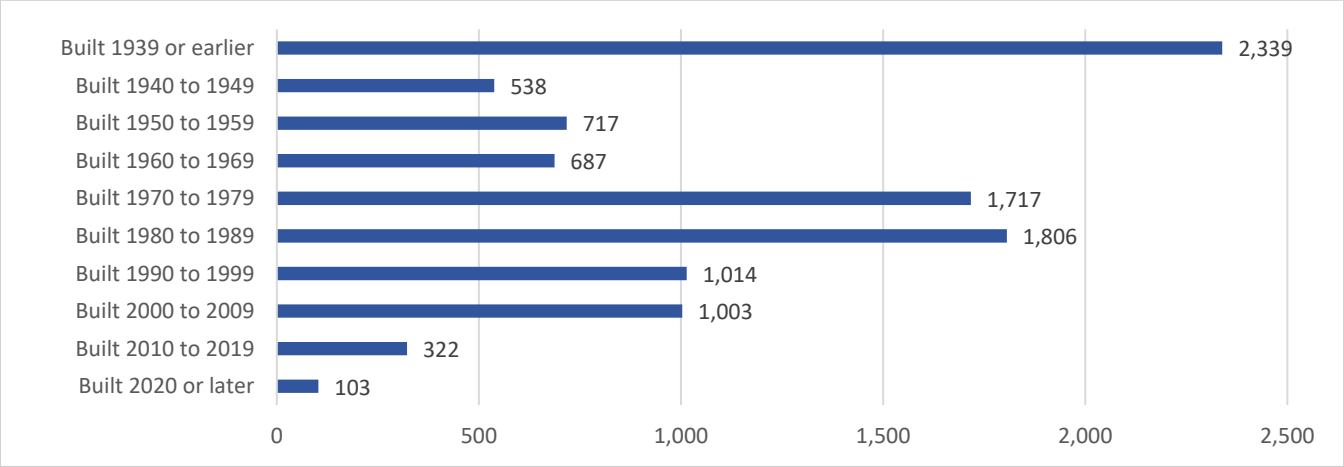
While the decades of the 1970s and 1980s saw a peak in construction, adding 1,700 to 1,800 units in Sanford in each of those decades, home construction fell off precipitously in 2010. In the 10 years from 2010 to 2019, just 322 homes were built in Sanford, with another 100 units added in the first four years of the 2020s. This precipitous drop in construction is more severe than the surrounding geographies.

Figure 8.2: Housing Stock by Year Built Comparison



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 8.3: Sanford Housing Stock by Year Built

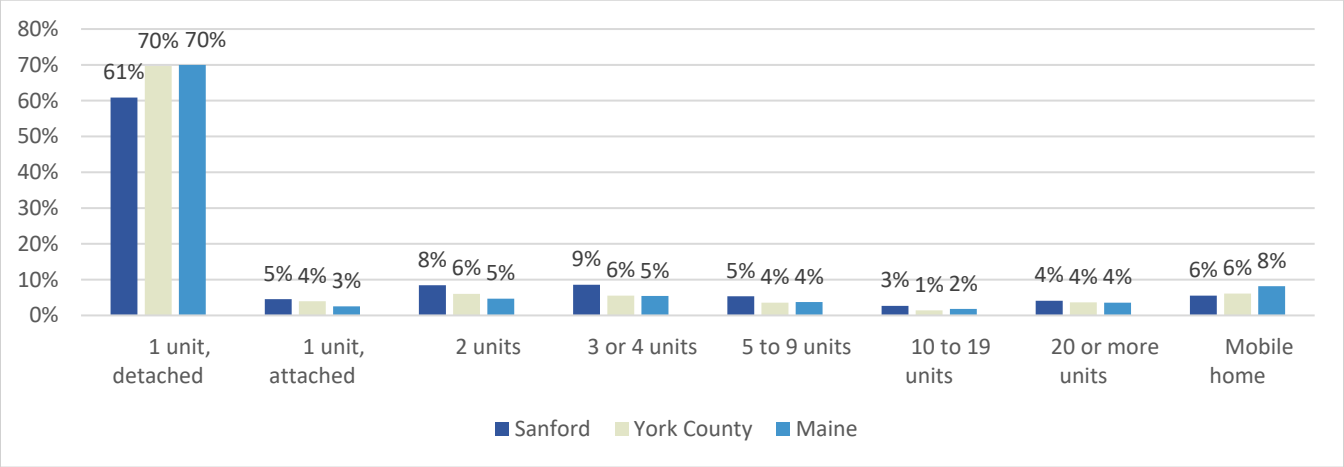


Source: U.S. Census

Housing Types

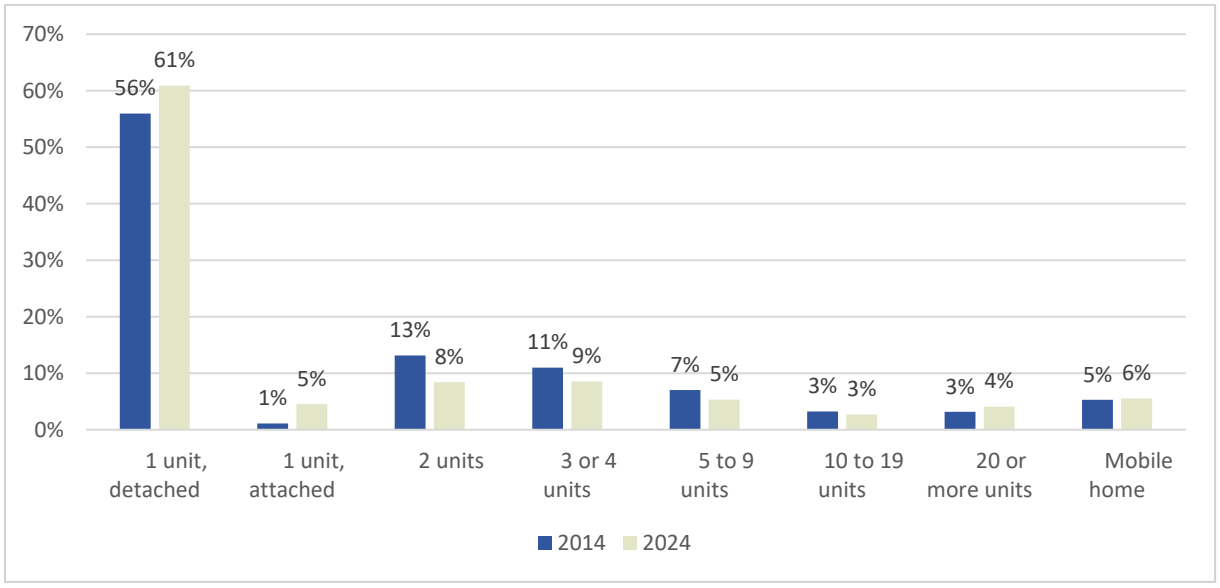
Single-family homes are the most prevalent type of housing in Sanford, representing 61% of housing types. However, Sanford's share is lower than the comparison geographies, in which about 70% of total housing units are single-family. Sanford leads both York County and the State in multi-family units of all sizes, ranging from duplexes to complexes with 20 or more units. Properties with three or four units are the most prevalent multi-family type, representing 8.5% of Sanford's housing stock. From 2014 to 2024, a high proportion of single-family homes were built. In Sanford, most of the housing units built between 2014 and 2024 were single-family homes.

Figure 8.4: Percentage of Housing Units by Type



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 8.5: Change in Percentage of Sanford Housing Units by Type



Source: U.S. Census

Housing Tenure and Household Characteristics

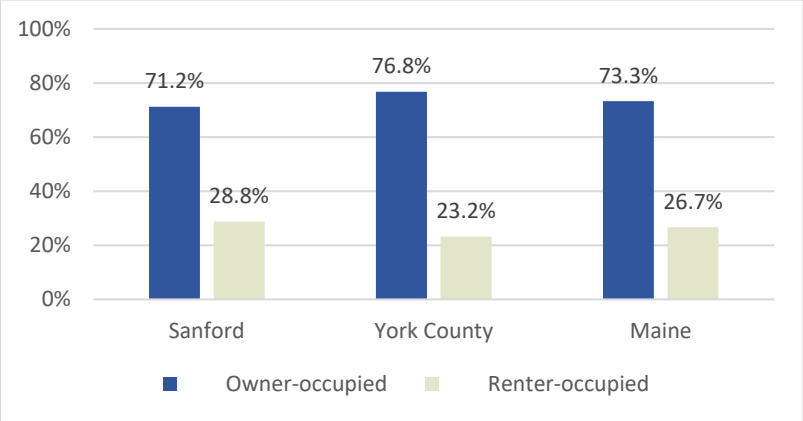
As of 2024, 71.2% of Sanford's housing units were owner-occupied, with just under 30% renter-occupied. Sanford has a higher rate of renter-occupied units than York County at 23.2% and is just slightly higher than the statewide rate of 26.7%.

As a service center for the region, Sanford has areas that can accommodate multi-family developments, as compared to the more rural nature of many of the surrounding towns.

The average household size of owner-occupied units mirrors that of York County at 2.4 people per household and is slightly higher than the statewide rate. Renter-occupied households in Sanford average at 1.98 people per household, outpacing the County at 1.92 and the State at 1.82.

A higher rate of renter-occupied homes brings potential vulnerabilities such as higher rates of cost burden among renters, potential housing instability, limited entry-level ownership options, and decreased capabilities of building long-term wealth through home ownership. At the same time, Sanford plays a critical role in supplying housing to residents of this region.

Figure 8.7: Owner and Renter Occupancy



Source: U.S. Census

Vacant Housing

Of Sanford's more than 10,000 housing units, roughly 6% were vacant, based on 2024 data. Multiple reasons can cause a home to be vacant, such as homes that are for rent or for sale and awaiting a new tenant, homes that are only used seasonally, and homes that are vacant for an array of other reasons, such as legal proceedings, disrepair, or abandonment.

Of the vacant units, those designated for seasonal or occasional use constituted the highest percentage, representing about 250 units, or 40% of total vacant units. Both York County (79%) and the State at large (74.4%) have significantly higher proportions of seasonal units, given concentrations in coastal, mountain, and other recreation areas.

Table 8.1: Vacant Housing Units by Reason for Vacancy (2024)

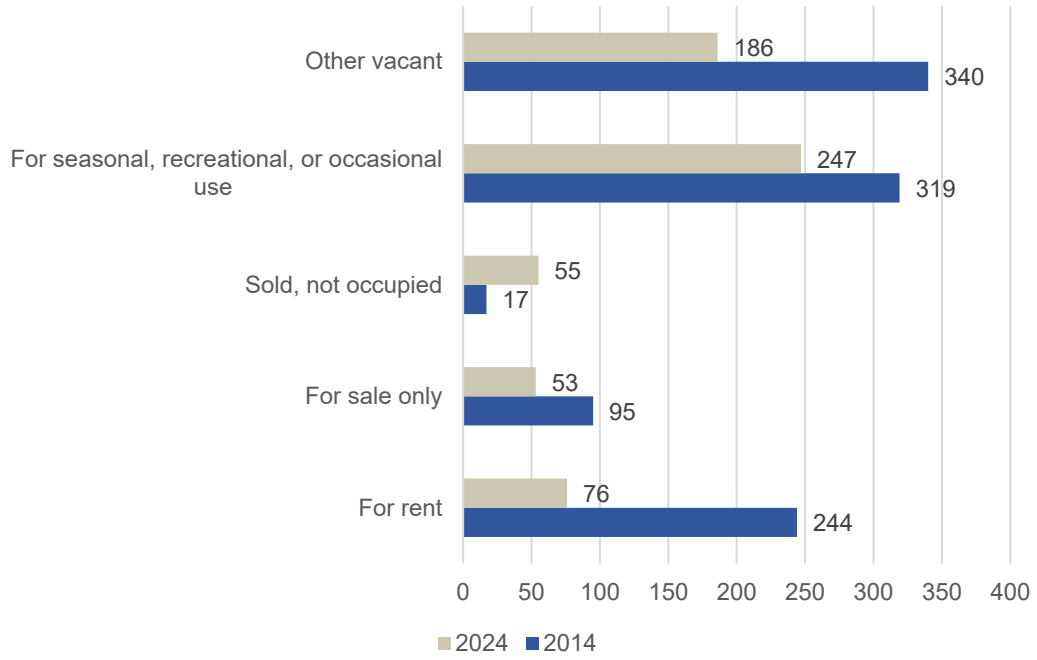
	Sanford		York County		Maine	
Total Housing Units	10,246		115,091		751,876	
Total Vacant Units:	617	6.0%	23,678	20.6%	154,717	20.6%

	Sanford		York County		Maine	
For rent	76	12.3%	1,150	4.9%	6,803	4.4%
Rented, not occupied	0	0.0%	305	1.3%	1,663	1.1%
For sale only	53	8.6%	570	2.4%	3,113	2.0%
Sold, not occupied (home has sold but a new owner has not yet moved in)	55	8.9%	315	1.3%	2,573	1.7%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	247	40.0%	18,703	79.0 %	115,063	74.4%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	61	0.3%	190	0.1%
Other vacant	186	30.1%	2,574	10.9 %	25,312	16.4%

Source: U.S. Census

The “other vacant” category is the second most prevalent reason for vacant homes, and the portion of Sanford homes in this category nearly doubles the rate found across the State. Homes in this category are potentially candidates for repair and potentially returning to active housing stock. The number of homes in this category decreased, however, between 2014 and 2024, from around 340 homes to 186.

Figure 8.8: Sanford Change in Vacant Units



Source: U.S. Census

The short-term rental (STR) data platform AirDNA, a data and analytics provider, identifies the Sanford-Alfred area as a submarket within an area designated as the Maine Beaches market. Within the Sanford-Alfred submarket, 53 properties are listed as rentals. As of February 2026, just 15 of those were active—a 40% decline from 12 months earlier. Activity reached its highest point in the last three years in July 2025, when 42 listings were active.

Most properties in the Sanford-Alfred submarket are entire-home rentals (96%), while the remaining 4% are single-room accommodations within a home. The market skews heavily toward occasional use: nearly three out of four listings are available fewer than six months per year, and 26% are listed for 90 nights or fewer annually.

AirDNA rates Sanford as a moderately performing market, assigning it a Market Score of 63 out of 100. Annual revenue from active listings has declined 3% year over year. Average occupancy over the past 12 months stands at 60%, up 6.2% from the previous year. Occupancy peaked at 77.5% in August 2024 then bottomed out at 45.7% in May 2025. Rental activity follows a seasonal pattern, with most listings becoming active between June and September and occupancy reaching its highest levels during the summer months. Overall, the area's STR market is limited in scale as compared to the overall housing market in Sanford.

Sanford Land Bank Authority

The City of Sanford, in coordination with the private real estate sector, oversees housing market quality through land banking activities, licensing of rental housing and vacant or abandoned buildings, and inspection programs. The Land Bank is intended to support Planning and Code

Enforcement by addressing properties around the city that pose dangerous or hazardous conditions, using hears and notices to compel property owner improvements. It functions to acquire, remediate, and return these properties to use.

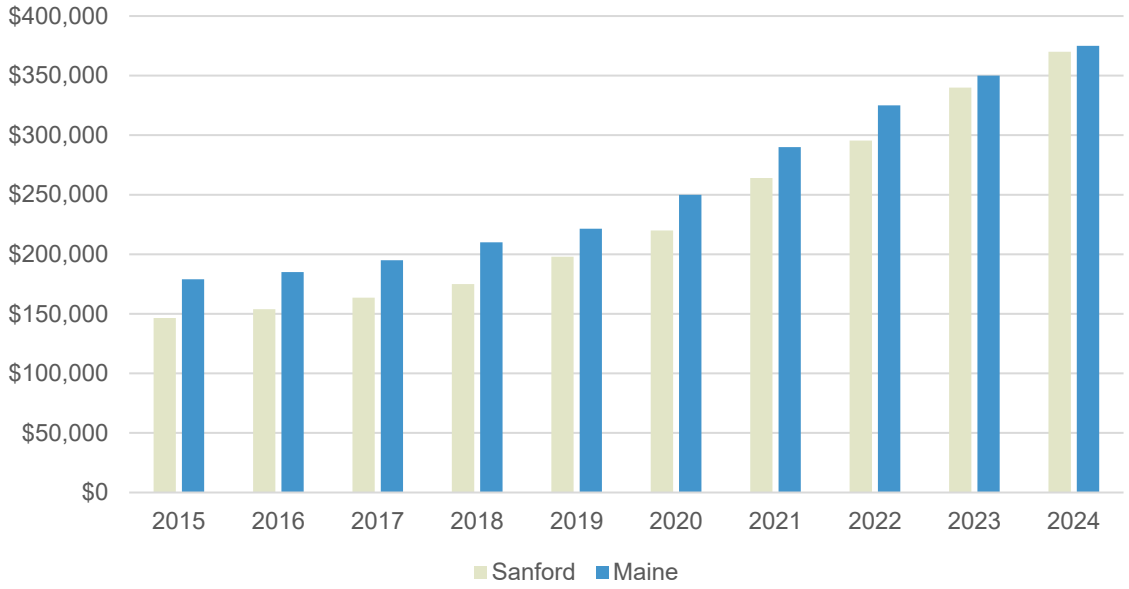
The Land Bank Authority was established by resolution of the Sanford City Council in August 2017 to address abandoned properties, improve housing stock, and manage dangerous buildings. Although it operates as a City organization, many key decisions are made by the Land Bank Commission, which is composed of volunteer members.

Affordability

While the prices of all homes in Maine have appreciated dramatically in recent years, average prices in Sanford historically lagged State averages—this relative affordability contributed to a sharp increase in demand locally, effectively leveling Sanford house prices with that of the State.

In 2015, the average home price in Maine was $179,000, with the price in Sanford trailing at about $146,500. The largest jump in home prices occurred between 2020 and 2021, after already seeing some increase in the late 2010s. Home prices in Maine jumped from $250,000 in 2020, on average, to nearly $300,000 in 2021 and continued to increase, reaching $375,000 in 2024. Prices in Sanford lagged behind State averages while experiencing the same rapid increase. However, by 2023, Sanford prices had caught up, and they nearly matched statewide averages by 2024.

Figure 8.9: Change in Median Home Price

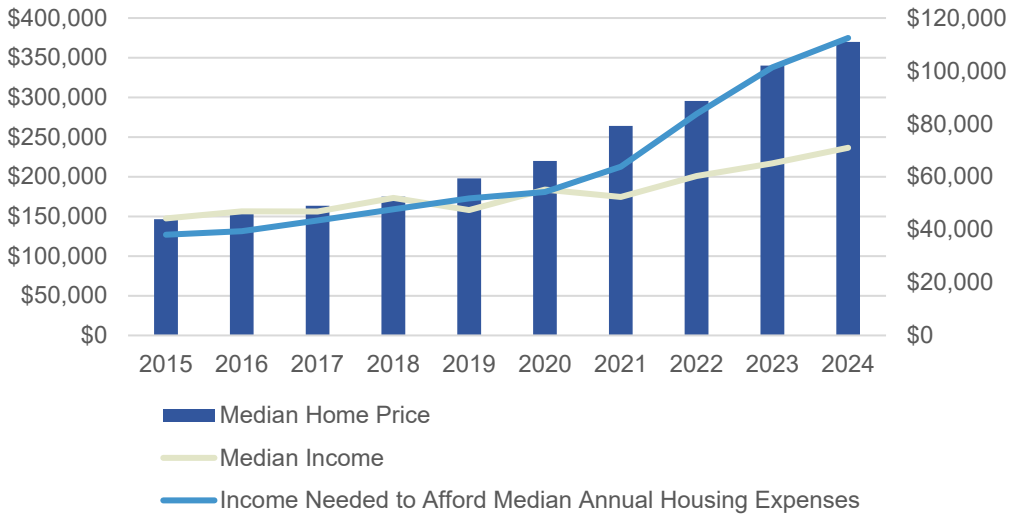


Source: U.S. Census

The data reflects the phenomenon experienced by Sanford as a relatively more affordable community than state averages. Sanford evolved rapidly from a service center offering primarily workforce housing composed of duplexes, multi-family units, older homes in agricultural settings, and small homes once occupied by employees of the mills. That relative affordability attracted attention—and then investment—from new residents looking for housing opportunities in York County after being priced out of many coastal communities with a greater housing stock but already elevated prices.

