Lake Norman Economic Development & Real Estate Monitor™

Covering Lake Norman and the Towns of Davidson • Cornelius • Huntersville

1Q | 2026

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Charlotte region enters 2026 with strong momentum, driven by **robust job creation, major corporate investments, and expanding infrastructure commitments**. Regional business leaders project that 2026 could be an even stronger year following record-breaking growth in 2025. The region saw a surge of **63 major project announcements in 2025**, generating **8,632 jobs** and **$2.9 billion** in capital investment, with especially strong contributions from manufacturing, headquarters expansions, and advanced industries. Charlotte also ranked **#2 nationally for job creation in 2025**, with strong gains in professional services, education/health services, and hospitality. [charlotteregion.com]

Charlotte's unemployment rate trends slightly below or near the national average (Charlotte MSA at **3.6%** vs. **4.1%** U.S. for Dec. 2025), signaling continued tight labor conditions and strong employment demand. The passage of the **Mecklenburg County transportation referendum** and ongoing airport and transit investments are viewed as pivotal for long-term economic competitiveness, helping attract talent and corporate growth. Local CEOs highlight transportation, safety, and housing as critical to sustaining labor force expansion.

The key issue going into 2026 is economic uncertainty. Inflation remains elevated relative to the Fed's 2% target, complicated by tariff effects and affordability pressures in energy and healthcare. The Federal Reserve is projected to consider a limited number of rate cuts later in the year, depending on inflation moderation. Major disruptions due to administration foreign policy continue to cloud the picture.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

Trends in the Lake Norman Region – Data from Moody's CRE Dec. 2025

Retail North Submarket	Office North/University Submarket	Industrial (Warehouse) NE Submarket	Multifamily NW Submarket
Vacancy: 11.4%	Vacancy: 31.7%	Vacancy: 8.5%	Vacancy: 5.6%
Rent per SF: $18.45	Rent per SF: $29.62	Rent per SF: $7.01	Monthly Rent: $1,561
Absorption (YoY): 13,250 SF	Absorption (YoY): 52,250 SF	Absorption YoY): -2,750 SF	Absorption (YoY): 646 Units

Contact us for detailed information on each product type & submarket

Major Projects in Progress

- **Huntersville:**

Town1 Mixed-Use Development (400,000+ sq ft commercial + 700+ residential units).

Two developers vying for projects on Hwy 115 – each with a different vision.

Hines purchases Birkdale Village Mixed-Use Development – new tenant announcements & expansion plans continue in 2026.

- **Cornelius:**

Mill's Market ($80M Mixed-Use Project)

Greenway Gartens / Briar Square (346 units + event & commercial space)

Cornelius Downtown Master Plan Update – stay tuned for upcoming Town Board discussion

- **Davidson:**

Oak Hill Apartments – Phase 2 (46 Affordable Units)

RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET

Market Statistics Overview – January 2026:

Metric (YoY)	Davidson	Cornelius	Huntersville	Lake Norman Overall
Median Sales Price	$732,500 (-6.2%)	$529,950 (-8.3%)	$560,000 (+0.5%)	$540,000 (-2.3% YoY)
Average Sales Price	$1,000,192 (+9.6%)	$882,004 (-25.8%)	$711,186 (+6.0%)	$877,840 (-8.1% YoY)
Avg. Days on Market	103 (+71.7%)	74 (+80.5%)	57 (+5.6%)	68 (+13.3% YoY)
Inventory of Homes	93 (+6.9%)	108 (0.0%)	232 (+26.8%)	469 (-8.4% YoY)
Months of Supply	2.6 (+18.2%)	2.4 (+4.3%)	2.1 (+10.5%)	2.8 (-9.7% YoY)

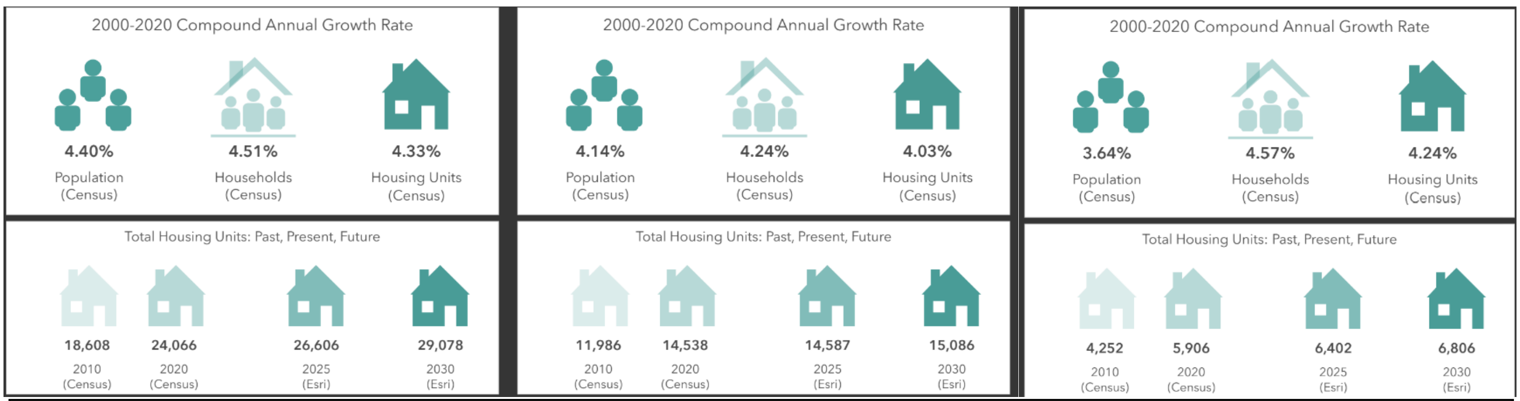
Market Trends

- Buyer vs. Seller Conditions – The tide is turning as homes remain on the market longer, particularly those in the mid-price range. Both affordable and luxury categories remain robust.
- New Construction Activity – Builders are cautious to proceed on new projects as economic uncertainty and interest rates reductions loom large.
- Migration Patterns – As a result of recent immigration policies, migration into the US has slowed dramatically. At the same time, interstate migration continues as the population shifts from northeastern states to the mid-atlantic and southern states. See the United Van Lines Report here.

COMMUNITY PROFILES	Davidson	Cornelius	Huntersville
Population	**16,276**	**34,366**	**67,087**
Median HH Income	**$166,556**	**$113,767**	**$116,438**
Median Age	**41.9**	**44**	**38.6**
Key Assets	**Davidson College, Parks & Greenways**	**Cain Center for Arts, Atrium Hospital (new), Parks & Greenways**	**Novant Hospital, Corporate Parks**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 2020-2024

DEMOGRAPHIC & GROWTH TRENDS



Huntersville	Cornelius	Davidson

ABOUT ROSE ASSOCIATES

Rose Associates is a real estate and economic development advisory firm providing services in:

- Economic development consulting
- Commercial real estate advisory & brokerage
- Real Estate investment sales
- Land Use strategic planning

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