

# LIVABLE MECK

YOUR VOICE. YOUR VISION.

PROGRESS REPORT 2017



 LIVABLE MECK  
 @LIVABLEMECK

[LIVABLEMECK.COM](http://LIVABLEMECK.COM)

MECKLENBURG • CHARLOTTE • CORNELIUS • DAVIDSON • HUNTERSVILLE • MATTHEWS • MINT HILL • PINEVILLE

# What is Livable Meck?

Livable Meck helps communities in our County give voice to their vision of the future, but vision is about more than seeing the future – it’s also about enacting positive change. Livable Meck is dedicated to bringing people together to enhance the quality of life across our community. Livable Meck coordinates, collaborates and enacts changes by:

- ▶ Engaging residents and stakeholders in a process to guide community growth
- ▶ Facilitating collaboration among the community’s private, non-profit and governmental organizations
- ▶ Measuring the livability of Mecklenburg County’s communities
- ▶ Communicating stories and progress as it aspires to be a coalition of livable communities

Together we’ll ensure that Livable Meck lives up to its name.

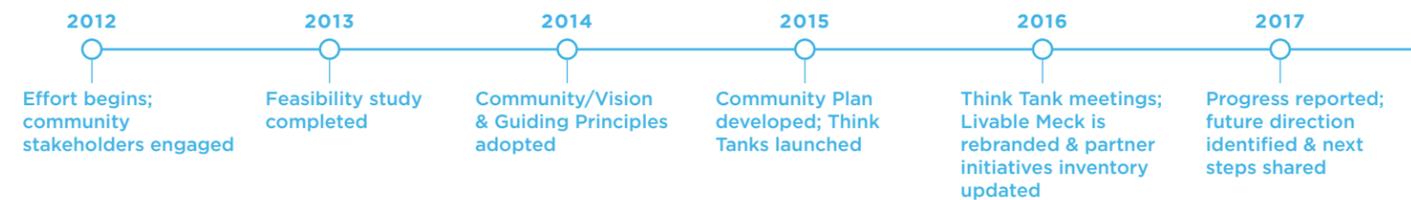
# How can I get involved?

Our community is moving forward. Be an active participant as our community continues to grow. Visit [livablemeck.com](http://livablemeck.com) to add your voice and share your vision.

## Background

There are numerous communities in Mecklenburg County, organized around eight governmental jurisdictions: Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville. There are also hundreds of non-profit organizations and businesses that provide essential services – all of which are necessary to meet the needs of local residents. As such, Livable Meck was established to foster collaboration and reduce redundancies with a unified vision and plan.

### LIVABLE MECK TIMELINE



## Guiding Principles

Through the more than 2,000 voices that contributed to defining Livable Meck’s shared vision, seven guiding principles were identified. These principles are statements of what our community values, guiding our more specific goals, measures and actions.

### OUR COMMUNITY WILL BE:

 <b>WELCOMING</b> Character. Entertainment. Opportunity. Safe Neighborhoods. P. 4	 <b>INNOVATIVE</b> Jobs. Entrepreneurship. Commerce. P. 8	 <b>CONNECTED</b> Engaged Residents. Transportation Choices. P. 12	 <b>INCLUSIVE</b> Community. Participation. P. 16
 <b>PREPARED</b> A Skilled Workforce. Quality Education. P. 20	 <b>HEALTHY</b> Physical Activity. Healthy Foods. Clean Environment. P. 24	 <b>RESILIENT</b> Future Well-being. Collaboration. P. 28	

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1:  
**WELCOMING.**

**We are a hospitable destination for those seeking opportunity.**

The Mecklenburg County community is characterized by a unique southern hospitality, making it a place that celebrates its history and embraces people from all walks of life.

**OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING A WELCOMING COMMUNITY**

- Build safe neighborhoods
- Increase access to community-based arts, science, and history education
- Continue to be an inviting destination for residents, visitors and businesses
- Celebrate and integrate history, culture and diversity



WELCOMING : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Arts & Science Council (ASC)	Culture Blocks	Aims to bring cultural programs to under-served neighborhoods



Imagine the sound of deep bass drums; feel their heartbeat pound. Close your eyes and visualize dancers; leaping, jumping and expressing a range of emotions in perfect syncopation. Have we been transported to the West Coast of Africa or are we enjoying the Charlotte Ballet as they present their “African Dance Class” to residents at the Sugaw Creek Recreation Center?

As part of ASC’s **Culture Blocks** initiative – an effort that aims to bring cultural programs to under-served neighborhoods throughout the County – this dance program is one of a few projects that make it easier for residents to enjoy the arts without traveling far.



The mission of ASC is “ensuring access to an excellent, relevant, and sustainable cultural community for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Region.” The ASC works to ensure “Culture For All” by combining resources from local and state government with those of the private sector to maximize community impact throughout the cultural sector.

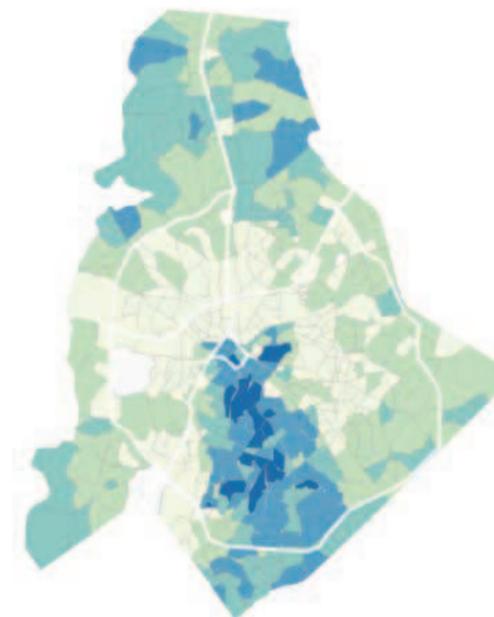
**REPORTING BY THE NUMBERS**

**The Geography of Arts and Culture Participation**

COUNTY

**15%**

Percentage of households that participate in ASC-sponsored arts and cultural activities for a total of 58,868 households.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer <http://mcmap.org/qol>



**ARTS AND CULTURE PARTICIPATION RATE:**

Overall, **15%** of households within Mecklenburg County participate in arts and culture activities sponsored by the Arts and Science Council. However, that number does not tell the whole story. Within the County there is a large difference in participation in these events based on neighborhoods. The **ASC Culture Blocks** program targets the areas of the County with the lowest participation.

*“By working with creative individuals and cultural programmers, Culture Blocks has introduced new and existing cultural infrastructure into neighborhoods to address barriers to participation with arts, science and history organizations. These efforts are grounded in what we have learned from residents about their cultural hopes and aspirations through extensive dialogue and outreach in these targeted areas.”*

**ROBERT BUSH**  
ASC President

<b>WELCOMING : PROFILE ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	
<b>GenerationNation</b>	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Council	Allows students the opportunity to voice issues impacting youth



**T**oday's students will become the leaders of our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, communities and nation. What and how they learn matters.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Council, a program of **GenerationNation**, is the student advisory council for the city, county, and school district. During this year, diverse teen leaders from schools and neighborhoods across the community collaborated to host dialogues with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department about race relations. **These leadership-minded students have impacted the Charlotte Community in many other ways, to include but not limited to:**

- ▶ Assisted Mayor Jennifer Roberts with the creation of a strategy for out-of-school time activities
- ▶ Volunteered time to help thousands of children to learn about voting through student mock elections
- ▶ Assisted Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Board of Education with the creation of a new student advisor role
- ▶ Served on the Charlotte delegation at the National League of Cities City Summit
- ▶ Shared student feedback with the Opportunity Task Force and more.

As a Livable Meck Think Tank leader, GenerationNation works with local schools, youth organizations, and community partners to provide students with hands-on experiences related to civic issues and local government.

Strong leadership development ensures that the youth of today (our future community decision-makers) have the experience, understanding and knowledge to lead the Livable Meck of tomorrow.



