

# 2010 Mecklenburg County, NC Performance Report



2010

community  
together to lend a hand we appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity  
to address unemployment  
education  
sustainable community  
effective and efficient government  
government assessment of what the community  
creative work  
to the best of their ability without wasting money  
providing those services  
providing support for families  
education  
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## Message from the County Manager



**Last year**, I said that the fiscal year was the most challenging for me in my career, given the juxtaposition of increased demand for County services and declining sales tax revenue and reduced State funds for our health and human service agencies. However, with this year's experience, I can say those challenges were pale in comparison to FY2010 (July 2009 – June 2010).

To address the economic realities, the FY2010 adopted budget was \$75.6 million less than the previous year. This cut further reduced our flexibility and capacity to provide services by eliminating 86 vacant positions and 84 filled positions. What followed were additional mid-year reductions totaling just over \$20 million, including additional layoffs of employees.

These difficult times have forced us to think and act differently. Because, when it is all said and done, Mecklenburg County still has a responsibility to serve its residents.

We focused our efforts on core mission, priorities and high-performing programs and services. We took a long-term perspective and continued progress on the long-term goals of our 2015 Community Vision.

This approach helped the organization sustain results achieved on the Community & Corporate Scorecard, a tool used to depict the Board of County Commissioners' vision for our community. The scorecard includes 25 measurable goals. All services provided by Mecklenburg County are targeted toward achieving these goals and are aligned to one of four focus areas:

- Community Health & Safety
- Social, Education & Economic Opportunity
- Sustainable Community
- Effective & Efficient Government

We use traffic light symbols as a visual for gauging progress toward our goals. Although progress has been made and some results already achieved (51 percent green lights), we still have a significant journey ahead of us.

Mecklenburg County strives to be the best local government service provider. This annual performance report highlights the County's achievement of, and progress toward, these goals over the past four fiscal years. I hope this report helps you learn more about Mecklenburg County government and our efforts to serve you and our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry L. Jones, Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Harry L. Jones, Sr.



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## Performance Legend

 A **green light** indicates either the goal has been achieved or performance is at least 95% of the long-term target.

 A **yellow light** indicates performance is between 86% and 94% of the long-term target.

 A **red light** indicates performance is at or below 85% of the long-term target.

 A **yellow/red light** indicates mixed results; performance evaluated using statistical analysis and expert knowledge.

 **No light** indicates that measurement data are not yet available and/or that targets have not been established.

# Mecklenburg County Scorecard 2010

## Desired Results View



Focus Area .....	Community Health & Safety	Effective & Efficient Government
Customer/ Stakeholder .....	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">Reduce Health Risks &amp; Diseases</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">Improve Management of Mental Illness, Developmental Disabilities &amp; Substance Abuse</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed red; padding: 2px;">Increase Safety &amp; Security of Residents</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed red; padding: 2px;">Increase Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness of Criminal Justice Services</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">Increase Customer &amp; Stakeholder Satisfaction</div> <div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">Increase Citizen Awareness of County Responsibilities, Services &amp; Results</div>
Internal Business Process .....		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Improve Employee Efficiency</div>
Financial .....	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Reduce/Avoid Costs</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Improve Financial Management</div>
Employee & Organization Capacity .....	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Enhance Workforce Retention &amp; Recruitment</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Increase Employee Motivation &amp; Satisfaction</div>

**KEY** Solid Line County Is Primary Service Provider Dotted Line County Is Not Primary Service Provider



**Social, Education & Economic Opportunity**

Increase Literacy & Workforce Development

Increase Citizen Self-Sufficiency

Increase Respect/Appreciation of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity

Increase Employee Access to Information

Maintain Triple-A Bond Rating

Increase Employee Knowledge, Skills & Abilities



**Sustainable Community**

Improve Air, Water & Land Quality

Improve/Expand Parks, Open Spaces, Greenways & Recreational Opportunities

Preserve Historic Sites & Landmarks

Improve Access to Public Facilities

Increase Economic Development & Job Opportunities

Enhance Citizen Involvement

Maintain Affordable & Competitive Tax Rate

Improve Technology-Related Capacities



# Domestic Violence – The Unknown Truth

**One of three** women in the United States will be assaulted by an intimate partner in her lifetime based on conservative estimates. Moreover, domestic violence crosses all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and religious lines.

With more than 35,000 calls to 911 for domestic violence related emergency assistance, or nearly 100 emergency calls per day, it is clear that domestic violence is an issue in our community. In fact, there were over 9,000 domestic violence related crimes reported in Mecklenburg County for FY2010.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, domestic violence services are approached from two fronts – crisis and non-crisis. Crisis assistance (immediate shelter and restraining orders) is provided by United Family Services through its Shelter For Battered Women and Victim Assistance. Non-crisis assistance (education, empowerment and

advocacy) is provided by Mecklenburg County’s Community Support Services (CSS) Women’s Commission. Both agencies work hand-in-hand with victims to increase their safety and are deeply entrenched in the community, partnering with police, hospitals, places of worship, community groups and civic leaders.

The CSS Women’s Commission’s Adult Services assists with everything from crisis counseling to personal advocacy in both English and Spanish. Its Children Services programs such as HERO, Teen Dating Violence, and REACH, help child observers of abuse (5 to 18 years old) and teens (13 to 20 years old) learn how to function in healthy relationships.

