

# HOW TO PASS DOWN A VACATION HOME WITHOUT PASSING DOWN CONFLICT

By JON MARZANO, AIF®, MANAGING PRINCIPAL

For many families, a vacation home is a place layered with memories, where generations gather each summer to laugh and share traditions. Yet, when it comes time to plan the future of the home, emotion and money can pull in opposite directions. Vacation home estate planning can keep heads level when the conversation becomes overwhelming.

## BALANCING SENTIMENT AND PRACTICALITY

When you begin passing down a vacation home, start by asking: do your heirs actually want it? Some will, others might not. Let's say you have a lake home. One of your children lives nearby, but the other lives out of state. How will the out-of-state family feel about the ongoing taxes and maintenance costs of a home they rarely use? Setting clear expectations through open discussion can prevent tension once the estate is settled.

## WAYS TO STRUCTURE OWNERSHIP

Several approaches can help an inherited vacation home stay a source of joy instead of conflict.

- **Trusts:** A trust can manage how the home is maintained and who makes key decisions. It also helps to avoid the probate process.
- **LLCs:** A limited liability company allows heirs to own shares rather than direct title. This simplifies voting rights and cost sharing while reducing personal risk.
- **Buyout Clauses:** Giving heirs a way to purchase each other's interests can protect family relationships if not everyone wants to keep the property.

Each option carries legal and tax consequences, so coordination among your advisor, attorney and accountant is critical.

## TAXES: WHAT HEIRS SHOULD KNOW

The tax implications of inherited property can vary widely. Heirs often receive a "step-up" in cost basis, meaning the property's taxable value resets to its market value at the time of inheritance. That can reduce potential capital gains taxes if they sell later.

Even so, estate taxes on vacation homes may apply for high-value estates. Thresholds and exemption amounts change over time, and each state sets its own rules on estate or inheritance taxes. Regular reviews with your advisor and tax professional help keep your plan current as laws evolve.

## KEEPING OR SELLING THE PROPERTY

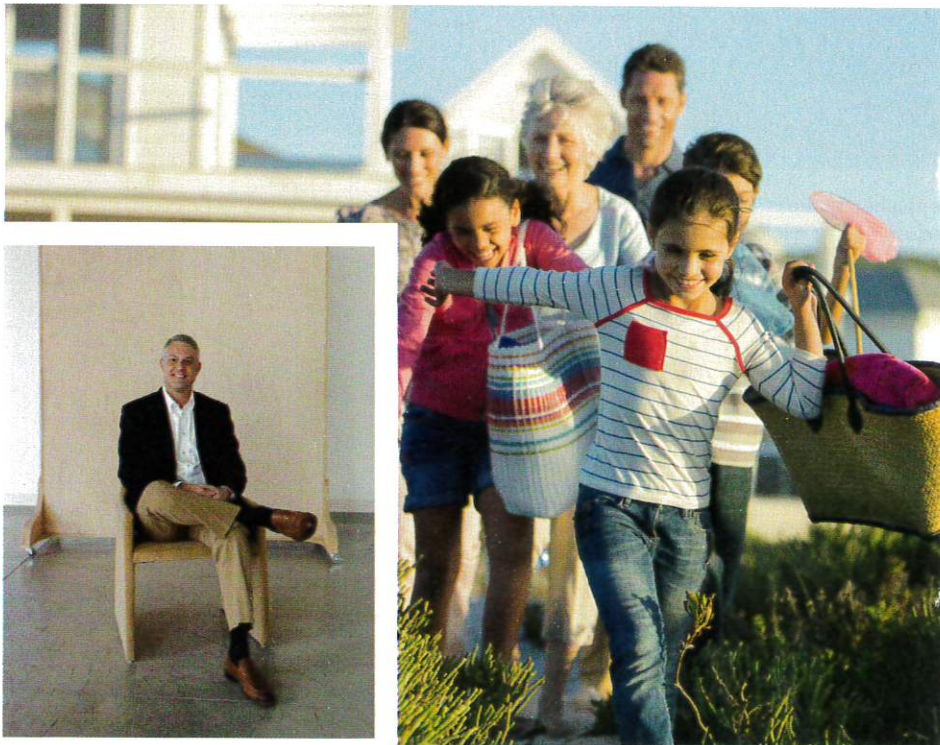
When multiple heirs are involved, fairly dividing assets among heirs can become

tricky. One child might dream of keeping the home while another prefers a cash inheritance. The estate plan should explain exactly how to handle keeping or selling inherited property so that your family avoids conflict during an already emotional time.

