#1 of 7: Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Permit Rate per 1,000 Residents (2025

Union County leads Charlotte in new home approvals

Permit rate 2.93x higher than Mecklenburg County, 2025

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THE DATA

2.93x

Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Permit Rate per 1,000 Residents (2025)

Union County's new home approval rate is nearly three times that of Mecklenburg County.

This disparity reveals a fundamental divergence in housing supply dynamics across the Charlotte metro. While Mecklenburg County struggles to keep pace with demand, Union County is rapidly expanding its housing stock, signaling a shift in where new development is being concentrated. This imbalance could influence future home prices, affordability, and long-term population growth patterns.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey, county annual totals, 2025; population from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-27-charlotte-permits-county-spread

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Supply is shifting to the periphery

The data shows that new construction is not evenly distributed across the metro. Union County, Gaston, and Lincoln are leading in permit issuance, while Mecklenburg—the core urban center—lags behind. This suggests that rising land costs, regulatory constraints, or developer preferences are pushing new housing development toward the outer edges of the region. Over time, this could reshape commuting patterns, infrastructure investment, and the balance of economic activity between the core and the suburbs.

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Affordability may follow the permit lead

Counties with higher permit rates—like Union and Gaston—are likely to see more new inventory entering the market, which could help moderate price growth. In contrast, Mecklenburg County, with its low permit rate, faces continued upward pressure on prices due to constrained supply. This dynamic may make Union County a more attractive long-term investment or homebuying destination for those seeking affordability and growth potential, even if it's farther from the urban core.

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