

mist said, "We are well on our way. By my calculations, the 11-county Charlotte area is adding about 200 people a week."
 Atlanta's metro area totals about 4.9 million today and is expected to reach more than 5.6 million by 2015 based on census projections.
 Its annual population growth rate over the past 20 years has been much faster than Charlotte's, which indicates our 2026 metro area population could be closer to 3.5 million than 4.2 million, Vitner said.

Still, he believes Charlotte is one of the nation's most attractive metropolitan areas. "Its inland location is probably a huge plus as businesses and residents begin to shy away from the higher property prices and insurance costs of the coastal areas," Vitner said.

"My hunch is that we will see Charlotte move dramatically higher in the various places rated measures once word begins to spread about all the new developments taking place."

Morgan said some audiences are skeptical when they hear that the uptown population will hit 100,000 in 20 years while savvy developers often say the overall growth statistics might be too conservative.

Doug Smith: 704-358-5174;
 dougsmith@charlotteobserver.com

	2006	2026
POPULATION		
City of Charlotte	632,760	1 million
Downtown	10,000	100,000
Mecklenburg County	829,976	1.5 million
Metro area	1.5 million	4.2 million
Over age 50 (Mecklenburg)	194,425	450,000
COMMUTING TO MECKLENBURG		
Daily commuters	146,160	450,000
Average travel time	26 minutes	34 minutes
RACE & ETHNICITY		
White	69%	55%
Black	23%	33%
Latino*	7%	20%
Other	8%	12%
PUBLIC SCHOOLS		
Mecklenburg	148	275
Enrollment	123,000	225,000
FORTUNE 500 HEADQUARTERS		
Mecklenburg	8	14
REAL ESTATE		
Office space	40 million sq. feet	115 million sq. feet
Industrial space	125 million sq. feet	250 million sq. feet

* Latino ethnicity can be included under the white, black or other racial categories.
 SOURCE: Charlotte Chamber, with statistics based on census data, file information and trend projections.