Some families choose to sell the home and use the proceeds to fund a charitable vehicle or a family trust, preserving the shared spirit without the upkeep of ownership.

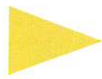
## FINAL THOUGHTS

Your vacation home can remain a family treasure when it's backed by a clear plan. By including vacation home estate planning in your overall wealth strategy, you help future generations enjoy what you built instead of arguing over it.



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# Handle Your Move With Care

BY STUART JAMES

Everyone gets overwhelmed at the thought of moving whether across the street, across town, or across the country. The best way to get a handle on all the things leading to this rise in anxiety is to research, organize and then make it happen. Staying focused is the key to staying calm and actually enjoying upcoming change in your life.

**Do Your Research** — No matter where you're moving, researching your new neighborhood and region is important. With the seemingly limitless range of websites available at the click of a button, it's now easier than ever to travel across the state or the country without leaving your recliner.

We hope you find useful information and insight into the area in our magazine. Another great place to start is with a site like City-Data.com that lists thousands of cities and towns from across the U.S. with stats on crime, education, income-earnings, housing prices and seasonal temperatures. It even has a "Top 100 Cities" listing. Another website, 50 States.com, outlines facts and trivia that will prove helpful if you're looking for overall information. With links to the official state pages, city guides and with links to practical information such as each state's DMV website, 50 States may be a site you'll want to hang on to even after your move is complete.

If at all possible, no kind of research compares to an in-person visit. Reading about a place will provide you with an overview but there is nothing like actually walking down its streets and getting a sense of living and working there. By allowing yourself a few days or a few weeks, you can discover the true essence of a city, and you'll feel better knowing that the decision you're making feels right. If you're moving with a spouse and children; take the entire family. Try to live as close as you can to a "local's" life, rather than visit as a tourist. Find the grocery stores, check out the schools, visit the library, the local diner and talk to people. See what it's really like to live there. Before arriving make sure to purchase local travel guides, maps, community newspapers and magazines, all of which will add to your research.

Not everyone can afford it but another option is to do a temporary or trial move. Before you uproot your family (and if you can manage to maintain two households), try living in the potential city for a three to six month period. This trial period will also allow family members to visit and have more opportunity to see if it is a good fit. In addition, it provides a great transition period, especially for children who may need some time to feel comfortable with the idea of moving away from what's familiar.

**How to Move** —Deciding how to move may sound simple, but a lot depends on your budget and time. Should



you hire a moving company? Deciding whether or not to hire a moving company, like most decisions, can have a hundred different answers depending on factors such as time and money as well as difficulty and complexity of the move. If you're moving across town, a self-move may make more sense. Moving across the country, may require more expertise and assistance. Still, to ensure you're making the best decision, it's a good idea to weigh all options. Decide first what your priority is — money or time or a bit of both. Knowing which is the most important will help lead you to a more satisfying answer.

How much stuff do you have? For a general idea of what it will cost to move your household, you can use the guide most truck rental agencies use, and count the number of bedrooms. A 26' truck will move 4+ bedrooms; a 24' truck will move 3-4 bedrooms; 17' truck 2-3 bedrooms; 14' truck will move 1-2 bedrooms; and a 10' truck will move an apartment.

How far are you moving? Truck rental companies can provide you with rates on the cost to rent a truck to move from Point A to Point B and factor in the type of move (one-way or return). That covers the fee to rent a truck, but what about gas costs and mileage? You'll have to count both when determining the total cost of renting a truck vs hiring a moving company. Distance calculators can provide estimates on how far you'll be traveling and fuel calculators will give you an idea of how much you'll be paying to fill up the gas tank. Both costs need to be added to the truck rental fee if mileage is not already included.

Once you've answered these two questions, it's time to start calling some moving companies and ask for a sample quote over the phone. Many will want to come out to your home for an estimate, which may or may not be something you want to do. You can also look for online quotes from companies such as Moving.com; however, keep in mind

that these quotes are not always guaranteed and also make sure the moving company is reliable.

