

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ROCKDALE COUNTY,
GEORGIA, ADOPTING THE ROCKDALE COUNTY HOUSING ASSESSMENT**

WHEREAS, Rockdale County has completed its first comprehensive Housing Assessment through the Atlanta Regional Commission Community Development Assistance Program to establish a data-driven foundation for addressing housing challenges and guiding future growth;

WHEREAS, the County is projected to grow by approximately 18,800 residents and require between 6,000 and 8,000 additional housing units by 2050 to meet demand;

WHEREAS, approximately 35 percent of households in Rockdale County are cost-burdened, with particularly high impacts on renters, seniors, and residents on fixed incomes;

WHEREAS, the Housing Assessment finds that the County's housing stock is heavily dominated by single-family homes and lacks sufficient "missing middle," senior-friendly, and attainable housing options to meet current and future needs;

WHEREAS, housing affordability and limited supply are impacting workforce retention, increasing commuting distances, and affecting the County's long-term economic competitiveness;

WHEREAS, the Housing Assessment outlines a phased implementation strategy, including near-term actions such as zoning updates, housing program development, partnerships, and preservation efforts, followed by mid- and long-term investments and policy alignment;

WHEREAS, the Housing Assessment emphasizes the need to transition from planning to coordinated implementation through dedicated staffing, funding strategies, and interdepartmental collaboration;

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners finds that adopting the Housing Assessment and advancing its recommendations is necessary to support housing stability, economic growth, and quality of life for current and future residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Rockdale County, Georgia, approves the Housing Assessment as presented; and

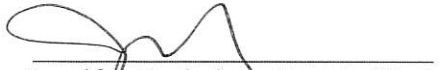
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County leaders are authorized and directed to implement the housing plan, including the development of departmental action plans and allocation of necessary resources, to monitor progress and outcomes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners shall receive regular updates on the implementation of the Housing Assessment and shall conduct periodic reviews to ensure alignment with the County's goals and to make any necessary adjustments; and

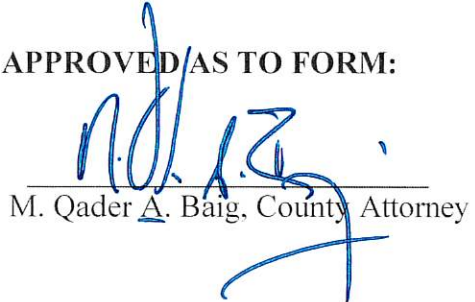
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be maintained in the official records of Rockdale County.

Adopted this 12th day of May, 2026.

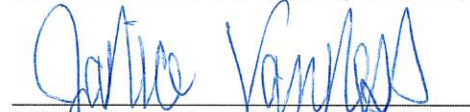
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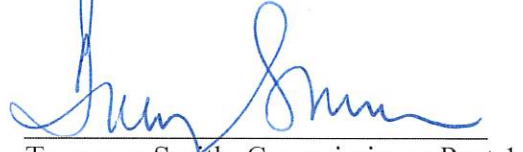

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Rockdale County Housing Assessment

Atlanta Regional Commission Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP)



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Vision

ONE **great** REGION

Mission

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

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.

Values

Excellence – A commitment to doing our best and going above and beyond in every facet of our work allowing for innovative practices and actions to be created while ensuring our agency's and our colleague's success.

Integrity – In our conduct, communication, and collaboration with each other and the region's residents, we will act with consistency, honesty, transparency, fairness and accountability within and across each of our responsibilities and functions.

Equity – We represent a belief that there are some things which people should have, that there are basic needs that should be fulfilled, that burdens and rewards should not be spread too divergently across the community, and that policy should be directed with impartiality, fairness and justice towards these ends.



Atlanta Regional Commission

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Acknowledgements

The community development team at the Atlanta Regional Commission appreciated the opportunity to work with Rockdale County - residents, employers, organizations, and Rockdale County staff - who are dedicated to obtaining a better understanding of Rockdale County housing issues and needs to work towards solutions. Many stakeholders gave their time, assistance, knowledge, and expertise during this process. The information in this report relied on the participants and community to help understand the data and trends related to housing needs and next steps to help set Rockdale County up for its most prosperous future.

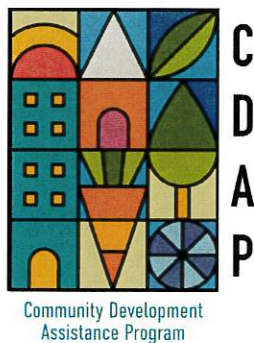
A special thank you goes to the members of the Project Management Team who were instrumental in connecting us with the community and assisting us throughout the process.

Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP)

The Atlanta Regional Commission's Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) provides planning assistance to local governments, CIDs, & non-profits across the metro Atlanta region, with a priority placed on projects that advance equity and climate resiliency.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of those of the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, or the Federal Highway Administration. This publication does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

Prepared in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, and the Federal Highway Administration.



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Housing in the Atlanta Region

“How can we be one great region if our residents can’t afford, without burden, to live here?”

- Anna Roach, Executive Director & CEO, Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is working to help local governments, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand the region’s housing challenges and explore potential solutions. Good housing options should be widely available, in communities large and small, urban and suburban. We all need places to live that won’t break our budgets while offering access to vital resources like healthy food, proximity to job centers, quality education and transportation options.

As the Atlanta region continues to grow in population and jobs, it is also tasked with maintaining its prosperity across all industries and for all residents as it seeks to preserve the unique fabric of its varied communities while embracing progress. Providing adequate, attainable housing to all income levels is a key building block in ensuring economic stability and maintaining a high quality of life in the region.

This report includes two parts: the Key Findings from the ARC’s housing assessment and the actionable Next Steps. The goal of this Housing Assessment is to evaluate Rockdale County as a vital participant in the health and viability of the region and to help leadership and community members understand current and forecasted housing needs for Rockdale County based on the following categories:

1. Housing Inventory
2. Cost Burden
3. Housing Supply
4. Housing Gap
5. Demographic Trends and Forecasted Growth

The Next Steps are specific to Rockdale County to help address the housing needs in this jurisdiction. Key Findings and Next Steps are based on recurring themes and data found in the assessment and aligned with recommendation categories of the ARC’s Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit¹:



**INCREASE
SUPPLY**



**PRESERVE
AFFORDABLE
SUPPLY**



**REDUCE HOUSING &
TRANSPORTATION
COST**



**EXPAND CAPITAL
RESOURCES**



**PROMOTE HOUSING
STABILITY**



**DEVELOP LEADERSHIP
& COLLABORATION ON
AFFORDABILITY**

Our region is better equipped for sustained success when its leaders and communities understand local housing needs and challenges. This Housing Assessment will help set Rockdale County up for its most prosperous future.