*“Livable Meck connected a variety of different community strategies, goals, and partners, and convened forward-thinking citizens and leaders for collaborative brainstorming and problem-solving.”*

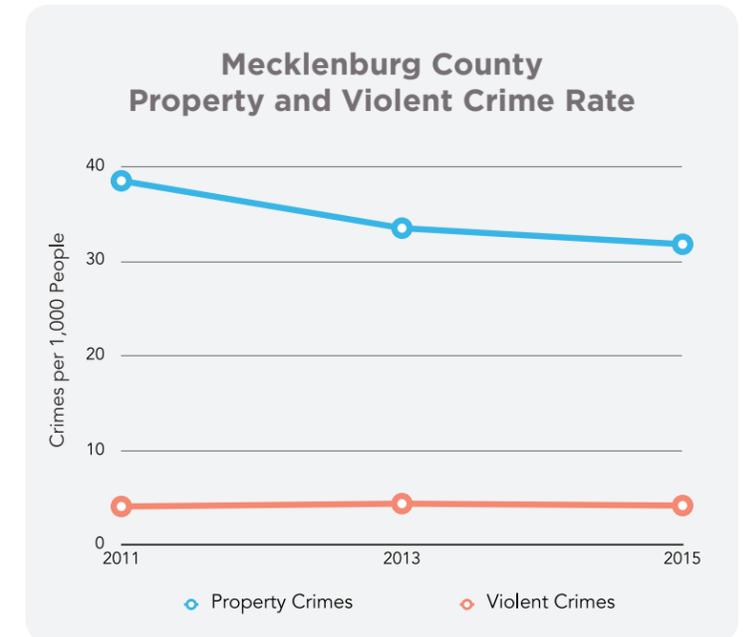
**AMY FERRELL**  
GenerationNation



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**MIXED TRENDS IN CRIME**

There has been a recent uptick in overall crime, particularly in robberies, vehicle thefts and aggravated assaults. Crime for the past several years had been trending down in our community. **Property crimes** drove this change, with the rate decreasing from 38.5 to 31.8 property offenses per 1,000 residents from 2011 to 2015. As illustrated below, **Violent crimes** has historically occurred much less frequently than property crimes, yet the rate slightly increased the past few years. Programs like **Generation Nation** focus on building civic leadership in communities that often face higher crime rates, and provide the infrastructure for more stable and welcoming communities.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer  
<http://mcmap.org/qol>



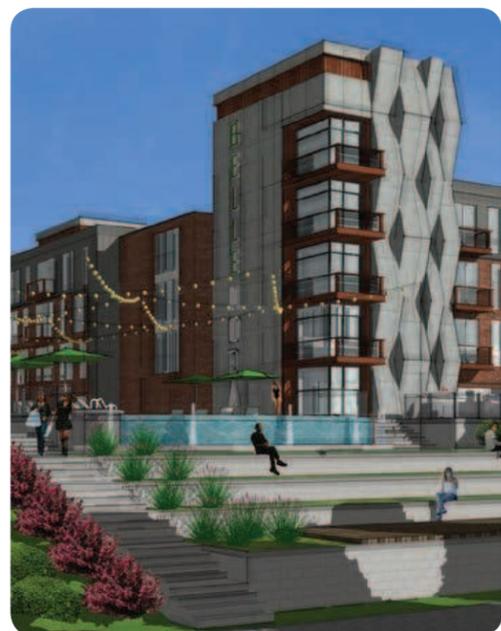
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2:

# INNOVATIVE.

We are entrepreneurial and pioneer solutions to support a prosperous community.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg area has become a global hotspot for commerce, giving businesses and entrepreneurs an opportunity to succeed in an affordable world-class community.

INNOVATIVE : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Flywheel Group	NoDa Greenway District	Exciting urban living & working experience linking NoDa to other area neighborhoods



Innovation is the key to continued economic growth in Mecklenburg County. Several local groups are taking the lead in promoting a framework for redevelopment. Innovation can come from established players or new, nimble organizations like the Flywheel Group.

Flywheel Group and its partners are currently redeveloping approximately 43 acres in what will be known as the **NoDa Greenway District**, Charlotte's first light rail and greenway-oriented development situated in the North Davidson (NoDa) area. This multi-phased mixed-use development project would ultimately be located along the Blue Line light-rail extension and connect with and overlook a greenway.

Once complete, the greenway district will feature shops, restaurants, offices, condos and apartments that will integrate with public parks and plazas. The **NoDa Greenway District** will continue to build upon the area's unique residential character and industrial history resulting in a walkable, mixed-use urban village with distinctive

## OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING AN INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY

- Make it easier for new businesses to succeed and existing businesses to flourish
- Increase global economic competitiveness
- Promote the redevelopment, reuse, and rehabilitation of declining and vacant properties
- Leverage technology



neighborhoods. This area is envisioned to foster an atmosphere of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, that once complete, will be able to provide an exciting urban living and working experience linking NoDa to Uptown, South End, and the University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC).

*"The NoDa Greenway District is a new way to think about developing communities. The focus is on multimodal forms of transportation and is as much about the outside experience as it is about the inside experience. We look forward to seeing the evolution of the district as the light rail and Cross Charlotte Trail projects come online."*

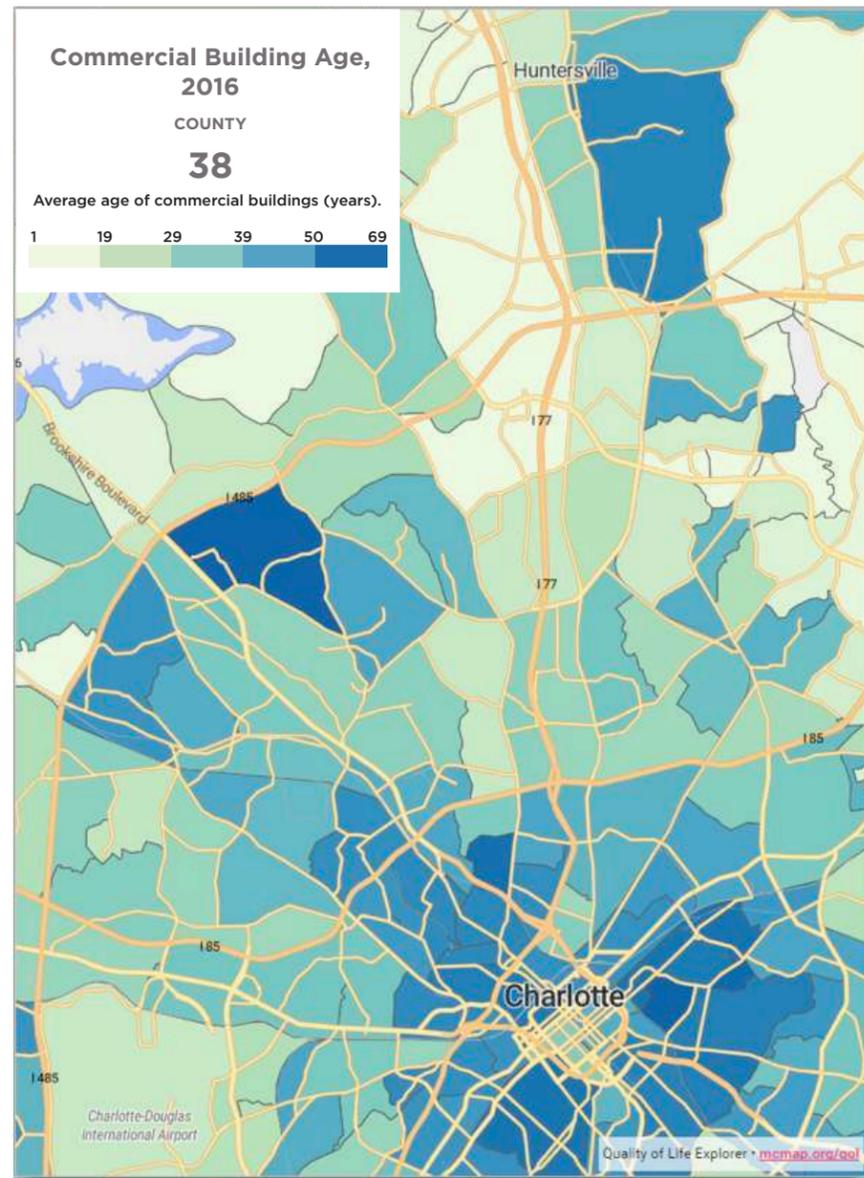
**TONY KUHN**  
Flywheel Group, President



