Public Hearing: YES ☒ NO ☐ **Department:** Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): All Districts

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability for a text amendment to amend Chapter 01: Issues, Opportunities, & Goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This amendment is for the adoption of the Comprehensive Housing Plan and its vision, goals, and strategies for addressing housing affordability and housing quality challenges. This text amendment is County-wide.

PETITION NO: N2-2026-1261 TA-26-1248257

PROPOSED USE: Chapter 1: Adoption of the Comprehensive Housing Plan.

LOCATION: County-wide.

PARCEL NO. : N/A

INFO. CONTACT: Eva Chauveau, Long Range Planner

PHONE NUMBER: 404-371-2155

PURPOSE:

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability for a text amendment to amend Chapter 01: Issues, Opportunities, & Goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This amendment is for the adoption of the Comprehensive Housing Plan and its vision, goals, and strategies for addressing housing affordability and housing quality challenges. This text amendment is County-wide.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (Aug. 2026) CC-1: No Quorum; **CC-2:** Approval with an amendment; **CC-3:** Approval; **CC-4:** No Quorum; **CC-5:** Approval (8-0-0).

PLANNING COMMISSION: (Nov. 5, 2026) Pending.

PLANNING STAFF: Approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The Comprehensive Housing Plan addresses the issues, opportunities, and goals of the 2050 Unified Plan. Some of these issues, opportunities, and goals addressed include the need for additional market rate housing, affordable housing, increased infill development, diverse housing types, code enforcement within aging housing developments, as well as increased development of senior-living housing types. Within the 2050 Unified Plan, recommendations around housing in DeKalb County stated that an "assessment to determine affordable housing stock for artists as well as affordable workspace." The 2050 Unified Plan states that a housing market is a complex and ever-changing landscape of countless variables including economic factors guiding production, rehabilitation, and demand. Social factors also influence housing preferences, as does the willingness of renters and buyers to adapt to new products. This fluidity can seem daunting, but all the more important to establish strategies around DeKalb County's issues. The following section summarizes strategies the County and community partners should consider. This should start with updating the more detailed Housing Study that was completed in 2018 and from that develop a more in-depth strategic housing plan for the county. To fulfill these expectations set by the Unified Plan, DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability Department, the Office of Housing, and Decide DeKalb have worked to create a plan that encompasses these recommendations. DeKalb County has already elected a Housing Officer, is in the process of establishing a Housing Advisory Committee

and is tracking key housing metrics through plan implementation. Staff recommends ***"Approval"*** of the Comprehensive Housing Plan to align with the recommendations set forth by 2050 Unified Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (November 5, 2026) Pending.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (August 2026) CC-1: No Quorum. Members present voted for Approval (4-0-0); **CC-2:** Approval (6-0-0) with an amendment to remove the words "by right" in reference to ADUs; **CC-3:** Approval (8-0-0); **CC-4:** No Quorum. Members present voted for Approval (6-0-0); **CC-5:** Approval (8-0-0).

DeKalb County Government Services Center
178 Sams Street, Decatur, GA 30030
404-371-2155
Planning & Sustainability Public Hearings

Planning Commission Hearing Date: November 5, 2026
Board of Commissioners Hearing Date: November 19, 2026

STAFF ANALYSIS

CASE NO.:	TA-26-1248257	**File ID #:** 2026-1261
Address:	County-Wide	**Commission Districts:** All Districts
Parcel ID(s):	N/A	
Request:	Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability for a text amendment to amend Chapter 01: Issues, Opportunities, & Goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This amendment is for the adoption of the Comprehensive Housing Plan and its vision, goals, and strategies for addressing housing affordability and housing quality challenges. This text amendment is County-wide.	
Property Owner(s):	N/A	
Applicant/Agent:	Director of Planning & Sustainability	
Acreage:	N/A	
Existing Land Use:	N/A	
Surrounding Properties:	N/A	
Adjacent Zoning:	N/A	
Comprehensive Plan:	Consistent [x]	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL.

BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Housing Plan is a tool that will guide policy and programmatic decisions to create a clear shared vision, values, goals, and strategic approaches. Housing costs in DeKalb County have risen dramatically in recent years. Over the past decade, median rents increased by 86 percent, while home prices climbed to levels that place homeownership beyond the reach of many working households. More than half of renter households are housing cost burdened, and the median-income household cannot afford the county's median-priced home. The county faces a significant shortage of affordable rental units, particularly for residents with the lowest incomes. As the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates that the county needs to increase the supply of housing by 70,000 units by 2035, collaboration across all sectors will be critical. DeKalb County has a goal of investing in the production and preservation of 15,000 affordable homes by 2031, in addition to unlocking more units through policy and enhancing the quality & affordability of existing housing. The goals identified in the housing plan to address these housing challenges: (1) Make homelessness rare, temporary, and non-recurring, (2) Facilitate more quality rental housing, (3) Support more attainable and lasting homeownership, (4) Strengthen relationships, systems, and processes, and (5) Optimize and increase resources for housing production and preservation. These strategic approaches will require partnership and collaboration across public sector agencies, community leaders, private sector developers and property managers, builders, financial institutions, philanthropic and corporate funders, and policymakers at all levels.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Housing Plan addresses the issues, opportunities, and goals of the 2050 Unified Plan. Some of these issues, opportunities, and goals addressed include the need for additional market rate housing, affordable housing, increased infill development, diverse housing types, code enforcement within aging housing developments, as well as increased development of senior-living housing types. Within the 2050 Unified Plan, recommendations around housing in DeKalb County stated that an "assessment to determine affordable housing stock for artists as well as affordable workspace."

The 2050 Unified Plan states that a housing market is a complex and ever-changing landscape of countless variables including economic factors guiding production, rehabilitation, and demand. Social factors also influence housing preferences, as does the willingness of renters and buyers to adapt to new products. This fluidity can seem daunting, but all the more important to establish strategies around DeKalb County's issues. The following section summarizes strategies the County and community partners should consider. This should start with updating the more detailed Housing Study that was completed in 2018 and from that develop a more in-depth strategic housing plan for the county.

To fulfill these expectations set by the Unified Plan, DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability Department, the Office of Housing, and Decide DeKalb have worked to create a plan that encompasses these recommendations. DeKalb County has already elected a Housing Officer, is in the process of establishing a Housing Advisory Committee and is tracking key housing metrics through plan implementation.

Staff recommends ***"Approval"*** of the Comprehensive Housing Plan to align with the recommendations set forth by 2050 Unified Plan.

DEKALB COUNTY'S 2027-2031

Comprehensive Housing Plan

DRAFT | OCTOBER 12, 2026

DeKalb County
GEORGIA

Executive Summary

DeKalb County stands at a critical moment in its growth and development. As one of the Atlanta region's most diverse and dynamic counties, DeKalb County continues to attract new residents, businesses, and investment. Yet alongside this growth, many residents have faced challenges related to housing affordability and stability.. This comprehensive housing plan is an actionable, living document that was created to guide the County in making policy & programmatic decisions, as well as to bring community leaders together around a clear shared vision, values, goals, and strategic approaches.

The Challenge

Housing costs in DeKalb County have risen dramatically in recent years. Over the past decade, median rents increased by 86 percent, while home prices climbed to levels that place homeownership beyond the reach of many working households. More than half of renter households are housing cost burdened, and the median-income household cannot afford the county's median-priced home. The county faces a significant shortage of affordable rental units, particularly for residents with the lowest incomes.

These pressures are compounded by broader demographic and economic trends. DeKalb County's population is expected to continue growing in the coming decades. Housing production has not kept pace with population growth, creating a need for 70,000 additional housing units over the next decade. Existing affordable housing is also at risk, with thousands of federally assisted units coming to the end of their affordability periods in the coming years.

The burden of these challenges is not shared equally. Black households experience significantly higher rates of housing cost burden and homelessness, while widening income disparities limit opportunities for wealth building and economic mobility. Additionally, many residents, including families living in extended-stay hotels, seniors on fixed incomes, immigrants, refugees, and households living in informal arrangements, are particularly vulnerable to housing instability and unsafe housing conditions.

A Vision for the Future

Throughout the planning process, residents, nonprofit organizations, developers, lenders, faith leaders, and public-sector partners shared a common aspiration: a DeKalb County where everyone has access to safe, stable, quality housing that fosters community and creates pathways to success.

As the Atlanta Regional Commission estimates that the county needs to increase the supply of housing by 70,000 units by 2035, collaboration across all sectors will be critical. DeKalb County has a goal of investing in the production and preservation of 15,000 affordable homes by 2031, in addition to unlocking more units through policy and enhancing the quality & affordability of existing housing.

This plan sets five goals for the County and outlines 38 strategic approaches to help realize this vision:

1. Make Homelessness Rare, Temporary, and Non-Recurring

The County will expand housing opportunities for residents experiencing homelessness, support adaptive reuse of hotels and underutilized properties, sustain emergency financial assistance programs, strengthen legal resources for renters, and increase access to financial counseling.

2. Facilitate More Quality Rental Housing

The County will pursue strategies that preserve existing rental housing, improve rental housing conditions, expand rental assistance opportunities, and incentivize landlords to provide affordable, high-quality housing.

3. Support More Attainable and Lasting Homeownership

Recognizing homeownership as one of the most powerful tools for building wealth and community stability, the County will expand homebuyer education, down payment assistance, homeowner counseling, rehabilitation programs, estate planning services, and support for families with heirs property. The plan also prioritizes development of more attainable for-sale housing options.

4. Strengthen Relationships, Systems, and Processes

Addressing housing challenges requires better coordination among public agencies, nonprofit partners, developers, lenders, and residents. The plan includes approaches relating to a County housing council, enhanced community engagement and outreach strategies, innovative partnerships, and modernization of the County's permitting systems and development processes.

5. Optimize and Increase Resources for Housing Production and Preservation

Meeting current and future housing needs will require increasing the resources devoted to housing, as well as the optimization of those resources. The County will update land use policies, support middle housing types, activate publicly owned and underutilized land, strengthen financing tools, pursue new revenue sources, and attract greater private and philanthropic investment in housing.

Forward Together

These strategic approaches will require partnership and collaboration across public sector agencies, community leaders, private sector developers and property managers, builders, financial institutions, philanthropic and corporate funders, and policymakers at all levels. While the challenges are significant, together we can realize a future for all DeKalb County residents.

Project Team

This comprehensive housing plan is a reflection of the people who invested their time and ideas into it.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Alan Ferguson
Paige Mitchell

Planning & Sustainability Department

Juliana Njoku
Eva Chauveau
Brian Brewer
Larry Washington
Rachel Bragg
Nicole Marchant

Decide DeKalb

Tiffany Wills

About the Consultant Team

Enterprise Advisors

Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise) is a national nonprofit dedicated to increasing the housing supply, advancing racial equity, and building resiliency and upward mobility. Enterprise's mission is to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging, and platforms for resilience and upward mobility for all. We believe opportunity begins when people have a safe, healthy, and affordable place to call home. It grows with access to good schools, jobs, transit, and health care. Founded by Jim Rouse in 1982, Enterprise has created 1.1 million homes and invested $92 billion across all 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and touched millions of lives over the past 44 years.

Enterprise Advisors ("Advisors") is the mission-driven consultancy within Enterprise, created to expand Enterprise's reach and impact to communities and partners across the country. Advisors is comprised of a dedicated team of more than 30 professionals working to advance place-based solutions and outcomes to improve the capacity, planning, design and impacts of community development and housing programs, policies, and organizations nationwide. We drive systems change at all levels--organizational, neighborhood, local, state, regional and national—and support Federal agencies, units of local government, public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, private institutions and other partners. Advisors brings a national perspective on housing and community development, having led engagements in over 900 communities to date.

Sycamore Consulting, Inc.

Since 1996, Sycamore Consulting has helped communities shape their future through meaningful engagement and thoughtful planning. We connect people, elevate diverse voices, and deliver outcomes that reflect the needs of the communities we serve.

A woman-owned small business based in Decatur, Georgia, Sycamore is a registered DBE (State of Georgia), LSBE (DeKalb County), and SBE/FBE (City of Atlanta). Our experience includes partnerships with GDOT, GRTA, SRTA, ARC, ATL, MARTA, and cities and counties all across Georgia.

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Introduction

DeKalb County is committed to acting on the belief that housing is a foundation for community stability and economic opportunity. The county has a strong network of residents, community leaders, homebuilders, lenders, and philanthropic partners who understand how urgently its housing needs must be met. While some challenges may be substantial, so, too, is the collective will to address it. This comprehensive housing plan exists to channel that commitment into coordinated action, resource alignment, and measurable progress.

Moving from where we are today to where we want to be

Over the past five years, DeKalb County has experienced the housing pressures that face many metropolitan areas. Rents have risen 86 percent, home prices have nearly doubled, and institutional investors now own one of every three single-family rental homes in the county. For many residents, the impact is clear and painful. Over half (56%) of all renter households are housing cost burdened. A household that is making the median income cannot afford to purchase the median priced home at $373,300. The racial income gap remains; Black households now earn $66,000 less annually than non-Hispanic White households. Housing instability is visible in extended-stay hotels, where approximately 4,600 residents (including 1,600 children) pay 77 percent of their income to secure a temporary, often substandard, roof over their head.

This crisis looks different across the County. In many ways, residents who have lived in in South DeKalb County have been hit the hardest. Across the board, housing production has not kept pace with population growth. The county has added fewer new units than new households in most years since 2011. Community members have consistently shared that new housing is not built for them and that decisions affecting their neighborhoods are made around them rather than with them.

These current day realities are not a reflection of what the people of DeKalb County value. This plan is centered on a vision of DeKalb County as a place where everyone has access to safe, stable, quality housing that fosters community and creates pathways to success.

DeKalb County can be a place where all residents have their housing needs met, including seniors looking to age-in-place or downsize, young adults hoping to start their families, and new Americans searching for a home. DeKalb County neighborhoods can be places where teachers, healthcare workers, skilled trade workers, and their families can afford to live and grow community. DeKalb County can be a place where all residents have access to safe shelter and security. DeKalb County can be a place where the generations that have planted roots here can continue to do so.

DeKalb County has a strong network of doers. The County operates three public housing authorities, a regional land bank, an active development authority, and numerous local and regional nonprofit and faith-based development partners. The Housing Working Group that helped to guide this plan demonstrated strong alignment when it came to prioritizing the preservation of existing affordable housing before it is lost, support building housing types that the market is not currently producing and ensuring that investment in housing development reaches South and Southeast DeKalb. These voices, and these tools, are the foundation on which this plan is built.

What This Plan is (and is not)

This five-year Comprehensive Housing Plan is DeKalb County's strategy – and commitment - to disrupt the status quo. It aims to be both aspirational while acknowledging practical limitations.

This plan was designed to serve as a roadmap for policymakers and decisionmakers across sectors. It is designed to clearly communicate where the County is investing its resources in the next five years and to serve as an invitation for partners across sectors to play their parts in realizing the County's vision. It includes five major sections:

1. A snapshot of the county's housing needs and challenges, including a deeper look at how residents experience them across income brackets
2. A deeper dive into the County's vision and values for the future of housing
3. Descriptions of the strategic approaches the County is taking to meaningfully achieve its goals
4. A more detailed implementation roadmap that outlines how the strategic approaches will be completed, who is responsible for each strategic approach, potential funding sources, and how the County will track progress over the next five years
5. A call to action

What this plan is not:

- A parcel-level plan or land use plan (though the zoning re-write and unified plan will be informed by this plan)
- A list of every possible action the County *could* take to address housing challenges

Throughout both phases, residents shared their perspectives, lived experiences, and priorities. Engagement included:

- In-person community conversations across the county
- In-depth focus groups with seniors, young adults, members of refugee/immigrant communities, and individuals living in extended-stay hotels
- Online engagement surveys and exercises via Engage DeKalb
- In-person CEO Town Hall and draft framework workshop

To learn more about the engagement process, see Appendix A.