The CSS Women’s Commission also works with abusers through its New Options for Violent Actions, or NOVA program, a 26-week batterers’ education program. NOVA is dedicated

to ending violence between intimate partners by initiating change in abusers’ behavior and exploring non-controlling and non-violent ways of relating. Participants are referred from court, the Department of Social Services and other human services providers, and individuals must pay a fee to participate in the program.

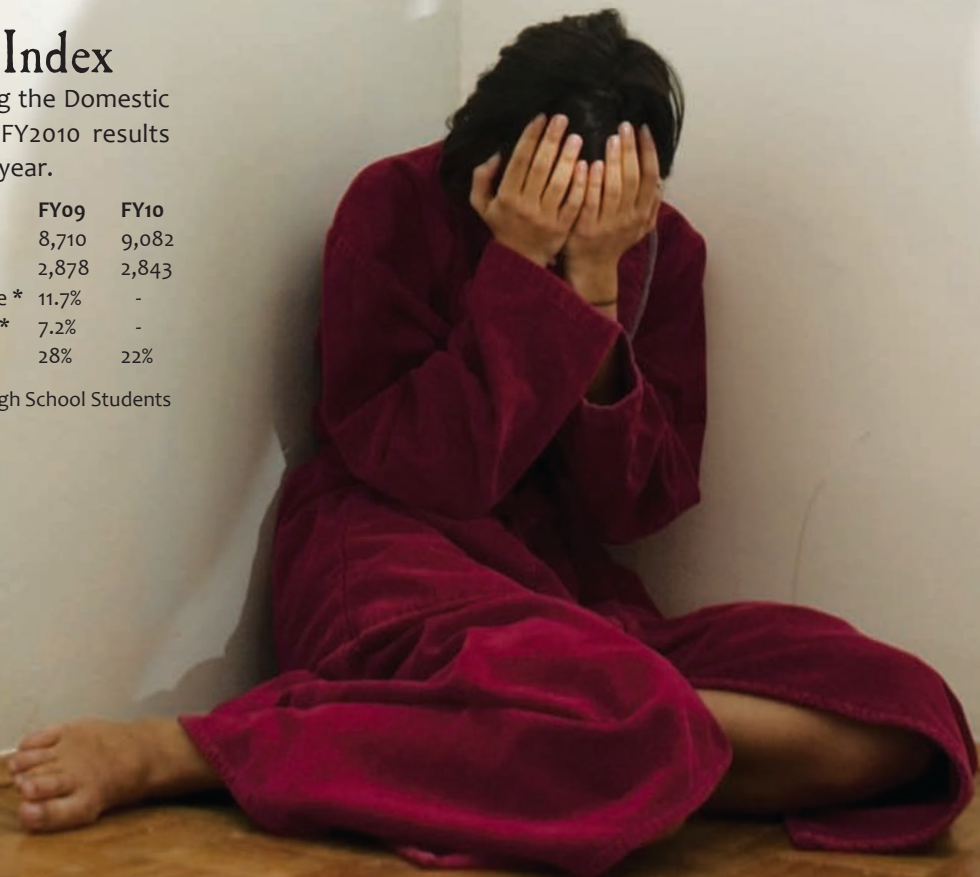
In addition to the above, the Women’s Commission, through its New Beginnings program, helps displaced homemakers get the training they need for employment, and offers empowerment services to help with resume writing, interview skills, and self esteem. The agency also offers domestic violence education and prevention work in the community through the Domestic Violence Speakers Bureau, which includes a pool of nearly 90 volunteers (including survivors) and is managed in partnership with United Family Services.

## Domestic Violence Index

In 2009, the County began reporting the Domestic Violence (DV) Index. Overall, the FY2010 results showed little change from the prior year.

	FY09	FY10
Domestic Violence Related Crimes	8,710	9,082
Protective Orders Filed	2,878	2,843
Youth with Intimate Partner Physical Abuse *	11.7%	-
Youth with Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse *	7.2%	-
NOVA Program Completion Rate	28%	22%

\*Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Middle & High School Students





## True or False: Bad Economy Yields Rise in Crime & Overcrowded Jails?

Contrary to what most people believe, crime is not connected to the economy, according to many criminologists, which makes the downward trend both nationally and locally somewhat baffling. Many people also directly equate overcrowded jails with a rise in crime rates, suggesting that the lower crime rates for the Charlotte area are the cause of the recent drop in the County's jail population. However, this only tells part of the story.

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### Community Health & Safety 2010

