ONE great REGION

Atlanta Regional Commission

2025 Population Estimates

Jim Skinner
Research & Analytics Department
jskinner@atlantaregional.org

Vision

ONE great REGION

Mission

Foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments.

Values

Excellence | **Integrity** | **Equity**

Goals

Healthy, safe, livable communities in the Atlanta Metro area.

Strategic investments in people, infrastructure, mobility, and preserving natural resources.

Regional services delivered with **operational excellence** and **efficiency**.

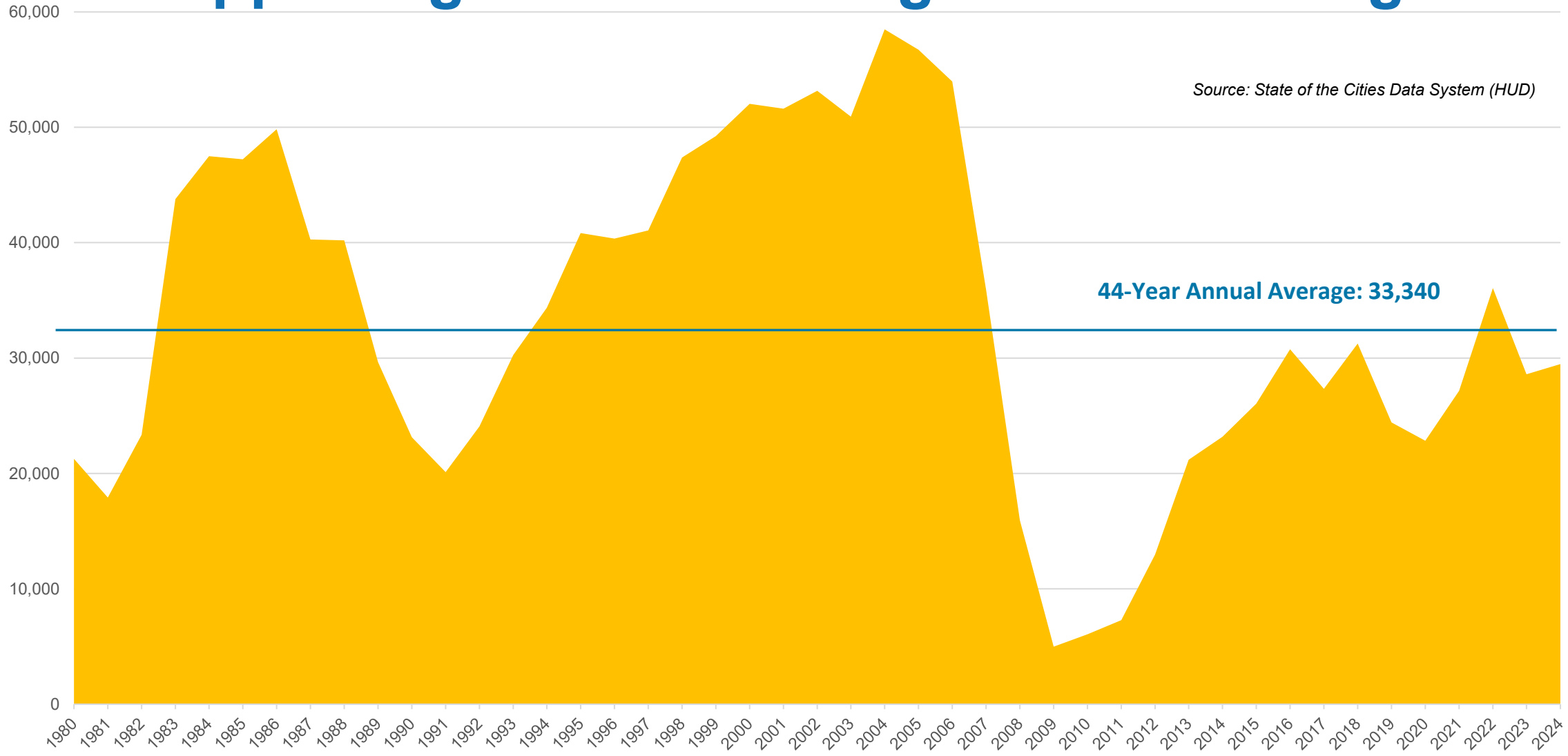
Diverse stakeholders engage and take a regional approach to solve local issues.

A competitive economy that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient.