While median incomes have risen in Sanford over this time frame, wages remain outpaced by home prices. This phenomenon has widened the gap between what households earn and what they would need to earn to afford median home prices. From 2021 to 2024, the affordability gap has grown from about $11,000 to over $40,000.

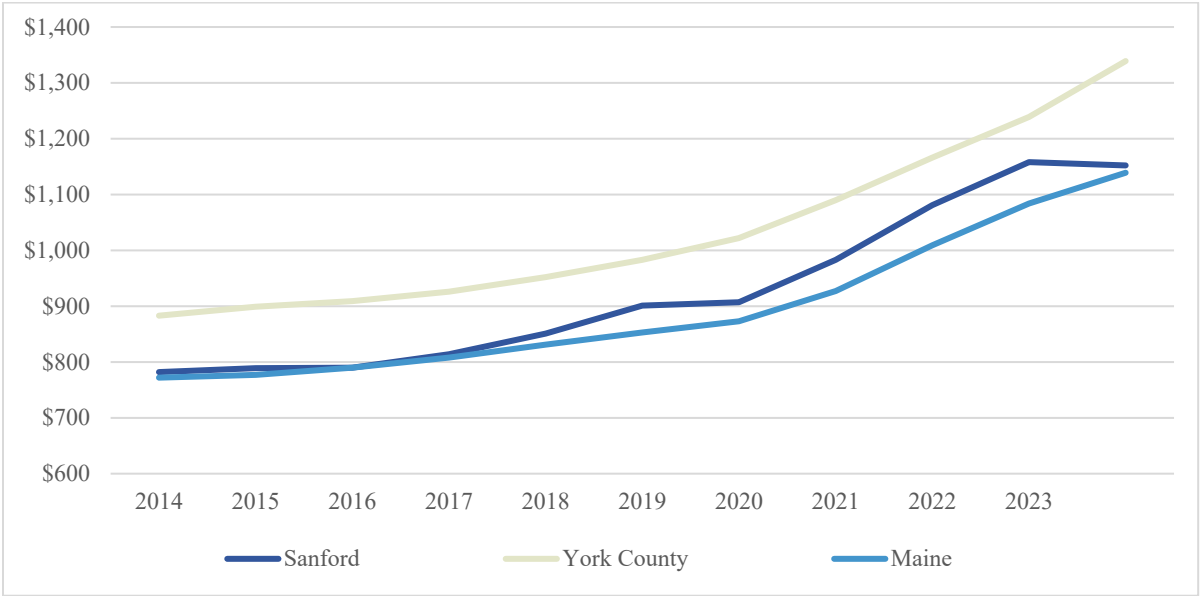
Figure 8.10: Sanford Median Home Price and Median Income Trends



Source: U.S. Census

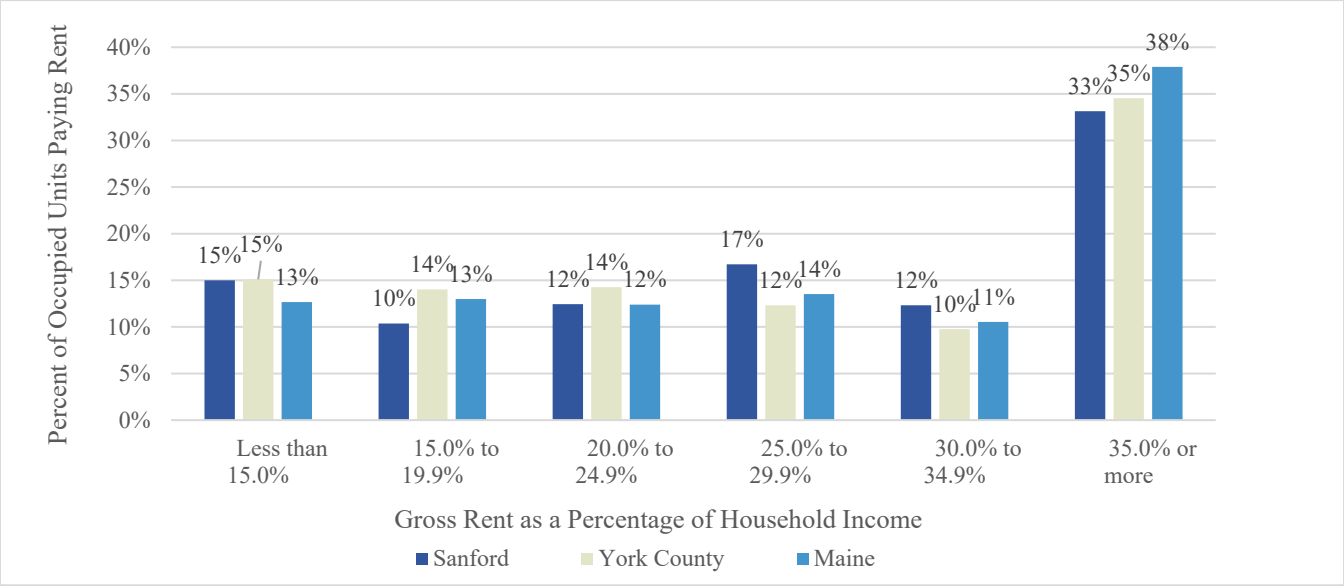
The cost of renting increased over this same period of time due to impacts from the same forces related to influx of new residents and obstacles limiting the development of new housing supply. Median rent in Sanford ranged just below $800 a month from 2014 to 2017, rising to nearly $1,100 in 2022 and, more recently, leveling at around $1,150 since 2023. Although Sanford rents lag those in broader York County, costs in Sanford elevated above statewide averages from 2018 to 2024.

Figure 8.11: Median Rent



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 8.12: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income



Source: U.S. Census

With increased costs in the face of stagnating wages, cost burdens stemming from housing expenses have become more widespread. Spending more than 30% of household income on housing-related costs constitutes a widely accepted standard of a cost burden. Owner-occupied units typically experience a greater level of housing stability, and the rate of cost-burdened households is typically lower compared to renter-occupied units. In Sanford, just over 31% of owner-occupied households are cost-burdened, which is notably higher than the rate in York County (24.5%) or the rate statewide (21.8%). In York County and in Maine, long-time homeowners—particularly older adults who have paid off their homes altogether—tend to bring these averages down.

Data indicates that about 38% of renter households statewide spend more than 35% of their income on gross rent. This number decreases slightly for York County (34.5%) and Sanford (33.1%). When a household pays 30% or more of its household income toward housing costs, it is considered cost-burdened. In Sanford, 43.7% of renter households pay 30% or more of their household income in rent. That is just under the statewide average of 44.1%. Countywide, a slightly lower 40% of renters are paying more than 30% of their household income toward rent.

Table 8.2: Tenure by Housing Costs and Household Income

	Sanford		York County		Maine	
Rented Housing Units						
30% or more	1,210	43.7%	8,354	40.3%	67,661	44.1%

	Sanford		York County		Maine	
Renter households with income less than $50,000	1,368	49.4%	8,294	40.0%	76,011	49.5%
Renter households with income less than $75,000	1,775	64.1%	11,936	57.6%	101,335	66.0%
Owned Housing Units						
30% or more	2,134	31.1%	17,353	24.5%	96,594	21.8%
Owner households with income less than $50,000	1,937	28.2%	14,705	20.8%	110,938	25.0%
Owner households with income less than $75,000	2,982	43.5%	24,627	34.8%	184,220	41.5%

Source: U.S. Census

Looking at migration trends, as of 2024, just over 89% of Sanford residents were in the same house they had been in a year earlier. That is equivalent to the rate in Maine, while the York County rate is slightly higher, at about 91%. Of the 10% who were not in the same house, about half of Sanford residents were in the same county a year ago, and 2.3%—if not in the same county—still lived in Maine a year ago. These numbers are comparable to the broader comparison geographies, and they reflect a nationwide decrease in migration tied to recent increases in housing costs.

Table 8.3: Place of Residence One Year Ago

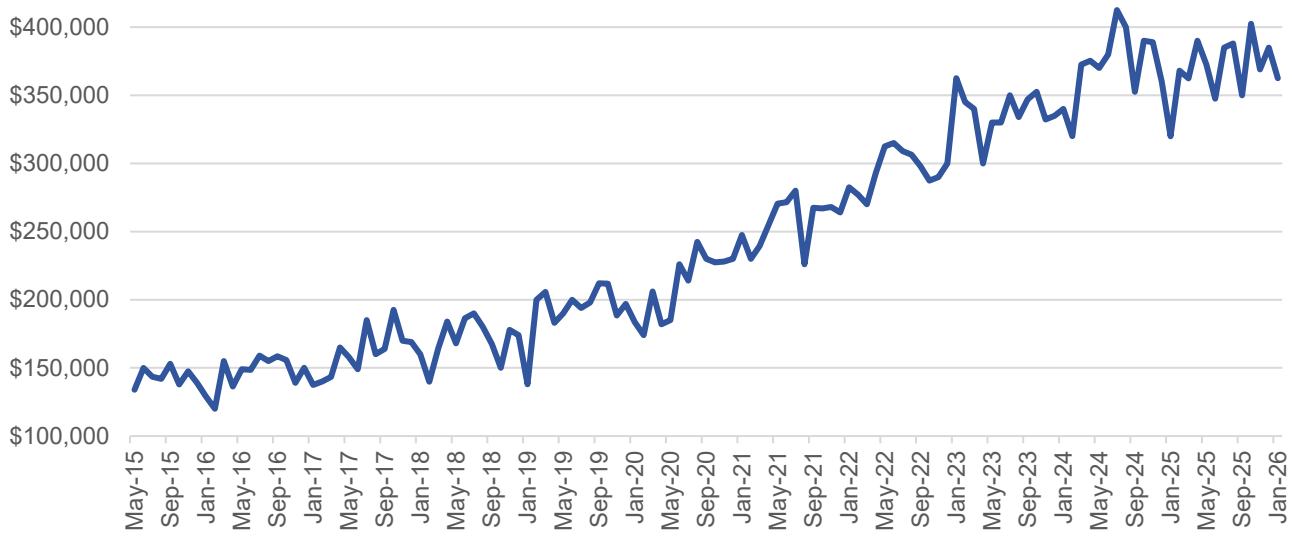
	Sanford	York County	Maine
Population one year and over	21,888	215,060	1,376,047
Same house	89.4%	90.6%	89.4%
Different house (in the U.S. or abroad)	10.6%	9.4%	10.6%

	Sanford	York County	Maine
Different house in the U.S.	10.6%	9.1%	10.3%
Same county	5.5%	4.1%	5.1%
Different county	5.1%	5.0%	5.2%
Same state	2.3%	1.9%	2.4%
Different state	2.8%	3.1%	2.7%
Abroad	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census

Median sale price data was collected from the online listing provider Redfin.com. Reflective of U.S. Census-sourced trends, the data shows a steep increase in home sale prices from around $150,000 in the mid-2010s, increasing by more than two-and-a-half times and peaking above $400,000 in July 2024. Since that peak in July 2024, median sale price data for Sanford has established a range, dipping to just over $300,000 in December 2024 and averaging around $375,000 for the past year. Data sourced from listing services fluctuates month to month, reflecting seasonal trends, and is more current than data from the U.S. Census. A general leveling off of median sale prices reflects current trends in broader geographies and the U.S. market as a whole.

Figure 8.13: Median Sale Price



Source: Redfin.com

Cost of Construction and Feasibility

Increases in construction costs have been integral to the dramatic rise in housing costs, as pandemic-related forces resulted in a sharp increase in demand for attractive rural and suburban locations like Sanford and resulted in shortages of both building materials and skilled labor. Compliance with federal laws such as the Buy America, Build America policy add ongoing costs to construction materials.

The average cost per square foot of residential construction in 2011 was $80, with the average house costing around $184,000 to construct. In 2024, the cost per square foot doubled to $162, and total construction costs for the average house nationwide were over $428,000.

Table 8.4: Average Construction Cost of a Typical Single-Family Home*

Year	Total Average Cost	Cost Per Square Foot
2011	$184,125	$80
2013	$246,453	$95
2015	$289,415	$103
2017	$237,760	$86

Year	Total Average Cost	Cost Per Square Foot
2019	$296,792	$114
2022	$392,241	$153
2024	$428,215	$162

**Based on the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Construction Cost Survey to home builders; typical home size varies by year*

Source: National Association of Home Builders, Costs of Constructing a Home, 2024

Housing Need and Production Targets

The State of Maine conducted a housing study to identify how many housing units would be needed to meet demand and establish a more diverse array of housing to meet the needs of current and future Maine residents. York County's historic underproduction was estimated at 5,500 housing units. The future need for housing above and beyond the underproduction was estimated based on both a low estimate and an upper-end estimate—respectively, 10,100 housing units and 11,100 housing units. Based on these projections, a range of about 15,600 to 16,600 housing units are needed in this time frame in York County to meet current demands and help bring housing prices more in line with wages by increasing supply. While added supply to meet these goals will be distributed throughout York County, Sanford is in a more advantageous position to accommodate needed housing than many primarily rural communities.

Table 8.5: York County Future Housing Needs, 2020 – 2030

	Housing Units
Historic Underproduction	5,500
Future Need – Low	10,100
Future Need – High	11,100
Total New Homes Needed – Low Estimate	15,600
Total New Homes Needed – High Estimate	16,600

Source: State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study

Affordable Housing Support

The City of Sanford administers a number of programs to address acute housing needs. The City's General Assistance (GA) Department provides rental assistance vouchers, with about 90 – 100 applications approved each month. This total has increased multifold over recent years and is the primary focus of the GA Department. In this way, GA functions as a housing stability backstop, even though it is strictly financial in its support. Financial pressure remains on the department as the State reimburses only 70% of support offered. In this way, local affordability pressures are translating directly into municipal fiscal exposure.

The City of Sanford Housing Authority (SHA) manages multiple properties that provide housing on a subsidized basis. SHA operates about 211 total units in both attached and detached types; some units have been financed through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. SHA's core income-restricted portfolio includes both family and 55+ units. In recent years, SHA used a process of streamlined voluntary conversion to convert all units to voucher-based housing.

In addition, as a regional housing voucher administrator, SHA administers about 721 housing vouchers across nine jurisdictions, with an active waitlist for vouchers as they become available.

Ongoing projects and investments are aimed at broadening SHA's portfolio and reach. SHA's Housing First project is designed to serve unhoused individuals with complex needs, providing a supportive housing pipeline targeted at high-need households. In addition, SHA was awarded $2.5 million for the development of senior housing and will be purchasing eight housing units from York County Community Action.

The impacts of a lack of available housing to meet the needs of Sanford's population are widespread. Rising home prices have served as a bottleneck, preventing residents from participating in homeownership. This keeps residents in rental units, serving to limit access to entry-level or less expensive housing options for others.

Identified gaps in the housing market span the full spectrum, including market rate, units attainable as workforce housing, senior housing, and housing suitable for families. Residents on the waitlist for vouchers are primarily over 55 years old.

Homelessness

Homelessness in Sanford was a limited and manageable issue as recently as 2017, but conditions changed rapidly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Post-COVID-19, the number of unhoused individuals increased due to a number of factors, and what had previously been addressed through routine case management and limited interventions became a capacity-consuming challenge for municipal staff and partner organizations. A key inflection point was the loss of emergency funding mechanisms, including hotel placements, which had served as a practical short-term stabilization tool during periods of heightened need. At the same time, Sanford no longer had an operating shelter in the City, reducing local shelter capacity and increasing reliance on regional partners and ad hoc arrangements. The combined

effect was greater street-level instability and a more visible presence of homelessness in public-facing locations.

At its peak, the situation carried secondary impacts that extended beyond the housing system itself. Public spaces, including parks, were actively inhabited, and many residents reported a diminished sense of safety and comfort when trying to use these places for recreation. Routine accounts of encountering needles and other hazardous refuse in public areas heightened concern, particularly for families and other frequent park users. While these conditions were not the only feature of homelessness, they became a defining public signal of disorder.

Today, Sanford's response has shifted toward a more organized and coordinated system. A five-entity housing navigation system is now in place, reflecting a more structured approach to triage, placement, and referrals. The work of stabilizing households is distributed across multiple partners rather than centralized in a single agency. GA remains an important component of the safety net, with partnerships that include motels, York County Community Action, and faith-based organizations on occasion. This networked approach reflects both improved coordination and the reality that the system still faces resource and capacity limits. As homelessness has been managed more effectively, reports of needles and similar hazards in public spaces have decreased in frequency. However, even as conditions have begun to improve, many members of the public retain a lasting impression shaped by these incidents.

Indicators of housing instability remain high, even as the most visible street-level impacts have moderated. GA continues to see heavy demand for rent assistance, reflecting ongoing cost burden and eviction prevention needs. In addition, a meaningful share of housing stability spending is tied to substance recovery pathways, including support connected to sober living houses. The most difficult cases involve individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, whose needs require long-duration, service-rich interventions that extend beyond short-term financial support.

Challenges and Opportunities

Rapid escalation in home prices and rent has outpaced household purchasing power. At the same time, newer rental supply is increasingly priced beyond reach for many local workers. Cost burden is now common among both renters and owners, with owner cost burden unusually elevated.

The implications of unreachable housing can become widespread. Housing instability risk increases for renters, and entry into homeownership becomes less feasible. Employers face greater difficulty attracting and retaining workers, especially for service and mid-wage sectors. Elevated owner cost burden suggests growing stress among moderate-income households and older homeowners with rising taxes, insurance, or maintenance costs.

In the face of increased construction costs and a shortage of workers in the industry, reducing locally controllable barriers that add cost or uncertainty (zoning complexity, approval timelines, inconsistent standards) becomes more critical. One approach is to create conditions for "lower-cost" forms of housing (missing middle, ADUs, small-lot options) where infrastructure exists. Using public tools to close feasibility gaps for priority housing types (land strategy, targeted incentives, partnerships, and grant leverage) is also a locally controlled lever.

In addition, continued focus on addressing distressed and dangerous properties through the City's Land Bank program is critical to an overall strategy for adding active housing supply. Distressed properties have remained in limbo longer, prolonging blight impacts and slowing return of units to the market.

Finally, addressing senior housing gaps is an opportunity with far-reaching benefits. The inability for seniors to move out of single-family homes while still remaining in the community constrains mobility and contributes to market pressure. Creating desirable places for seniors to feel part of the community and age in place will retain this key demographic in Sanford. Besides conventional senior housing, there is increasingly strong interest in newer configurations such as cottage communities or village-style housing.