#### 2015 Performance Goals

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10 Results
<b>Child Abuse Rate</b> To have the County's abused children rate to be below the State's rate				Meck: 8.1 State: 12.6 (cases per 1,000) Performance Trend ▲
<b>Violent Crime Rate</b> To be in the quadrant with the lowest crime rate among comparable jurisdictions in the region				Lowest Crime Quadrant (667 crimes per 100,000) Performance Trend ▲
<b>Mental Health Index</b> To obtain 80% or more of targeted mental health goals including increased access to mental health services by decreasing wait time and increased number of consumers staying in the community and/or receiving in-home services				60% of goals obtained
<b>Disabled Adult Abuse &amp; Neglect Rate</b> To have fewer than 33 cases per 10,000 disabled adults				Meck: 67 State: 35 (cases per 10,000)
<b>Health Index</b> To obtain 75% or more of targeted health goals including low adolescent pregnancy, preventable mortality and communicable disease rates				38% of goals obtained Performance Trend ▲
<b>Trial Court Performance Index</b> To achieve 75% or more of targeted trial court goals including case clearance rate, time to disposition and age of active pending cases				33% of goals obtained Performance Trend ▲
<b>Domestic Violence Index</b> To obtain 75% or more of targeted goals including domestic violence reports, protective orders, youth risk behaviors, offender program completion rate and community outreach				DV Crimes Report: 1,021 (per 100,000) Protective Orders: 312 (per 100,000) 22% Offender Program Completion Rate
<b>Functional Capacity of Jails</b> Not to exceed functional capacity more than 20% of the year				9.6% of days exceeded functional capacity Performance Trend ▲

## Helping People Get Back to Work

**Mecklenburg County**, like communities across America, has struggled during the recession, witnessing some of the highest unemployment rates in decades. The unemployment rate in Mecklenburg County rose to a high of 11.8 percent over the winter of 2010 – more than twice the rate just two years ago

In response, two new initiatives emerged. The Job Help Center, located at the Main Branch of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, provides job seeking services to citizens, while the Department of Social Services (DSS) administered The Opportunity Project, or TOP, part of the federal stimulus funding allocated to help put people back to work.

Beginning in January 2010, the Job Help Center opened to a clientele mainly comprised of newly and chronically unemployed as well as first-time job market entrants.

“Every day, customers are using the Library to file for unemployment, search for jobs, create resumes, develop computer skills, and perform other tasks related to the workforce,” Frank Blair, director of Research, Innovation & Strategy for the Library told *Charlotte Observer*. Around 2,500 patrons per month have used the computers in the Job Help Center for an average of 75 minutes looking for work and applying for jobs since its opening.

Bryan Keith used the Job Help Center and got a job with International Paper after being out of work for several months. “This place has saved my life, I was about to be out on the street,” Keith said.

As a part of the federal stimulus to subsidize jobs, Mecklenburg County received \$6.4 million for The Opportunity Project. In all, DSS placed 476 eligible workers into jobs with 93 different employers.

Anthony Hunt of Comprehensive Construction said, “We are proud to be a part of a program that helps those who are, for lack of a better word, disenfranchised. We want to re-employ them.” Requirements for TOP included living below the poverty level and having dependent children.

The County’s programs and services, such as the Job Help Center and The Opportunity Project, are a social safety net for our most vulnerable neighbors. Laurenthia Gurley, who was hired by Communities in Schools of Charlotte spoke about her experience with TOP.

“While I have appreciated receiving public assistance, it wasn’t enough to sustain my family. Obtaining a full-time job through The Opportunity Project has allowed me to come from the Salvation Army Women’s Shelter to my own apartment. I am totally self-sufficient again, which is the way I’ve always preferred.”

### Job Help Center

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Frank Blair, Director of Research, Innovation & Strategy for the Library





The Bechtler Museum

## Arts, Culture, Diversity

Visit the Levine Center for the Arts in Uptown Charlotte or the Little Sugar Creek Greenway at Metropolitan in Midtown, and you'll find evidence of Mecklenburg County's commitment to cultural and ethnic diversity. The Levine Center for the Arts (formerly the Wells Fargo Cultural Campus) comprises the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts & Culture, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, the Knight Theater and the new Mint Museum.

Mecklenburg County assisted in the development of this arts complex, a public-private partnership, by increasing its rental car tax and channeling the funds through the City of Charlotte to pay for the cultural arts venue. The Gantt Center and Knight Theater opened last year; the Bechtler and Mint museums opened this year.

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## Social, Education & Economic Opportunity 2010

### 2015 Performance Goals

#### Ethnic & Cultural Diversity Index

To have 80% of residents believe Mecklenburg County is a diverse community, provides an array of cultural activities and has diverse minority-owned businesses

#### Adult Literacy Index

To increase the percentage of adults that are literate

#### Student Literacy Index

To have students perform on grade level or above on End of Grade Reading (95%), Math (88%) and Writing tests (80%)

#### Unemployment Rate

To have the County's unemployment rate at or below the State's rate

#### Self-Sufficiency Index

To have 50% of clients on public assistance increase their earned income; to assist veterans in accessing VA services; and to decrease the County's homeless population

#### Workforce Development Rate

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10 Results
Ethnic & Cultural Diversity Index	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse Community: 84%</li> <li>Cultural Activities: 84%</li> <li>Minority-Owned Business: 67%</li> </ul>
Adult Literacy Index	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77%</li> <li>Performance Trend ▲</li> </ul>
Student Literacy Index	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math: 82%</li> <li>Reading: 70%</li> <li>Writing: 76%</li> <li>Performance Trend ▲</li> </ul>
Unemployment Rate	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meck: 11.2%</li> <li>State: 10.8%</li> <li>Performance Trend ▲</li> </ul>
Self-Sufficiency Index	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients with increased earned income: 32%</li> <li>Homeless population: 8% increase</li> <li>Veteran claims processed: 4,265</li> <li>Paid veteran claims: \$17.8 million</li> </ul>
Workforce Development Rate	●	●	●	Under Development

## 'ReThink Recycling'

For many residents, the most they ever think about their household waste is on the evening when they roll or carry their trash and recycling bins out to the curb. Mecklenburg County has been working diligently to get residents to think about recycling a little more, and we're seeing some promising results so far.