Main Takeaways

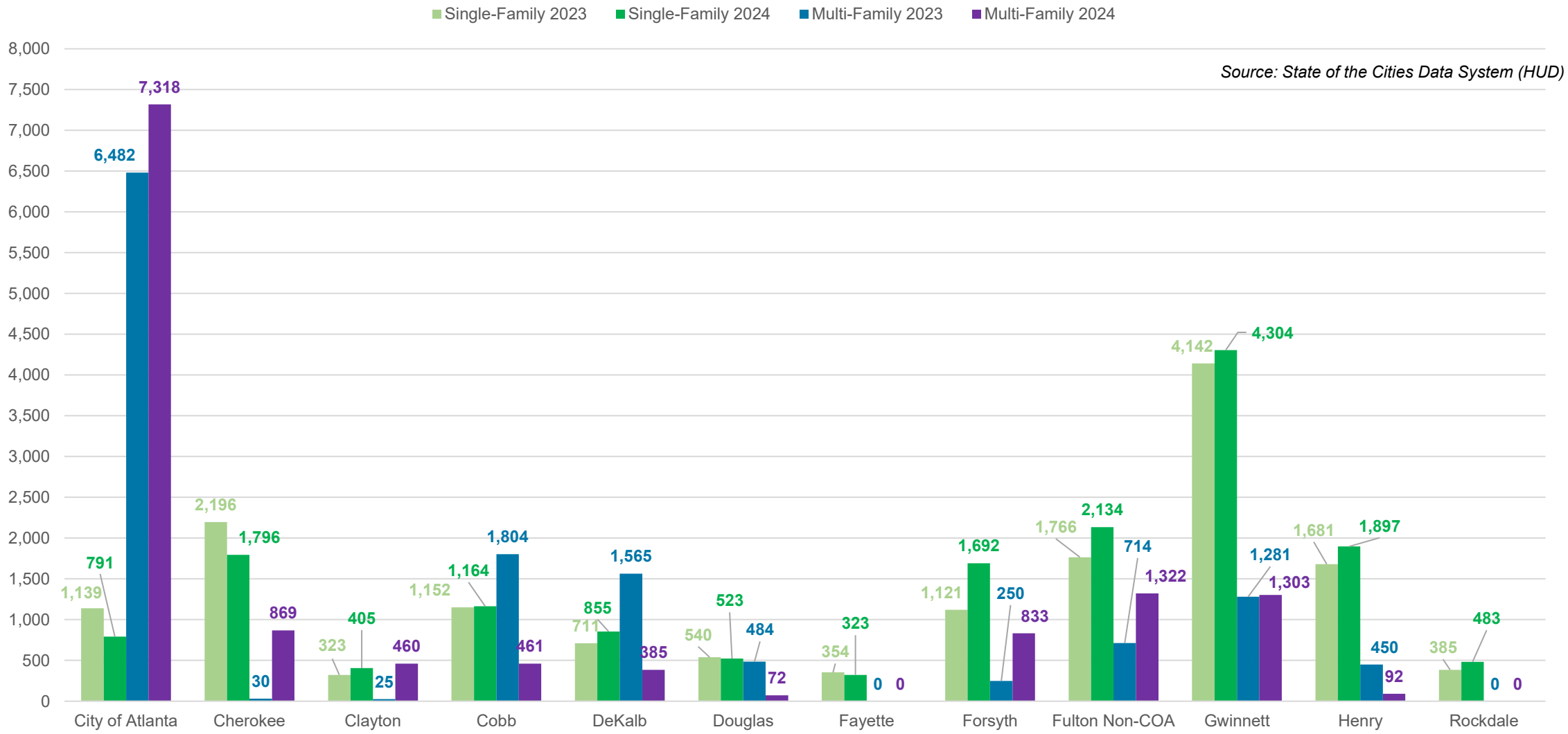
- **We're still growing** … just more slowly than we were (on average) since the 1980s
- The 11-county Atlanta region is now home to **5,285,474 residents**, an **increase of 64,400** in the year ending April 1, 2025.
- This represents **a slight uptick** compared to our 2024 population estimate. But it **trails the average annual increase during the 2010s** (68,245).
- Our growth in the past year reflects a **small increase in building permit activity,** though levels remain below historical averages.
- We're still **adding jobs**, but the **rate of growth is slowing**.
- **Housing supply remains very low,** keeping prices elevated. This has acted as a **brake on population growth**, especially domestic migration.