1 ARC’s Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit www.metroatlhousing.org

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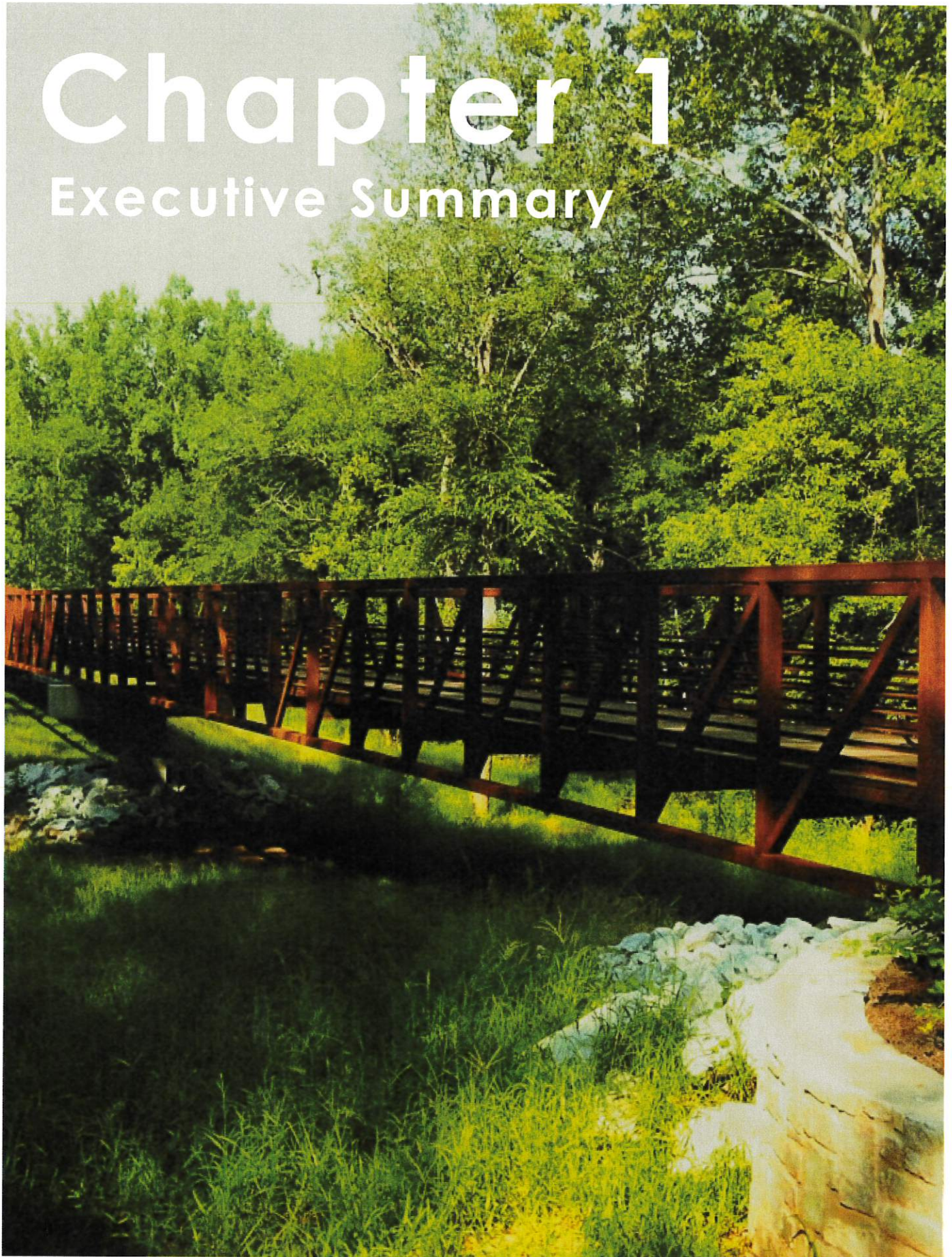
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Chapter 1

Executive Summary



1

Part 1 - Key Findings

Identify housing
needs and issues
within the community

2

Part 2 - Next Steps

Define community-supported
actions to meet Rockdale
County's needs and address
identified issues

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rockdale County is at a turning point: it remains a largely homeowner community with strong neighborhood stability and comparatively attainable home prices, but it is underbuilt relative to recent and projected growth, facing rising housing costs, and the need for intentional housing development to support employment and amenities as well as connectivity and walkability.

Between 2020 and 2050, Rockdale's population is projected to grow by nearly 18,800 residents and households by more than 7,700, requiring roughly 6,000–8,000 additional housing units countywide by 2050. Yet housing production has lagged for years—an estimated 1,742-unit shortfall in 2020 based on data from the Georgia Public Policy Foundation—contributing to tightening supply and upward pressure on both rents and home prices.

Affordability pressures are increasingly shaped by the combined effects of housing prices, rents, and property taxes. About 35 percent of households are cost burdened, with high burdens among renters, owners with mortgages, and owners without mortgages (many of whom are seniors). Resident feedback underscores that rising home and rental prices, a lack of affordable homes, as well as property taxes are dominant concerns and a growing risk to aging-in-place and long-term stability.

Past housing growth patterns and other factors contribute to low-density patterns and low connectivity. The county's inventory is dominated by single-family detached homes, while smaller households, seniors, first-time buyers, and local workers need more 'missing middle' options, quality affordable rentals, and walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods. Employers report that limited attainable housing is affecting recruitment, retention, and commuting patterns.

Rockdale County Housing Assessment Survey Project Engagement

1,868

Views

595

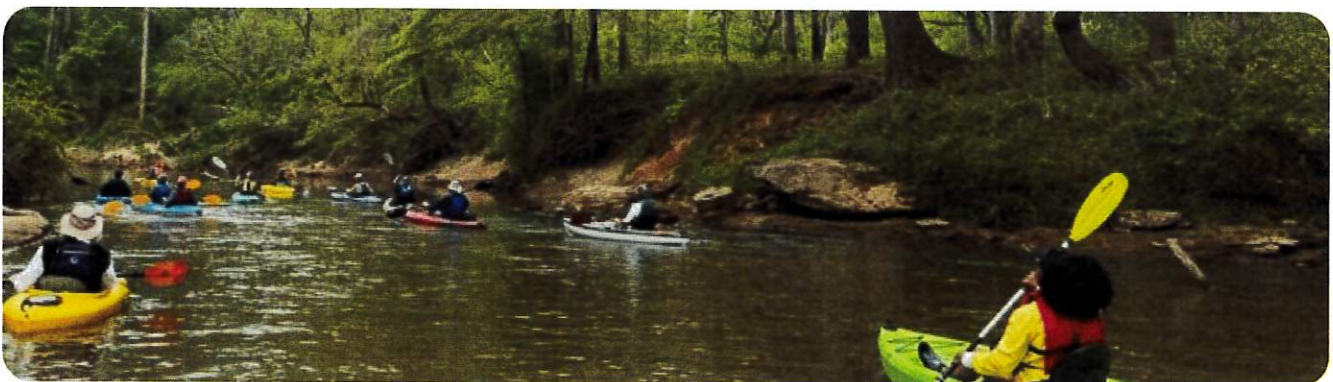
Participants

968

Comments

12,649

Responses



HOUSING INTENTORY AND METRICS



36,877 Total Housing Units (2023)
483 LDP Permitting (2024)



26.69% of Householders
Live Alone



2.75 People per
Housing Unit



56.2% Renters Cost Burdened
6,235 Occupied Rental Units



34.2% Live in Renter-Occupied Units
65.8% Live in Owner-Occupied Units



1.3% Homeowner
Vacancy Rate
3.8% Rental Vacancy Rate



68.5% of Homes Built Prior
to 2000
31.4% of Homes Built 2000
or After



83.3% Live in 1-Unit
Structures
12.7% Live in 2+Unit
Structures



1,061 Affordable/Rent Restricted Units
820 Vouchers
3.1% of Units are Affordable



Owner Cost Burden (2023)
4,811 units with a Mortgage
445 without a Mortgage

RECURRING THEMES

Housing costs are outpacing local incomes, putting financial strain on residents and the workforce and increasing housing instability.

The current housing stock is misaligned with demand, offering too many of a few product types and not enough affordable, senior, and “missing middle” options.

The combined impact of property taxes and modest wages is making it harder for people to afford to stay in Rockdale County long-term.

Resident feedback points to intentional, infrastructure-supported growth that emphasizes amenities and clear community vision rather than scattered, conventional development.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- High homeownership and long-term residents create stable neighborhoods.
- Homes still relatively affordable versus the region, with abundant single-family stock.
- Diverse employment base supports demand for workforce housing.
- Active planning efforts and engaged stakeholders support housing solutions

WEAKNESSES

- Housing construction lags behind population and job growth.
- Rapidly rising prices and rents, low wages create widespread cost burdens.
- Few affordable and “missing middle” homes and rentals exist for varied needs.
- High property taxes strain seniors and fixed-income homeowners.
- Weak walkability, and limited amenities reduce satisfaction.

