Decide DeKalb

Development Authority

Strategic Economic Development Plan 2025 Update

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Decide DeKalb Team would like to thank the following individuals and partners for their participation in the Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) update process:

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Partners

DeKalb County Community Improvement Districts
DeKalb County Municipalities
DeKalb County School District
DeKalb Entertainment Commission
Discover DeKalb
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia Economic Developers Association
Georgia Municipal Association
Georgia Piedmont Technical College (GPTC)
Georgia Power
Local Chamber Partners
MARTA
Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

As the economic development agent for DeKalb County, Decide DeKalb engaged a consulting team led by KB Advisory Group to update its Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP), refining the County's strategy for long-term growth and opportunity. This plan builds on the foundation of the 2019 SEDP and aligns with DeKalb County's evolving economic landscape to drive sustainable prosperity. An SEDP is similar to a countywide Comprehensive Plan, but is tailored to just the Economic Development team or arm. It helps ascertain what is currently influencing the County's economic ecosystem and what specific actions the County and Decide DeKalb can take to bolster or influence these trends to help align with long-term economic development aspirations.

With all the local and regional changes over the past five years, this updated document will allow the County, through Decide DeKalb, to reorient its economic development goals and strategy for the next five years to reflect the needs, priorities, and market realities post-2020. This update primarily looks at the interplay of three pillars of economic development:



- Attraction and retention of residents
- Education and training opportunities
- Entrepreneurship support
- Social connectivity

PEOPLE



- Housing diversity
- Parks and civic spaces
- Recreational amenities
- Multi-modal connectivity
- Adequate infrastructure capacity

BUILT ENVIRONMENT



- Attraction and retention of businesses
- Industry diversity
- Well-paying jobs
- Quality mix of shopping and dining

INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

A Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) also includes recommendations on how to leverage existing tools and services such as:



Site Selection



Property Tax Incentive



Brownfield Remediation



Tax Allocation Districts (TADs)



Small Business Financing



Workforce Development



Industry Advisory Councils

Additionally, a SEDP identifies current and potential new partnerships so there is a collective team effort to achieve desired goals.

Decide DeKalb Development Authority

DeKalb County School District

Georgia USA

Metro Atlanta Chamber

discover dekalb Convention & Visitors Bureau

Emory

Georgia EMC

DeKalb Workforce Source Georgia

DeKalb Chamber Access. Influence. Leadership.

Georgia Piedmont Technical College

Georgia Power

ECG

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The process and overarching questions for each component of the updated Strategic Economic Development Plan are highlighted below:

Quantitative Analysis

Using industry-trusted data sources such as Esri, U.S. Census, and CoStar to help answer the following questions:

- Where does DeKalb County stand today in terms of population and household growth? How does this compare to the rest of the region?
- What industries make up the County's economic base, and how does this compare to where current residents work?
- What are DeKalb County's educational and age trends that feed into its 'labor force readiness'?
- How is the County's existing commercial real estate inventory performing? Are there certain types that have maintained high demand?

Qualitative Analysis

Gathering input from residents, the business community, and partners to uncover:

- What are DeKalb County's current strengths? Its weaknesses?
- What are potential opportunities for continued economic growth? Are there any threats?
- What are ways that the County can help improve DeKalb's economic base and quality of life?
- What should the County's economic development team prioritize over the next five years?

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Target Industries

Combining insights from localized economic trends and community sentiment to focus the lens on:

- Do the existing target industries still align with DeKalb County's current economic ecosystem and County leadership priorities?
- What industry clusters within the Atlanta region are clustering in DeKalb County? How has employment within these clusters changed over time?
- Given input from the data and the community, what industries could the County feasibly retain and recruit over the next five years?

Implementation

Building an **economic development** road map over the next five years centered on goals and strategies:

- What are "next-step" strategies to build on successful completions from the previous Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP)?
- What are new economic development goals and objectives that DeKalb County wants to accomplish over the next five years? Who would be potential partners that the County could work with to achieve them?

KEY FINDINGS

WHERE IS DEKALB COUNTY TODAY?

Since 2010, DeKalb County has grown to approximately 780,000 residents, 310,000 households, and over 23,000 businesses.

Of these residents, the largest share are 25-44, a prime age cohort for business recruitment and retention. Almost a third of DeKalb residents fall within this cohort, compared to just under 30% regionally. While the County has grown 12% since 2010, the largest growth over the past five years has been in the share of the population over 65. This reflects regional, state, and national trends of a naturally aging population and smaller subsequent age cohorts.

The County's 23,000 businesses employ over 300,000 workers. Similar to trends regionally, over 60% of establishments within DeKalb County are extremely small businesses with less than five employees – emphasizing the importance of "homegrown" economic development approaches. Furthermore, the largest industry within DeKalb County is Health Care – representing almost 15% of the region's total employment within this industry. This is also the top industry for working residents within the County. However, there are more jobs within this industry, as well as with Education, than there are current working residents employed – meaning these firms within DeKalb have to seek workers from outside the County to fit their workforce needs. Additionally, less than 30% of residents both live and work in DeKalb County, a decline since 2010.

1. **Plan communities for residents of all income-levels**
2. **Develop a sense of place throughout the County that is attractive to younger age cohorts and large employers**
3. **Continue to work with major partners such as Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Emory, and other universities/ colleges for job retention and workforce development**
4. **Focus equally on business retention and business attraction in order to bring high-paying employment opportunities throughout DeKalb County**



780,000
residents



310,000
households



23,000+
businesses



310,000+
jobs



$81,472
median household income

WHAT INPUT DID WE RECEIVE?

The planning process for this update included both in-person and virtual input opportunities. From our community open houses, 350+ survey responses, and 1:1 stakeholder conversations, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were highlighted:

STRENGTHS

- Decide DeKalb and DeKalb County staff
- Proximity to Atlanta
- Relative affordability
- Parks and greenspace
- Perimeter office core
- Healthcare workforce
- Local culture
- Educational and institutional assets
- MARTA

WEAKNESSES

- Permitting expediency
- Underinvested areas of the County
- Retail gaps
- Traffic congestion
- Public safety/crime
- Lack of large, undeveloped land
- Lack of access to grocery for some neighborhoods
- Dilapidated properties/absent landowners
- Memorial Drive redevelopment
- Historical communication and transparency from DeKalb leadership

OPPORTUNITIES

- Public transit/MARTA expansion
- Attracting major employers
- Redevelopment of vacant spaces
- Expanding the incentive toolkit
- More arts, culture, music festivals
- Investing in new public amenities
- Incentivizing foot traffic
- Career/job training
- Establishing more third spaces
- Better engagement and integration of young adults

THREATS

- Outdated infrastructure
- Displacement risks
- Assistance needed outside of existing TADs
- Retail leakage
- Incompatible planning requirements with market environment
- Deferred beautification and maintenance
- Federal employment instability

WHERE DOES DEKALB GO FROM HERE?

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research and feedback from stakeholders, updated targeted industries were determined. These industries serve as guides for economic development recruitment and retention efforts over the next five years and touch on four important aspects of a well-balanced economy.

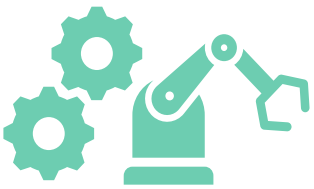
Health Care & Medical Support as well as Advanced Manufacturing represent a more focused concentration on prior target industries. Lifestyle & Creative Industries and Knowledge Industries & Business Services incorporate two other previous target industries (HQ & Business Operations and the Film, Arts & Entertainment Emerging Cluster) as part of a larger focus cluster. While Logistics and Distribution was not incorporated into the updated target industries, it is still an important industry within the County.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



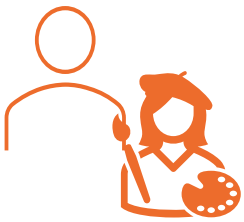
Health Care & Medical Support

PRODUCTION & INNOVATION



Advanced Manufacturing

COMMUNITY & AMENITIES



Lifestyle & Creative Industries

TECHNOLOGY & HUMAN CAPITAL

Knowledge Industries & Business Services

WHERE DOES DEKALB GO FROM HERE?

These updated data trends, public feedback, stakeholder conversations, and target industries culminate together to shape DeKalb County's economic development roadmap over the next five years. The previous SEDP outlines broad overarching goals with objectives to assist the County and Decide DeKalb with creating a base for its initial five-year strategy. This updated Action Plan builds on these successes to determine next steps as well as incorporates aspects of the prior plan that still need to be implemented.

The goals for this updated Strategic Economic Development Plan are as follows:

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE)

1. *Maximize programming, services, and partnerships to ensure Decide DeKalb can address the needs of businesses across all life stages*
2. *Maintain retention of existing employers tied to key sectors within DeKalb County*
3. *Expand workforce development programs and services to keep talent within DeKalb County and provide economic opportunity to residents*

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & ATTRACTION (BRA)

1. *Adjust BRA efforts to reflect new industry focus and expand opportunity to underserved areas of the County*
2. *Maximize marketing of resources for new business creation and attraction*
3. *Maintain incentives that are competitive with peer communities*

REDEVELOPMENT

1. *Leverage existing partnerships to assist redevelopment efforts*
2. *Maximize TAD programming potential*
3. *Expand redevelopment strategies and initiatives*

ORGANIZATION, CAPACITY, & BRANDING

1. *Evaluate internal capacity and resources to ensure proper staffing and funding to meet the aforementioned goals*
2. *Continue to serve as a convener with economic development partners*
3. *Continue to serve as DeKalb County's economic development arm*

COMMUNITY VISION

OVERVIEW

The public input process for this SEDP update was launched during Economic Development Week with two community open houses, one in northern and one in southern DeKalb County. Attendees were introduced to Decide DeKalb and the purpose of the SEDP update and then participated in activity boards focused on gathering high-level sentiments on economic development and DeKalb County.

Recurring themes identified from these in-person meetings were also supplemented by both a community and business survey that ran from April through July 2025 as well as 1:1 stakeholder conversations with the consultant team. The feedback gathered from these sessions and virtual feedback formed the basis of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

2 OPEN HOUSES



Northlake-Barbara Loar Library

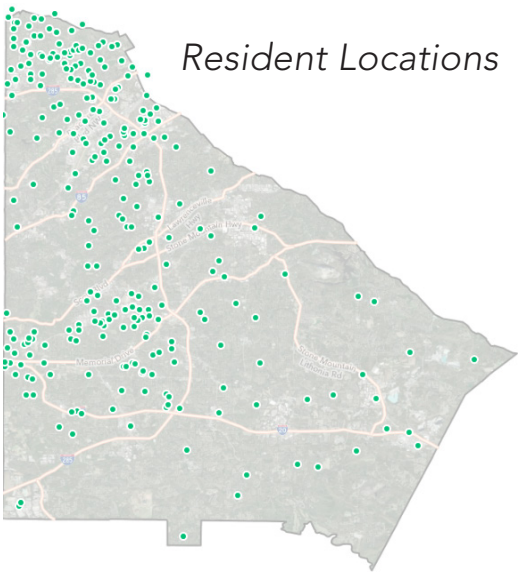
Tuesday
May 13th
6:00 - 7:30pm
3772 LaVista Road
Tucker, GA 30084

Scott Candler Library

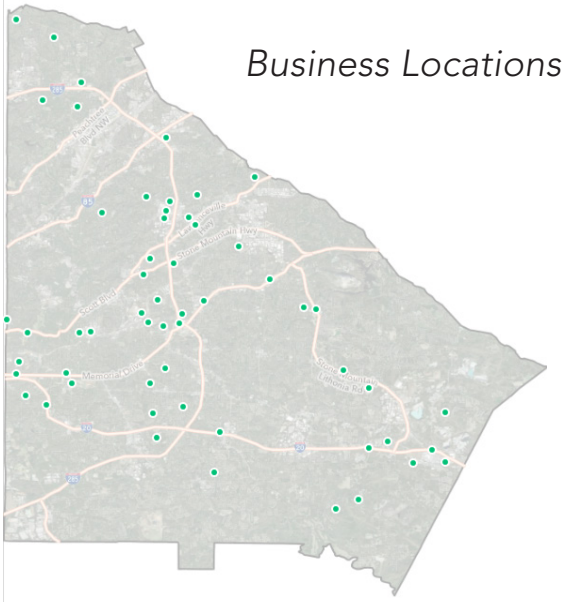
Wednesday
May 14th
6:00 - 7:30pm
1917 Candler Road
Decatur, GA 30032



350+ SURVEY RESPONSES



Resident Locations



Business Locations

20+ 1:1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

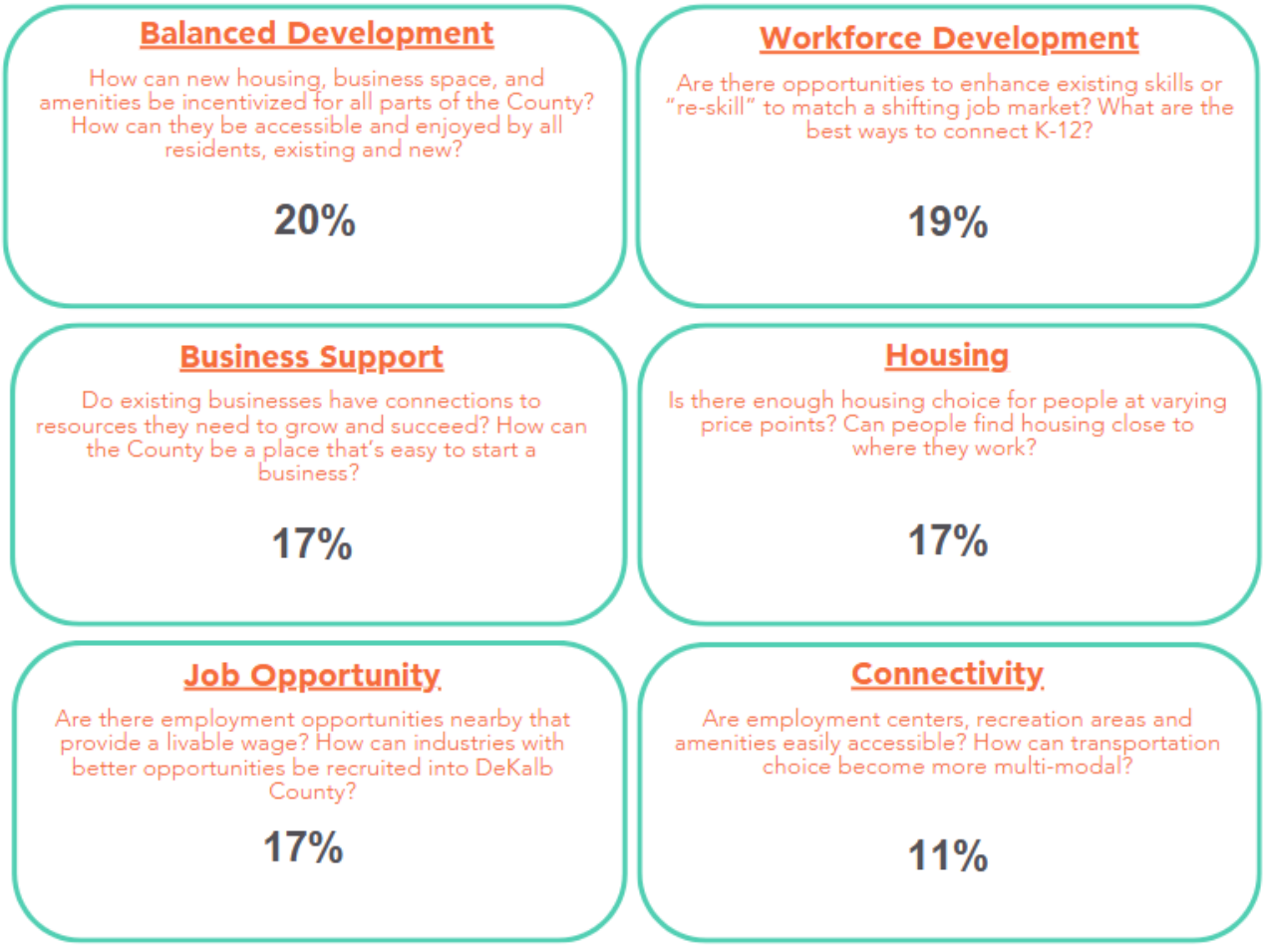
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

As part of Economic Development Week, Decide DeKalb and the consultant team conducted two separate Open Houses, one at Northlake-Barbara Loar Library and one at Scott Candler Library. On top of being introduced to Decide DeKalb and the SEDP process, community members were invited to interact with five different activity boards that asked them to provide their perspective on a variety of high-level topics. This input helped serve as a contextual base for the consultant team.

BOARD #1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLARS

Traditionally, economic development efforts focused on just job creation. While still a focus, there is better acknowledgment of all the various pillars of a strong community that rely on well-rounded economic development. Some of these were featured at this activity board. Each are important and are interrelated but, due to finite resources and staff capacity, it is not possible to address each pillar equally at the same time. With this in mind, community members were asked which three of the six pillars they felt DeKalb County should prioritize over the next five years.

The image below shows the six pillars and the central question example for each and the resulting share of overall votes. Balanced development and workforce development received the highest shares of overall votes, each receiving around 20% of total votes.



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

BOARD #2: QUALITY OF LIFE

Increasingly, businesses are using "quality of life" indicators, or attributes that make people want to live somewhere and foster better well-being, for their location decisions. By locating where people want to live, businesses are in closer proximity to more customers and/or their desired talent pool. However, what constitutes a good "quality of life" may vary from person to person. For this activity, community members were invited to write down in two or three words what they believe would indicate a high quality of life. Recurring indicators included:



Greenspace, Nature, and Recreational Opportunities



Public Safety



Housing Choice and Affordability



Commercial Diversity



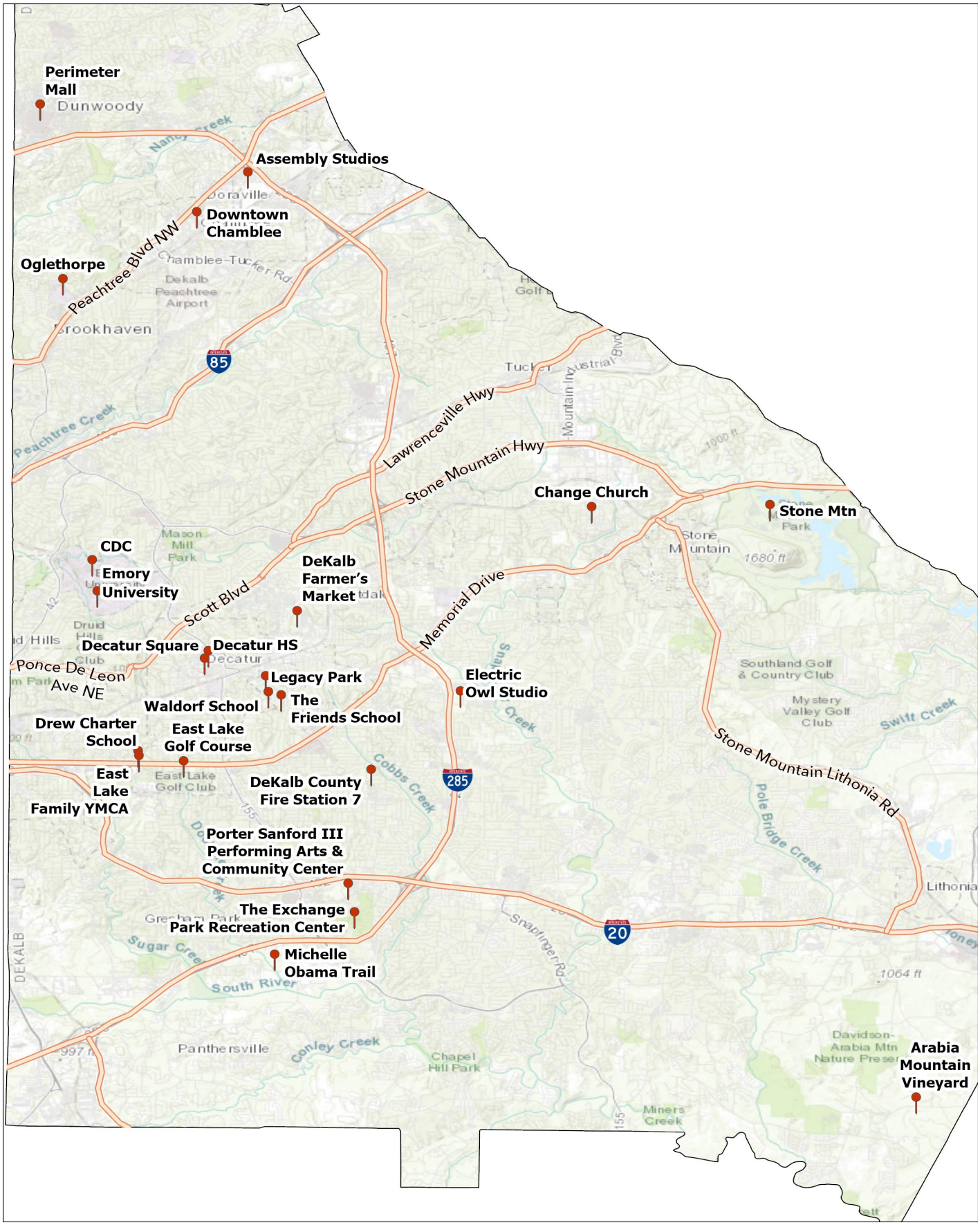
Proximity to Employment and Desired Retail/Amenities

BOARD #3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSETS

When it comes to economic development, every community starts with something. While some face more hurdles than others, every community has places, businesses, or institutions that serve as building blocks for economic growth and prosperity. For this activity, community members identified specific places they believe serve as an economic development asset for DeKalb County.

The results are included on the map on the next page. The places that were identified were largely clustered within I-285 on either side of Memorial Drive. Areas instead of specific locations that were referenced included Avondale Estates, Decatur, retail nodes along Wesley Chapel Road, Panthersville area industrial nodes, I-20/I-285 logistics hubs, and the College Avenue corridor.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

BOARD #4: TARGET INDUSTRIES

This update includes looking at "target industries" or specific industries that will be the focus of Decide DeKalb business retention and recruitment efforts. Similar to the pillar board, this asked community members to prioritize. The major industries, as formally classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), were grouped into four overarching categories based on similar characteristics. Each category included an example of high-level characteristics to be weighed against each other. Similar to the pillar activity, community members were asked to choose which two they would prefer DeKalb County focus on over the next five years.

The image below shows the four categories and the resulting share of overall votes. The industry group that caters to local amenities and personal services, such as restaurants and entertainment, received the highest share of overall votes.



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

BOARD #5: WHY DEKALB

Whether it's a person or business looking to move somewhere in the region, there are formally 29 counties in the Atlanta region for them to choose from. Community members were invited to write down what they thought makes DeKalb County unique. A word cloud from the resulting attributes is included below. Characteristics of the County that were mentioned the most often included its diversity, opportunities, culture, and natural assets like its parks and trails.



RECURRING THEMES

After the Open Houses, both a community and business survey were advertised to gather more detailed input. The surveys ran from April through July and collectively received over 350 responses. Summaries of both surveys can be found in the Appendix. In combination with other input the consultant team received from 1:1 interviews with local, regional, and state partners, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were highlighted:

STRENGTHS

- Decide DeKalb and DeKalb County staff
- Proximity to Atlanta
- Relative affordability
- Parks and greenspace
- Perimeter office core
- Healthcare workforce
- Local culture
- Educational and institutional assets
- MARTA

WEAKNESSES

- Permitting expediency
- Underinvested areas of the County
- Retail gaps
- Traffic congestion
- Public safety/crime
- Lack of large, undeveloped land
- Lack of access to grocery for some neighborhoods
- Dilapidated properties/absent landowners
- Memorial Drive redevelopment
- Historical communication and transparency from DeKalb leadership

OPPORTUNITIES

- Public transit/MARTA expansion
- Attracting major employers
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- Expanding the incentive toolkit
- More arts, culture, music festivals
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THREATS

- Outdated infrastructure
- Displacement risks
- Assistance needed outside of existing TADs
- Retail leakage
- Incompatible planning requirements with market environment
- Deferred beautification and maintenance
- Federal employment instability

DEKALB COUNTY PROFILE

OVERVIEW

Having a current profile of DeKalb County helps establish a baseline to help determine the aspects of its people, industry, and built environment that will influence its growth over the next five years in terms of the types of businesses, amenities, or jobs that are in DeKalb County. This encompasses both historical and current trends on the County's population and households, businesses and industries, and real estate.

Population & Households

Future economic growth is partially dependent on the ability of DeKalb County to add new residents and households. Doing so creates a larger tax base that can help fund new projects and improvements for the County. This can also create a larger client base for the existing businesses and support the creation of new ones.

Demographic Composition

Understanding demographic composition can provide insights into the different needs and preferences for spending and amenities. For example, a multi-cultural community will more likely increase the demand for restaurant options with varied cuisine, and a community with an older population is more likely to put higher emphasis on strong healthcare options.

Educational Attainment

While not all well-paying jobs require a post-secondary degree, the share of the population that has pursued post-secondary education is an indicator of a local workforce that is often targeted by employers in knowledge industries such as Information, Professional Services, Finance, and Health Care.

Household Income

Household income is a key metric of both the local workforce and new business opportunities. From a workforce perspective, it can serve as the first indicator of whether residents are working in high-paying jobs. From a business perspective, this metric is often used in location decisions (i.e., would there be enough local spending to support that business?).

Labor Force and Job Mix

Comparing the industries residents work in versus the jobs that exist within the community can uncover any mismatches between the local workforce and existing jobs. For example, if a large portion of the jobs within the community are in one industry, but a small share of the local labor force is employed in that same industry, then that industry may be one to target for workforce initiatives.

Commuting Patterns

Building on any labor force and job mix mismatches, observing commuting patterns can help determine where resident workers are employed if they leave DeKalb County for work. It can also show in which local industries workers are being "imported". If a community has many in-commuters, this may be due to the land use mix between residential and commercial or a particular industry may be serving as a regional hub.

Real Estate

Observing the County's real estate trends provides key insights about the built environment that influence which industries and businesses can find a home within DeKalb. It also serves as an indicator how and where DeKalb County can accommodate its current and projected growth.