The Supporting Facts: Building Permits – Long View



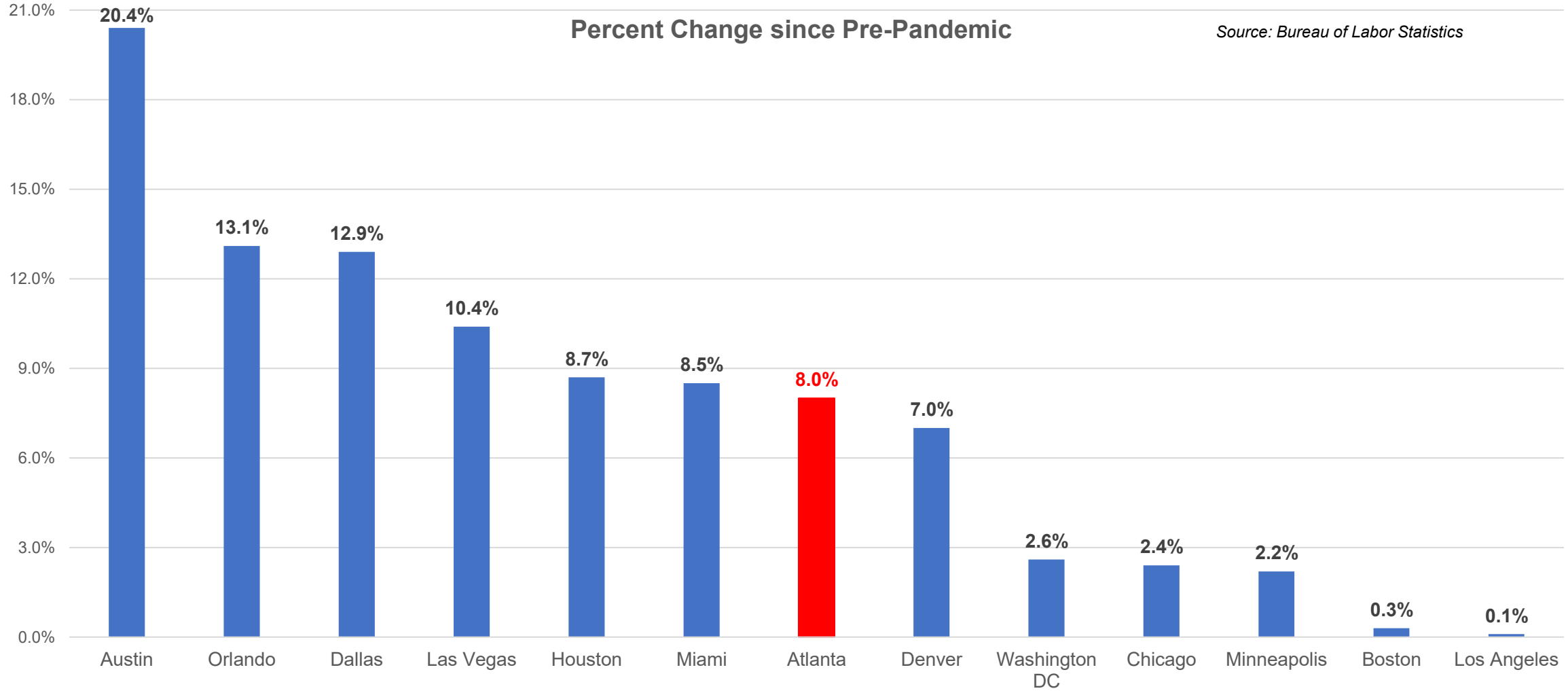
Over the last four decades- plus, the ARC 11-County region has averaged just over 33,300 permits per year. Since the onset of the Great Recession in 2008, the region has exceeded that long-term average only in 2022, with the 2008-2024 annual average about 22,000. By way of comparison, the average annual permitting from 1980-2007 was just over 40,000 per year.