DeKalb County Housing Profile

Understanding DeKalb County's current and projected housing conditions allows community leaders to meet today's needs while planning for the future. This chapter includes findings that touch on DeKalb County's demographic and economic context, as well as housing needs and market trends. Furthermore, it explores how housing needs differ across the housing continuum.

Demographic and Economic Profile

DeKalb County's population is marked by steady growth and increasing diversity

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, DeKalb County had a residential population of nearly 779,700 people in 2025. Since 2000, the county's population has increased significantly, adding around 113,800 new residents (17% increase), though this growth lags other counties in the Atlanta Metro. Projections from the Governor's Office suggest that the county will continue growing in the coming years with 65,200 new residents by 2035 and 94,700 residents by 2060 (total of 874,405 residents in 2060). However, moderate declines are expected to occur beginning in the mid-2050s.

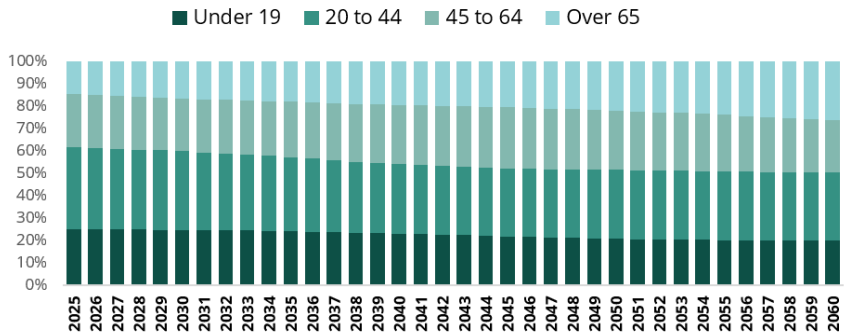
DeKalb County is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse with 50% of residents identifying as Black, 11% as Hispanic or Latino, 6% as Asian, and 28% as non-Hispanic White. Several cities in North DeKalb County (i.e., Chamblee, Clarkston, Doraville) serve as gateway communities for immigrants and households with limited English proficiency (LEP).

The county's population is rapidly aging

DeKalb County's current age profile reflects that of the Atlanta Metro. According to 2020-2024 ACS estimates, 23% of residents are under 18 years, 63% are 18 to 64 years, and 14% are 65 years or older. However, the county's age structure is expected to shift drastically in the coming decades with substantial increases in the senior population and declines in the working age population.

By 2060, DeKalb County is expected to add 117,300 residents over 65 years (103% increase), emphasizing the need for the county to prepare for an aging population with special housing and service needs. These increases will be offset by declines in younger and working adults with notable declines in residents under 19 years (10% decrease) and residents between 20 and 44 years (7% decrease) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Population Projections by Age, 2025-2060



Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

Economic growth is reshaping opportunities for some households

DeKalb County's economy continues to grow and diversify, employing nearly 390,000 residents in 2024. Since 2019, local employment increased by around 6,700 workers (2% increase) with the strongest growth in the professional and technical services, transportation and warehousing, real estate, and utilities industries. Economic gains have translated into higher incomes for many households in the county. According to ACS estimates, the median household income increased to $80,644 in 2024, a 29% increase since 2019.

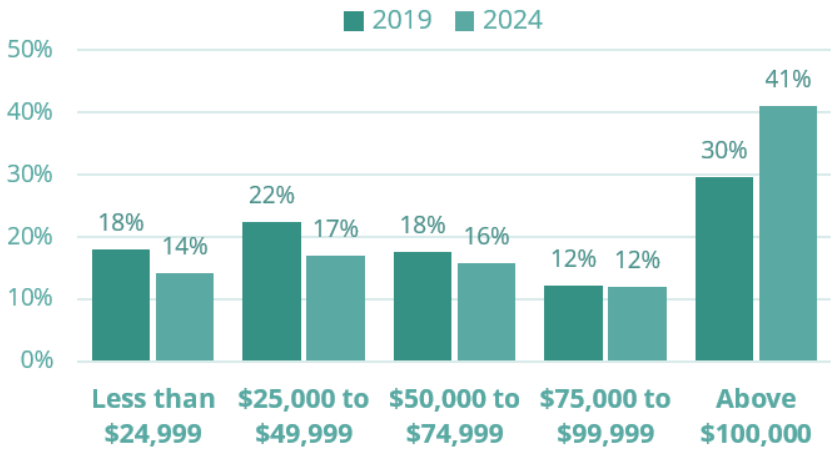
Economic growth is expected to continue through 2050. The Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) employment forecasts project that the county will add around 74,000 jobs between 2020 and 2050, representing a 20% increase in total employment. Job growth is expected to slow after 2030 though DeKalb County is projected to remain one of the region's primary employment centers.

Countywide Housing Needs and Market Trends

Racial and income disparities are widening

Household incomes have shifted upward over the past five years with fewer households in the lowest income brackets (below $25,000) and more households in the highest income brackets (above $100,000) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Change in Household Income Distribution, DeKalb County, 2019-2024



Source: 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Economic growth has not been experienced equally across households or geographies. The racial income gap between non-Hispanic White and Black households has increased in the past five years: between 2019 and 2024, the wealth gap between White and Black households increased from $40,000 to $66,000, a 65% increase.

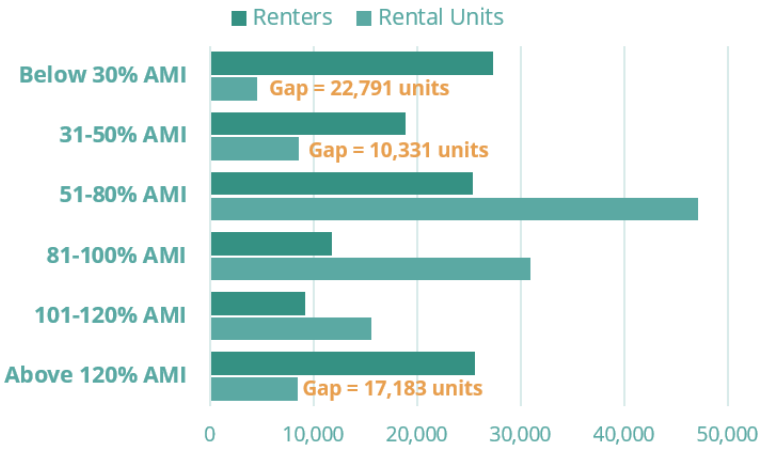
Widening income gaps have exacerbated existing upward mobility challenges for these households. In 2025, Black households were significantly overrepresented among the county's homeless population, representing 91% of people experiencing homelessness in the county despite comprising only 50% of the total resident population. Black households also experience housing cost burden at double the rate of their White counterparts, making it more difficult for households to exit poverty and access equity-building opportunities.

DeKalb County is becoming less affordable for renters

Housing costs are rising faster than household incomes for all households, creating growing affordability pressures countywide. Over the past decade, the median rent increased by 86%, outpacing increases in the median household income for renters during this time.

Affordability challenges are exacerbated by the severe shortage of affordable rental units countywide, particularly for the lowest income renters (<30% AMI) who face a mismatch of 22,791 rental units. Cumulatively, there is a gap of 33,121 rentals for <50% AMI households and 11,432 rentals for <80% AMI households (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Rental Affordability Gaps, DeKalb County, 2024



Source: 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates and HUD Program Income Limits.

With severe affordability gaps and lagging incomes, more renters are overpaying for their housing and becoming increasingly unstable. Over half (56%) of renter households were housing cost burdened countywide in 2024.

Homeownership and wealth-building opportunities are shrinking

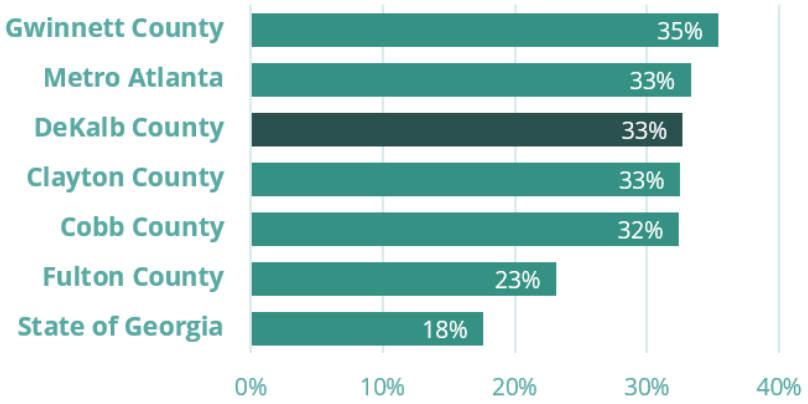
Rapid home value and price appreciation has narrowed ownership pathways for first-time and moderate-income homebuyers in DeKalb County. Since 2015, the median home value in the county has increased by 114% while the median for-sale price has increased by 59% since 2019, reaching a median price of nearly $373,300 in 2025. The median for-sale price in 2025 is well above what households with or greater than the median household income can afford to buy (maximum sale price of $265,282), contributing to the stark affordability gap of owner-occupied housing for-sale countywide.

Starter homes have experienced the highest appreciation in recent years, which could be driven by a range of factors including institutional investor acquisitions and activity in the for-sale market. Between 2019 and 2025,

institutional investors and investment companies purchased over 9,900 homes (12% of all home sales) within DeKalb County, 80% of which were single-family homes and purchased for a median price of $210,000.

Illustrating the magnitude of this problem, researchers found that investment companies own 33% of all single-family rentals in DeKalb County, one of the highest shares in the 21-county region (Figure 4).[1] These conditions have made it challenging to access homeownership.

Figure 4: Institutional Investor Share of Single-family Rentals, 2026



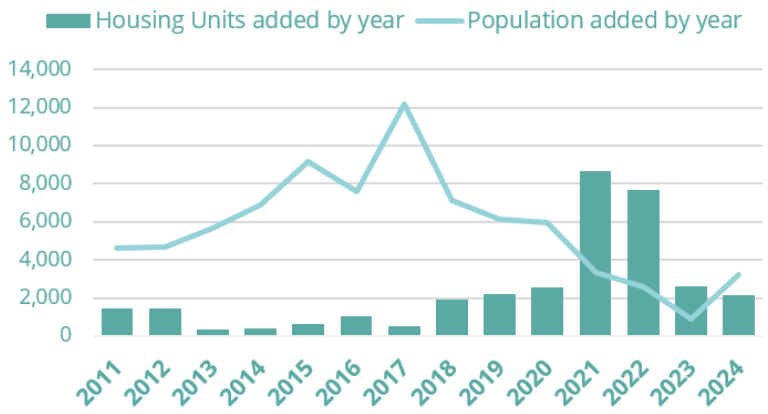
Source: Data prepared by Dr. Taylor Shelton from Georgia State University in January 2026.

Housing production trends are not aligned with population growth or needs

DeKalb County needs more housing to address previous shortfalls and keep pace with projected growth. Between 2011 and 2020, population increases consistently outpaced the number of new units added to the housing stock (Figure 5). This means that the county has years of "catching up" to meet current needs and to accommodate projected growth (25,232 additional households by 2030 and 39,056 additional residents by 2030).[2,3]

[1] Data prepared by Dr. Taylor Shelton from Georgia State University, January 2026.
[2] Atlanta Regional Commission. "Series 17 Forecast Data & Maps," n.d. https://atlantaregional.org/what-we-do/research-and-innovation/population-employment-forecasts/.
[3] Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. "Population Projections," 2025. https://opb.georgia.gov/census-data/population-projections.

Figure 5: Housing Units v. Population Added by Year, 2011-2024



Source: 2010-2024 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

Over the next decade, DeKalb County will need to create an additional 70,000 housing units to accommodate future employment and population growth and housing demand (the county's production target is 19% of the 367,000 new homes needed across the Atlanta region).[4]

DeKalb County does not just need more housing units; it needs more units that are diverse in size. For example, there is a severe lack of units that accommodate single-person households (studios) and larger family or intergenerational households (five or more bedrooms). Addressing these gaps will require land use and zoning policies that support a broader range of housing options including smaller homes, cottage-style developments, townhomes, and the subdivision of existing lots to create smaller fee-simple lots that support attainable homeownership opportunities.

Residents expressed a desire for a range of housing options throughout the engagement and planning process including small multifamily structures, cottage-style homes, accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, duplexes/quadplexes, and townhomes. Other desired housing types included single-family homes that are wheelchair accessible and starter homes that support homeownership.

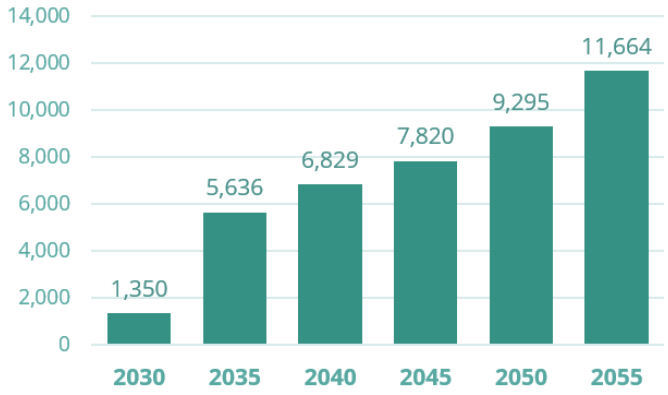
[4] Atlanta Regional Commission. "Housing Forward 2035: Connecting Housing, Jobs and Opportunity," September 9, 2026. https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/housing-forward-2035-atlanta-regional-housing-strategy-2026.pdf.

Preservation of existing subsidized housing is increasingly urgent

DeKalb County has approximately 14,900 federally assisted rental housing units (13% of the county's rental stock), many of which are subsidized by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Project-Based Vouchers (through the Housing Choice Voucher Program), or through a combination of subsidies. Without intervention from the County and other critical partners, 1,350 federally assisted housing units will expire by 2030 and approximately 11,700 rental units will expire by 2055, representing 78% of the total federally assisted rental housing stock (Figure 6).

Rental units supported by LIHTC are at the highest risk of expiring in the next five years. LIHTC units are an important resource for low and moderate-income households yet LIHTC awards in the county have fluctuated in recent years. Of note, operating expenses for LIHTC properties rose nationally by nearly 34% between 2021 and 2024 due to increases in property insurance costs, contributing to challenges in keeping these developments affordable to low-income households.[5]

Figure 6: Federally Assisted Rental Units Facing Exit Risk Over Time, DeKalb County, 2025

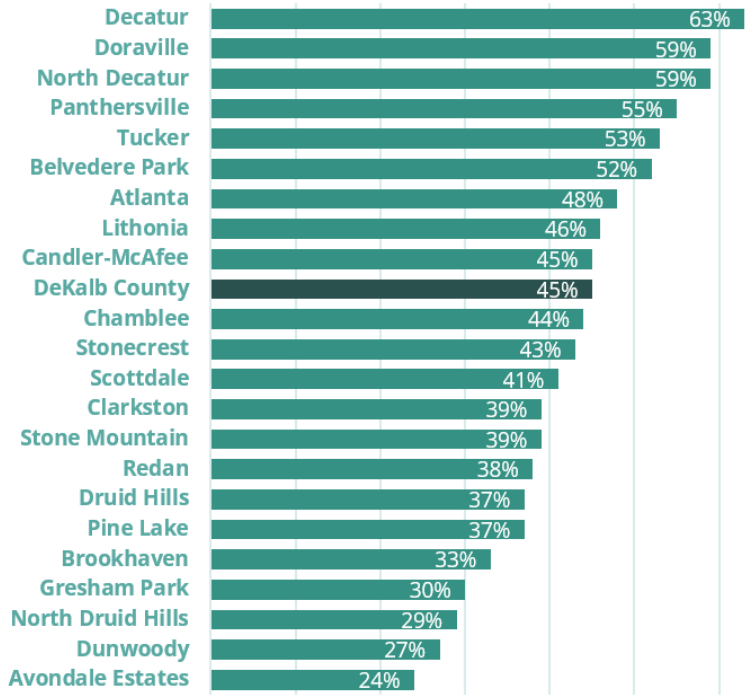


Source: National Housing Preservation Database.