Gentle density and missing middle forms can increase supply without requiring large-scale redevelopment. More senior options can support aging in place while enabling rightsizing, which can free up existing single-family stock for younger households. Without a deliberate housing-type strategy, new supply might not match local needs by tenure, income, or life cycle stage.

A key opportunity is to implement L.D. 1829 in a way that targets serviced growth areas and supports compatible "missing middle" forms. Small-scale housing and incremental housing additions (two to four units, cottage clusters, ADUs) could find a willing market in seniors in the region and take pressure off of housing demand from that growing demographic.

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9. Transportation

Overview

Transportation infrastructure is essential to Sanford's economic vitality, regional accessibility, and overall quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors. As both a regional employment center and a growing residential community, Sanford's transportation system must effectively support local circulation, accommodate regional commuting patterns, and meet increasing multi-modal needs.

Located approximately 35 miles from Portland, 30 miles from Portsmouth, 20 miles from Saco, and 14 miles from Wells, Sanford plays an important role within southern Maine's transportation network. Historically shaped by its location along the Mousam River and later by the arrival of the Portland and Rochester Railroad, the City's development has long been tied to its transportation connections. With the transition to automobile-oriented travel in the 20th century, highways such as New England Interstate Route 11, State Route 11A, and Route 202 further integrated Sanford into regional corridors and strengthened access to surrounding communities and markets.

Today, maintaining and improving transportation infrastructure remains critical to supporting Sanford's economic development, enhancing mobility, and sustaining the community's high-quality of life. A safe, resilient, and multi-modal transportation system, one that supports walking, bicycling, transit, and efficient vehicle travel, will help manage congestion, expand travel choices, and foster a more connected and accessible City.

Transportation Initiatives

Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Sanford has advanced numerous initiatives to improve safety, walkability, and connectivity across its transportation network. Continued investment in these efforts will be essential as Sanford grows and evolves. The City's recent transportation efforts demonstrate Sanford's commitment to a transportation system that balances vehicle access with enhanced facilities for walking, cycling, and transit. Building on a long history of regional connectivity, from Indigenous waterways and footpaths to industrial-era rail connections and modern highways, the City is investing in safe, walkable, and multi-modal infrastructure. These improvements aim to manage downtown congestion, enhance accessibility, support economic vitality, and improve overall quality of life for residents and workers.

Village Partnership Initiative for Downtown Sanford (VPI, 2022)

The Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative Project ("Project") calls for a much needed and long-awaited revitalization of Downtown Sanford by building upon numerous transformational accomplishments the City has already made. Improvements call for:

- Replacing and/or constructing streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, underground utility ducts, streetlights, parking spaces, drainage areas, a multi-use pathway, and a Park and Ride facility serving a Navy base

- Improving numerous safety aspects of downtown streets and sidewalks for motorists and various active transportation users
- Modernizing downtown infrastructure to attract potential employers, commercial and residential development, and prepare for a green future
- Providing safe and efficient access to the region's commercial center and current downtown employers critical to Sanford's economy
- Meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and MaineDOT standards

City leaders have spent the past several years improving Sanford's infrastructure and rigorously marketing the City's value to potential employers – a task that has progressed well despite limited resources. Leaders developed an ambitious plan, fostered needed collaboration, successfully applied for various funding, and created meaningful improvements. While this work focused on various elements, roads and sidewalks remain very old and lack safety and mobility essentials.

The Project addresses all eight aspects of USDOT's merit criteria while simultaneously aligning with many USDOT Strategic Framework goals. MaineDOT and Sanford chose this Project because of the need to alleviate a number of safety concerns downtown, create sustainable public and active transportation alternatives, prepare the City for a future mindful of climate change, and build upon the momentum that fostered recent funding awards for City improvements already completed or scheduled.

South Sanford Multi-Modal Transportation Study (Planning Partnership Initiative (PPI), 2025)

A PPI was conducted with Seawall and Viewshed consultants to develop strategies for increased safety and connectivity for pedestrians, trail users, and bicyclists. The study evaluated three key corridors: Main Street from Westview Drive easterly to Patriots Lane, Route 4 from Country Club Road northerly through the School Street and Gavel Road intersection, and Mousam River Trail from the High School to the east side of Route 4 to Gavel Road. Recommended improvements include:

- Main Street – Mayflower Drive Easterly to Roundabout: Construct a 10-foot-wide shared-use path on the north side of Main Street.
- Main Street – Roundabout Easternly to Patriots Lane: Re-stripe Main Street to reduce lane widths to 11 feet and add bike lanes within the widened shoulder or construct a 10-foot-wide shared-use path on the north side of the corridor, extending the path from Mayflower Drive to Patriots Lane.
- Route 4 – Roundabout Northerly to School Street and Gravel Road: Re-stripe the corridor to reduce lane widths to 11 feet and provide bike lanes in the widened shoulder. Add a five-foot sidewalk on the west side of Route 4 between the roundabout and the Mousam River Trail.
- Route 4 – Roundabout Southerly to Country Club Road: Construct a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail on the east side of Route 4.

- Main Street and Alfred Road Roundabout: Add new crosswalks and extend multi-use path connections.

Route 4, Jagger Mill, and Alumni Intersection Improvements (State-Municipal Agreement, 2024)

A State-Municipal agreement with Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) have upgraded traffic signals at Route 4, Jagger Mill, and Alumni intersection, improving safety and operations at a key South Sanford gateway and supporting future trail connections identified in the *South Sanford Multi-Modal Transportation Study*.

High Street Corridor Improvements (Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI), 2024)

Through a MPI agreement with MaineDOT, Sanford is advancing improvements to the High Street corridor, enhancing pavement condition, safety, and overall reliability for all users. Drainage improvements and retirement of abandoned mill utility infrastructure is also included within the scope.

City-wide Traffic Signal Modernization (BUILD Grant, 2023)

A MaineDOT BUILD grant supported the replacement and modernization of more than 100 signalized intersections statewide, including coordinated system upgrades in Sanford, Augusta, and Waterville. Designed in 2018 and completed in 2023, this project introduced coordinated signal systems that enhance safety, improve traffic flow, and create a strong foundation for future technologies such as transit signal priority and other intelligent transportation systems.

Downtown Sanford Reconstruction (RAISE, 2022-2030)

In August 2022, the City, in collaboration with MaineDOT, received $25 million in funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's RAISE Grant program. The RAISE Grant supports the Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative Project. The project encompasses parts of William Oscar Emery Drive, Main Street (Route 109), Washington Street, Cottage Street (Route 202), and School Street and will include streetscape and accessibility improvements as well as the construction of a shared-use path along the western shore of Number One Pond with connections to Sanford's trails network. Key projects funded under this grant include:

- Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative: Full reconstruction of Main Street (Route 109), Washington Street, and School Street (0.9 miles) with wider sidewalks, ADA-compliant upgrades, modernized utilities, improved parking, and enhanced drainage systems
- Mousam Promenade Multi-modal Path: A 10-foot-wide multi-use pathway (0.9 miles) along the western shore of Number One Pond, connecting northern and southern portions of the Sanford Trails network; includes traffic-calming, safety features, and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon at Winter Street

- Cottage Street Gateway Improvements: Full-depth reconstruction of Cottage Street (Route 202) over 0.73 miles, creating a downtown gateway and reconfiguring the Cottage Street, Winter Street, and River Street intersection to improve access to Sanford's Mill District
- Park and Ride Facility: An 80-space parking facility at 10 Emerson Street with a bus shelter providing service to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and infrastructure for future electric vehicle charging stations

Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan (2022)

A federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program funded a comprehensive City-wide safety analysis to identify high-crash locations (HCLs), prioritize projects, and support future federal funding for safer streets, especially for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable users. The plan was adopted on June 12, 2024, and provides a framework of strategies, projects, and policies designed to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Sanford's roadways.

Alignment with State and Regional Plans

Sanford maintains a 5-Year Roadway Capital Improvement Plan and coordinates annually with MaineDOT to partner on upcoming projects as outlined by the annual issuance of the MaineDOT 3-Year Work Plan. The City also coordinates with the State on operations and maintenance, long-term capital planning, community-based initiatives like VPI, PPI, and MPIs, and separate State-Municipal Agreements.

The MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy, adopted in 2024, provides a framework that supports the City's participation in community-based initiatives. The 2023 Strategic Highway Safety Plan establishes statewide goals to reduce pedestrian and cyclist fatalities through enhanced visibility, enforcement strategies, and public education campaigns, which align with local safety priorities. The Maine State Active Transportation Plan identifies strategies including improving active transportation in villages and downtowns, paving shoulders along high-priority corridors, and evaluating speed limits, approaches reflected in Sanford's ongoing planning initiatives. The MaineDOT Long Range Transportation Plan identifies complete streets and high-visibility bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as priority funding areas.

The City of Sanford was awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning Grant for $200,000 by the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2022 to develop the City's 2024 Safety Action Plan, which seeks to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while improving safe, healthy, and multi-modal mobility for all road users. Sanford integrated the direction of the MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, State Active Transportation Plan, and Long-Range Transportation Plan into their Safety Action Plan, producing a state-aligned local safety framework that guides project selection, design, and funding.

Sanford has demonstrated extensive coordination and alignment with State planning efforts and, by taking advantage of partnership and funding opportunities, is effectively leveraging State and federal resources to provide policy direction, funding, performance targets, and

technical guidance that support the City's efforts to develop a safer, more connected, and multi-modal transportation network.

Transportation Considerations for Development

Sanford's development regulations influence how new projects connect to and function within the community's transportation network. Several ordinances address pedestrian circulation, street design, subdivision layout, multi-modal access, parking, and the handling of transportation impacts associated with growth.

Transportation must be considered when zoning and permitting growth. Revitalization of the urban core of Sanford must be prioritized and incentivized while urban sprawl and development outside of designated growth zones must be discouraged and penalized. Maintaining peripheral public roadways and infrastructure becomes increasingly difficult and expensive as forces are spread thin across all seasons of the year.

Site Plan Review Standards

Sanford's Site Plan Review Standards require developments to provide safe internal pedestrian circulation and to connect to existing nearby sidewalks where they are present. The standards require internal roadways to be designed for both vehicle and pedestrian safety and require landscaping to enhance comfort and provide shade along walkways. These provisions reinforce walkability within private developments and help integrate new development into the overall pedestrian network.

Sanford should develop a pedestrian network plan to guide when and where sidewalk connectivity needs to be constructed and maintained both by private and public efforts. High-value targets for the plan will be residential walkability to the downtown, commerce centers, recreational destinations, community event centers, and neighborhood collection of school children to designated bus stop areas. Conversely, existing portions of sidewalk that are discontinuous, on streets that are readily walkable, streets where residents park all over the sidewalks, and sidewalks with no use or function, should be designated for removal. A sidewalk inventory needs to be performed to grasp this issue entirely. Careful consideration and rationale should be used when determining whether a roadway receives sidewalk on one side or both sides.

Parking

Parking in Sanford is managed to support safe, convenient, and context-sensitive circulation. The Site Plan Review Ordinance requires parking for non-residential and multi-family residential development but emphasizes designs that minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, avoid backing onto streets, and fit the scale of the proposed use. Because parking areas are designed as part of the overall circulation system, they contribute to walkable, pedestrian-friendly environments. Changes in use that increase parking demand by 15% or more trigger site plan review, ensuring that any impacts on circulation and pedestrian safety are evaluated on a project-specific basis. This approach balances the need for vehicle accommodation with walkability and connectivity objectives, particularly in downtown and mixed-use areas.

Department of Public Works (DPW) staff reported that changes to the current parking Ordinance are upcoming in 2026 and 2027, as the City will transition to automated solid waste and recycling collection. These materials will not be collected when there is a car obstructing the automated arm. Streets will need to be uniformly signed for their new parking situation as a result. Each street will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the City Engineers, Contractor, DPW Supervisors, School Bus Company, Police Department, and York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) Shuttle Service.

Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Areas Ordinance

Within the public right-of-way, Sanford's Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Areas Ordinance requires that any work affecting vehicular or pedestrian traffic includes a Traffic Control Plan. These are often synonymous with the Highway Excavation Permit process and are actually the same permit form. Traffic Control Plans must help ensure safety for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and people using mobility devices. Traffic Control Plans shall conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and are subject to approval by the Director of Public Works and City Engineer.

Subdivision Ordinance

Sanford's Subdivision Ordinance establishes street design standards based on growth area designations, distinguishing between urban and rural street classifications. These standards guide the development of compact street networks in designated growth areas and accommodate lower-density development in rural areas. The ordinance applies primarily to subdivision streets and does not set comprehensive design standards for all public streets. Existing infrastructure capacity exceeds current population levels, and concerns about dispersed development patterns persist.

Technical Manual

The Sanford Technical Manual is the City's engineering and public works standards document that sets the rules and preferred practices for how infrastructure is designed and built in Sanford/Springvale. The technical manual has recently updated street design standards. It provides technical directions to residents, developers, engineers, architects, utilities, and contractors on things like streets, drainage, utilities, and related public improvements, using current, widely accepted industry standards; it is periodically updated by the DPW Engineering Division as technologies and best practices evolve.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Considerations

The Subdivision Ordinance requires sidewalk installation in growth areas and includes specific construction standards for concrete sidewalks. The ordinance does not include standards for bicycle facilities such as bike lanes or shared-use paths. The City of Sanford is in need of a sidewalk inventory and connectivity plan.

Subdivision Layout

For larger subdivisions, the ordinance includes requirements for multiple street connections and limits dead-end streets to 15 dwelling units and a maximum length of 1,500 feet. Easements for

potential future road connections are required in locations where additional subdivision is foreseeable. These provisions are primarily applied to larger subdivisions. Connectivity expectations differ by growth area designation.

Traffic Impact Fees

Sanford previously collected a traffic impact fee but discontinued the program approximately 10 years ago. Transportation improvements associated with development are now addressed primarily through project-specific conditions or public-private partnerships as guided by the Sanford Technical Manual.

Traffic Counts

Key transportation corridors in Sanford include State Route 109 (Main Street), U.S. Route 202 (Lebanon Street/Winter Street/Cottage Street), State Route 11A (Oak Street), and State Route 4 (Country Club Road/Alfred Road). These roads form the backbone of local and regional mobility, connecting residents to the downtown area, neighboring communities, and the regional highway network.

In 2023, 22.5% of Sanford residents worked locally, while the remainder commuted to nearby employment centers, including Portland (7.4%), Biddeford (4.9%), North Berwick (4.6%), and other communities in southern Maine or western New Hampshire, such as South Portland, Saco, Kennebunk, Portsmouth, and Westbrook. These commuting patterns highlight the importance of Sanford's key corridors, with State Route 109 providing access to I 95 and U.S. Route 1, U.S. Route 202 serving as a primary route north and west, and State Route 4 connecting residents to employment hubs in North and South Berwick and beyond via U.S. Route 9.

To understand how these corridors are functioning today, Table 9.1 summarizes traffic volumes for 2016, 2019, and 2022. It should be noted that over 600 units have been developed in recent years, resulting in increased pedestrian activity in the downtown area and reported stress on roadway capacity downtown. While this data provides a useful snapshot of travel demand, the absence of counts beyond 2022 limits the ability to paint an accurate picture.

Table 9.1: Traffic Volumes for Key Sanford Corridors

	Daily Capacity	2016		2019		2022	
		AADT	% of Capacity	AADT	% of Capacity	AADT	% of Capacity
Cottage Street/Winter Street/Lebanon Street (U.S. Route 202)							
E/O Grammar Road	57,600	11,950	21%	12,400	22%	11,410	20%
W/O Grammar Road	57,600	7,580	13%	7,900	14%	7,910	14%
W/O Main Street	55,680	8,000	14%	6,990	13%	7,370	13%

	Daily Capacity	2016		2019		2022	
		AADT	% of Capacity	AADT	% of Capacity	AADT	% of Capacity
W/O Oak Street	57,600	9,060	16%	8,950	16%	9,620	17%
Main Street (State Route 109)							
S/O Oak Street	46,080	10,490	23%	10,390	23%	9,130	20%
N/O Lebanon Street	46,080	12,610	27%	12,720	28%	10,700	23%
W/O Country Club Road	73,440	17,990	24%	18,720	25%	17,710	24%
Oak Street (State Route 11A)							
N/O Lebanon Street	43,200	2,460	6%	2,690	6%	2,700	6%
Country Club Road/Alfred Road (State Route 4)							
S/O Main Street	57,600	9,980	17%	9,790	17%	10,380	18%
N/O School Street	57,600	12,260	21%	12,510	22%	12,810	22%

Source: Maine DOT

Based on the available data, traffic volumes on key Sanford corridors showed little to no change between 2016 and 2019, followed by a modest decrease of roughly 1%, or a few hundred vehicles, between 2019 and 2022. Overall, volumes remained stable rather than increasing. As of 2022, all corridors were operating well within their available capacity, typically using only 13% – 28% of daily capacity.

The City completed traffic signal modernization through a MaineDOT BUILD grant in 2023, installing advanced traffic controllers (ATCs) at all but two traffic lights. These cloud-controlled signals facilitate improved traffic flow, with data showing increased percentages of vehicles arriving on green signals.

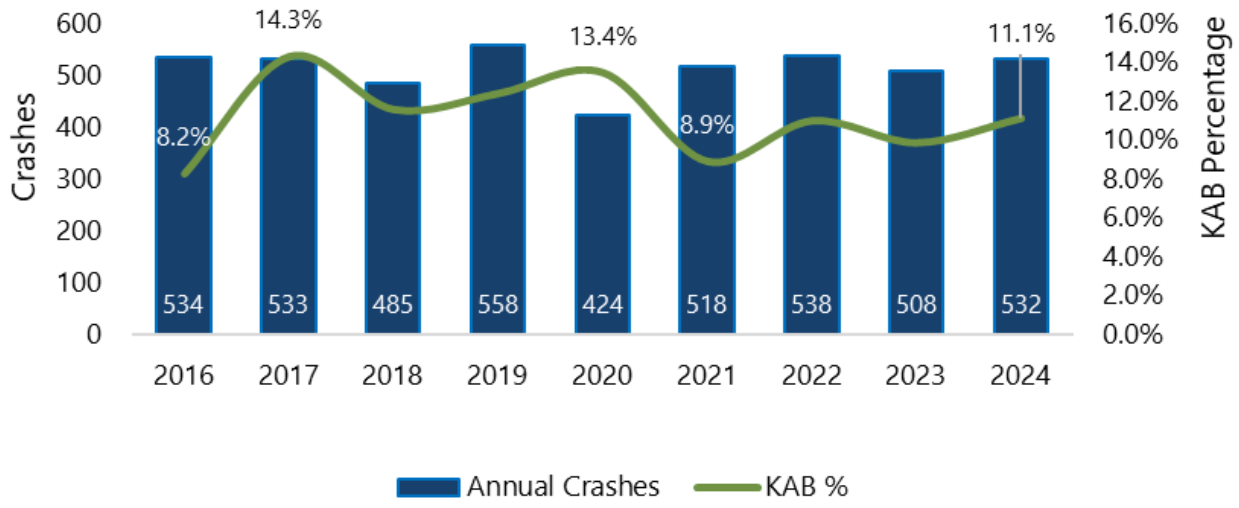
These conditions indicate that Sanford's priority roadways continue to provide substantial remaining capacity and are not constrained by traffic volume. Continued monitoring, especially during high-volume months, will help ensure that these corridors remain reliable as regional commuting patterns evolve.