So, now you should have a pretty good cost-comparison between hiring a company and moving it yourself. If this is all you're concerned about, you can pretty much stop right here and make your decision. But if time is a factor, then you may want to take it a step farther: How much time will it take to pack your things, load your things and drive it all to your new destination? Do you have additional help like friends, family, neighbors or co-workers that can lend a hand? Are there fragile or special items that will require special handling? Can you move these items yourself? If not, what will it cost to move them? Will you need to rent additional equipment/supplies/hired-hands to move larger items such as appliances?

**Hiring a Moving Company** — Hiring a good moving company is a lot harder than you might think. Once again you start by doing some research, most of which can be done right from your computer. Select at least 5 companies and interview them over the phone. Get familiar with moving terminology, such as binding and non-binding estimates. Most companies have websites that list their services, service history, destinations they are willing to move to, and roughly how much it will cost. This is a great place to get background information and to start compiling a list of potential companies. Also, most companies will list contact information, including e-mail addresses, allowing you to ask questions and be provided with a written response. Also ask around among friends, family and colleagues. They can perhaps recommend a company (or if there's one you should avoid).

Another place to start your research is on MovingScam.com. This is a website dedicated to revealing moving scams before they happen to you. On MovingScam you can check out articles, message boards with moving company problems, warnings, and other Q&A sections. Find out if any of the companies on your list have generated any BBB reports. Information you can get will usually contain any grievances filed and if the grievances were resolved successfully. It's rare that a company has zero unhappy customers; the key is to ensure that if there were complaints, that in the end, the customer was satisfied with the result. Read the report carefully, and if you're thinking of using a company who had a grievance filed, ask them specifically about this case and how it was resolved.

Go to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website and find out if your potential mover has a Department of Transportation (DOT) number. This number ensures that the company is registered with the Department of Transportation. According to FMCSA, watch for signs of rogue movers such as those not offering an on-site inspection of your household goods before giving you an estimate; those demanding cash or a large deposit upfront; the ones with no local address; or if on moving day, a company who shows up in a rental truck rather than a company-owned

and marked fleet truck. Make note of anything suspicious. Above all, if it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

**Move It Yourself** — If you're moving locally, moving yourself may make more sense and save you money. Self-moves tend to be financially smarter if you're moving a short distance, but there are some points to remember when you start your research. You'll need a truck. As mentioned earlier, size depends on how big of a household you're moving. You'll also need to book in advance to make sure of availability. May through September is peak season and most agencies will charge more during these months. Don't forget any other vehicles that may need transporting (others cars or trucks, 4 wheelers, boats, etc.). Moving equipment such as dollies, pads, and blankets also add to the self-move total as well as insurance.

**Moving Timetable** — In order to keep yourself on schedule, you'll need to keep a list of things to do eight, four, and finally two weeks before you move.

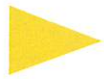
**At eight weeks** - Start to call movers, truck rental companies, etc. and keep all notes and reminders. Decide if you're going to move yourself or hire professionals. Find out how much the moving company will cover, then contact your own insurance agent and ask if your policy can apply to moving your household goods. If you're moving with kids, arrange to transfer their school records. Check on storage facilities at the new location if there will be a need. Finally, start compiling any packing supplies you'll be needing, purchase a lockable box for important documents.

**With a month to go** - Contact your utility and service companies for disconnect and reconnect dates respectively at your previous and new residences. If you're moving yourself, now is the time to reserve your truck or trailer. In any case, complete all of your travel plans such as flights, hotels, and pet arrangements. If you're driving, decide what you need to pack for the trip such as kids' games, clothing, and food. Cancel local subscriptions (magazines, newspapers, bottled water). Complete an IRS change of address form. Be sure to have good directions for the entire trip and keep packing.

**Just two weeks left** - Get your car fully serviced and prepare its registration and insurance. If you're moving out of state, notify your current Department of Motor Vehicles of your address change and inquire about registration in your new state. Call your insurance company to cancel or transfer your current home coverage. You'll need to transfer all prescriptions to a pharmacy in your new city. Make sure the moving van can fit in your driveway or on the street and that the distance from the van to the front door does not exceed what the moving company allows.