[5] Novogradac. "Rental Income, Operating Expenses, NOI All Hit New Peaks for Properties in Novogradac LIHTC Data Set," January 8, 2026. https://www.novoco.com/notes-from-novogradac/rental-income-operating-expenses-noi-all-hit-new-peaks-for-properties-in-novogradac-lihtc-data-set.

Market rents are increasing and eroding the naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) that has remained one of the last accessible options for households below 80% AMI. Losses of NOAH have been most stark in South DeKalb County, particularly in Panthersville, Lithonia, and Stonecrest with increases from 43% to 55% (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage Change in Median Rent by Jurisdiction, DeKalb County, 2019-2024



Source: 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

The County has strong partner infrastructure but lacks coordination to meet needs consistently and at scale

DeKalb County has three public housing authorities, a regional land bank, development authority, and active nonprofit and faith-based development partners. However, as demonstrated by the affordability gaps analyses, these entities' tools have not been used consistently to meet affordability needs at the scale needed. Additionally, the housing ecosystem lacks a comprehensive data system to track housing quality and there are no formal strategies to preserve NOAH or deed-restricted homes.

Housing vulnerability is likely more severe than existing datasets capture

Some of the most vulnerable households living in DeKalb County are not captured by the datasets that drive resource allocation and programmatic decisions. In 2025, there were 4,664 residents paying 77% of their income on rent to stay in an extended-stay hotel (including 1,635 children).[6] These households are not captured in official counts of homelessness due to the federal definition of homelessness, making them "invisible" in the data systems that often determine resource allocations and program eligibility. This means that the 2,590 residents experiencing homelessness (including 391 families with children) in 2025 is significantly underestimated.[7] Other vulnerable households that are often overlooked due to program eligibility definitions and data collection procedures include households with limited English proficiency, immigrants or refugees, seniors on fixed incomes or living in substandard housing, and those living in informal housing arrangements to afford their housing.

[6] Sam Fahmy. "A Hidden Housing Crisis: GSU Researchers Document Families Living in Extended-Stay Hotels," January 7, 2026. https://news.gsu.edu/2026/01/07/a-hidden-housing-crisis-gsu-researchers-document-families-living-in-extended-stay-hotels/.
[7] DeKalb County Longitudinal Systems Analysis Summary Data, 2025.

How Housing Needs & Conditions Differ Across the Housing Continuum

The market conditions and housing disparities identified in DeKalb County create different challenges and experiences for households across the housing continuum, the impacts of which vary significantly by income level.

To illustrate how households experience the county's housing market and socioeconomic conditions at different income levels, the following profiles are organized around the housing continuum framework, which illustrates the range of available housing by income level and recognizes that addressing housing needs requires enough homes at each income level to allow households to move freely between housing types, especially as their incomes, health, and life circumstances change.[8]

A complete continuum ensures housing fluidity, allowing young professionals to find entry-level/starter homes, seniors to downsize affordably, and vulnerable residents to access stability during temporary crises. It also includes quality options for higher income households. This leads to healthier communities and housing markets, greater economic diversity, and lower public costs associated with chronic homelessness.[9]

The following profiles are based on a household size of two (in line with DeKalb County's average household size in 2024) and HUD program income limits for the Atlanta MSA. Each profile includes key metrics, examples of the households that fall within that income bracket, what households can afford in monthly rent and ownership costs without spending more than 30% of their income on housing, and an identification of their unique housing challenges and needs.[10]

[8] Colorado Housing and Finance Authority. "White Paper: The Housing Continuum," April 2024. https://chfainfo.com/getattachment/a7f4be85-7a8e-4783-b5f4-d4d48763761a/WP-HousingContinuum.pdf.

[9] Montana Healthcare Foundation. "The Housing Continuum," May 2, 2023. https://mthf.org/wp-content/uploads/Housing-Continuum-Design_5.2.23-FINAL-SPREAD.pdf.

[10] Housing affordability calculations assume households should not spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Calculations are based on HUD's 2024 program income limits for a 2-person household in the Atlanta MSA.

Households below 30% AMI

Extremely low-income families, seniors, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness who require deep affordability, assistance programs, and/or supportive services.

Key Metrics

- Earns up to $25,800 per year
- 65% are renters
- 35% are homeowners
- 76% of households are cost burdened
- 2,590 residents were homeless in 2025

Who We Are

- Extremely low-income families, in many cases with children
- Seniors on fixed incomes
- People experiencing homelessness
- Individuals needing supportive services

Housing Affordability

- Rental Affordability
    - Affordable rent = $645
    - Median rent in DeKalb County = $1,762
    - Monthly gap = $1,117
- Ownership Affordability
    - Affordable home price = $80,238
    - Median home price in DeKalb County = $373,290
    - Ownership gap = $293,052

Key Housing Challenges

- Shortage of deeply affordable rental housing (22,791 rental unit gap for these renters)
- Long waitlists for housing vouchers
- Limited shelter and supportive housing capacity
- High rates of cost burden

Top Housing Needs

- Deeply affordable rental housing for households <30% AMI
- Housing vouchers and rental assistance
- Homelessness prevention services and expanded supportive housing inventory/capacity

31-50% AMI Households

Low-income households, seniors living on a fixed income, single parents, and essential workers needing deeper affordability and targeted preservation efforts.

Key Metrics

- Earns $43,000 per year
- 57% are renters
- 43% are homeowners
- 79% of households are cost burdened

Who We Are

- Single-parent households
- Essential service workers
- Refugee and immigrant families
- Seniors living on retirement incomes

Housing Affordability

- Rental Affordability
    - Affordable rent = $1,075
    - Median rent in DeKalb County = $1,762
    - Monthly gap = $687
- Ownership Affordability
    - Affordable home price = $133,730
    - Median home price in DeKalb County = $373,290
    - Ownership gap = $239,560

Key Housing Challenges

- Severe affordable rental shortage
- Expiring LIHTC properties and loss of NOAH
- Limited resources to meet demand and need
- Homeownership is largely inaccessible

Top Housing Needs

- Production of income-restricted rental housing
- Affordable housing preservation, targeting LIHTC units and <50% AMI units
- Expanded access to vouchers and stabilization services or support

51-80% AMI Households

Moderate-income workers and families increasingly squeezed between affordability programs and rising market prices.

Key Metrics

- Earns $68,800 per year
- 53% renters
- 47% homeowners
- 51% of households are cost burdened

Who We Are

- Healthcare workers
- Teachers
- Public safety personnel
- Skilled trades workers
- Moderate-income families with children

Housing Affordability

- Rental Affordability
    - Affordable rent = $1,720
    - Median rent in DeKalb County = $1,762
    - Monthly gap = $42
- Ownership Affordability
    - Affordable home price = $213,867
    - Median home price in DeKalb County = $373,290
    - Ownership gap = $159,423

Key Housing Challenges

- Shortage of affordably-priced starter homes for-sale
- Loss of low-cost rentals and small multifamily developments
- Investor competition in the for-sale market and inflated rental prices for investor-owned properties

Top Housing Needs

- Production of missing middle housing types including duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small multifamily buildings
- Housing preservation efforts, targeting naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)
- Expanded down payment assistance programs, homeownership vouchers, and other tools to meaningfully support ownership pathways

81-120% AMI Households

Young families, professionals, and first-time homebuyers experiencing market pressures and declining homeownership opportunities.

Key Metrics

- Earns between $85,300 and $102,350 per year
- 44% renters
- 56% homeowners
- 20% of households are cost burdened

Who We Are

- Young families
- First-time homebuyers
- Aging homeowners
- Mid-career professionals (e.g., business or financial manager, nurse practitioner, project manager)

Housing Affordability

- Rental Affordability
    - Affordable rent = $2,133
    - Median rent in DeKalb County = $1,762
    - Monthly surplus = $371
- Ownership Affordability
    - Affordable home price = $265,282
    - Median home price in DeKalb County = $373,290
    - Ownership gap = $108,008

Key Housing Challenges

- Rapid home value and home price
- Appreciation
- Limited inventory of attainable homes
- Investor competition
- Downsizing challenges

Top Housing Needs

- Attainable for-sale housing
- Supports and programs for homeowners aging-in-place
- Expanded housing choice (diverse unit sizes, typologies, and price points countywide)

Above 121% AMI Households

Above moderate-income professionals and families with market mobility and choice of housing; lack of diversity in housing types.

Key Metrics

- Earns above $102,350 per year
- 29% renters
- 71% homeowners
- 5% of households are cost burdened

Who We Are

- Higher-income professionals (e.g., individuals in legal, management, or computer and mathematical occupations)
- Established homeowners
- Buyers looking to move up from their starter home
- Market-rate renters

Housing Affordability

- Rental Affordability
  - Affordable rent = $2,559
  - Median rent in DeKalb County = $1,762
  - Monthly surplus = $797
- Ownership Affordability
  - Affordable home price = $318,308
  - Median home price in DeKalb County = $373,290
  - Ownership gap = $54,982

Key Housing Challenges

- Limited housing diversity in the rental and for-sale markets
- Market-rate rental mismatch
- Lack of attainable move-up ownership options

Top Housing Needs

- Mixed-income development
- Broader housing type diversity
- Opportunities for improved mobility in the renter and for-sale markets

Vision and Values in Action

Looking to the future, residents and leaders envision…

a DeKalb County where everyone has access to safe, stable, quality housing that fosters community and creates pathways to success.

In order to move toward this vision, DeKalb County and its partners will move with intention.

Throughout the planning process, several central values emerged:

Inclusivity & belonging

Equity

Connection & community

Individual agency

Sustainability & resiliency

What does this mean for how DeKalb County implements the Comprehensive Housing Plan?

Program & Policy Design

DeKalb County policymakers will use this plan to create a comprehensive toolkit of policies, programs, and resources that intentionally complement each other.

While planning for a future DeKalb County for all residents, DeKalb County will prioritize resources for residents at the greatest risk of displacement and housing instability while adopting policies that unlock housing at all price points. County policymakers will strive to focus resources in both communities that have experienced disinvestment and areas with greater access to jobs, transit connectivity, parks & trails, high-performing schools, and amenities that residents need to thrive. In doing this, the County will create opportunities for residents to have greater say in where they live.

DeKalb County will also design programs that support a diversity of household structures, including single adults, unrelated people living as roommates, and multi-generational households.

Policymakers will utilize tools like racial equity impact assessments when tailoring policies to understand who will benefit from programs/policies and anticipate unintentional effects. While designing eligibility criteria, policymakers will aim to minimize barriers while ensuring resources are stewarded well.

County policymakers will also fund programs to last. While pilot or short-term programs can be informative, where possible, the County will work to sustain and scale programs that it launches.

In terms of environmental sustainability and resiliency, the County will incentivize builders and developers to create housing that is built to last; while utilizing sustainable and resilient materials/practices may increase development costs on the front end, they are proven to reduce costs over the life of the property, including ongoing energy-related costs for residents.[11]

Targeted Outreach and Engagement

When engaging people to design policies and programs and conducting outreach about resources, DeKalb County will use tailored approaches to reach its target audiences. When appropriate, the County will have materials translated into preferred languages, offer interpretation services at meetings, and work with trusted culturally competent community partners. When planning events and in-person events, the County will consider residents of all age groups, levels of digital literacy & accessibility, and locations .

Reporting & Evaluation Practices

DeKalb County will track the impact of its policies and investments. Where possible, it will disaggregate data by demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, income, gender, household size) and geography.

Additionally, the County will aim to evaluate policies and programs for longer-term outcomes that go beyond standard housing program metrics. Outcomes may include:

- Energy savings
- Sense of belonging
- Economic mobility
- Changes in transit ridership
- Educational outcomes
- Community investment
- Jobs created

To move toward this vision, DeKalb County is committed to advancing five core goals in the next five years:

[11] U.S. Green Building Council

Make homelessness rare, temporary, and non-recurring

Facilitate more quality rental housing that meets the needs of DeKalb County residents

Support more attainable and lasting homeownership

Strengthen housing development relationships, systems, and processes

Optimize and increase resources to sustain housing production & preservation

Each of these goals is associated with a set of strategic approaches. These strategic approaches, which are detailed in the following section, are responsive to the challenges DeKalb County residents face today, as well as anticipated threats to housing stability based on market research.

Alignment

This comprehensive housing plan does not exist on its own. Rather, it was designed to be a complementary document to other County and regional plans, including

- DeKalb County Unified Plan
- DeKalb County Zoning Code
- Public housing authorities' strategic plans
- Countywide Unhoused Plan
- Decide DeKalb Strategic Plan
- ARC Regional Housing Strategy

- DeKalb County Unified Plan
- DeKalb County Zoning Code
- Public housing authorities' strategic plans
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- Decide DeKalb Strategic Plan
- ARC Regional Housing Strategy

Strategic Approaches

Make homelessness rare, temporary, and non-recurring

Note: these strategic approaches are designed to complement the actions identified in DeKalb County's Unhoused Plan.

1. Increase housing opportunities for residents experiencing & exiting homelessness

Through DeKalb County's Coordinated Entry system, residents experiencing homelessness have access to a range of housing opportunities across the continuum of care from emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing. The County, with partner agencies, will invest in creating more beds/units across the continuum to help individuals/families move from homelessness to safe, long-term housing. This will require intentionally layering federal funds (i.e., Emergency Solutions Grants) with other public, private, and philanthropic sources.

2. Expand and strengthen the County's Coordinated Entry system

In addition to increasing deeply affordable housing opportunities, the County will strengthen its infrastructure to support residents experiencing and facing homelessness. In addition to expanding street outreach and case management countywide (i.e., mental-health-trained outreach) with standard roles and caseloads across agencies, the County will increase Coordinated Entry access points by certifying assessors at partner agencies and adding County Coordinated Entry capacity as needed. Additionally, the County will invest in a shared data and case management system built on HMIS and publish a community-level housing and homelessness dashboard.

3. Utilize hotels/motels and other underutilized properties to increase availability of deeply affordable housing opportunities

DeKalb County has a high availability of hotel/motel buildings that could be converted to quality, affordable rental homes and made available to residents with limited incomes. Collaborating with partner agencies, DeKalb County will strategically acquire properties, focusing on troubled extended-stay hotels, and redevelop them while applying lessons learned from comparable conversions in the region & across the country. The County will also work with partners to help any individuals/families who are residing in these buildings find permanent housing.