## WHERE INNOVATION HAPPENS

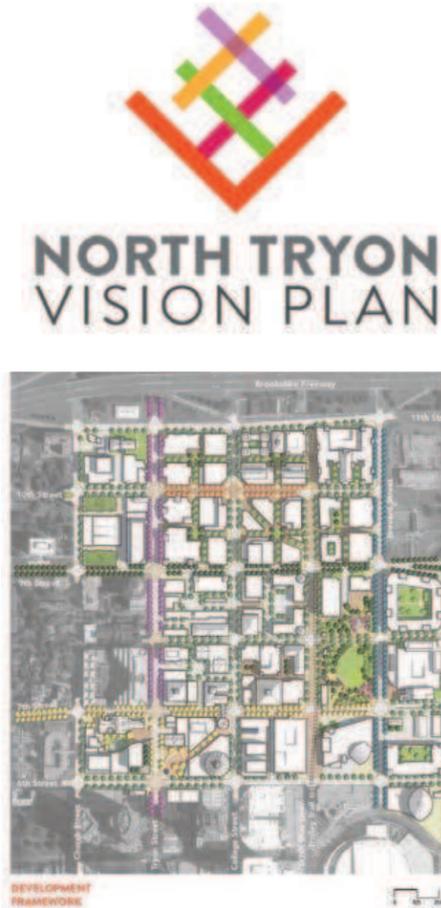
In our local communities, older commercial buildings surround Uptown Charlotte and central parts of local towns in the County, such as Huntersville. As a result, aging commercial structures may provide opportunities for rehabilitation and reuse.

The combination of older commercial structures near areas of high job density, like center city Charlotte, allow for a center of innovation. This phenomenon is seen in many communities throughout the country. The areas southeast and northwest of center city Charlotte have been called the area's Applied Innovation Corridor.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer  
<http://mcmmap.org/qol>

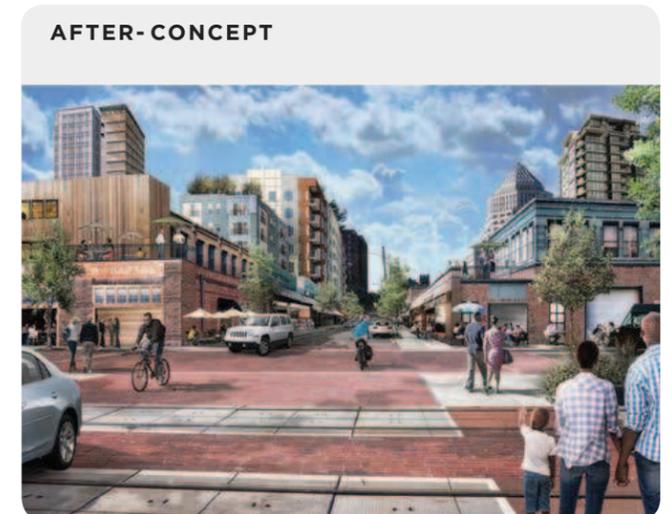
INNOVATIVE : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Foundation For The Carolinas and Multiple Collaborators	North Tryon Corridor Development	A joint effort to create a plan to revitalize the North Tryon area of Uptown



Uptown Charlotte is the heart of an exciting, dynamic City center and a thriving region. As new development continues Uptown, and land becomes scarce; a vision for the North Tryon Corridor was warranted.

Foundation For The Carolinas has partnered with the Charlotte Center City Partners and more than 20 stakeholder groups in a public-private partnership to create a plan that catalyzes and guides revitalization of the North Tryon area of Uptown, bordering 6th Street, Church Street, Caldwell Street and 11th Street.

The plan aims to sustain growth and development of this prime location in the heart of Charlotte by attracting innovative businesses, drawing creative crowds to the urban core, and offering education and diverse housing opportunities in the area. Envisioned in the plan is the development of a unique district to attract and retain the creative industry, innovative arts, and cultural institutions.





GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3:

# CONNECTED.

We are physically and socially linked to one another.

As Mecklenburg County continues to grow, it's important to plan for how residents and visitors travel throughout the region and that leaders provide a diversity of transportation options—from walking to bus to rail.

## OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- Expand capacity and increase use of sidewalks, bikeways, greenways/paved trails, bus routes, and rail
- Build stronger connections across diverse population groups

<b>CONNECTED : PROFILE ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	
Sustain Charlotte	ibikeCLT	Campaign to voice support for safer bicycle facilities in Charlotte.



What if riding your bicycle to work, school, and shopping was a more appealing transportation choice than driving there? Sustain Charlotte is working to make this vision a reality through its **ibikeCLT** campaign, which empowers area residents to speak up for safe, connected, and dignified facilities for people on bikes. In fact, Sustain Charlotte's annual Biketoberfest event recently introduced over 400 adults and kids to the ease and fun of traveling around South End, Wesley Heights, and Charlotte's Center City without a car.



These transportation initiatives illustrate how the organization lives its mission to inspire choices that lead to a healthy, equitable, and vibrant community for generations to come.

True to its name, Sustain Charlotte focuses on supporting and strengthening the economies, infrastructure, and communities of this rapidly growing metro area.

## IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD BICYCLE FRIENDLY?

### DID YOU KNOW?



Prior to 2000, there were no bicycle lanes in the City of Charlotte. Today, there are **over 79 miles of bicycle lanes and 56 miles of signed bike routes** in the city as well as **58 miles of greenways** throughout the County.

According to the Alliance for Biking and Walking, cities have an average 1.8 miles of bicycle facilities per square mile. In Charlotte, there are approximately 0.6 miles of bicycle facilities per square mile.



*"Study after study confirms what we hear from the public every day: People want to ride their bikes more, but most only feel safe riding if they're physically separated from cars. Safe bike facilities lift barriers to economic opportunity by creating a welcoming environment for people of all ages and ability levels to ride."*

**SHANNON BINNS**  
Sustain Charlotte

## RIDING THE BUS AND RAILS

Ridership for Charlotte Transit rose prior to the recession (reaching peak levels in 2008) but has generally remained flat since that time. The map of transit ridership (below) shows the wide variation in transit ridership across the county. Higher ridership is clear along the Blue Line light rail (opened in 2007) that runs from the dark blue areas in the County's southwest into Uptown. The completion of the LYNX Blue Line extension from Uptown to University of North Carolina Charlotte in 2017 will start a new chapter for transit in the region. The new section of light rail will connect the booming southern part of the line and Uptown Charlotte with the nearly 30,000 students enrolled at UNCC.

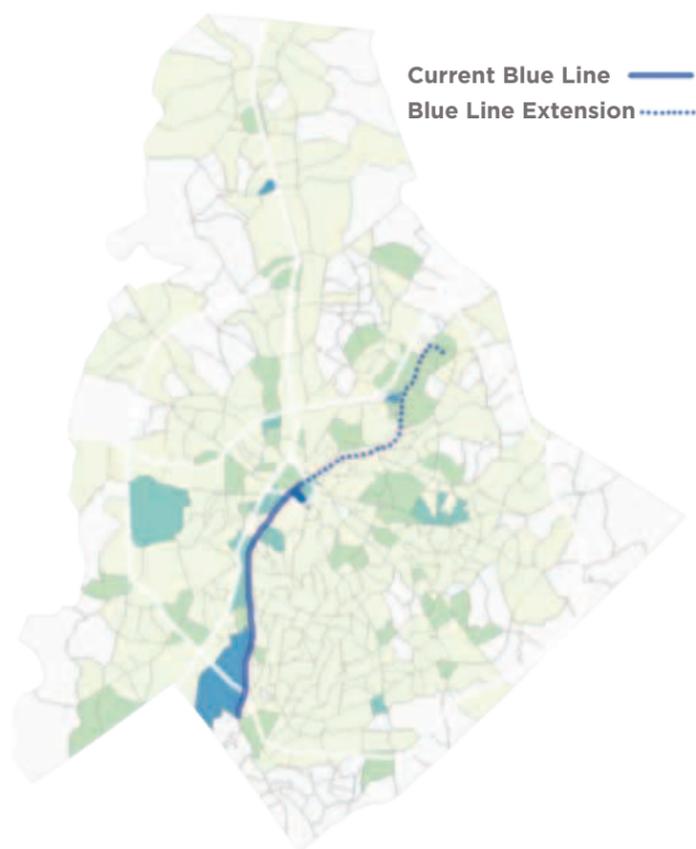
### REPORTING BY THE NUMBERS

**Transit Ridership**  
COUNTY  
**114**

Average weekly bus and train boardings per stop (boardings per stop). The County total is 406,595 weekly boardings.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer  
<http://mcmmap.org/qol>



### CONNECTED : PROFILE ORGANIZATION

**Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB)**

### INITIATIVE

**Keep Charlotte Beautiful**

Inspires and educates people to take action every day to improve and beautify our community environment.