Try not to buy too many groceries or only buy essentials and items that you'll eat in the next two weeks. Continue general packing. Try to label each box with what's inside, where it goes and any special instructions. Be as detailed as you can. This will make it easier when you're unpacking.

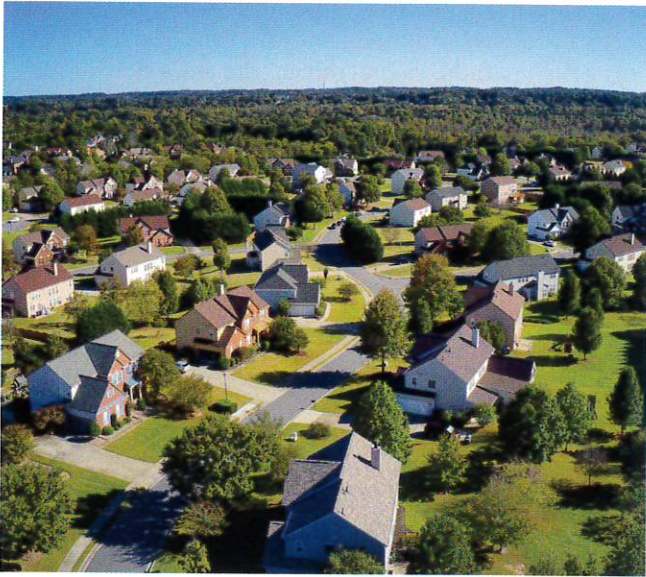
Some preparation on your part in the beginning can make something even as life changing as moving from your home to a new home a good adventure.[]



# Real Estate

multiple choices in a very livable city

BY STUART JAMES



**Most sources agree** that the Charlotte housing market continues to evolve with steady migration patterns, moderate price growth, and shifting market dynamics. North Carolina's largest city is made up of 165 neighborhoods, and currently, there are just over 5,300 homes for sale, ranging in price from just \$235K to a staggering \$15M!

According to Realtor.com, home prices have fallen slightly, with a median listing price of \$439,950. The number of listings "on the market" grew 4.3% from the last reported month, which is a bigger increase than normal for this time of the year in Charlotte. Even with slightly lower prices, homes are selling at a slightly slower pace than at this time last year.

Typically, home price per square foot in Charlotte rises in the autumn months, and the most recent data shows that the price per square foot increased by 1.3% compared with the month before. Compared with the rest of the U.S., price changes in the Queen City are outpacing the national market.

Redfin.com agrees that the Charlotte housing market is still somewhat competitive. Homes in Charlotte receive 2 offers on average and sell in around 60 days, as compared to 53 days this time last year. According to Redfin, the median sale price of a home in Charlotte was \$415K last month, up 2.6% since last year. The median sale price per square foot in Charlotte is \$239.

To get the most balanced view of the Charlotte real estate market, we can add Zillow's estimates. According to Zillow, the average Charlotte home value is \$395,529, down 1.5% over the past year, and the closing goes to "pending" in around 30 days.

Who's buying, who's moving, and what part of Charlotte are they going to? On average, 117 people move to Charlotte daily. So, who is migrating to Charlotte? Across the nation, a high percentage of homebuyers searched to move into Charlotte from outside metros. New York homebuyers searched to move into Charlotte more than any other metro, leading with a net inflow of 1,020 buyers, followed by San Antonio (746), Washington, DC (685), Los Angeles (472), and Boston (267). These buyers typically come from markets with higher home prices and may have different priorities regarding property features and neighborhood amenities. What does this mean if you're "selling"? For example, New York buyers might prioritize walkability and access to public transportation, while buyers from Texas markets might focus on space and value.

If you're considering Charlotte as your next job opportunity, family relocation, or forever retirement, knowing something about the neighborhoods available and what they offer can be invaluable. Some of the hottest neighborhoods around Charlotte are Ballantyne West, Highland Creek, Steele Creek, Pleasant Hill Road, and Back Creek Church Road.

In fact, the Ballantyne area of the city offers truly diverse price points. Ballantyne East commands a median price of \$724,000, while Ballantyne West offers entry at \$409,000. The \$315,000 difference within the same general area illustrates how specific location factors influence pricing. Both areas maintain solid 3.8% appreciation, making them attractive for long-term investment while serving different buyer segments. This area serves both first-time buyers in Ballantyne West and move-up buyers in Ballantyne East.