OPPORTUNITIES

- 2050 Plan: 7,000-9,000 new homes in targeted growth areas.
- Use partnerships, zoning and incentives to expand affordable, mixed-income housing
- Support existing residents with repair, tax-relief, and services.
- Vacant land and redevelopment opportunities to target growth while preserving greenspace.
- Build walkable, mixed-use communities around parks, trails, and nodes

THREATS

- Continuing underbuilding/housing mismatch risks worsening affordability and housing instability.
- Aging homes and apartments could deteriorate without reinvestment.
- Demographic and household shifts, homelessness impact the enrollment and expenses of the school system.

Key Findings

1

Rockdale has a persistent housing production gap—about 1,700-2,400 units —tightening supply and pushing prices and rents upward.

2

Affordability is worsening, and rising home prices and property taxes are a primary driver of resident stress and displacement risk.

3

Cost burden affects about 35% of households and is rising for renters and seniors without mortgages.

4

The housing stock is dominated by single-family homes and lacks missing-middle, senior-friendly, and attainable options.

5

Housing costs and limited choice are harming workforce retention and increasing commutes for employees.

6

Rockdale can add more rentals and intentional density in targeted nodes and corridors to increase walkability and access to greenspace and amenities without sacrificing community character.

7

Data and survey feedback points to future need for aging homes and multifamily properties to require preservation, repair, and stabilization programs to prevent loss of affordability.

8

Rockdale County and the City of Conyers have established consistent housing policies over time, and the key challenge moving forward is translating these aligned plans into action through coordinated implementation, funding, and partnerships.

Next Steps

YEARS 0 - 1

Zoning and Land Use

- *Zone for more housing in nodes and corridors:* Shift density away from sprawl and towards areas with existing infrastructure.
- *Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance:* Allows homeowners to build small secondary units.
- *Pilot “missing middle” and cottage court zoning:* Enables housing types between single-family homes and large apartments.
- *Determine mechanisms for smaller homes:* Specifically targets neighborhoods for high-density, smaller-footprint living.
- *Zone for conservation neighborhoods in greenfields:* Ensures that when undeveloped land is used, it preserves significant open space and nature features.

Housing Mechanisms and Targets

- Plan and enable 6,000-8,000 new homes by 2050
- Stand Up Housing Mechanisms
- Establish partnerships for deep affordability

Stability and Community Engagement

- Create/expand eviction-prevention and rent-relief programs
- Implement Homelessness Task Force
- Quarterly Housing Forum or ongoing housing education

YEAR 2 - 3

Proactive Planning and Streamlining

- Develop pre-approved ADU plans with permitting incentives
- Create Small Area Plans for target densification
- Implement and refine zoning for missing middle and mixed-use
- Prepare for Strategic Plan update that incorporates findings from housing assessments and past planning

Direct Investment and Partnerships

- Work with DCA to deliver a senior Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project
- Deliver one new mixed-use project
- Identify partnerships on public/non-taxes land
- Targeted incentive packages for aging commercial centers

Preservation and Resident Stability

- Expand grant and low-interest loan repair programs
- Re-evaluate homestead exemptions and Homestead Option Sales Tax (HOST)
- Establish coordinated eviction-prevention programs
- Partner with community organizations for resident coaching

YEAR 4 - 5

Integrated Planning and Infrastructure

- Redevelop Corridors: Shifts focus to transforming aging commercial strips into vibrant, mixed-use residential corridors that reduce sprawl and maximize land use
- Align Transit and Trails: Ensures that high-density nodes are physically connected by transit and trails, lowering transportation costs for residents
- Institutionalize Strategy: Integrates housing goals into every future planning cycle to ensure consistency across departments

Data-Driven Monitoring and Fiscal Health

- Monitor and track the mix of housing types and affordability
- Track new developments for value per acre and millage stability

