

2018 Challenges Ahead

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next
ATL

REGIONAL ISSUE

Increasing Access to Housing Affordability and Jobs

BACKGROUND

Atlanta is known as an affordable metro area. But for many, it's challenging to live near work. And that's adding to the region's infamous traffic problems.

Housing is generally considered affordable if a family spends less than 30% of its income on rent or a mortgage and other housing costs. By that definition, most metro Atlanta neighborhoods are not affordable for families making less than \$50,000 a year.

Adding to the challenge is the fact that most metro Atlanta residents don't live near where they work. The ARC has identified about a dozen "Regional Centers" with more than 10,000 jobs, such as downtown Atlanta, Midtown, Buckhead, and the Cumberland and Perimeter mall areas. These job magnets account for 21% of the region's jobs but less than 1% of its geographic area, 14% of its housing units, and less than 9% of its affordable housing.

As a result, many workers spend a big chunk of pay on commuting costs. For moderate-income families making about \$47,000 a year, housing and transportation costs consume about 63% of their pay, according to a study by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. By that measure, the Atlanta region is less affordable than many other major metro areas.

Year-Over-Year Change in Sales Prices and Job Earnings



INSIGHTS & INNOVATION

Providing housing that offers easy access to jobs while remaining affordable for a wide range of residents is a challenge for communities all over the Atlanta region – as it is in many growing metro areas.

There are a number of local efforts underway to address this issue as well as some collaborative efforts involving multiple jurisdictions.

LOCAL

In response to rising property values that could be squeezing out low-to-middle income residents and young families, Sandy Springs leaders are encouraging developers to build more affordable housing near jobs and MARTA rail stations.

The city adopted new zoning and land-use policies that allow taller multi-family projects if developers set aside at least 10% of the units as affordable housing. This has stimulated housing growth in the Perimeter area. That market's residential and working population has grown by 119% in recent years.

COLLABORATIVE

There are several efforts underway that are dealing with this issue either directly or as part of other initiatives. These include the Transformation Alliance, the Atlanta Regional Housing Forum, the Atlanta Regional Housing Collaborative, and the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, to name a few.

It is immoral to ask a police officer, firefighter, or other first responder to put their lives on the line for a community in which they cannot afford to live.

*Rusty Paul,
Mayor, Sandy Springs*



Atlanta Regional Commission