Crash Data

Between 2016 and 2024, total crashes in Sanford remained relatively stable, ranging from 424 to 558 annually. Following the COVID-19 pandemic low of 424 crashes in 2020, totals rebounded to between 508 and 538 crashes per year from 2021 through 2024. In 2024, 59 crashes (11.1%) resulted in fatal, suspected serious, or suspected minor injuries (KAB crashes). KAB crashes are defined as fatal (K), suspected serious injury (A), and suspected minor injury

(B) by the KABCO accident severity rating system. Examining crash severity, time of year, time of day, and involvement of vulnerable road users provides additional insight into local safety conditions. These trends are illustrated in Figures 10.1 – 10.3.

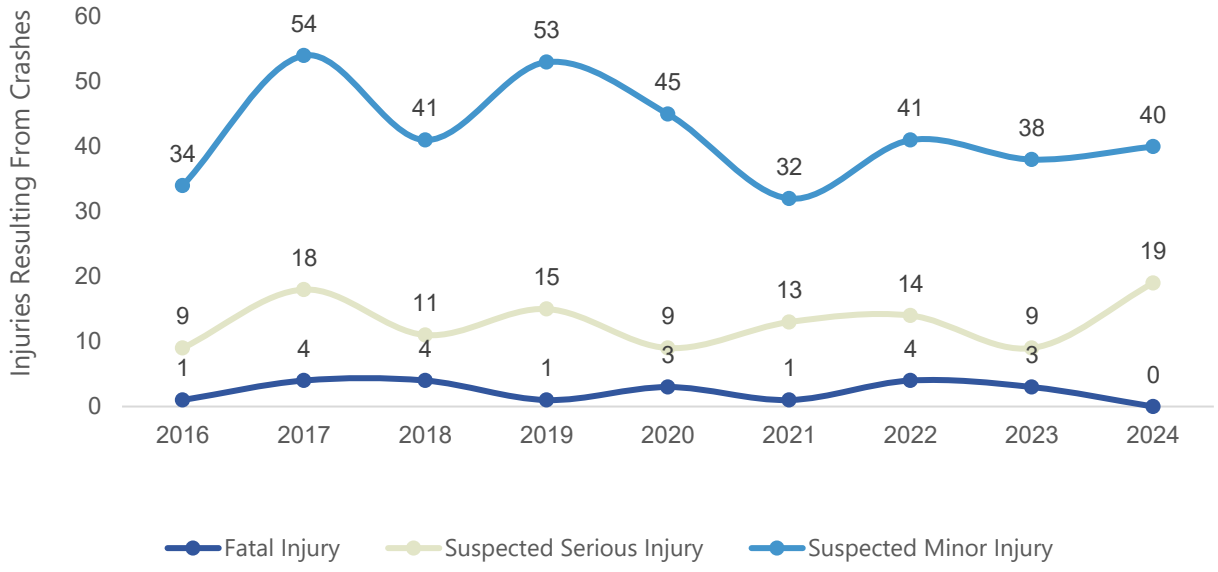
Figure 9.1: Sanford Crash History by Severity (2016 – 2024)



Source: Maine DOT

As shown in Figure 9.2, suspected minor injuries were the most common outcome of crashes from 2016 to 2024, ranging from 32 to 54 per year and consistently exceeding serious and fatal injuries. The counts of both minor and serious injuries fluctuated over time with minor injuries peaking in 2017 and 2019, dropping to a low in 2021, and then rising again through 2024; suspected serious injuries reached their highest level (19) in 2024 after varying between 9 and 18 in prior years. Fatal injuries remained low and relatively stable throughout the period, never exceeding four per year and falling to zero in 2024, indicating that while crash outcomes increased in severity in 2024, fatalities did not follow the same upward pattern.

Figure 9.2: Sanford Breakdown of Severe Crashes (2016-2024)



Source: Maine DOT

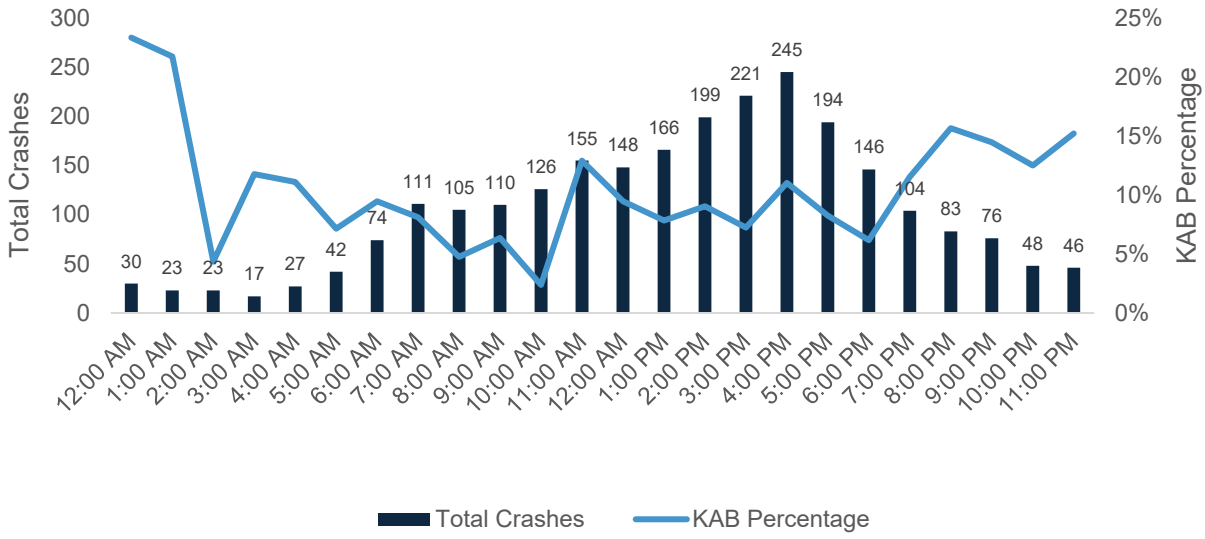
An analysis of crash data from 2020 to 2024 indicates that January and December consistently had the highest number of crashes, likely due to winter driving conditions, with June ranking third. The fewest crashes occurred in April, May, and October. Overall, seasonal patterns were fairly consistent, showing no dramatic fluctuations in crash frequency. By day of the week, Fridays experienced the most crashes, while Sundays had the fewest.

Time-of-day analysis from 2020 to 2024 revealed distinct patterns in crash frequency and severity. As shown in Figure 9.3, total crashes decreased substantially during evening and nighttime hours, yet the proportion of severe crashes increased during these periods. Crash totals peaked at 4 p.m. and were lowest between 2 and 3 a.m. Notably, no pronounced peak corresponded with morning commute hours.

The City of Sanford adopted the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan in June 2024 to eliminate all serious and fatal transportation-related crashes in Sanford. The plan establishes a comprehensive set of strategies primarily focused on reducing excessive vehicle speeds, a leading factor in severe and fatal collisions. Throughout the SS4A Action Plan process, community engagement consistently identified vehicles operating at unsafe speeds as a top concern for residents.

As outlined in the SS4A Action Plan, the City of Sanford must provide clearer speed-limit signage and reevaluate existing speed limits to help ensure they are context-sensitive; increase speed enforcement, particularly within the High Injury Network (HIN) and on targeted neighborhood streets; invest in traffic-calming and other speed-reducing infrastructure; and consider reducing the number of travel lanes along HIN corridors and on priority neighborhood streets.

Figure 9.3: Sanford Crashes by Time-of-Day (2020 – 2024)



Source: Maine DOT

From 2020 to 2024, vulnerable road users represented a significant portion of serious injuries and fatalities. Pedestrian crashes accounted for two fatalities, seven suspected serious injuries, and 11 were suspected minor injuries. Cyclists experienced 11 minor injuries, while motorcyclists suffered two fatalities, 14 suspected serious injuries, and 21 minor injuries. Incidents involving vulnerable users were highest in the years 2021 and 2024.

For the same time period, 12 HCL nodes and seven HCL segments were identified by MaineDOT (see Table 9.2). These locations all experienced eight crashes or more over the past three years.

Table 9.2: High Crash Locations in Sanford (2020 – 2024)

Type of HCL	Location	Critical Rate Factor	Number of Accidents
Intersection	Kennebunk Road and Main Street	1.78	9
	Jagger Mill Road and Main Street**	1.40	31
	Riverside Avenue and Winter Street**	4.49	17
	Brook Street and Cottage Street**	2.10	8
	Cottage Street and North Avenue**	2.07	8
	Alfred Road and Main Street at the roundabout**	15.44	129

Type of HCL	Location	Critical Rate Factor	Number of Accidents
	Alumni Boulevard, Main Street, and Old Mill Road**	1.07	26
	Cottage Street and June Street**	2.05	8
	Cottage Street, Grammar Road, and Shaws Ridge Road**	1.22	24
	Alfred Road, Alumni Boulevard, and Jagger Mill Road**	6.72	43
	Alfred Road and High Street	2.25	13
	Pioneer Avenue, Riverside Avenue, and Washington Street**	2.17	9
Node	Hanson Ridge Road from Blanchard Road to Windy Ridge Lane	1.74	10
	Oak Street from Harry Howes Road to Hanson Ridge Road	1.11	8
	Lebanon Street from Foot Hill Lane to Bauneg Beg Hill Road	1.04	9
	Mount Hope Road from Fieldstone Lane to Bauneg Beg Hill Road**	2.45	24
	Main Street from Alumni Boulevard to Gerrish Drive**	1.69	9
	Kennebunk Road from Old Falls Road to Whichers Mill Road	1.12	12
	Main Street from Pinewood Drive to Branch Road	1.06	9

Source: Maine DOT

**Denote locations where Sanford and or MaineDOT have engineered corrective actions that have either already been constructed or is planned to be constructed in the next five years

Household Transportation Characteristics

York County has a high rate of household car ownership. Of the County's 91,413 households, 4,636 (5.1%) lacked access to a vehicle in 2025, according to a study by the John T. Gorman Foundation.

Transportation costs in rural Maine are elevated due to limited public transit options. The MIT Living Wage Institute estimates that a family of four requires an annual transportation budget of

$16,683. Financial and logistical barriers also contribute to lower rates of driver's license acquisition in Maine, with an estimated 10% of adults aged 20 – 29 and 11% of adults over 75 unlicensed. The high cost of car ownership and barriers to driver's license acquisition underscore the need for expanded transit and active transportation options.

Parking

Parking in Sanford's downtown and village areas is limited. The conversion of historic single-family homes into multi-unit apartments has increased pressure on available parking and created challenges for emergency vehicle access and winter snow operations.

The City of Sanford recently received grant funding to pursue a parking ordinance review and parking plan. A full evaluation of Sanford's current parking regulations, management, and availability will allow for an understanding of the barriers parking places to increased housing development. The City is planning to conduct a comparison of Sanford's ordinances with those of surrounding communities and industry best practices to evaluate future parking needs and comparable community approaches to downtown parking

Pedestrian Bicycle Facilities

Sanford began coordinated bicycle and pedestrian planning in 2005 with updates to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, recommending the creation of a sidewalk and bikeway plan for the City's growth areas. Sanford maintains a sizeable network of sidewalks, both on major State routes and in neighborhood areas. While the urban center of the City makes up the bulk of its development and population, other development, mostly low density, has occurred on both State routes and other rural roads outside the City center. These areas tend to have the greatest lack of active transportation infrastructure. The South Sanford PPI was evidenced by observable bicycle traffic and pedestrian "goat paths" alongside the road. Route 109/Main Street dense residential development currently ends around Patriot Lane which is the southern extent of the South Sanford PPI. Also, Downtown Springvale is a good example of discontinuous sidewalk opportunities to connect neighborhoods in some places. Carl J. Lamb Elementary School doesn't have pedestrian connectivity to the road in front of it.

The sidewalk network in the City varies significantly by location, with downtown containing wide concrete sidewalks and marked crossings, and some neighborhoods containing narrow, cracked, overgrown concrete or asphalt sidewalks with unmarked crossings. On-street bicycle infrastructure is not present in the City. The City's recreational trail network, including the Mousam Way Trails, Three Rivers Land Trust, and Sanford-Springvale Rail Trail, represents a significant recreational asset.

State Route 109 is a Principal Arterial and the main backbone of development in Sanford. It connects downtown, Springvale, and the Airport along a consistently developed corridor. The pedestrian infrastructure varies significantly along its length, with some areas having wide sidewalks on both sides of the road, some with only one sidewalk, and some areas with no sidewalks at all. Some improvements have been made along the corridor, with new sidewalks and access management being completed in the vicinity of Advanced Auto Parts. In 2019 the City did a road rehabilitation and built a new sidewalk from Advanced Auto Parts to the new High School, connecting the protected pedestrian crossing at Old Mill Road on Main Street.

The South Sanford Multi-Modal Transportation Study recommends adding a 10-foot separated multi-use path on the north side of Route 109 from Mayflower Drive to the roundabout, then continuing east with narrowed 11-foot travel lanes and either a sidewalk plus bike lanes or a 10-foot multi-use path on the north side, plus Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)-equipped crosswalks to connect Patriots Lane housing to businesses across the road. Also, ped crossings at the roundabout with RRFB's. 10-FT wide multi-modal intended to tie into Sanford High School at Mayflower Drive as the northern extent. SHS is currently the southern terminus of the Trails System.

Planned improvements include the funded Downtown Revitalization Project, which will involve full-depth reconstruction of Main Street downtown, among other streets. The funded Mousam Promenade will connect the northern and southern portions of the Sanford trail network, providing a more complete alternate corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists. It will also construct a recreational facility directly adjacent to Downtown Sanford which is Route 109/Main Street corridor.

U.S. Route 202 Corridor

U.S. Route 202, otherwise known as Winter Street, Lebanon Street, and Cottage Street, is a Principal Arterial running through Downtown Sanford, roughly perpendicular to Route 109/Main Street. It serves as an alternative route to I-95 between Concord and the lakes region of New Hampshire and all parts of Maine to the north. Within the City, it connects residential areas on the east and west side of the Mousam River to downtown.

Planned improvements to this corridor include the 2027 RAISE Grant project, which will involve full-depth reconstruction of Cottage Street and a reconfiguration of the Cottage Street/Winter Street/River Street intersection. The existing sidewalks, which are in poor condition, will be reconstructed as a part of the project. The project will deliver roadway and sidewalk reconstruction, a protected left-turn lane to Sanford's Mill District on River Street, drainage upgrades, and utility upgrades.

State Route 4 Corridor

State Route 4 is a two-lane Minor Arterial connecting low-density uses in Sanford to the towns of North Berwick and Alfred. It has no sidewalks or other active transportation infrastructure and intersects with Route 109 in a roundabout with no active transportation facilities. It has relatively high-speed limits and consequently a disproportionate number of severe and fatal crashes.

The South Sanford Multi-Modal Transportation Study recommends narrowing travel lanes to 11 feet in the area between the roundabout and High School, adding bike lanes in the widened

shoulders, and building a five-foot sidewalk on the west side of Route 4 from the roundabout to the Mousam River Trail, plus a 10-foot multi-use path on the east side of Route 4 from the roundabout south to Country Club Road 1 to serve both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Downtown Sanford

The standard cross-section through Downtown Sanford is sidewalks on both sides of the road, directly adjacent to the travel lane. The sidewalk width varies by location, with some areas having wide, approximately 12-foot sidewalks, and other areas having approximately five-foot sidewalks. Sidewalks range from fair to poor condition, with many locations being severely cracked. Some improvements have been made recently, generally at crosswalk landings.

The Downtown Sanford Village Partnership Initiative led to the RAISE Grant which is a Downtown Revitalization Project and will include full-depth reconstruction of Main Street, Washington Street, and School Street, featuring wider, ADA-compliant sidewalks and other streetscape upgrades. A new 10-foot-wide multi-modal pathway along the Mousam Promenade will be complemented by traffic-calming measures, safety devices, and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon at a key trail crossing on Riverside Avenue across Route 202/Winter Street.

Springvale

Central Springvale has similar pedestrian infrastructure to Downtown Sanford, with approximately five-foot sidewalks being standard, though striped shoulders are present along Main Street. Downtown Springvale has benefited over the years by strong leadership from local residents and business owners maintaining downtown infrastructure including sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and trails connectivity.

South Sanford District

Little to no active transportation infrastructure exists in the vicinity of the Airport, however the City is partnering with MaineDOT to assess. While most of the area is based on industrial uses, there is some low-density housing and some retail businesses. Clear signage that highlights nearby dining and downtown attractions, with simple directions can help connect airport users.

Recreational Path Network

The combination of the Mousam Way trail network and the Sanford-Springvale Rail Trail, with their associated spurs, creates a substantial recreational path network.

The Mousam Way trail network connects many areas of the City and provides an alternate corridor roughly parallel to Route 109 between Alfred Road and the rail trail, with a gap along Riverside Avenue and Pioneer Avenue. The northern paved portion of the network surrounding Sanford Middle School and Sanford Pride Elementary School connects to multiple neighborhoods and provides a safe route for students and staff walking to the school. The southern unpaved section running to Sanford High School provides significant connections to neighborhoods along the 109 corridors, making it an attractive route for students and staff biking or walking to the school.

While the rail trail provides routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, it does not provide significant access to destinations and is limited in its ability to be used for transportation. It does provide a useful crossing of the Mousam River.

The ongoing South Sanford Multi-modal Transportation Study's investigation into a shared-use path connection along Jagger Mill Road would further extend the reach of the network to new housing developments on Patriots Lane, as well as other existing housing. In addition, the Mousam Promenade project will complete a gap in the trail network along Riverside Avenue through downtown.

Regional Transportation

Regional transportation in York County provides a combination of road, transit, rail, and air options that connect communities across southern Maine and southeastern New Hampshire. Sanford, as a larger inland community, relies on these systems for commuting, access to services, and connections to regional destinations. Key highways—including U.S. Route 202, State Route 109, and State Route 4—link Sanford to nearby towns such as North Berwick, Wells, and Biddeford, as well as to interstate routes that provide access beyond the County.

Public transit in the region is provided primarily by the YCCAC, which operates fixed-route and demand-response services connecting Sanford to surrounding communities and regional hubs. Intercity connections, including Amtrak's Downeaster rail service and Greyhound buses, are accessible through the Wells Transportation Center. Sanford is served by local taxi and rideshare services for short-distance travel and by the Sanford Regional Airport, which supports general aviation.

Sanford Regional Airport

Sanford Regional Airport is a general aviation facility classified as a regional reliever airport within the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, serving as an alternative to congested commercial hubs. The Airport supports charter services, emergency preparedness, flight training, aircraft storage, business aviation, helicopter instruction, LifeFlight operations, and special events.

The Airport is owned and operated by the City, allowing it to leverage City bond capacity for capital projects while maintaining strong community support. The Airport achieved financial self-sufficiency in 2019 through solar land leases, public-private partnerships, and a TIF district that pre-permits utilities and saves approximately 18 months and $15,000 in construction soft costs for hangar development. FAA regulations require all airport-generated revenue to be dedicated to airport operations and improvements.