Since curbside recycling began on a County-wide basis in January 1990, the program has grown to include state-of-the-art collection and processing of many different types of recyclable items as part of a partnership between Mecklenburg and the City of Charlotte, Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville. As the community has grown, so has the need to not contribute more waste to our limited landfill space and divert as much as possible to be processed and recycled again.

To put it all into perspective, an estimated 13,000 tons of recyclables were collected in FY1999; in FY2010, approximately 60,000 tons were collected in Mecklenburg County.

"The key to our success so far has been increased education and larger recycling containers for residents," said Laurette Hall, Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction environmental manager. "We have worked with the City of Charlotte government, the towns, and the County as a whole to make sure everyone has been getting the same message about recycling."

That simple point of communication – "ReThink Recycling" – has helped recycling collection skyrocket more than 21 percent when compared to the same time last year. In Charlotte alone, about 52 percent of all households are now recycling – a 40 percent increase over

last year. Landfill use has been declining steadily over the last year, with 7,000 fewer tons of trash going in compared to the year before. Earlier in the year, the City of Charlotte delivered new, larger, wheeled recycling carts to most households, while the towns elected to provide roll-out carts or carry-out bins for their residents.

"Just to divert one percent of tonnage from trash to recycling is monumental," Hall added. "We have a way to go, but the early results are promising."

In July 2010, renovations and upgrades were completed at Mecklenburg County's Metrolina Recycling Facility (MRF), where most of the recyclable material goes after collection as part of a "single stream" operation. Single stream means the recyclables are not sorted at the curb; the sorting takes

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### ReThink Recycling

"We have worked with the City of Charlotte government, the towns, and the County as a whole to make sure everyone has been getting the same message about recycling."

Laurette Hall, Mecklenburg County Waste Reduction Environmental Manager

# Federal Stimulus Money Aids Construction of Greenways

In 2009, the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department received \$2.35 million in federal stimulus funding for the construction of Toby Creek Greenway in the University City area and West Branch Rocky River Greenway in Davidson.

The funding was provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and obtained through the Mecklenburg Union County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) through a competitive ranking process. Originally, the two projects were supposed to receive funding with 2004 Park and Recreation

bonds that the County never issued due to the economic downturn.

Toby Creek Greenway and West Branch Rocky River Greenway will add to the Carolina Thread Trail greenway network which will eventually extend over 500 miles into 15 counties and to 2 million people.

“Both West Branch Rocky River Greenway and Toby Creek Greenway add important sections to our overall greenway system,” said Park and Recreation Greenway Planner Gwen Cook. “Without the funding, neither project would be possible.”

The impact of the stimulus money has enabled Park and Recreation’s greenway division to continue carrying out its mission of providing natural transportation and fitness areas that help to improve water quality, reduce the impacts of flooding, and provide wildlife habitat.

Currently, Toby Creek Greenway is 70 percent complete and West Branch Rocky River Greenway is 40 percent complete. Both are expected to be completed by spring 2011.

Additional Greenway information continued on page 17

## Sustainable Community 2010

2015 Performance Goals	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10 Results
<b>Business Property Growth Rate</b> To have positive growth in business property valuation				3.07%
<b>Preservation Rate</b> To increase the number of preserved historic sites and landmarks				5 new sites preserved
<b>Park &amp; Recreation Capital Ratio</b> To have 20% or more of capital expenditures for Park & Recreation facilities matched by other public or private sector partners				60% matched
<b>Insurance Services Office Ratings</b> To achieve Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings of 1.0 or lower for commercial building regulations, 4.0 or lower for residential building regulations and flood control and 5.0 or lower for fire protection				Commercial building regulations: 1.0 Residential building regulations: 4.0 Flood control: 5.0 Fire protection: 5.4
<b>Job Growth Rate</b> To have positive net growth in the number of jobs				5.1% decrease
<b>Transit Proximity Index</b> To have 85% or more of the County’s parks, greenways and libraries within one-quarter mile of a transit stop				Parks: 54% Greenways: 56% Libraries: 88%
<b>Environmental Quality Index</b> To have 100% goal attainment for improving air quality, stream water quality, and solid waste management and maintaining excellent lake water quality				81% of goal obtained Performance Trend ▲
<b>Parks &amp; Open Space Index</b> To have 100% goal attainment for voter approved parks, recreational amenities, greenways and natural resources				16.2% of goal obtained Performance Trend ▲
<b>Environmental Leadership Index</b> To have 85% or more of the County’s annual operations performed in a manner that conserves and protects our air, water and land resources				46% of goals obtained

## It's a New Normal

With the nation's economy still reeling from the effects of the Great Recession, and most local, state and federal revenue sources in decline, the County's leadership declared a "New Normal" for Mecklenburg County government going forward. To start, for FY2011, the County cut its budget, reduced and/or discontinued programs and services as well as eliminated positions to match available funding. The County also continues its "debt diet" – not acquiring any new debt for capital projects.

The \$1.35 billion budget adopted by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners is a 5 percent reduction from the previous year's budget. Stated differently, it

is a \$70.9 million cut. What this means is that the County will have to "do less with less," as County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr. said.