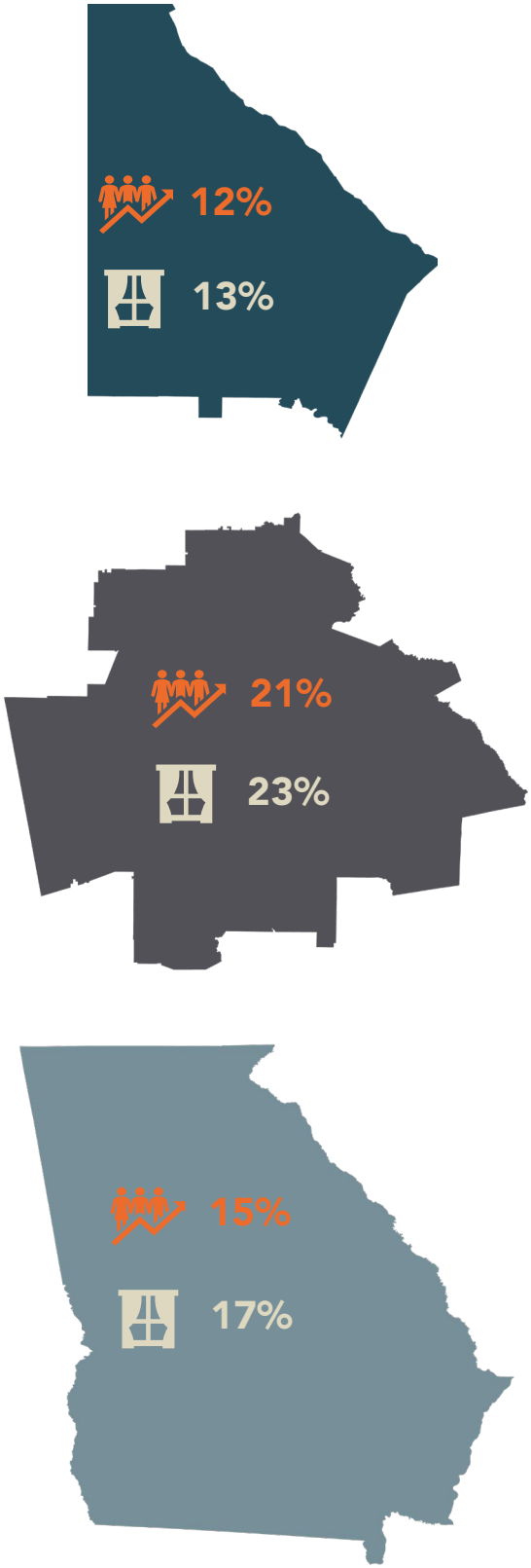
PEOPLE

DeKalb County is currently home to an estimated 780,000 residents, or 12% of the Atlanta region's population. Since 2010, the County has grown by almost 85,000 residents (12%). While similar to the rate of population growth statewide, this rate of growth is almost half the rate regionwide. Looking at more recent growth trends, DeKalb County has grown at a lower rate (2%) compared to both the region (5%) and the state overall (4%).

DeKalb County is also home to approximately 308,000 households. Unlike the relative population trends, the rate of household growth within the County is below the growth rates both regionally and statewide. While growth has differed, the average household size across all three geographies is relatively similar and has not experienced significant change since 2010 (~2.6 people per household).

There are several factors that can influence these lower growth trends including: relative housing affordability, overall cost of living, infrastructure capacity, employment opportunities, transportation accessibility, and proximity to desired amenities. While Decide DeKalb does not have direct influence on all of these, the team can monitor them and assist where possible to improve these factors within the County.

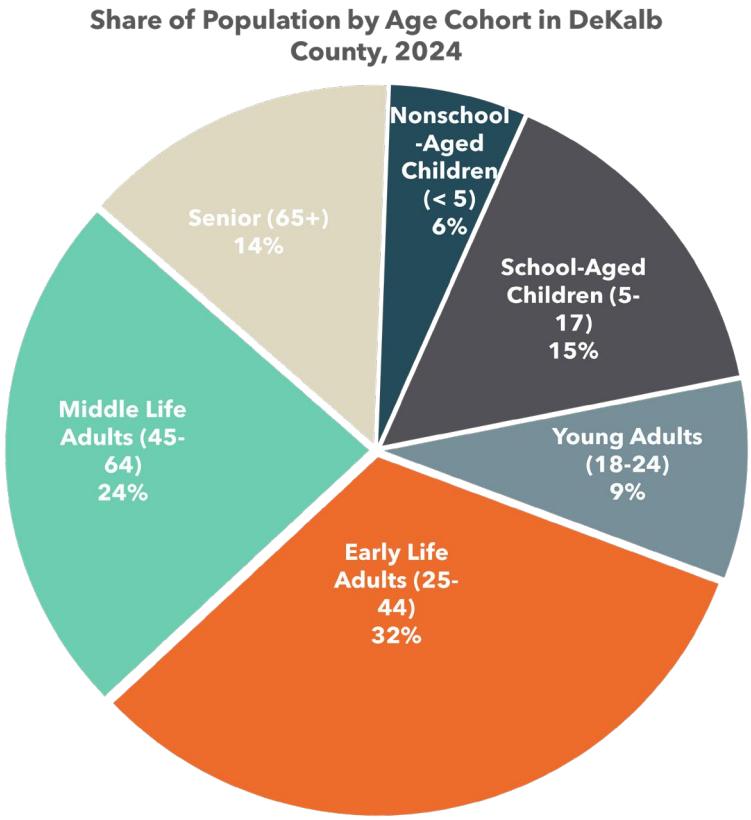
Population and Household Growth Rates, 2010-2024



Population	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia
2010	691,835	5,298,345	9,687,659
2020	764,382	6,104,803	10,711,908
2024	776,301	6,399,274	11,128,319

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri

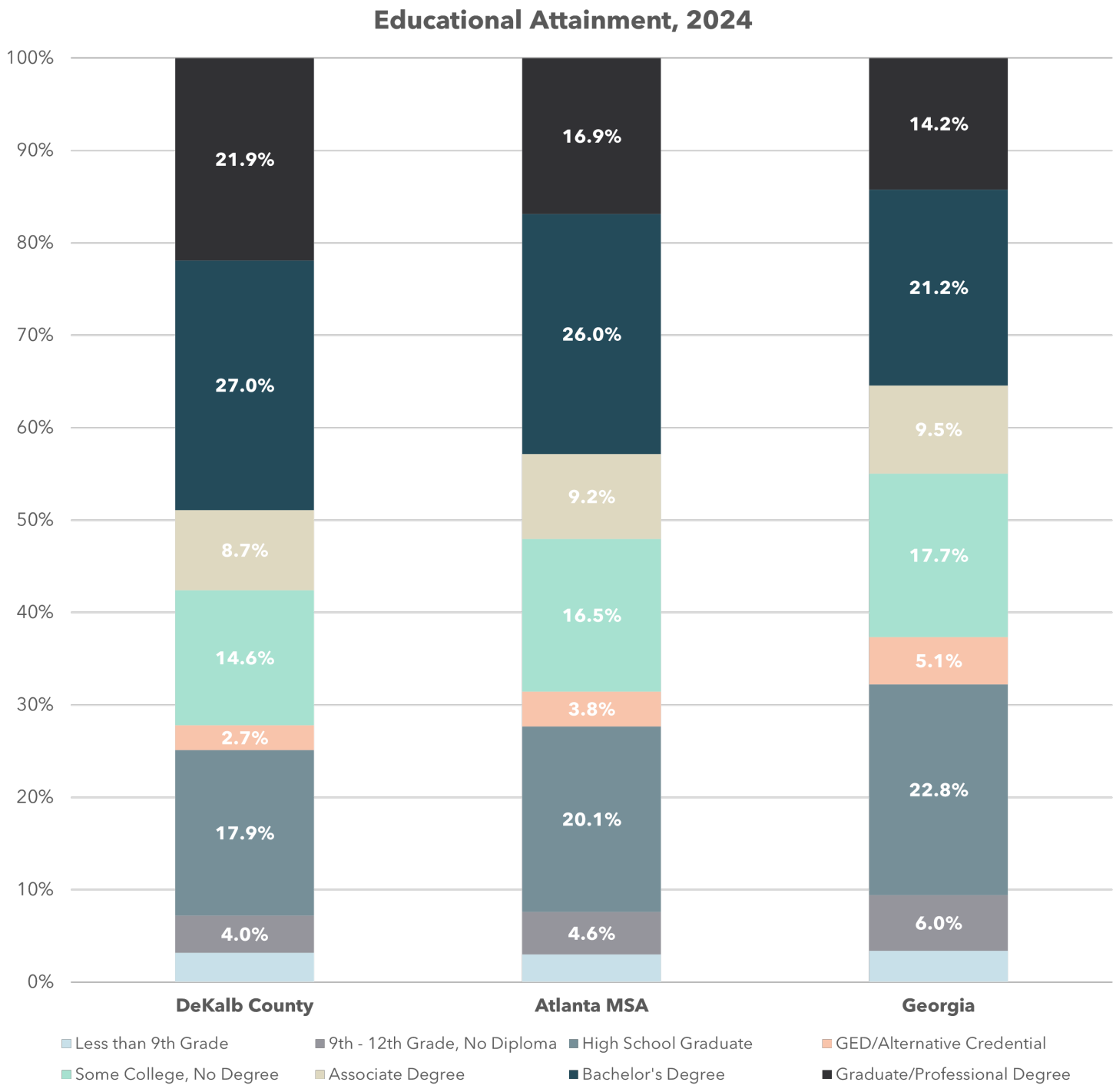
Almost a third of residents within DeKalb County are considered Early Life Adults, or between the ages of 25 and 44. Those within this age cohort are more likely to be finishing up post-secondary or certification programs, start careers, become first-time home-buyers, and become households with young children. While DeKalb County has a slightly higher concentration than the region (28%) and state overall (27%), recent growth in this population segment is lower than the region and state. Similar to both, population growth is largest in those above 65 years of age. Whereas the region and state have experienced recent growth in children under 5 years of age, this age cohort has declined within DeKalb County.



2020-2024 Population Change	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA	Georgia
Nonschool-Aged Children (< 5)	-1.7%	3.0%	3.9%
School-Aged Children (5-17)	-2.3%	-3.4%	-3.8%
Young Adults (18-24)	0.4%	8.1%	7.1%
Early Life Adults (25-44)	2.5%	6.7%	5.8%
Middle Life Adults (45-64)	-0.5%	2.4%	1.4%
Senior (65+)	10.2%	14.4%	11.6%

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri

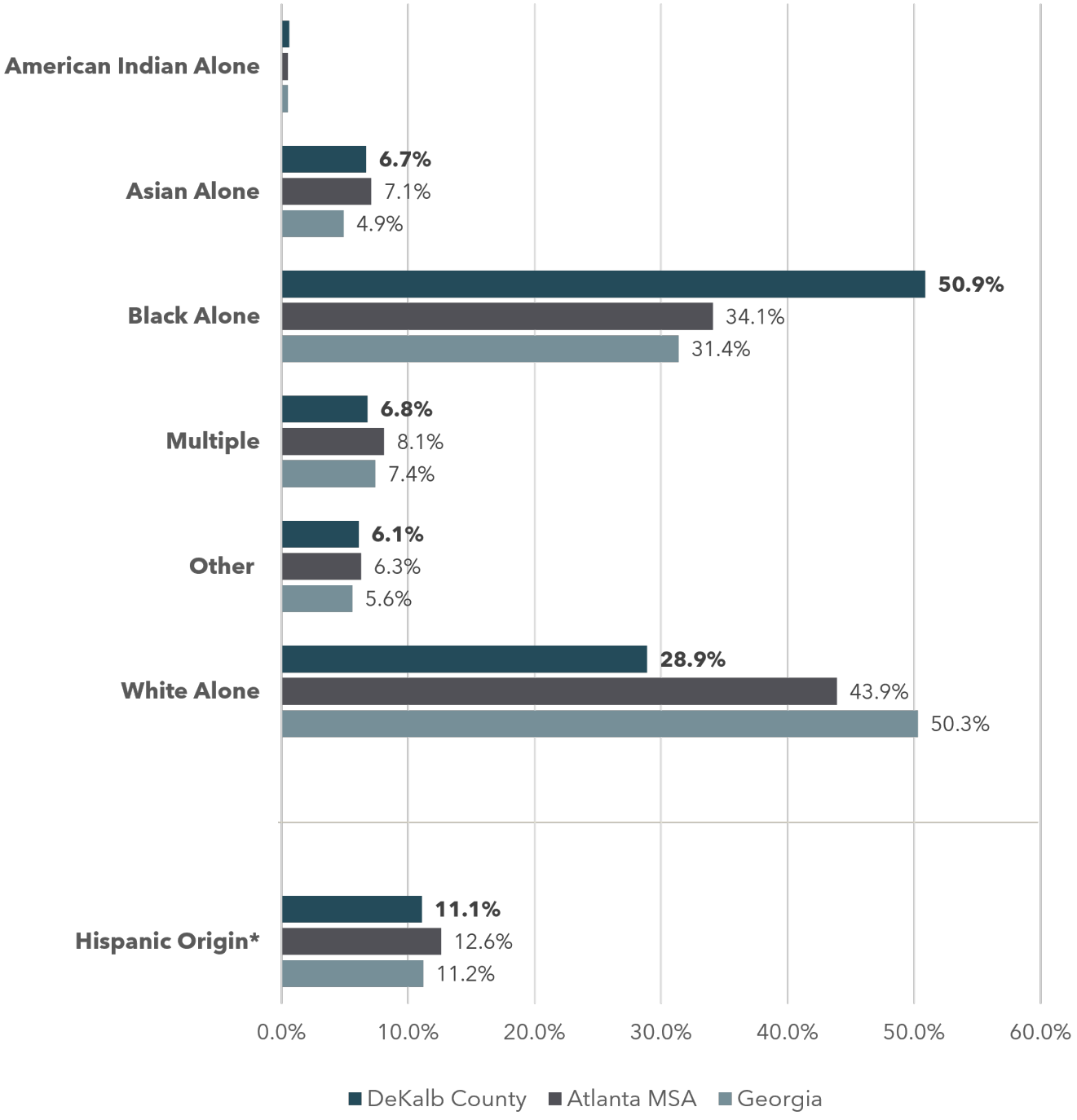
DeKalb County leads the region and state in the share of residents 25+ with at least a Bachelor's Degree at almost 50% compared to 43% and 35% respectively. This is likely largely influenced by the concentration of universities within DeKalb County, including Emory University, Mercer University satellite campus, Oglethorpe University, and Agnes Scott. However, approximately one in five residents 25+ have at most a High School diploma or an equivalent, highlighting the potential need for workforce development initiatives to address skills and certification requirements.



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri

In terms of racial and ethnic diversity, as categorized by the U.S. Census, DeKalb County is similar to the state overall and less diverse than the region. The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity by measuring the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity). This index, however, is just one way to measure diversity and does not encompass other definitions of diversity such as cultural and linguistic diversity.

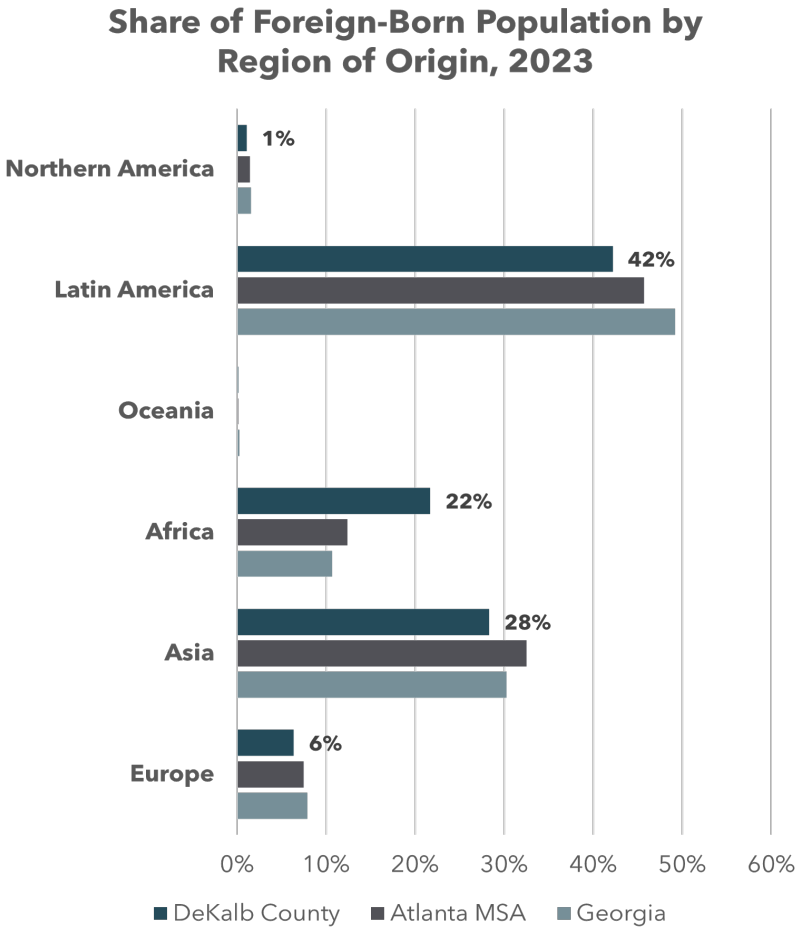
Diversity Index: 71.5 Atlanta MSA: 74.8 Georgia: 71.0

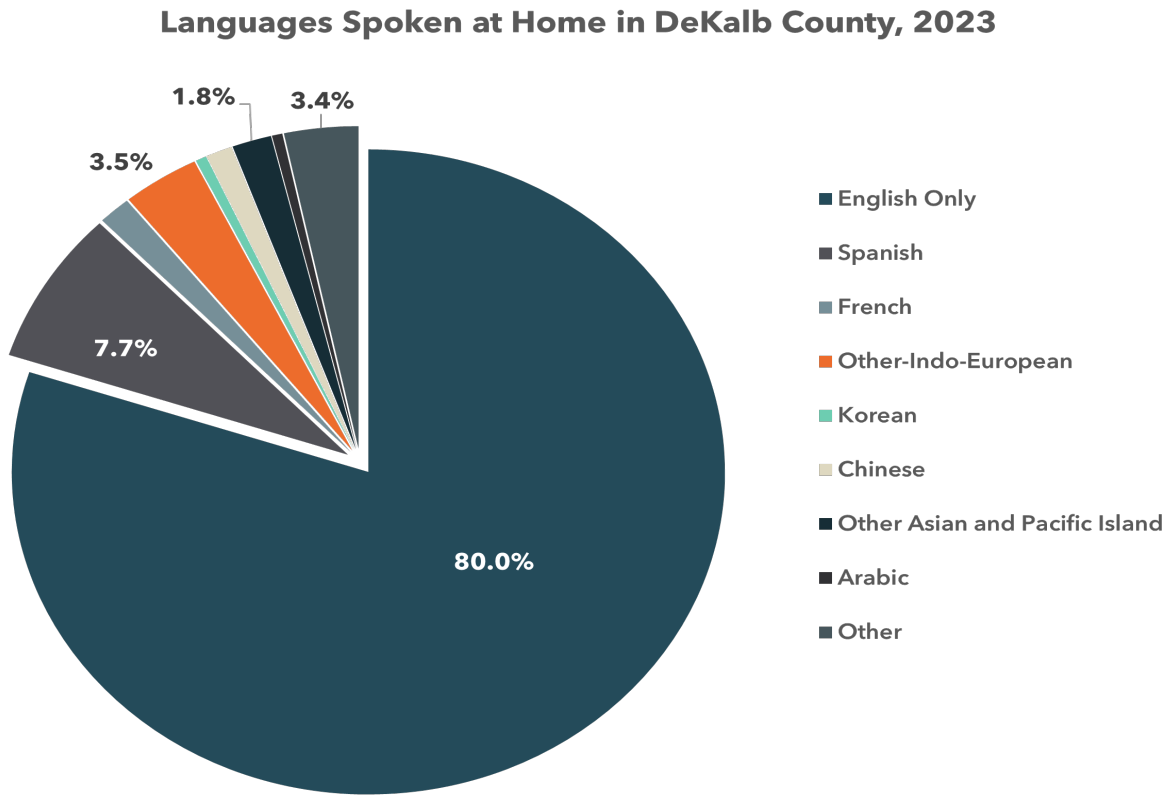


*Can be of any race

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri

As of 2023, an estimated 11% of residents within Georgia were immigrants. Of those approximately 1.2 million residents, 916,000 (78%) live within the Atlanta MSA and 130,000 (11%) live within DeKalb County. In terms of relative share of total population that is foreign-born, DeKalb County leads the region and the state at 17%. Similar to the region and state, the largest share of foreign-born residents are from Latin America. However, a relatively higher share are from Africa. While not a direct measure of full spoken and written fluency, almost 80% of total households within DeKalb County speak only English at home.



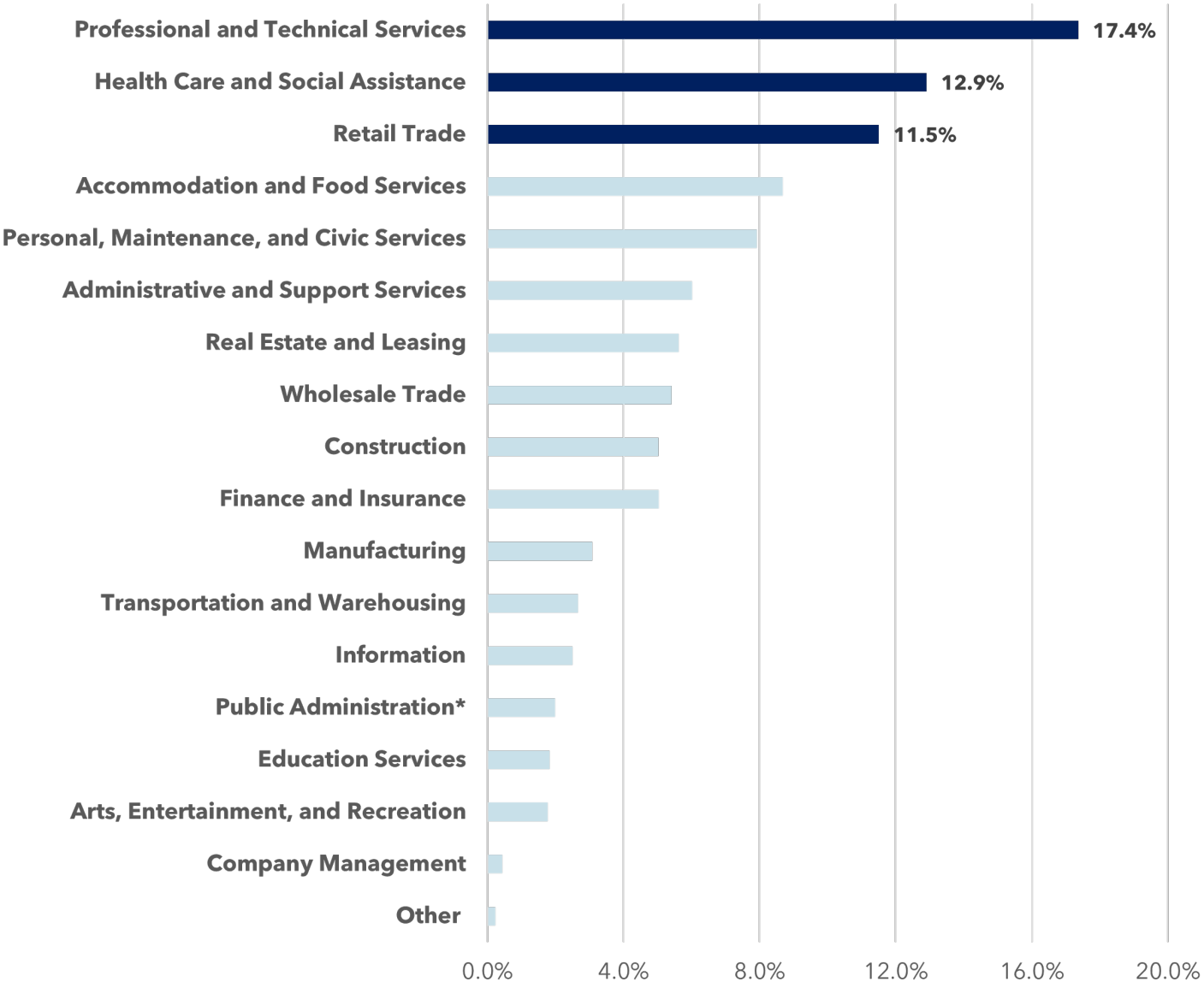


Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates

INDUSTRY

As of 2023, DeKalb County hosted over an estimated 23,000 businesses, approximately 11% of the region's business base. Excluding unclassified businesses, or those that have not formally filed an associated industry, the largest share of businesses are within Professional and Technical Services (17%). This industry includes businesses who perform specialized engineering, accounting, legal, or other technical services. Additionally, as of 2022, over 60% of establishments within DeKalb County were extremely small businesses with less than five employees. This is similar across the region. Often used as a proxy for measuring entrepreneurship, this trend emphasizes the importance of offering "homegrown" economic development initiatives that meet the needs of these entrepreneurs.

