Mecklenburg County is at the heart of the dynamic Charlotte metropolitan region, and the 2022 Pulse Report explores the trajectory of growth and change in Mecklenburg County across several topical areas:

- Demographics
- Health
- Housing
- Environment and Infrastructure
- Economy

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

Each section begins with notable trends in the County for the 2010-2020 period. The next section describes how COVID-19 affected that trajectory, and the final section explains what these trends may mean for County policies and services in the future.

This presentation offers highlights of those findings.
DEMOGRAPHICS: Population Change

- Our county is now **home to 1,115,482 people**.
- This places Mecklenburg as North Carolina’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} most populous county (behind Wake County).
- Mecklenburg’s population growth positioned the county as the nation’s 41\textsuperscript{st} most populous county.
  - Wake County, NC (Raleigh) is 40\textsuperscript{th}, and Fulton County, GA (Atlanta) is 42\textsuperscript{nd}.

US Census interactive data tool (Census.gov)
Mecklenburg County grew 21.3% from 2010 to 2020.

This translates to a growth of 195,854 residents since the 2010 census.

Of North Carolina counties, Mecklenburg ranked 6th in fastest growth rate.

Mecklenburg County’s growth was slower than neighboring, suburban Cabarrus County but outpaced Union County.
DEMOGRAPHICS: Racial Population Change

- All racial and ethnic groups grew in number, along with the population growth, through the decade. However, there was a shift in the proportions, as shown in the graph.
- The proportion of White and Black populations declined, while Asian, Multiracial, and Hispanic populations grew at faster paces during the past decade.
- Mecklenburg County ranks 4th in racial and ethnic diversity in North Carolina (US Census).
DEMOGRAPHICS: Predominant Racial & Ethnic Groups

This ArcGIS map, developed by Mecklenburg County’s GIS team, shows predominant racial distributions by block group as of the 2020 Census. The darker the color, the more prevalent the racial group is in that block group.

The image above shows a zoomed-in view of the racial predominance map. By clicking on an individual block group, within the resulting legend, the full racial breakdown of the selected area is shown.

Note: Legend categories reflect all values in the data, so not all legend colors are reflected in the current map view.
DEMOGRAPHICS: Age Cohort

- The senior population in Mecklenburg County is steadily growing.
- In 2010, residents aged 65+ accounted for about 9% of the population. In 2021, that number has increased to about 12%.
- The median age of county residents rose by 4 years between 2010 and 2020. From a county average age of 32.8 years old to a county average age of 36.8 years old.
- The growth in older adults does not mean a decline in children. Rather, Mecklenburg County’s youth population grew by 9.5% between 2010 and 2020, accounting for an increase of 22,119 children.
- In North Carolina, Mecklenburg ranks 2nd in total youth population at 255,457, behind Wake County at 269,331.
DEMOGRAPHICS: Brookings Article

- Recent census estimates show a **slowdown in urban core area growth** due primarily to more deaths, fewer births, less immigration from abroad, and greater out-domestic migration.

- However, **some metro areas like the Charlotte region are expected to see strong population growth**, despite some people leaving more densely populated areas during the pandemic.

- It is unclear whether the overall pre-pandemic trend of slow urban growth will continue post-pandemic.
DEMOGRAPHICS: Projected Growth

- State projections based on the 2020 Census show Mecklenburg growing to 1,329,914 by 2030.
- That would place the projected growth for the next decade at 211,139, slightly outpacing the growth from 2010 to 2020.

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina estimated/projected population by year 2030 (North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management)

- 2010: 932,242
- 2020: 1,118,775
- 2030: 1,329,914
HEALTH: Unintentional Poisoning Deaths

- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid pain killer, and it is **80-100 times more powerful** than morphine.
  - Fentanyl is commonly combined with other narcotics to increase their potency.
  - Only **2 milligrams** of fentanyl is considered to be a lethal dose.
- There was a **1,728% increase** in overdose deaths attributed to “Other Synthetic Narcotics” from 2014-2017.
- There was a **1,071% increase** in cocaine-related overdose deaths from 2010-2019.
HEALTH: Mental Health

- Adults across the U.S. are experiencing considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions as a result of the pandemic. Groups most impacted include:
  - Young adults,
  - Racial and ethnic minorities,
  - Essential workers, and
  - Unpaid adult caretakers.