*Connections can be improved by building infrastructure and roads and also by bringing diverse populations together for a common cause.*

Plastic bags, fast-food containers, cigarette butts, candy wrappers are just a few things you might see while driving through any local neighborhood. Regardless of where one lives, trash is unsightly, and it is everyone's responsibility to keep our neighborhoods neat and clean.

Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB) and other Keep America Beautiful affiliated groups across the country make it easier for residents to get involved and connect people to each other and to the environment. Keep Charlotte Beautiful inspires and educates people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment. When streets are littered, people feel less safe and are less willing to get out and socialize with neighbors, buy a house or expand their business nearby.

From volunteerism with cleaning up local neighborhood streets to involvement with the Great American Cleanup campaign, the work of KCB serves to bring diverse people together to connect our community.

*"We're proud to provide tools, supplies and support to 600+ volunteers from over 250 groups currently collecting litter from our streets and public spaces; however there are still many areas in need of adoption and much work to be done."*

**DENISE COLEMAN**  
KCB, Program Manager





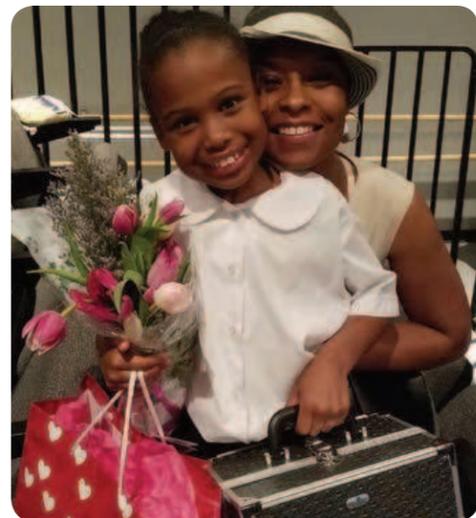
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4:

# INCLUSIVE.

We celebrate our differences and see them as strengths that bind us together.

For a community to be inclusive, it has to provide opportunities for all of its members to live healthy, fulfilled lives. We want to make sure Mecklenburg County is that kind of place.

INCLUSIVE : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	Addresses poverty through integration of health, education and human services	Center that serves as a resource hub for North Mecklenburg and South Iredell Counties helping those in crisis
Ada Jenkins Center		



As a single mother, Charlyn (depicted on the left) came to the **Ada Jenkins Center** seeking employment, education and housing. She worked closely with on-site case managers to develop a plan to meet these goals. After encouragement from her case manager, Charlyn applied and received the ANSWER scholarship to pursue her interests in hospitality, tourism, and project management. She currently attends Johnson C. Smith University and is working towards a Bachelor's degree with a focus in Business Administration.

Despite her challenges as a single mother in school, Charlyn's grades are excellent. She has been recognized multiple times for her outstanding GPA and excellence in education. Recently, Charlyn was chosen for the Women Initiating and Nurturing Growth through Scholarships (WINGS) program.

Charlyn continues to stay in touch with her case manager and the **Ada Jenkins Center** staff, who she has nicknamed "Ada's Angels." Charlyn has recently joined the National Association of Black Accountants and is well on her way to a flourishing career in accounting.

## OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

- Balance available housing options
- Coordinate the work of organizations addressing the needs of at-risk residents
- Expand the availability of affordable recreation and cultural services programs

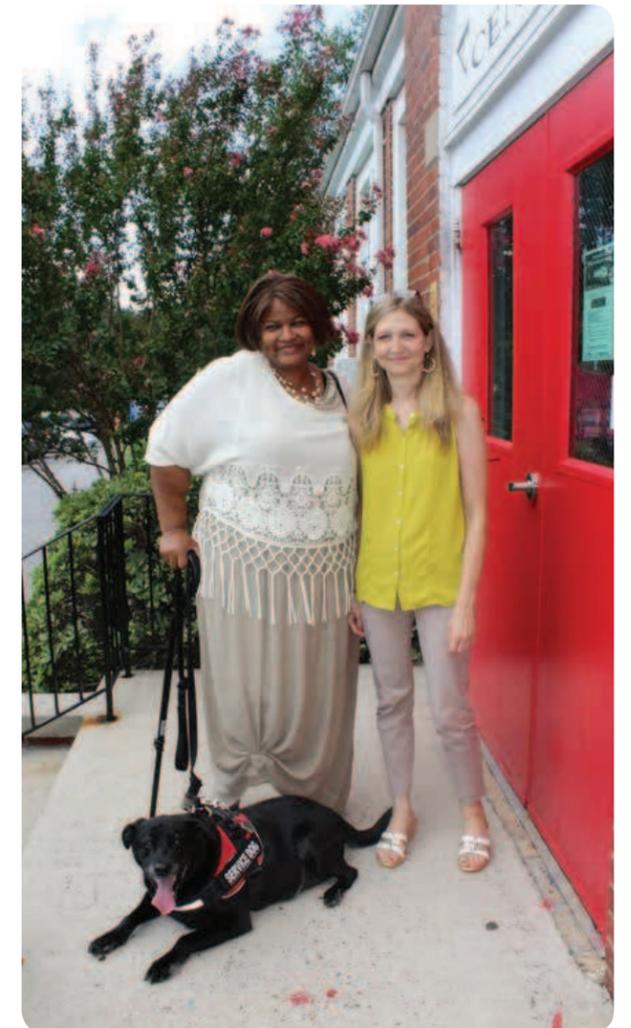


Charlyn's story is one of many that highlight the tremendous impact that the **ADA Jenkins Center** has had in our community by ensuring that residents are prepared to contribute to and be a part of an inclusive community.

The **Ada Jenkins Center** is a full-service health and human service agency providing help to those in need in North Mecklenburg and South Iredell Counties. Its mission is to empower people to break the cycle of poverty through the integrated delivery of health, education, and human services. In addition to administering more than 15 programs and services, the Center collaborates with many other organizations and is a well-respected model for community centers in the region.

*"Livable Meck is a great initiative in bringing the community together. By inviting different organizations to the table, it seemed like all the pieces of the puzzle were finally coming together."*

**DEVON KILPATRICK**  
Mecklenburg County, Department of Social Services



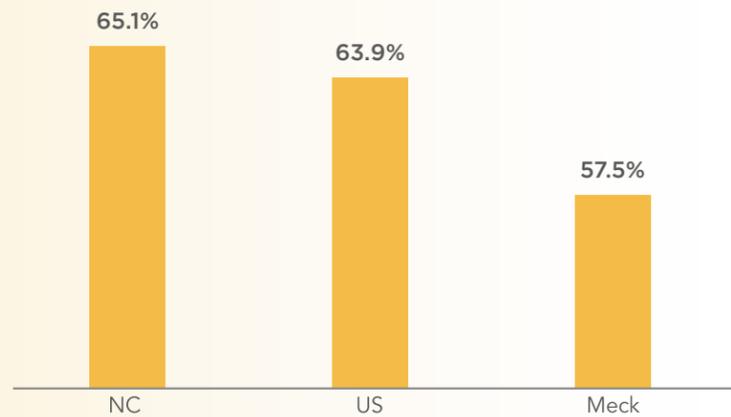
**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FEWER FAMILIES OWN THEIR HOMES**

Renting a home or apartment may be the right option for many households, but homeownership is thought to provide opportunities for wealth creation and long-term financial security. The Great Recession took a toll on homeownership nationally, and fast-growing counties like Mecklenburg were typically more affected by the recession. Homeownership in Mecklenburg County fell from a pre-recession high of 67.2% in 2008 to 57.15% in 2015.