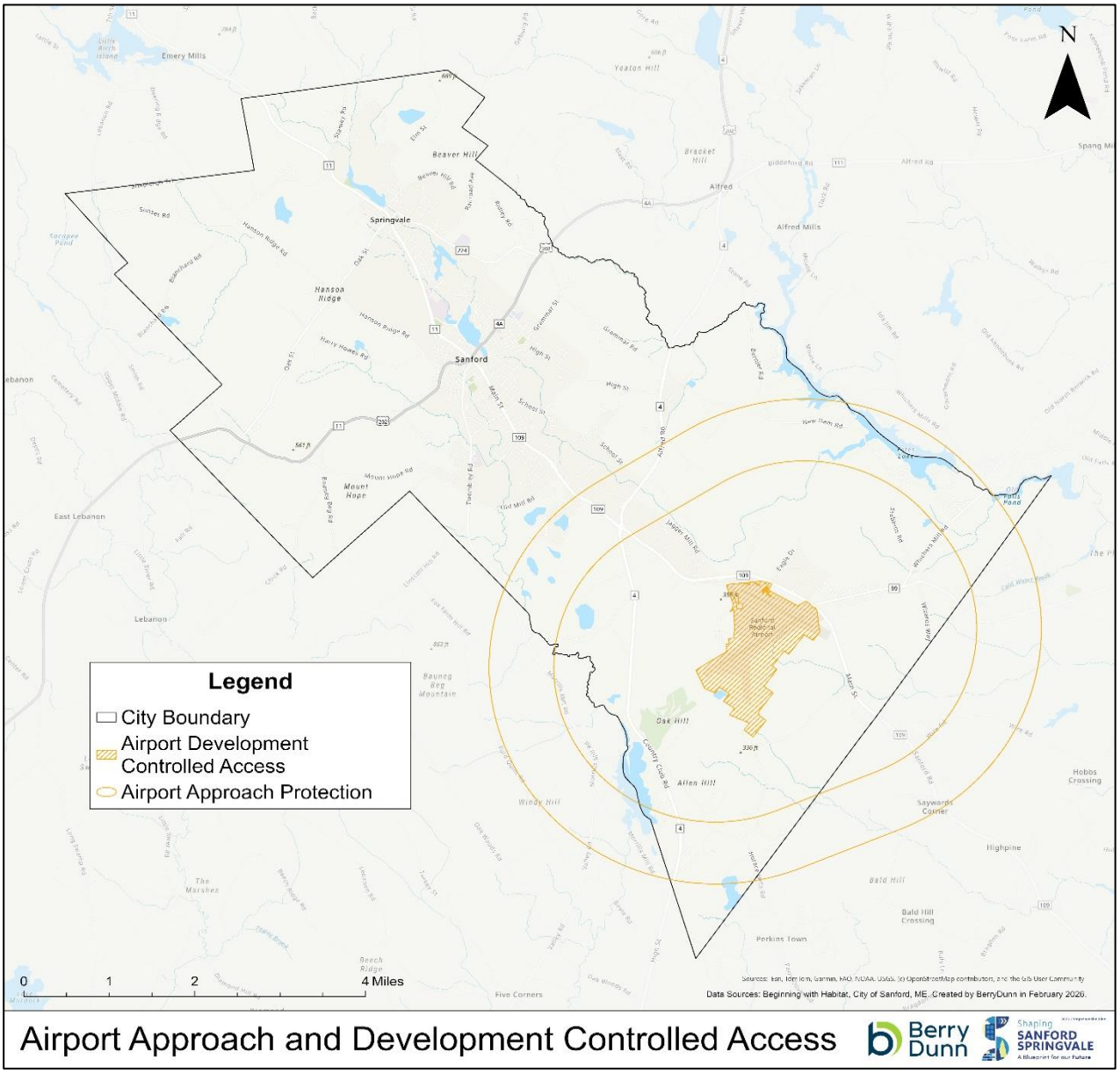
The Airport's planning framework centers on two documents: the Airport Master Plan, which guides facility development and must be approved by FAA and MaineDOT for capital construction, and the Business Plan, which articulates financial sustainability strategies while maintaining high levels of safety, security, and maintenance. The Master Plan includes "ultimate airport" drawings with theoretical hangar locations that effectively serve as pre-approval for future development. Phase 1 focuses on hangar development planning, while Phase 2 addresses runway and taxiway geometry.

A key business strategy has been divesting City ownership of buildings to private operators. This approach has proven successful, with based aircraft growing from 84 to 174 and a current waiting list of 60 aircraft owners. Approximately 18 hangars are owned by two private groups. Southern Maine Aviation serves as the primary fixed-base operator, providing flight training, recertifications, fueling, and hangar rentals. The Airport employs 3.5 full-time staff plus seasonal employees and supports numerous private sector jobs through aviation-related businesses. Routine maintenance includes crack sealing and pavement marking twice annually, while major capital projects depend on FAA grants.

The Airport is primarily accessed by automobile via Route 4 or Route 109, with limited transit service from the Orange Line and Shipyard Sprinter bus routes. Figure 9.5 shows the location of the Airport and its development control access. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are notably absent in the Airport district. The City's Airport Development zoning designation governs on-airport and adjacent development areas, prioritizing aeronautical uses to maintain FAA-compliant airside access and protect long-term aviation capacity. The Airport has identified parcels for potential acquisition to support future hangar development, protect critical airspace, and enable expanded aviation-related industrial uses. Recent infrastructure improvements include new road segments and pre-designed stormwater systems that streamline future development approvals.

Figure 9.5: Airport Approach and Development Control Access

Source: City of Sanford, ME



York County Community Action Corporation

YCCAC operates a comprehensive network of public transportation services throughout all 29 towns in York County. Services are designed to accommodate passengers of all ages and are equipped for people with disabilities. In 2024, YCCAC reported 75,800 passenger trips.

Fixed-Route Services

Fixed-route bus service launched in 2020 with the Springvale Community Connector. After proven success, the Orange Line with service to Wells and the Shipyard Sprinter were launched in spring 2025. All fixed-route services can deviate from their standard routes with 24 hours advance notice, though additional costs may be associated with these requests. The bus routes all operate Monday through Friday and do not have weekend service. Sanford should seek to expand bus service through the weekend to provide essential transportation access for residents who depend on transit.

Demand-Response Services

Wheels to Access Vocation and Education (WAVE) provides premium year-round, curb-to-curb service between Sanford-Biddeford and Sanford-Wells. Service requires 24-hour advance notice for scheduling.

Local Rides/Shoppers provides weekly trips to area shopping destinations, with routes assigned to specific towns each day, offering curb-to-curb service from residences with a return trip an hour or more later.

Table 9.3: Sanford Transit Schedules

Service Line	Route	Hours and Days of Operation	Frequency
Flex Routes			
Southern Maine Community Connector	Springvale to Biddeford and Saco	M – F 7 a.m. – 2 p.m.	84 min
Sanford Transit	Springvale to Shaw's Shopping Center	M – F 8 a.m. – 3:50 p.m.	79 min
Orange Line	Sanford to Wells	M – F 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.	132 min
Shipyard Sprinter	Sanford to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard	M – F 4:35 a.m. – 5:15 a.m.	40 min
Demand/Response Services (Advance Registration Required)			
WAVE	Within Sanford and to Biddeford or Wells	M – F 6 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.	On demand

Service Line	Route	Hours and Days of Operation	Frequency
Local Rides/Shoppers	Sanford to various shopping locations	M – F, varies by day	One trip daily
York County Transport	Medical destinations	By reservation	On demand
Connecting to Cancer Care	Cancer treatment facilities	By reservation	On demand
ModivCare	Medical destinations (1-877-659-1302)	By reservation	On demand
Access2Care/MTM	Medical destinations (1-888-597-1189)	By reservation	On demand
Veterans Transportation	Medical and essential appointments	By reservation	On demand

Source: Wheels to Access Vocation and Education

Wells Transportation Center

The Wells Transportation Center, located approximately 10 miles from Sanford, serves as a regional hub connecting rail, intercity bus, and local transit services. YCCAC's Orange Line provides weekday bus service from Sanford to the Wells Transportation Center, offering connections to both Amtrak's Downeaster and Greyhound intercity bus service. The Downeaster originates in Boston and provides service to Brunswick with multiple daily departures. While there is no direct bus service from Sanford to Boston, Greyhound provides intercity service to Boston from the Wells Transportation Center.

Taxi and Rideshare

Several taxi companies operate in the Sanford area. Rideshare services including Lyft and Uber are also available throughout York County.

Challenges and Opportunities

Active Transportation Infrastructure

Ongoing projects such as the Downtown Sanford RAISE Grant, Mousam Promenade, and South Sanford multi-modal improvements provide opportunities to fill key network gaps, enhance connectivity, and establish a safe, attractive active transportation system. Strengthening trail marketing and programming can also encourage both recreational and commuting use, supporting economic development and overall quality of life.

MaineDOT supports active transportation infrastructure through a coordinated set of programs that fund and encourage walking, biking, and rolling as part of a multi-modal transportation system. Key tools include the state-funded Active Transportation Partnership Initiative (ATPI), which helps municipalities implement small, context-sensitive safety and mobility improvements for vulnerable road users, and the federally supported Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, which provides grants for larger sidewalk, trail, and bikeway projects. These infrastructure investments are complemented by statewide initiatives such as Go Maine, which promotes mode shift through resources and incentives for carpooling, vanpooling, transit use, and other alternatives to driving alone. Additionally, MaineDOT has technical assistance programs for demonstration projects such as flex posts, temporary speed bumps, and other materials to protect vulnerable users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

Connectivity and Street Design

Subdivisions situated outside of the downtown and village core often create disconnected street networks with pedestrian facilities that lead nowhere, increasing City maintenance responsibilities and reducing network efficiency. By focusing on public-private partnerships for the revitalization of existing properties and ensuring strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing neighborhoods, Sanford can promote compact growth, increase walkability, and reduce long-term infrastructure costs. Well-connected developments will integrate seamlessly with the broader active transportation network, supporting safe, multi-modal access to jobs, schools, and services.

Traffic Safety

Traffic safety concerns in the City are shaped by both the frequency and severity of crashes. As reported in Sanford's Safety Action Plan, between 2018 and 2022, a total of 2,523 crashes occurred in Sanford, including 12 fatal crashes and 250 crashes involving fatal, serious, or minor injuries, indicating a clear need for targeted safety improvements. Rear-end/sideswipe crashes accounted for the largest share of total crashes (37%), followed by intersection-related crashes (26%) and roadway departure crashes (21 percent), suggesting that corridor design, conflict points, and driver behavior are important contributors to local safety issues. Among the more severe crash patterns, intersections, lane departures, speeding, and crashes involving young drivers were especially prominent, while pedestrian, bicycle, and motorcycle crashes, though fewer in number, had disproportionately high injury severity rates. The City's HIN further shows that severe crashes were concentrated on a relatively small portion of the roadway system, approximately 22 miles out of Sanford's 176-mile network accounted for the 155 KAB crashes, and several of these corridors were located within or adjacent to transportation-disadvantaged census tracts.

Airport Development

Sanford Regional Airport has experienced significant growth but faces regulatory, environmental, and infrastructure constraints, including limited hangar capacity, de-icing facilities, repair infrastructure, and nearby accommodations. Environmental review requirements and Maine's aircraft excise tax further restrict expansion potential. Strategic investments in hangars, repair and de-icing facilities, nearby hotel and conference amenities, and multi-modal access improvements can strengthen the Airport as a regional economic engine. The Airport's proactive planning approach, including the Ultimate Airport Layout Plan, provides a framework for streamlined approvals and sustainable growth.

Funding and Infrastructure Maintenance

The City of Sanford has a strong track record of securing grant funding for transportation infrastructure investment and planning; however, this reliance on state and federal sources can create uncertainty. While long-term maintenance of sidewalks, trails, streets, and other infrastructure is supported through the municipal budget, Sanford can further strengthen its investment capacity by pursuing hybrid public-private partnerships and continued grant opportunities to fund ongoing enhancements. In addition, integrating technology such as GIS-based asset management will improve the City's ability to monitor conditions, prioritize projects, and coordinate investments, thereby increasing system efficiency, safety, and resilience while maximizing the impact of limited infrastructure dollars.

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10. Sustainability

Overview

Like much of Maine, the City of Sanford faces a range of natural hazards, which are forecasted to be more intense and damaging due to climate change. Flooding, severe winter and summer storm events, wildfires, and drought all pose risks to the City's natural environment, infrastructure, future economic growth, and community physical and mental health. As temperatures rise and precipitation patterns shift due to climate change, forecasts indicate that these hazards will become more frequent and severe.

Working with local, State, and federal stakeholders, Sanford must address damage caused by natural hazards in the present while strengthening the City's resilience to withstand and recover more quickly from future natural hazards and climate change-related impacts. This includes stewarding natural resources, protecting ecosystems and wildlife habitats, promoting climate-smart growth, and properly preparing and protecting emergency systems and critical infrastructure.

This chapter provides an overview of the natural hazards that Sanford experiences, their local relevance, and trends as a result of climate change. The section focuses on specific hazards including flooding, severe spring/summer and fall/winter weather events, wildfires, and drought. The chapter then discusses recent sustainability and climate resiliency initiatives completed and/or underway in the City and opportunities and challenges facing the City in the near future.

Natural Hazards in Sanford/Springvale

Flooding

Flooding occurs when normally dry land is inundated by water due to either overflowing inland or tidal waters or unusually and rapidly accumulating surface waters causing runoff. Flooding is common in the spring as snow melts and can also occur in early winter when early snowfall melts due to mild weather and rainfall. Due to its geography, geology, and hydrology, York County is particularly susceptible to intense, short-term flooding events. Flooding-specific hazards within York County include:

- Dam Failure/Breach: Dam failures and breaches can cause a rapid release of water downstream, causing intense flooding leading to loss of life, property damage, and forced evacuations. Sanford is developing an inventory of all dams as part of Drainage Capital Improvement Plan.
- Flash Flood: Flash floods occur when water levels rapidly rise due to heavy rain, ice jam releases, or rapid snowmelt. Flash floods typically occur during the summer months and can occur almost anywhere, particularly in hilly terrain.
- Ice Jam: Ice jams are caused when floating ice fragments accumulate, blocking normal river flow. During a thaw or rainstorm, the discharge from snowmelt and/or rainfall can

rapidly break up the accumulation and carry it downstream as an ice run, which can cause further blockages and result in serious flooding.

- Previously discussed seasonal frost flooding (see above) – wasn't this all discussed previously? Seems repetitive like AI
- Seasonal flooding: Seasonal flooding occurs when predictable high-water periods, often driven by snowmelt or heavy seasonal rains, temporarily cause rivers, streams, or drainage systems to overflow their banks and inundate adjacent low-lying areas
- Lake Flooding: Also known as lacustrine flooding, lake flooding occurs when flood waters cannot be discharged from a lake outlet fast enough to maintain a lake's water surface elevation. In Maine, typical flood events can cause a lake or pond's water surface elevation to rise between one to two feet. In some instances, flood events can reverse outlet stream flow, causing water surface elevations to rise more than 15 feet.
- Riverine Flooding: Riverine flooding is the periodic overflowing of a river or stream's bank, typically the result of spring runoff or a major rainstorm.
- Urban Flooding: Heavy rain or rapid snowmelt can cause heavy runoff and overflow storm sewer systems, particularly when such systems are poorly maintained, designed, laid out, constructed, or maintained. They might also have poor drainage or be inadequately sized.

In the United States, the main standard for flood planning is the "one-percent annual chance flood," which is set by the FEMA, the government agency that manages flood risk and disaster response. This "one-percent annual flood" standard is also referred to as the base flood or "100-year flood," meaning there is a 1% chance flooding will occur in any given year. Homes, businesses, and critical facilities in areas identified as flood-prone face this level of risk each year. Sanford's Floodplain Management and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances dictate allowed development and building standards within floodplain and riparian areas. The City's Floodplain Management Ordinance was more recently updated in 2024 to conform with the State's revised FEMA flood maps. Sanford also participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. See Chapter 3, Existing Land Use, for further information on Sanford's development standards within flood-prone areas.

York County experienced four times as many nuisance flooding events over the last decade compared with the average of the past century. This trend is projected to continue to increase in the coming decades, resulting in more flooding of roadways and properties particularly in coastal and riparian areas. Stormwater runoff resulting from more intense rain events will also lead to more extensive flooding in these areas. This threat is exacerbated by increasing development pressure in York County, which is increasing the number of impervious surfaces (e.g., roads, buildings, parking lots) and limiting the amount of land available for water to naturally infiltrate into the soil.

In York County, flooding typically results in extensive damage to roads and stormwater drainage systems. Flooding and undersized or aging stormwater infrastructure can undermine the base of paved roads, overwhelm catch basins and culverts, and accelerate potholes and cracking, leading to costly, localized failures on key corridors such as Main Street and other downtown

arterials. Additionally, unpaved and minimally improved roads are especially susceptible to widespread erosion, rutting, and loss of gravel when runoff flows over the road surface and through informal ditches, particularly in outlying rural neighborhoods. As a result, major storm events can create chronic maintenance needs, contribute sediment to nearby streams and wetlands, and periodically render some local roads difficult or unsafe to travel. Historically, flooding events have resulted in partial or complete road washouts and severe erosion of roadside ditches. Because much of the County is rural, many roads do not have storm drainage systems, introducing greater risk of flooding and washouts. The recovery and repair costs associated with this damage can strain municipal budgets. See Chapter 5, Natural and Water Resources, Floodplains section, for more information on the flood risk in Sanford.

Severe Spring and Summer Weather

Severe spring and summer weather events can produce heavy rainfall that leads to flooding and high winds that can damage property and critical infrastructure. In early spring, repeated freeze/thaw cycles and saturated soils weaken local roads and require seasonal weight postings, which limit heavy vehicle access and can disrupt deliveries and other commerce. Severe weather events can also force businesses to close for periods of time, resulting in lost revenue and income for workers. Severe spring and summer weather-specific hazards within York County include:

- Hurricane: An intense tropical cyclone, formed in the atmosphere over warm ocean areas, in which wind speeds reach 74 miles per hour or more and blow in a large spiral around a relatively calm center called the “eye”.
- Lightning: An electrical discharge that results from the buildup of positive and negative charges within a thunderstorm. A bolt of lightning reaches a temperature approaching 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit in a split second.
- Thunderstorm: A thunderstorm is formed when hot unstable air and a warm or cold front or a sea-breeze front collide.
- Tornado: Tornadoes form when air extends downward from a thunderstorm to the ground, forming a distinctive slender, funnel-shaped cloud. With wind velocities of up to 200 miles+ per hour at the central core, a tornado can destroy everything on the ground along its path.

Between 2011 and 2021, a total of 185 severe spring and summer storm events occurred in York County. The majority (98) of these events were thunderstorms. Four tropical storms passed directly over or within 100 miles of York County. Forty-nine reported severe spring/summer weather events caused a total of $6 million in property damage. Over the past 50 years, York County has experienced a significant tropical storm once every three to four years and a hurricane once every 12 years. Current projections forecast the frequency and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes to increase as a result of climate change.