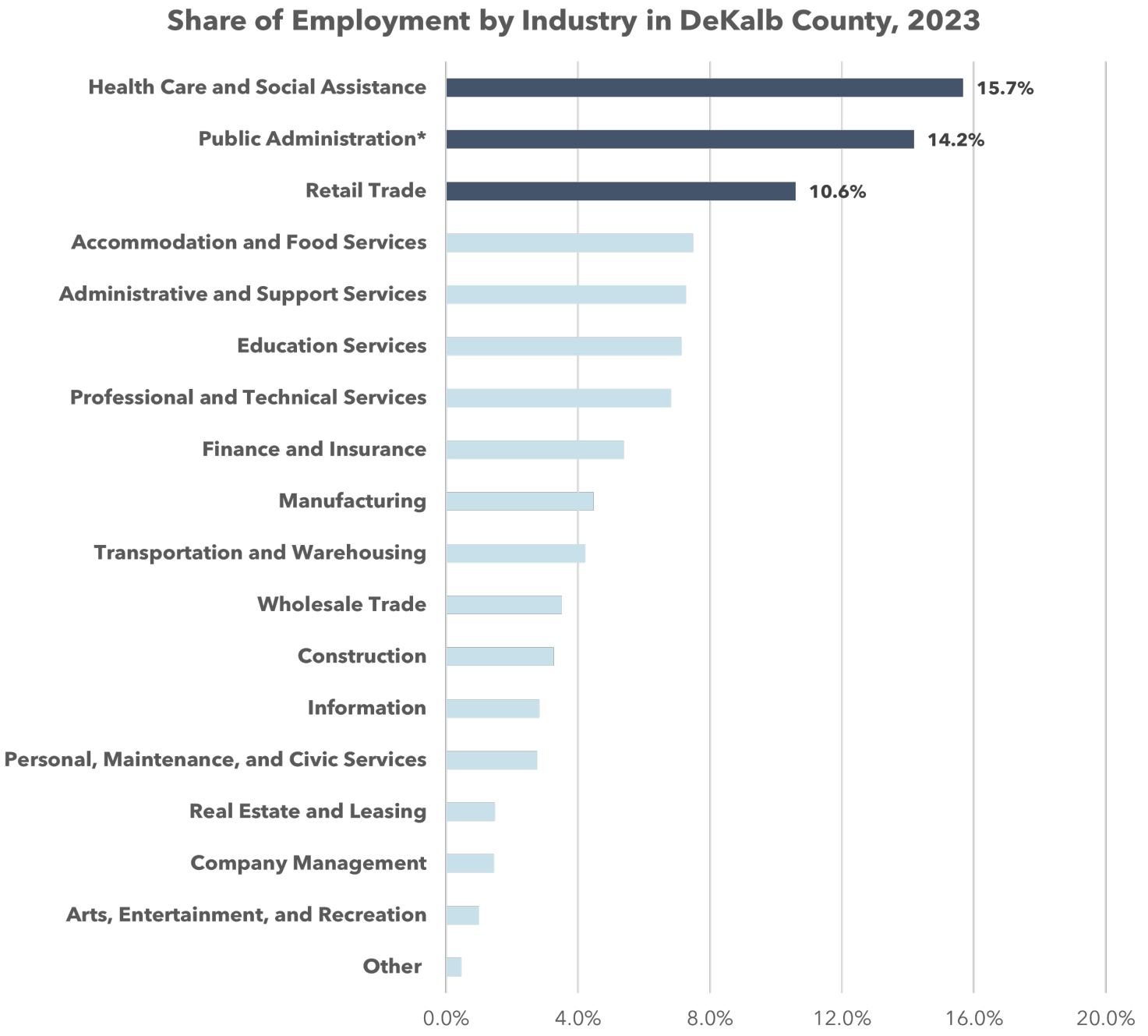
Share of Establishments in DeKalb County by Industry, 2023



*Inclusive of Federal, State, and Local Government

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census County Business Patterns

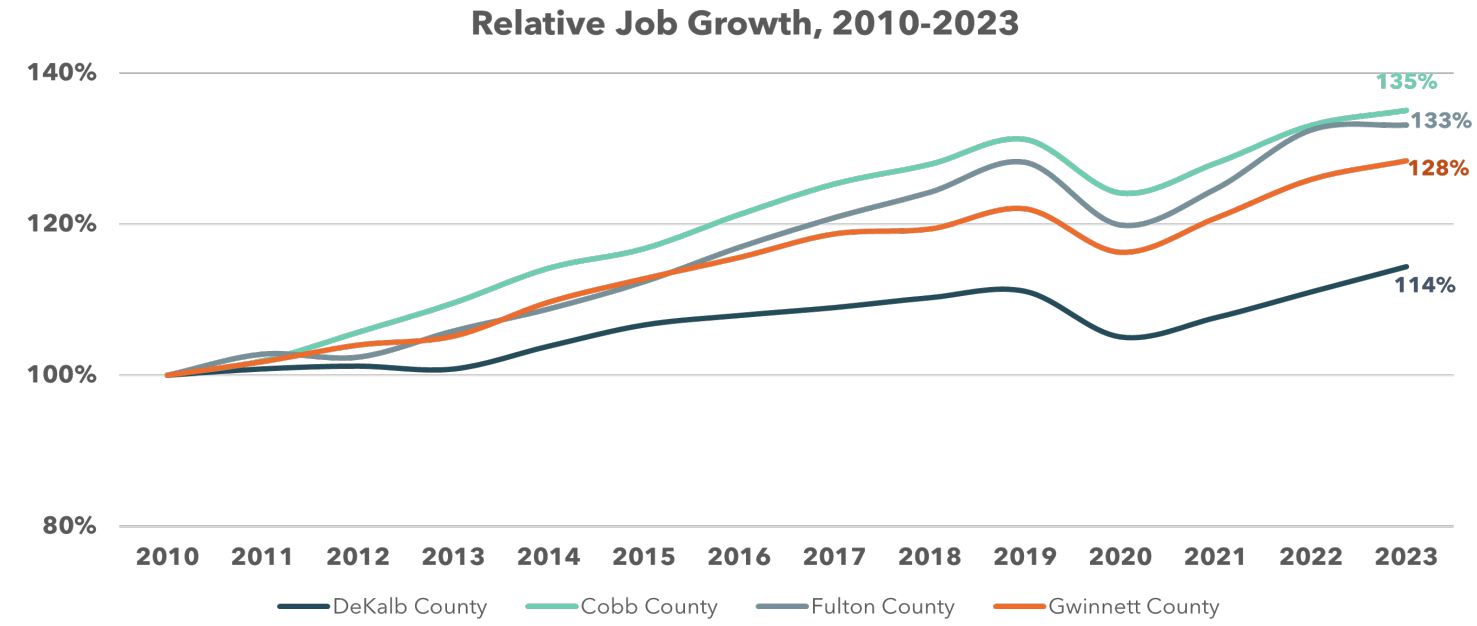
Overall, these businesses support over 300,000 jobs across DeKalb County. The largest industry within DeKalb County is Health Care, employing almost 50,000 people – representing almost 15% of the region's total employment within this industry. Public Administration is the second-largest industry with almost 45,000 employees within the County. Since 2010, both the Education and Health Care industries have far outpaced the other industries in terms of new jobs - adding over 15,000 jobs each (growing by 124% and 43% respectively). Although it is currently the second-largest industry within the County, jobs within Public Administration experienced the largest decline over this same period - losing approximately 4,400 jobs.

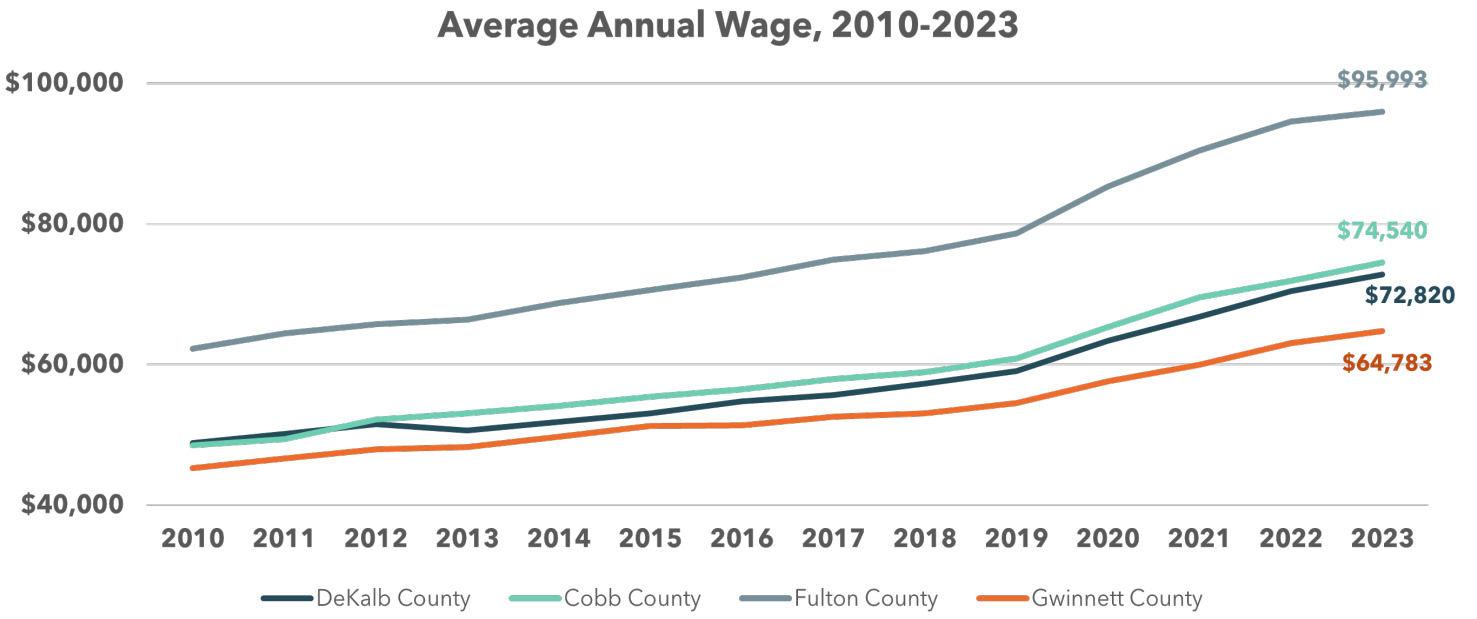


*Inclusive of Federal, State, and Local Government

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

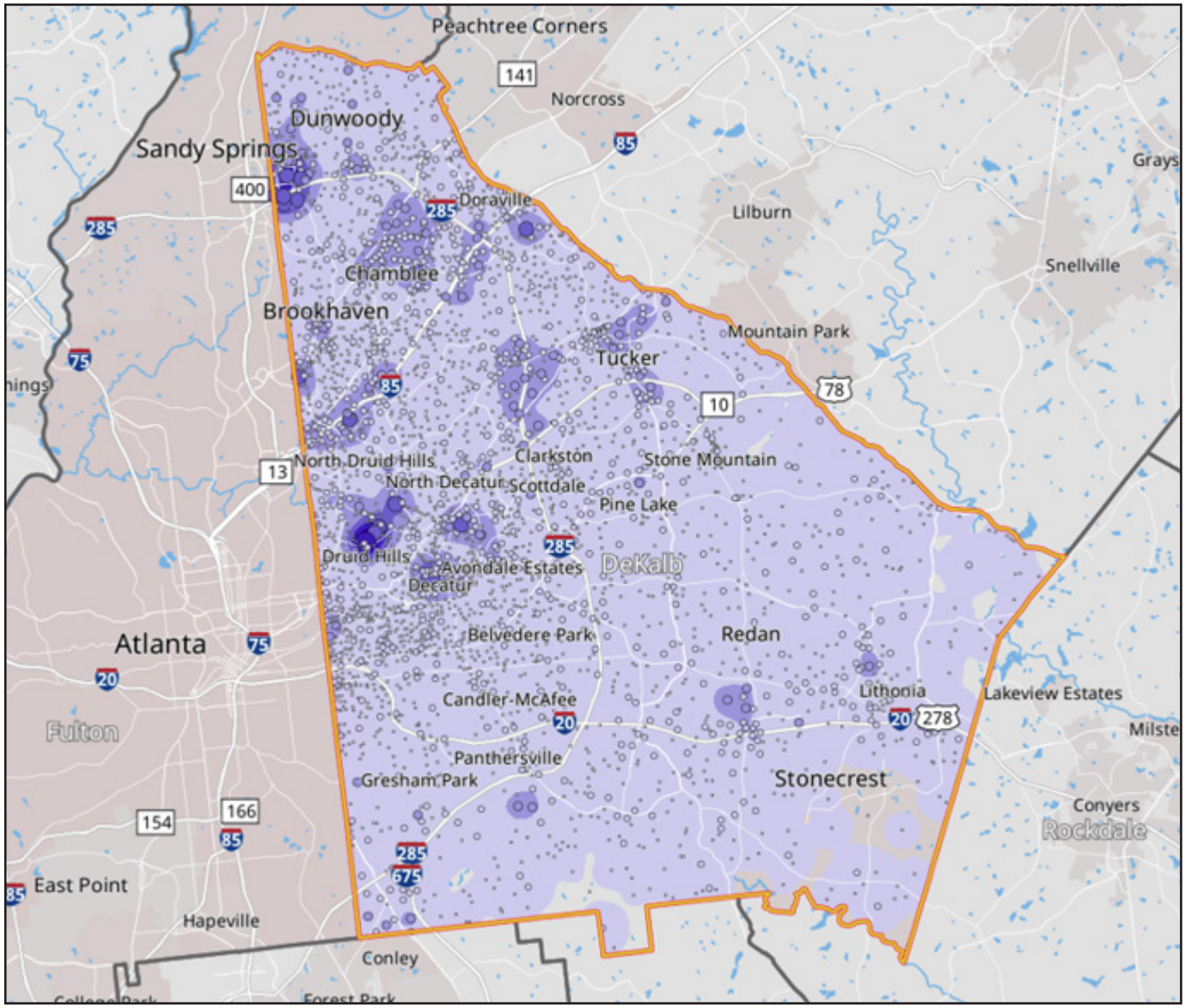
While DeKalb County has generally followed regional employment trends, its overall job growth has lagged behind other core counties. Since 2021, Cobb, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties have each experienced job growth exceeding 20%, compared to 14% in DeKalb County. However, the wages associated with DeKalb's jobs are competitive with Cobb County and exceed those in Gwinnett County, highlighting a stronger wage profile despite slower growth. The jobs within Fulton County continue to offer significantly higher wages, but this is largely influenced by the prominent employment nodes within the City of Atlanta. The map on the following page shows the employment centers within DeKalb County - most of which are disproportionately clustered north of Memorial Drive.





Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Job Concentration in DeKalb County, 2022



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census on the Map (2022)

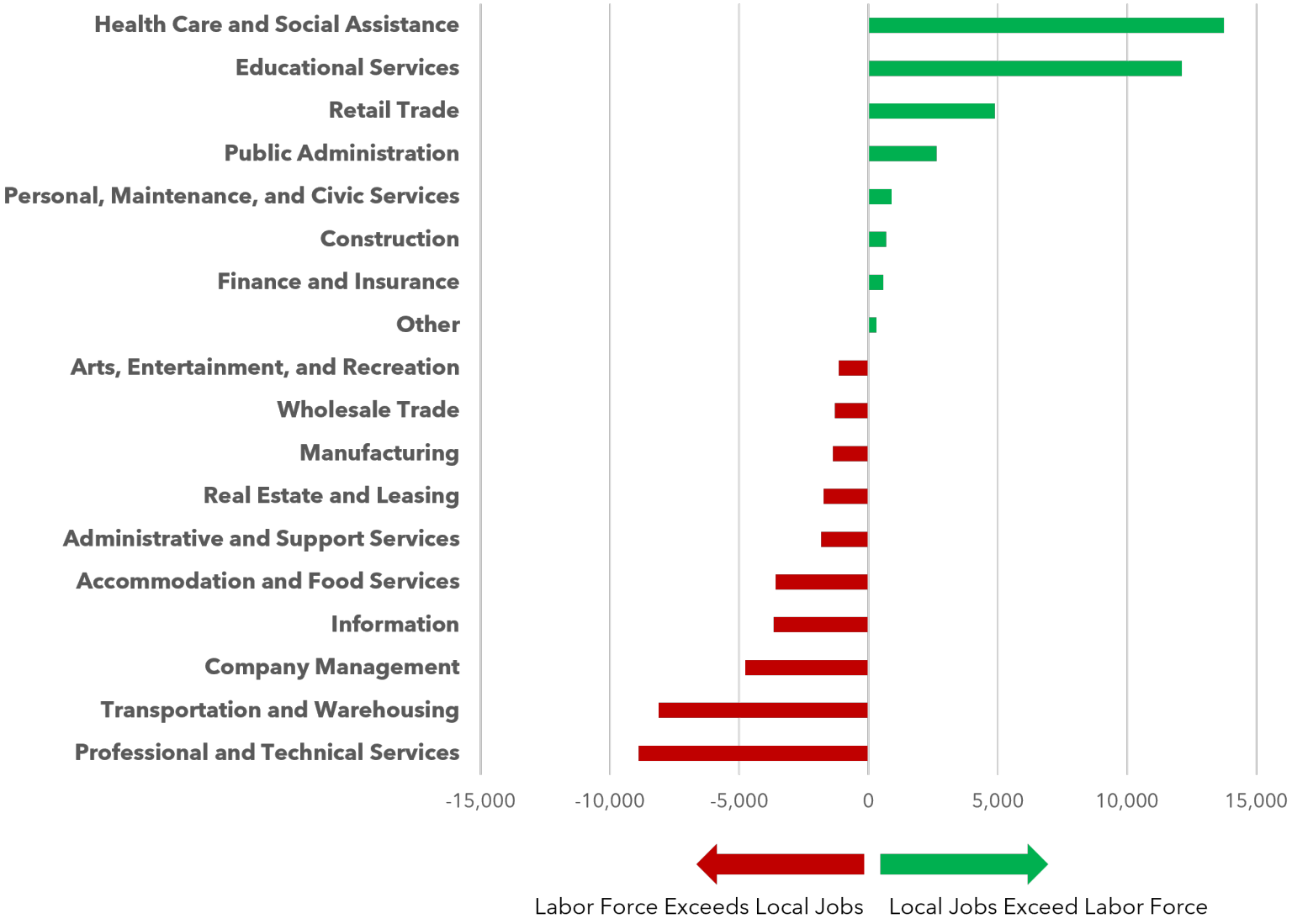
In terms of DeKalb County employed residents, almost 13% are employed within the Health Care industry while approximately 30% of working residents are employed across the Professional Services, Retail Trade, and Educational Services industries. Based on 2024 estimates from Esri, almost 70% of residents work in roles that have historically been categorized as white collar: management/business/financial, sales, or administrative support. An estimated 17% are in historically categorized blue collar roles: transportation/ material moving, production, installation/repair/maintenance, or construction.



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census on the Map (2022), Esri

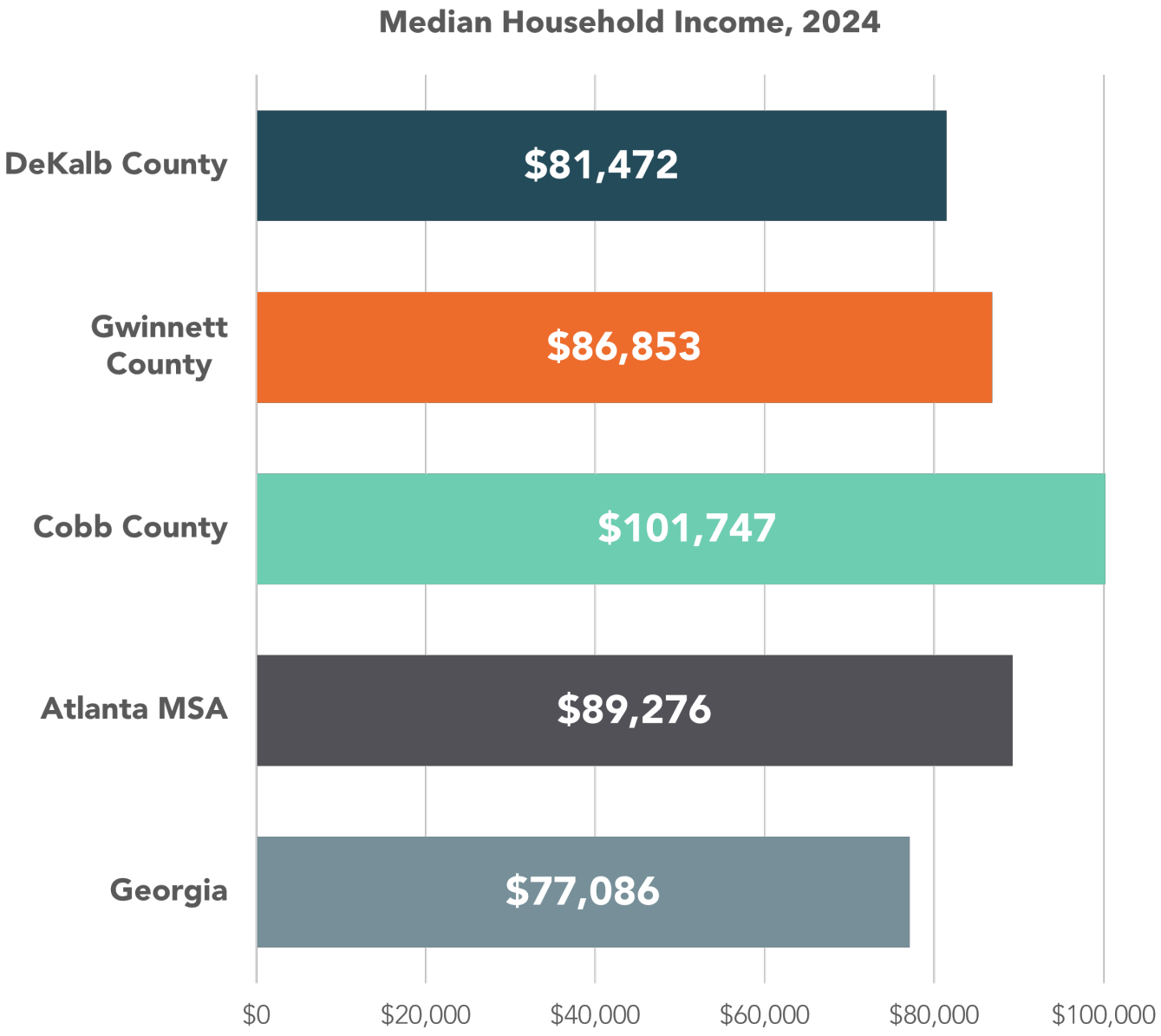
Although the Health Care industry is a top industry within DeKalb County and employs the largest share of working residents, there are more jobs within this industry than there are current working residents employed – meaning these firms within DeKalb have to seek workers from outside the County to fit their workforce needs. The reverse is true for the Professional Services industry - the share of working residents exceeds the number of jobs so many of these workers are commuting outside of the County for work. Overall, DeKalb County is continuing to see a decline in the share of workers that stay within the County for work - falling to 27% in 2022 from 32% in 2010. The top external work and home destinations continue to be in neighboring Fulton and Gwinnett counties.

Job v. Working Resident Employment in DeKalb County by Industry, 2022



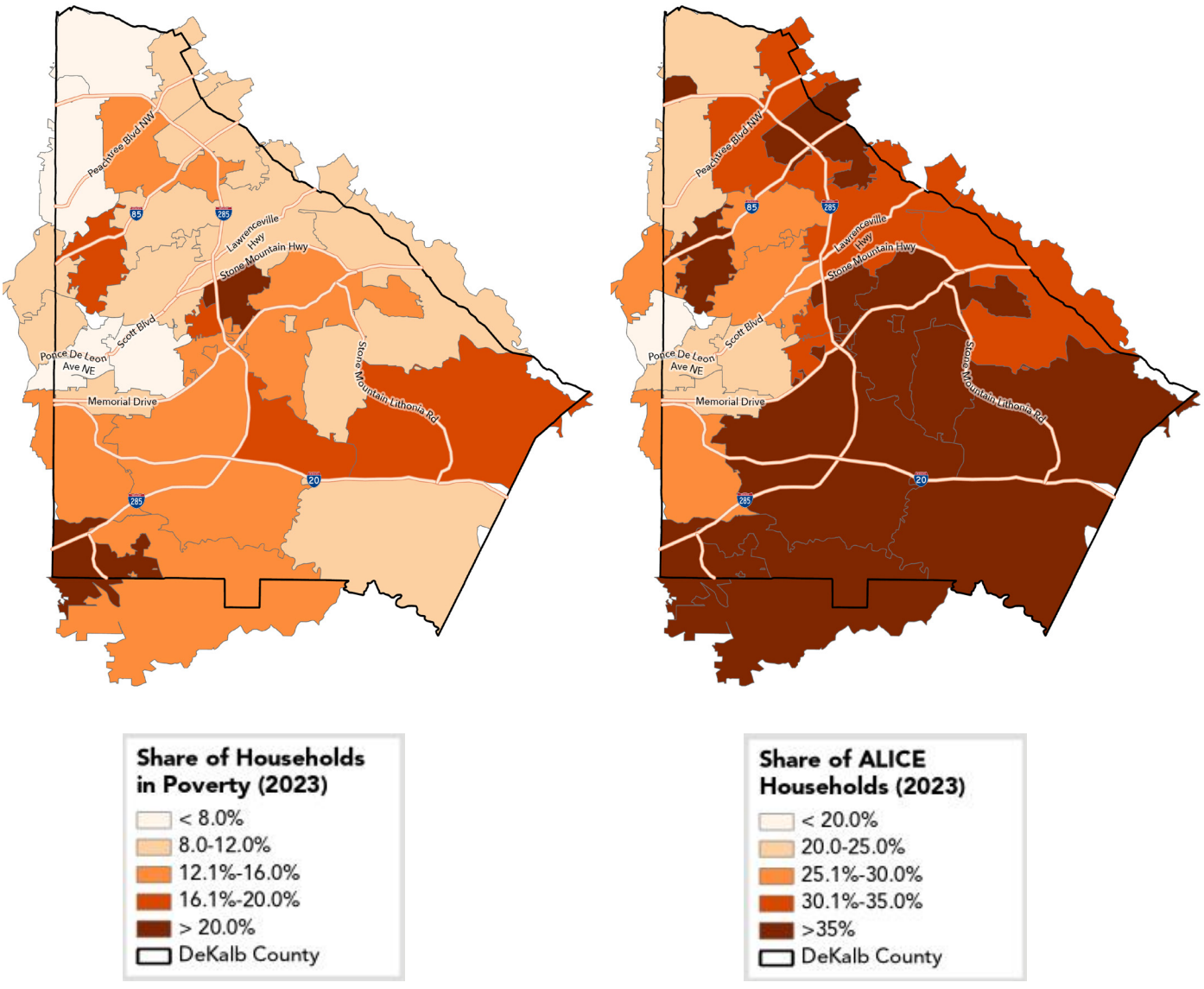
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census on the Map (2022)

The median household income for DeKalb County households, while higher than the state, is lower than the region and nearby Gwinnett and Cobb Counties. However, similar to these counties, the average wage offered by jobs within DeKalb County has grown at a much lower rate than housing costs. From 2015-2023, the average home price in DeKalb County grew by 113% and the average rent increased by 78% while wages only increased by 37%. If this gap continues or widens, the share of residents that both live and work in DeKalb County is likely to continue to decrease. If the cost and time of commuting begin to outweigh the earnings from jobs outside of DeKalb County, it could also lead to current residents and potential future residents moving to other areas of the region that offer more affordable housing options and/or are closer to places of employment.