The Supporting Facts: Building Permits – 2023 & 2024



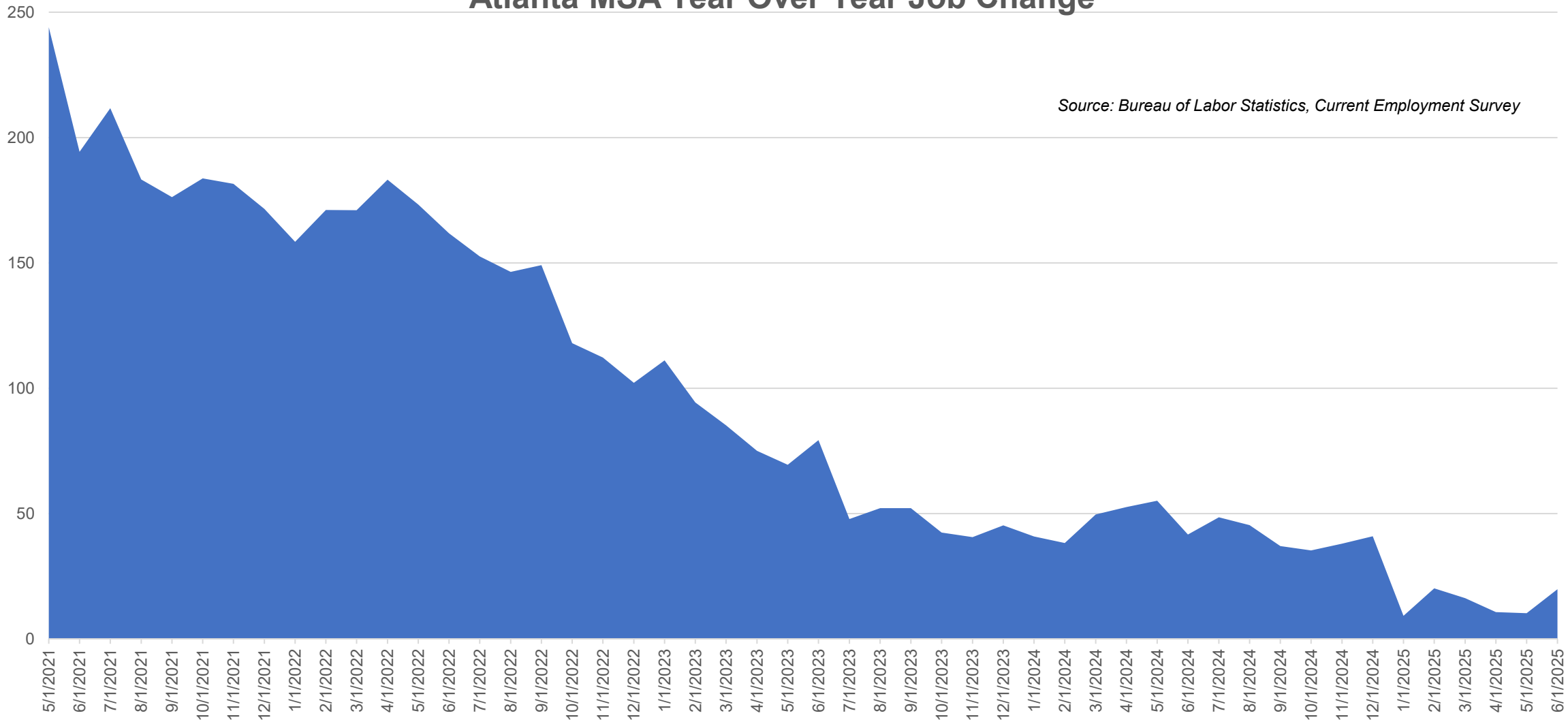
Single-family permits increased 5% across the region in 2024 (cf: 2023) led by increases in Forsyth County, Henry County, Gwinnett County, and Fulton County outside of the city of Atlanta. Multifamily permitting in the region were steady (cf: 2023), continuing to be dominated by the city of Atlanta; 2024 also mutltifamily permit increases in Cherokee, Clayton, Forsyth, and Fulton outside of the city of Atlanta.

Job Recovery Well from Pandemic (Feb 2020-May 2025)



While Atlanta had a relatively quick job base recovery and steady increase from the pandemic downturn of the early decade, job growth –while far exceeding that seen in the larger metros of Chicago and LA--has lagged that of peer regions like Dallas and Houston.