The immediate changes included a layoff of more than 300 employees, cuts of hundreds of additional unfilled positions, and reduced funding for libraries and parks and recreation, which resulted in some library branch closings, some recreation centers and other park facilities closing, and reduced hours for many facilities that remained open. Additionally, other programs were cut in the effort to focus on providing for the core County services, such as social services and public health.

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### What's Next

"Although the economy is recovering, we will likely not see meaningful growth in our revenues for the foreseeable future, perhaps three to five years or even longer."

Harry Jones, County Manager

# Effective & Efficient Government 2010

2015 Performance Goals	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10 Results
<b>Bond Rating</b> To maintain Triple A bond rating, the highest possible score	●	●	●	● AAA
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b> To have 80% or more of County residents satisfied with direct and online service delivery	●	●	●	● 84% satisfaction
<b>Employee Access to Information</b> To have 80% or more of County employees satisfied with internal communication and access to information necessary to perform job	●	●	●	● 87% satisfaction Performance Trend ▲
<b>Employee Knowledge, Skills &amp; Abilities</b> To have 80% or more of County employees satisfied with training and development opportunities	●	●	●	● 82% satisfaction
<b>Employee Motivation &amp; Satisfaction</b> To have 80% or more of County employees satisfied with working at Mecklenburg County	●	●	●	● 84% satisfaction
<b>Employee Technology Resources</b> To have 80% or more of County employees satisfied with technology related resources	●	●	●	● 88% satisfaction
<b>Employees per Capita</b> To optimally manage demands for service at or below the per capita average for North Carolina benchmark jurisdictions	●	●	●	● Meck: 562 Benchmark: 628 Performance Trend ▲
<b>Tax Collection Rate</b> To be comparable or higher than state average in tax collections	●	●	●	● 97.85% Performance Trend ▲
<b>Public Awareness</b> To have 100% goal attainment on awareness of County services, goals and results	●	●	●	● 118% of target achieved Performance Trend ▲
<b>Employee Satisfaction Parity</b> To achieve at least 80% satisfaction (parity) for each indicator by race, gender and age	●	●	●	● Parity achieved for most indicators except for persons under 25 years of age
<b>Resignation Rate</b> To have the County's voluntary resignation to be at or below the national benchmark for local and state governments	●	●	●	● Meck: 4.6% Benchmark: 6.2%
<b>Percentage at Net County Funding</b> To have all departments expenditures within amended budget	●	●	●	● 95% Performance Trend ▲
<b>Property Tax to Household Income</b> To have residential property tax revenue as a percentage of household income less than or equal to select regional jurisdictions in North Carolina	●	●	●	● Meck: 1.27% Benchmark: 1.30% Performance Trend ▲
<b>Advisory Committee Diversity</b> To have advisory committee membership representative of the County's racial/ethnic population which currently is 28% Black/African American; 13% other	●	●	●	● Blacks: 35% Others: 9% Performance Trend ▲
<b>Stakeholder Satisfaction</b> To have 80% or more of County residents satisfied with quality of service, value for tax dollar and the community as a place to live, work and recreate; and to have 65% or more of residents satisfied with County communication	●	●	●	● 75% satisfaction (Quality Service) 52% satisfaction (Value/Tax Dollar) 72% satisfaction (Live, Work, Recreate) 57% satisfaction (Communication)
<b>Citizen Satisfaction: Input Opportunities</b> To have 80% citizen satisfaction with input opportunities	●	●	●	● 59% satisfaction
<b>Customer Satisfaction Parity</b> To achieve at least 80% satisfaction (parity) for each indicator by race and gender	●	●	●	● Parity achieved sometimes by gender Parity not achieved by race
<b>Workforce Representation</b> To have a diverse applicant pool consistent with the Federal Government's selection rate	●	●	●	● Under Development

“True or False: Bad Economy Yields Rise in Crime & Overcrowded Jails?” continued from page 7

The average daily jail population of 2,274 inmates is 5 percent less than that reported one year ago, and 14 percent less than the peak fiscal year of 2006-2007. While this decline is due in part to fewer arrests, it also is due to shorter lengths of stay by inmates, fewer inmates awaiting trials and a drop in the contractual federal prisoner population.



Federal inmates are housed at the jail for various reasons, such as awaiting trial or disposition to another jurisdiction. The average daily population of federal inmates was 463 for FY2010. The previous year, the daily average was 501.

Capacity of the jail also increased as a result of expansion. There were 320 beds added at Jail North in FY2010 which lessened the strain on the central jail and reduced overcrowding.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) reports that through the end of October 2010, most crime statistics were showing sharp declines. Robberies were down over 20 percent, burglaries were down almost 20 percent, and rapes were down nearly 28 percent over this

time the previous year. And although homicides showed an increase of nearly 21 percent, all other violent crimes were down almost 12 percent. Some of the declines can be directly attributed to better enforcement and more officers on the street, but this does not explain everything — other factors need to be analyzed for definitive findings.

The question now on the minds of residents, elected officials and staff is how long will this downward trend continue? The short answer is that it is hard to predict particularly given experts are still unsure of what are the contributing factors. But projections show that the daily inmate population will continue to decline for the rest of 2010 and into 2011.