High-competition areas continue to persist, with each area and neighborhood bringing something special to the table. The South End and Uptown area experiences high demand due to their urban amenities and walkability. Homes under \$800,000 in good condition are attracting multiple offers, especially those with unique features or premium locations. Properties here spend just 26 days on the market, indicating continued competitiveness in the luxury urban segment.

Dilworth and Plaza Midwood offer historic homes charm with updated systems that continue to be popular among buyers. These buyers prioritize character and walkability over size. Dilworth’s historic charm and proximity to both Uptown and the medical district make it an attractive option for professionals seeking character and convenience.

There are some other emerging areas showing strong activity. Highland Creek stands out as one of Charlotte’s most active neighborhoods, with 237 homes sold in the past year. The average price of \$298K sold, combined with low inventory levels (1.87 months), indicates strong demand in this family-friendly community. In University City, there is moderate competition in the market, driven by both investors and first-time buyers. Homes under \$350,000 are selling quickly.

What are some popular zip codes and neighborhoods around the Charlotte area? It may be worth looking into single-family homes and condo/townhomes for sale in zip codes like 28269, 28277, or three-bedroom homes for sale in neighboring cities, such as Concord, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, Fort Mill, and Rock Hill.

So, what can we glean from all these predictions, trends, and numbers? Here, near the close of 2025, the

Charlotte housing market is transitioning from a strong seller’s market to a more balanced, yet still competitive, environment. While home prices are still appreciating moderately due to strong population and job growth, increasing inventory (and longer selling times) are giving buyers more options and more negotiating power.

With the median price in the lower \$400K’s, there is a year-over-year increase of just less than 3%. Forecasts suggest moderate price growth will continue through the end of the year. Homes are taking longer to sell (on average, after 60 days on the market in September 2025, compared to 53 days last year at this time). Charlotte home buyers will have more choices now as active listings (5000+) have increased significantly, rising over 30% year-over-year in the broader North Carolina market, with Charlotte seeing similar supply growth.

This healthier supply is the highest in nearly a decade. As far as sheer volume of sales goes, there were 962 homes sold in the last reported month, a slight increase from 926 during the same month last year. The market is rebalancing, with a rising number of listings experiencing price reductions as sellers are adjusting to a less frenzied pace, and accurate initial pricing has become crucial for a quick sale. []

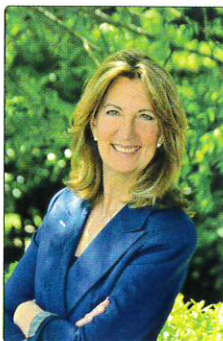
# Let's find the best neighborhood for you!

## SOUTH CHARLOTTE'S DESIRED NEIGHBORHOODS (RECENT SALES\*)

Contact me for more of Charlotte's desired neighborhoods.

Neighborhood	Price Range	Average DOM	~SF Range	Bedrooms	Baths	Amenities Include
Longview	\$1,550,000 - \$6,745,000	47	4,700 - 14,200	4-7	4-11	Golf Course, Gated & more
Highgrove	\$1,300,000 - \$2,120,000	23	3,500 - 6,500	4-6	3-7	
Firethorne	\$855,000 - \$2,600,000	96	3,500 - 10,300	4-8	4-10	Golf Course & more
Ballantyne Country Club	\$1,000,000 - \$3,500,000	21	2,800 - 10,000	4-6	3-9	Golf Course & more
Piper Glen	\$815,000 - \$2,400,000	32	2800 - 7200	3-6	3-7	Golf Course & more
Skyecroft	\$1,300,000 - \$4,000,000	31	4200 - 9000	4-7	4-6	Tennis Courts, Gated & more
Chatelaine	\$1,600,000 - \$2,000,000	4	4500 - 7200	4-5	5-7	Gated
Aero Plantation	\$899,000 - \$2,000,000	9	2200 - 7000	3-5	3-6	Private Airstrip, Hangar, Tennis & more
Quintessa	\$1,075,000 - \$1,525,000	13	4000 - 5300	3-5	4-5	Tennis, Gated & more
Longbrooke	\$1,300,000 - \$1,700,000	6	3800 - 4800	4-5	4	Gated
Springfield	\$1,000,000 - \$1,855,000	33	3500 - 6600	4-6	4-6	Golf Course & more