- MeckHope provides residents with free counseling and referrals for substance abuse treatment.

- Through MeckHope from March – December 2021,
  - 6,965 individuals received behavioral health services, and
  - 6,738 individuals received counseling services.

Mecklenburg County ABC Board (@meckABC), Dec. 22, 2020, Twitter
HOUSING: Affordability by Occupation*

- From 2010 to 2020, there was a **92% increase** in the median single-family home sales price in Mecklenburg County.
- The cost of less expensive homes has been getting higher at a much faster rate than more expensive homes.
- During the pandemic (January 2020 - September 2021), the median single-family home sales price increased **35%**, from $281,400 to $380,000.
- During that same time period, only 4.4% of houses were sold for less than $150,000, and only **35% were sold for less than $300,000**.
- A typical elementary school teacher can only afford about 6% of Mecklenburg County’s housing stock.
- Lack of affordable housing may lead to recruitment and retention issues.

*Please note that data presented on this slide come from the UNCC Childress Klein Center for Real Estate’s State of Housing 2021 Report.*
Housing: Corporate Owned Properties

- Corporate ownership of single family residential emerged after the Great Recession (circa 2012).
  - Large corporate landlords now own more than 12,000 single-family homes according to analysis completed by the UNCC Urban Institute.
  - The Mecklenburg County Assessor’s Office estimates that this number may be closer to 13,600.
  - According to reporting by Axios Charlotte, "outside investors made up 14% of all home buyers in Charlotte from January to April 2021."

- Corporations are able to buy affordable units (starter homes) often with all cash offers, over asking price and drive up the rental prices.

- 93.5% of single-family residential properties purchased by corporations were $300,000 or less.

2021 Corporate Owned Properties by Price Range (UNCC Urban Institute & Mecklenburg County)
ENVIRONMENT: New Building Permits

• Approximately 189,000 new building permits were issued between 2010-2020, and 247,000 new addresses were assigned between 2010-2020.

• New development - 21.2 square miles of land being developed with buildings, streets, and sidewalks - has resulted in a loss of tree canopy and reduced the land's natural ability to absorb and hold rainfall.

• Despite the growth, the number of “good” air quality days has improved from 159 in 2010 to 296 in 2020, partially aided by remote working conditions.

• The County’s Meck Playbook and Greenway Acceleration Plan prioritize the creation of greenspace.

• Investments in stream restoration and flood mitigation are required to continue to mitigate the impacts of development.
ENVIRONMENT: Transportation Growth

- ~171 miles were added to the 1,514 miles of streets since 2010. **2020 County road density is 192 km/100 sq. km.** (178 in 2010), similar to the level of Germany and France.
- The expansion of road network generally leads to higher population density in suburbs.
- Drivers spend **57 hours** a year stuck in traffic delays. County travel time **increased about 2 minutes** overall in the past decade.
- A negative correlation between transit ridership and highways length has been shown in Mecklenburg County. (the **CATS ridership has been slightly down** from 2010 to 2020 despite the $1.1 billion expansion of the blue line extension).
- Extension of the road network tends to decrease urban population density, decrease the effectiveness of road based public transport -- favoring an increase in car ownership. Resulting in congestion.

Percentage of auto commuters traveling 20 minutes or more to work (Quality of Life Explorer)
ECONOMY: Jobs

- Ads for jobs indicate a substantial recovery from 2020.
- By November 2021, Mecklenburg job postings had substantially recovered from a sharp drop in May 2021.

Active Job Ads by Date, Mecklenburg County (Jobs EQ)
Please visit https://maps.mecklenburgcountync.gov/MeckPulseReport2022 to view the full report and use the interactive infographics.

Thank you!
Mecklenburg County Pulse Report

Growth & Change in a New Era

2022 Board Retreat

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