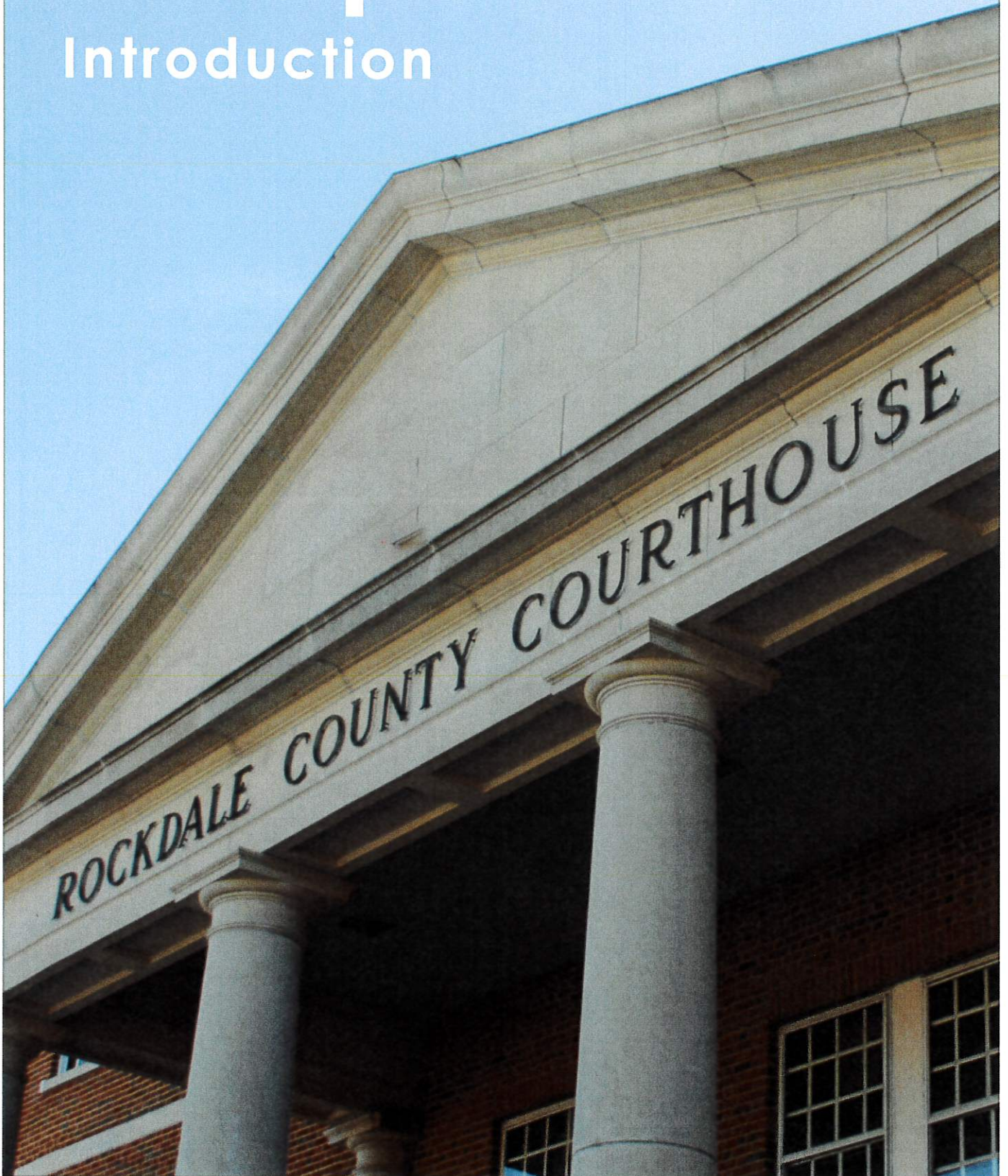
Funding and Scaling

- Create a Housing Trust Fund
- Scale home repair and weatherization programs



Chapter 2

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

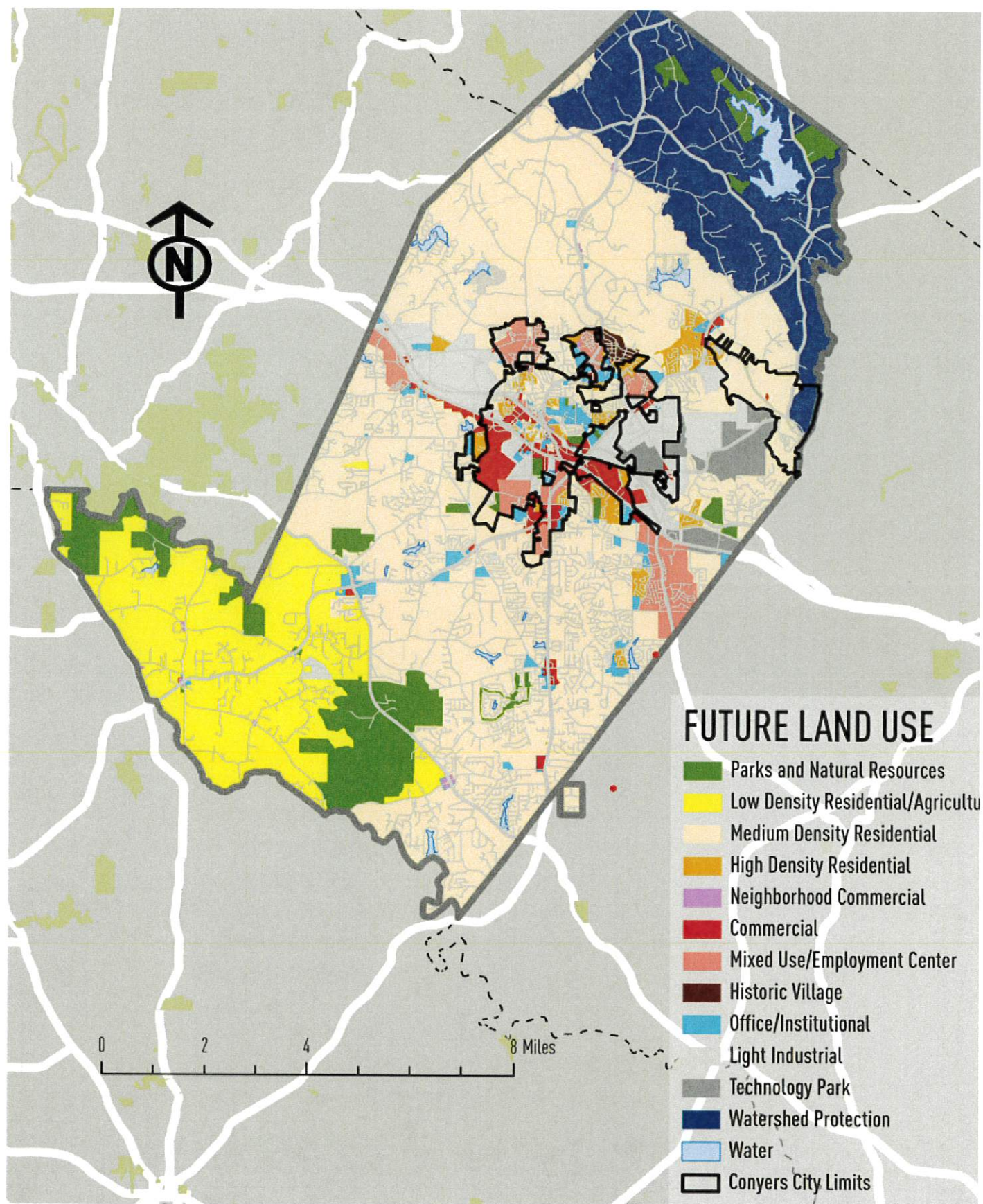
PURPOSE

The purpose of Rockdale County Housing Assessment is to establish a data-driven foundation for strategic decision-making that addresses the county's specific housing challenges and growth targets.

The assessment fulfills this purpose through the following six key functions:

1. Provide a better understanding of the existing stock and future housing need and identify appropriate housing metrics and strategies.
2. Assess overall housing stock and growth patterns to ensure that development is focused, intentional, and supportive of a vision for a vibrant and thriving Rockdale County.
3. Assess housing unit types and costs to ensure that comfortable and safe housing remains an attainable goal for residents at all income levels and all stages of life.
4. Identify appropriate housing metrics that allow planners and developers to look at housing developments more holistically to address vulnerabilities that have historically been in planning blind spots.
5. Suggest appropriate broad program and policy housing strategies that directly address the issues identified in the assessment to facilitate informed, strategic decision-making.
6. Provide details about the existing housing stock to support the planning efforts of Rockdale County, ensuring that future strategies honor the personal investment residents have put into their homes.





Rockdale County Housing Assessment Schedule													
	Project Initiation		Data Assessment and Stakeholder				Plan Development			Final Deliverable			
	Jun 25 Month 1	Kickoff Jul 25 Month 2	Aug-25 Month 3	Sep-25 Month 4	Oct-25 Month 5	Nov-25 Month 6	Dec-25 Month 7	Jan-26 Month 8	Feb-26 Month 9	Mar-26 Month 10	Apr-26 Month 11	May-26 Month 12	
Project Initiation													
Identify Goals and Desired Outcomes													
Data Gathering, Cleaning, Initial Analysis													
Data Review of Analysis by PMT and Steering Committee													
Revisions and Additions to Data Analysis													
Drafting Final Technical Memo and Slide Deck													
(Optional) Presentations to SC or BoC													
Project Management Conference Calls (Frequency TBD)	●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	●	●	●
Stakeholder Committee Meetings			●	●	●			●					
Deadline for Total Project Completion: May 2026													

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

U.S. Census Estimates 2018-2023, 1-year and 5-year American Community Survey

ARC Series 17 Forecasts

2050 ARC Forecast Data calculated by Block Group

ARC Employment Projections 2050

CoStar 2025 Multifamily and Real Estate Data

DCA (Georgia Department of Community Affairs) Local Government Housing Inventory, 2024

Data USA, Average Salary by Industry, 2025

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Income, Limits, and Price Maximums, 2025

ParclViewer, 2025, ParclLabs

ARC Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy Toolkit

Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI)/ Zillow Zori Data, 2025

Georgia Public Policy Foundation Housing Gap, 2020

MarketNSight, October 2025

Nation Low Income Housing Coalition Gap, 2023

Urban Institute, Mapping Neighborhoods with the Highest Risk of Housing Instability and Homelessness, 2025



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Process and Participation

Engagement for the Rockdale County Housing Assessment was accomplished primarily through a Project Management Team, a Stakeholder Committee, key informant interviews, and a comprehensive community survey process. The Stakeholder Committee met four times during the housing assessment process and included a diverse group of 20 members representing residents, housing organizations, and community leadership.

To capture a broad range of perspectives, the project team conducted targeted interviews with representatives from the Conyers Housing Authority, the City of Conyers, Rockdale County Schools, housing developers and various HOA representatives. These qualitative insights were supplemented by an extensive digital outreach campaign.

The community survey was made available to the public to gather data on resident and business needs. The Resident Survey was highly successful, generating 1,868 views and 595 active participants, which resulted in 12,649 responses and 968 detailed comments. Additionally, a Business Survey was implemented to understand the economic impact of housing, receiving 248 views and 23 participants who provided 129 responses and 68 comments.