\*All data is estimated based on 2025 Sales



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Opening extraordinary doors, leaving a legacy 

# Lake Norman

BY LAUREL HYATT

*on, in and around the water*

**Ask anyone** in and around the Charlotte region of North Carolina, “Where do you go for fun, relaxation, and to get away from the hustle and bustle?” They’re likely to say Lake Norman. From an area that was once just farmland, mill villages, and small communities, Lake Norman has grown into a 32,000-acre destination for people who love the outdoors and all it has to offer. Waterfront parks, marinas, and boat rental companies stand ready for fun and adventure.

Created in 1963 by Duke Energy, the area is separated by four different counties: Iredell County, Catawba County, Mecklenburg County, and Lincoln County. Nestled on the banks of this beautiful lake are the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Denver, Mooresville, Sherrills Ford, and Troutman. Each of these unique towns presents a wide array of leisure amenities for visitors and guests, including upscale shopping, restaurants, NASCAR, and (of course) water activities.

Today, Lake Norman supports some 60 islands within its 500+ miles of shoreline. Its water depth can reach 110 feet in some areas (just in case you’re up for some sea monster hunting.) It is 33.6 miles long with a maximum width of 9 miles. The lake is North Carolina’s largest man-made lake, earning its nickname of the “inland sea”, offering endless opportunities to explore and play. In fact, there’s no such thing as “being bored” here! Lake Norman is the ideal place for swimming, fishing, boating, kayaking, and water sports of all kinds! Whether you choose to charter a sunset cruise, take in the view from a waterfront restaurant, shop at the unique shops in the surrounding area, attend one of the region’s annual events, or just kick back and relax, there is something for you here.

If you’re the “water dog” of the family, you obviously will be happy here, but there’s also plenty to do around the lake. The Lake Norman area is comprised of several charming towns with both lakefront and inland opportunities to explore. If you like getting out into nature, there are plenty of local hikes for you to enjoy. Looking for an entertaining night out? Some of the best breweries, bottle shops, and bistros are nearby. As a bonus, if you’re traveling with your pup, there are also many awesome dog-friendly establishments.

To spend time on the water, locals and visitors rent a ride with Party Pontoon from the town of Cornelius



to take in the beauty of the lake. On a rainy day head to Urban Air Trampoline and Adventure Park for an action packed day on a climbing wall, trampoline, zip line and more.

More and more people are looking at the area as more than a vacation spot and are choosing to take up residence here year-round. Throughout the year, there are four distinct seasons to expect. In Spring, the weather begins to warm back up, flowers are blooming, and it is a great time to visit museums and sight-see.

You cannot go wrong with a self-guided audio tour of the Davidson College Sculpture Garden. Spring temperatures range between the mid-50s and the upper-70s. Summer is perhaps the best time to get out on the water. With a great selection of waterfront restaurants, beautiful scenery, and temperatures reaching the mid-90s, on the water is where you want to be. Fall here is known for its sheer elegance, with fall foliage peaking in every direction. In Winter, even the cold isn’t too harsh, with temperatures ranging between the mid-30s and 50s. You can’t always count on snow, but winter is the holiday season, and there’s no better place to shop. There are local venues, boutiques, and farmers markets, along with your brand-name major merchandisers, with multiple malls to choose from.

Remember, from Lake Norman, you may enjoy the ease of traveling anywhere in the state, being just minutes north of Charlotte, while the mountains and coast are a short drive away. Whatever your desire, vacation or permanent residence, you’ll find it at the “lake.”

*To plan a trip, go to [visitlakenorman.org](http://visitlakenorman.org)*

# Charlotte/Mecklenburg

*the Queen City*

## CHARLOTTE STATS

POPULATION 943,476

COST OF LIVING 93.2 / US 100

BY LYNNE BRANDON



**Charlotte—the Queen City** — shines as one of the South’s most dynamic destinations and reigns supreme in culture, cuisine, and city life. Families visit and decide to put down roots to enjoy the high quality of life that encompasses quaint neighborhoods and a bustling city center.

Charlotte has officially become the 14th largest city in the United States, according to new U.S. Census Bureau data. This shows the Queen City outpacing larger metros like Phoenix, Seattle, and DC.

