**Quality of Life Explorer: It’s as easy as 1-2-3!**

# Exercise 1 Create a summary report for a specific area

*In this exercise, you will quickly generate a report for a single Neighborhood Profile Area (NPA).*

1. Open an internet browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Internet Explorer) and in the address bar, enter the URL: **mcmap.org/qol**
* *Click the “Get Started” button. Before searching for an address, take a look around the dashboard and see what is available. The Explorer Overview sheet has the main features highlighted.*
1. In the search bar [#1], start typing your address – the site will help you finish. Click on the auto-completed address and watch the dashboard zoom to the location. Click the layer control [#2] and select “Mecklenburg” orient yourself.
* *Notice the area is outlined in yellow, indicating that an NPA is selected.*
1. Click “Report” [#3] and the report will open in a new tab.
* *Browse the report for information on all 82 variables. Notice that each variable within the report is a hyperlink. Click on any blue variable name within the report to be taken back to the dashboard directly to that variable.*

# Exercise 2 Explore variables across the city and county

*In this exercise, you will explore different variables as well as how they change over time and across neighborhoods.*

1. Open an internet browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Internet Explorer) and in the address bar, enter the URL: **mcmap.org/qol**
* *Click the “Get Started” button. Before searching for an address, take a look around the dashboard and see what is available. The Explorer Overview sheet has the main features highlighted.*
1. Explore the list of all variables by clicking on the Variable List [#4]. Select any variable and see how the map changes automatically.
2. For this exercise, select “Water Consumption” under the Environment domain. Hover over an NPA on the map and a pop-up box will appear with the NPA number and the average daily water consumption.
3. Next, hover over the points on the trend chart [#10] to see how water consumption in the county has changed over time. Is water consumption in Mecklenburg County going up or down?
* *For variables with more than one time point, the time slider is activated on the bottom-left of the map [#7]. Switch between years with the slider to see how data changes. Notice how the variable value [#9] changes as the time slider moves back and forth.*
1. Next, select any NPA by clicking on the map. Notice that the variable value appeared under SELECTED NPAs [#9] and a new trend line appeared in yellow on the trend chart [#10]. How does water consumption in your selected NPA compare to the County as a whole?
2. Now, select two more NPAs to compare. Notice that as you select areas, a data table populates underneath the map [#6]. Which of your selected NPAs uses the most gallons of water per day?
3. To learn more about any variable, scroll down below the map and explore the companion information to learn more and find resources to take action. For this exercise, scroll down to Additional Resources and click on the first link to learn how you can help “Conserve Water.”

# Exercise 3 Build your own area

*In this exercise, you will create your own neighborhood, area or corridor. Some examples include combinations of neighborhoods that make up University City, that are along a road such as Independence Blvd, that surround a school, or that make up other jurisdictions such as the surrounding towns.*

1. Open an internet browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Internet Explorer) and in the address bar, enter the URL: **mcmap.org/qol**

Click the “Get Started” button. Before searching for an address, take a look around the dashboard and see what is available. The Explorer Overview sheet has the main features highlighted.

1. Click the layer control [#2] and select “Mecklenburg” orient yourself.
2. Start with an address, as in Exercise 1, or zoom in using the map controls to find where you wish to start.
3. Select a NPA by clicking the map.
* *The areas you click are outlined in yellow, indicating that they are selected. To unselect an area, simply click inside the area again – the yellow outline will go away. To start over, click on the “Clear Selected” button under the map.*

Select as many more NPAs as you feel cover the area you wish to learn information about.

* *Look at the two boxes at the top of the screen: the box on the left, “Selected NPAs,” changes every time you add or remove a NPA (this is the dashboard automatically re-calculating the variable’s value!)*

***OR***

Use the Pre-defined areas [#11] to explore by jurisdiction, City Council District, or County Commission District!

1. Look below the map at the data table [#6]. Each NPA that makes up your entire area has its individual value displayed for further comparison.
2. Finally, generate a summary report for your custom area by clicking “Report” [#3] as you did in Exercise 1. Now, give your area a name by clicking on “Summary Report” and typing in a custom name for your area.

# Just For Fun

1. Navigate to the “Voter Participation” variable under the Engagement domain. (Hint: you can use the Variable List, or type “Voter Participation” into the search bar.) Move the time slider back and forth. See the big difference in the two years’ of data? Scroll down to the Variable Information and read “How are we doing?” to find out more.
2. Navigate to the “Residential Renovations” variable. Click on areas that you think are growing faster than the county. Does the data table on the bottom and the trend chart on the right reflect your thoughts?

# Things to Remember

1. Use the “Help” button on the site’s menu bar to take a tour of the parts and pieces of the dashboard.
2. Any view in the Explorer or in a Report can be shared by copying the URL and sending it to others. The Report can also be printed or saved as a pdf.
3. We’re here to help! Use the Contact tab on the site’s menu bar to send us a message, or e-mail us directly at qualityoflife@charlottenc.gov. Want a customized training or presentation for your group or organization? We can do that too! Send us an e-mail to schedule at qualityoflife@charlottenc.gov