**Homeownership Rate 2015**



Source: Census 2011-2015 estimate, owner-occupied housing unit rate.

**RATE OF CHILDREN RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

**50%\***



In 2015, roughly 50% of children in Mecklenburg County received some form of public assistance.

*\*Public assistance includes a combination of food assistance (Food and Nutrition Services or Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or North Carolina Health Choice.*

Source: Mecklenburg County Dept. of Social Services

INCLUSIVE : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Cardinal Innovations Healthcare	Transitions to Community Living (TCL)	Helps people with mental illness find and choose housing in their communities



**E**arly in life, Charlotte, N.C., resident and **Cardinal Innovations Healthcare member Shawn Nichols** struggled to find peace, stability and a reason to feel blessed. At age 47, he finally found what he was searching for with help from Cardinal Innovations' local team and its **Transitions to Community Living (TCL)** program.



"I've been a diagnosed schizophrenic for about 25 years," Nichols said. "Back in the beginning, I used to be hospitalized a lot because I used to act out over the voices."

Once Nichols became a Cardinal Innovations member, his life began to change, he said. In 2015, he moved into his own apartment, and he has learned to cope with his disease by listening to music and using other techniques. Nichols, who also has physical health issues, said he eats healthier now that he has his own home. And he's spending time with his children and grandchildren.

"The Cardinal Innovations team that placed me in this apartment did me very well. I love all of them," he said. "I have peace in my own home and I am happy, very happy."



Cardinal Innovations is the nation's largest specialty health plan, serving more than 850,000 individuals with complex needs. It pioneered a unique managed care model in North Carolina, relying on strong community partnerships with providers and stakeholders to provide person-centered care.

Cardinal Innovations' TCL program that helped Nichols has helped many Mecklenburg County residents who are diagnosed with a mental illness to find and choose housing in their communities.

 GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5:  
**PREPARED.**

We provide opportunities for learning and applying new skills—in school, on the job, and throughout life.

Education is one of the most important investments we can make in ourselves and in our community. Without it, hope for the future is difficult to envision. Our community needs to plan how it's going to keep the community learning and growing.

**OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING A PREPARED COMMUNITY**

- Expand and enhance learning across all age groups
- Enhance partnerships between workforce development initiatives and employers

PREPARED : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Real School Gardens	Teacher Training Program	National organization uniting teachers, parents, businesses and the students themselves to design a learning garden tailored to each school's unique needs.



**R**eal School Gardens trains teachers to harness children's "natural" curiosity and get them engaged in learning, specifically in Math, Science, and Literacy. This is accomplished by building dynamic outdoor classrooms in elementary schools in low-income communities and giving teachers the tools, training, and coaching they need to help their students succeed.

**Real School Gardens** is a national organization with more than a decade of experience working with schools and engaging with communities to improve academics, increase teacher effectiveness, and build sustainable learning gardens.

Every teacher can benefit from harnessing students' "natural" curiosity and using the outdoors to help power instruction. At Billingsville Elementary, Amanda Sanders' 2nd graders were struggling to write so she took them outside to practice journaling, using their school garden for inspiration. Amanda explains that their writing has really come to life. Now her students

have something interesting to write about and share.

When the 3rd graders at Whitewater Academy struggled to grasp the concept of a perimeter, their school garden coordinator Jeffie Hardin handed them each a tape measure and marched them outside to measure the raised beds. Once they engaged with the hands-on task instead of looking at abstract boxes on a chalkboard, students instantly understood the concept, and their test scores soared.

At Lebanon Road, Darlene Petranick gets students excited about science by asking them to make Real-world observations, which gets them deeply engaged in learning, especially when they get to host the hens in **Real School Gardens'** mobile chicken tractor.



PREPARED : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Collaborative	Soft Skills for Workforce Success	Established to help address the needs of both the workforce and the special training needs of business and industry.



Many job seekers experience one or more barriers to employment during their careers. Although this makes finding or keeping a job more difficult, it's not impossible. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Collaborative, formed in 2011, has been working collectively to identify strategies and coordinate efforts to improve outcomes for those with barriers to employment. These agencies include:

- ▶ Goodwill
- ▶ Charlotte Works
- ▶ Urban League
- ▶ Center for Community Transitions
- ▶ Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)
- ▶ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)
- ▶ Charlotte Area Fund
- ▶ NC Vocational
- ▶ Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
- ▶ City of Charlotte



Acknowledging that local employers have consistently expressed the need for better soft skills from job seekers, the Collaborative worked with an expert in workforce curricula to develop a common and rigorous soft skills curriculum that all agencies would use. In 2015, the Working Smart curricula was tested and launched.

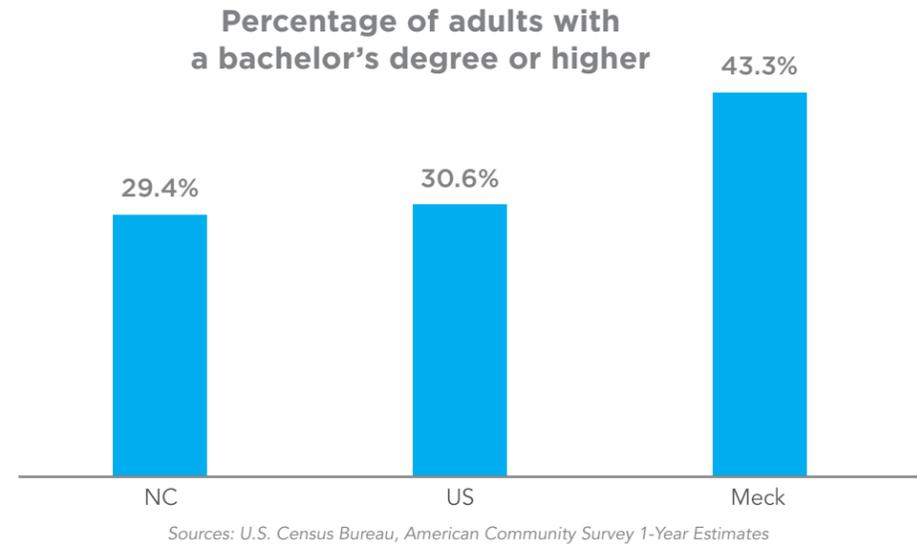


To date, well over 500 job seekers have completed the **Soft Skills for Workforce Success** program, which is now also being used with CMS high schools. It has also been adopted by community colleges across the state.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Collaborative exemplifies how organizations can effectively work together to break down silos and develop strategies to better prepare potential employees to enter the workforce.

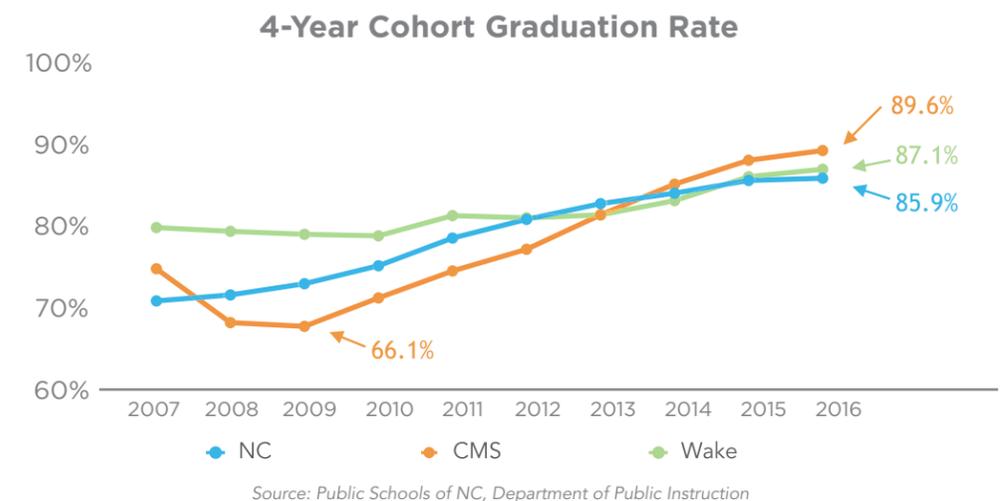
## HOW EDUCATED ARE WE?