Atlanta MSA Year Over Year Job Change



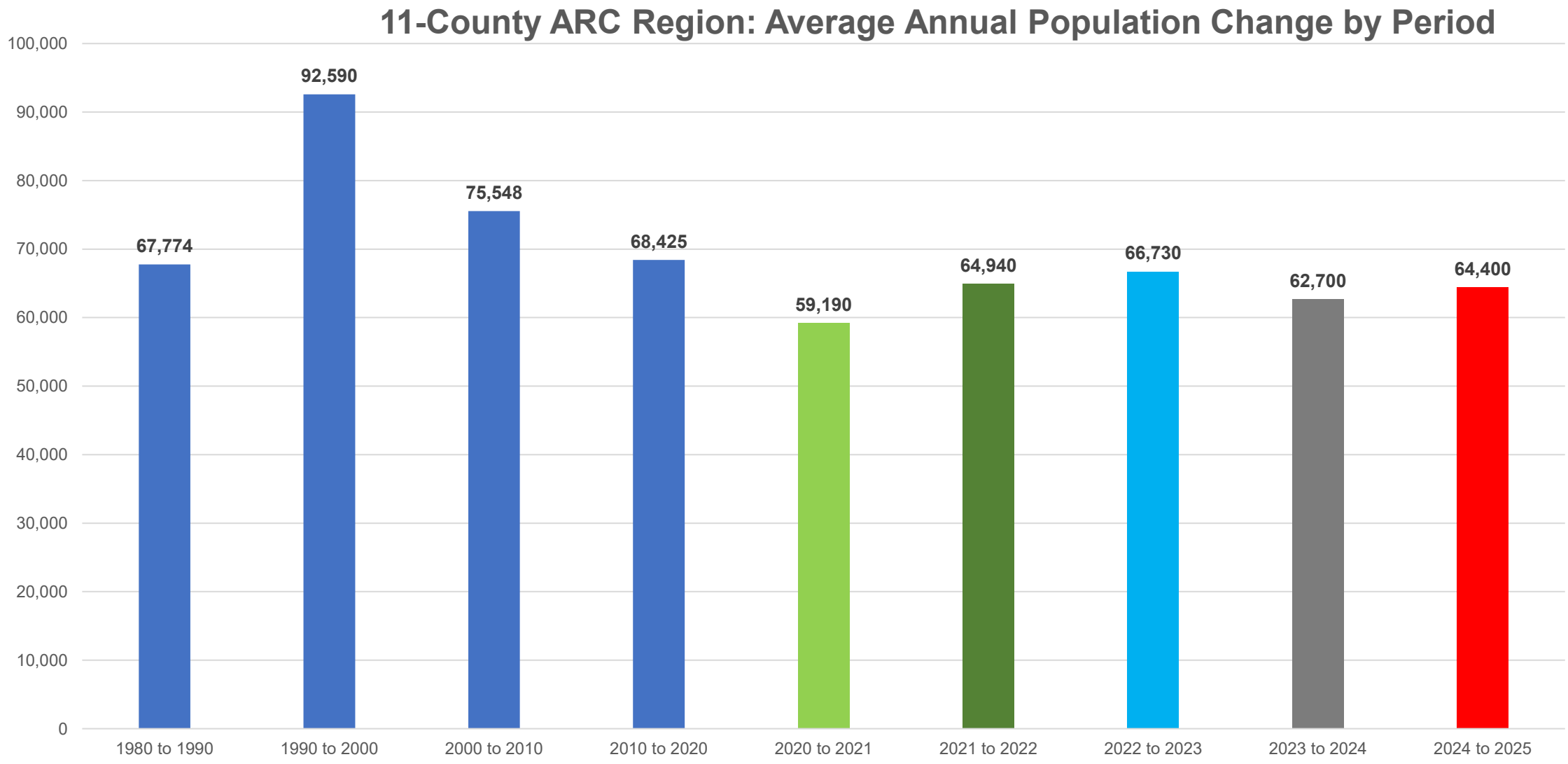
While the 2020-21 year over year growth numbers for Atlanta are very high, in response to the pandemic plunge, the year over year absolute changes have significantly declined since the middle of 2022 through to recent months.

The Estimates: 2025 ARC Population

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2024	2025	Average Annual Change, 1980-2010	Average Annual Change, 2010-2020	Average Annual Change, 2022-2025
Atlanta Region	**1,924,140**	**2,601,883**	**3,527,779**	**4,283,261**	**4,967,514**	**5,221,074**	**5,285,474**	78,637	68,425	64,610
Cherokee	51,699	91,000	141,903	214,346	266,620	292,360	299,460	5,422	5,227	6,540
Clayton	150,357	184,100	236,517	259,424	297,595	304,215	306,615	3,636	3,817	1,443
Cobb	297,718	453,400	607,751	688,078	766,149	792,049	795,749	13,012	7,807	5,500
DeKalb	483,024	553,800	665,865	691,893	764,382	783,442	786,542	6,962	7,249	3,840
Douglas	54,573	71,700	92,174	132,403	144,237	153,097	154,197	2,594	1,183	1,633
Fayette	29,043	62,800	91,263	106,567	119,194	125,384	126,284	2,584	1,263	1,200
Forsyth	27,958	44,083	98,400	175,511	251,283	275,233	281,933	4,918	7,577	5,633
Fulton	589,904	670,800	816,006	920,581	1,066,710	1,123,070	1,141,870	11,023	14,613	18,233
Gwinnett	166,808	356,500	588,448	805,321	957,062	1,012,112	1,027,312	21,284	15,174	14,537
Henry	36,309	59,200	119,341	203,922	240,712	262,552	267,152	5,587	3,679	4,883
Rockdale	36,747	54,500	70,111	85,215	93,570	97,560	98,360	1,616	836	1,167
City of Atlanta	424,922	415,200	416,474	420,003	498,715	532,115	542,715	(164)	7,871	11,900

The 11-County region's population as of April, 2025 comes in at nearly 5.3 million, nearly doubling from 1990 levels. The fastest absolute and percentage increases occurred in the 1980-2010 period; most jurisdictions have slowed, somewhat in recent periods, with the notable exception of Fulton County (driven by growth in the City of Atlanta).