County staff regularly collects and analyzes inmate data as well as meets

regularly with key partners to discuss opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system. These partners include the Sheriff’s Office, District Attorney’s Office, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, police departments in the six other towns in Mecklenburg County, and other criminal justice stakeholders. The County also assists by coordinating and supporting key criminal justice initiatives such as improvements in case processing, information sharing, and offender services.

The County continues to be committed to its vision of ensuring the safety of all Mecklenburg County residents. In order to achieve this vision, the County will continue its collaborative approach of addressing systemic issues in the criminal justice system.



**Arts, Culture, Diversity** continued from page 9

For its part in the development agreement, the County will owe the City \$2,948,040 per year for 25 years. Because the Mint Museum was not ready in time for the first payment, this year's payment was 55.08 percent of \$2,948,040, but counted as full payment for the first year.

Also in FY2010, the County awarded the Arts & Science Council \$428,000 to support its grants programs, which includes funding to broaden access to cultural programs in neighborhoods and communities and, to promote arts and cultural equity and to increase the cultural experiences of African American, Asian, Latino and Native American audiences and participants. The grant funds also support the operations of 28 professional art, science and history organizations in

Mecklenburg County. By partnering with organizations that promote cultural activities, the County works to meet its goal of being a model diverse community.



Another way the County participates in cultural and ethnic diversity is through its public arts funding. During 2003, Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte adopted an ordinance where 1 percent of eligible capital improvement project funds are set aside for the commission, purchase and installation of artworks. This enables more opportunities for artwork to be placed in the community as part of urban development. Funding for projects is allocated from eligible capital improvement funds.

The Metropolitan section of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway (along Kings Drive), which was unveiled in August 2010, is such an example. The greenway includes several pieces of public art scattered throughout a park that features a fountain plaza, tower clock and ornate stonework.



place at the recycling facility. The MRF expanded to accept more recyclable items such as plastic bottles and jugs, wide-mouth plastic containers, empty aerosol cans, milk and juice boxes, and rigid plastic items (like utility buckets, old toys, etc.), as well as paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, cereal and food boxes, and aluminum cans.

All of the upgrades to the MRF will be paid for by revenue generated from the sale of the recyclable material recovered at the MRF, not tax dollars.

All recyclables can go into the same roll-out containers or bins, and are sorted manually and by machine when they reach the recycling facility. The County also runs dozens of self-service recycling centers, as well as four full-service recycling centers that accept standard recyclables and batteries, household hazardous waste, appliances, old tires and more.

The ongoing ReThink Recycling campaign is shared not only by Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, but by the



towns, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Central Piedmont Community College, and all City and County departments and agencies. Residents can go online to get more detailed information at [mecklenburgcountync.gov](http://mecklenburgcountync.gov) to find out what’s collected, where it goes, what communities participate, and when their pickup days are, or call 311.

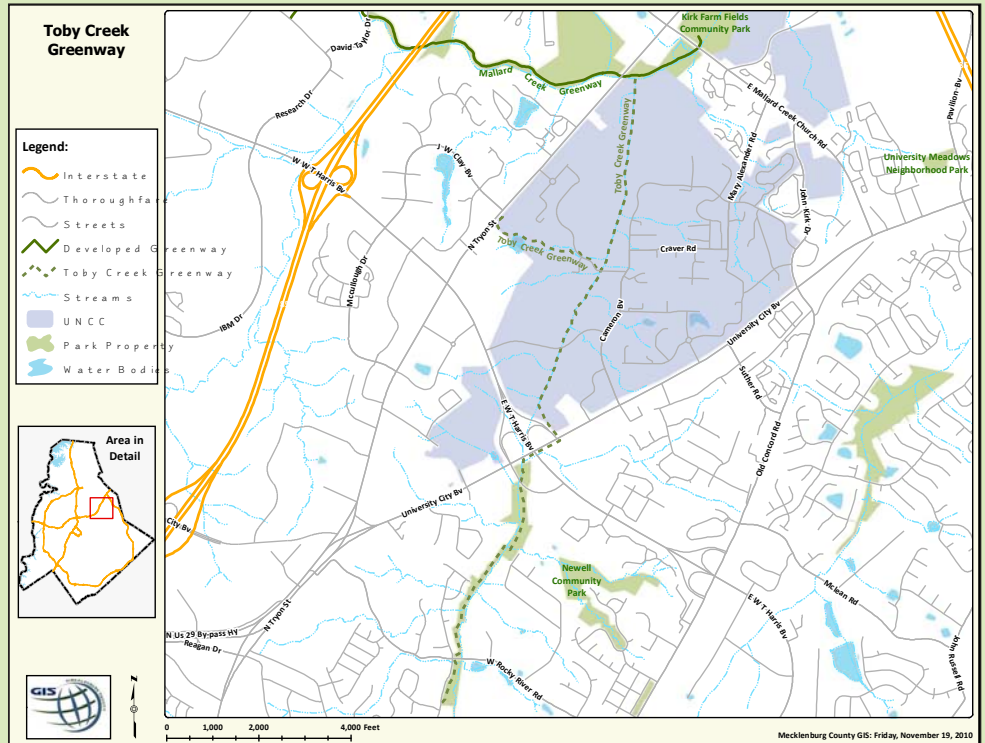
Recycling programs contribute toward Mecklenburg County’s goal of being a Sustainable Community with a vibrant and diverse economy, while protecting its natural resources and enhancing the quality of life.