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Zillow

This commuting cost and earnings mistmatch could potentially exacerbate existing disparities within DeKalb County since multiple factors may create barriers for some residents to access jobs outside of the County or relocate to more affordable areas. As of 2023, approximately 12% of residents within DeKalb County lived in poverty. The map below shows the zip codes that overlap with DeKalb County with the darker the color indicating a higher rate of poverty. Southern DeKalb County below Memorial Drive has a relatively higher concentration of high poverty zip codes. This trend continues when also looking at households who are above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but are also experiencing financial hardship - categorized as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. Furthermore, there are areas of the County, such as the I-85 corridor and eastern border, that had a relatively lower share of households in poverty, but have a high share of ALICE households. These trends emphasize the growing importance of Decide DeKalb being able to attract and retain high-paying jobs as well as support related workforce development initiatives as financial hardship is something residents across the County are experiencing.

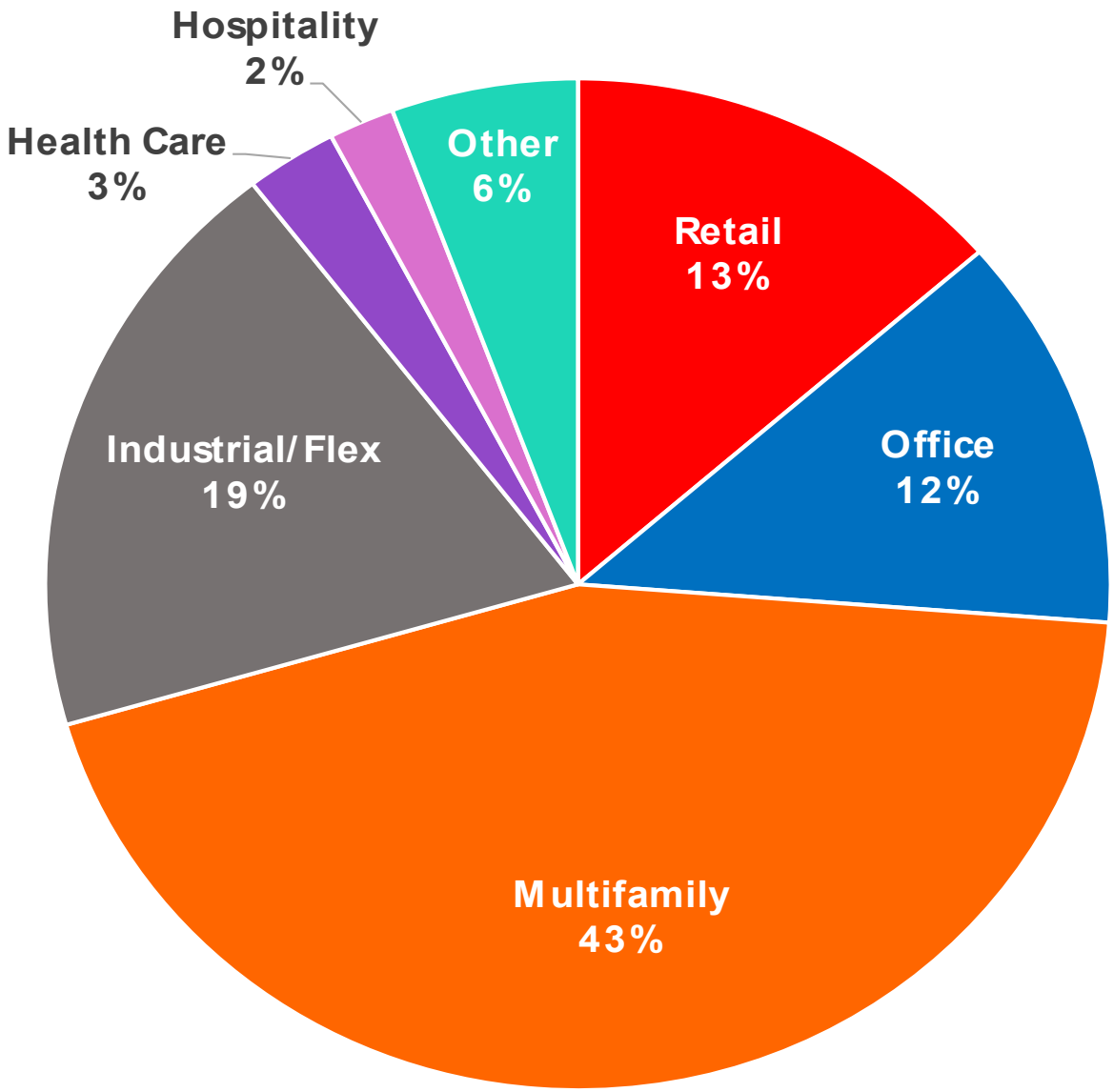


Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. ACS 1-Year Estimates, United Way

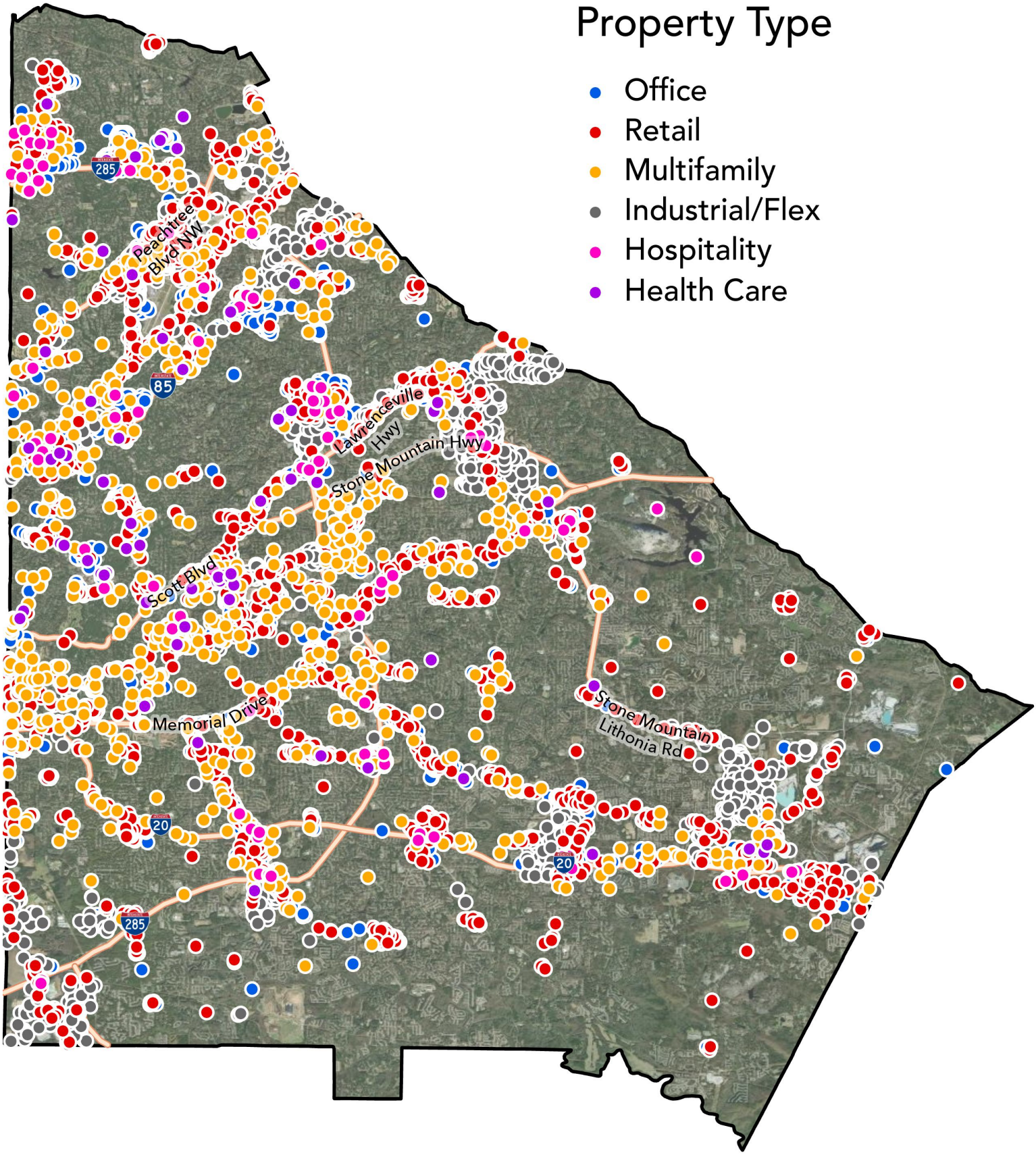
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DeKalb County hosts almost 336.0 million square feet (SF) of commercial real estate. Of that, 145.3 million (43%) is dedicated to just multifamily space. This is similar to the City of Atlanta (42%), but higher than its peer counties of Gwinnett (25%) and Cobb (32%). Industrial/flex space is the second highest share of total commercial real estate space within the County. The map on the next page shows the locations of these commercial spaces. Most are concentrated on the major corridors running through the County. A profile map for the main property types will be featured on the following pages.

Share of Commercial SF

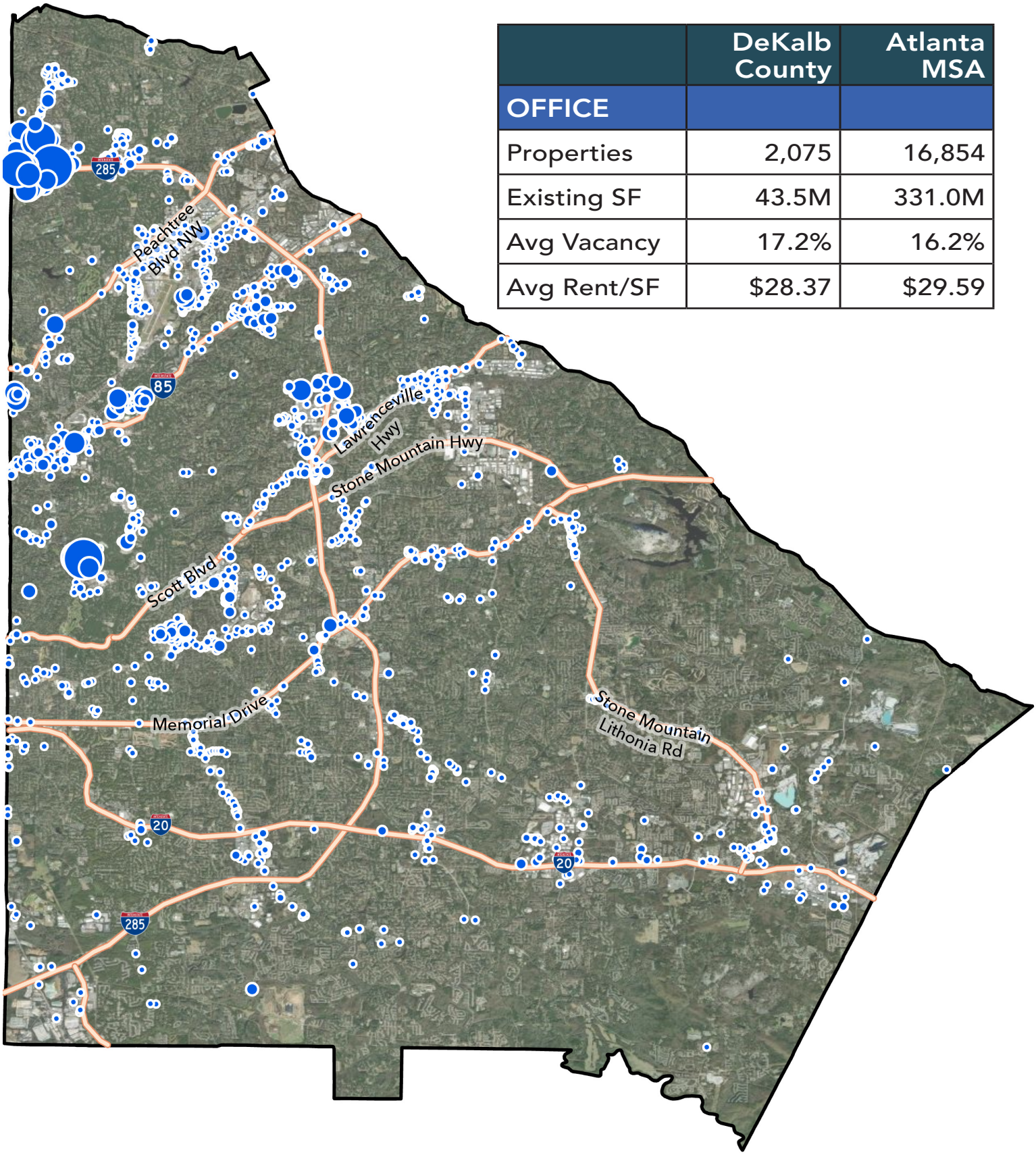


Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)


Property Type
Office
Retail
Multifamily
Industrial/Flex
Hospitality
Health Care
285
Peachtree Blvd NW
85
Lawrenceville Hwy
Stone Mountain Hwy
Scott Blvd
Memorial Drive
20
285
20
Stone Mountain Lithonia Rd

Existing Office Space, Sized by Rentable Building Area (SF)

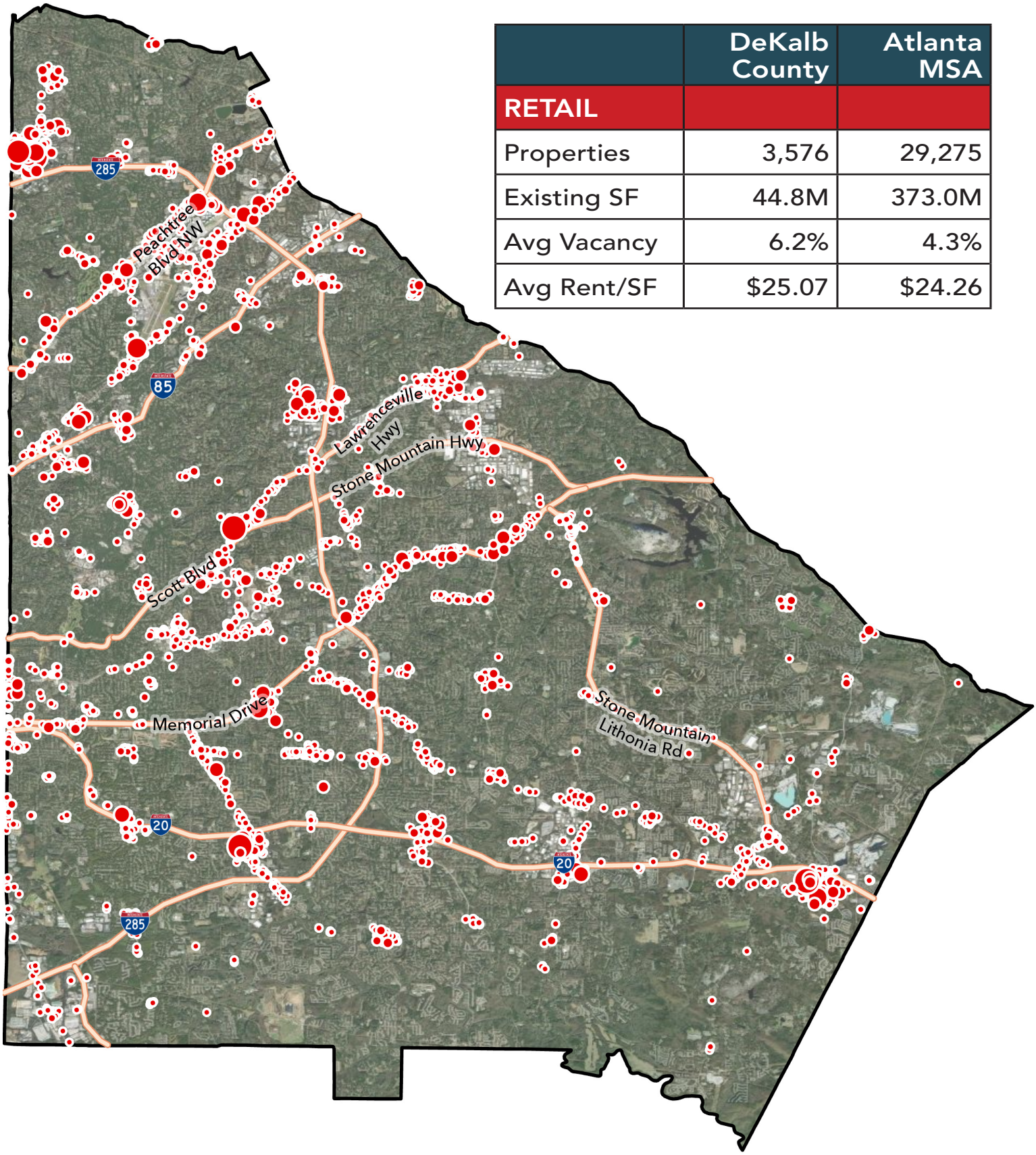
	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
OFFICE		
Properties	2,075	16,854
Existing SF	43.5M	331.0M
Avg Vacancy	17.2%	16.2%
Avg Rent/SF	$28.37	$29.59



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Existing Retail Space, Sized by Rentable Building Area (SF)

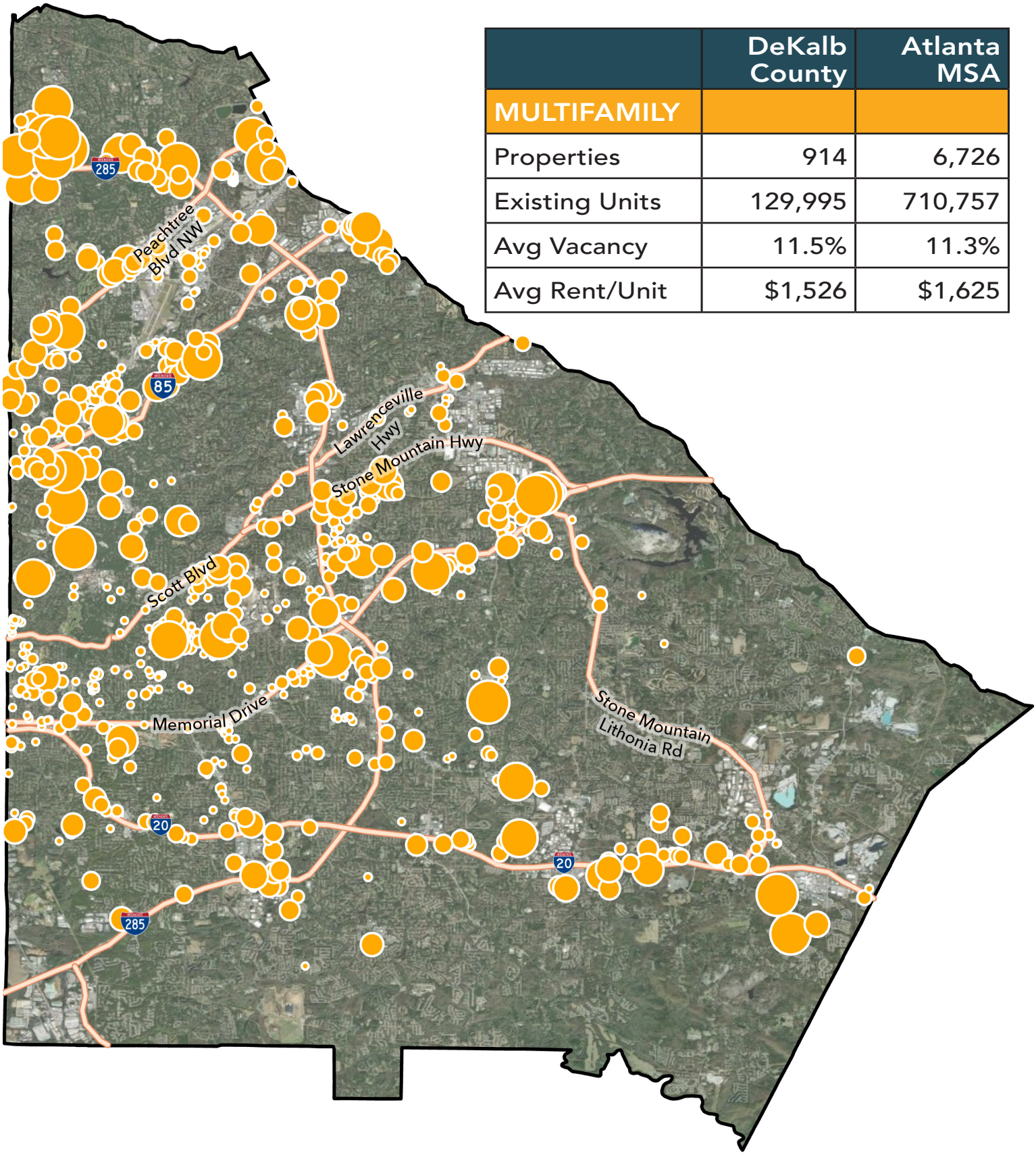
	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
RETAIL		
Properties	3,576	29,275
Existing SF	44.8M	373.0M
Avg Vacancy	6.2%	4.3%
Avg Rent/SF	$25.07	$24.26



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Existing Multifamily Space, Sized by Rentable Building Area (SF)

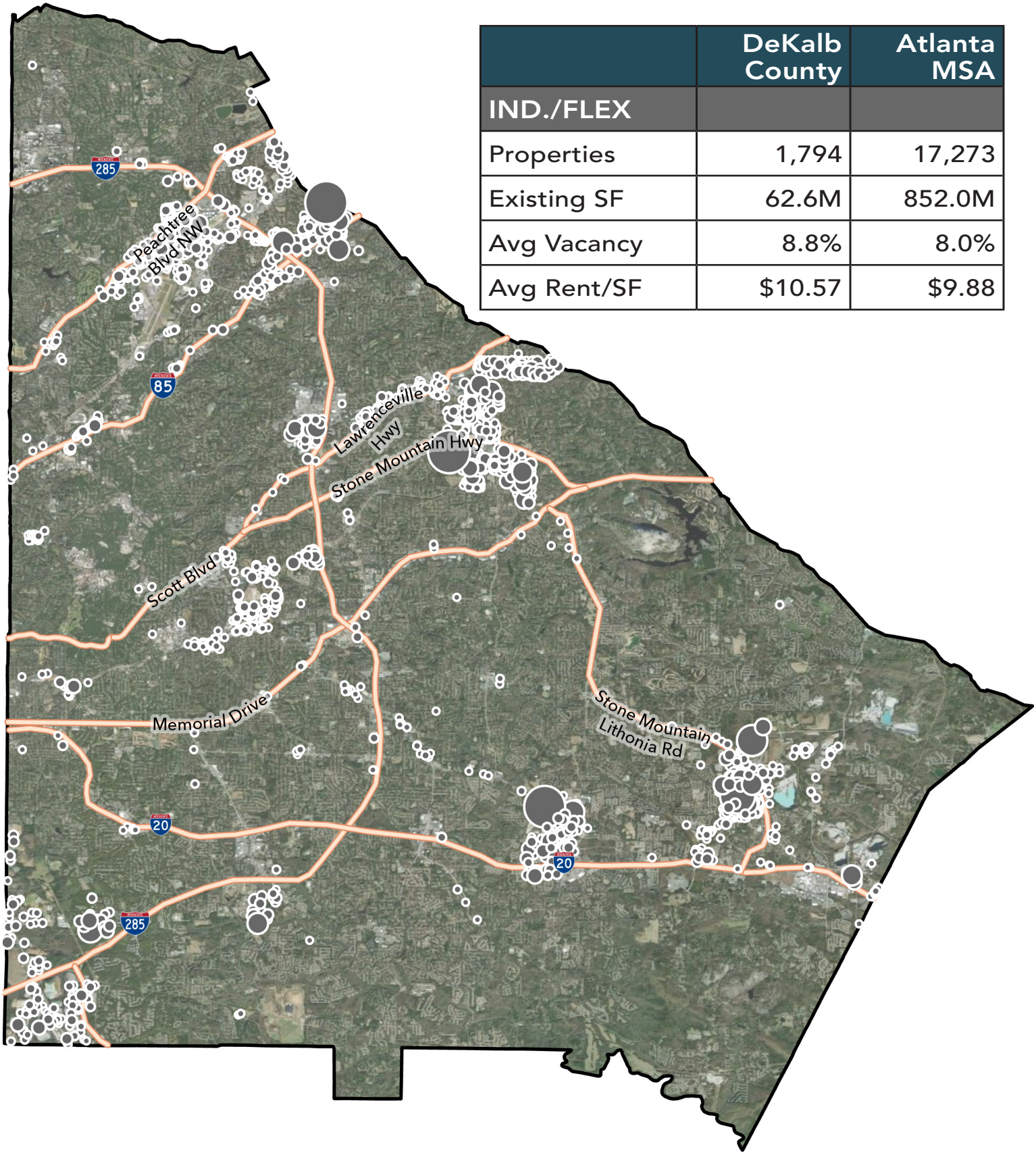
	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
MULTIFAMILY		
Properties	914	6,726
Existing Units	129,995	710,757
Avg Vacancy	11.5%	11.3%
Avg Rent/Unit	$1,526	$1,625