As outlined in the project schedule, the findings from this engagement were reviewed by the Project Management Team and Stakeholder Committee to ensure the final deliverable reflects the community's vision. The final Housing Assessment is slated for presentation and completion between March and May 2026.

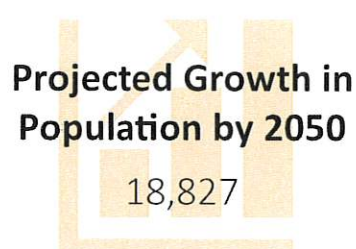
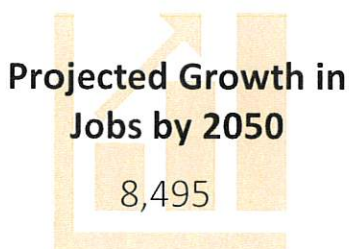
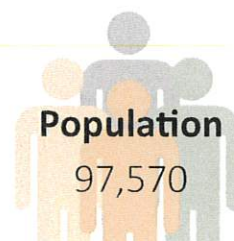
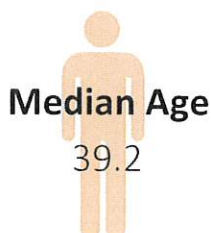


ROCKDALE COUNTY OVERVIEW

Rockdale County was established in 1870 and is a vital part of the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Located approximately 20 miles east of downtown Atlanta, Rockdale is the second smallest county by land area in Georgia, yet it serves a diverse and growing population of approximately 95,000 residents according to recent census estimates.

The County is home to the I-20 Corridor, which serves as a major regional artery connecting Rockdale to the global economy and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The City of Conyers, the county seat, serves as the central commercial and historic heart of the area, while the surrounding unincorporated lands feature a unique blend of suburban neighborhoods and preserved rural character.

Rockdale County has experienced steady growth and is poised for significant transformation over the coming decades. According to the Atlanta Regional Commission's latest forecasts, the county is projected to see continued upward trends in both population and employment. To manage this growth sustainably, the county is focusing on strategic densification and the preservation of its natural assets, ensuring that Rockdale remains a vibrant community for all residents through 2050.

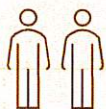


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, ACS 5-year data, ARC Series 17 Forecasts. Projected growth is for all Block Groups that contain part of Rockdale County.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING DATA



In 2023, Rockdale County had 36,877 total homes. New home permits (LDP) as of 2024 include 483 newly permitted homes.



The average number of people per home in Rockdale County is 2.75, and 26.69% of householders live alone.



3.85% of homes are vacant as of the 2023 Census.



68.5% of homes are older and built prior to 2000 and 31.4% of homes are newer and built 2000 or after.



Rockdale County has 1,061 affordable or rent restricted units (3.1% of housing stock) according to HUD and CoStar, and residents use 820 HUD vouchers to help pay rent.



56% of renters are cost burdened.



30.9% of owners with a mortgage are cost burdened, and 6.7% of owners without a mortgage are cost burdened.



83.3% of residents live in 1-unit structures. 65.8% of residents own their homes.



12.7% of residents live in 2+unit structures. 34.2% rent their homes.



53% of respondents believe housing prices do not meet the needs of the community. Responses included support for added workforce housing, and housing for graduates and young people.



Additionally, the survey found support for a variety of types of senior housing as well as accessible housing.



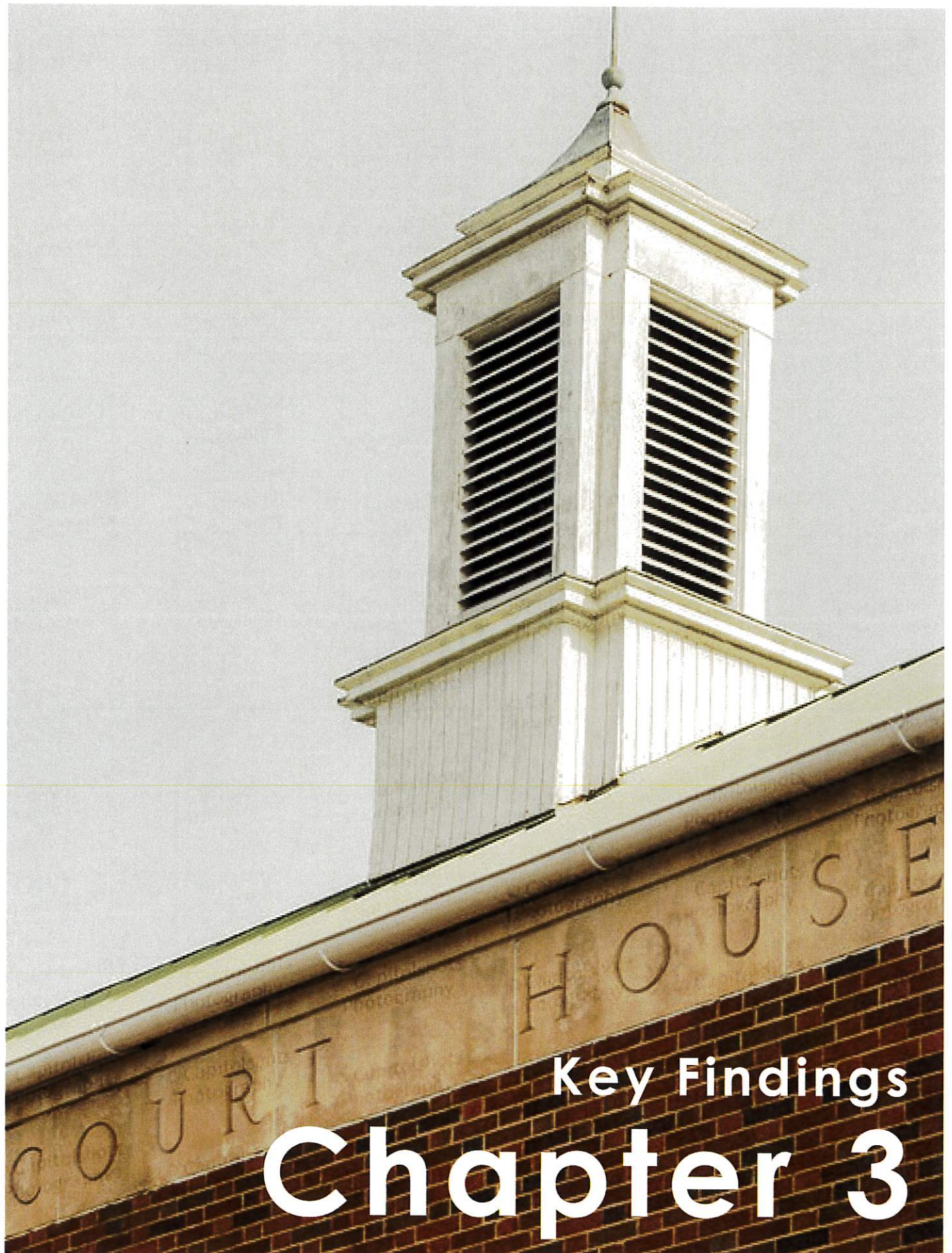
Respondents cited the need for affordable and mixed-use housing, more housing options including townhomes and condos, and a better mix of rentals and owner housing.



Respondents want to ensure new housing and greenspace are considered so that natural space is preserved, and that walkability is a factor in new housing development, as well as live-work-play.



The type of home most requested is the single family home, followed by the need for home renovations and home repairs as well as the concern of increased corporate ownership and vacancy.