Residents of Mecklenburg County are more educated than the population of the country as a whole, with over 43% of adults (age 25 and older) holding a bachelor's degree. This high level of educational attainment is fed by strong in-migration of educated workers from around the US and abroad. The local economy's strength is strongly linked to the skill of its workforce.



## EDUCATING OUR POPULATION

An increasing number of students educated by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are graduating from high school, helping to prepare the future workforce and influence economic growth. As seen in the graph below, (CMS) exceeded the state and Wake County's (Raleigh) high school graduation rates in recent years.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6:  
**HEALTHY.**

## We protect the foundation of our community—our residents and the environment.

It's not a coincidence that health and happiness often go hand-in-hand. We want to create a culture of health and wellness in all areas of our community.

HEALTHY: PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Mecklenburg County Public Health	Village HeartBEAT	An initiative to address obesity and heart disease awareness among African American and Hispanic populations



Arthur Johns knew he had reached a crossroad in his life. Approaching his 50th birthday and weighing more than 400 pounds, Johns decided he should focus on his health. His church, Ben Salem Presbyterian, had recently joined a partnership of local congregations in a fitness and wellness challenge sponsored through the **Village HeartBEAT** program. With daily workouts, educational classes, and healthy cooking demonstrations, Johns stayed diligent and began to inspire other members of his team.



Now, three years later, the hard work has paid off. Johns has dropped more than 200 pounds, reduced his blood pressure medications and continues to maintain a regular workout routine. He is not alone. More than 300 participants from 30 churches are now actively involved in **Village HeartBEAT's** 10-month fitness and wellness challenge.

The **Village HeartBEAT** initiative was created to reduce risk factors of heart disease by investing in an alliance with faith-based organizations with internal focus in

### OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

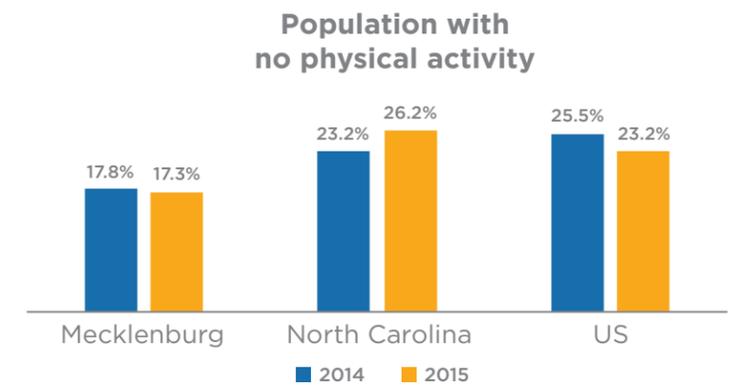
- Create a culture of health and wellness
- Protect and restore the natural environment
- Coordinate open space, greenways/paved trails, and parks planning with neighborhood accessibility

Mecklenburg County Public Health Priority Areas. The concept of community engagement has succeeded in improving poor diets and providing alternatives to sedentary lifestyles. The result has been an improved culture of health and wellness.



#### MECKLENBURG IS ACTIVE

Several campaigns throughout the country encourage people of all ages to become more physically active. Whether at work, school, home, or while commuting, Americans spend a lot of time sedentary. When it comes to the percentage of individuals not engaging in physical activity, Mecklenburg County is performing better than the country as a whole, however the results are low with only **18% of residents in 2014 and 17% in 2015 being active.**



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention via. Mecklenburg County Public Health

HEALTHY : PROFILE ORGANIZATIONS

Carolinas HealthCare System and Novant Health

A collaboration of two giants in health care for doing good.



Carolinas HealthCare System



**GENE WOODS**, President & CEO  
Carolinas HealthCare System



**CARL ARMATO**, President & CEO  
Novant Health



Chief Executives at two local health systems have launched a first-of-a-kind partnership that will explore ways for their organizations to collaborate to improve access to health care for under-served communities in Charlotte.

Gene Woods, who became CEO of **Carolinas HealthCare** in May of 2016, and Carl Armato, who has led **Novant Health** since 2012, have begun efforts to engage the community around improving the overall health in local neighborhoods. The emphasis of this partnership is on “distressed neighborhoods” that do not have enough health services or access to fresh foods, and where rates of diabetes and heart disease exceed the national average.

To kick-off this effort, they invited leaders from more than 40 businesses, religious and educational institutions, local government agencies and nonprofits to meet in November 2016, with the hopes of coming together “to improve the health of Charlotte’s communities whose population health status is significantly challenged.”

While there is still much work to be done, this is a great example of potentially life-saving collaboration that can help create a community culture of health and wellness.

*Source: Contents from this article are reproduced with permission from the Charlotte Observer from the following site:*

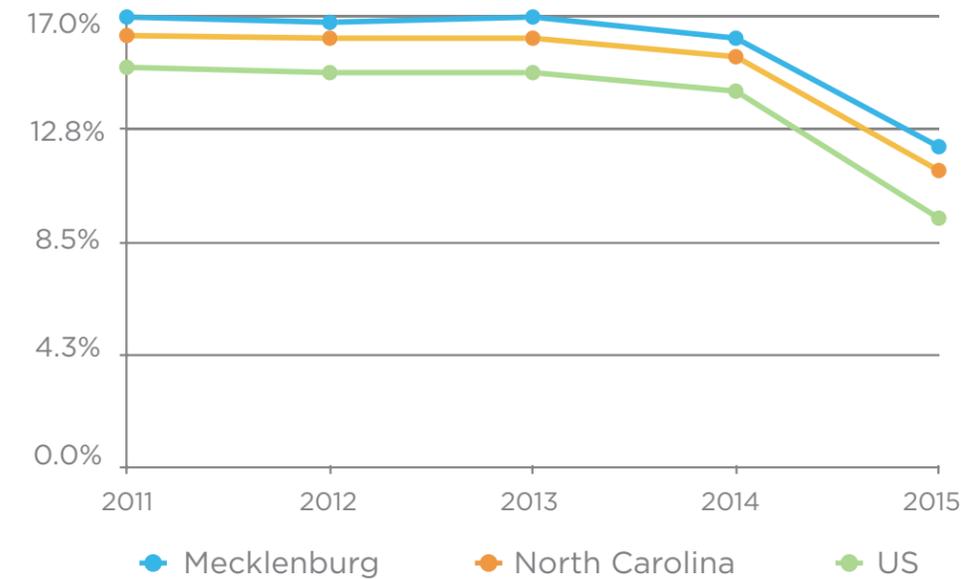
<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/living/health-family/article117592478.html>

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health insurance coverage allows individuals of all ages to receive preventive care treatment, meaning individuals are more likely to detect health problems early, when they’re less expensive and less difficult to treat, and more likely to stay healthy. In 2010, the Affordable Care Act was passed in the United States in an effort to decrease the number of uninsured citizens. In 2015, the percent of uninsured Americans dropped from 14% to 9%. Mecklenburg County’s numbers are slightly higher but follow the same downward trend: from 16% in 2014 to 12% in 2015.



Percent Uninsured  
Mecklenburg, NC 2011-2015



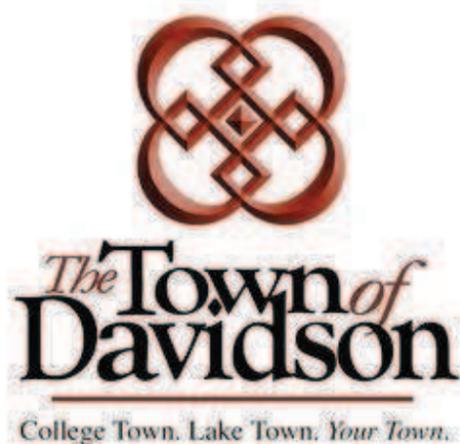
Source: American Community Survey (US Census)

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7:**  
**RESILIENT.**

We carefully manage resources in the face of a growing population and limited resources.