4. Sustain emergency financial assistance programs

Emergency financial assistance is a proven solution to prevent homelessness and housing instability. Emergency financial assistance programs are designed to help renters and homeowners facing hardships cover housing-related expenses (i.e., rent, mortgage, and utilities) to prevent eviction, foreclosure, utility turn-offs – and their ripple effects. Building

on pandemic response efforts, the County will work to identify a long-term source of funding to scale and sustain a program tailored to meet the needs of DeKalb County residents.

5. Continue to support and expand legal resources for renters

Understanding and navigating landlord tenant laws and the legal system can be challenging for DeKalb County residents, especially those who work jobs with limited flexibility, have limited English proficiency, and/or have had previous interactions with the legal system. Legal resources for renters are often focused on eviction cases but can also address other aspects of landlord-tenant law, including discrimination and sub-standard housing conditions. DeKalb County will identify additional funding resources and partners to help more county residents resolve challenges, both in and out of the courtroom, to help them stay in their current homes – and be able to secure future housing.

6. Increase access to financial counseling

Through financial counseling, DeKalb County residents receive professional guidance on topics like budgeting, savings strategies, debt reduction, and credit building. While financial counseling does not directly address housing supply gaps, it can help households set and meet short-term and long-term housing goals. DeKalb County will partner with trusted organizations to remove barriers to and scale financial counseling programs.

Facilitate more quality rental housing that meets the needs of DeKalb County residents

7. Explore launching a local rental assistance program

Rental assistance programs cover a portion of an individual's or families' rent, reducing housing cost burdens and increasing housing stability without developing new units. Unlike emergency financial/rental assistance programs, local rental assistance programs do not require participants to be experiencing an immediate threat of eviction or foreclosure; rather, like federal rental assistance programs (e.g., Housing Choice Voucher program), income-eligible participants are able to apply for ongoing support. Without the requirements that come with federal funding, locally designed rental assistance programs can be more flexible, less administratively burdensome, and tailored to meet local needs/market realities. The County will explore a rent-to-own option when doing research.

8. Increase incentives for private landlords to rent at affordable rates and/or reduce barriers to access

There are a number of strategies DeKalb County will advance to improve the existing housing stock and remove barriers to safe, quality rental housing, including:

- Creating a property rehab program
- Developing a risk-mitigation pool

To access these resources, landlords would agree to rent their properties at certain affordable rates. Additionally, landlords would commit to not discriminating based on source of income, history with the legal system, past evictions, etc. These resources would be open to property owners with subsidized and otherwise unsubsidized properties alike.

9. Develop a preservation strategy for existing affordable rental housing

Recognizing the significant number of affordable housing units that are at risk of becoming unaffordable to low-income residents, DeKalb County will develop a strategy to support the acquisition/re-sale of currently affordable properties. Working with key conveners and funders with agile resources, the County will map out a strategy, including priority properties, potential new owners based on property characteristics, the funding/financing needed to preserve affordability, and potential sources/lenders to pursue.

10. Explore policies that improve rental housing conditions

DeKalb County recognizes the impacts the substandard housing on the health and well-being of residents. In compliance with Georgia House Bill 404, DeKalb County will develop and implement ordinances to define habitability and strengthen code enforcement approaches (e.g., prioritizing properties with a history of code enforcement violations). The County will also increase the capacity of the code enforcement team to target inspections and increase awareness of property maintenance resources for property owners.

Support more attainable and lasting homeownership

11. Scale homebuyer counseling and education

DeKalb County currently partners with HUD-certified organizations to educate and counsel residents who are interested in buying a home. Homebuyer counseling often involves professional guidance on whether or not a household is ready to purchase a home, how to select a home, the homebuying process, the financial realities of owning a home, and the selling process. Foreclosure prevention and estate planning information can also be included in homebuyer education efforts. To qualify for many homeownership programs, residents must go through HUD-certified homebuyer counseling. As such, it is critical that adequate options are available to meet the diverse needs of DeKalb County residents (i.e., when, where, and how households can take part in counseling programs).

12. Deploy funding to support development of for-sale housing

As DeKalb County's population is expected to grow, the development of new for-sale housing options across price points is critical. While DeKalb County has historically focused resources on rental housing, DeKalb County will also intentionally invest in a diversity of quality for-sale homes, including homes that are permanently affordable and/or funded through shared equity models (e.g., community land trusts and limited equity cooperatives). *This effort will be aligned with other efforts, including development of publicly owned, optimizing land banking powers, and activating other vacant, abandoned, or underutilized properties.*

13. Expand down payment assistance programs

As sales prices continue to rise, higher down payments are a barrier to homeownership for many households. Down payment assistance programs provide homebuyers with financial support at closing to make homeownership more accessible and sustainable for low- and moderate-income households. There are currently several down payment assistance programs available to eligible residents in DeKalb County. The County will expand resources for down payment assistance and work to align/streamline applications, where possible, while diversifying programs to meet households' needs.

14. Scale training and counseling for new & current homeowners

Homeownership is not an easy journey. It is essential for homeowners to understand how to care for their properties (i.e., preventative maintenance and energy efficiency improvements), manage property taxes, understand insurance policies, and make financial decisions (e.g., refinancing), if needed. This type of education can help reduce housing costs and prevent foreclosures for both new homeowners and long-time homeowners who have paid off their mortgages. DeKalb County will expand partnerships to increase access to homeowner trainings/counseling and ensure programs are meeting the evolving needs of residents.

15. Scale owner-occupied rehab & rebate programs, including home-hardening and resiliency improvements

Educating homeowners on critical home improvements is not enough. Traditionally, owner-occupied rehab programs have been focused on health and safety improvements (i.e., roof replacements, porch/step repairs, HVAC system replacements). These types of programs allow residents with limited incomes, including seniors on fixed incomes, to stay in their homes safely while minimizing the risk of foreclosure and code violations. In response to the realities of climate changes, programs for energy efficiency enhancements and "home hardening" upgrades that make homes more resilient to severe storms are also important. DeKalb County will scale its existing programs (e.g., DeKalb CARES Plumbing Repair, Special Purpose Home Repair, BrighterHome) to meet the current needs of homeowners.

16. Increase access to estate planning services

An estate plan outlines what happens to someone's assets (including their home) after they pass. In many cases, homeowners do not have an estate plan which can lead to many complications for the future of their home and result in a costly, time intensive process for their heirs. As attorneys can be expensive, there are credible community partners who offer estate planning services at affordable costs or for free. DeKalb County will partner with trusted partners to help more residents be able to have clear estate plans and ultimately pass on generational wealth.

17. Expand resources relating to heirs properties

According to the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center, "(h)eirs property refers to a home or land that passes from generation to generation without a legally designated owner resulting in ownership divided among all living descendants in a family."[12] For families with heirs property, legal assistance is needed to review and clear titles. There are a number of legal teams focused on doing this work in Metro Atlanta. DeKalb County will partner with them to expand their resources for DeKalb County residents.

[12] Georgia Heirs Property Law Center, 2026

Strengthen relationships, systems, and processes

18. Resource a permanent DeKalb County Housing Council

The DeKalb County Housing Council is a multi-sector advisory body created to monitor outcomes of this plan, promote regional coordination, engagement residents and provide policy recommendations. The Council will also advise the County on reviewing and updating the Comprehensive Housing Plan. On an ongoing basis, the County will provide adequate resources to staff this Council.

19. Work with community partners and use County communication platforms to increase awareness of rights & resources for residents

Residents' rights and resources are only impactful if people are aware of them. The County has a broad range of communication platforms, including social media channels, DCTV, CEO & departmental newsletters, Engage DeKalb, and in-person facilities (i.e., senior centers, libraries). Furthermore, the county has a strong network of community partners who are well-positioned to amplify information in even more accessible ways. The County will develop and implement a community education strategy for existing rights & resources, as well as new information.

20. Facilitate a series of community forums and resource fairs

Ongoing community engagement is essential for County policymakers to meet the evolving needs of residents. County leaders will hold regular forums across the district to meet residents where they live, work, study, and play. These forums will serve as opportunities for residents to share their perspectives, as well as for County staff and partners to share important updates on resources and policy changes.

21. Launch Housing Innovation Fund in coordination with cross-sector working group

In addition to traditional development approaches, DeKalb County must foster innovative development models that have the potential to be scaled in the county, including modular construction and prefabricated development. The County and partner agencies will work with educational institutions and workforce development entities to pilot innovative approaches while strengthening the county's workforce.

22. Launch faith-based development initiative

Across the country, county and local governments are working with faith leaders to develop affordable housing on vacant land owned by houses of worship. Faith-based development initiatives often offer a combination of technical assistance, capacity building resources,

and/or flexible funding for participants. DeKalb County's initiative, Land to Legacy, will engage faith leaders who are striving to be good neighbors across the county.

23. Update permitting staffing model to increase efficiency and communication

Communication and collaboration between permitting staff and developers is key to making the permitting process more efficient. The County is updating its staffing model to create a more relational approach to the permitting process. The County will adopt a master review team model, in which a project manager and number of dedicated reviewers are assigned to work with a developer based on the project.

24. Introduce new centralized permitting platform

DeKalb County will roll out a new Oracle-based platform designed to help staff and developers alike track where developments are in the permitting process. This system will increase transparency by showing all parties what has been done (e.g., what documents have requested, uploaded, and reviewed), how long a development has been in the process/current phase, and what the next steps are.

25. Implement State-defined permitting timeframes while enforcing six-month open permitting policy

As DeKalb County enhances its staffing model and permitting technology, it will work to move developments through the process in a more timely manner. A consistent and predictable permitting process can help reduce financing costs, thus making construction more affordable. This shift will require commitment from both staff and developers. To foster a culture of thoughtful efficiency, DeKalb County staff will comply with the timeframes outlined in Georgia State Bill 447 while enforcing the policy that allows the County to close permits that have been open for six months.

26. Update and adopt new application, and permitting fee structure

County-charged development fees go toward the inspection, infrastructure, and administrative costs associated with development projects. As such, updating development fees will help ensure the County has the resources it needs to support the county's growth. The County is currently undertaking this study. As part of this effort, the County will determine what reductions can be offered in exchange for community benefits (e.g., affordable rental or for-sale units).

27. Establish a clear and predictable pathway for eligible nonconforming properties to achieve compliance

DeKalb County has a number of older properties that are nonconforming with the County's modern code. This makes it complicated to make improvements to these aging homes. The County will amend the zoning ordinance so that property owners have a clear and predictable way to bring eligible properties into compliance.

Optimize and increase resources to sustain housing production & preservation

28. Revise land use policy to allow for greater housing supply and greater housing choices

Some current zoning and land use policies limit the county's housing potential (e.g., insufficient density allowances and/or incentives around activity centers). With DeKalb County's population expected to grow significantly in the next fifteen years, the County needs to plan for additional housing development, especially in areas with the greatest connectivity and access to services & resources. Through its zoning re-write process, DeKalb County will update land use policies to unlock growth in a way that aligns with community vision. While significant intensity is appropriate in some places, other changes will support thoughtful, context-sensitive infill development.

29. Adopt pre-approved architectural plans for select housing types

Pre-approved architectural plans are designs that have been certified as compliant with building regulations. Jurisdictions use them to make it easier for developers to move through permitting processes and, ultimately, reduce development costs. DeKalb County will institute pre-approved plans that can be used for middle housing typologies, such as starter homes, and accessory dwelling units to meet the needs of the county's diverse population.

30. Pilot funding for middle housing types

Communities across the country are finding that allowing middle housing types via policy does not automatically lead to new development. One major barrier is that traditional lending tools are designed for detached single-family homes and larger multi-family developments. To increase housing supply, DeKalb County will work with private funding/lending partners to design products that meet the needs of developers building middle housing.

31. Explore targeted inclusionary zoning near major public investments

Inclusionary zoning is a policy tool that requires developers to make a certain portion of units available at an affordable rate in an otherwise market rate development. These policies are most impactful in high growth markets. DeKalb County will work to understand if this is an appropriate tool to deploy in target geographies near significant public investments and, if so, design & implement a tailored policy.

32. Explore additional County revenue sources to sustain housing-related activities

In 2026, DeKalb made major strides in dedicating resources to affordable housing. To create and scale programs & development efforts, additional revenue is needed. Across the

country, many governments fund their housing trust funds with a diversity of dedicated recurring sources, including fees, fines, and taxes. This makes them resilient through economic and market changes. While selecting revenue sources, the County will consider the limitations of different revenue sources, as well as any unintended effects of new/expanded revenue sources on the housing market and residents with the lowest incomes.

33. Attract more regional/national private & philanthropic funders to support housing-related activities

As development and operational costs continue to rise due to broader economic conditions, developers and nonprofit service providers alike have elevated the need for more flexible funding. In parallel to increasing public revenue sources, county leaders will work to increase the volume of private & philanthropic dollars being invested across the housing continuum and in the capacity of nonprofit organizations.

34. Convene CDFIs to sustainably support revolving loan fund

As development costs increase, the demand for a well-resourced revolving loan fund is strong. Unlike grants, revolving loan funds are replenished as loans are repaid with interest. Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) are well-positioned to pilot and scale flexible funds; when acting in coordination, the impact can be even greater. The County will bring CDFI leaders together to design a facility specifically for housing development in DeKalb County.

35. Streamline applications for funding

Developers invest a significant amount of time and resources into creating applications for funding. Currently, developers are required to complete separate applications for different County funding sources (e.g., Decide DeKalb resources and HOME) for the same development proposal. The County will explore how the applications differ, why different information is requested, and the processes developers move through to secure different County funding sources. Based on these learnings, the County will work to streamline applications – increasing efficiencies for County staff and developers alike.

36. Develop and begin implementing a strategy for developing housing on publicly owned land

The County and its authorities have a wealth of underutilized assets: land. Public entities in Metro Atlanta and across the county in similar positions are working to thoughtfully unlock development, including housing, on these assets. To this end, the County will create a framework to identify properties that are suitable for residential development and prioritize them. Additionally, the County will identify common challenges private and nonprofit developer experience while navigating the County's disposition processes and work to mitigate them.

37. Develop and implement a strategy to optimize land banking powers

DeKalb County's land bank authority is a key partner in the housing ecosystem due to their unique powers. In Georgia, "land bank(s) can buy and sell property, receive donated properties, clear title and liens against property it owns, establish buyer and seller criteria consistent with the law, prioritize the extent to which they partner with for-profit or non-profit entities and aggregate properties for assemblage, development or sale as it may deem appropriate."[13] For these powers to be optimized in alignment with this plan, leaders will work together to align this strategy with other land activations efforts (i.e., publicly owned land development, coordination around major public investments, land assemblage for housing developers, etc.)

38. Launch an activation strategy for vacant, abandoned, and underutilized properties

Vacant, abandoned, and other underutilized properties can be repositioned as community assets. Rather than redeveloping properties on a one-by-one basis, the County will develop a nuanced understanding of this universe of parcels to determine what policies, tools, and partnerships can have the greatest impact at scale. This approach should be aligned with heirs properties-related efforts, public land activation, and land banking strategy.

[13] DeKalb Regional Land Bank

Moving to Action

Plans are nothing without the people power, resources, and the tenacity required to change how things are done. All of us have a part to play in making DeKalb County a place where everyone has access to safe, stable, quality housing that fosters community and creates pathways to success.

Not sure how to get involved? Here are some ideas to get started:

- Participate in community forums
- Join your community council and/or neighborhood association
- Sign up for Engage DeKalb to participate in active planning processes and stay up-to-date
- Advocate for policies

The following section outlines the roles of County departments/authorities, other funders, policymakers, developers and builders, utilities, and other key stakeholders in implementing this comprehensive housing plan.