Severe Fall and Winter Weather

Severe fall and winter weather events can result in heavy precipitation, high winds, and extreme cold. Similar to severe spring/summer weather, these events can result in property damage,

power outages, hazardous travel conditions, and business and school closures. Severe fall/winter weather-specific hazards within York County include:

- Blizzard: Blizzards involve sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 miles per hour (mph) or more with visibilities below one quarter mile due to heavy falling and blowing snow that persist for three hours or more and with temperatures of 10 degrees Fahrenheit or colder.
- Ice Storms: Ice storms occur when super-cooled rain freezes on contact with sub-freezing ground. During ice storms, ice can coat trees and wires, weighing them down and causing them to break and snap, which can result in power outages.
- Nor'easter: Nor'easters are extra-tropical coastal storms that produce large amounts of precipitation and strong winds. When the precipitation is in the form of snow, sleet, or freezing rain, it can damage overhead utility lines and cause hazardous travel conditions.
- Sleet Storm: Sleet storms occur when frozen rain drops (i.e., ice pellets) bounce when hitting the ground or other objects. While sleet does not stick to objects, it can accumulate up to two inches in depth or more, causing hazardous travel conditions.
- Freezing Rain: any precipitation that is sticking to trees, utility poles, and utility lines poses a risk to bring them crashing to the ground. The April 2024 storm had a dozen roads closed, and residents trapped with downed trees and wires on either end.

Between 1996 and 2021, York County experienced a total of 366 severe fall/winter weather events, with an average of 15 such events occurring each year. The majority (234) of these events were snowstorms, with 224 resulting in heavy snow fall and 10 producing blizzard conditions. The most recently recorded ice storm occurred in 2008 and caused $6.9 million in property damage.

Based on current projections, York County is at risk of experiencing up to seven severe fall/winter weather events each year. As the State's average temperature increases, precipitation will likely fall as sleet and freezing rain rather than snow, increasing the likelihood of downed trees and power lines and causing hazardous travel conditions.

Wildfires

A wildfire is an unplanned fire caused by human activity or a natural reason, such as lightning that burns within a natural area. The York County Hazard Mitigation Plan defines two types of wildfires:

- Wildland Fire: This is a type of wildfire that burns exclusively within an area of vegetative cover (e.g., grass, brush, timber). These types of fires are usually referred to as wild- or brushfires.
- Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire: This is a fire that occurs within the zone of transition between natural areas and developed land, referred to as the WUI.

Between 2010 and 2021, 549 wildfires occurred within York County, burning a total of 688.83 acres. The three most common causes of wildfires were sparks caused by railroad cars, debris burning, and campfires. During this period, 24 wildfires occurred within Sanford, making the City one of five major hot spots in the County for wildfire occurrences.

Wildfires are largely unpredictable events, depending on a mixture of factors including weather conditions and human influence. As severe spring/summer weather events such as thunderstorms and lightning become more frequent due to climate change, the risk of wildfires could increase as well. Increasing temperatures will also cause more frequent extreme heat events, resulting in drier conditions and increasing the risk of wildfires. Importantly, as development continues in York County and Sanford, the WUI will grow, placing more properties and critical infrastructure at risk.

Drought

Drought is generally defined as an extended period of below-average precipitation, developing and lasting for several weeks to several years. In the United States, a five-level classification system is used to classify a drought's severity, with "D0" or "Abnormally Dry" being the lowest level and "D4" or "Exceptional Drought" being the highest level. Drought-related impacts can range from stunted crop growth, browning lawns, and declining surface water levels at D0 to widespread crop loss, depleted water reservoirs, and extreme water use restrictions at D4.

York County has experienced three droughts classified as D1 or higher in the last 20 years, each of which lasted between two to eight months. Drought conditions in the summer of 2022 led to water restrictions being imposed in several communities within York County. Increasing average temperatures as well as more frequent extreme heat events and heatwaves will create drier conditions, increasing the risk of drought conditions for Sanford, the County, and the State. More frequent and severe drought conditions will decrease the supply and quality of drinking water sources and place wildlife habitats at increased risk of wildfire.

Recent Initiatives and Progress

Over the past decade, Sanford has made strides in clean energy development, green infrastructure, sustainable waste management, and climate resilience. Since 2016, the Sanford Sewerage District (SSD) has been recycling wastewater solids to produce biosolid compost. Sanford DPW's Transfer Station, working with textile recycler Apparel Impact, diverted 134 tons of textiles from landfills, the second highest amount in the State.

Through partnerships with the State and federal governments and private developers, Sanford has become the State's second largest community in terms of installed solar energy capacity. As of February 2026, 15 ground-mounted solar arrays were located throughout the City, including sites abutting the Airport, along New Dam Road, adjacent to the City's transfer station, and outside Downtown Sanford. Together, these arrays produce an estimated 90 megawatts (MW) of clean energy. The most recently completed array, the 140-acre Mousam River Solar Array, came online in November 2025. Located off New Dam Road, the array is on a former electronics recycling facility owned by CGA, Inc. The site, abandoned in the early 2000s, was acquired by the City in 2010. With funding from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection, the City spent approximately

$1.4 million removing 4,000 tons of waste and remediating the site for reuse. The 28 MW array will produce enough clean energy to power an estimated 6,000 homes.

In 2024, the City received a grant from the State's Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) program to produce a Drainage Capital Improvement Plan. Established in 2021, the CRP program helps communities identify and address local priorities related to greenhouse gas emissions, clean energy, and resiliency.

Challenges and Opportunities

Sanford has taken significant steps over the past decade to increase the use of clean energy, promote municipal sustainability programs, and build out safer, multi-modal, green infrastructure in the City. As Sanford continues to grow, it will be vital to help ensure that roadways and stormwater drainage systems are properly maintained and in good condition to handle normal runoff as well as flooding and severe weather events. Currently, the City's Floodplain Management and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances help curtail development within flood-prone areas and establish standards for development that does occur. As the City of Sanford looks toward revising its zoning ordinances, it should review its existing technical manual to conform with the State's latest guidance on green infrastructure and culvert sizing. Doing so will help ensure the City's stormwater drainage systems are able to handle increased runoff and flooding. Once completed, Sanford's Drainage CIP will be a vital resource for the City when prioritizing infrastructure improvements and climate resiliency initiatives.

An expanded, healthy, and connected tree canopy in Downtown Sanford can provide critical shade and evapotranspiration that will help lower air and surface temperatures on streets, sidewalks, and building facades and further mitigate urban heat island effects, improve pedestrian comfort, and lessen cooling energy demand in adjacent buildings.

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11. City Facilities and Services

Overview

Sanford's facilities and public services are essential to protecting public safety, supporting community health, maintaining infrastructure, and enhancing quality of life. Services are delivered through a combination of municipal departments, quasi-municipal entities, regional providers, and nonprofit partners. As service demands increase due to population growth, aging infrastructure, and climate-related impacts, long-term planning is needed to help ensure facilities and services remain effective, resilient, and fiscally sustainable.

Public Works

Sanford DPW, located at 156 School Street, serves to maintain and enhance the infrastructure of the municipality through stewardship of the City's roadways, bridges, sidewalks, drainage, parking, fleet, and environmental services, providing the most reliable and safe systems possible given available resources. The department oversees and maintains 184 miles of roads, sidewalks, drainage infrastructure, work zone traffic control, winter storm response, the transfer station and capped landfill, the City's Roadway Capital Improvement Program, and a fleet of vehicles and equipment intended to be capable of supporting this infrastructure.

Organization and Staffing

The department's structure and operations are fully described in its Standard Operations and Procedures Manual.

DPW consists of five (5) Divisions:

1. Highway: performing the physical operations and maintenance on the City’s infrastructure

2. Garage: Maintaining the fleet of vehicles and equipment required by other Divisions and Departments to effectively perform their jobs

3. Transfer Station: Operating a facility so that residents can conveniently and effectively dispose of their Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and recycling

4. Engineering: Performing civil engineering technical review, inspection, and guidance on all City and development activities

5. Administration: Providing guidance and management to coordinate DPW actions with other City Departments, State and Federal agencies, and local utilities

The department’s Highway Division currently employs 13 full-time Highway Maintainers, short of the 16 calculated by DPW to adequately perform routine maintenance functions of the City's infrastructure. This staffing shortage is exacerbated by a statewide shortage of truck drivers and equipment operators. In response to chronic staffing shortages, the department has internally trained three drivers to obtain their commercial driver's licenses and plans to train additional staff.

In 2025, DPW conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. DPW Employees collaboratively identified teamwork, comradery, and leadership as key strengths of the department and weaknesses as equipment needs, insufficient department staffing, and job training. The department set goals to continue seeking full funding for the equipment capital maintenance program through the annual budgeting process with the City Council Budget Committee, which may involve educating the City Council about fleet management, reasonable rates of vehicle/equipment turnover, and escalating costs of deferred maintenance on older equipment. In the wake of a series of lifestyle-related diseases and illnesses affecting current and former DPW staff, the department has launched an initiative to provide education and support for more balanced lifestyles.

Facilities

The current City garage building is nearing or past its functional life expectancy with numerous roof leaks, electrical issues, and narrow doors barely capable of accommodating a full-sided snowplow and wing. DPW is working with a team of students from the University of New Hampshire to develop preliminary plans for a new City garage.

The City is in the process of hiring a new Director of Facilities. There is currently no plan drafted for routine maintenance of the department's facilities. Once hired, the Department hopes to work with the new Facilities Director to develop respective maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction plans.

Fleet Management

DPW maintains a comprehensive Fleet Management Program documented in Appendix H of its Standard Operations and Procedures Manual. The program seeks to optimize the delivery of department services by documenting the processes of drafting specifications and purchasing, utilizing, maintaining, managing, and decommissioning both vehicles and equipment required by the department. The Vehicle Replacement Program promotes an orderly system of purchasing and funding a standardized vehicle and heavy equipment fleet.

Infrastructure Funding and Programs

The City's infrastructure funding is primarily through DPW Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Program and the Roadway Capital Improvement Program.

The Highway Division tracks hours by core department function and reports them monthly. The department can demonstrate that the O&M program is underfunded. It is critically important that the City prioritize O&M funding over capital improvement planning. If the City cannot maintain the infrastructure, it will be exponentially more expensive to reconstruct it.

The Roadway Capital Improvement Program often serves as a catchall for the City's capital investments, typically major contracted roadway maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts. The department's five-year CIP draft changes regularly. Changes are often a result of emergent needs (such as failing infrastructure), additional funding participation (getting the City's dollars matched by the State), or changes as a result of political guidance from the City Manager or City Council.

Another tool used to guide the Roadway CIP is the City's Pavement Condition Index (PCI). This is a survey of roadway surface conditions updated approximately every five years that helps the department identify which roads with what treatment will have the highest benefit-to-cost ratio for the City. While the PCI reviews and estimates roadway surface conditions, it does not include other essentials such as drainage systems, sidewalks, or utility considerations.

Drainage and Stormwater

Drainage infrastructure is a growing concern to DPW. Much of Sanford's drainage infrastructure is antiquated combined sewer overflow systems turned over to the City by the SSD when the State of Maine mandated that the systems be separated. Much of this infrastructure is approaching or past its expected service life. Several major systems are essentially un-maintainable as they cross private properties and under buildings. With current Roadway CIP funding programmed for capital projects, the department is typically addressing drainage issues on an emergency basis only.

To address these concerns, the Planning Department and Public Works Department recently teamed up on a grant opportunity to develop a Drainage Capital Improvement Program. This program would review existing conditions and help identify and prioritize the department's greatest issues.

Drainage reconstruction and culvert upgrades along sections of Cottage Street, William Oscar Emery Drive, the Mousam Promenade, and Main Street downtown are anticipated to begin in spring 2027 as a component of the RAISE Grant.

Collaboration and Partnerships

DPW is a good collaborator with other City departments, quasi-municipal utilities, and private organizations. The department often finds itself leading local and regional coordination efforts through monthly utility coordination meetings, pre-construction meetings, pre-plow meetings, or other major initiatives. The department does struggle with emergency responses, as it is often uninformed (for example, traffic control for fires).

The department seeks to positively partner with private entities for the benefit of public good through public-private partnerships (PPPs) as included in the department's technical manual. Building public roads on the periphery of the City makes the department's job tougher because staff need to travel far to maintain them. More remote roads serve fewer residents and therefore are more expensive for their respective use. The department has developed a set of Public Road Acceptance Standards required for a road to receive the department's recommendation for public acceptance.

The department has initiated efforts to revitalize the urban core where residential and commercial density already exist. DPW has created a City Technical Manual with the intent of drawing out technical standards from the City's ordinances. While the technical manual has been acknowledged by the City Council, it has not been "accepted" so as to avoid creating conflicts with ordinances. (It should be a major milestone of the comprehensive plan to withdraw technical standards from the City's ordinance so that the technical manual can be accepted.)

Utility Coordination

Sanford DPW holds a monthly Utility Coordination Meeting vital for communication between those maintaining the City's infrastructure and routine operations. Sanford has developed a local One Touch Make Ready (1TMR) overhead utility coordination process to address a significant backlog of incomplete overhead utility transfers. The 1TMR process has one contractor complete all necessary utility relocations and pull the old pole. Despite sounding relatively simple, this program took several years to develop the necessary partnerships and contracts.

Grant Awards

Sanford has an excellent history of grant awards. DPW purposefully maintains three Employees with MaineDOT Local Project Administration certifications. Recent grant awards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 2014-2022 Goodall Brook Watershed Management Plan (three phases)
- 20210319 MaineDEP Phosphorous Mitigation Grant (new Street Sweeper/Basin Vacuum)
- 20210707 MaineDOT Heads Up Grant for Sanford Street Signs (Pedestrian Crossing Signs)
- 20211130 RAISE Grant for Downtown Improvements ($25M)
- 20220208 MaineDEP Waste Diversion Composting Grant (third-party program eventually withdrew)
- 2019 Volkswagen settlement grant for air emissions for new 10-Wheel Truck
- FHWA SS4A
- Annual Participation in MaineDOT MPI program
    - 2026 – Grammar Road reconstruction
    - 2025 – High Street reconstruction
    - 2021 – River Street reconstruction
    - 2020 – Mount Hope Road reconstruction
    - 2020 – Old Mill Road reconstruction
    - 2018 – Main Street overlay and sidewalk construction to Sanford High School

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Sanford DPW oversees solid waste disposal and recycling operations through its Landfill and Transfer Center located at 81 Rushton Street. The facility serves residents of Sanford and Springvale while maintaining full compliance with Maine Department of Environmental Protection regulations.

Sanford operates a Pay-as-You-Throw (PAYT) program that uses orange bags to meter residential municipal solid waste while encouraging recycling and waste reduction. Recycling services are provided free of charge; the City utilizes single-sort recycling, allowing residents to place all recyclable materials together. Recycling participation is increasing over time.

Sanford's services are subsidized, meaning that the costs paid by users of the system are below the actual cost of disposal. A fraction of the remainder of these costs is paid through general taxation.

Police

The Sanford Police Department serves the community with comprehensive law enforcement and public safety services. In 2023, the department successfully addressed significant staffing challenges through an active retire-rehire program and focused recruitment efforts. Two officers graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in the spring, with another beginning training in the fall. The department restructured its command element by appointing a major of operations to oversee patrol operations. By year's end, only two officer positions remained vacant, a substantial improvement from the eight to 10 vacancies previously faced.

Mental Health Unit

The Sanford Police Department operates a Mental Health Unit (MHU), a co-response team pairing mental health professionals with community outreach officers dedicated to responding to individuals experiencing mental health crises. This law enforcement-based program provides specialized support to residents in crisis and connects them with appropriate community resources.

Response Types

In 2023, the department handled 29,612 calls for service, representing a 14.8% increase over the previous year. The department made 929 arrests and conducted 5,777 motor vehicle stops. Officers responded to 736 vehicle crashes and 4,480 animal complaints. Mental health, homeless, or substance use calls totaled 1,488, reflecting the ongoing need for specialized crisis response services. The department received State Bureau of Highway Safety grant funding for traffic enforcement and installed four electronic speed signs to address community traffic complaints.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Sanford Fire and EMS Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue, and fire prevention services to the community. In 2024, the department responded to 4,737 incidents, including 100 structure fires and 3,403 rescue and EMS incidents. The emergency calls are forecasted yearly on the average community usage; history and the numbers show us Department usage is 21% of the overall population. Currently the Department sees an average 5% annual increase in call volume, surpassing 7,000 responses in 2025. Today, 18% of the population in our community is 65 years or older, accounting for, a documented 1,987 responses/calls in 2025. Like other communities in Maine, we see more people aging in place, requiring more services and we as a community continually look for ways

to bridge this gap. The department operates from two stations: Central Station in Sanford and District Station in the Springvale village area. With two new stations coming online in 2027/2028, the Department looks to improve response times to meet the needs of this growing community in a timely manner.

The fire department currently operates from two outdated facilities that no longer meet operational needs. In November 2024, residents approved a referendum bond to construct two new fire stations to replace the existing facilities. Construction is expected to begin in 2026. In early 2025, the City secured $5 million in federal funding to support construction of the two new public safety facilities, including a modern headquarters and a new Springvale substation.

A large portion of the Fire Department's building systems were successfully upgraded during recent renovations, which have modernized much of the district's infrastructure. However, many HVAC units were cut off or not included in those renovation plans due to budget restrictions at the time. While understandable given financial constraints, this has created a situation where the district now has mixed infrastructure, some systems are new and reliable, while others are aging and approaching or exceeding their useful life.

Data shows that nearly one third of HVAC equipment is approaching or past its life expectancy. More concerning, 33 pieces of equipment have either failed or are over 150% past their useable life. To put this in perspective, if a unit is expected to last 20 years, the district has equipment that is over 30 years old and still in operation.

Currently, the City does not have a full-time fire marshal. The City works in partnership with the State of Maine Fire Marshal's Office when needed. The current State fire marshal is Richard McCarthy.

Table 11.1: Fire Department of Equipment

Name	Make/Model	Year	Age (Years)	Condition
Engine 1	Pierce Enforcer	2020	5	Good
Truck 37	Pierce Aerial	2018	7	Good
Ambulance 1	Ford Custom	2017	8	Good
Ambulance 2	Ford Custom	2016	9	Good
Engine 5	Pierce 4x4 Forestry	2018	7	Good
Ambulance 3	Ford Custom	2021	4	Good
Rescue 7	Pierce Quantum Rescue	2014	11	Good
Engine 4	Pierce Impel	2013	12	Good (reserve)

Name	Make/Model	Year	Age (Years)	Condition
Engine 2	Emergency One Cyclone	2001	24	Being phased out
Brush 1	Mahindra UTV Diesel	2018	7	Good

Source: City of Sanford

Library

Sanford is home to two public libraries. The Springvale Public Library Association hosts regular community events and provides access to a collection of physical books, the Digital Maine Library, and Cloud Library. A lending library of 35 spices is available as well as a library of things. The library is partially funded by the City and relies on community support to sustain services and programs.

The Louis B. Goodall Memorial Library was built in 1937 and has served the Sanford community since. From 2023 to 2025, the library underwent renovations funded by a federal community projects grant and was temporarily displaced; the library has now returned to the original building. The library supports regular community events, access to computers, printing and scanning, and e-book and audiobook access. As part of the Minerva consortium, the library provides access to over 60 Maine library collections. Neither library has late fees.

Schools and Educational Facilities

The Sanford School District serves 3,250 students enrolled across seven schools: Sanford High School, Sanford Middle School, Margaret Chase Smith Elementary School, Sanford Pride Elementary School, Carl J. Lamb Elementary School, Sanford Regional Technical Center, and Sanford Community Adult Education.