Businesses seize opportunities found only in Charlotte, one of two major banking capitals in the U.S. Major mixed-use projects like The RailYard in South End, The Square redevelopment in Uptown, and Ballantyne Reimagined in South Charlotte are reshaping how locals and visitors live, work, and play.

Sustainability and community engagement are woven into Charlotte’s development strategy — from LEED-certified skyscrapers to the Center City 2040 Vision Plan, which aims to keep the Queen City livable, connected and inclusive as it grows. Public transit improvements, including the expanding LYNX Light Rail, make it easy to explore without a car. New greenways and the Rail Trail provide urban walking and biking paths linking neighborhoods, art installations and breweries. Visitors have easy access to travel destinations via Charlotte Douglas International Airport, a.k.a. CLT. It is one of the nation’s busiest airports with direct flights to numerous domestic and international destinations.

Downtown Charlotte — known locally as Uptown — is the city’s vibrant core where high-rises, boutique hotels, rooftop bars, green spaces, and mixed-use districts fill the skyline. At its center is Romare Bearden Park, a lush urban oasis honoring the Charlotte-born artist. The park’s fountains, public art, and skyline backdrop make it one of the city’s most photographed spots — and a hub for concerts, festivals and food trucks.

The Uptown is a creative center with museum and cultural experiences like the Levine Center for the Arts, Mint Museum Uptown, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, and the Knight Theater.

Public art flourishes in other venues throughout the city, from the “Firebird” sculpture in front of the Bechtler to colorful murals in NoDa and South End. Charlotte’s creative energy also pulses through its live music scene — from intimate jazz lounges to major festivals like Breakaway, Charlotte SHOUT! and Carolina Jubilee.

Charlotte’s music scene continues to grow and music lovers gather at AvidXchange Music Factory, Charlotte’s sprawling entertainment complex home to The Fillmore Charlotte, The Underground, and outdoor festival stages. Small venues like Neighborhood Theatre, Snug Harbor and others, draw locals to more intimate settings with live music and DJs. Skyla Credit Union Amphitheatre brings in local and national artists.

Beyond Uptown, Charlotte mini-cities (districts) tout restaurants, breweries and good times, set inside cool neighborhoods. >>

## CHARLOTTE/MECKLENBURG

NoDa (North Davidson) is the city's historic arts district, filled with murals, live music venues, vintage shops, and unique eateries. Catch a concert at The Evening Muse, grab tacos and tequila at Haberdish, or sample small-batch beers at Heist Brewery.

South End is one of Charlotte's trendiest areas. The neighborhood is alive with breweries, murals, markets, and rooftop bars. Ride the LYNX Blue Line Light Rail to hop between craft breweries like Sycamore, Triple C and Wooden Robot. Plaza Midwood is Charlotte's eclectic and bohemian neighborhood and blends retro charm with modern edge. Here you'll find funky boutiques, street art, and restaurants like Mezzo Market, Supperland and Workman's Friend, a beloved Irish pub.

The best memory and photo-op can be found at the dive bar, Thirsty Beaver Saloon, the smallest neighborhood dive bar in Charlotte, tucked in between two towering apartment buildings. It was the scene of Mick Jagger grabbing a beer incognito when the Rolling Stones played in Charlotte in 2021. A funky food menu serves up Dam Big Plates, Beaver Snacks and more.

To go more mainstream, Dilworth, is a green, walkable neighborhood known for historic homes, boutique shops, and cozy eateries along East Boulevard. SouthPark takes the crown as Charlotte's

upscale district with luxury shopping, fine dining, and five-star hotels. It is the home of SouthPark Mall and brands like Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany and others.

Visitors make the trip to Charlotte for its diverse food and drink scene. The city's cuisine offerings continue to attract national attention and talent. Bravo's Top Chef is set to film Season 23 here (premiere in early 2026), shining a national spotlight on Charlotte's diverse, fast-growing culinary landscape. The momentum continues with the new 10-episode documentary series Fork & Hammer that debuted nationwide on PBS. The series follows Charlotte restaurateurs as they operate five restaurants while restoring a 130-year-old former church, now transformed into Leluia Hall. Adding to the city's culinary crown is Charlotte's first Michelin star for Counter. It is also the first Michelin award for a North Carolina restaurant in the guide's inaugural American South list.