Measuring Impact

Together, we can move toward our vision of a DeKalb County where everyone has access to safe, stable, quality housing that fosters community and creates pathways to success. Between 2027-2031, DeKalb County will invest in the production and preservation of 15,000 affordable homes as part of an overarching goal of unlocking 35,000 new homes. The County will track and report progress toward these goals by:

- level of affordability
- duration of affordability
- location
- tenure (for rent / for sale)
- occupancy restrictions (e.g., family/no restriction, seniors, residents with disabilities)

Additionally, the County will track and report progress on the impact of services and programs outlined in this plan.

Across activities, the County will work to understand the level of County investment, as well as other public (i.e., local, state, and federal), private, and philanthropic commitments made in line with this comprehensive housing plan.

Implementation Roadmap

Approaches to be Initiated in Years 1 & 2

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
1. Increase housing opportunities for residents experiencing & exiting homelessness	**Community Development**	**Public housing authorities, Human Services, developers, philanthropic organizations, Continuum of Care members, Planning & Sustainability, CEO's Office**	**ESG, HOME, bond, TAD, project-based vouchers philanthropy**	**Number of shelter beds, Number of transitional housing units, Number of PSH units**
Determine developers funding needs				
Release RFPs focused on shelters, transitional housing, and/or PSH				
2. Expand and strengthen the County's Coordinated Entry system	**Community Development**	**Office of Housing, Human Services, Continuum of Care members**	**Continuum of Care funding**	**Number of residents/households engaged through street outreach, Number of residents/households supported with case management, Number of Coordinated Entry access points**
Expand street outreach and case management countywide				
Define target populations, service goals, and geographic coverage across all municipalities				
Develop standard roles, training, caseload expectations, and workflows				
Release RFP to fund 5–10 outreach and/or case management positions across providers				
Expand Coordinated Entry access points				
Identify partner agencies through RFP/RFI				
Develop assessor training and certification (HMIS, assessment process, trauma-informed practice)				
Pilot with a small group of agencies, then expand countywide				
Invest in a shared data and case management system				
Convene stakeholders to define business requirements, data standards, privacy rules, and governance				
Assess HMIS and related tools and determine priority actions to implement				
Publish community-level housing and homelessness dashboard				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
3. Utilize hotels/motels and other underutilized properties to increase availability of deeply affordable housing opportunities	**Office of Housing**	**Community Development, Planning & Sustainability, Decide DeKalb, CEO's Office**	**HOME, bond, Affordable Housing Fund, TAD, philanthropy**	**Number of deeply affordable units created**
Inventory potential sites				
Develop/release RFPs with community input				
4. Sustain emergency financial assistance programs	**Community Development**	**Nonprofit service providers, utility companies**	**ESG, General Fund, philanthropy**	**Number of households supported**
Set target funding goal				
Identify short-term funding sources				
Cultivate multi-year commitments from private/philanthropic partners				
Create recurring revenue source				
5. Continue to support and expand legal resources for renters	**Community Development**	**Legal aid organizations/clinics**	**ESG, philanthropy**	**Number of households supported, Number of evictions prevented, Number of assisted households housed 12 or 18 months after receiving support**
Through consolidated planning/annual action planning, set funding for legal resources				
Develop direct referral process for residents accessing County resources (i.e., emergency financial assistance programs)				
6. Increase access to financial counseling	**Office of Housing**	**Nonprofit partners**	**General Fund, philanthropy**	**Number of households supported**
Secure additional funding for qualified partners				
Build awareness for counseling resources for households accessing other County resources				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
8. Increase incentives for private landlords to rent at affordable rates and/or reduce barriers to access	**Decide DeKalb**	**CEO's Office, Tax Assessor's Office, public housing authorities, Planning & Sustainability, private landlords, utility companies**	**Tax abatements, fee waivers/reductions, philanthropy, local government allocations, bond**	**Number of participating landlords, Number of units in incentive program**
Conduct engagement with private landlords to understand what meaningful incentives could be				
Develop clear guidance on requirements and benefits				
9. Develop a preservation strategy for existing affordable rental housing	**Office of Housing**	**HouseATL, Decide DeKalb, public housing authorities, affordable housing funders/lenders, developers, property managers, Land Bank Authority, Planning & Sustainability, Georgia Department of Community Affairs**	**Bond, TAD, Affordable Housing Fund, HOME, LIHTC, philanthropy, tax abatements, corporations/institutions, private lenders**	**Number of developments preserved, Number of units preserved**
Identify subsidized properties with expiring affordability				
Identify NOAH properties located in target geographies at-risk of increased rents, including portfolios for sale by institutional investors				
Map pathways to preservation for different property types				
Clarify roles & responsibilities for County departments/agencies				
Align funding resources				
Action	**Lead**	**Support**	**Potential Funding Sources**	**Metrics**
10. Explore policies that improve rental housing conditions	**Office of Housing**	**Code Enforcement, Law, mission-driven owners, property owners & industry groups**	**TBD**	**Homes improved via policy interventions**
Assess existing code enforcement administration to understand what works and where there are limitations				
Conduct legal research on policies permissible under Georgia law				
11. Scale homebuyer counseling and education	**Office of Housing**	**Nonprofit partners, financial institutions**	**Private/corporate, philanthropy**	**Number of potential homebuyers supported by HUD-certified counselors**
Map existing partners providing homebuyer counseling/education				
Identify funding needs to expand services				
Develop/release RFP for additional funding				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
12. Deploy funding to support development of for-sale housing	**Decide DeKalb, Community Development**	**Developers, CDFIs, developers, homebuilders, major employers/institutions**	**HOME, bond,** Affordable Housing **Fund, New Markets Tax credits, philanthropy, corporate, fee waivers**	**Number of new units created**
Convene program administrators of funds that support for-sale housing to determine how existing resources can be optimized				
Revise program guidelines to align with market needs across the income spectrum				
13. Expand down payment assistance programs	**Decide DeKalb**	**Community Development, Office of Housing, public housing authorities, financial institutions, homebuilders, realtors**	**Bond, Affordable Housing Fund, philanthropy, corporate**	**Number of households supported**
Convene program administrators to discuss opportunities to align/optimizing existing resources and identify limitations of existing resources				
Revise existing program guidelines and applications to optimize/streamline existing programs				
Secure additional funding to align with resident needs				
14. Scale training and counseling for new & current homeowners	**Office of Housing**	**Nonprofit partners, financial institutions**	**Philanthropy**	**Number of households supported**
Map and convene partners currently providing training/counseling for homeowners to identify where additional resources would be most additive				
Secure additional funding to align with resident needs				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
15. Scale owner-occupied rehab & rebate programs, including home-hardening and resiliency improvements	**Community Development**	**Utility companies, nonprofit partners**	**Bond, Affordable Housing Fund, philanthropy**	**Number of households supported**
Convene program administrators to discuss opportunities to align/optimizing existing resources and identify limitations of existing resources				
Revise existing program guidelines and applications to optimize/streamline existing programs				
Secure additional funding to align with resident needs				
16. Increase access to estate planning services	**Office of Housing**	**Legal clinics**	**Philanthropy, corporate/institutions**	**Number of households supported**
Map network of partners who provide accessible estate planning services				
Identify barriers to access/gaps in system				
Develop strategies to increase access				
18. Resource a permanent DeKalb County Housing Council	**Office of Housing**	**Office of the CEO, City Attorney's Office**		
Draft and adopt formal bylaws and ordinances establishing the Housing Council's governance structure, meeting cadence, and charter under the Office of Housing				
Equitably appoint representatives across the County's housing ecosystem, including but not limited to County departments, agencies, developers across the housing spectrum, service providers, advocates, etc.				
Establish regular meeting cadence to evaluate pipelines, resolve interagency logjams, and align resources.				
19. Work with community partners and use County communication platforms to increase awareness of rights & resources for residents	**Office of Housing**	**Department of Planning & Sustainability, nonprofit partners, community leaders**		**Number of residents participating Number of regional forums held**
Inventory existing rights and resources that need to be amplified				
Map key community partners to share information/updates with				
Launch public awareness campaign, leveraging all DeKalb County communication platforms (e.g., transit stops, buses, libraries, community centers, utility bills, social media, etc.)				
Incorporate participatory visual tools to educate residents on middle housing, building a sense of belonging and proactively countering exclusionary beliefs				
Synthesize resident input into transparent public evaluation summaries presented to the Board of Commissioners				
Establish a centralized, multilingual online portal (e.g., a "Housing Gateway) detailing tenant rights, eviction prevention programs, home repair grants, and down payment assistance opportunities to increase individual agency				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
20. Facilitate a series of community forums and resource fairs	**Office of Housing**	**Community Development**		**Number of residents served** **Number of events and initiatives undertaken**
Design a regional forum series covering North, Central, and South DeKalb, rotating between community centers, faith institutions, etc.				
Proactively deploy "Housing Navigators" in partnership with local nonprofits to provide in-person intake support in targeted, high-need communities (e.g., Clarkston, South DeKalb)				
21. Launch Housing Innovation Fund in coordination with cross-sector working group	**Office of Housing**	**Decide DeKalb, CDFIs, philanthropic partners**	**Affordable Housing Fund, bond, CDFI financing, philanthropy**	
Form an Innovation Funding Working Group including CDFIs, Decide DeKalb, local philanthropic partners, and other mission-driven lenders				
Issue an RFP or Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to provide seed loans or grants for innovative housing production and preservation methods and opportunities				
Embed long-term affordability and climate-resilient benchmarks into the fund's scoring rubric to ensure sustainability				
22. Launch faith-based development initiative	**Office of Housing**	**Faith community partners, Decide DeKalb**		**Number of homes built**
Develop and release an RFP for a consultant to facilitate community-centered, faith-based development initiatives				
Deliver an assessment-based development training academy coaching faith leaders on site feasibility, zoning, financing, and mission alignment				
Award pre-development technical assistance grants empowering congregations to retain long-term property control and create intergenerational community wealth				
23. Update permitting staffing model to increase efficiency and communication	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**Approving agencies (i.e., Fire, Watershed Management, GIS, etc.)**		
Hire proactive housing project managers tasked with guiding developments concurrently through Watershed, Fire, and Site Plan reviews, with an expedited process for projects that provide significant community benefits				
Hire internal reviewers for all departments to create a Master Review Team				
Hire certified permitting technicians to serve as internal project managers and provide specific customer service responses				
Update inter-departmental Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure transparent and predictable permitting processes				
Create external facing guides to assist in the permitting process				
Create external portal to find status of pending permits				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
24. Introduce new centralized permitting platform	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**Department of Innovation & Technology, local emerging developers**		**Average review times**
Provide regular training sessions for users				
Ensure permitting software allows pre-checks of submitted applications				
Build public-facing tracking dashboard where applicants and residents can view review status, comments, and project milestones				
Conduct user workshops for local small-scale emerging builders				
Create public facing guides and videos explaining the system				
25. Implement State-defined permitting timeframes while enforcing six-month open permitting policy	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**County Attorney's Office**		**Number of permits approved**
Create internal dashboard that provides notifications when deadlines are approaching				
Create automatic notification in the new permitting system that sends an email to applicants when the permit is approaching expiration				
Establish an expedited administrative review process to close out lingering permits (e.g., 6+ months after approval with no action taken) to proactively resolve differences and to establish accountability for expeditious communication				
26. Update and adopt new application, and permitting fee structure	**Department of Planning & Sustainability with Office of Housing**	**Finance Department, Board of Commissioners**		**Fee revenue generation**
Commission a comprehensive regional fee study evaluating DeKalb's fees against true costs and peer Metro Atlanta jurisdictions and recommend updated fees accordingly				
Research best practices to draft an ordinance establishing a slide-scale fee reduction for projects that provide deep affordability (<50% AMI), supportive housing, or other housing-related benefits				
Adopt updated fee schedule				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
28. Revise land use policy to allow for greater housing supply and greater housing choices	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**Office of Housing, MARTA, Atlanta Regional Commission, Decide DeKalb**	**ARC Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grants, FTA TOD planning grants**	**Number of units built within 1/2 of a MARTA station**
Update Future Land Use Map and zoning district designations to permit higher-density, mixed income residential developments within 1 mile of all MARTA rail stations and key arterial bus corridors				
Update transit-oriented overlay districts that remove minimum parking requirements and provide density bonuses for permanent affordability commitments, and otherwise incentivize increased density, connectedness, multi-modal mobility and increased housing diversity				
Align infrastructure related Capital Improvement Plan programing to support transit-oriented in historically underserved South DeKalb activity centers				
Conduct geographically bounded planning studies to allow neighborhoods or communities to determine what future infill (commercial and residential) should look like and then update the zoning district for the community accordingly				
Allow a greater variety of housing types and styles within the suburban character area as infill development				
Allow ADUs by right in all residential zoning districts				
Allow smaller lot sizes and smaller dwelling units				
Encourage the redevelopment of shopping plazas into mixed use developments that include a variety of housing types				
32. Explore additional County revenue sources to sustain housing-related activities	**Finance Department**	**Office of Housing, Decide DeKalb, Board of Commissioners**		**Total new revenue generated (by source)**
Establish Special Service Districts (SSDs) and modernize Decide DeKalb's Bond for Title policy to dedicate recurring funding for housing programs				
Explore opportunities to leverage local short-term rental taxes, licensing fees, code violation fees, blighted property lien penalties, and other community-impact fees to create a dedicated funding stream for emergency rental assistance and housing preservation				
33. Attract more regional/national private & philanthropic funders to support housing-related activities	**Office of Housing**	**Decide DeKalb, HouseATL coalition leadership**		**Total private & philanthropic dollars leveraged**
Host an annual DeKalb Housing Capital Summit convening corporate, healthcare, and higher education anchors to co-invest directly in local workforce housing				
Structure a private-matching framework that leverages County bond dollars to unlock philanthropic capital, especially for deeply affordable and supportive units				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
34. Convene CDFIs to sustainably support revolving loan fund	**Office of Housing**	**CDFIs, Decide DeKalb, mission-driven lenders**		**Total amount revolving through the fund**
Convene a multi-CDFI lending consortium to structure a revolving construction loan program that recycles capital continuously into local housing production				
Provide County loan guarantees to lower borrowing costs and absorb early risk for local, emerging homebuilders				
Create shared, equitable loan criteria across lenders to speed up approvals for community-focused deals				
36. Develop and begin implementing a strategy for developing housing on publicly owned land	**Office of Housing, GIS Department**	**DeKalb County School District, MARTA, Housing Authority of DeKalb County, municipal authorities**	**CDBG administrative funds, FTA Transit Joint Development technical assistance planning grants**	**Number of permanently affordable units generated**
Execute cross-jurisdictional GIS audit compiling real estate owned by the County, school district, MARTA, housing authorities into an open public registry				
Screen and rank parcels based on environmental constraints, water/sewer utility capacity, and proximity to high-frequency transit and essential community services				
Issue competitive multi-site RFPs				
37. Develop and implement a strategy to optimize land banking powers	**DeKalb Regional Land Bank Authority, Decide DeKalb**	**Office of Housing, Code Enforcement, Law**	**EPA Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund, General Fund**	**Total properties acquired, Total properties disposed, Total units produced/preserved**
Connect Land Bank's acquisition pipeline directly with County tax foreclosure auctions and repeat code-violation dockets to capture distressed single-family properties vulnerable to investor acquisition				
Develop and coordinate a proactive acquisition plan for Decide DeKalb designed to fill property acquisition and housing preservation gaps				
Create an equitable disposition policy that conveys properties to nonprofit developers/builders, including those with permanent affordability restrictions				
Capitalize a site-preparation pool to close non-tax liens, perform basic environmental remediation, and preserve neighborhood affordability where prices are rising/expected to rise				
38. Launch an activation strategy for vacant, abandoned, and underutilized properties	**Code Enforcement, DeKalb Regional Land Bank**	**Office of Housing, Community Development, Law**	**DeKalb Regional Land Bank capital, CDBG, HOME, TAD, philanthropy**	**Number of vacant/abandoned properties**
Coordinate across departments to combine information (e.g., utility shutoffs, tax delinquencies, death records, code violations, etc.) to pinpoint areas suffering from chronic blight and speculative investor activity				