Between 2021 and 2025, enrollment increased by more than one third, requiring the district to expand staff, resources, and services while maintaining educational quality. The enrollment growth experienced between 2021 and 2024, along with the loss of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, created financial pressures that continue to affect the district budget. Higher operational costs, increased staffing expenses, additional supply needs, and greater facility maintenance requirements are now permanent features of the district budget.

Graduation rates have climbed by nearly seven percentage points over the past four years to reach more than 92%. The Sanford Regional Technical Center continues preparing students for high-demand careers through 25 different programs serving seven area school districts, with many students earning both industry certifications and college credits.

Farmers' Market

Farmers' markets are an important community asset, connecting residents to local growers and providing access to fresh products while encouraging the local economy. The City is home to the Sanford Farmers' Market, which operates over the summer season (May through October) between 8 a.m. and noon on Saturdays. It is located in Central Park across from City Hall, and it previously operated in Springvale as a second location on Wednesdays. The market previously partnered with the YCCAC in 2016 to provide people with free transit between these different locations. It currently features 14 vendors from across the region, offering a range of products from sourdough bread served by the Humble Loaf, vegetables and microgreens from Poplar Brooks Farm, and honey from Mountain View Bees. The market has been a part of the Maine Harvest Bucks Program alongside 33 other markets throughout Maine. Sanford's market also offers several programs, including Senior FarmShare, Vouchers for Veterans, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Power of Produce (POP) to further provide all residents with an opportunity to purchase fresh local produce.

Public Health

A strong public health system is essential to the well-being, resilience, and long-term vitality of the Sanford community. Public health encompasses far more than medical care—it includes access to preventive services, behavioral health support, healthy food, and community-based programs that help residents thrive. Sanford benefits from a robust network of healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, social service agencies, and regional partners that work together to meet the physical, mental, and social needs of residents across all stages of life.

This section provides an overview of Sanford's public health resources, including medical providers, behavioral health and substance use services, and programs that address food security. Together, these services contribute to a healthier, safer, and more equitable community.

Medical Providers

Sanford is served by several medical facilities providing comprehensive healthcare services to residents. MaineHealth operates multiple facilities in Sanford, including an emergency department. Area providers offer primary care, radiology, gynecology, cardiology, pediatrics, and more.

Nasson Healthcare, operated by YCCAC, is a community health center providing primary medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare to residents of York County and neighboring communities. Services include preventive care and treatment for acute and chronic conditions. In addition, Nasson offers health education, care management, and referrals to specialists and other services. Nasson accepts most health insurance plans, can set up payment plans, and will treat patients regardless of insurance or ability to pay.

The nearest emergency department is the MaineHealth Maine Medical Center Sanford Emergency Department within Sanford.

Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Access to timely, coordinated, and comprehensive behavioral health services is essential to community well-being. Sanford and the surrounding region are served by a wide network of organizations that provide mental health support, substance use treatment, recovery services, and harm reduction resources. These programs help residents navigate crises, connect with long-term care, and access supportive environments that promote stability, safety, and recovery.

- Maine 211 is a free, confidential referral service operated by United Way that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services, including mental health resources.
- Seeds of Hope is a nonprofit organization that addresses poverty and promotes personal growth through various initiatives, including a drop-in center with trained volunteers, meals, and support services.
- Maine Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach, Naloxone, and Safety (OPTIONS) provides substance use professionals who offer judgment-free guidance and connections to local resources for harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and other services.
- Maine Access Point (MAP) is a harm reduction organization providing syringe access services, overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution, peer support, and advocacy throughout rural Maine.
- Enso Recovery provides comprehensive substance use disorder treatment programs in Sanford through an outpatient center offering a safe and supportive environment for clients.
- Groups Recover Together offers substance use counseling, addiction treatment, and group support, including support for medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and weekly group therapy sessions.
- Milestone Recovery focuses on providing support and services to individuals struggling with substance use disorders, mental illnesses, and homelessness, offering a specialized emergency shelter for substance use disorder, medically monitored detoxification, residential treatment, a housing navigator program, and a mobile outreach program called the HOME Team.
- Crossroads is Maine's premier addiction and behavioral health treatment center providing gender-responsive treatment programs for addiction, mental health, and eating disorders in a safe, supportive environment.
- Better Life Partners Maine offers MAT for opioid use disorder along with supportive services through a flexible, accessible, and community-based approach, with treatment often beginning the same day as initial contact.
- Saint Thomas Recovery Center provides residential rehabilitation for men aged 18 and older struggling with chemical dependencies and substance use disorders, with admission and fees covered by MaineCare and GA.

- Recovery Connections of Maine offers a safe, affordable, and comprehensive path to recovery for individuals facing substance use disorders and mental health challenges, accepting MaineCare and GA and working with a wide network of private insurance providers.
- Sweetser operates a Child Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program in Sanford, an intensive community-based outpatient treatment program with a multi-disciplinary team supporting eligible children at imminent risk of losing where they live due to severe behavioral impairments. Sweetser also operates a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Sanford offering high-quality, integrated, evidence-based substance use and mental health services, including MAT for substance use disorders.
- United Way Southern Maine mobilizes nonprofits, government, businesses, and funders to support efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes.
- First County Foundation is the charitable arm of York County Government currently constructing the York County Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Center, which is focused on trauma-informed care and will promote holistic healing through tailored treatment plans and ongoing aftercare support for lasting recovery.

Food Assistance Programs

Access to reliable, affordable, and nutritious food is essential to community health and well-being. Sanford residents benefit from a broad network of food assistance programs that support individuals and families experiencing food insecurity or facing temporary hardship. These resources range from emergency food pantries and free community meals to federal nutrition benefits and senior meal services.

- Salvation Army Food Pantry provides non-perishable items on Tuesdays and produce, meats, breads, and pastries on Fridays.
- Sanford Food Pantry serves Sanford/Springvale residents only on Mondays.
- St. Therese of Lisieux Food Closet provides food assistance on Thursdays with no residency requirement.
- First County Food Pantry in Alfred is open to low-income residents from all York County towns on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- Crossroads United Methodist provides food distribution on the second Thursday of every month for seniors 60 and older from York County.
- Sanford Unitarian Universalist Church runs the Corner Cupboard, providing non-food necessities on the third Saturday of each month.
- St. George's Episcopal Church operates a Little Free Pantry (take-what-you-need outdoor pantry), offers free community meals, and provides Baby Blessings on the fourth

Saturday of every month, offering free emergency assistance for baby formula and other baby items.

- New Beginnings Christian Church provides a free community meal every Thursday at 5 p.m.
- The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, operated by YCCAC, serves pregnant women, infants, and children from birth to age five, offering one-on-one health and nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support, and assistance paying for nutritious food and formula.
- SNAP in Maine provides monthly benefits to help low-income households purchase nutritious food through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.
- Free or reduced school meals are available year-round through the Sanford School Department, with applications accepted at any time. During summer break, the Sanford School Department's Nutrition Program sponsors the USDA's Summer Food Service Program for children and teens 18 and under with no eligibility requirements or registration required.
- Meals on Wheels provides meal delivery to homebound seniors or those with mobility limitations, with several community meal sites in the area where seniors can enjoy nutritious meals and social opportunities.
- The Maine Food Access Map is an interactive statewide tool that identifies food pantries, community meal sites, WIC offices, senior meal programs, and SNAP retailers, including those located in Sanford.

Housing and Economic Assistance

Stable housing, financial security, and access to essential services are foundational to community resilience. Sanford residents benefit from a broad network of local and regional programs that provide emergency support, housing assistance, financial guidance, employment resources, and family services. These organizations play a critical role in helping individuals and families overcome economic hardship, maintain stable housing, and build long-term financial independence.

- City of Sanford GA provides confidential financial assistance to Sanford/Springvale residents who are having difficulty meeting basic needs for housing, food, heating fuel, and other goods or services essential to maintain themselves or their families.
- SHA aids with subsidized housing programs, affordable housing, and resources for those who are unhoused or at risk of becoming unhoused.
- YCCAC provides many services including child and family services, healthcare, homeownership resources, utility assistance programs, and transportation.
- The State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides health and social services to children, families, older Mainers, and individuals with disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders.

- United Way Southern Maine works with the community to respond to emerging needs and tackle persistent issues, including child care, food insecurity, housing instability, and mental health.
- It Takes a Village is a local nonprofit organization working in York County that provides resources for families and individuals struggling with financial hardship, homelessness, food insecurity, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other life challenges.
- York County Career Center helps those seeking employment navigate the job search through a variety of no-cost employment and training services, including resume building and job training.
- Head Start is a federally funded program for children aged zero to five years old and their families.

Infrastructure

Water

Water service is provided by the Sanford Water District, a quasi-municipal entity with a three-member board of trustees serving the City, including the Village of Springvale. The district is located at 243 River Street in Springvale, a quarter mile south of the intersection of Pleasant Street.

The district maintains a high standard of quality, meeting all State and federal water quality requirements and achieving a loss rate of less than 10%.

Sanford was built on a large natural gravel aquifer. The Sanford Water District has nine sources of water supply, all groundwater sources that draw water from sand and gravel aquifers located in the City:

- Main Pumping Station: Naturally developed wells located on River Street (currently offline)
- Cobb I Well: Gravel pack well located on Spartan Drive
- Cobb II Well: Gravel pack well located on Spartan Drive (currently offline)
- Country Club Road Well: Gravel pack well located on Country Club #2 Road. This well's modeled wellhead protection area goes into North Berwick, and ongoing coordination is needed to support safe drinking water.
- Old Mill Road Well: Gravel pack well located on Old Mill Road
- Eagle Drive No. 1 Well: Gravel pack well located on Eagle Drive (currently offline)
- Eagle Drive No. 11 Well: Gravel pack well located on Eagle Drive
- New Dam Well: Gravel pack well located on New Dam Road (currently offline)
- Bernier Road Wells: Gravel pack wells located on Bernier Road

The Sanford Water District has historically pumped an average of 2.6 million gallons per day, with peak production of approximately 3.5 million gallons per day in the summer. Consumption has dropped in recent years, however, and the average pumpage of the district is now under 2 million gallons per day. Currently, the district pumps an average of 1.57 million gallons of water per day to meet community water needs. The district has approximately 6,000 service connections. The district does not anticipate demand outpacing supply; as such, no further sources are being examined.

The district adds hypochlorite at its supply sources, and, seasonally, doses two standpipes to maintain adequate chlorine residuals within specific areas of the distribution system. Fluorosilicic acid is added to all source water to promote dental health; fluoride levels must be maintained between 0.5 and 1.2 mg/L, with a target level of 0.7 mg/L. Sodium hydroxide is added to all sources to produce less corrosive water with a higher pH level. Phosphate is added to Country Club II and Bernier wells for iron and manganese chelation.

Extensive sampling programs are implemented by the district including regular monitoring of bacteria, acidity, fluoride, chlorine, copper, lead, and other contaminants. The Sanford Water District has discontinued the use of one of its six wells after recent test samples exceeded the interim Maine State Drinking Water standard for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Regular system maintenance is conducted. In 2024, water mains were replaced on Spencer Hill Road, Grammar Road, and Hansons Ridge Road. On William Oscar Emery Drive, the district replaced the water main from River Street to the armory, then installed a new water main from the armory to Front Street to complete a 12-inch transmission loop to Main Street. These improvements help prevent leakage in the system as well as improve water quality and fire flows in Sanford. In 2017, the district contracted with Marcel Payeur Inc. to renovate and paint the Grammar Tank at a total cost of $709,595.45.

As of October 30, 2026, there are 11 Public Water Systems (PWS) in the City of Sanford. This includes: four Community (C) Water Systems, six Transient, Non-Community (NC) Water Systems, and one Non-Transient, Non-Community (NTNC) Water System.

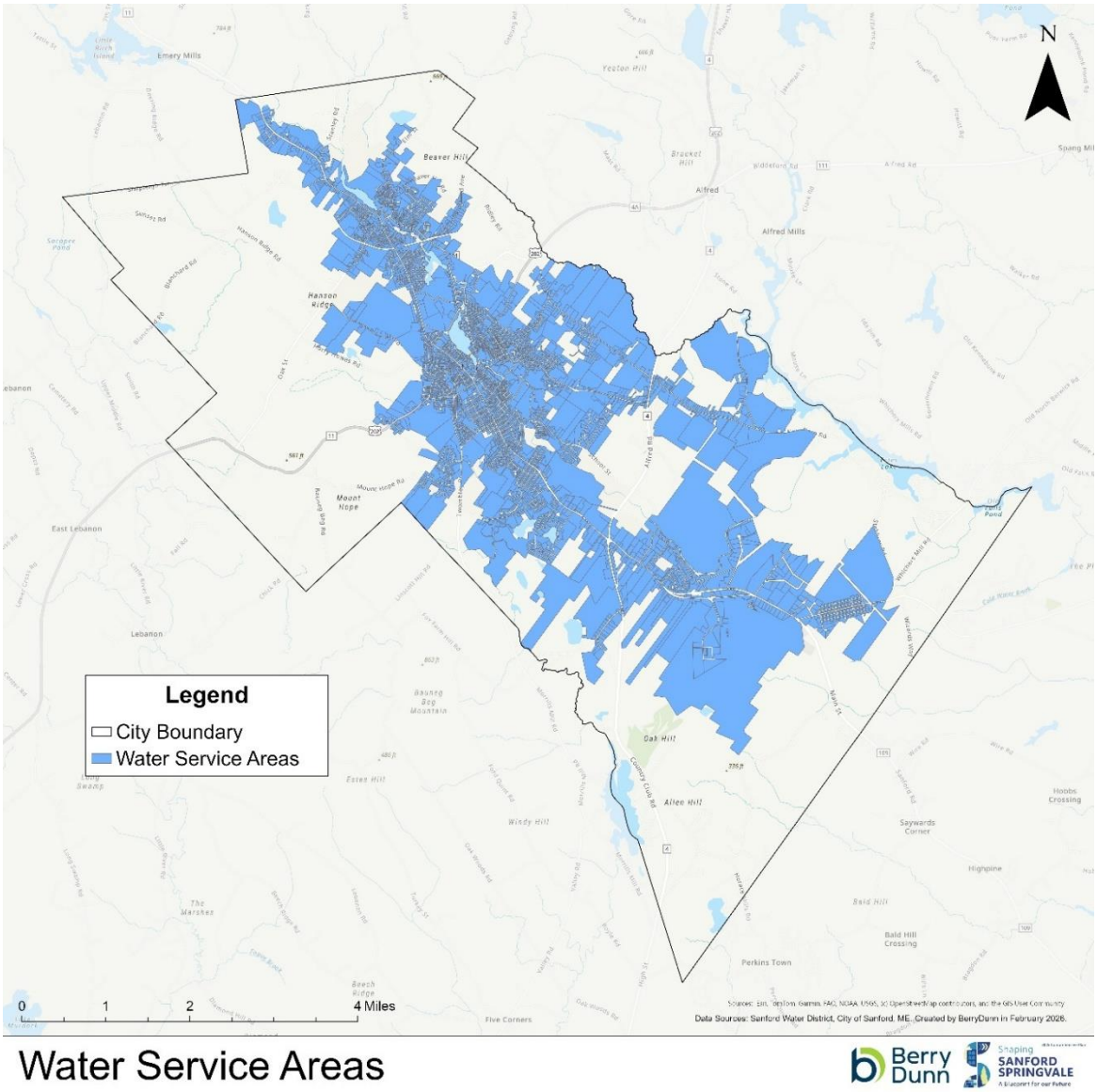
Table 11.2: Public Water Systems

Water System No.	Water System Name	Type	Status	Pri. Cnty/City Served	Pri. Src. Water Type
ME0017059	APACHE CAMPGROUND CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW
ME0002809	ESTES LAKE MOBILE HOME PARK CET FIT	C	A	YORK	GW
ME0002755	HUTTOPIA SAND POND LLC CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW
ME0092288	MARSH BROOK ESTATES CET FIT	C	A	YORK	GW
ME0002782	PINEWOOD PARK CET FIT	C	A	YORK	GW
ME0092812	RIVERS EDGE FAMILY CAMPGROUND LLC CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW
ME0002805	SANFORD COUNTRY CLUB CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW
ME0091410	SANFORD WATER DISTRICT CET FIT	C	A	YORK	GW
ME0094978	WAYPOINT- CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER CET FIT	NTNC	A	YORK	GW
ME0002766	WOODEN TAVERN LLC CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW
ME0002807	YELLOWSTONE PARK CET FIT	NC	A	YORK	GW

Source: Maine Drinking Water Program

A portion of North Berwick Water District's modeled wellhead protection area lies within the City of Sanford. The City and Sanford Water District will need to continue ongoing communication and partnership with North Berwick Water District and the Town of North Berwick to support safe drinking water.

Figure 11.2 Water Service Area

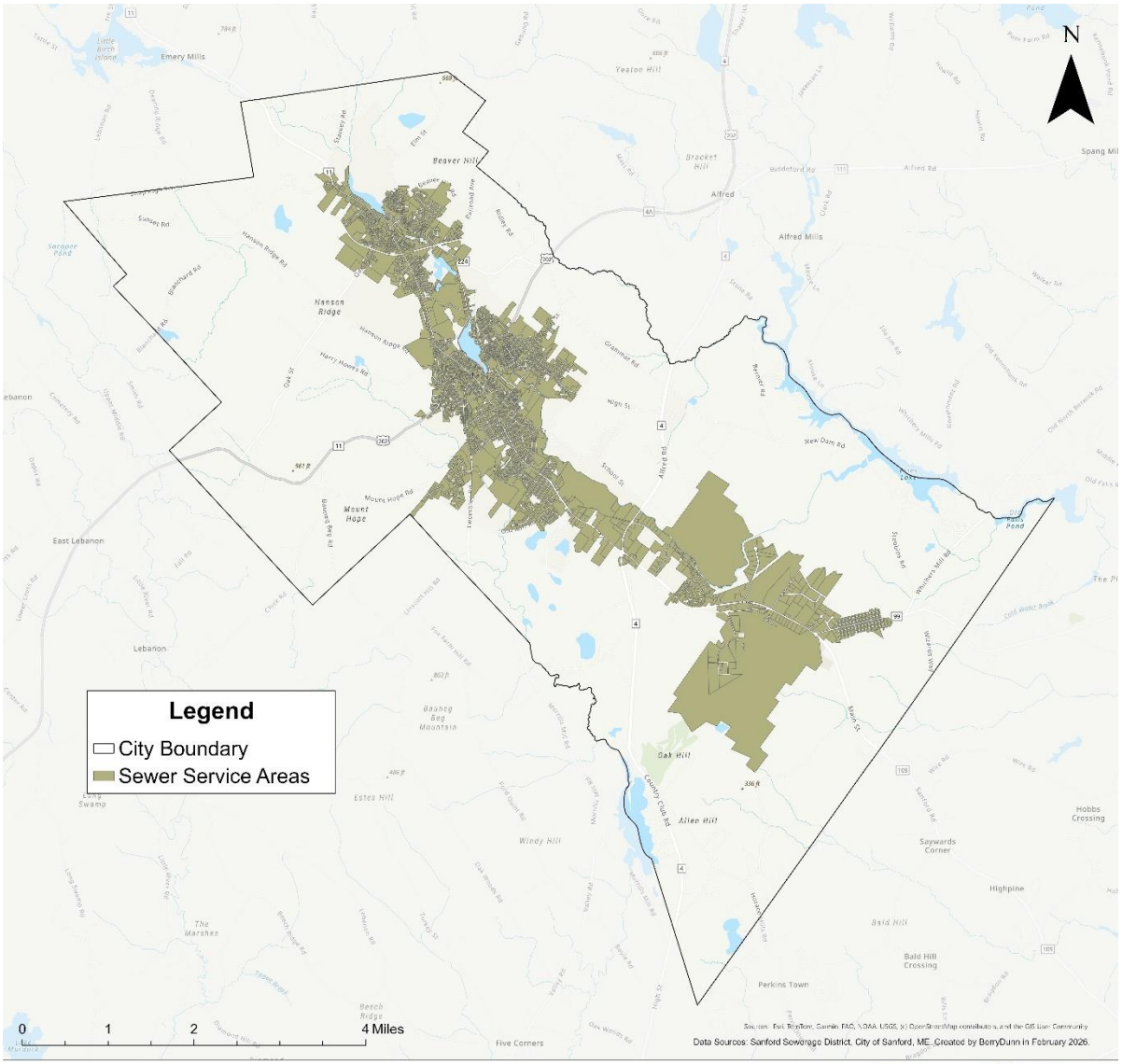


Source: Sanford Water District

Sewage

The SSD provides wastewater collection and treatment services for the community. The district employs 14 staff members who collect, convey, screen, treat, and release wastewater to the Mousam River. SSD maintains 73 miles of pipe, 2,200 sanitary sewer manhole structures, 16 pump stations, and nearly 4,900 accounts. Service does not cover the whole City; coverage can be seen in Figure 11.3. SSD does not drain septic tanks. A number of private providers are available, such as Marquis Well and Pump and Stoney Road Septic.