Our community should resolve to plan development and conserve precious resources in ways that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

RESILIENT : PROFILE ORGANIZATION	INITIATIVE	
Town of Davidson	Rural Area Plan	Aims to preserve the character and livability of the Town of Davidson, while allowing for growth.



Over the past decade issues related to sprawl have become obvious (transportation capacity, affordable housing, preserved open space, etc.) in the **Town of Davidson**. As development pressures increase across the region and, specifically, in the town's rural area, the town seeks to understand and proactively plan for this growth. The goal: is to develop a long-term vision and inform future land-use and transportation decisions facilitating the balance between development and conservation of valuable resources. The Town of Davidson has been proactive in meeting development challenges head on.

Questions have existed for some time about how communities can manage and direct development for the long term benefit of landowners, stakeholders, and residents. In response to Davidson's recognition of being a desirable place to live, and consequently the reality of rising development pressures, town officials, town staff, local organizations, and landowners took a hard look at what they wanted for their community in the next 20 to 30 years.

**OUR STRATEGIES FOR GROWING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY**

- Manage zoning and development to revitalize community character and the natural environment while allowing for growth and innovation
- Manage resources wisely
- Develop community and neighborhood leaders for the future



Known as the “**Rural Area Plan**,” a vast swath of approximately 3,780 acres in the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) will feature guided development while increasing connectivity to large parks and natural areas. Livable Meck supports the Town of Davidson's vision of smart and directed growth through the guiding principle Resilient. The town officials and staff manage zoning and development to revitalize community character and the natural environment while allowing for growth and innovation. Through strong collaboration leveraging the resources, knowledge, and experience gained from implementing actions like the **Rural Area Plan**, the community can build upon this success in preserving the character and livability of our local communities.

*“The Town of Davidson stands at a cross-roads with respect to rural development and conservation practices,” said Planning Director Jason Burdette. “The question is not whether Davidson will face development pressure, but how the town will accommodate, direct, and manage growth; and, how landowners and stakeholders will benefit from this change.”*

**JASON BURDETTE**  
Town of Davidson, Planning Director

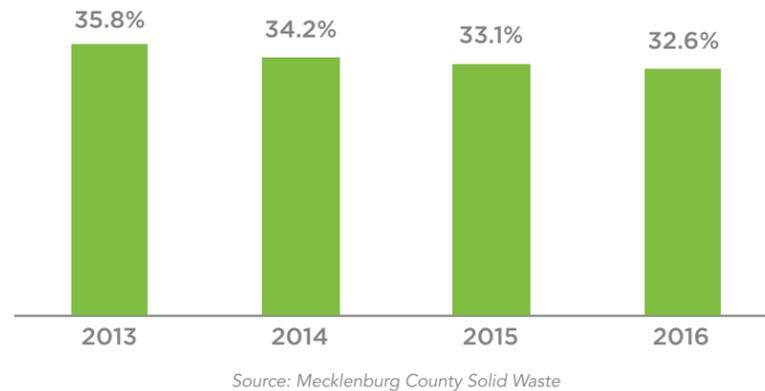


**WORK TO DO ON RECYCLING**

One of the major goals in recycling is to divert waste from landfills. Diverting solid waste from landfills saves money for families and communities, reduces consumption, reduces air and water pollution, and conserves natural resources. Solid waste diversion can be increased by increasing recycling participation and separating yard waste from garbage.

Since 2013, the percentage of Mecklenburg residential solid waste that has been diverted from landfills has seen a slow decline. This represents an opportunity for greater awareness to encourage continued recycling and separation of yard waste from garbage.

**Mecklenburg County Residential solid waste diversion**



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**WATER CONSUMPTION GOES UP WITH HOME VALUES**

Reducing water consumption saves money for households, reduces demand on the Catawba River water supply, and also reduces energy consumption, as it takes energy to pump, heat, treat and deliver water. The map of water consumption corresponds very closely with home prices (i.e. neighborhoods with higher home prices consume more water).

**REPORTING BY THE NUMBERS**

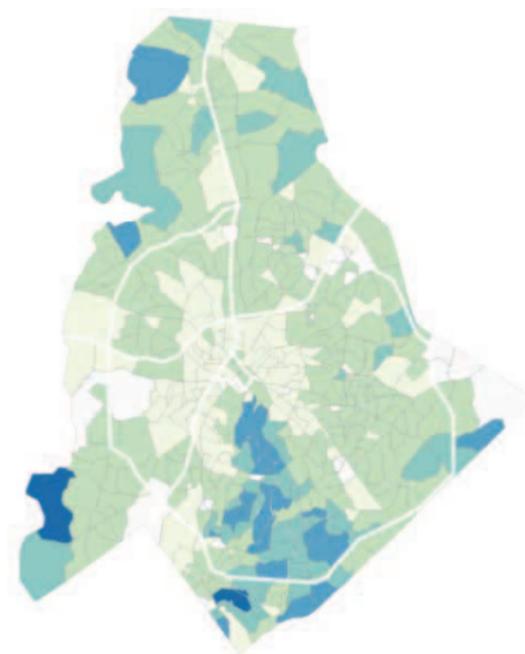
**Water Consumption COUNTY**

**153**

Average daily water consumption for single-family housing units (gallons per day per unit). The County total is 37,440,746 gallons per day.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer <http://mcmmap.org/qol>



**RESILIENT : PROFILE ORGANIZATION**

**Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation**

**INITIATIVE**

Resource Preservation

A team of Master Naturalists helping to identify rare plant species



Searching for pygmy pipes? That's just what Natural Resources Coordinator and Supervisor Lenny Lampel and a team of Master Naturalists searched for - one of our region's long forgotten plants. "Monotropsis odorata", more commonly known as sweet pinesap or pygmy pipes, is a regionally rare species. This often overlooked local resident pushes its way just above soggy leaves with a dismal display of papery brown sepals. Small violet to purple flowers briefly appear and a sweet scent hangs in the air that attracts pollinators. All before vanishing quietly as Spring begins to take full bloom.



Why take the time to look for such a forgotten thing? **Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation** is identifying, documenting and digitally locating these plants, along with a host of others to make sure we avoid destroying critical habitat. Livable Meck partners including Catawba Lands Conservancy, Davidson Lands Conservancy, and Duke Energy have shared in this opportunity by making and available to survey and by providing additional resources.

This is an example of how organizations are collaborating to ensure our natural resources can be resilient - continuing to grow and thrive so we can continue to have a Livable Meck.

**SPECIES MONITORED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS:**

Flora: Threatened/Endangered Species (T&E Species):	US Status	NC Status
Schweinitz's sunflower ( <i>Helianthus schweinitzii</i> )	E	E
Smooth coneflower ( <i>Echinacea laevigata</i> )	E	E
Georgia aster ( <i>Symphotrichum georgianum</i> )	C	T
Sweet Pinesap ( <i>Monotropsis odorata</i> )	FSC	SC-V
Piedmont Aster ( <i>Eurybia mirabilis</i> )	FSC	SR-T
Prairie Anemone ( <i>Anemone caroliniana</i> )	--	E
Northern cup-plant ( <i>Silphium perfoliatum</i> )	--	T
Dissected Toothwort ( <i>Cardamine dissecta</i> )	--	SC-V
Prairie dock ( <i>Silphium terebinthinaceum</i> )	--	SR-P
Crested Coralroot ( <i>Hexalectris spicata</i> )	--	SR-P

## About This Report

This is the first progress report for the Livable Meck which highlights collaborations and success stories within each of the plans guiding principles of **Welcoming, Innovative, Connected, Inclusive, Prepared, Healthy, and Resilient.**

The data shown in this report come from a variety of sources, but the majority are summarized at the neighborhood level in the **Quality of Life Explorer**, which is an interactive online tool to help neighborhoods, government leaders and staff, businesses, community organizations, new residents, and others learn more about our county and the diverse neighborhoods within it.