Some Background: Historical Estimates



Annual growth from 2021 to 2025 has rebounded strongly from 2020-21, but values are still below the annual average for the 1980s and the 2010s, and far below the 1990s and 2000s.

The Estimates: 2025 ARC Population

Average Annual Percentage Increase

	1980 to 1990	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2020	2020 to 2025
Atlanta Region	3.1	3.1	2.0	1.5	1.2
Cherokee	5.8	4.5	4.2	2.2	2.4
Clayton	2.0	2.5	0.9	1.4	0.6
Cobb	4.3	3.0	1.2	1.1	0.8
DeKalb	1.4	1.9	0.4	1.0	0.6
Douglas	2.8	2.5	3.7	0.9	1.3
Fayette	8.0	3.8	1.6	1.1	1.2
Forsyth	4.7	8.4	6.0	3.7	2.3
Fulton	1.3	2.0	1.2	1.5	1.4
Gwinnett	7.9	5.1	3.2	1.7	1.4
Henry	5.0	7.3	5.5	1.7	2.1
Rockdale	4.0	2.6	2.0	0.9	1.0
City of Atlanta	-0.2	0.0	0.1	1.7	1.7

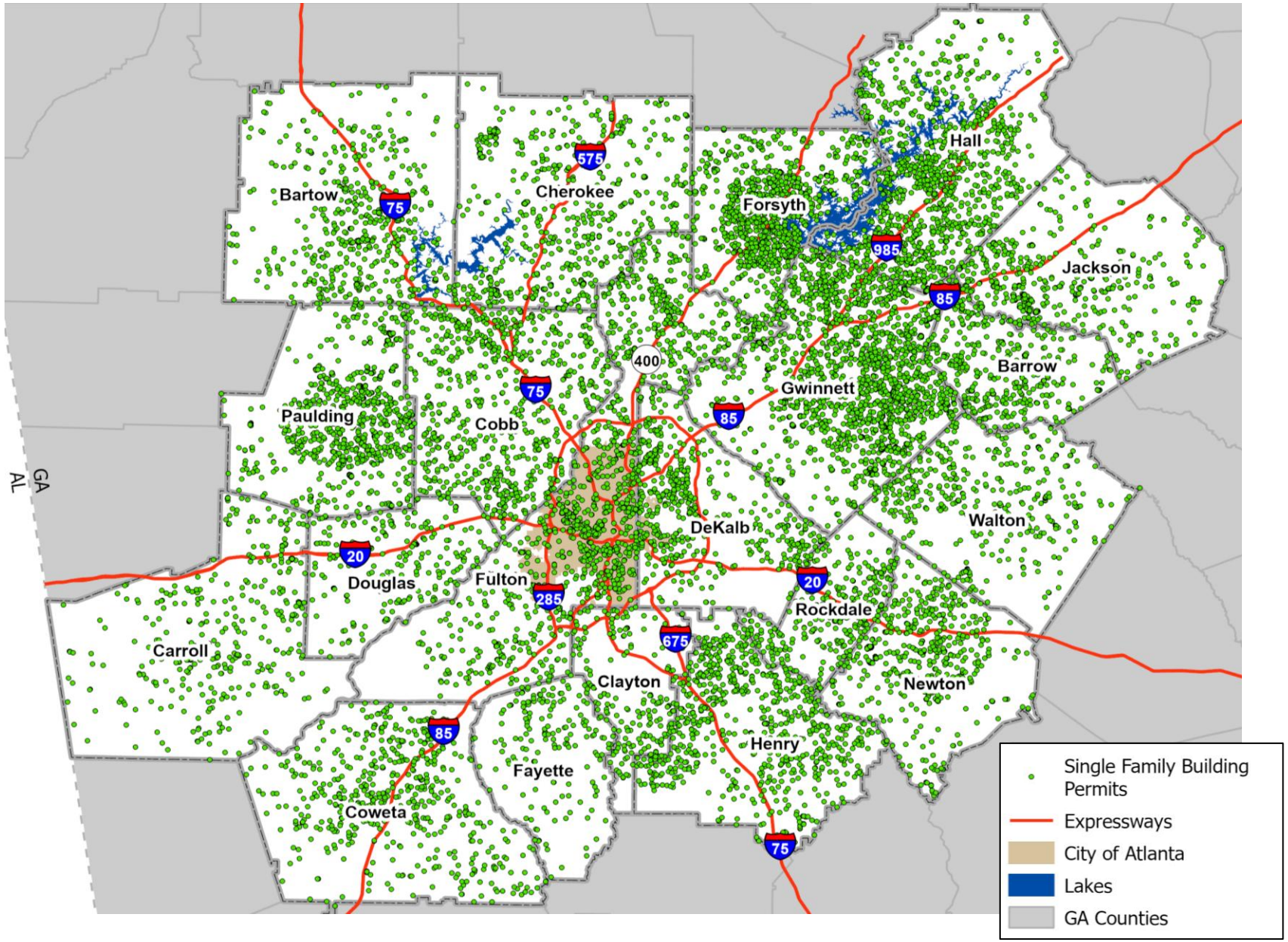
Percentage population growth tends to decrease over time as baseline totals for an area get bigger. Gwinnett County has maintained some of the higher growth rates among regional counties, even though it was the second largest county by the mid-2000s. Also, note that the City of Atlanta was negative or static from 1980 yo 2010, but has been among the regional rate leaders since then.