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

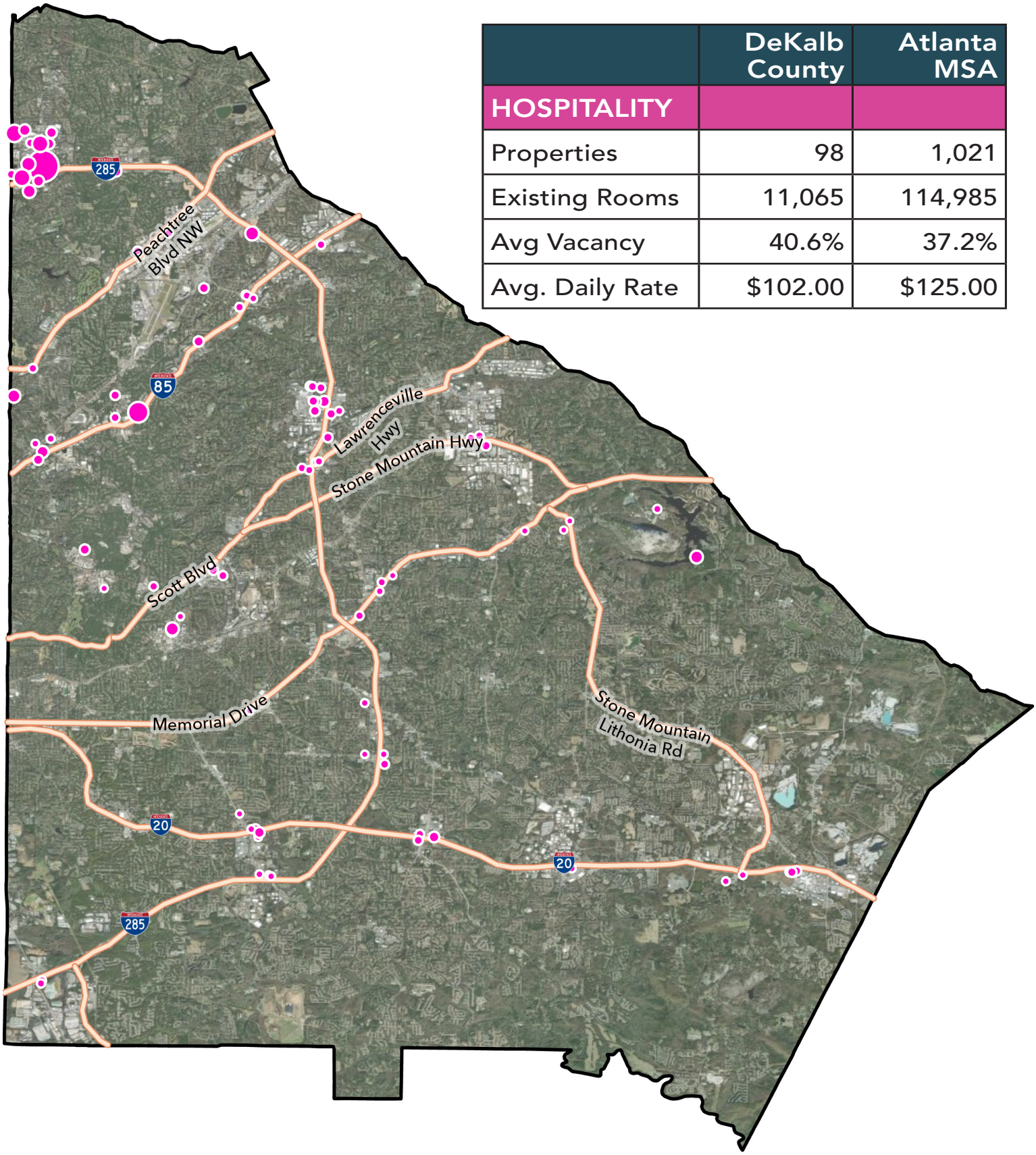
Existing Industrial/Flex Space, Sized by Rentable Building Area (SF)

	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
IND./FLEX		
Properties	1,794	17,273
Existing SF	62.6M	852.0M
Avg Vacancy	8.8%	8.0%
Avg Rent/SF	$10.57	$9.88



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Existing Hospitality Space, Sized by Rentable Building Area (SF)

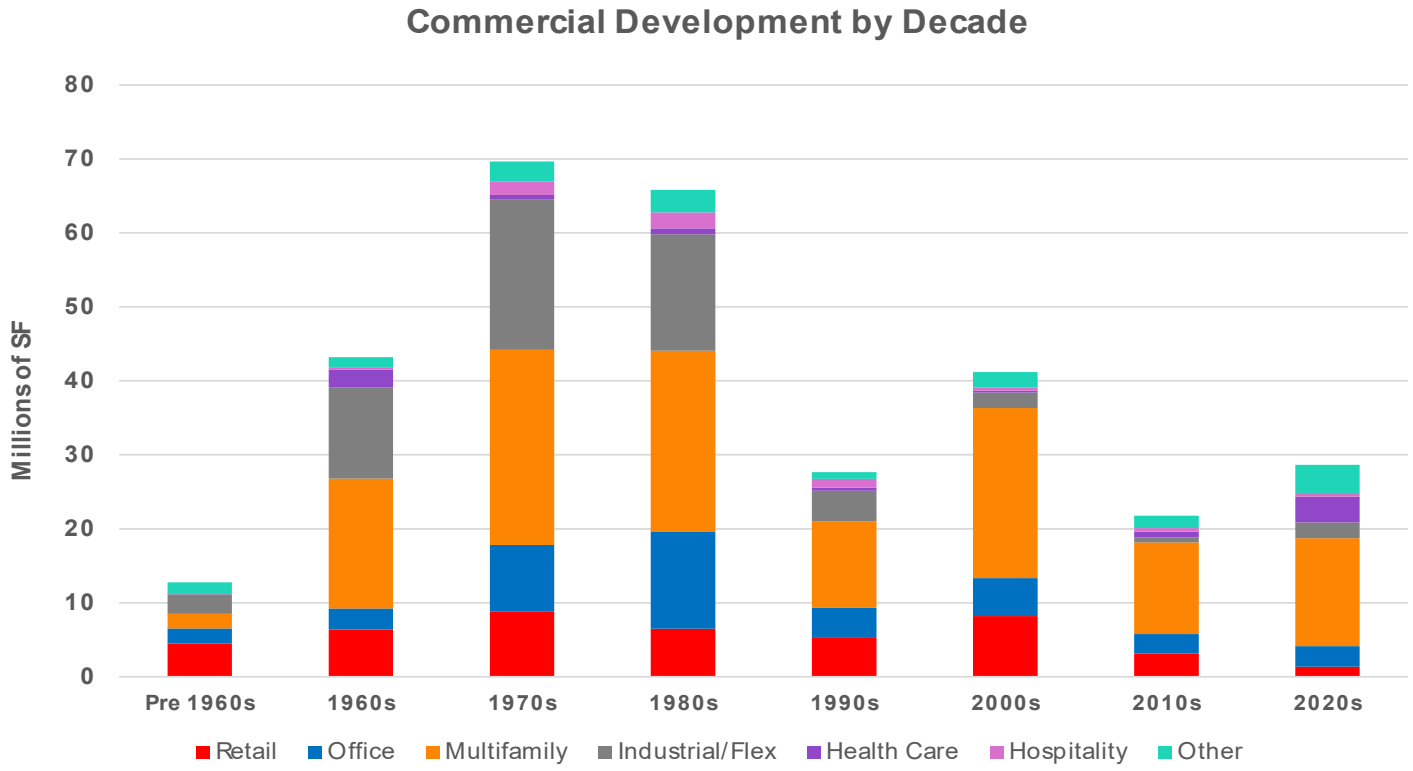


	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
HOSPITALITY		
Properties	98	1,021
Existing Rooms	11,065	114,985
Avg Vacancy	40.6%	37.2%
Avg. Daily Rate	$102.00	$125.00

*Metrics are submarket averages and are inclusive of all hospitality types

Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Over 60% of DeKalb County's commercial inventory was delivered prior to 1990. Multifamily space has consistently been a significant share of new square footage since 1960. Industrial/flex space was predominately delivered between 1960-1990, meaning that the majority of that commercial real estate is at least 35 years old. This has contributed to over 60% of these properties currently being classified as Class C, or older properties that are considered to be lower quality or in undesirable locations. Less than a quarter of the County's total commercial real estate inventory is the top classification, Class A. Approximately 40% of the inventory is considered Class B space, or mid-range with less high-class amenities as Class A properties.



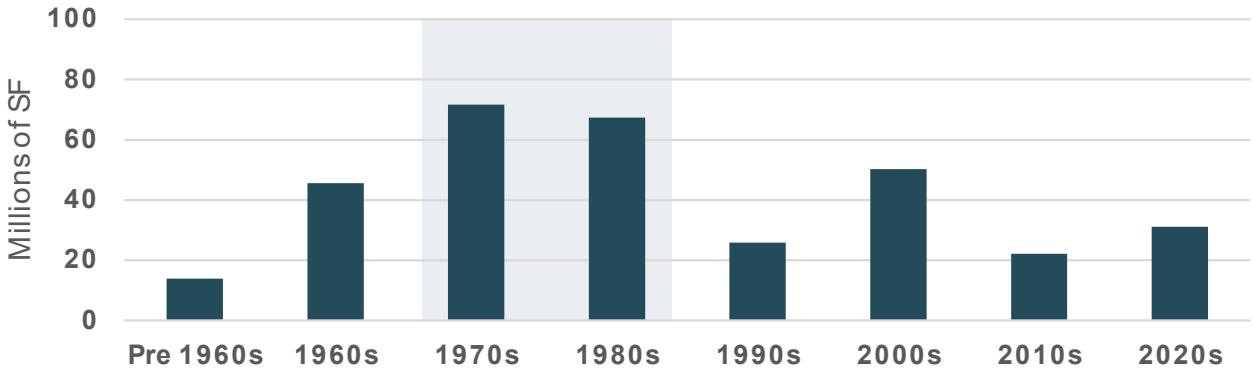
Even from a comparative perspective, the commercial real estate inventory within DeKalb County is older than its peer communities of City of Atlanta, Gwinnett County, and Cobb County – almost 60% of its space is at least 35 years old.

Over half of the County's multifamily space delivered before 1990, far higher than in the City of Atlanta and Gwinnett. Despite this, average vacancy is on-par with its peers (~10-11%), but this is likely driven by the lower relative unit rents. Additionally, over a quarter of the County's industrial/flex space delivered before 1990, almost double the amount in both Gwinnett and Cobb County. Unlike with the County's multifamily space, the average vacancy is higher than these two peers (~9%) despite lower average rents. Lastly, excluding Gwinnett, office deliveries peaked in the 1980s within DeKalb County and its peers. Despite having comparable office rents with Cobb County, DeKalb has a higher average office vacancy (17% compared to 14%). This is the second only to the City of Atlanta at 21%.

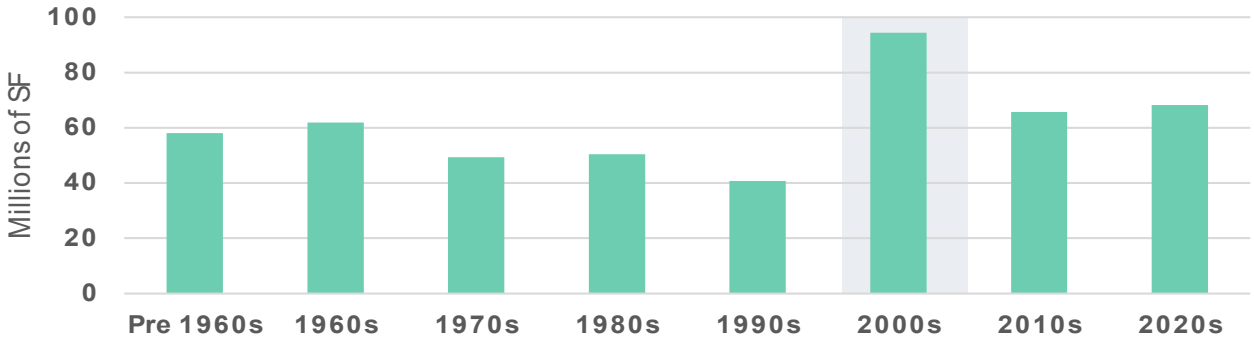
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Commercial Development by Decade

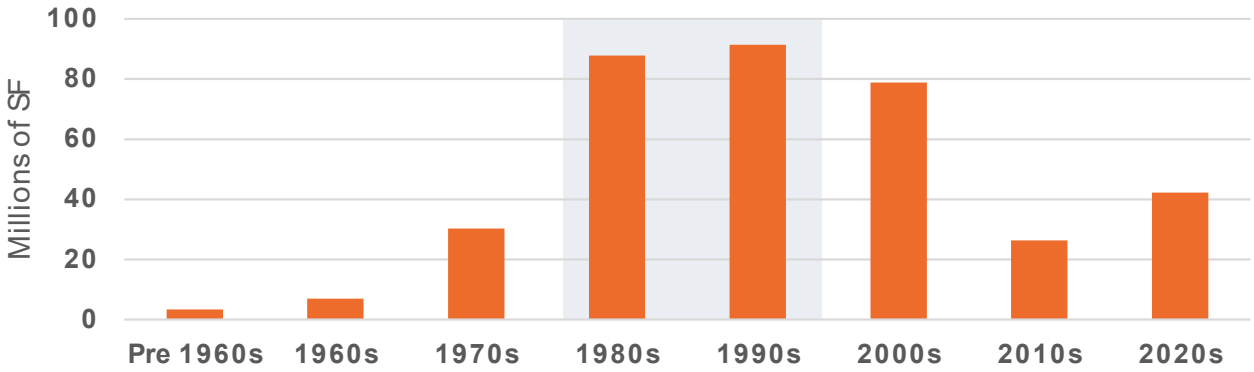
DeKalb County



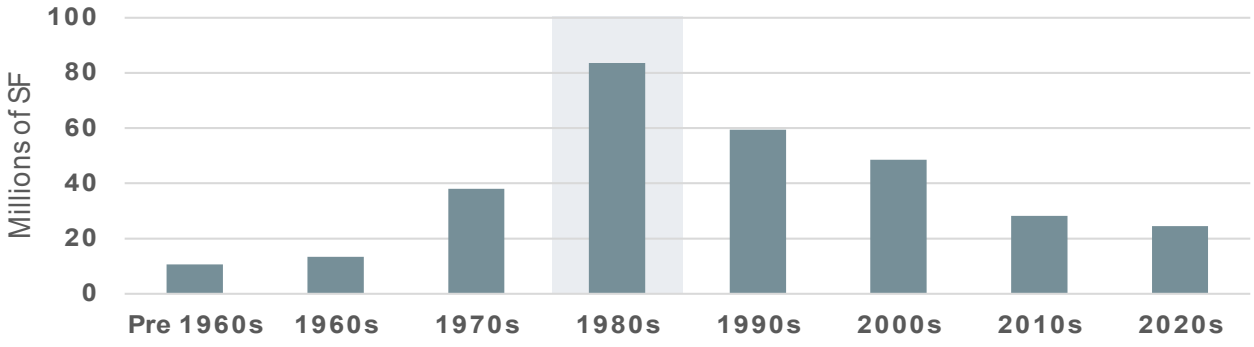
City of Atlanta



Gwinnett County

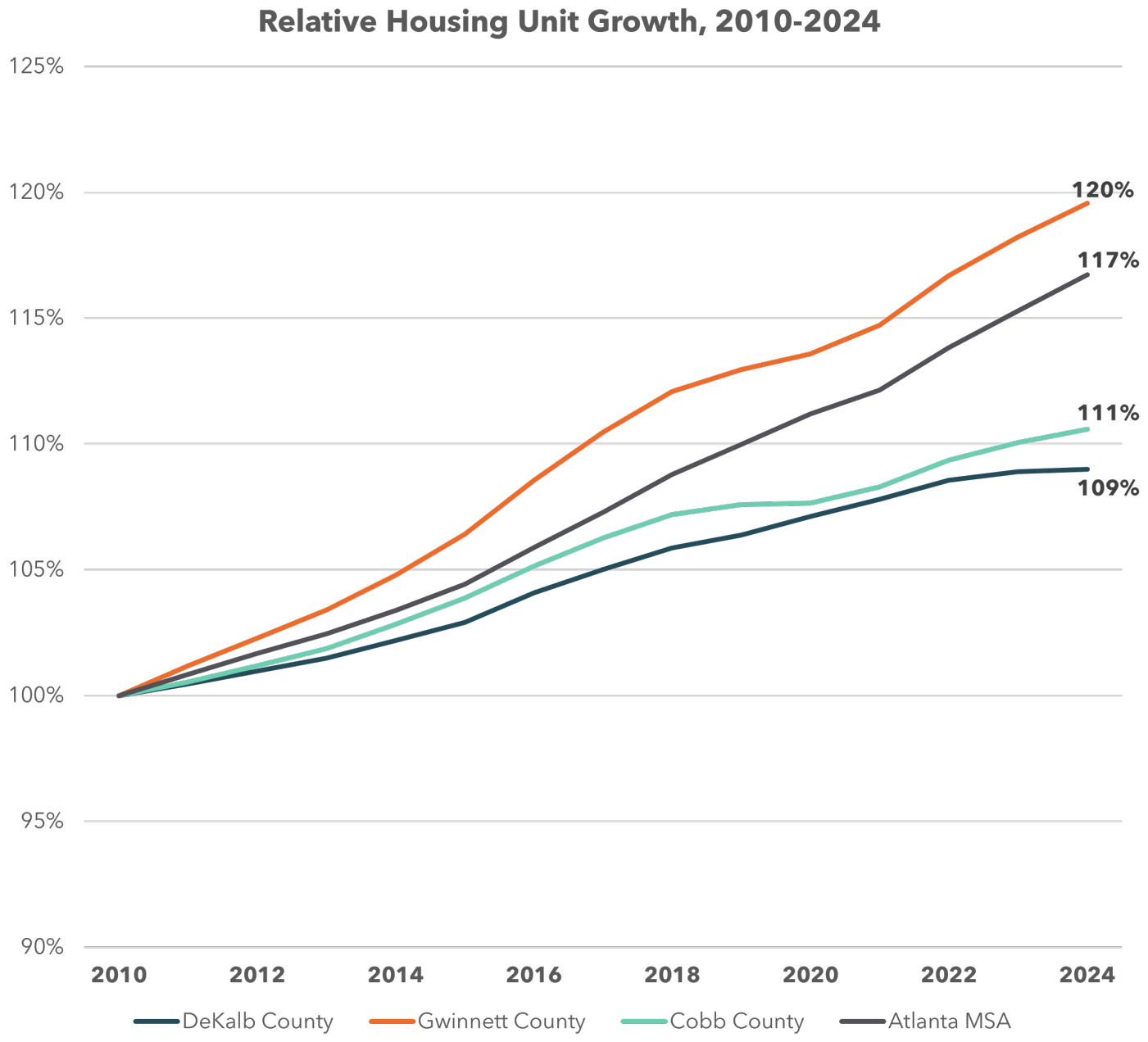


Cobb County



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from CoStar (Feb. 2026)

Looking at overall housing production, the growth in new housing units is below that of the region overall. In comparison, Gwinnett County's rate of new housing units is above the regionwide average. The rate of household growth (13%) exceeds the growth in new housing units, suggesting continued demand for housing within DeKalb County. Compared to the region overall, a more equal share of residents are in homes they own compared to homes they rent - 56% of households own their home in DeKalb compared to 65% regionwide. If this ratio carries forward, there will be continued demand for both for-sale and rental housing options within DeKalb County. While Decide DeKalb is neither a Housing Authority or has land use decision-making authority, it can provide support through incentives and the use of its tools such as the County's Tax Allocation Districts (TADs).



Source: KB Advisory Group with data from Esri

TARGET INDUSTRIES

OVERVIEW

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research and feedback from stakeholders, updated targeted industries were determined. These industries serve as guides for economic development recruitment and retention efforts over the next five years and touch on four important aspects of a well-balanced economy.

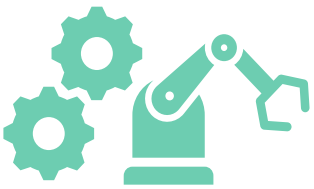
Health Care & Medical Support as well as Advanced Manufacturing represent a more focused concentration on prior target industries. Lifestyle & Creative Industries and Knowledge Industries & Business Services incorporate two other previous target industries (HQ & Business Operations and the Film, Arts & Entertainment Emerging Cluster) as part of a larger focus cluster. While Logistics and Distribution was not incorporated into the updated target industries, it is still an important industry within the County.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



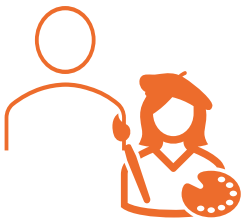
Health Care & Medical Support

PRODUCTION & INNOVATION



Advanced Manufacturing

COMMUNITY & AMENITIES



Lifestyle & Creative Industries

TECHNOLOGY & HUMAN CAPITAL

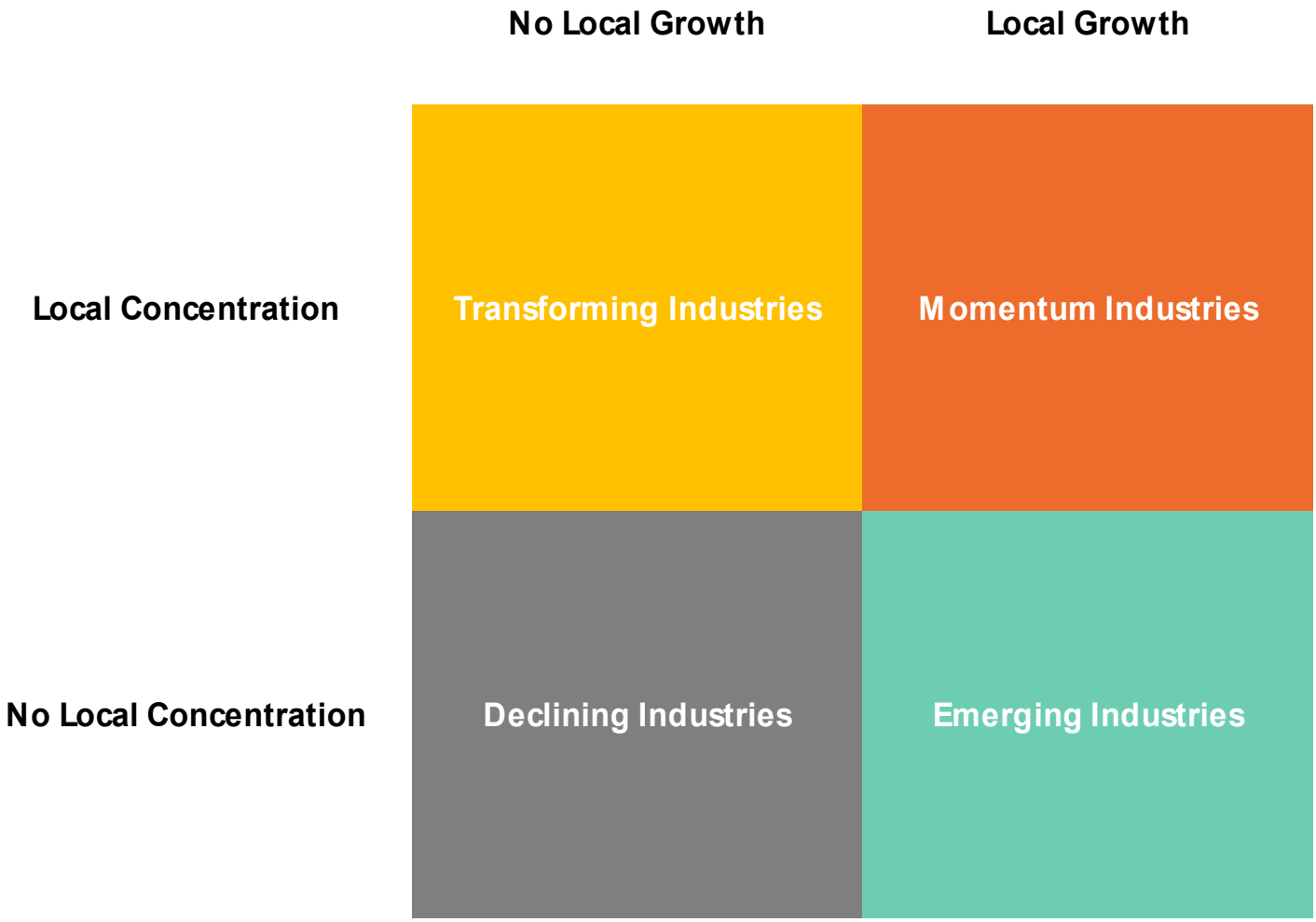
Knowledge Industries & Business Services

INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

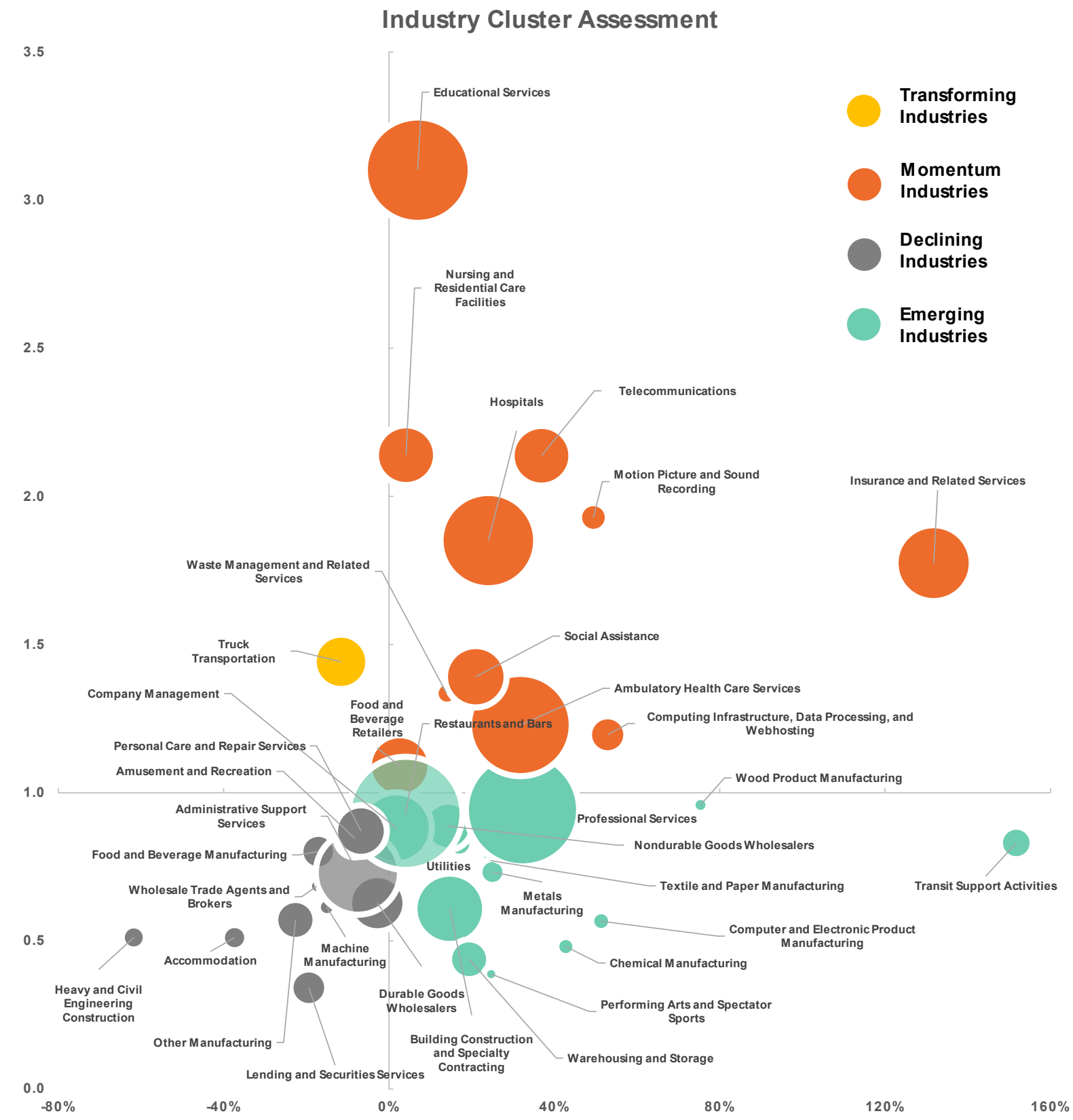
To assist in determining which industries Decide DeKalb should target over the next five years, an industry cluster assessment was conducted. The assessment observed:

- Industry growth from 2017-2023
- Relative concentration of each industry in the County compared to the MSA (location quotient)

The resulting industry clusters were then grouped based on the quadrant table to the below and sized by relative share of total employment within DeKalb County.