# Toby Creek Greenway

**Toby Creek Greenway** received \$1.25 million from the ARRA. Upon completion, the two-mile greenway will connect the 7.1 mile-long Mallard Creek/Clark's Creek Greenway system with the campus of UNC-Charlotte, linking several neighborhoods, parks, apartment complexes, and retail shopping centers in the process.

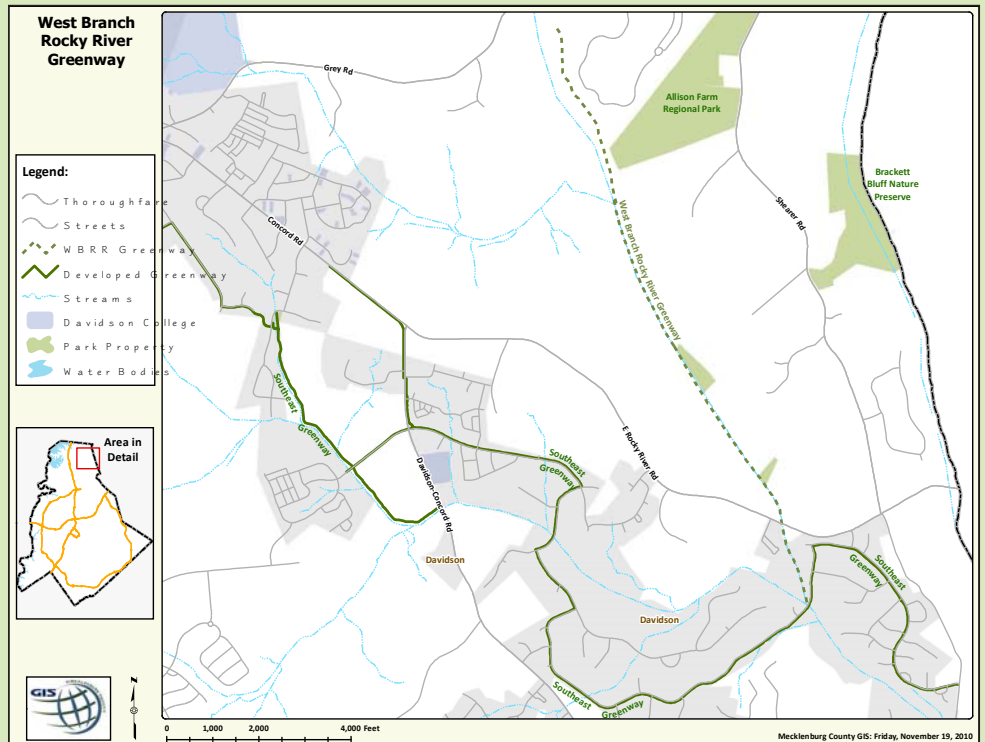
Toby Creek will begin at Mallard Creek Greenway near North Tryon Street, extend through the western part of the UNCC campus and on to NC Highway 49 near Harris Boulevard. A connector trail at the intersection of North Tryon and J.W. Clay will link the university to retail centers as well as the Kirk Farm soccer fields. Future plans call for the greenway to connect to a planned light rail station which will be part of the Charlotte Area Transit System.



# West Branch Rocky River Greenway

The **ARRA** also provided \$1.1 million in stimulus funding for the construction of the West Branch Rocky River Greenway in Davidson. When completed, West Branch Rocky River will stretch 1.1 miles and connect the existing Southeast Greenway with several residential communities, Davidson Elementary School, South Street Park, and to an area with sidewalks with easy access to downtown Davidson and Davidson College.

The trail will run from River Ford Drive, east along West Branch Rocky River, ending east of Shearr Road. It will connect with existing sidewalks and bike lanes of Southeast Greenway, which passes through the River Run community, and on to existing paved portions of Southeast Greenway. In a separate project, the River Run Property Owners Association will fund an entrance plaza that will be situated adjacent to River Ford Drive.





“It’s a New Normal” continued from page 12

## What Happened to Mecklenburg’s Economy?

Hyong Yi, the County’s budget and management director, describes how Mecklenburg’s current situation grew from events of the past, including increased growth and the subsequent demands on government services.

Looking back 10 years ago, he explains that Mecklenburg County’s economy benefited from tremendous growth. For example, from 2000 to 2007, the value of construction permits in Mecklenburg County rose significantly and as a result, the total assessed value of property increased by 50 percent to \$90.1 billion over that time. But when the recession hit, construction began to dwindle.

Another factor in the boom time was an unemployment rate below 5 percent. However, the recession’s effects moved that rate upward steadily into double digits, as high as 11-plus percent.

The good times of the last decade also attracted newcomers to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region, and the population grew. As a result, more schools and other infrastructure were built to accommodate the growth, as well as more programs and services offered to meet residents’ needs.

The domino effect was the County had to take on more debt. However, even with more debt and demand for services during the boom time, tax revenues – property and sales tax, for example – were significant because of the growing economy at that time.

And then the Great Recession hit.