The Estimates: 2025 ARC Population

	Average Annual Change 21-22	rank	Percent Change 21-22	rank	Average Annual Change 22-23	rank	Percent Change 22-23	rank	Average Annual Change 23-24	rank	Percent Change 23-24	rank	Average Annual Change 24-25	rank	Percent Change 24-25	rank
Atlanta Region	64,940		1.3%		66,730		1.3%		62,700		1.2%		64,400		1.23%	
Cherokee	6,890	4	2.5%	3	7,120	3	2.5%	1	5,400	4	1.9%	1	7,100	3	2.43%	2
Clayton	2,200	9	0.7%	9	1,030	11	0.3%	11	900	10	0.3%	11	2,400	8	0.79%	7
Cobb	6,900	3	0.9%	8	6,100	4	0.8%	9	6,700	3	0.9%	8	3,700	6	0.47%	10
DeKalb	5,430	7	0.7%	10	4,420	7	0.6%	10	4,000	7	0.5%	10	3,100	7	0.40%	11
Douglas	3,060	8	2.1%	4	1,400	10	0.9%	8	2,400	8	1.6%	4	1,100	9	0.72%	8
Fayette	2,000	10	1.7%	5	1,600	9	1.3%	7	1,100	9	0.9%	7	900	10	0.72%	9
Forsyth	6,620	5	2.6%	2	5,800	5	2.2%	2	4,400	6	1.6%	3	6,700	4	2.43%	1
Fulton	11,200	2	1.0%	7	18,500	1	1.7%	5	17,400	1	1.6%	5	18,800	1	1.67%	4
Gwinnett	13,460	1	1.4%	6	13,510	2	1.4%	6	14,900	2	1.5%	6	15,200	2	1.50%	5
Henry	6,600	6	2.7%	1	5,300	6	2.1%	3	4,750	5	1.8%	2	4,600	5	1.75%	3
Rockdale	580	11	0.6%	11	1,950	8	2.1%	4	750	11	0.8%	9	800	11	0.82%	6
City of Atlanta	5,070		1.0%		14,300		2.8%		10,800		2.1%		10,600		1.99%	
in DeKalb	410		1.0%		1,150		2.8%		867		2.1%		851		1.99%	
in Fulton	4,660		1.0%		13,150		2.8%		9,933		2.1%		9,749		1.99%	

From 2024 to 2025, **Fulton added 18,800 new residents**, for the largest single-year county-level numeric increase in the region. Next were Gwinnett with 15,200 new residents, Cherokee with 7,100 new residents, and Forsyth with 6,700 new residents. **The City of Atlanta continued to set the pace in the leading county of Fulton with a net increase of 10,600.** Growth did moderate from the record-high levels (14,300) of 2022-23 and fell slightly from 2023-24's 10,800 increase. **Cherokee and Forsyth Counties led the region in percentage increase** 2023-24, **at 2.4 percent**. Henry follows at 1.8, with Fulton and Gwinnett following at 1.7 and 1.5, respectively. The 2024-25 growth rate in Forsyth is notable, as it compares to a 1.6% increase 2023-24.