INDUSTRY CLUSTERS



*Bubbles are sized by relative share of total employment within DeKalb County
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census County Business Patterns

INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

The results from this assessment show that most industries observed are evenly dispersed across three of the four industry quadrants. The two pivotal categories are Momentum and Emerging industries. These categories provide initial insight on where business retention and recruitment efforts may need to be focused. Momentum industries reflect the industries that are clustered within DeKalb County and have demonstrated employment growth. As such they may provide a good base for business retention efforts. From this assessment, this included industries related to healthcare, education, computing and telecommunications, and motion picture and sound recording. Emerging industries have also demonstrated employment growth, but are not yet clustered within the County. Therefore, they have the potential to serve as the base for business recruitment efforts. From this assessment, this included an array of manufacturing, professional services, corporate headquarters, performing arts, and sports.

Transforming
(Local Concentration but No Growth)

- Truck Transportation

Momentum
(Local Concentration and Local Growth)

- Food and Beverage Retailers
- Motion Picture and Sound Recording
- Telecommunications
- Computing Infrastructure, Data Processing, and Webhosting
- Insurance and Related Services
- Waste Management and Related Services
- Educational Services
- Ambulatory Health Care Services
- Hospitals
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- Social Assistance

Declining
(No Local Concentration and Growth)

- Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- Other Manufacturing
- Machine Manufacturing
- Durable Goods Wholesalers
- Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers
- Lending and Securities Services
- Administrative Support Services
- Amusement and Recreation
- Accommodation
- Personal Care and Repair Services

Emerging
(No Local Concentration but Local Growth)

- Utilities
- Building Construction and Specialty Contracting
- Textile and Paper Manufacturing
- Wood Product Manufacturing
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Metals Manufacturing
- Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing
- Nondurable Goods Wholesalers
- Transit Support Activities
- Warehousing and Storage
- Professional Services
- Company Management
- Performing Arts and Spectator Sports
- Restaurants and Bars

TARGET INDUSTRIES

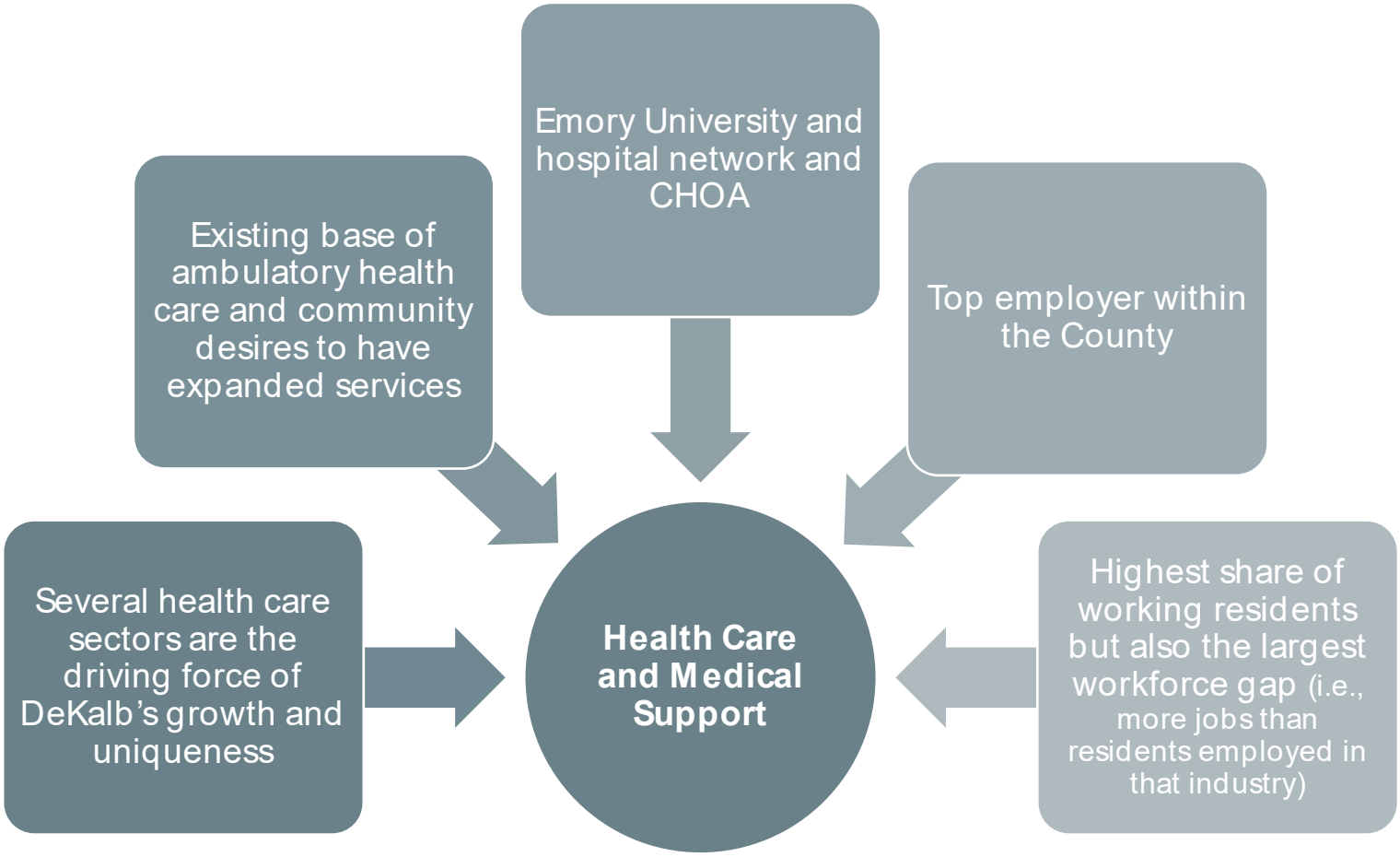
The former target industries are: Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Science, Logistics & Distribution, Corporate Operations & Business Services, and Film & Entertainment (as an emerging cluster). Based on the results from the industry assessment and input gathered during the SEDP process, the updated target industries were determined. As shown in the graphic below, these industries also align with the focus industries at the state and regional level.

The following pages in this section discuss these updated target industries in more detail.



HEALTH CARE & MEDICAL SUPPORT

Businesses within this target industry range from hospitals to social service providers to medicinal retailers. Factors that led to its identification as a target industry are outlined below. These include its existing framework and prevalence within the County and the demonstrated workforce opportunities.



HEALTH CARE & MEDICAL SUPPORT

This target industry includes the following types of businesses and workforce occupations:



Hospitals and Outpatient Care Centers



Nursing and Residential Care Facilities



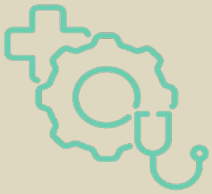
Social Assistance Services



Medicine and Supplement Retailers



Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories



Medical Device Research and Development

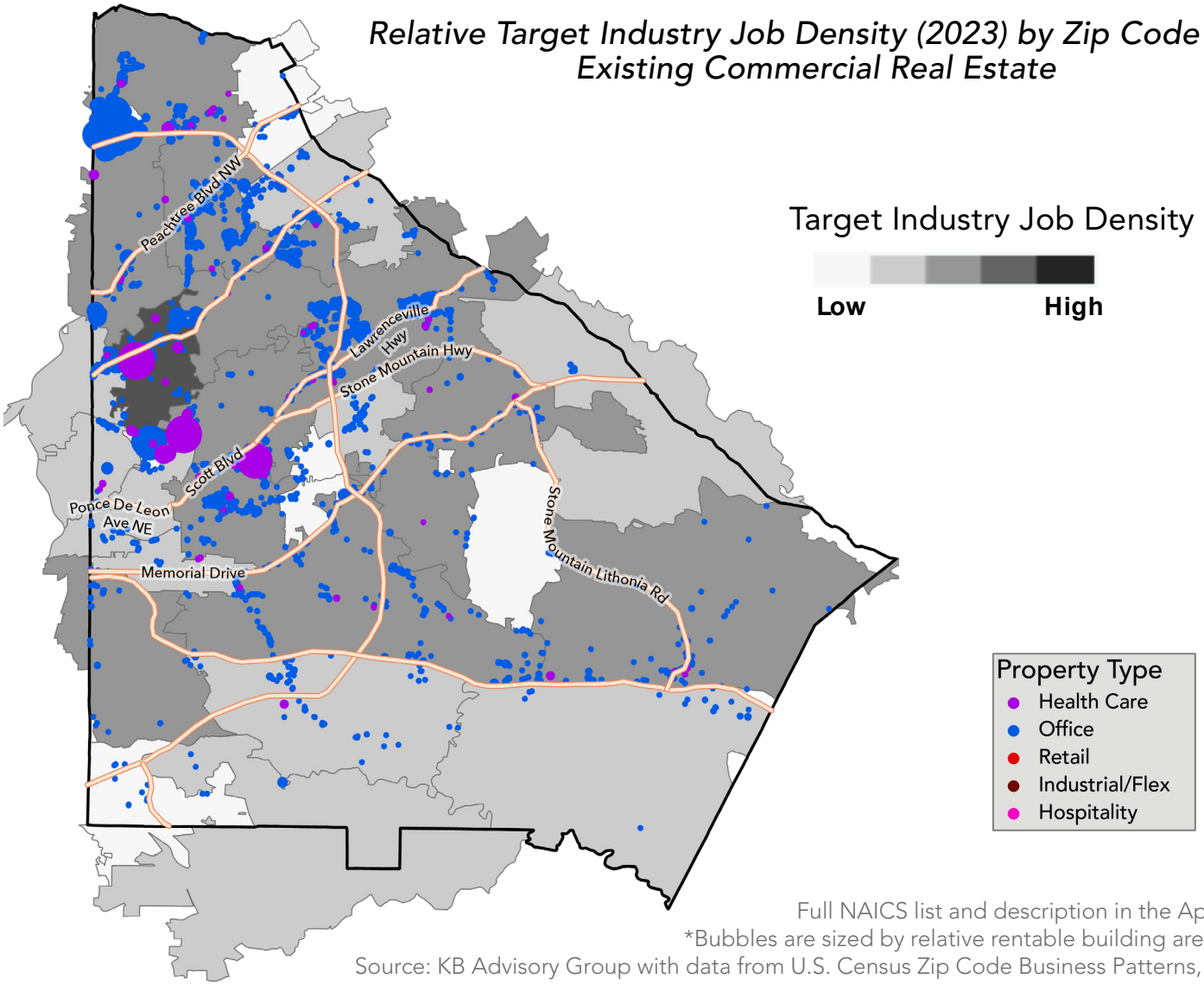
Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	3,100	35%	$137,322
Physician Assistants	Master's degree	1,540	32%	$119,579
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	4,600	58%	$116,397
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	Doctoral or professional degree	200	20%	$105,851
Mechanical Engineers	Bachelor's degree	930	20%	$99,736
Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technologists and Technicians	Associate's degree	370	14%	$82,784
Healthcare Social Workers	Master's degree	830	15%	$60,798
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	Bachelor's degree	1,350	14%	$58,926

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix

HEALTH CARE & MEDICAL SUPPORT

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary non-degree award	2,780	12%	$54,101
Medical Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	5,930	23%	$39,083
Social and Human Service Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	1,700	18%	$37,003
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	9,130	25%	$27,061

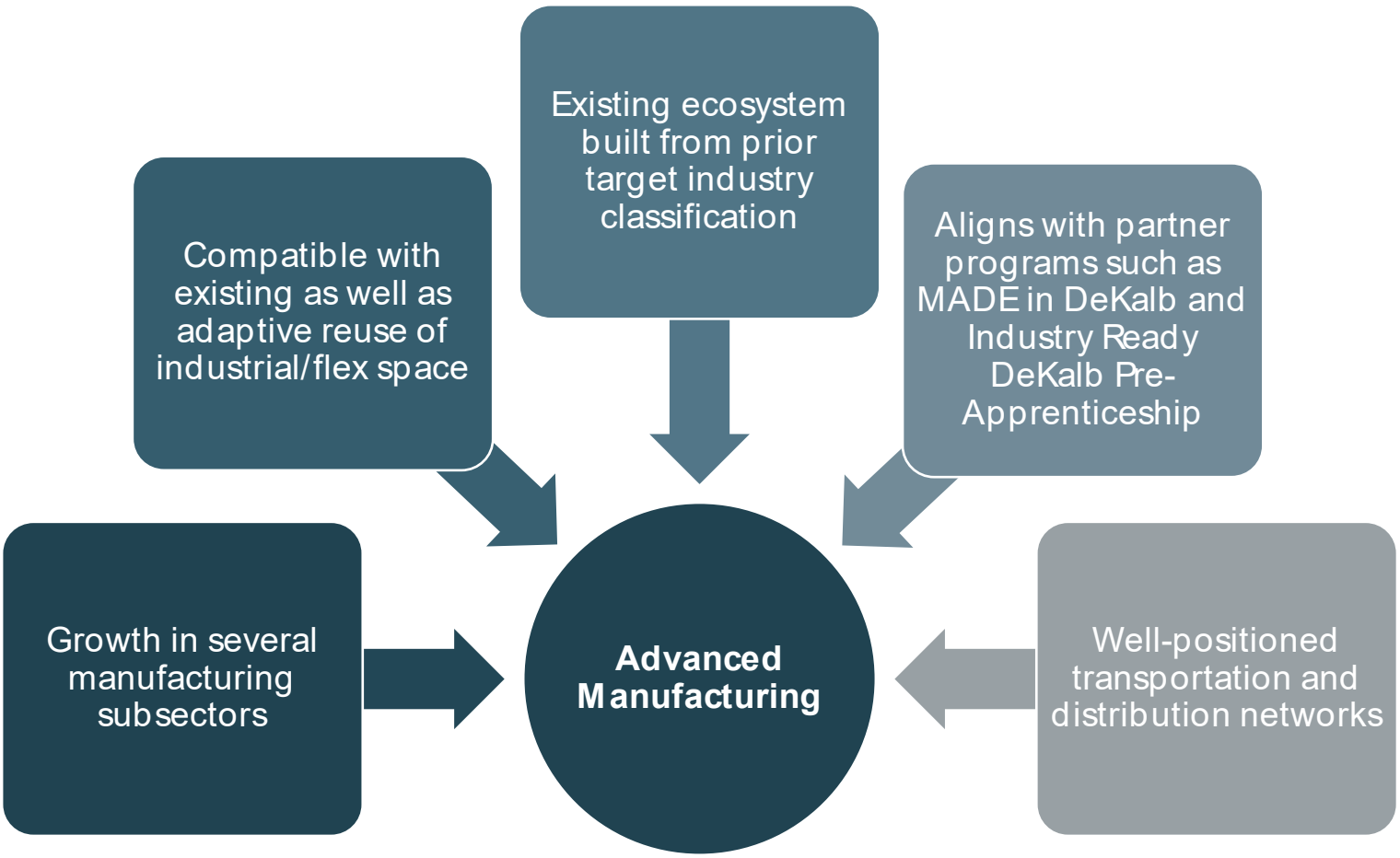
Relative Target Industry Job Density (2023) by Zip Code and Existing Commercial Real Estate



Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
*Bubbles are sized by relative rentable building area (RBA)
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census Zip Code Business Patterns, CoStar

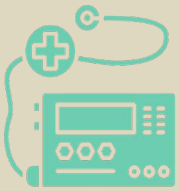
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Businesses within this target industry are specialized manufacturers across an array of products such as medical devices and computer & electrical equipment. Factors that led to its identification as a target industry are outlined below. These include its alignment with on-going workforce programming and local growth within certain subsectors.



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

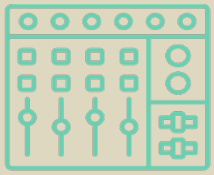
This target industry includes the following types of businesses and workforce occupations:



Medical Device Manufacturing



Electronic Computing Manufacturing



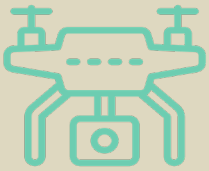
Audio and Video Equipment Manufacturing



Communications Equipment Manufacturing



Robotics Automation Engineering



Aerospace Research and Development

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	Bachelor's degree	260	8%	$123,115
Aerospace Engineers	Bachelor's degree	290	10%	$117,874
Data Scientists	Bachelor's degree	2,340	44%	$110,552
Mechanical Engineers	Bachelor's degree	930	20%	$99,736
Industrial Engineers	Bachelor's degree	1,620	22%	$96,325
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award	950	16%	$90,896
Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technologists and Technicians	Associate's degree	370	14%	$82,784
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,600	10%	$66,768

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

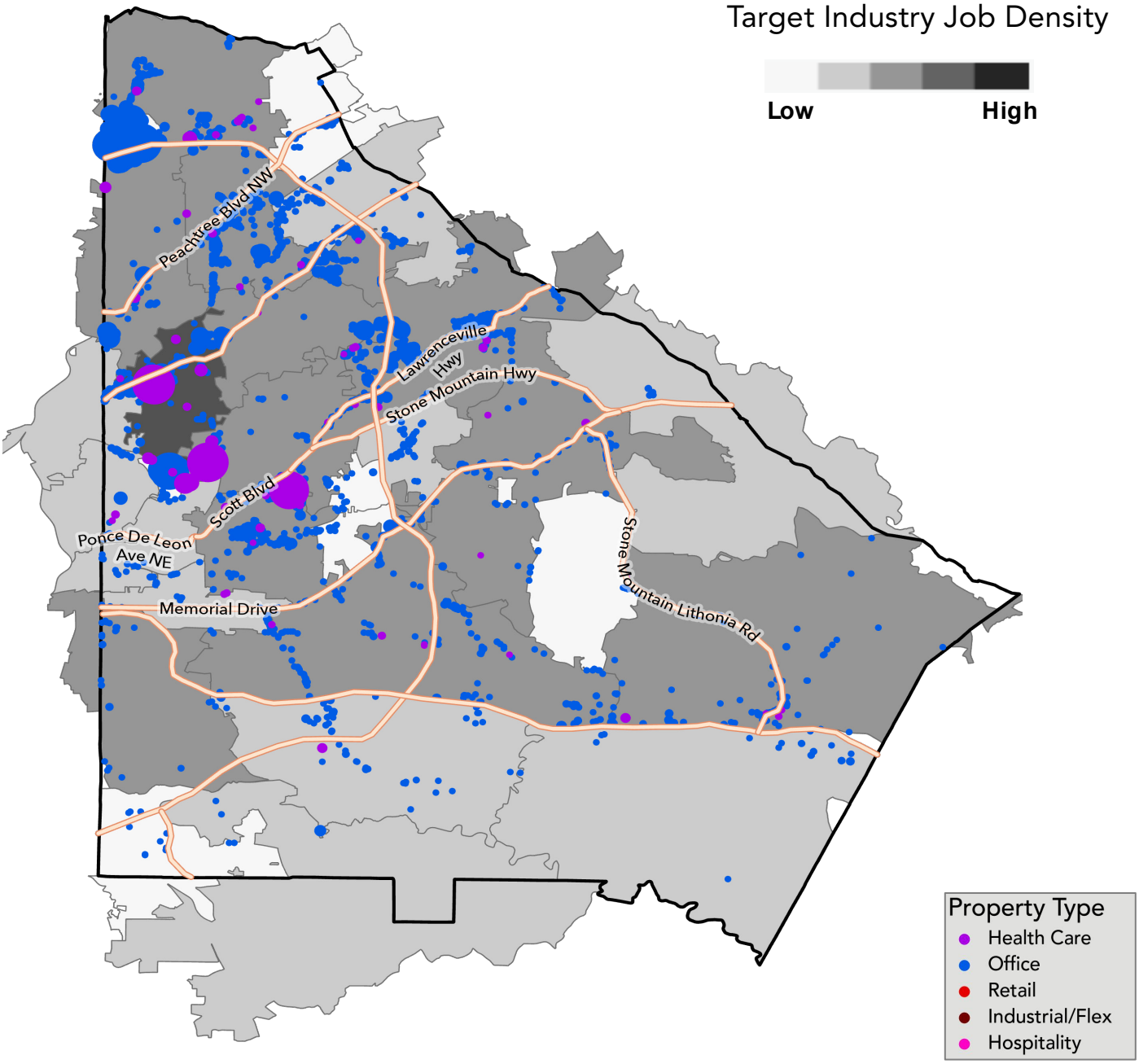
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technologists and Technicians	Associate's degree	*	-	$59,738
Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	High school diploma or equivalent	190	10%	$59,363
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High school diploma or equivalent	3,340	26%	$59,176
Machinists	High school diploma or equivalent	930	15%	$51,563
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,370	17%	$48,339

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
*Suppressed data
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

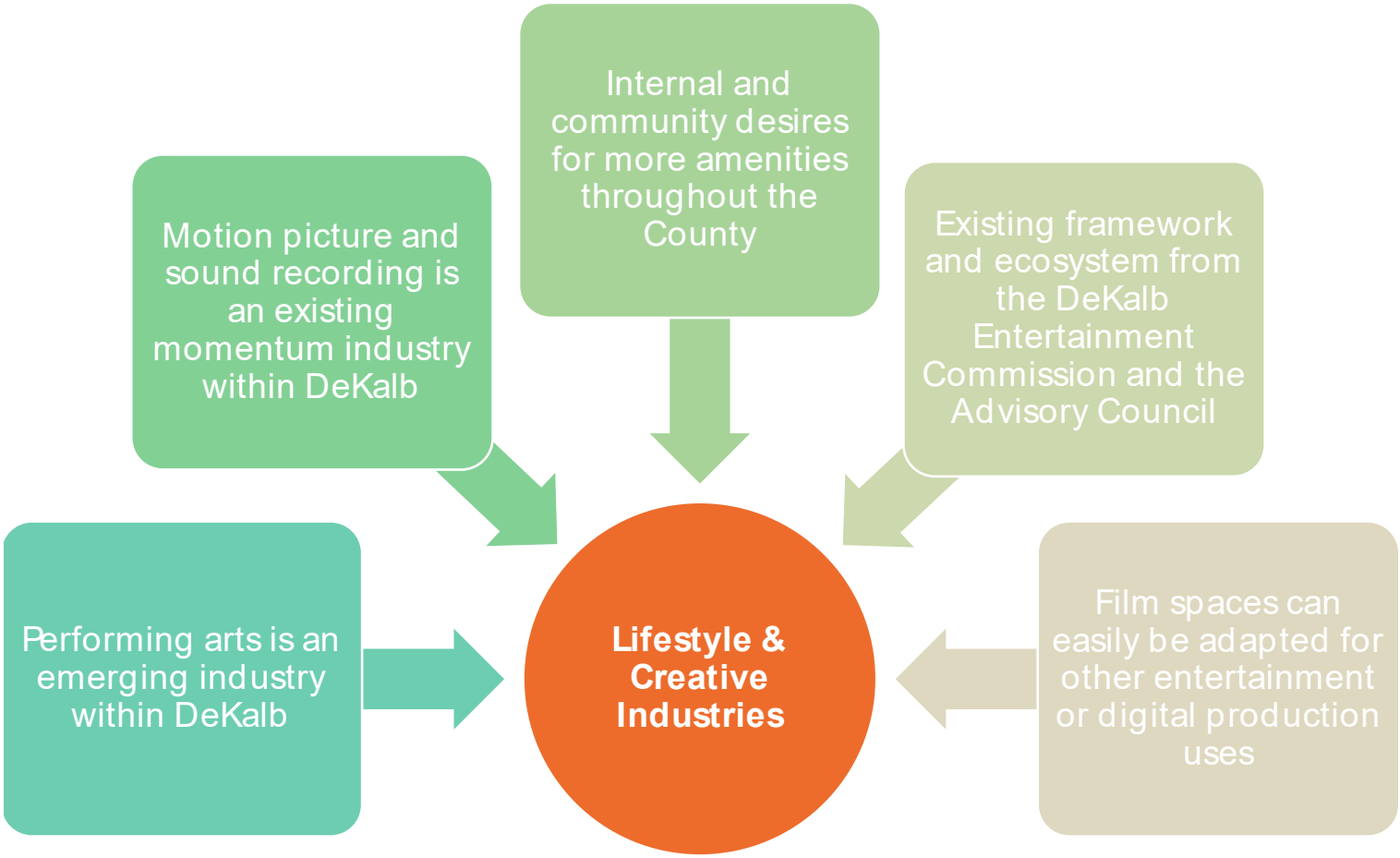
Relative Target Industry Job Density (2023) by Zip Code and Existing Commercial Real Estate



Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
*Bubbles are sized by relative rentable building area (RBA)
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census Zip Code Business Patterns, CoStar

LIFESTYLE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Businesses within this target industry range from those tied to the direct filming and editing of movies/television to lifestyle retail to hospitality. Factors that led to its identification as a target industry are outlined below. These include its alignment with community desires for more amenities and entertainment and subsector growth.