Key Findings

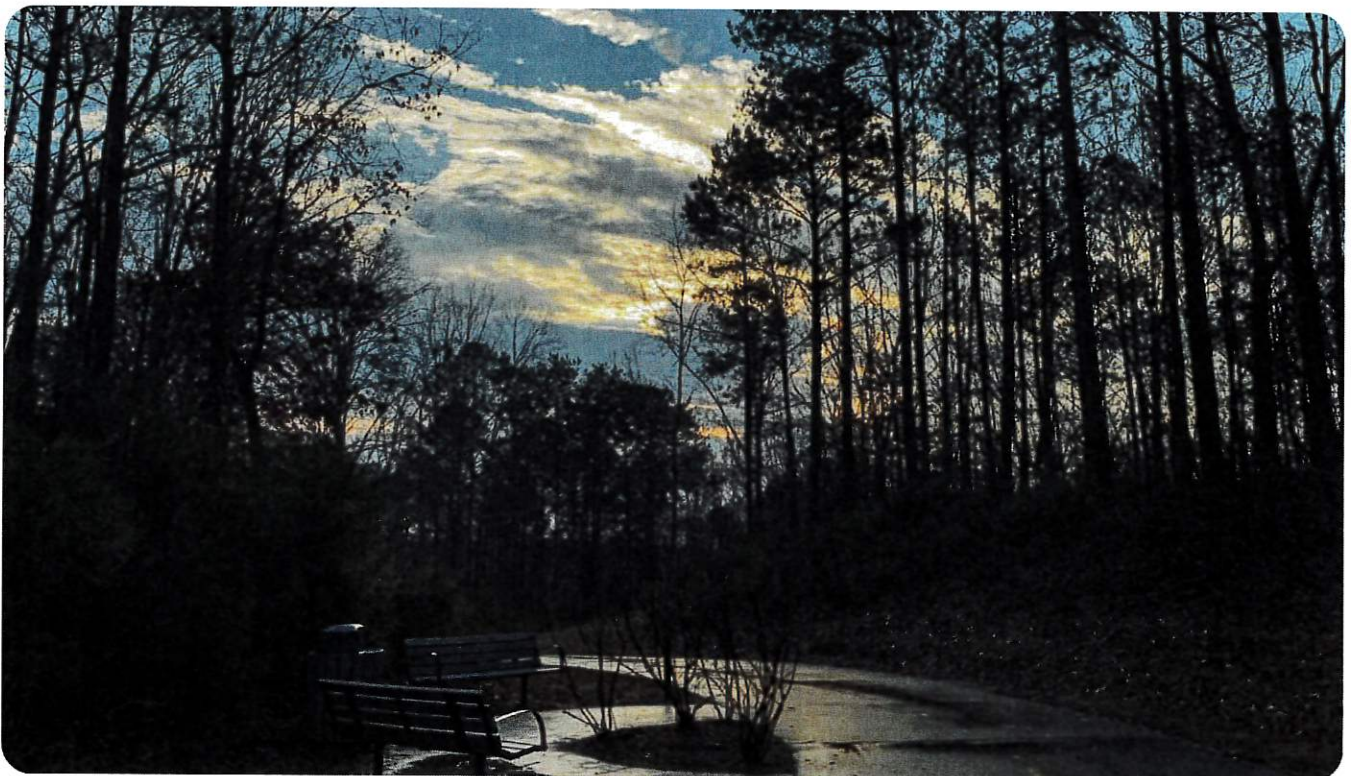
Chapter 3

1

Key Finding #1: Rockdale has a persistent housing production gap - about 1,700-2,400 units - tightening supply and pushing prices and rents upward

Rockdale County historically has added residents and jobs faster than it has added homes. Between 2015 and 2023, the housing supply grew by only 2.1%, falling significantly behind the growth of population, households, and employment. While recent building permits lead some to believe the area is being overbuilt, the data shows this activity is a delayed reaction to years of stagnation rather than a sign of excess. Because density remains low, the current pace of construction has yet to close a historic production gap of 2,494 missing units (U.S. Census).

This persistent shortfall creates an economic squeeze that affects the entire community. As population growth outstrips supply, the resulting competition drives home prices upward, eroding affordability for both long-term residents and newcomers. Furthermore, because job growth is outpacing local housing, the economy faces a dual threat: labor shortages and increased traffic congestion. Without enough local roofs to house the workforce, employees are forced to commute from ever-increasing distances, straining infrastructure and leading to increased competition for homes. (U.S. Census, 2023)



THE CORE CRISIS: HOUSING UNDERPRODUCTION

Since 2015, the rate of housing growth has consistently lagged behind the rate of employment and household formation (Figure 1: Rate of Change). To have kept pace with household demand alone, Rockdale should have constructed an additional 2,374 homes between 2015 and 2025 (Figure 2: Housing Unit Gap). Current permitting levels of 1,511 units remain significantly below the 2,494 units required to close the gap identified by Census data, and even fall short of the more conservative 1,742-unit deficit calculated by the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. This persistent shortfall ensures that intense competition for existing inventory will continue to drive upward price pressure and reduce overall affordability for the local workforce.

FIGURE 1: RATE OF CHANGE

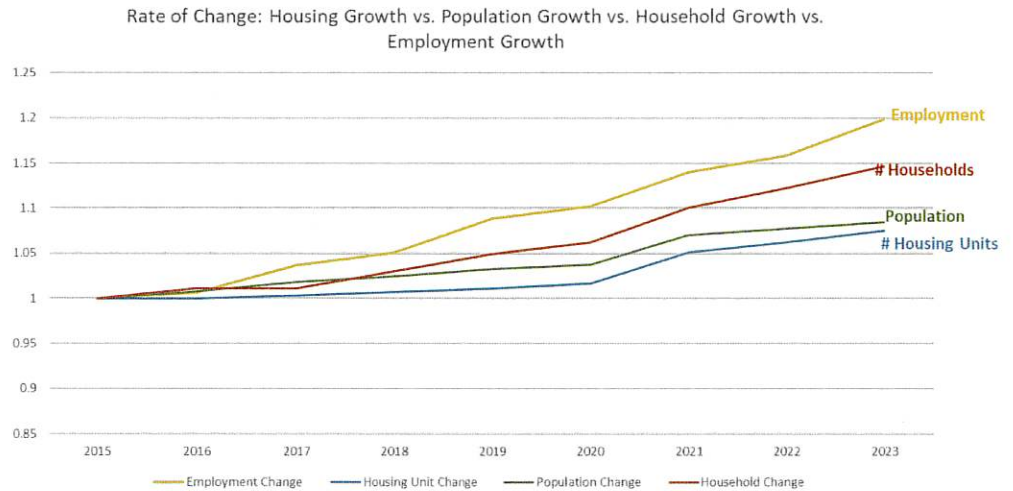
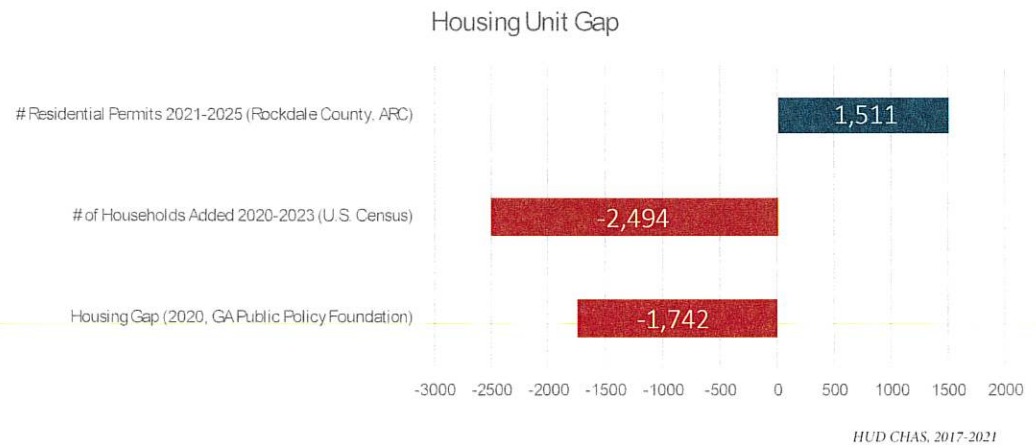