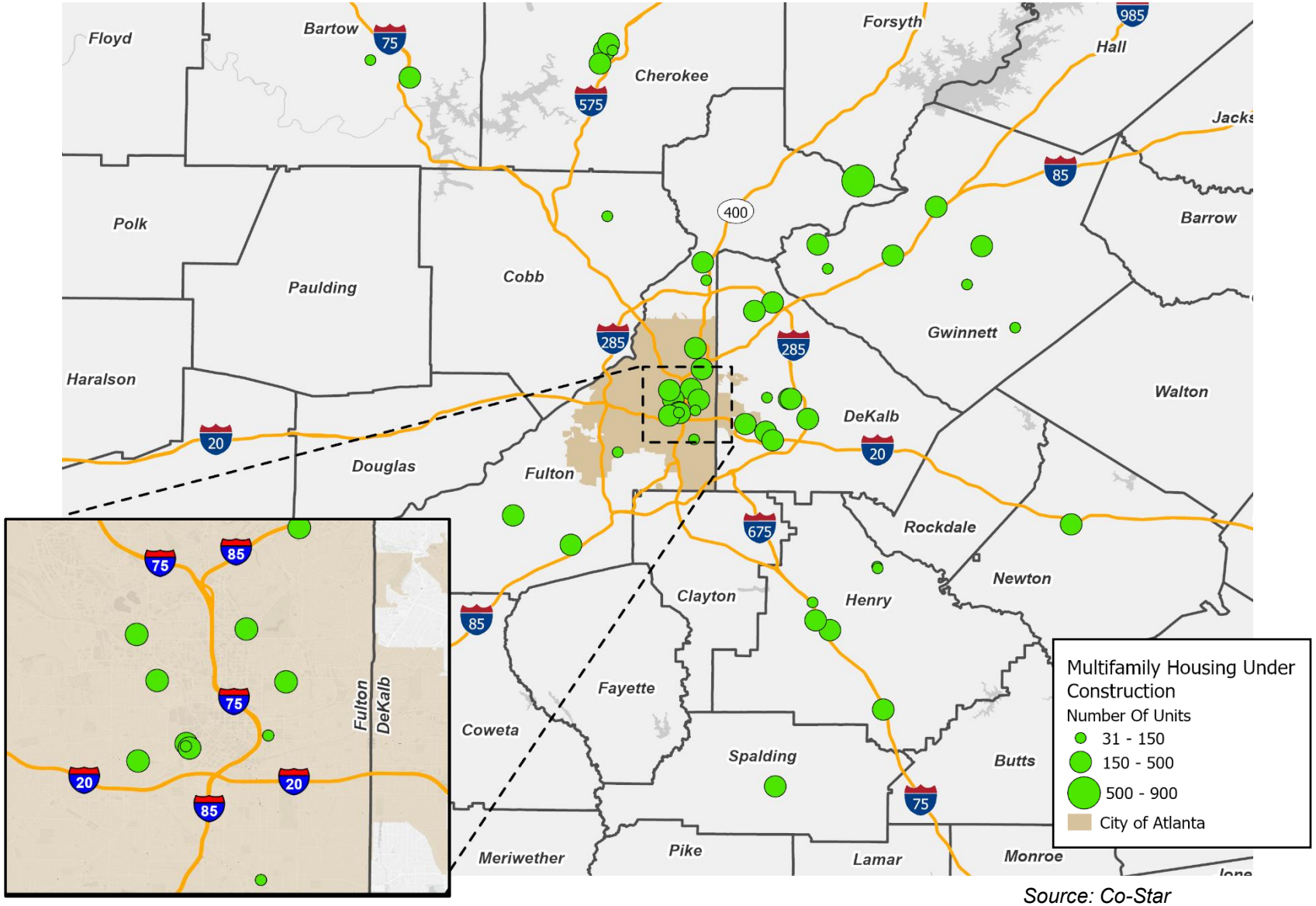
Single-Family Housing Building Permits in the Atlanta Region, 2024



ONE great REGION

ARC

Multifamily Housing Building Permits Under Construction 2024 through Q1 2025



Source: Co-Star

ONE great REGION

ARC

Population Estimate (2025) & Appropriation Due (2026) by Political Jurisdiction

Political Subdivision	Estimated Population 4/1/2025	Formula for Fiscal Support of Regional Planning		Appropriation Due for 2026 Budget
Cherokee County	299,460	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$361,352
Clayton County	306,615	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$369,938
Cobb County	795,749	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$956,899
DeKalb County				
City of Atlanta	43,558	$.48 per capita	$20,908	
Outside Atlanta	742,984	$1.20 per capita	$891,581	
DeKalb County Total			plus $2,000	$914,489
Douglas County	154,197	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$187,036
Fayette County	126,284	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$153,541
Forsyth County	281,933	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$340,320
Fulton County				
City of Atlanta	499,157	$.48 per capita	$239,595	
Outside Atlanta	642,713	$1.20 per capita	$771,256	
Fulton County Total			plus $2,000	$1,012,851
Gwinnett County	1,027,312	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$1,234,774
Henry County	267,152	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$322,582
Rockdale County	98,360	$1.20 per capita	plus $2,000	$120,032
City of Atlanta	542,715	$.72 per capita	plus $2,000	$392,755
Total	5,285,474			$6,366,569