Launch a "Revive DeKalb" initiative, utilizing receivership and expedited tax foreclosure sales to acquire, assemble, and reposition deteriorated multifamily properties
Channel rehabbed single-family homes into an affordable housing pipeline paired with down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers

Approaches to be Initiated in Years 3-5

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
7. Explore launching a local rental assistance program	**Office of Housing**	**Human Services, public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, private landlords**	**General Fund, philanthropy, private/corporate**	**Number of households assisted, Number of households able to secure housing independently, Number of participating landlords/housing providers**
Coordinate with public housing authorities to understand limits of existing rental assistance programs				
Engage residents and landlords				
Identify capacity for administering program				
Identify funding source(s)				
17. Expand resources relating to heirs properties	**Office of Housing**	**Legal clinics**	**Philanthropy**	**Number of households supported**
Identify existing resources and identify remaining community needs				
Partner with relevant stakeholders to create solutions tailored to DeKalb County				
27. Establish a clear and predictable pathway for eligible nonconforming properties to achieve compliance	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**Office of Housing, local legal aid organizations**		
Identify and classify prevalent nonconforming residential parcels across unincorporated DeKalb County (e.g., historically small lots, duplexes in single-family zones, etc.)				
Draft zoning code amendments that provide administrative, by-right, or minor-variance processes to legalize nonconforming properties without going through a formal Board of Appeals process				
Conduct educational outreach in historically disinvested neighborhoods to assist legacy owners with understanding the legal options for developing or improving their property				
Adopt zoning regulations that allow for updates to nonconforming properties without requiring full compliance to current codes				
Establish a process for determining legal nonconforming properties, structures, and uses				
Establish a process for properties to obtain compliance with codes and regulations that takes into account or subsidizes neighborhoods with historic underinvestment				

Action	Lead	Support	Potential Funding Sources	Metrics
29. Adopt pre-approved architectural plans for select housing types	**Department of Planning & Sustainability**	**Office of Housing, local architectural associations, residential homebuilders**	**ARC Community Development Assistance Program, CDBG planning grants**	**Number of homes built using pre-approved plans**
Commission a design team to procure 4-6 standardized, contextual middle housing plans (i.e., ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, cottage courts, etc.) that comply with local building codes while providing architectural and design variability				
Provide completed design packages free of charge to property owners, empowering resident homeowners and emerging local builders to create missing middle				
Institute an expedited review process approving pre-cleared architectural plan submissions (e.g., within 10 business days)				
30. Pilot funding for middle housing types	**Decide DeKalb, Community Development Department**	**Regional and local financial institutions**	**Housing Bond, Affordable Housing Fund, federal entitlements (e.g., CDBG, HOME)**	**Number of middle housing units built**
Number of ADUs financed for seniors				
Launch a revolving financing pilot that provides low-cost construction and gap financing for 2-8 unit infill developments				
Offer forgivable pre-development grants for fixed-income seniors and multi-generational households seeking to constructed ADUs to age-in-place				
31. Explore targeted inclusionary zoning near major public investments	**Department of Planning & Sustainability, Office of Housing**	**Office of Housing, County Attorney's Office, Decide DeKalb, Board of Commissioners**		**Number of affordable units produced**
Complete an economic and legal feasibility study to examine and structure inclusionary zoning requirements within Georgia statutory limits, prioritizing Tax Allocation Districts, Activity Centers and transit nodes.				
Establish affordability set-asides (e.g., 20% of units at <50% AMI) for residential projects receiving rezonings, tax abatements, or County land				
35. Streamline applications for funding	**Department of Housing**	**Decide DeKalb, public housing authorities, local governments**		
Convene active funders to develop shared objectives and understand key application needs				
Engage developers to understand opportunities for alignment				
Develop phased approach to pilot unified application and solicit feedback from funders/developers				
Refine and launch streamlined application				

Appendices

Appendix A: Engagement Summary

DeKalb County utilized a variety of techniques and levels of involvement to gain a complete understanding of existing conditions, community goals and values, needs and opportunities, and desires for the direction of its housing ecosystem. As detailed below, this process included a variety of techniques to reach broad and diverse audiences such as project management team meetings, site visits, a Housing Working Group and other stakeholder touchpoints, public meetings, social media, and an interactive website through Engage DeKalb/Social Point. The Team advertised all events and engagement opportunities in coordination with the DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability and created flyers and business cards to distribute at community locations and promote engagement opportunities via social media. Participation was encouraged through physical flyer solicitation, an email communication list, existing County communications channels, and stakeholder committee contacts to maximize outreach.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

This engagement process began with an initiatory presentation to the Planning, Economic Development, and Community Services (PECS) Committee of the Board of Commissioners on February 17, 2026. Participation in this public hearing officially kicked off the planning process with the public.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The project team worked closely with a Housing Working Group comprised of stakeholder groups including residents, business and property owners, non-profit organizations, community groups, and others identified with guidance from county management. The Team met with this committee as a group two times during the first phase of the planning period and consulted them individually as necessary to provide input for the identification of goals, vision, needs, and proposed solutions. The team also convened additional stakeholder touchpoints through a series of implementation-focused work sessions during the second phase of the project.

Housing Working Group Project Orientation

Housing Working Group Project Orientation introduced the project's intent, process and schedule, and set expectations for the committee. The team also collected input and feedback on the goals and priorities for this planning effort. The goal of the engagement activities was to educate and solicit general feedback on the planning process and planned public engagement strategy. The team also worked with the committee to identify existing needs and opportunities for bolstering the local housing ecosystem, as well as the community's priorities for addressing them throughout DeKalb County.

- **Meeting Location** – Zoom (with access via email distribution list)
    - Friday, January 16, 2025, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

The meeting consisted of an interactive presentation given by the project team to facilitate introductions between members of the committee, provide an overview of the comprehensive housing plan process, initiate discussion on ongoing work and resources for addressing housing issues, and begin aligning priorities across public sector agencies. Key takeaways included:

- Despite ranking second to last amongst these stakeholders, multiple attendees stressed that maintaining community character is a high priority for residents.
    - This tends to be feedback received from people pushing back on development plans
        - Developers could do a better job of conveying their message to residents as they attempt to account for this pushback

- Unique challenges exist for maintaining current housing for residents, particularly in middle-income group.
- Committee members largely agreed that reducing barriers to development (including access to capital) needs to happen before other priorities can be adequately addressed.
    - Regulations are a big hinderance in using available tools to expand affordable housing, negatively impacts housing affordability and attainability and hurts equity.
- Location of workforce housing was raised as a major priority that was not a part of the exercise.
    - Naturally affordability (central to south DeKalb Co.) is geographically isolated from job centers (north DeKalb Co.)
    - Residents will choose to live further from job centers in order to stay closer to community connections or upsize
- Senior-focused affordable housing projects are more palatable to community members than family-oriented development
    - Can potentially lobby and advocate with Georgia Department of Community Affairs to put in preference points for family-oriented development through LIHTC
- Most affordable housing is brought online through LIHTC and a need exists to have local municipalities allocate more funding
    - Capital stacks and financing remain priority issues outside of potential incentives for development

Housing Working Group Bus Tour

Housing Working Group Bus Tour provided participants with a shared, firsthand understanding of existing housing conditions throughout DeKalb County; illustrated key issues identified in the data around housing affordability, aging stock, displacement, redevelopment, and infrastructure impacts; and, built a common language and context for discussing these issues. The team also worked with the committee to identify existing needs and opportunities for bolstering the local housing ecosystem, as well as the community's priorities for addressing them throughout DeKalb County.

- **Bus Tour Starting Location** – Shirley A. Trussell Building
    - Monday, April 27, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

The bus tour consisted of a verbal orientation given by the project team to set expectations for the committee, provide an overview of the tour route, and initiate discussion on relevant housing topics. The tour consisted of three major stops throughout the county where a developer/facilitator gave a presentation on the site's project, in addition to several other locations where the project team discussed existing conditions and county priorities to facilitate conversation amongst attendees. Key takeaways are as follows:

- Attendees repeatedly emphasized need for deeply affordable housing opportunities, specifically via "Missing middle" housing expansions (duplexes, townhomes, ADUs). General concern that new development is becoming "too high-end" and forcing residents into homelessness, but attendees recognize the need to improve the quality of new developments.
- Common strategies for developing new affordable and attainable housing included:
    - Land trusts
    - LIHTC developments
    - ADU incentives/loan forgiveness

    - Flexible zoning and minimum lot sizes
    - Mixed-income communities
- Many comments supported walkable transit-oriented development or "City center" style environments that better integrate housing, retail, groceries, and services similar to Atlantic Station or Lulah Hills. Support exists for redevelopment of underutilized lots and abandoned properties to achieve this development model as well.
- A major recurring issue that attendees noted was a lack of grocery stores, particularly with healthy food options, quality restaurants, and retail amenities. Several areas were described as "food deserts" or being dominated by fast food and auto-related businesses.
- There was strong interest in revitalizing key points along the commercial corridors (i.e. Belvedere Plaza and Gallery at South DeKalb) through better grocery anchors and improved shopping environments.
- Aging infrastructure and beautification concerns were raised including:
    - Broken sidewalks and curbs
    - Overgrown vegetation and poor landscaping
    - Graffiti
    - Trash and illegal dumping
    - Faded street lines
    - Large parking lots
    - Abandoned storefronts
- Several attendees highlighted challenges around property ownership dynamics preventing accountability actions for absentee/private owners and fragmented property ownership hinders redevelopment efforts.
- Attendees want to know how the county will work with individual owners to avoid legal/punitive actions for neglected properties.

Housing Working Group Work Sessions

Housing Working Group Work Sessions provided participants with an opportunity to develop the implementation plan component of the comprehensive housing plan.

- **Meeting Location** – Zoom/Microsoft Teams (with access via email distribution list)
    - Wednesday, September 9, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM
    - Thursday, September 10, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM
    - Thursday, September 17, 2026, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
    - Thursday, September 17, 2026, 1:15 – 2:15 PM
    - Thursday, September 17, 2026, 2:30 - 3:30 PM

Each of these work sessions consisted of a brief project recap followed by an interactive discussion around implementing the strategic approaches for each of the five goals.

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Community Conversations

The Team hosted five public workshops and open houses, "Community Conversations," in March 2026 as the project's first public events to introduce the community to the comprehensive housing plan effort. The goal of the engagement activities was to officially kick off the project; introduce the project's intent, process and schedule; educate the public on concepts related to housing affordability, preservation, displacement pressures, for-sale market changes, and homeownership attainment; present existing conditions; and collect input on needs and desires to sketch out palatable ideas for future housing development and preservation strategies. The project team also collected input and feedback on existing conditions and priorities for residents throughout DeKalb County. A total of 135 people attended the five meetings.

- **Meeting #1** – Stonecrest Library (District 5)
  - Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 5:00 – 7:00 PM
  - 34 attendees
- **Meeting #2** – South DeKalb Senior Center (District 3)
  - Monday, March 9, 2026, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 47 attendees
- **Meeting #3** – Mason Mill Recreation Center (District 2)
  - Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 21 attendees
- **Meeting #4** – Tobie Grant Recreation Center (District 4)
  - Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 24 attendees
- **Meeting #5** – Sandtown Park (District 1)
  - Thursday, March 19, 2026, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 9 attendees

The team gave a presentation to attendees to provide an orientation of the comprehensive housing planning process and set expectations for the project team's work over the planning period. This orientation was capped by a four-person panel discussion covering relevant local topics: socioeconomic characteristics; displacement pressures; affordable housing preservation; for-sale market changes; and homeownership attainment. Attendees were greeted by project team members who provided them with a brief, optional demographics survey and encouraged them to participate in a welcoming board activity. Afterwards, participants were encouraged to review five information boards related to the panel topics before sitting for the presentation and panel. After the presentation and panel, attendees were asked to provide feedback through an interactive workshop that consisted of five stations. Key takeaways are as follows:

- Top priority for residents is reducing housing cost burdens, followed by preserving existing affordable housing.
- "No quality homes in my price range" and "desired housing types are not available" were the most frequently cited as barriers to buying and renting housing, respectively.
- Residents prefer single-family housing over other housing types, but are open to duplexes, quadplexes, and similar small-scale multifamily options.
- Attendees most frequently cited school quality as the major driving factor influencing where they choose to live other than cost.

- Residents want more investment in strategies that will develop homes affordable to buy for households making less than $100,000 a year.
- Comments from attendees highlight a desire for more wheelchair accessible single-family and small-multifamily housing options, smaller housing types (i.e. cottages, ADUs, tiny houses) particularly for seniors, and sustainable transitional homes for unhoused residents or those undergoing other personal crises (e.g. mental instability, abusive households, etc.).

Resident Focus Groups

The Team hosted three resident focus groups in July and August 2026 to help test the popularity and knowledge of different housing interventions, uncover experiential barriers and ideas, and begin refining policy options for addressing localized concerns. The goal of the engagement activities was to utilize the small group format and create a space for deeper dialogue with specific populations within DeKalb County to yield detailed insights that complement quantitative data. The groups focused on the experiences and perspectives of unhoused residents, recent immigrants and refugees, and college-age adults and seniors. A total of 39 people participated in the three focus groups.

- **Focus Group #1: Unhoused Neighbors** – Rock of Ages Lutheran Church
  - Monday, July 6, 2026, 5:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 13 participants
- **Focus Group #2: College-age Adults and Seniors** – South DeKalb Senior Center
  - Thursday, July 16, 2026, 5:00 – 8:00 PM
  - 6 participants
- **Focus Group #3: Immigrants and Refugees** – Milam Park
  - Saturday, August 8, 2026, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
  - 20 participants

The team initiated the groups with a round of introductions and provided a brief verbal orientation of the comprehensive housing planning process before soliciting the participants' consent. After collecting signed consent forms, the facilitator guided participants through an interactive discussion catered to their population's presumed housing needs. For unhoused residents, the conversation centered their current living situation and the effectiveness of existing systems they've interacted with and how they're designed. The college-aged adults and senior focus group highlighted shared issues across the aging spectrum, specifically programs, policies, and other tools that can support transitioning between housing units within the County, homeownership aspirations, homesharing programs, and cohabitating preferences/necessity. The tri-lingual (Arabic, English, and Somali) immigrant/refugee focus group centered their current living conditions, troubles or successes navigating the domestic housing system, and accessing services or trusted supports in the community. All three groups addressed the participants' current housing needs and preferences, as well as any potential solutions they would like to see prioritized in DeKalb County. Key takeaways are as follows:

- Affordability is the central housing challenge across cohorts. Young adults struggle to establish independent households, while seniors struggle to maintain existing homes or find affordable alternatives as their incomes become more constrained. Unhoused neighbors are unable to re-enter the traditional housing market because rents and associated barriers (i.e. deposits, income requirements, etc.) exceed their capacity despite many working. Recent immigrants and refugees experience trouble buying their preferred housing types because of lack of availability and limitations placed on their ability to earn wages sufficient to in those homes.