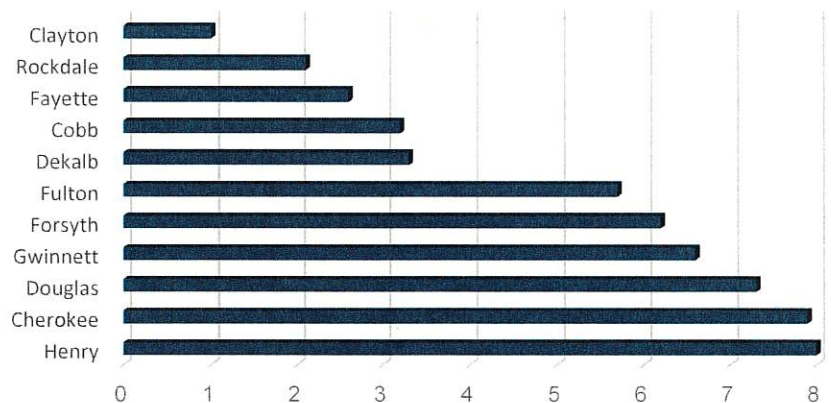
FIGURE 2: HOUSING UNIT GAP



REGIONAL COMPARISON

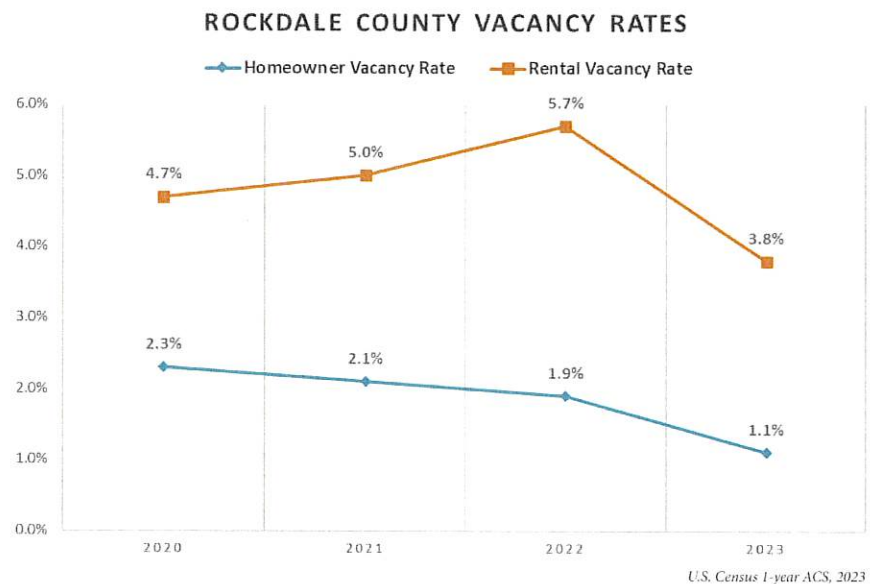
Rockdale is a regional outlier, significantly underperforming its neighbors in the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) 11-county area. While counties like Henry (8.0%) and Douglas (7.3%) have aggressively expanded, Rockdale's 2.1% growth rate is among the lowest in the region. This lack of residential investment limits Rockdale's ability to compete with surrounding jurisdictions for new residents and workers.

ARC 11 Counties: Percent Change in Housing Units, April 2020 - December 2024

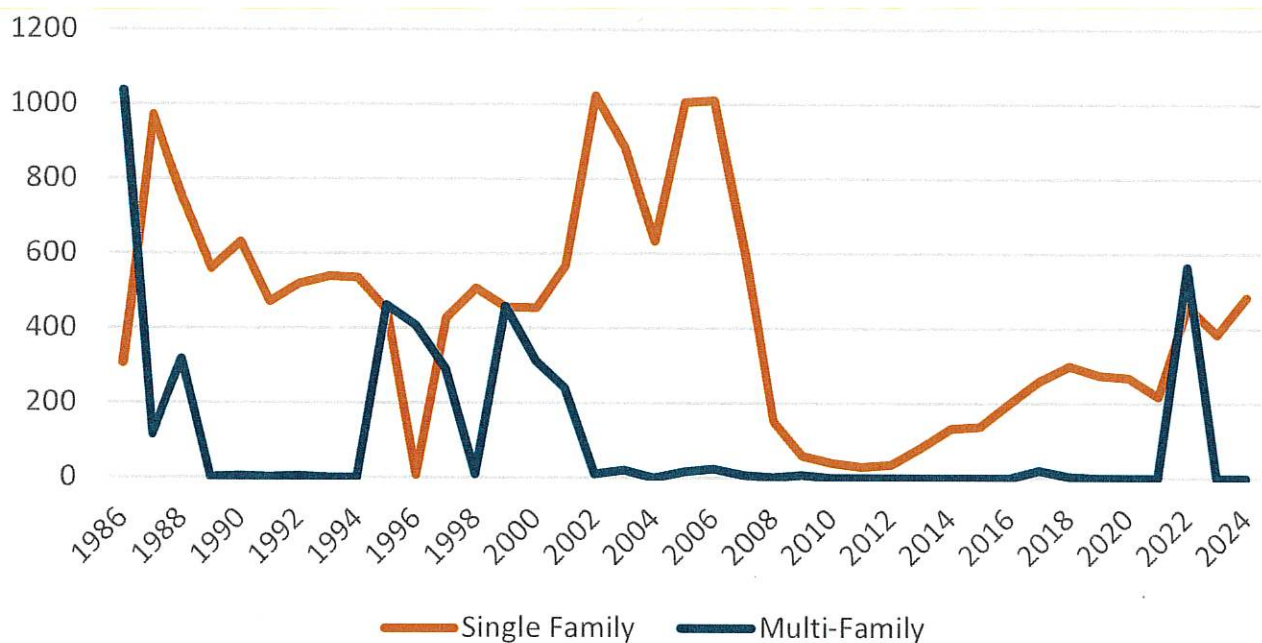


MARKET TIGHTNESS AND VACANCY

The human impact of this underproduction is felt most acutely in a historically tight rental market, where current vacancy rates of 2–4% represent scarcity. According to Census definitions, low availability creates intense upward pressure on rents, often forcing residents to spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing. While a 1–2% vacancy rate for homeowners indicates a balanced but lean market, the high occupancy across all new developments—including 95% average for new townhomes—signals that demand is not being met by current inventory. More current vacancy numbers show a slight softening of market-rate rents with vacancy closer to 7.0% and in a more healthy range. Some subsidized affordable apartments have a higher vacancy rate of around 10%, which could point to needed repairs, intentional vacancy ahead of remodeling, or other issues. Vacancy in corporate owned single-family homes was reported by residents, however, this data was not accessible for this report.



Permits Issued in Rockdale County Since 1985



2

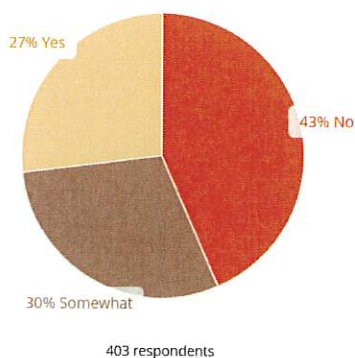
Key Finding #2: Affordability is worsening, and rising home prices and property taxes are a primary driver of resident stress and displacement risk.