Figure 11.3: Sewer Service Area



Source: Sanford Sewerage District

Broadband

Sanford has made significant investments in digital infrastructure to support economic development and quality of life. Since 2018, the City has invested $2.4 million, including $769,209 in federal funds, into SanfordNet fiber. The 45-mile municipally owned network provides connectivity to the downtown mill district, industrial parks, and many other critical locations.

Natural Gas

Unitil's Targeted Area Build-out (TAB) program is a natural gas expansion initiative designed to extend service into previously unserved neighborhoods by spreading infrastructure costs over time rather than requiring large upfront payments from new customers. Under TAB, Unitil installs new gas mains and services within defined project areas, and participating customers pay a dedicated surcharge on their monthly gas bill for a set term to recover a portion of the extension costs. This approach improves the affordability of fuel conversion, supports higher participation rates, and can advance local goals related to energy affordability, economic development, and reduced on-site emissions from older, less efficient heating systems

Challenges and Opportunities

Sanford's municipal services face a period of significant transition as the community grows, infrastructure ages, and service demands continue to rise. A central challenge across departments is the increasing strain placed on aging municipal facilities, many of which no longer meet operational needs or are approaching the end of their functional life. Public Works buildings, City Hall, the City garage, and older HVAC systems illustrate years of deferred maintenance that now require substantial reinvestment. At the same time, voter support for replacing outdated fire stations and the award of federal funding provides a major opportunity to modernize public safety facilities, improve response times, and build infrastructure that is resilient to future needs.

Growing service demands are another pressure point. Police, Fire, EMS, Public Works, and school facilities are all experiencing rising call volumes and workload increases, often outpacing staffing and available resources. The Police Department's mental health-related calls, the increase in EMS incidents, and the school district's sharp enrollment growth all demonstrate the widening scope of municipal responsibilities. While staffing shortages, intensified by statewide competition for qualified workers, poses ongoing challenges, Sanford has begun deploying creative strategies such as retire-rehire programs, expanded academy pipelines, and in-house CDL training. These approaches show promises for strengthening the City's workforce and improving long-term recruitment and retention.

Funding constraints add further complexity. O&M budgets remain insufficient to meet present-day expectations, forcing the City to rely on capital accounts for needs better suited to routine maintenance. This makes it difficult to keep pace with deteriorating roadways, stormwater systems, and municipal buildings. However, developing multiyear capital improvement plans for facilities, equipment, and drainage infrastructure presents an opportunity to support proactive, transparent, and fiscally responsible long-term planning. Establishing a dedicated capital

reserve for building systems would allow the City to replace equipment before it fails, reducing emergency costs and avoiding service disruptions.

Environmental and climate-related pressures further shape the City's service needs. Aging culverts, antiquated drainage systems, and historic combined sewer infrastructure are increasingly vulnerable to severe weather events. Emergency-only responses to drainage failures are costly and inefficient, but recent planning efforts, including pursuit of a Drainage Capital Improvement Program and federally funded stormwater upgrades, offer a path toward more resilient and strategically managed infrastructure.

Finally, Sanford's efforts to guide growth toward the urban core and apply updated Public Road Acceptance Standards create an opportunity to control long-term maintenance costs and support more efficient service delivery. Pairing strategic land use decisions with data-driven tools, such as pavement condition assessments, fleet management systems, and grant-funded improvements, positions the City to address its challenges proactively while maximizing the impact of limited resources.

This combination of constraints and emerging opportunities places Sanford at an important inflection point. With targeted investment, improved coordination, and long-range planning, the community can strengthen essential services, modernize infrastructure, and help ensure that City facilities and programs remain effective, equitable, and resilient for the decades ahead.

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12. Fiscal Capacity

Fiscal Capacity in the Planning Context

The City's fiscal capacity, and thus its ability to provide adequate levels of high-quality services, largely depends on creating and maintaining a diverse economic environment supported by residents, the local business community, employment centers, and—especially in the case of the City—comprehensive plan priorities. Therefore, fiscal capacity, land use, economic development, and capital investment are inevitably intertwined. The City can help cultivate interdependence between economic needs and residential needs through land use, infrastructure investment, and fiscal policies that complement and support the City's neighborhoods, commercial partners, built environment, and natural environment, thus helping ensure the expansion of the City's fiscal capacity into the future.

The City's annual budget serves as the principal financial planning and control tool. The City utilizes its annual operating and capital budget development process as the primary strategic tool that helps guide the City to realize all elements associated with regulatory and strategic goals and objectives. In order for the City to realize and implement the core components laid out in the comprehensive plan and strategic plans, it will need to lay out a fiscally responsible road map. To that end, a five-year financial forecast should be developed for the City's general fund and applicable special fund operations (enterprise funds would be excluded from this analysis) to help guide the City and provide revenue and expense projections and estimates. The forecast should include key assumptions and trends identified related to revenues and expenditure over the next five FYs, specific to the Sanford community.

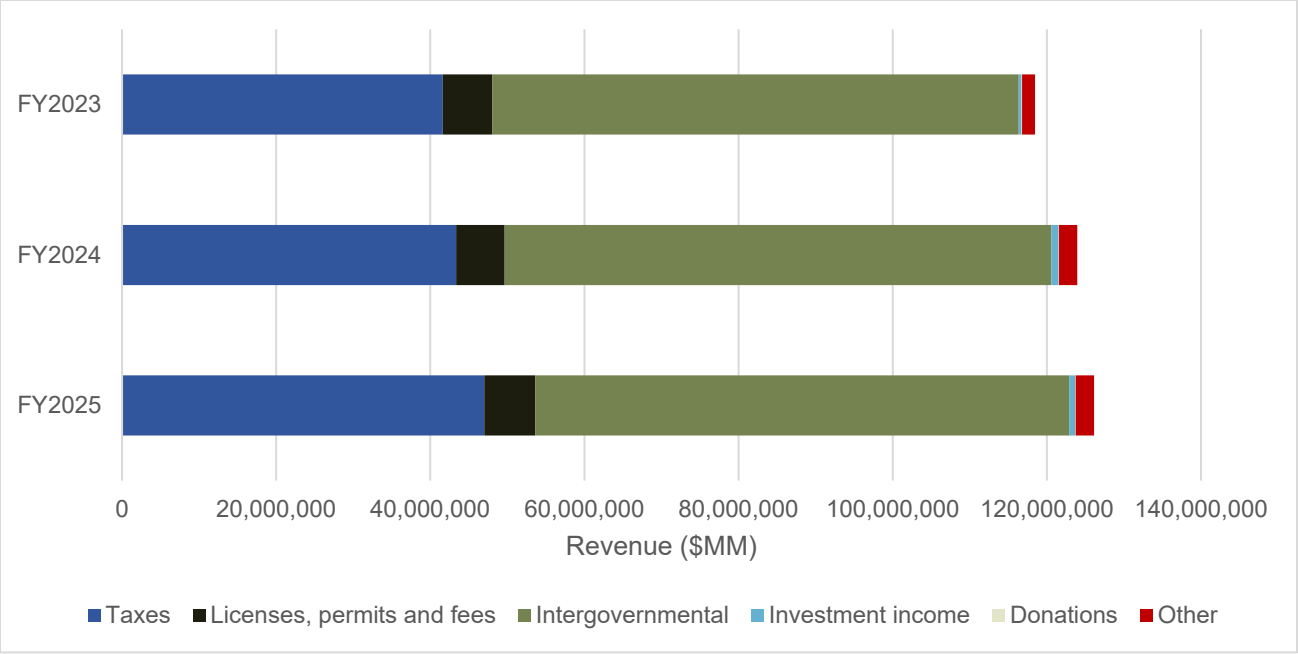
Furthermore, consideration of applicable comprehensive plan priorities should also inform the five-year financial forecast as well as other budgetary assumptions that would address financial needs and priorities related to day-to-day service delivery and other City-wide initiatives. The forecast should attempt to balance priorities with issues of affordability and reality. The financial forecast model developed should provide a thorough analysis of existing funding practices, sources of funds, and funding levels for day-to-day service delivery, capital investments, and comprehensive and strategic plan priority investments. It should also identify barriers to long-term funding needs in certain scenarios.

Revenue and Expenses

To establish a baseline for assessing fiscal capacity growth, it is necessary to understand the City's core revenue-generating structure. In FY 2025, approximately 35% of total revenues were derived from taxes, continuing a downward trend from 37% in FY 2024 and 40% in FY 2023. Intergovernmental revenues accounted for roughly 58% of total revenues in FY 2025. Although this share declined modestly from the prior year, intergovernmental sources continue to reflect a substantial reliance on externally controlled funding sources, which limits local flexibility in addressing expenditure pressures.

Revenues generated from licenses, permits, and fees have remained relatively flat over the past three fiscal years at approximately 5% of total revenues. This consistency provides stability within the revenue base; however, these sources represent a comparatively small portion of total revenues. As a result, changes in overall revenue capacity are more likely to be influenced by increases in tax and intergovernmental revenues than by fee-supported sources.

Figure 12.1: Municipal Revenue Sources



Source: City of Sanford Annual Financial Statement Audits 2023 – 2025

Municipal expenses have increased in recent years. Most of these cost increases cannot be avoided. Costs for road maintenance, equipment and vehicles, and salaries for public employees have all increased with inflation and are essential budgeted expenses. In addition, rising costs for larger capital expenses require long-term planning to help ensure the City has adequate facilities and equipment to continue effectively serving residents and visitors. As part of the annual budget process, City departments submit capital improvement plans that are reviewed and approved by City leadership.

Table 12.1: Municipal Expenditure

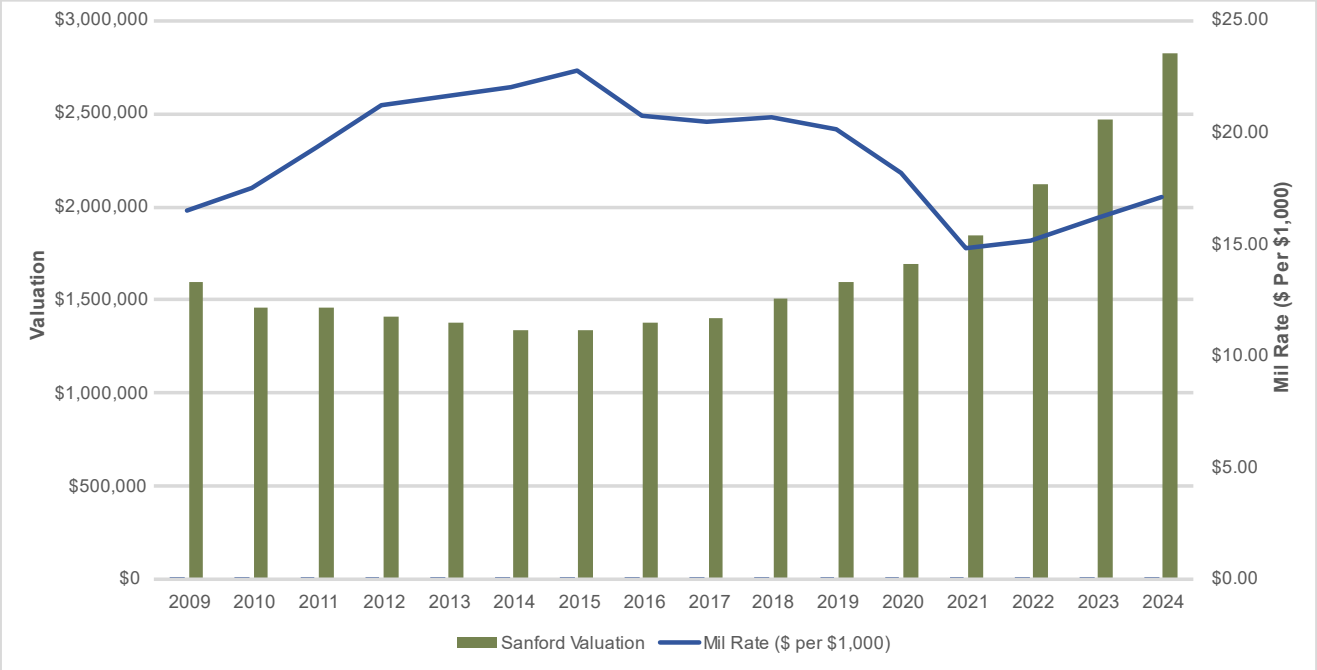
Service Category	FY 2025	FY 2024	FY 2023
General government	$16,015,286	$14,702,796	$14,062,346
Public services	$2,730,243	$2,721,991	$2,615,645
Public safety	$13,762,431	$14,499,485	$12,364,131
Public works	$4,575,913	$4,035,996	$4,306,604
County tax	$967,930	$893,690	$837,942
Education	$77,485,389	$77,007,525	$73,398,303
Debt service	$1,780,968	$1,792,435	$1,731,991
Capital improvements	$5,528,565	$6,000,825	$8,104,447
Other	$2,449,857	$2,398,329	$2,575,999
Total Expenditures	**$125,296,582**	**$124,053,072**	**$119,997,408**

Source: City of Sanford Annual Financial Statement Audits 2023 – 2025

Municipal Valuation and Mil Rate

Maine Revenue Services calculates an annual valuation of all taxable property. The State valuation represents the full equalized value of all taxable property in Sanford. Like other communities in the State, Sanford experienced a large increase in total valuation since 2020. In 2025, the City's State-assessed total valuation was $2,824,700, an increase of 77% from 2020. The State valuation values are used to calculate State allocations for education, revenue sharing, and apportioning county taxes.

Figure 12.2: Sanford Total Valuation



Source: Maine Revenue Services Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary reports

The mil rate is used to calculate property taxes based on assessed value of the property. The rate is the tax payable per $1,000 of assessed value. Municipalities determine the mil rate based on the approved budget and the amount of property tax revenue that is needed to meet the budget divided by the total valuation of property within the City. As property valuation has increased, the mil rate has decreased.

Revaluation

Property revaluation is a process used to promote equitable distribution of the property tax levy among property owners. It updates assessed values to reflect current market conditions so that comparable properties are assessed consistently across neighborhoods and property types. A revaluation does not, by itself, increase or decrease the City's overall tax levy; rather, it adjusts how the levy is distributed among properties based on changes in relative market values. Because property values do not change at the same rate across all locations and property classes, periodic revaluation helps maintain fairness, uniformity, and transparency in the property tax system.

In Maine, assessment levels are monitored through the Certified Ratio, which compares assessed values to recent sales. State law requires municipalities to maintain assessments within a range of 70% – 110% of market value to support equitable taxation. Although Sanford has not completed a full "measure-and-list" revaluation since 1987, the City's Certified Ratio of 92% as of April 1, 2025, indicates that assessed values continue to be consistent with prevailing market conditions.

Debt Capacity

Debt service requirements are analyzed through the lens of realistic revenue capacity to fund service payments on issued and projected debt as well as through the lens of the comprehensive plan. For example, the Strong Towns Strength Test, of which recommended maximum debt levels are a core component, recommends that a City government should spend no more than 10% of its locally generated revenue annually on debt service. The financial model and subsequent five-year financial forecast to be developed should include existing debt as well as proposed new debt inputs. Proposed new debt should generally reflect projects and purchases that support comprehensive plan properties. The table below highlights historical debt service requirements.

Table 12.2: Historical Debt Service Requirements

Category	FY 2023 Debt Service	FY 2024 Debt Service	FY 2025 Debt Service
Existing Debt	$1,731,991	$1,792,435	$1,780,968
Debt Service Percent	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%
Additional Capacity ($)	$10,114,567	$10,601,142	$10,830,996
Additional Capacity (%)	8.5%	8.6%	8.6%

Source: City of Sanford Annual Financial Statement Audits 2023 – 2025

Despite the additional borrowing capacity estimated through the lens of the Strong Towns 10% ratio ceiling, to advance larger and more complex capital investments and comprehensive plan initiatives, a general obligation (GO) bond might need to be secured. A GO bond is a common type of municipal bond secured by a local government's pledge to use legally available resources, including tax revenues, to repay bondholders. Most GO pledges include a pledge to levy a property tax to meet debt service requirements.

Capital Planning

The City plans capital investments related to education, City departments, and City facilities. It is evident that the City continues its commitment toward community-centric investments balanced with current capital plan requests, which remain focused on addressing aging infrastructure and promoting strategic economic development. To strengthen this approach, the City should prepare and maintain a formal CIP that aligns capital investments with comprehensive plan priorities and clearly identifies anticipated capital needs over the near and long-term. The CIP should be updated annually as part of the budget process and revisited throughout the year, allowing the City to adjust assumptions as conditions, costs, or priorities change. Incorporating projected revenues, operating impacts, and long-term expense implications—particularly those associated with comprehensive plan initiatives—would provide valuable insight for financial forecasting. This approach would better position the City to evaluate whether and when to advance major initiatives, maintain critical

infrastructure, and continue investing in service delivery enhancements, all while minimizing impacts to taxpayers and ratepayers and supporting informed, data-driven decision-making.

Challenges and Opportunities

As costs for goods, equipment, and labor have continued to rise, municipalities have been increasingly challenged to continue providing services at the same level without burdening taxpayers. The City also has a significant amount of State and federal grant funding. Currently, there is uncertainty surrounding the availability of federal funds, which could impact the City's fiscal environment.

The City has leveraged a range of funding sources—including TIF, the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), the Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Program, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, among other funding sources—to support economic development, property remediation, and targeted infrastructure improvements. In August 2022, the City of Sanford, in partnership with the MaineDOT, was awarded a $25 million federal RAISE Grant to fund infrastructure improvements in the downtown area, with the first phase of construction anticipated to begin in early 2027. Strategically directing new growth to these districts could further enable Sanford to leverage TIF to support critical infrastructure investments and broader community development objectives.

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Appendix A: Large-Format Maps