The Explorer features over 80 variables in nine dimensions that reflect our community. Check out the Explorer online to learn more about what's happening, see trends over time, and connect to resources to take action on the issues that matter to you.

To see the interactive tool for these and many other data variables go to:

[mcmmap.org/qol](http://mcmmap.org/qol)



## Data Source Details

PRINCIPLE	GOAL	MEASURES	NOTES	SOURCE
Welcoming	A. We will build a safe community.	Crime Rate - Property	QoL 2011, 2013, 2015 available, rate dropping (from 38.5 in 2011)	Quality of Life Explorer
Welcoming	A. We will build a safe community.	Crime Rate - Violent	QoL, 2011, 2013, 2015 available, rate mixed; down from 2013 to 2015	Quality of Life Explorer
Welcoming	O. Mecklenburg County residents will have access to community-based arts, science, and history education.	Arts/culture participation	QoL tracked - ACS is source	Quality of Life Explorer
Innovative	D. We will be a community where new and existing businesses have the resources to help them succeed.	Commercial Building Age	QoL - 3 data points	Quality of Life Explorer
Healthy	F. Mecklenburg County residents will have access to open space, greenways/paved trails, and parks within their neighborhoods.	No physical activity	Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention	County Public Health Department
Healthy	P. All Mecklenburg County residents will have access to healthcare resources.	Uninsured	American Community Survey, Census	Census
Connected	G. Mecklenburg County residents will be connected by foot, bike, and transit to places they need to go.	Transit Ridership	QoL - 3 years of data, map shows distribution, shows drop since 2014.	Quality of Life Explorer
Inclusive	L. We will support our most at-risk residents.	Rate of Children Receiving Public Assistance	Source: Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services	County DSS
Inclusive	T. Residents will have desirable, safe, and accessible housing choices.	Homeownership Rate	QoL	Quality of Life Explorer
Prepared	N. All age-groups will have academic educational opportunities.	Percentage of adults over age 25 with a Bachelor's degree or higher	Source: ACS. Add state, federal for context, multiple dates for trend	American Community Survey
Prepared	N. All age-groups will have academic educational opportunities.	Graduation Rate	QoL tracks -Source: CMS	Quality of Life Explorer
Resilient	R. We will manage resources wisely.	Residential solid waste diversion	LUESA (QoL tracks, but only for Charlotte)	County Land Use & Environmental Services
Resilient	R. We will manage resources wisely.	Average daily water consumption for single-family housing units	QoL	Quality of Life Explorer

**LIVABLE MECK PARTNERS**

AARP  
 Active Charlotte Alliance  
 Ada Jenkins Center  
 AIA  
 American Leadership Forum Charlotte  
 Arts & Science Council  
 Camino Community Center  
 Cardinal Innovations  
 Care Ring  
 Carolina Raptor Center  
 Carolina Thread Trail  
 Carolina Voices  
 Carolinas Healthcare System  
 Catawba Land Conservancy  
 Catawba Riverkeeper  
 Catholic Refugee Resettlement Office  
 Center for Prevention Services  
 Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)  
 Centralina Area Agency on Aging  
 Centralina Council of Governments  
 Charlotte Area Health Education Center  
 Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)  
 Charlotte Center City Partners  
 Charlotte Chamber of Commerce  
 Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT)  
 Charlotte Family Housing  
 Charlotte Fire Department  
 Charlotte Housing Authority  
 Charlotte International Cabinet  
 Charlotte Makerspace  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Food Policy Council  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Library  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)  
 Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Police Department  
 Charlotte Museum of History  
 Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization  
 Charlotte Rescue Mission  
 Charlotte Solid Waste Services  
 Charlotte Water  
 Charlotte Works  
 Child Care Resources  
 Children and Family Services Center

Circle de Luz  
 Citizen Schools  
 City of Charlotte Budget and Evaluation  
 City of Charlotte Economic Development  
 City of Charlotte Engineering & Property Management  
 City of Charlotte Innovation & Technology  
 City of Charlotte Managers Office  
 City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services  
 City of Charlotte Solid Waste  
 City of Charlotte Strategy & Budget  
 City Start Up Labs  
 Clean Air Carolina  
 CLT Joules  
 Code for Charlotte  
 Community Building Initiative  
 Community Care Partners of Greater Mecklenburg  
 Community Link  
 Council for Children's Rights  
 Crescent Communities  
 Crisis Assistance Ministry  
 CROWN: Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves with Nature  
 CRTEC  
 Customer Service Solutions, Inc.  
 Davidson College  
 Davidson Housing Coalition  
 Davidson Land Conservancy  
 Davidson Lifeline  
 Discovery Education  
 Discovery Place  
 Duke Energy  
 E2D  
 E4 Carolinas  
 Envision Charlotte  
 F3 Foundation  
 Flywheel Group  
 For Charlotte  
 Foresite Development, Inc.  
 Four Town Alliance  
 Generation Nation  
 Goodwill Industries  
 Greater Charlotte Apartment Association  
 Greater Charlotte Hospitality and Tourism Alliance  
 Green Teacher Network  
 Habitat for Humanity  
 Hands On Charlotte  
 Heartwood Tree Service

Historic Charlotte  
 Homeless Services Network  
 Informative Technologies  
 InnerVision  
 Innovation Agency  
 International House  
 Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas  
 Keep Charlotte Beautiful  
 Keep Mecklenburg Beautiful  
 Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation  
 Leadership Charlotte  
 Learning Help Centers of Charlotte  
 Levine Museum of the New South  
 Levine Senior Center  
 LiveSmart Design  
 Matthews Chamber of Commerce  
 Matthews Free Medical Clinic  
 Matthews Help Center  
 McColl Center  
 MeckEd  
 Mecklenburg County Asset and Facility Management  
 Mecklenburg County Child Support Enforcement  
 Mecklenburg County Community Support Services  
 Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services  
 Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services  
 Mecklenburg County Health Department  
 Mecklenburg County Human Resources  
 Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency  
 Mecklenburg County Manager's Office  
 Mecklenburg County Office of Economic Development  
 Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation  
 Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Commission  
 Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office  
 Mecklenburg County Volunteer Fireman's Association  
 Mecklenburg EMS Agency - MEDIC  
 Mental Health America of Central Carolinas  
 Mint Hill Chamber of Commerce  
 My Aloha Paddle & Surf, Inc.  
 National Gypsum  
 North Carolina Cooperative Extension  
 NC Med Assist  
 NC Sustainable Energy Association  
 Northeastern University  
 Novant Health  
 Packard Place  
 Piedmont Natural Gas

Professional Services Industries (PSI)  
 Project for Innovation, Energy and Sustainability  
 Queen City FinTech  
 Queen City Forward  
 REAL School Gardens  
 REBIC  
 ReCommunity  
 Safe Alliance  
 Safe Kids Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
 Salvation Army  
 Shift  
 Sierra Club Central Piedmont  
 Southminster  
 SPICE  
 Sustain Charlotte  
 Tech Talent South  
 Teen Health Connection  
 The Learning Collaborative  
 The Relatives  
 The Vital Form  
 Time Out Youth  
 Town of Cornelius  
 Town of Davidson  
 Town of Huntersville  
 Town of Matthews  
 Town of Mint Hill  
 Town of Pineville  
 Trees Charlotte  
 UNC - Charlotte  
 UNC - Charlotte Urban Institute  
 United Way of Central Carolinas  
 University City Partners  
 Urban Eagles  
 Urban League  
 Urban Ministry Center  
 USGBC - North Carolina Chapter  
 Ventureprise  
 Vision Ventures  
 Visit Charlotte  
 Wake Forest University School of Business  
 Wethinknext  
 Wise Transitions  
 YMCA of Greater Charlotte  
 YWCA of the Central Carolinas



 LIVABLE MECK  
 @LIVABLEMECK

[LIVABLEMECK.COM](https://www.livablemeck.com)

MECKLENBURG • CHARLOTTE • CORNELIUS • DAVIDSON • HUNTERSVILLE • MATTHEWS • MINT HILL • PINEVILLE