- Participants called for a variety of housing types including:
    - Starter homes
    - Small footprint one-story units
    - Cottages/tiny homes
    - Accessible housing
    - Affordable independent senior living
    - Townhouses
- Multigenerational living is increasingly common due to necessity, with younger adults remaining with parents and older family members moving in with adult children for financial, caregiving, or support reasons.
- Seniors raised concerns about rising property taxes, maintenance and repair expenses, accessibility, caregiving, and fixed or declining incomes. Some are delaying repairs or doing work themselves because assistance is unavailable or they fall just outside eligibility thresholds.
- Existing housing assistance does not align with real income limits, household-income calculations, lengthy requirements, repayment provisions, and other program rules as barriers, particularly for untraditional or multigenerational households.
- Walkability, recreational amenities, communal gathering places, and opportunities for neighbors to interact were repeatedly connected to quality of life and housing satisfaction. Participants described the loss of grocery stores, restaurants, shopping, recreation, and other destinations as diminishing neighborhood quality even where new or increasingly expensive housing is being developed.
- Participants repeatedly expressed frustration that plans, studies, public meetings, and promised improvements do not consistently translate into visible neighborhood changes. Participants want decision-makers to listen to people with lived experience, improve transparency around development and zoning decisions, strengthen follow-through, and make public engagement more consequential.
- Across cohorts, participants want the ability to choose housing that fits their income, household composition, mobility, and stage of life while remaining connected to their community.

Community Showcase Townhall

The Team, in partnership with DeKalb County's Chief Executive Officer, hosted a town hall-style public meeting, "Community Showcase Townhall," in August 2026 as the project's final public event for stakeholders to review, respond to, and refine draft recommendations before they move into implementation work sessions and adoption. The goal of the engagement activities was to reorient attendees to the project's intent, process and schedule; educate the public on key findings from demographic and economic assessment, housing inventory, market analysis, and public engagement; and educate on proposed vision, goals, and strategies. The project team also collected input on those strategies and provided feedback on potential sites for strategy deployment. A total of 68 people attended the meeting and 77 others watched concurrently via livestream.

- **Meeting Location** – Porter Sanford III Performing Arts and Community Center
    - Monday, August 17, 2026, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

The team gave a presentation to attendees to provide an update on the comprehensive housing planning process and introduce project recommendations for goals, strategies, and actions. This presentation was

capped by a four-person question-and-answer panel covering attendee-provided questions around relevant housing topics. Attendees were greeted by project team members who provided them with a brief, optional survey as they entered the auditorium. Participants were also encouraged to review ten information boards related to key findings before sitting for the presentation and panel. After the presentation and panel, attendees were asked to provide feedback through an interactive workshop that consisted of five stations based on the five proposed plan goals. For each station, participants were asked to select their top three priorities from a list of proposed strategic actions related to a particular goal and to select locations on a map to deploy a relevant strategy. A virtual workshop that consisted of digital versions of the five stations was launched for two additional weeks (until September 2, 2026) to allow for additional engagement. Key takeaways are as follows:

- Homelessness prevention and housing stability emerged as the strongest priorities across topic areas with the greatest emphasis on increasing rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and non-congregate shelter (37 votes), followed by repurposing hotels/motels and other underutilized properties for deeply affordable housing (31 votes), and identifying sustainable funding for emergency financial assistance (29 votes).
- Participants want resources directed toward areas where homelessness is visibly concentrated, specifically noting areas along Candler Road, Glenwood Road, Covington Highway, Hairston Road, Memorial Drive, Lawrenceville Highway, and near South DeKalb Mall as locations where additional services and resources may be needed. Participants also mentioned food assistance, safe overnight parking, permanent affordable housing, security, and wraparound social services.
- Participants expressed concern that existing rental affordability is already being lost emphasizing rising rents, corporate ownership of single-family homes, and increasing housing costs.
- Keeping existing homeowners in their homes ranked above creating new homeownership opportunities. Foreclosure prevention was the top homeownership strategy with 21 votes.
- Participant comments suggested redeveloping vacant or underused shopping centers and properties along Lawrenceville Highway, Covington Highway, Redan Road, Hairston Road, and near the Indian Creek MARTA line for affordable, workforce, or multifamily housing.
- Comments called for additional housing forums, resource fairs, and educational events to reach communities throughout the County, with particular attention to South DeKalb and communities of color.
- Participants stressed the need to mitigate gentrification and ensure legacy residents benefit from redevelopment.
- Across the goals, participants generally gave stronger support to strategies involving practical, near-term housing interventions, including direct housing assistance, preservation, reuse of existing properties, and foreclosure prevention.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Online engagement provides a convenient way to engage with the public and to share information. During the first phase of engagement, the Team launched a project site through Engage DeKalb as an online hub to serve as the central location for project information including project overview and schedule, outreach event announcements, and plan documents. The site also hosted a visioning board exercise as a convenient way to engage with the public and collect feedback on issues that could influence the comprehensive housing plan's priorities around key topic areas. The project website was used to host a

virtual townhall which mirrored the interactive stations present at August 2026's Community Showcase Townhall.

Additionally, timely and strategic content was developed for the County to post on its own social media channels as calls to action for engagement opportunities and events. We also coordinated with the Housing Working Group to leverage other existing marketing outlets to maximize digital and traditional outreach footprints.

Appendix B: Demographic & Economic Assessment Key Findings

Purpose

This assessment provides a demographic and economic portrait of who lives in DeKalb County, how the population and households are changing over time, and the key economic conditions that shape housing needs. It situates DeKalb County within the broader context of the five core counties of Metropolitan Atlanta and highlights similarities and differences that are relevant for housing policy and planning.[1]

Scope

This assessment focuses on multiple, nested geographies relevant to DeKalb County's housing strategy:

- The five core counties of the Atlanta metropolitan area—Clayton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and Gwinnett County—as regional comparison points for understanding DeKalb County's relative position
- DeKalb County overall, as the primary geography for describing population, households, and economic conditions
- Incorporated cities and other jurisdictions within DeKalb County, used selectively where data allow, to highlight important differences in demographics, income, and housing-related needs across municipalities
- Census tracts within DeKalb County, used particularly for mapping and analyzing the spatial distribution of income, poverty, and racial/ethnic composition

To capture both long-term trends and current conditions, the assessment uses multiple time horizons:

- Long-term trends (roughly 20 years): Population and jurisdictional change are examined from 2000-2020, capturing how DeKalb County's role in the Atlanta region has shifted over two decades.
- Recent change and current conditions (last 5-10 years): Changes in demographics, household composition, income, poverty, and commuting, are assessed comparing 2015-2019 to 2020-2024 ACS 5-year estimates, highlighting trends over the last five to ten years.
- Forward-looking context (next 20-30 years): Regional population and employment forecasts through mid-century are to indicate how DeKalb County's available jobs are expected to evolve relative to the rest of the Atlanta region.

Together, these timeframes allow the assessment to describe where DeKalb County has been, where it stands now, and the broad direction in which it is heading.

[1] The findings are intended to serve as the foundation for DeKalb County's comprehensive housing strategy and implementation plan. A separate housing inventory analysis will examine the county's housing stock, market conditions, preservation risks, and affordability challenges in more detail; that work will draw directly on the demographic and economic trends summarized in this document.

Data Sources and Methods

This assessment relies primarily on publicly available federal and regional data sources, supplemented by select local data sources. Key sources include:

- U.S. Census Bureau
    - Decennial Census (2000, 2010, 2020) for population counts and jurisdictional changes
    - American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2015-2019 and 2020-2024) as the main source for demographic, social, economic, and commuting indicators[2]
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
    - Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) for historical unemployment trends
    - Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) for typical wages in key occupations
- U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD)
    - OnTheMap and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) destination data for commuting patterns, job inflows/outflows, and job distance analyses
- Homeless management and local administrative data, including Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) summary data for people and households experiencing homelessness

The analysis is primarily descriptive and comparative. It:

- Uses ACS 5-year estimates for all small-area (jurisdiction and census-tract) statistics to ensure adequate sample sizes and data reliability
- Compares DeKalb County to the core counties and, where relevant, to the broader Atlanta metropolitan statistical area (MSA) to place local conditions in regional context
- Highlights changes over time to show recent shifts in income, poverty, household composition, and other key indicators
- Uses jurisdiction-level summaries and census-tract level maps to identify spatial patterns in opportunity and disadvantage within DeKalb County, including areas with higher poverty, lower incomes, or concentrations of specific racial/ethnic or linguistic groups

The methods are designed to support practical decision-making: the assessment emphasizes patterns and contrasts that are most relevant for understanding housing need, risk, and opportunity in DeKalb County.

[2] Key tables analyzed include tables DP02, DP03, S1501, S2301, S0801, and related subject tables

Key Findings

DeKalb County is a large, majority-Black, increasingly diverse county with pronounced intra-county disparities, regional growth, and strong ties to the wider metropolitan labor market. DeKalb County's CHP must be equity-centered, geographically nuanced, and coordinated with transportation, economic development, and human services planning and investment efforts.

1. DeKalb County is a large core county with slower growth than its peers. DeKalb County remains one of the largest counties in the five-county core and has continued to add residents since 2000, but it no longer leads regional growth. Over the last two decades, Gwinnett County and Fulton County have grown faster and now anchor much of the region's population expansion, while DeKalb County and Cobb County form a middle tier and Clayton County remains the smallest. DeKalb County's growth has been steady but comparatively modest, signaling a mature, inner-core county rather than a fast-growing suburban frontier.

2. Population change is uneven across DeKalb County's cities, with rapid growth and stagnation happening side by side. Between 2010 and 2020, many jurisdictions in North DeKalb County, particularly Brookhaven, Chamblee, Clarkston, and Tucker, grew far faster than the county as a whole, often due to a mix of new housing and annexations/incorporations. Other areas, particularly unincorporated DeKalb County, saw much slower growth or even declines in the population. Demand, reinvestment pressure, and displacement risk are more concentrated in specific corridors and cities, while other areas face softer markets and aging housing stock.

3. DeKalb County is a majority-Black, multiethnic county with racial and ethnic differences by place. DeKalb County anchors a substantial share of the region's Black population: just over half of residents are non-Hispanic Black, a larger share than in Cobb, Fulton, or Gwinnett Counties and second only to Clayton County among the core counties. DeKalb County has significant non-Hispanic White, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian communities, particularly along the I-85 corridor and in several cities in North and West DeKalb County. Racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAPs), along with other high-poverty tracts with very high shares of Black and Hispanic residents, underscore that race, ethnicity, and poverty are tightly linked, especially in South DeKalb County where are further from economic development opportunities, services, and transit facilities.

4. Immigrant and limited-English-proficient residents are concentrated in specific gateway communities. DeKalb County has a sizeable foreign-born population, but geographic distribution is highly uneven. Cities in North and Central DeKalb County (like Clarkston, Chamblee, Doraville, Brookhaven, parts of Dunwoody, and Tucker) have much higher shares of foreign-born and non-citizen residents, as well as larger proportions of residents who speak English less than "very well." Other cities and unincorporated areas, particularly in South DeKalb County, are predominantly U.S.-born despite being racially diverse. This creates a landscape where language access, immigration status, and cross-cultural service needs are highly concentrated rather than evenly spread across the county.

5. Household composition is diversifying, with fewer households with children and fewer single-parent households. DeKalb County's household composition sits between more family-dominated suburban counties and the more urban Fulton County. In 2024, over a quarter (27%) of households had children under 18, while 57% were classified as family households.[3] This means that roughly half of family households are adult-only families rather than families with children. Roughly one-third of households are

[3] Family households represents households where two or more people are living together, with or without children.

single-person households, placing DeKalb County closer to Fulton County than to Clayton, Cobb, or Gwinnett Counties. Since 2019, the share of households and families with children has declined, and average household size has slightly increased. This means that households are, on average, a bit larger even as households with children make up a smaller share of the total. Among families with children, 15% are headed by a single parent, with especially high single-parent and single-mother shares in South DeKalb County and parts of Central DeKalb County (particularly in cities with higher racial and ethnic diversity).

6. Incomes have risen, but DeKalb County still faces relatively high poverty and marked racial and geographic inequality.

Median household incomes have increased since 2019 in DeKalb County and across the region, but DeKalb County's median household income still trails Cobb, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties. Poverty and unemployment rates are the second highest among the five counties. Within DeKalb County, income and poverty conditions vary widely: more affluent census tracts cluster in North and Central DeKalb County, while census tracts in South DeKalb County and Southeast DeKalb County, as well as some immigrant gateway areas, experience significantly higher rates of poverty and lower incomes. Black, Hispanic/Latino, and some immigrant communities are disproportionately represented in high-poverty tracts and R/ECAPs.

7. Educational attainment varies across the county and higher levels of education are closely tied to income and housing stability.

DeKalb County has a relatively high share of adults with bachelor's degrees or higher in parts of the county, especially around Decatur, Druid Hills/Emory, Brookhaven, and other northern and western areas of the county. Many census tracts in South and East DeKalb County (particularly the unincorporated county), and in several immigrant gateways, have much higher shares of adults with a high school diploma or less. These differences in educational attainment mirror income and poverty disparities and influence both earning potential and vulnerability to housing cost burdens.

8. DeKalb County's labor market is deeply regional; commuting and work-from-home trends shape housing demand.

DeKalb County supports a substantial job base, but most jobs in the county are held by non-residents, and most employed DeKalb County residents work outside the county. Driving alone remains the primary method DeKalb County residents commute, though the drive-alone share is somewhat lower than in neighboring suburban counties. Transit use is modest but meaningful, especially in more urban and transit-served jurisdictions; transit riders, however, experience significantly longer average commutes than drivers. A large share (25%) of residents now work from home, and nearly 90% of DeKalb County workers travel between one and 24 miles to their jobs, often to major employment centers in Atlanta, Sandy Springs, Alpharetta, and other cities. These dynamics emphasize that access to opportunity for DeKalb County households depends heavily on regional transportation networks and job centers, not only local employment.

9. Homelessness and housing instability remain pressing concerns, particularly for families, older adults, and people with disabilities.

Homelessness system data show that families with children, chronically homeless adults, and people with behavioral health needs experience significant barriers to stable housing. These challenges intersect with the county's high shares of cost-burdened renters and lower-income households, especially in high-poverty and R/ECAP tracts.

Appendix C: Housing Inventory Analysis Key Takeaways

Purpose and Scope

The Housing Inventory Assessment Report was developed as part of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Housing Plan (CHP) to inform housing goals, strategies, and action items that will guide the County in addressing current and future housing needs. This report provides an in-depth analysis of the local and regional housing inventory, as well as household needs across the housing continuum. Building on the Demographic & Economic Assessment and providing important context for the Residential Market Analysis, the report explores the following factors and characteristics that can influence housing needs, supply, and production:

- Housing typology,
- Housing age and condition,
- Tenure and unit size,
- Age-restricted care settings,
- Assisted and subsidized housing units (including affordability and occupancy restrictions),
- Utility availability and infrastructure capacity, and
- Neighborhood characteristics and access to services.

Data throughout the report draw from a range of sources including but not limited to

- the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS),
- the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data,
- the National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD), and
- local data gathered from County departments and local public housing authorities.

Data are presented for DeKalb County, Metropolitan Atlanta (Metro Atlanta), and the five core counties within Metro Atlanta (Cobb County, Clayton County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and Gwinnett County). Where relevant, data are presented and analyzed for the incorporated cities within DeKalb County and at the census tract and ZIP code levels to identify nuances within neighborhoods.