LIFESTYLE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

This target industry includes the following types of businesses and workforce occupations:



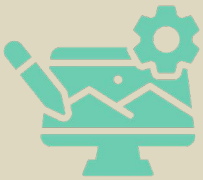
Film and Video Production (including post-production)



Sound Recording



Performing Art Companies



Visual and Graphic Design



Local Leisure and Lifestyle

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Art Directors	Bachelor's degree	480	13%	$158,226
Producers and Directors	Bachelor's degree	610	15%	$86,258
Public Relations Specialists	Bachelor's degree	700	13%	$83,117
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Bachelor's degree	380	19%	$76,731
Photographers	High school diploma or equivalent	340	8%	$73,965
Lodging Managers	High school diploma or equivalent	*	-	$73,590
Graphic Designers	Bachelor's degree	570	8%	$66,706
Interior Designers	Bachelor's degree	380	12%	$62,171

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

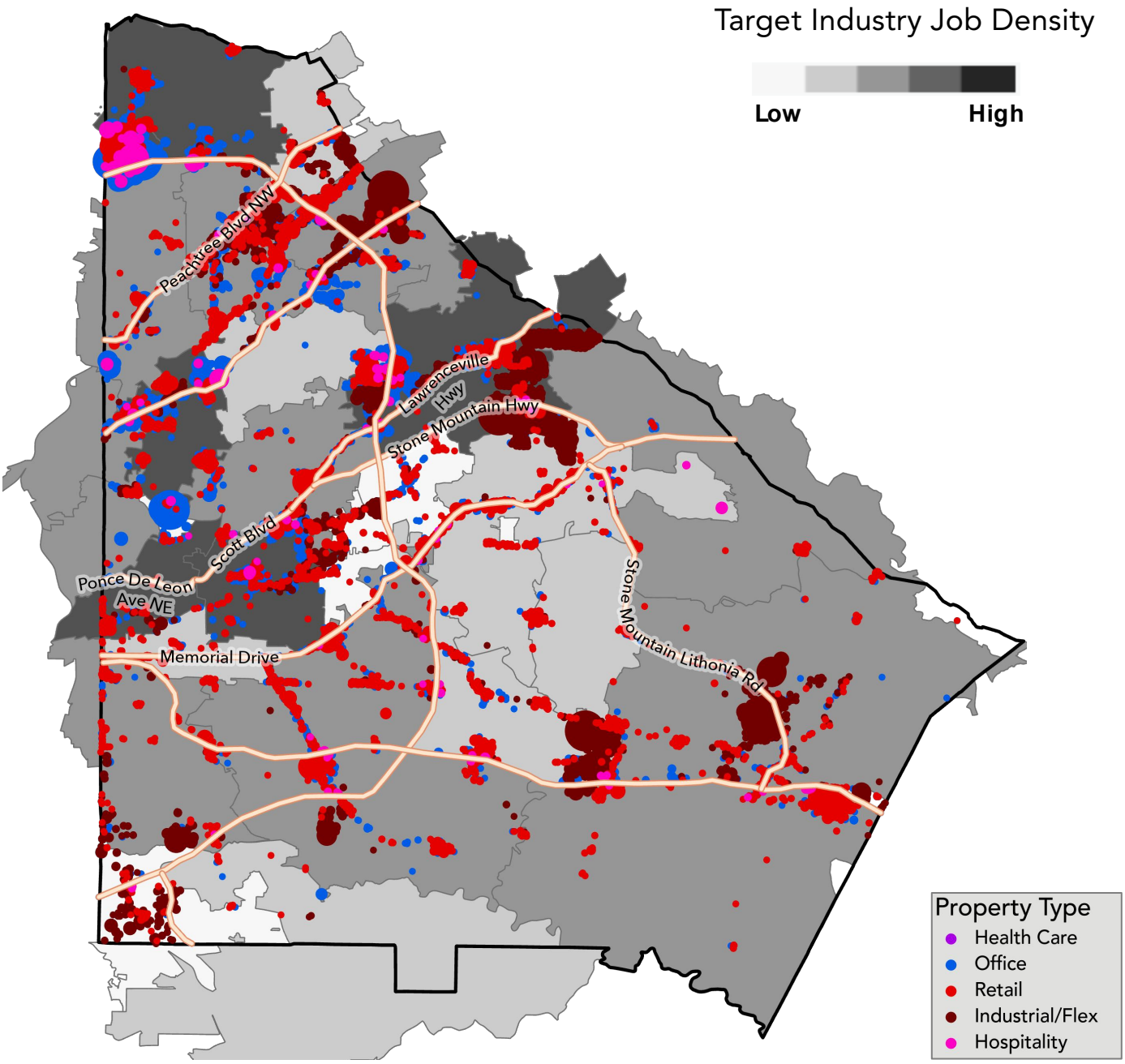
LIFESTYLE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Audio and Video Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award	200	11%	$57,574
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	High school diploma or equivalent	1,500	32%	$49,774
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	Postsecondary non-degree award	1,510	13%	$38,917
Recreation Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	720	12%	$33,925
Retail Salespersons	No formal educational credential	12,970	9%	$32,427
Waiters and Waitresses	No formal educational credential	7,190	9%	$30,202
Cooks, Restaurant	No formal educational credential	14,870	36%	$29,640
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	970	14%	$28,870
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	No formal educational credential	2,630	29%	$23,254
Actors	Some college, no degree	1,020	14%	N/A

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
*Suppressed data
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

LIFESTYLE & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

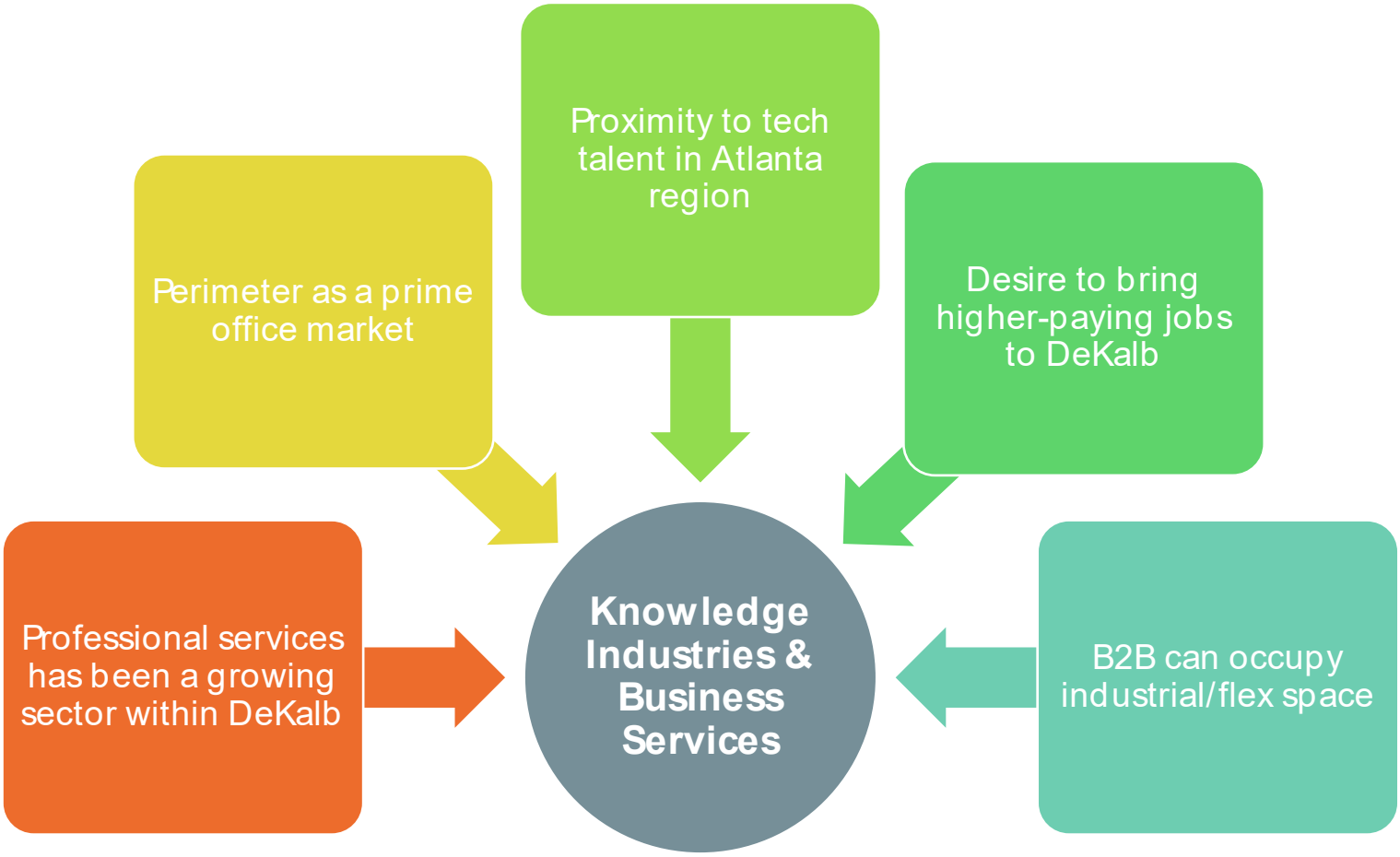
Relative Target Industry Job Density (2023) by Zip Code and Existing Commercial Real Estate



Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
*Bubbles are sized by relative rentable building area (RBA)
Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census Zip Code Business Patterns, CoStar

KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRIES & BUSINESS SERVICES

Businesses within this target industry range from those tied to digital and software design to office support. Factors that led to its identification as a target industry are outlined below. These include its assets like one of the region's primary employment cores and proximity to strong talent pool.



KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRIES & BUSINESS SERVICES

This target industry includes the following types of businesses and workforce occupations:



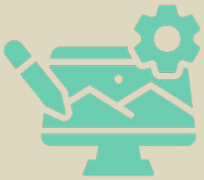
Digital and Software Design



Financial Technologies



Corporate and Regional Offices



Visual and Graphic Design



Telecommunications and Utility Providers



Office Support Services

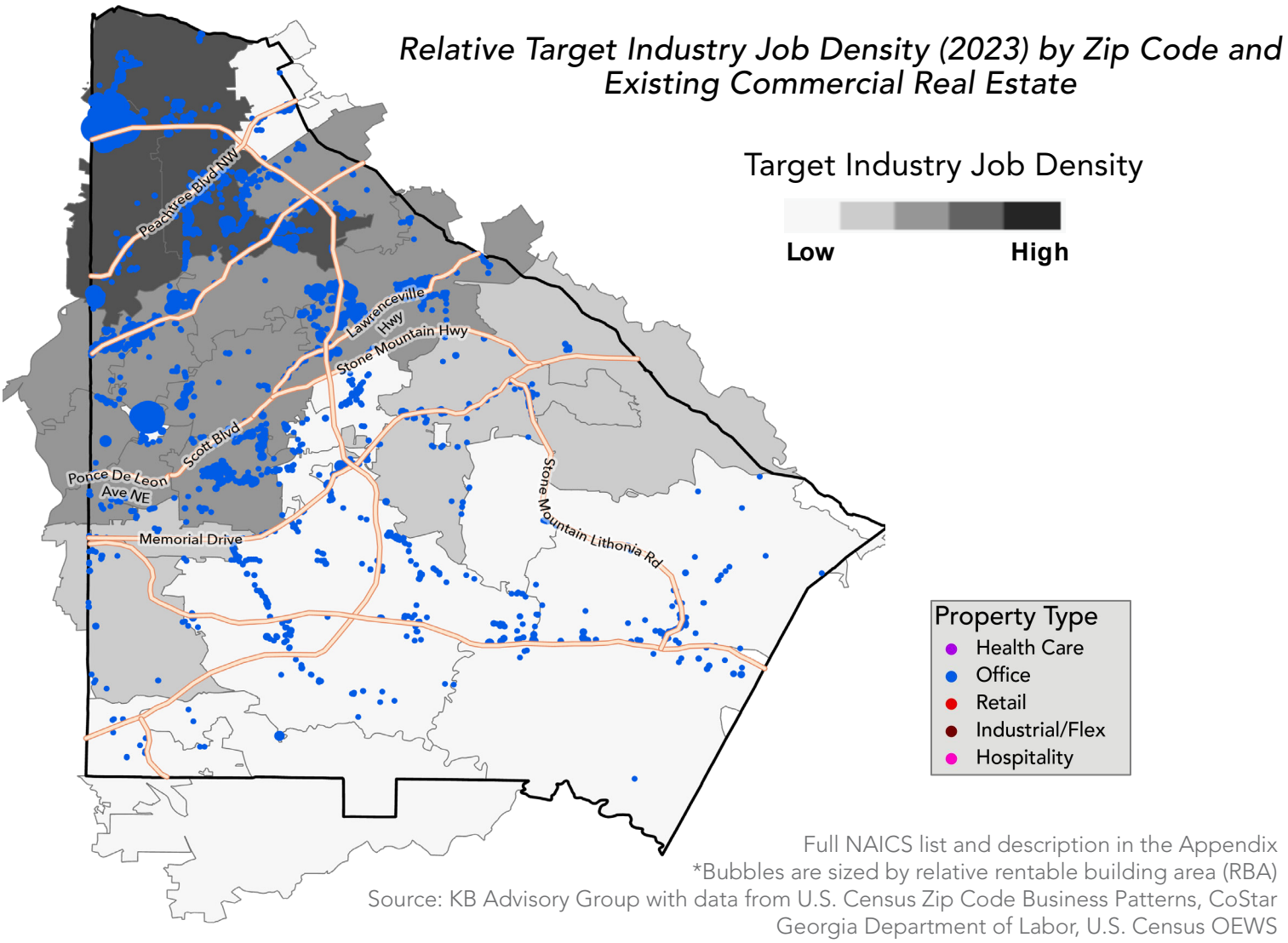
Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Management Analysts	Bachelor's degree	5,410	17%	*
Marketing Managers	Bachelor's degree	1,090	13%	$164,650
Sales Managers	Bachelor's degree	1,830	12%	$156,950
Software Developers	Bachelor's degree	13,800	29%	$130,830
Lawyers	Doctoral or professional degree	2,640	12%	$128,910
Web and Digital Interface Designers	Bachelor's degree	790	25%	$109,560
Project Management Specialists	Bachelor's degree	3,700	16%	$102,760
Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	Bachelor's degree	380	13%	$102,070
Industrial Engineers	Bachelor's degree	1,620	22%	$99,880
Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's degree	5,740	13%	$82,340

Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRIES & BUSINESS SERVICES

Occupation	Typical Education	2022-2032 GA Proj. Growth	% Growth	DeKalb County Avg. Wage, 2023
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Bachelor's degree	5,540	21%	$79,230
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	High school diploma or equivalent	390	3%	$76,760
Human Resources Specialists	Bachelor's degree	3,690	13%	$69,700
Interior Designers	Bachelor's degree	380	12%	$65,280
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate's degree	980	8%	$59,810
Graphic Designers	Bachelor's degree	570	8%	$59,470

Relative Target Industry Job Density (2023) by Zip Code and Existing Commercial Real Estate



Full NAICS list and description in the Appendix
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Source: KB Advisory Group with data from U.S. Census Zip Code Business Patterns, CoStar
Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Census OEWS

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW

These updated data trends, public feedback, stakeholder conversations, and target industries culminate together to shape DeKalb County's economic development roadmap over the next five years. The previous SEDP outlines broad overarching goals with objectives to assist the County and Decide DeKalb with creating a base for its initial five-year strategy. This updated Action Plan builds on these successes to determine next steps as well as incorporates aspects of the prior plan that still need to be implemented.

The goals for this updated Strategic Economic Development Plan are as follows:

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE)

1. *Maximize programming, services, and partnerships to ensure Decide DeKalb can address the needs of businesses across all life stages*
2. *Maintain retention of existing employers tied to key sectors within DeKalb County*
3. *Expand workforce development programs and services to keep talent within DeKalb County and provide economic opportunity to residents*

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & ATTRACTION (BRA)

1. *Adjust BRA efforts to reflect new industry focus and expand opportunity to underserved areas of the County*
2. *Maximize marketing of resources for new business creation and attraction*
3. *Maintain incentives that are competitive with peer communities*

REDEVELOPMENT

1. *Leverage existing partnerships to assist redevelopment efforts*
2. *Maximize TAD programming potential*
3. *Expand redevelopment strategies and initiatives*

ORGANIZATION, CAPACITY, & BRANDING

1. *Evaluate internal capacity and resources to ensure proper staffing and funding to meet the aforementioned goals*
2. *Continue to serve as a convener with economic development partners*
3. *Continue to serve as DeKalb County's economic development arm*

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Business retention and expansion (BRE) is the bedrock of a thriving local and countywide economy. Once a business chooses DeKalb County as their home, it is imperative for the County Economic Development team to ensure that these businesses continue to have the resources they need as well as the opportunities to continue to grow. The longer these businesses can be part of their communities, the more invested they can become. Not only can this generate even further job opportunities for residents, but it can also market to other businesses in the same or other industries that DeKalb County is a great place to do business.

Therefore, the focus of the goals and strategies below are on using collaboration to ensure the existing business community is being routinely engaged and that the County is continuing to provide resources for them as they grow. These were devised based on input from the Open Houses, surveys, focus groups, partner interviews, and conversations with Decide DeKalb staff. The full Action Plan matrix that includes detailed tactics, responsibility designation, and implementation timeframe can be found at the end of this section.

ACTIONS

1. ***Maximize programming, services, and partnerships to ensure Decide DeKalb can address the needs of businesses across all life stages***
    - Host semi-annual technical assistance opportunities for the business community to educate them on loan readiness, marketing, succession planning, employee ownership conversions, and navigating County-level approvals
    - Maintain a sustainable level of individual engagement with existing businesses each year to execute a successful BRE program
    - Collaborate with the County to develop a Rapid Response Fund that can be used to provide emergency funds (rental assistance, payroll grants, etc.) to small or medium-sized businesses through grants and/or a revolving loan fund
    - Explore creating a Legacy Business Program that provides support to businesses with demonstrated investment in the County by offering specialized business assistance and resources
    - Attend networking and/or industry events to promote Decide DeKalb programs and resources
2. ***Maintain retention of existing employers tied to key sectors within DeKalb County***
    - Establish more formal procedures and continuous communications for regional and state economic developers and project managers
    - Support and advocate for pathway programming within DeKalb County School District and Decatur City Schools - especially as it relates to target industries
    - Utilize the existing Industry Advisory Councils to build industry-specific programming and workforce development solutions

3. ***Expand workforce development programs and services to keep talent within DeKalb County and provide economic opportunity to residents***
    - Support the creation of a Young Professionals of DeKalb (YPD) network
    - Adjust the existing Industry Advisory Councils to reflect the updated target industries
    - Expand the Industry Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship to include a healthcare-related pathway
    - Explore the creation of Workforce Innovation Zones around MARTA corridors

WHAT IS A WORKFORCE INNOVATION ZONE?

Workforce Innovation Zones are place-based strategies that coordinate training, education, employment, housing, and transit efforts within a specific geographic area. While not a federal designation, they are used by states, counties, and municipalities to concentrate investments and partnerships in areas where they can have the highest impact.

Examples include Aspire Center for Workforce Innovation in Austin, Texas and the Baltimore Pipeline Project in East Baltimore, Maryland.

PARTNERS

The following entities will coordinate together to either lead or support the actions outlined above (in alphabetical order):

- ***Better Business Bureau (BBB)***
- ***City Schools of Decatur***
- ***Decide DeKalb Development Authority***
- ***DeKalb County Government***
- ***DeKalb County School District***
- ***Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD)***
- ***Georgia Piedmont Technical College (GPTC)***
- ***Housing Authority of DeKalb County***
- ***Leadership DeKalb***
- ***Local Chamber Partners***
- ***Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MAC)***
- ***Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)***
- ***Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)***
- ***UGA Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)***
- ***Universities within DeKalb County***
- ***WorkSource DeKalb***
- ***Utility Providers***

EVALUATION METRICS

- [ ] **Host 2 small business programs and/or trainings annually**
- [ ] **65 business engagements annually**
- [ ] **Identify the potential and need for a Rapid Response Fund by 2030**
- [ ] **Identify the potential and need for a Legacy Business Program Fund by 2030**
- [ ] **Decide DeKalb Staff attendance or resources marketed/sponsorship provided at 5+ partner events annually**
- [ ] **Target industry businesses representing 30% of overall business engagement through year end 2030**
- [ ] **Creation of at least 3 programs to benefit DeKalb's schools systems that pertain to at least 1 target industry by 2030**
- [ ] **Conduct at least 4 meetings annually for all Industry Advisory Councils**
- [ ] **Participate in at least 1 event or engagement with YPD annually once network is established**
- [ ] **100 new collective Industry Advisory Council participants by 2030**
- [ ] **Establish a healthcare-related pathway by 2030**
- [ ] **Conduct a feasibility study for at least 1 potential Workforce Innovation Zone by 2030**

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & ATTRACTION

Business recruitment and attraction (BRA) is an endeavor that requires strong collaboration and partnerships from all levels: municipal, local, regional, and statewide. It is through these relationships that a new business or industry will choose DeKalb County as their first or next location. Each level has its own purviews as well as tools and incentives that, when working in tandem, successfully showcase all the region and DeKalb County have to offer.

Therefore, the focus of the goals and strategies below are on leveraging the variety of partners DeKalb County and Decide DeKalb have to ensure the County is top of mind for businesses looking to locate to Georgia. These were devised based on input from the Open Houses, surveys, focus groups, partner interviews, and conversations with Decide DeKalb staff. The full Action Plan matrix that includes detailed tactics, responsibility designation, and implementation timeframe can be found at the end of this section.

ACTIONS

1. ***Adjust BRA efforts to reflect new industry focus and expand opportunity to underserved areas of the County***
   - Explore ways to bolster the innovation within the County and continue efforts from the Southwest DeKalb Strategy
   - Continue proactive target industry recruitment efforts based on the updated SEDP
   - Remain in active conversations with regional and state partners to assist with international business recruitment
2. ***Maximize marketing of resources for new business creation and attraction***
   - Support the coordination and convening of the partners and resources necessary to establish a business technical assistance hub or incubator within DeKalb County
   - Create marketing materials offered to businesses describing best practices in starting, promoting, and maintaining a successful business
   - Create presentations and collateral for industry-specific recruitment efforts, project visits, and recruitment meetings
3. ***Maintain incentives that are competitive with peer communities***
   - Conduct an incentive package assessment to determine the competitiveness of DeKalb County compared to its peer counties in the Atlanta region
   - Participate in regional and statewide marketing efforts and stay current on regional and statewide Economic Development offerings
   - Continue to serve as the County's Point-of-Contact for site selectors and business attraction efforts for regional and statewide projects

PARTNERS

The following entities will coordinate together to either lead or support the actions outlined above (in alphabetical order):

- ***Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)***
- ***Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in DeKalb County***
- ***Decide DeKalb Development Authority***
- ***DeKalb County Government***
- ***Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD)***
- ***Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA)***
- ***Local Chamber Partners***
- ***Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MAC)***
- ***Municipalities in DeKalb County***
- ***UGA Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)***
- ***Universities within DeKalb County***
- ***Utility Providers***

EVALUATION METRICS

- [ ] **Finalize strategy for implementing 1 temporary or permanent economic development district or area by 2030**
- [ ] **Land 10 projects related to at least one of the updated target industries annually**
- [ ] **Attendance at 1 or more international recruitment events/year hosted by identified partners**
- [ ] **Identify a committed partner to manage a potential business incubator by 2030**
- [ ] **Creation of guide to start business in DeKalb County & its cities**
- [ ] **Create industry-specific collateral**
- [ ] **Perform an internal incentive assessment by 2030**
- [ ] **Attend at least 2 regional economic development events annually**
- [ ] **Facilitate 100 leads and 40 projects annually**

REDEVELOPMENT

Decide DeKalb is the lead economic development entity for DeKalb County and is unique in that it is also the countywide Development Authority. Per O.C.G.A. §36-42-1 and §36-62-1, the purpose of development authorities in the State of Georgia are to "develop and promote trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities for the public good... and to promote the general welfare." A large way that Decide DeKalb carries this out is stewarding County development efforts, especially for the County's five tax allocation districts (TADs).

Therefore, the focus of the goals and strategies below tie to key redevelopment efforts that the County should prioritize over the next five years. These were devised based on input from the Open Houses, surveys, focus groups, partner interviews, and conversations with Decide DeKalb staff. The full Action Plan matrix that includes detailed tactics, responsibility designation, and implementation timeframe can be found at the end of this section.

ACTIONS

1. ***Leverage existing partnerships to assist redevelopment efforts***
   - Work with partners to ensure there is attainable housing near major employment hubs
   - In furtherance of the goals of the DeKalb 2050 Comprehensive Land Use plan, coordinate with MARTA and GDOT to help establish the vision and create financial incentives to support redevelopment in TODs and expanded commuting options at all potential high-capacity transit stations
   - Provide assistance to the DeKalb County School District in the repositioning of underutilized sites/ land owned by the School system
   - Monitor office market conditions and assist in future County-led efforts that incentivize or promote redevelopment of underutilized office spaces (if deemed necessary)
   - Support the establishment of a countywide Housing Investment Bond Program and related initiatives
   - Collaborate and coordinate with DeKalb County and GA Department of Community Affairs on new Federal programs and opportunities
2. ***Maximize TAD programming potential***
   - Maintain continuous annual assessment of existing TADs and potential new TAD areas
   - Prioritize future TAD redevelopment projects that incorporate trails or connectivity to existing green paths within the County
   - Continue building relationships with the DeKalb County School District to demonstrate the benefits of participating in existing and/or future TADs
   - Leverage TAD funds to support anti-displacement efforts for residential tax payers
3. ***Expand redevelopment strategies and initiatives***
   - Develop an Adaptive Reuse Strategy

- particularly along the County's major corridors
- Secure additional Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (BRLF) funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or other sources
- Explore using tools, such as ground leases or a commercial community land trusts, to address commercial affordability and mitigate risks of commercial displacement
- Evaluate the feasibility of a Redevelopment Technical Assistance program
- Develop a Site Acquisition Strategy that can be leveraged for economic development efforts

PARTNERS

The following entities will coordinate together to either lead or support the actions outlined above (in alphabetical order):

- ◊ ***Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in DeKalb County***
- ◊ ***Decide DeKalb Development Authority***
- ◊ ***DeKalb County Government***
- ◊ ***DeKalb County School District***
- ◊ ***Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD)***
- ◊ ***Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)***
- ◊ ***Housing Authority of DeKalb County***
- ◊ ***Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)***
- ◊ ***Municipalities in DeKalb County***
- ◊ ***Urban Land Institute (ULI)***

EVALUATION METRICS

- ☐ **Support at least 3 partner-led housing projects by 2030**
- ☐ **Fund 1 trail segment or trail-related initiative (study, etc.)**
- ☐ **Legislative resolution from DCSD Board**
- ☐ **Develop 1 displacement mitigation program by 2030**
- ☐ **Creation of a Major Corridor Adaptive Reuse Strategy by 2030**
- ☐ **Identify at least 1 additional BRLF funding source by 2030**
- ☐ **Identify at least 1 existing Decide DeKalb program or incentive that can target commercial displacement**
- ☐ **Establish a Pre-Development Fund/Redevelopment Technical Assistance Program by 2030**
- ☐ **Creation of a Site Acquisition Strategy by 2030**

ORGANIZATION, CAPACITY, & BRANDING

Again, as the lead economic development entity for DeKalb County, the Decide DeKalb team spearheads the economic development initiatives for DeKalb County. Ensuring that Decide DeKalb has adequate staff capacity is the only way that current and future engagement with existing and potential new businesses can be maintained and expanded. Furthermore, there will be some efforts where it is best for Decide DeKalb staff to support their partners internal and external to DeKalb County.