Foodies are drawn to the endless choices from cafes to upscale restaurants. For an elevated experience, diners go to Barrington's for New American cuisine, and Good Food on Montford for small plates in a rustic setting. At Mizu, diners enjoy coastal Asian-inspired dishes and incredible skyline views. For Carolina barbecue locals head to Midwood Smokehouse for slow-smoked pork with classic sides. For multiple choices, diners go to Optimist Food Hall, located in a restored textile mill.



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## CHARLOTTE/MECKLENBURG

Start the morning off with coffee or take a mid-day break at one of Charlotte's local favorites, Not Just Coffee, Hex Coffee or Undercurrent Coffee. For craft beer lovers, the Charlotte Beer Trail features more than 30 breweries — including NoDa Brewing, Birdsong (try the Jalapeño Pale Ale) and Resident Culture, all known for creative brews. NoDa Brewing Company is a Flagship craft beer pioneer in Charlotte.

Cocktail enthusiasts will find plenty of choices with Uptown gems like Merchant & Trade, a rooftop bar at Kimpton Tryon Park Hotel with skyline views, and The Crunkleton, known for classic cocktails and elegant style. The Cellar at Duckworth's is a popular underground speakeasy serving craft beer and creative cocktails. At Supperland, great food is accompanied by exceptional drinks. In November, Beverage Director, Colleen Hughes, (James Beard nominated), received Michelin's Exceptional Cocktails award.

Sports are a big deal in the Queen City and keep fans entertained year-round. The city is home to the Carolina Panthers (NFL), Charlotte Hornets (NBA), Charlotte FC (MLS) — a fast-growing soccer club, and the Charlotte Knights (MiLB) — watch baseball with skyline views at Truist Field. For racing fans, the NASCAR Hall of Fame and nearby Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord celebrate the region's deep motorsports heritage. Not into team sports? For outdoor adventures, the U.S. National Whitewater Center is a mecca for rafting, zip-lining, rock climbing and live music.

Just north of Charlotte, Huntersville blends natural beauty with family-friendly attractions and adventure. History, nature and wildlife are the backdrop at Historic Latta Plantation and the Carolina Raptor Center, both nestled within the scenic Latta Nature Preserve. The preserve's trails and kayaking spots offer peaceful escapes amid 1,400 acres of woodlands and water. >>

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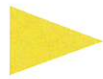
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# Welcome to Charlotte

If you are thinking of moving to the Charlotte area, you would be moving to one of the most dynamic cities in the nation and the largest metro in North Carolina. If you already live in Charlotte, you know it to be a thriving city with many equally quality suburbs nearby.

The great schools, strong values, and friendly environment here make for the perfect place for families, retirees, and those who are simply looking for a fresh start. It is exciting to see the ongoing growth in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg area with accompanying restaurants, nightlife, and thriving retail and corporate businesses. There are many entertainment venues for sports and the performing arts to enrich life in the area.

Located in the southern part of the state and with easy access to I-85 and I-77, Charlotte is also within easy driving distance of Asheville, Atlanta, and the NC Coast for weekend get-aways to the ocean, mountains, and other city life. This commerce-rich area is one of the fastest growing regions in the state and nationally ranked as a great place to live.

Large international corporations have established regional and national headquarters here bringing a strong economy, growth, and future development. This has also helped to foster cultural diversity and understanding in our communities, further enhancing our lives.

The team at The Original Relocation Guide/Charlotte edition knows how important pertinent information on an area can be to relocating families. This magazine's detailed map and informative articles are sure to enhance your moving experience.

**The Relocation Guide Blue Pages, on pages 46-47, provides important phone numbers and contact information that you will need to get settled into your new home, whether you are new to the area, visiting or just making a cross-town move.**

We know you will find our magazine to be a helpful guide whether you are a visitor or if you are relocating here. Be sure to tell our advertisers where you found them and thank them for making it possible to bring you this publication. You can learn more about North Carolina by visiting our website at [www.relocationguide.biz](http://www.relocationguide.biz) and also sign up on our website to receive free digital issues of the magazine.

Wishing you all the best,

Mark Boyd & Don Holland

*Executive Publishers*



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