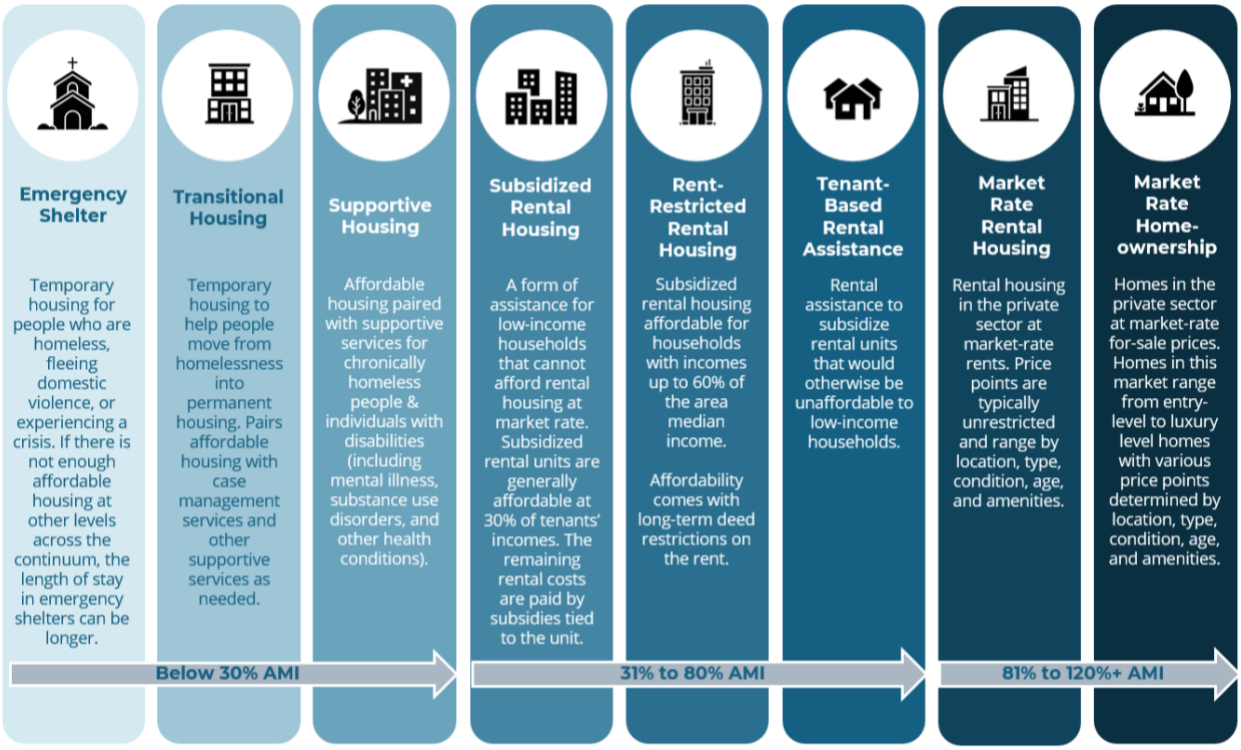
Understanding the Housing Continuum

The housing continuum is a framework that illustrates the range of available housing options in a community. At its core, this framework recognizes that addressing housing needs requires enough homes at each continuum level to allow individuals and households to move freely between housing types as their incomes, health, and life circumstances change.[i] The continuum begins with crisis-response housing, which provides immediate housing for individuals and households experiencing homelessness, and progresses to permanent supportive housing for individuals who need longer-term assistance. It then progresses to subsidized rental housing for low-income renters and finally reaches private market rental and homeownership units (Figure 1).

A complete continuum ensures housing fluidity, allowing young professionals to find entry-level/starter homes, seniors to downsize affordably, and vulnerable residents to access stability during temporary

crises. It also includes quality options for higher income households. This leads to healthier communities and housing markets, greater economic diversity, and lower public costs associated with chronic homelessness.[ii]

Figure 1. The Housing Continuum Framework



Primary Findings

- ***Housing production has not met demand, meaning DeKalb County has years of "catch-up" production to meet both current needs and future growth.*** From 2011 to 2020, residential population growth exceeded new housing construction. Planning for higher permitting volumes, greater density, and more diverse housing types will be essential for DeKalb County's growing population.
- ***DeKalb County has an aging housing stock, exacerbating affordability challenges for residents.*** Almost half (44%) of homes were built before 1979, placing residents at an increased risk for lead hazards and indicating a widespread need for weatherization and climate-resilience upgrades. Older housing is unevenly distributed and concentrated in areas with single-family homes. Investments are needed for home repair programs and energy-efficiency improvements, particularly as the county's population ages and more householders look to age in place.
- ***DeKalb County needs more missing middle housing types to support renters and families*** like smaller multifamily developments, duplex/triplex/quadplexes, cottage homes, and entry-level homeownership options. Over half (56%) of the county's housing stock are single-family detached homes, reflecting the historical permitting and construction trends identified within the 2050 Unified Plan.[4]

[4] Historical and current permitting and construction trends will be explored in the Residential Market Analysis.

- ***Demand for age-restricted housing and care settings[5] will increase as the population ages, yet the existing supply is insufficient to meet projected demand.*** Jurisdictions with large senior populations lack an adequate supply of age-restricted housing and care settings to support older residents, specifically in Avondale Estates and Belvedere Park. As the county's population is projected to age in the coming years, these gaps will need to be addressed to avoid an increase in seniors experiencing housing instability.
- ***Rental housing options are declining, and housing problems disproportionately impact renters.*** Between 2019 and 2024, the total number of renter-occupied units in DeKalb County declined by 8% while the number of owner-occupied units increased by 9%. At the same time, renter households are more likely to experience overcrowding (5% versus 1% of owners) and structural housing problems (6% versus 1% of owners). Preservation strategies are needed to avoid further loss of rental housing units.
- ***Affordable rental housing is at a significant risk of loss in the coming years.*** DeKalb County has nearly 15,000 federally assisted units (13% of total rentals). Of these units, 1,350 units are at risk of losing affordability restrictions in the next five years and 5,600 units within 10 years. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) are at the highest risk of losing their affordability, especially those with nonrenewable subsidies, no recent capital subsidy, and for-profit ownership. DeKalb County will need robust preservation strategies and local partnerships to prevent displacement and further loss of the existing affordable housing stock.
- ***There are crucial gaps across DeKalb County's homeless response system.*** There are 1,654 temporary and supportive housing beds and 206 family units to support individuals and households experiencing or at risk of homelessness. However, DeKalb County lacks sufficient emergency shelter capacity to address immediate crises (only 138 beds) and does not have enough beds to support homeless youth or chronically homeless persons. Temporary and short-term housing options are an essential component of the housing continuum and will require a coordinated approach across the County's departments and partners.
- ***Housing vouchers are administered by all three public housing authorities (PHAs), but households face barriers using them in the private rental market.*** DeKalb County's PHAs have over 6,800 vouchers to support housing affordability and choice in the private rental market. However, success rates for lease-up are below the national average (52% for the Housing Authority of DeKalb County and 56% for the Decatur Housing Authority).[6] Voucher holders are clustered in South DeKalb County, many of which overlap with Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs).

Infrastructure gaps limit development potential and infill opportunities in South DeKalb County and near activity centers. Southeast DeKalb County lacks broadband coverage, water and sewer capacity, and access to public transit, limiting the potential for redevelopment in these areas.[7] Areas near activity centers

[5] Age-restricted housing and care settings include nursing homes, senior living facilities, independent living facilities, assisted living facilities, and retirement communities, which are restricted for individuals over 55 years or individuals with disabilities.

[6] Nationally, the average success rate for public housing authorities is 57%. Success rates vary due to housing authority policies and market factors like landlord acceptable of vouchers as a source of income, units' ability to pass physical inspection standards, payment standards, and the amount of time households have to search for a unit once the voucher is issued.

[7] These areas have larger Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations, lower household incomes, and limited access to grocery stores, parks, and schools.

also lack robust water capacity and some areas are unserved by broadband, which could hinder the county's vision for development and growth near activity centers. Place-based infrastructure investment should prioritize these areas for future investments to ensure equitable development.

Appendix D: Residential Market Analysis

Purpose and Scope

The residential housing market analysis explores housing affordability, availability, and construction pipeline trends in DeKalb County to understand how DeKalb County residents experience housing opportunities and supply constraints. The analysis was guided by and answers the following research questions:

- How do housing costs compare to incomes in the county and jurisdictions? What might this suggest about the types of housing that are affordable to different households?
- How have rents, for-sale prices, and home values changed over time in the county?
- How do today's housing shortages show up in the market?

Data analyzed to conclude findings on the residential market in DeKalb County was pulled from a variety of sources including:

- The CoStar Group
- The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS)
- Zillow Rent Index and Home Value Index[8]
- The DeKalb County Property Appraisal Department
- U.S. Census Permit Survey

The residential market analysis is subject to the following data limitations:

- Permit data from the Census Permit Survey is only available at the metropolitan statistical area level, meaning permitting data and trends are only provided for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell metro area, not DeKalb County. Findings from analysis of permitting data should be interpreted as indicative of regional trends rather than conditions unique to the county or jurisdictions within the county.
- As Census data reflect conditions from 2015-2019 and 2020-2024, they may not fully capture more recent shifts in the local and regional housing market. The Census Bureau's ACS is subject to publication lags, meaning the most current ACS data available at the time of this report is 1-2 years behind present-day conditions.

Primary Findings

- **DeKalb County is facing a severe and broadening affordability crisis.** Median home values have increased by 115% since 2015, severely outpacing income growth and limiting entry-level homeownership opportunities. The median rent increased by 86% between 2015 and 2025, and is projected to continue rising, placing greater financial stress on renters and exacerbating displacement risks.
- **High and worsening housing cost burden indicates growing housing instability, especially for renters.** In 2024, 36% of households were considered either cost burdened (spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs) or severely cost burdened (spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs). The rate of cost burden is much higher for renters at 56% compared to 23% for homeowners.

[8] Zillow was chosen as the primary data source to analyze the for-sale market because it sources data from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) database and private owners that do not list on MLS.

- **Vacancy rates indicate a soft housing market overall but households in DeKalb County face a tight ownership market.** Overall vacancy rates increased by four percentage points since 2019, reaching 13% in 2024. The for-sale vacancy rate remains extremely low (0.8%) compared to rental vacancy rates (4.5%). Vacancy rates are highest for units with four or more bedrooms, which could indicate a unit size mismatch in the market.
- **Supply gaps in DeKalb County persist across the income spectrum and tenure, forcing many households to occupy units that are not affordable to them.** The rental market shows a cumulative gap of 33,121 units for renters earning below 50% Area Median Income (AMI), including a gap of nearly 22,800 rental units for renters earning below 30% AMI. The for-sale market undersupplies homes affordable to households below 80% AMI as well: 61% of households fall within this income range, but only 9% of 2024 home sales were priced affordability (units selling for less than $213,967).
- **New supply is not aligned with missing middle housing needs**. Permit authorizations in the Atlanta MSA are concentrated in structures with one-unit and five-units while structures with 2-4 units comprise a small share of overall permit authorizations. This suggests that the market is not replacing missing middle housing types/units at scale.
- **Construction is adding units faster than demolition**. A total of 1,606 housing units were under construction (as of January 2026) and can be expected to come online in the coming years. Over the past 12 months, 2,908 units were delivered (versus 60 units that were demolished) with 23% occupancy at delivery. Lower occupancy indicates a need to pair production with deeper affordability and/or preservation strategies to address affordability gaps.
- **Construction costs have spiked in recent years due in part to government policy and processes and the new tariffs introduced in 2025** that add pressure on construction materials like steel, aluminum, and lumber. Just between December 2025 and March 2026, the national Produce Price Index increased by 4.2%. Rising costs, in both cases, can render a development project infeasible.
- **Operating costs are increasing and present significant challenges for affordable housing developers and providers.** Operating expenses for LIHTC properties increased by 34% between 2021 and 2024. The biggest driver of this increase is property insurance: the median per-unit insurance cost for LIHTC properties reached $697 in 2023, a 143.7% increase from 2016.
- **The combination of higher construction costs and higher operating costs is squeezing the financial feasibility of housing development in DeKalb County**. This is particularly challenging for affordable developers and affordable housing providers.

[i] Colorado Housing and Finance Authority. "White Paper: The Housing Continuum," April 2024. https://chfainfo.com/getattachment/a7f4be85-7a8e-4783-b5f4-d4d48763761a/WP-HousingContinuum.pdf.

[ii] Montana Healthcare Foundation. "The Housing Continuum," May 2, 2023. https://mthf.org/wp-content/uploads/Housing-Continuum-Design_5.2.23-FINAL-SPREAD.pdf.

October 27, 2026

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA TO ADOPT THE COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PLAN AND TO AMEND THE DEKALB COUNTY 2050 UNIFIED PLAN, CHAPTER 1, ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, & GOALS, TO INCLUDE THE PLAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Housing Plan is a broader extension of the 2018 DeKalb County Housing Affordability Study and supports the 2050 Unified Plan's Goals and Community Work Program through implementation by the Office of Housing; and

WHEREAS, in October 2025, DeKalb County awarded Enterprise Community Partners Inc., $249,994.00 to complete a Comprehensive Housing Plan derived from a Comprehensive Analytical Assessment and pursued through a local engagement process; and

WHEREAS, the plan aims to address goals related to housing variety and choice, workforce housing, senior and independent living, mixed use developments, multi-family housing, housing strategy, fair housing, and code compliance; and

WHEREAS, between February 2026 and October 2026**,** the plan has engaged an array of stakeholders through the community participation process, including, but not limited to, elected officials, developers, resident focus groups, municipal partners, and interagency dialogue**;** and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability department and the Office of Housing recognize that the Comprehensive Housing Plan aligns with the 2050 Unified Plan; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Community Development Department, as an implementation partner, provided guidance and expertise in incorporating the goals, strategies, and tactics of the Unhoused Support and Services Plan into the Comprehensive Housing Plan; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability department is authorized to outsource the Office of Housing to implement the Comprehensive Housing Plan with the Community Development Department as an implementation partner; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Housing Plan is an amendment to Chapter 1: Issues, Opportunities, and Goals of the 2050 Unified Plan, providing recommendations for implementation of housing strategies by the Office of Housing; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Housing Plan includes the following elements: Housing Assessment (Demographic Data, Cost Analysis, Existing Housing Stock Analysis, Home Sales, Trends, & Employment), Community Participation Program, Recommendations, 5-Year Action Plan, Implementation Framework (Gap Analysis, Housing Supply and Options, Preservation and Production Strategies, Housing Development Costs and Opportunities for Reduction, Capital Resources for Accessibility and Affordability, Public Investment Opportunities, Streamline of County Entitlement and Permit Approval Processes); and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure plan implementation, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt the proposed Comprehensive Housing Plan as an amendment to the 2050 Unified Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners:

(1) hereby adopts the DeKalb County Comprehensive Housing Plan, and amends the 2050 Unified Plan, Chapter 1, Opportunities, Issues, and Goals, to include this Plan; and the recommended policies and implementation proposals contained in the Comprehensive Housing Plan provide specific guidelines to support the character areas of the Future Land Use Map of the 2050 Unified Plan and provide zoning recommendations for amendment to increase housing opportunities.

APPROVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this _____ day of

October 27, 2026

_____, 2026.

CHAKIRA JOHNSON
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2026.

LORRAINE COCHRAN-JOHNSON
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

_____

BARBARA SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

JULIANA NJOKU
Director of Planning and Sustainability

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

TERRY G. PHILLIPS
County Attorney

October 27, 2026