## What is Next?

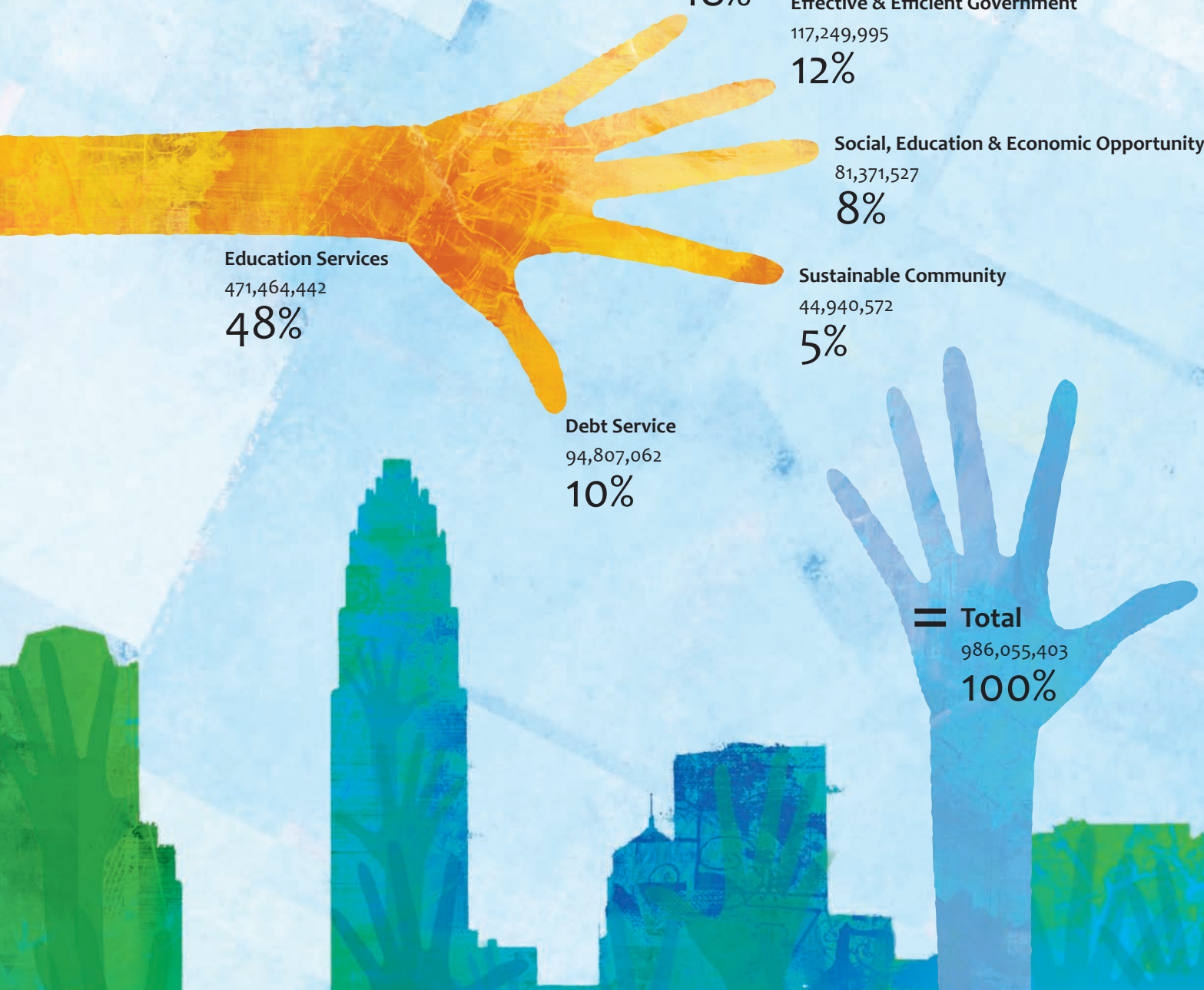
The County’s tax base is projected to grow to \$100.3 billion, a 0.10 percent increase from FY2010. Property tax revenue is projected to be flat, and the County’s other revenue sources are in decline.

Now as a result of the local and national economy, the County must pursue a “New Normal” -- a new strategic path that Jones says should include three components:

- Reduce programs, services and personnel to match available funding
- Maintain long-term fiscal discipline
- Redesign and reshape Mecklenburg County government

“Although the economy is recovering, we will likely not see meaningful growth in our revenues for the foreseeable future, perhaps three to five years or even longer,” Jones has said. “The bottom line in these brutal facts: we cannot afford the government services we have right now (and) the future will be very different from the past. We will not return to the past in the near-term, if ever.”

## How the Money was Used (County Dollars)



## Mecklenburg County Tax Rate

The County's largest source of operating revenue is the *ad valorem* property tax. Real property (land and buildings), motor vehicles, boats, trailers and income-producing personal property are subject to the property tax unless specifically exempted by North Carolina statute.

Property owners in unincorporated areas (areas not within the City of Charlotte or the other six towns) pay additional taxes for their share of police services through the Law Enforcement Service District Tax. The police services provided in the city and towns are paid through those municipalities' tax rates.

In FY2010, the County tax rate was \$0.8387 per \$100 of assessed value (\$1.0175 for unincorporated areas). This means that the tax bill for a home assessed at \$150,000 was \$1,258.05. The FY2011 County and unincorporated area tax rates remained the same.

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sustainable community keeping mecklenburg county green with parks and greenways funded by the american recovery and reinvestment act sustainable community  
recycle reuse to keep our community sustainable