NC’s Shifting Population: Growth, Decline, and Rebound

House Select Committee on Strategic Transportation Planning and Long-Term Funding Solutions

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North Carolina’s Total Population (July 1), 1990-2035

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, NC OSBM
North Carolina’s Total Population (July 1), 1990-2035

July 1 Population (Millions)

Year

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Officially 9th most populous state in 2014

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- Officially 9th most populous state in 2014
- >10M in 2015

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North Carolina’s Total Population (July 1), 1990-2035

Officially 9th most populous state in 2014
10.3M in 2017
>10M in 2015

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North Carolina’s Total Population (July 1), 1990-2035

Officially 9th most populous state in 2014

>10M in 2015

10.3M in 2017

12.3M in 2035

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, NC OSBM
59% of NC municipalities had less than 2,500 residents in 2016
9 municipalities had more than 100,000 residents in 2016
45% of NC growth from 2010-16 occurred in these 9 places
225 municipalities lost population from 2010-16
3 in 4 municipalities declined or grew slower than the state average of 6.4%
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48 counties lost population from 2010 to 2016
46 counties had net out-migration from 2010 to 2016
85% of declining municipalities are in a county that had net out-migration
51 counties had natural decrease from 2010 to 2016
74% of declining municipalities are in a county experiencing natural decrease.
Overall decline
Growth with natural decrease
Growth with net out-migration

68 counties with at least one driver of population decline

Elements of Change, 2010-2016

- Overall decline
- Growth with natural decrease
- Growth with net out-migration
Entrenched Decline
9 counties have fewer residents today than in 1980
9 counties have fewer residents today than in 1980

- Anson
- Richmond
- Edgecombe
- Northampton
- Washington
- Hyde
- Bertie
- Lenoir
- Halifax
10 municipalities with greatest decline are in these counties
3 counties with net out-migration each decade since 1980

- Municipalities with greatest percentage declines from 2010-2016
- Counties with net population loss since 1980
- Counties with net out-migration since 1980
3 counties with net out-migration each decade since 1980

- Edgecombe
- Cumberland
- Washington

Counties with net population loss since 1980

Counties with net out-migration since 1980
Municipalities with greatest percentage declines from 2010-2016

Counties with net population loss since 1980

Counties with net out-migration since 1980 only

Counties with negative natural increase since 1980 only

3 counties with natural decrease each decade since 1980
Municipalities with greatest percentage declines from 2010-2016

Counties with net population loss since 1980

Counties with net out-migration since 1980 only

Counties with negative natural increase since 1980 only

3 counties with natural decrease each decade since 1980:
- Macon
- Polk
- Alleghany
Decline of the “Big Three” industries

Tobacco

Textiles

Furniture manufacturing
Rise of North Carolina’s new industries

- Information Technology
- Food Production
- Banks and Finance
- Biotechnology
Occupational Shifts
1850-2015
NC occupational mix mirrors U.S.

Occupational classification of labor force, NC vs. U.S., 2015 ACS

- Professional, Technical: 24% (NC) vs. 25% (US)
- Farmers & Farm Workers: 1% (NC) vs. 1% (US)
- Craftsmen & Operatives: 20% (NC) vs. 17% (US)
- Service: 15% (NC) vs. 16% (US)
- All Other Occupations: 40% (NC) vs. 41% (US)
Few individuals employed as farmers

Share of farmers and farm laborers in labor force, NC vs. U.S., 1850-2015

- 80%
- 60%
- 40%
- 20%
- 0%

Manufacturing employment peaked in 1980

Share of craftsmen and operatives in labor force, NC vs. U.S., 1850-2015


Legend:
- NC
- US
Steady growth of professional occupations

Share of professional and technical workers in labor force, NC vs. U.S., 1850-2015

Year

NC

US

Emerging Trends

Near Future
NC municipalities had largest single year of growth since 2010 in 2015-16
Rebounding municipalities in many areas across NC

12 municipalities with large increase in 2016 after stagnant or declining growth from 2010-15

Municipalities with large relative gains in 2015-16 after stagnant or declining growth
Rebounding municipalities in many areas across NC

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Major NC cities
Rebounding places offer easy commute to major cities

12 municipalities with large increase in 2016 after stagnant or declining growth from 2010-15

Municipalities with large relative gains in 2015-16 after stagnant or declining growth

Major NC cities

15 mile buffer
32 NC counties had largest single year of growth since 2010 in 2016-17
34 NC counties lost population between 2016 and 2017
On the horizon?

Potential longer-term impacts on growth patterns
I thought I'd try hunting from home, but it's harder than I expected.
Driverless Future?
60 NC counties had more deaths than births between 2016 and 2017.
What does this mean for you?
Contact

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