Therefore, the focus of the goals and strategies below center on internal reflection of making sure that Decide DeKalb has the organizational capacity to both lead and support the desired programs and initiatives over the next five years. These were devised based on input from the Open Houses, surveys, focus groups, partner interviews, and conversations with Decide DeKalb staff. The full Action Plan matrix that includes detailed tactics, responsibility designation, and implementation timeframe can be found at the end of this section.

ACTIONS

1. ***Evaluate internal capacity and resources to ensure proper staffing and funding to meet the aforementioned goals***
   - Evaluate organizational capacity every year to ensure staffing levels are appropriate to implement the updated SEDP
   - In coordination with County leadership, work towards establishing another designated funding tool that could help fund economic development efforts
2. ***Continue to serve as a convener with economic development partners***
   - Continue to provide monthly Decide DeKalb President Reports to the Decide DeKalb Board of Directors and share these updates with County leadership
   - Continue to host quarterly meetings with Decide DeKalb leadership and economic development partners to enhance dialogue about current economic development efforts
   - Strengthen partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) & other funding institutions
3. ***Continue to serve as DeKalb County's economic development arm***
   - Maintain relationships with brokers, developers, stakeholders, CIDs, and municipal economic development staff (where applicable) to showcase County assets and focus sites
   - Maintain a best-in-class website and social media marketing to ensure businesses and investors have rapid access to information about Decide DeKalb and its programs
   - Increase marketing efforts of project successes and results from various Decide DeKalb efforts

PARTNERS

The following entities will coordinate together to either lead or support the actions outlined above (in alphabetical order):

- ***Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)***
- ***Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in DeKalb County***
- ***Decide DeKalb Development Authority***
- ***DeKalb County Government***
- ***Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD)***
- ***Local Chamber Partners***
- ***Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MAC)***
- ***Municipalities in DeKalb County***
- ***Universities within DeKalb County***

EVALUATION METRICS

- [ ] **Annual capacity assessment**
- [ ] **Identify at least 1 additional funding source by 2030**
- [ ] **Monthly Progress and Accomplishments Reports**
- [ ] **Annual internal Program Goal Report and quarterly summaries of the reports from 2.1**
- [ ] **Establish at least 1 CDFI-partnered program**
- [ ] **Create an internal public engagement and marketing plan**
- [ ] **Creation of a successes webpage and share content on social media monthly**

ACTION PLAN MATRIX

Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE)					
Goal 1	Maximize programming, services, and partnerships to ensure Decide DeKalb can address the needs of businesses across all life stages				
Strategy 1.1	**Host semi-annual technical assistance opportunities for the business community to educate them on loan readiness, marketing, succession planning, employee ownership conversions, and navigating County-level approvals**	**DDDA**	**CHAM, EDU, GPTC, SBDC, BBB**	**Continued Efforts**	**Host 2 technical assistance programs and/ or trainings annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Leverage involvement, expertise, and staff time from partners such as the County, local Chamber partners, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Emory University (Goizueta Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation), and Georgia Piedmont Technical College to assist in hosting technical assistance events in rotating locations throughout the County to expand accessibility to all businesses. This recurring programming can encompass how to access a variety of capital (including small business loans and grants), developing a business and marketing plan, navigating business taxes and local/federal incentives, showcasing workforce development partners and programs, and meetings with or presentations from the various County departments that businesses will have to interact with to open or expand their business. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, Small Business Technical Assistance				
Strategy 1.2	**Maintain a sustainable level of individual engagement with existing businesses each year to execute a successful BRE program**	**DDDA**	**CHAM, GDECD, MAC, Utility Providers**	**Continued Efforts**	**65 business engagements annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Establish a list of individual businesses that Decide DeKalb has engaged within each calendar year and ensure there are metrics that have tracked the frequency, type of engagement (i.e. site visit, email, phone call, event), service requested, and potential service rendered for each business in that given year. Maintain a database internal to Decide DeKalb that tracks these annual lists and metrics so that engagement can be tracked over time. Establish goals for level of new engagement with existing businesses within DeKalb.				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 1.3	**Collaborate with the County to develop a Rapid Response Fund that can be used to provide emergency funds (rental assistance, payroll grants, etc.) to small or medium-sized businesses through grants and/or a revolving loan fund**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**3-5+ Years**	**Identify the potential and need for a Rapid Response Fund by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Work with the County Board of Commissioners to evaluate feasibility, create, and fund an emergency fund program that Decide DeKalb would manage and administer. Establish criteria for when funds could become accessible to businesses and an application process. Priority will be given each cycle to businesses that have not previously applied. Ensure that this fund is promoted in areas of the County that have historically demonstrated the most need.				
Strategy 1.4	**Explore creating a Legacy Business Program that provides support to businesses with demonstrated investment in the County by offering specialized business assistance and resources**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**3-5+ Years**	**Identify the potential and need for a Legacy Business Program Fund by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Work with the County Board of Commissioners to create a program for businesses that have established a longer-term commitment to DeKalb County by establishing a self-registry, similar to Invest Atlanta's Atlanta Local Legacy. Longer term investments can include specialized and recurring business assistance efforts (ex. marketing, licensing/permitting, navigating how to sell their business, financial resource opportunities, etc.). If additional funding should become available, this program could be expanded to provide supplemental funding to the existing Decide DeKalb TAD Small Business Property Improvement Grant Program for eligible improvements throughout the County. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Strategy 1.5	**Attend networking and/or industry events to promote Decide DeKalb programs and resources**	**DDDA**	**Many**	**Continued Efforts**	**Decide DeKalb Staff attendance or resources marketed/ sponsorship provided at 5+ partner events annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Maintain recurring conversations with partners who sponsor and host networking events so that Decide DeKalb resources can be promoted to attendees. Work to identify all existing business associations and CID or municipal networking groups who regularly host events.				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Goal 2	Maintain retention of existing employers tied to key sectors within DeKalb County				
Strategy 2.1	**Establish more formal procedures and continuous communications for regional and state economic developers and project managers**	**Econ. Dev. Orgs.**	**DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	**Target industry businesses representing 30% of overall business engagement through year end 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Through coordination with regional and state partners, ensure there is recurring cadence with target industry businesses so that Decide DeKalb can remain involved in expansion plans and any potential concerns or challenges. Maintain a focus on relationship building until there is enough staff capacity for more enhanced engagement. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 2.2	**Support and advocate for pathway programming within DeKalb County School District and Decatur City Schools - especially as it relates to target industries**	**DCSD, CSD, EDU, TCSG**	**DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	**Creation of at least 3 programs to benefit DeKalb's school systems that pertain to at least 1 target industry by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Through the Industry Advisory Councils and workforce development partners, support the creation or refinement of pathway programs at all High Schools within DeKalb County that support the skills most in demand for the County's target industries. Where possible, assist the public school system with determining what applicable certifications could be obtained by High School seniors or where dual enrollment opportunities may be possible. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils, Industry Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship				

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Strategy 2.3	**Utilize the existing Industry Advisory Councils to build industry-specific programming and workforce development solutions**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY, MAC, GDECD, DCSD, CSD, WSD, TCSG**	**Continued Efforts**	**Conduct at least 4 meetings annually for all Industry Advisory Councils**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Update the Industry Advisory Councils and incorporate talent and other needs as a recurring meeting topic. From these conversations, work with economic development and educational partners to develop programming that is reflective of current and project future industry needs. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils, Industry Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship, MADE in DeKalb				
Goal 3	Expand workforce development programs and services to keep talent within DeKalb County and provide economic opportunity to residents				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 3.1	**Support the creation of a Young Professionals of DeKalb (YPD) network**	**LD**	**COUNTY, CHAM, DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	**Participate in at least 1 event or engagement with YPD annually once network is established**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Through the Industry Advisory Councils and collaboration with Leadership DeKalb and local Chamber partners, support the creation of a Young Professionals of DeKalb that would function as a self-sufficient network for working professionals early in their careers to network, volunteer, and socialize. Decide DeKalb and partners would assist in convening a potential Board made up of young professionals who would want to lead this effort. Once created, Decide DeKalb will maintain at least one engagement with YPD a year to stay abreast of the hurdles and needs of this segment of the County's workforce. Gwinnett and Cobb County have similar programs. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 3.2	**Adjust the existing Industry Advisory Councils to reflect the updated target industries**	**DDDA, COUNTY**	**MAC, GDECD, MUNI, CID**	**0-2 Years**	**100 new collective Industry Advisory Council participants by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, DeKalb Entertainment Commission*				
Tactic	Ensure that the existing Advisory Councils reflect the proper mix of industry businesses and organizations based on the updated target industries. Aim to recruit at least five new businesses/organizations to each Advisory Council annually to integrate new industry voices. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils				
Strategy 3.3	**Expand the Industry Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship to include a healthcare-related pathway**	**GPTC**	**DDDA, DCSD, CSD, EDU, WSD**	**3-5+ Years**	**Establish a healthcare-related pathway by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				

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Tactic	Collaborate with industry and educational partners to determine the feasibility of adding a healthcare-specific pathway to the existing pre-apprenticeship program in order address entry-level worker shortages. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils, Industry Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship				
Strategy 3.4	**Explore the creation of Workforce Innovation Zones around MARTA corridors**	**DDDA, COUNTY, MARTA**	**EDU, WSD, GA, DCSD**	**3-5+ Years**	**Conduct a feasibility study for at least 1 potential Workforce Innovation Zone by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Collaborate with economic development stakeholders to establish one or more Workforce Innovation Zones or place-based strategies that coordinate training, education, employment, housing, and transit efforts within a specific geographic area. These can be anchored by a particular industry or educational partner. A center can be created that is housed on the campus of a higher-ed partner or on an underutilized property owned by DCSD. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Industry Advisory Councils, TADs				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & ATTRACTION (BRA)					
Goal 1	Adjust BRA efforts to reflect new industry focus and expand opportunity to underserved areas of the County				
Strategy 1.1	**Explore ways to bolster the innovation within the County and continue efforts from the Southwest DeKalb Strategy**	**DDDA, COUNTY**	**MAC, GDECD, MUNI, CID**	**3-5+ Years**	**Finalize strategy for implementing 1 temporary or permanent economic development district or area by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives, DeKalb Entertainment Commission*				

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Tactic	Leverage the existing Technology and Film & Entertainment Advisory Councils and relationships with educational and regional partners to develop more innovative nodes that promote and support entrepreneurship and the creative class - especially in Southeast and Southwest DeKalb County. These nodes should aim to create a sense of place by prioritizing developments that incorporate several lifestyle amenities such as parks, social spaces, dining, smart technology, and co-working. Explore how the Housing Investment Bond Program can be leveraged to assist with this effort once it is established. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive, Industry Advisory Councils				
Strategy 1.2	**Continue proactive target industry recruitment efforts based on the updated SEDP**	**DDDA**	**MAC, GDECD**	**Continued Efforts**	**Land 10 projects related to at least one of the updated target industries annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Adapt existing business recruitment & attraction strategies to reflect the updated target industries and communicate this update to all recruitment partners. Identify new avenues that may be needed to reach these employers.				

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Strategy 1.3	**Remain in active conversations with regional and state partners to assist with international business recruitment**	**DDDA**	**MAC, GDECD**	**Continued Efforts**	**Attendance at 1 or more international recruitment events/year hosted by identified partners**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Support international recruitment efforts by GDEcD's International Trade and Global Commerce teams by maintaining collaboration and coordinating any joint efforts so there is no "reinventing the wheel". Where applicable, serve as a County representative at a trade show or industry event related to the updated target industries.				
Goal 2	Maximize marketing of resources for new business creation and attraction				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 2.1	**Support the coordination and convening of the partners and resources necessary to establish a business technical assistance hub or incubator within DeKalb County**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**3-5+ Years**	**Identify a committed partner to manage a potential business incubator by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Continue to support the creation of a business incubator in DeKalb County by convening partners who wish to staff and manage the incubator with those who are willing to house it. These partners could be faith-based organizations, educational institutions, or non-profits. Maintain cadence with partner operating the incubator so participating businesses are aware of Decide DeKalb's services once they "graduate out". An example is the on-going efforts with New Life Church. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: Business Resources 101 Class, Small Business Technical Assistance				
Strategy 2.2	**Create marketing materials offered to businesses describing best practices in starting, promoting, and maintaining a successful business**	**DDDA**	**EDU, CHAM, SBDC, COUNTY**	**0-2 Years**	**Creation of guide to start business in DeKalb County & its cities**

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Marketing & Communications*				
Tactic	Building on the UGA Small Business Development Center's Guide to Starting a Business in Georgia, provide pertinent information a new business may need to set-up a physical location in DeKalb County. This can include expectations in County permitting and license timeframes, important points of contact within the County, and best practices from successful businesses who have been within the County for over five years. Summarize this information in one clear and concise document that is shared on Decide DeKalb's website.				
Strategy 2.3	**Create presentations and collateral for industry-specific recruitment efforts, project visits, and recruitment meetings.**	**DDDA**		**0-2 Years**	**Create industry-specific collateral**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Marketing & Communications*				
Tactic	Create and strategically distribute one or more fact sheets that include key industry data (especially on the updated target industries), contact list of key stakeholders, incentive information, approval processes, and quality of life attributes.				
Goal 3	Maintain incentives that are competitive with peer communities				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 3.1	**Conduct an incentive package assessment to determine the competitiveness of DeKalb County compared to its peer counties in the Atlanta region**	**DDDA**		**3-5+ Years**	**Perform an internal incentive assessment by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Reassess the current base incentive package to make sure it still aligns with Decide DeKalb and County goals, remains competitive in the region, and provides a return on investment for the DeKalb County community. Align reassessment with updated evaluation criteria.				
Strategy 3.2	**Participate in regional and statewide marketing efforts and stay current on regional and statewide Economic Development offerings**	**DDDA**	**MAC, GEDA, GDECD, GA, ARC, Utility Providers**	**Continued Efforts**	**Attend at least 2 regional economic development events annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Through regular cadence with partners who also operate external to DeKalb County (including infrastructure partners, Metro Atlanta Chamber, ARC, GDEcD, State of Georgia), stay updated about their incentives and financial support offerings so Decide DeKalb can continually align and fit in with these existing efforts.				
Strategy 3.3	**Continue to serve as the County's Point-of-Contact for site selectors and business attraction efforts for regional and statewide projects**	**DDDA**	**MAC, GEDA, GDECD, GA, ARC, Utility Providers**	**Continued Efforts**	**Facilitate 100 leads and 40 projects annually**
Department Lead	*Economic Development*				
Tactic	Maintain cadence with the Metro Atlanta Chamber and GDEcD so these regional and state partners can include Decide DeKalb early on in their business attraction efforts. Use this cadence to continually generate new leads and projects that bring economic opportunity throughout the County.				
REDEVELOPMENT					
Goal 1	Leverage existing partnerships to assist redevelopment efforts				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 1.1	**Work with partners to ensure there is attainable housing near major employment hubs**	**COUNTY**	**DDDA, HDAC**	**3-5+ Years**	**Support at least 3 partner-led housing projects by 2030**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Based on findings from the Countywide Comprehensive Strategic Housing Plan, assist efforts led by the County's designated housing lead to expand housing options that are accessible to employees across the income spectrum - especially near major healthcare and manufacturing centers. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive, Housing Investment Bond Program, Decide DeKalb Down-payment Assistance Program				
Strategy 1.2	**In furtherance of the goals of the DeKalb 2050 Comprehensive Land Use plan, coordinate with MARTA and GDOT to help establish the vision and create financial incentives to support redevelopment in TODs and expanded commuting options at all potential high-capacity transit stations**	**DDDA, COUNTY**	**MARTA, GDOT**	**0-2 Years**	

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Leverage existing relationships with County and municipal leadership to advocate for Decide DeKalb leadership involvement with MARTA and GDOT projects early on in the project planning process. This can include being part of the initial project kick-off meetings and/or periodically joining routine project meetings. Advocate to join initial and recurring conversations for all projects that will occur within an existing TAD boundary, even if the project is not seeking TAD funds. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive				
Strategy 1.3	**Provide assistance to the DeKalb County School District in the repositioning of underutilized sites/land owned by the School system**	**DCSD**	**DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Leverage existing and strengthened partnerships with the DeKalb County School District to explore strategic initiatives that align with County economic development and workforce services. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Strategy 1.4	**Monitor office market conditions and assist in future County-led efforts that market and promote redevelopment of underutilized office spaces (if deemed necessary)**	**DDDA, MUNI**	**CID, ULI**	**Continued Efforts**	
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Through conversations with partners and broker relationships, passively monitor and re-evaluate private office assets within the County to assess the necessity of assisting with the promotion of underutilized private commercial properties. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive				
Strategy 1.5	**Support the establishment of a countywide Housing Investment Bond Program and related initiatives**	**COUNTY**	**DDDA**	**Continued Efforts**	
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Continue to administer and manage any identified subloan and subgrant programs tied to the Housing Investment Bond Program. Coordinate other tools as needed to assist with other related initiatives. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Strategy 1.6	**Collaborate and coordinate with DeKalb County and GA Department of Community Affairs on new Federal programs and opportunities**	**COUNTY, DCA**	**DDDA**	**Continued Efforts**	

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives, Economic Development*				
Tactic	Remain involved in County and state conversations about new federal programs and initiatives to expand knowledge sharing on federal opportunities that DeKalb County can qualify for.				
Goal 2	Maximize TAD programming potential				
Strategy 2.1	**Maintain continuous annual assessment of existing TADs and potential new TAD areas**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY, DCSD**	**Continued Efforts**	
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Routinely assess the utilization of existing TADs and, when deemed necessary, conduct audits of TAD collections and obligations. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Strategy 2.2	**Prioritize future TAD redevelopment projects that incorporate trails or connectivity to existing green paths within the County**	**DDDA**		**0-2 Years**	**Fund 1 trail segment or trail-related initiative (study, etc.)**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				

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Tactic	To enhance quality of life and align with countywide connectivity efforts, prioritize or provide TAD funding programs that will make connections to existing multi-modal paths and green spaces. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Strategy 2.3	**Continue building relationships with the DeKalb County School District Board to demonstrate the benefits of participating in existing and/or future TADs**	**DDDA, DCSD**		**Continued Efforts**	**Legislative resolution from DCSD Board**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Build on the existing partnership with the DeKalb County School District to determine their level of millage commitment to all of the existing TADs and any future ones. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Strategy 2.4	**Leverage TAD funds to support anti-displacement efforts for residential tax payers**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**3-5+ Years**	**Develop 1 displacement mitigation program by 2030**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				

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		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Explore the potential to add an additional TAD program that establishes a tax increment rebate back to owner-occupied residential properties within the TAD areas. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs				
Goal 3	Expand redevelopment strategies and initiatives				
Strategy 3.1	**Develop an Adaptive Reuse Strategy - particularly along the County's major corridors**	**COUNTY, MUNI**	**CID, GDOT, DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	**Creation of a Major Corridor Adaptive Reuse Strategy by 2030**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Building on prior planning efforts such as the recent Memorial Drive Plan, LCIs, and other small area plans, craft an adaptive reuse strategy of underutilized and vacant properties along the County's major corridors. Use the resulting strategies and recommendations to inform conversations with brokers and CIDs as well as plan for future TAD areas.				

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Strategy 3.2	**Secure additional Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or other sources, once funding becomes available**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**3-5+ Years**	**Identify at least 1 additional BRLF funding source by 2030**
Department Lead	Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives				
Tactic	Explore existing and potential future federal and state funding sources for the Brownfield Revolving Loan fund.				
Strategy 3.3	**Explore using tools, such as ground leases or commercial community land trusts, to address commercial affordability and mitigate risks of commercial displacement**	**DDDA**		**3-5+ Years**	**Identify at least 1 existing Decide DeKalb program or incentive that can target commercial displacement**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				

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Tactic	Establish a relationship with the Atlanta Land Trust, Decatur Land Trust, and similar entities or faith-based organizations to explore ways that Decide DeKalb's existing programs and incentives could assist in combating commercial displacement risk. Existing Relevant Tool/Service: TADs, Property Tax Incentive, DeKalb County Land Bank				
Strategy 3.4	**Evaluate the feasibility of a Redevelopment Technical Assistance program**	**DDDA, ULI**		**3-5+ Years**	**Establish a Pre-Development Fund/ Redevelopment Technical Assistance Program by 2030**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	Explore the creation of a technical assistance program that can educate private property owners on real estate 101 basics and the process of how to redevelop their properties in DeKalb County.				

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Strategy 3.5	**Develop a Site Acquisition Strategy that can be leveraged for economic development efforts**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY, HADC, DCSD**	**3-5+ Years**	**Creation of a Site Acquisition Strategy by 2030**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives, Economic Development*				
Tactic	Develop an Acquisition Strategy that outlines a framework that establishes specific criteria for properties to potentially purchase as well as pre-development and due diligence processes to determine the feasibility for redevelopment opportunities.				
ORGANIZATION, CAPACITY, & BRANDING					
Goal 1	Evaluate internal capacity and resources to ensure proper staffing and funding to meet the aforementioned goals				
Strategy 1.1	**Evaluate organizational capacity every year to ensure staffing levels are appropriate to implement the updated SEDP**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY**	**Continued Efforts**	**Annual capacity assessment**
Department Lead	*Decide DeKalb leadership, Economic Development*				
Tactic	Assess the staff capacity of current staff members to continue their current workload as well as implement strategies outlined in prior goals in this implementation matrix				

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Strategy 1.2	**In coordination with County leadership, work towards establishing another designated funding tool that could help fund economic development efforts**	**COUNTY**	**DDDA**	**3-5+ Years**	**Identify at least 1 additional funding source by 2030**
Department Lead	*Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				
Tactic	In partnership with the County, identify another designated funding tool (ex. from millage rates or other public source) whose funds could help supplement funding for Decide DeKalb programming and services.				
Goal 2	Continue to serve as a convener with economic development partners				
Strategy 2.1	**Continue to provide monthly Decide DeKalb President Reports to the Decide DeKalb Board of Directors and share these updates with County leadership**	**DDDA**		**Continued Efforts**	**Monthly Progress & Accomplishments Reports**
Department Lead	*Decide DeKalb leadership*				
Tactic	Establish a template of metrics to report out on (including those established in BRE Strategy 1.2), accomplishments, and upcoming priorities.				

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Strategy 2.2	**Continue to host quarterly meetings with Decide DeKalb leadership and economic development partners to enhance dialogue about current economic development efforts**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY, CHAM, CID, MUNI, MAC, GDECD, EDU**	**Continued Efforts**	**Annual internal Program Goal Report and quarterly summaries of the reports from 2.1**
Department Lead	*Decide DeKalb leadership*				
Tactic	During the annual Decide DeKalb Board retreat, devise a program plan that can be communicated to all partners. Provide progress and accomplishments for each of these programs at these quarterly meetings.				
Strategy 2.3	**Strengthen partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) & other funding institutions**	**DDDA**		**0-2 Years**	**Establish at least 1 CDFI-partnered program**
Department Lead	*Economic Development, Redevelopment & Strategic Initiatives*				

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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Increase routine cadence and coordination with CDFIs in the Atlanta metro to provide supplemental financial assistance for DeKalb businesses. Example CDFIs include: 1st Choice Credit Union, B.O.N.D. Community Federal Credit Union, Citizens Trust Bank, Community Redevelopment Loan and Investment Fund, Credit Union of Atlanta, Georgia Cities Foundation, and Habitat Capital.				
Goal 3	Continue to serve as DeKalb County's economic development arm				
Strategy 3.1	**Maintain relationships with brokers, developers, stakeholders, CIDs, and municipal economic development staff (where applicable) to showcase County assets and focus sites**	**DDDA**	**COUNTY, CHAM, MUNI, MAC, GDECD, EDU**	**Continued Efforts**	
Department Lead	All staff				
Tactic	Remain a part of all partner activities that focus on marketing DeKalb County and coordinate additional tours, roundtables, or meetings as needed to lead marketing efforts of the County's economic development assets. Use these opportunities to learn and address any potential negative perceptions about locating in DeKalb County.				
Strategy 3.2	**Maintain a best-in-class website and social media marketing to ensure businesses and investors have rapid access to information about Decide DeKalb and its programs**	**DDDA**		**Continued Efforts**	**Create an internal public engagement and marketing plan**
Department Lead	*Marketing & Communications*				

***ARC** - Atlanta Regional Commission*
***BBB** - Better Business Bureau*
***CHAM** - Local Chamber Partners*
***CID** - Community Improvement Districts in DeKalb*
***COUNTY** - DeKalb County*
***CSD** - City Schools of Decatur*
***DCA** - GA Dept. of Community Affairs*
***DCSD** - DeKalb County School District*
***DDDA** - Decide DeKalb Development Authority*
***EDU** - All High-Ed Inst. in DeKalb*
***GA** - State of Georgia*
***GDECD** - Georgia Dept. of Econ. Dev.*
***GDOT** - Georgia Dept. of Transportation*
***GEDA**- Georgia Economic Developers Association*
***GPTC** - Georgia Piedmont Technical College*
***HADC** - Housing Authority of DeKalb County*
***LEAD** - Leadership DeKalb*
***MAC** - Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce*
***MARTA** - Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority*
***MUNI** - DeKalb Municipalities*
***SBDC** - UGA Small Business Development Center*
***TCSG** - Technical College System of Georgia*
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Decide DeKalb Action Plan Matrix		*ROLE*		*Begin Implementation*	*Evaluation Metric(s)*
		Lead	*Supporting Partner*		
Tactic	Ensure that the Decide DeKalb website is routinely updated with the most current demographic and economic information, details about each Advisory Council, and events. Include quality of life metrics on the website as part of marketing DeKalb County and integrate into social media posts.				
Strategy 3.3	**Increase marketing efforts of project success and results from various Decide DeKalb efforts**	**DDDA**		**Continued Efforts**	**Creation of a successes webpage and share content on social media monthly**
Department Lead	*Marketing & Communications*				
Tactic	Draft monthly marketing that recaps recent business retention and attraction efforts and accomplishments (highlighting new jobs or investments). Disseminate these on social media and create a page on the website where these accomplishments can be posted and routinely updated. Mirror these recaps in the newsletters and include a link on the new webpage for people who are interested to subscribe and also be able to view archived newsletters to avoid losing information in inboxes.				

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