The second key finding identifies a significant and growing crisis of rising home prices and housing unaffordability that has become a primary source of anxiety for Rockdale County residents. Comprehensive survey data and qualitative interview feedback reveal that this financial strain is deeply intertwined with concerns over property taxes and rising appraisals, which were cited in the ARC Housing Assessment Survey and stakeholder interviews as top-tier issues over 150 times by community members. Currently, only 27% of residents feel their housing costs are manageable, while 43% explicitly state that their housing is no longer affordable. Low density growth patterns and lower-than-average home prices contribute to a higher tax contribution per person. Rockdale has a low revenue yield per parcel, meaning the county must maintain high millage rates to fund essential services and school systems. Ultimately, the data points to a critical need to transition away from low-value land use patterns toward increased residential density and commercial development, which would boost the value per acre and create a more sustainable, diversified tax base for the entire community.

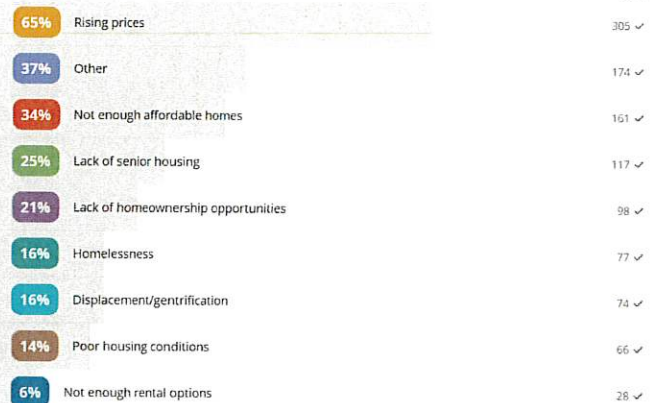
ARC HOUSING ASSESSMENT SURVEY FEEDBACK AND COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

Public feedback highlights a high percent of the community under financial pressure, with “rising prices” cited by 65% of survey respondents as a top concern. Beyond the raw cost of housing, 34% of residents noted a lack of affordable homes, and 25% reported a lack of senior housing options. The narrative from these interviews suggests that residents feel squeezed by a market that offers few entry-level or downsized living opportunities.

6. Do you feel your current housing costs are affordable for your household?



5. What concerns do you have about housing in Rockdale County? (Select all that apply)



TOP FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HIGHER TAX MILLAGE RATES

Rockdale County faces a unique fiscal challenge: it maintains a high tax millage rate compared to the region, due to a small population and a limited number of households to share the tax burden. Because median home prices are relatively low, each “mill” yields less revenue than in higher-value counties, forcing the local government to set higher rates just to meet standard service and school funding requirements. This creates a weak tax base relative to peers, placing a disproportionately high burden on individual residents who see their appraisals rise without a corresponding increase in the county’s broader commercial or high-density residential tax base.

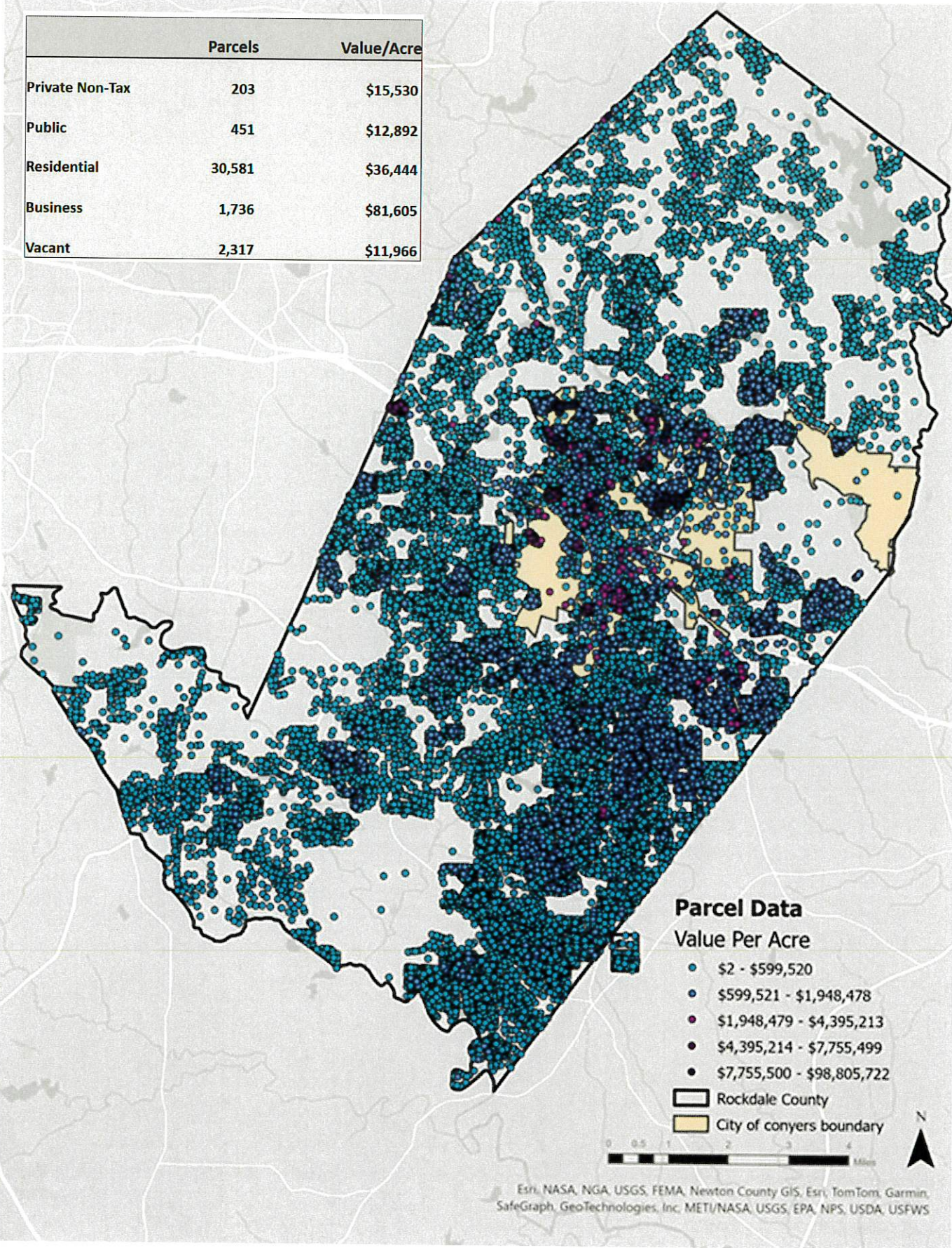
Does not include extra taxation on separate line items apart from County and School M&O, does not include homestead exemptions

County	County M&O – Incorp.	County M&O – Unincorp.	School M&O*	Total – Incorp.	Total – Unincorp.
Cherokee	5.153	5.153	16.450	21.603	21.603
Clayton	15.266	15.266	19.600	34.866	34.866
Cobb	8.460	8.460	18.700	27.160	27.160
DeKalb (county schools areas)	10.002	17.480	22.880	32.882	40.360
Douglas	12.063	12.063	18.900	30.963	30.963
Fayette	3.763	3.763	19.600	23.363	23.363
Forsyth	4.791	4.791	15.208	19.999	19.999
Fulton (county schools areas)	8.870	8.870	17.080	25.950	25.950
Gwinnett	6.950	6.950	19.100	26.050	26.050
Henry	7.042	7.042	20.000	27.042	27.042
Rockdale	18.690	18.690	20.000	38.690	38.690

Georgia DOR – 2024 County Ad Valorem Tax Digest Millage Rates (county M&O and school M&O):

VALUE PER ACRE AND LAND USE PATTERNS

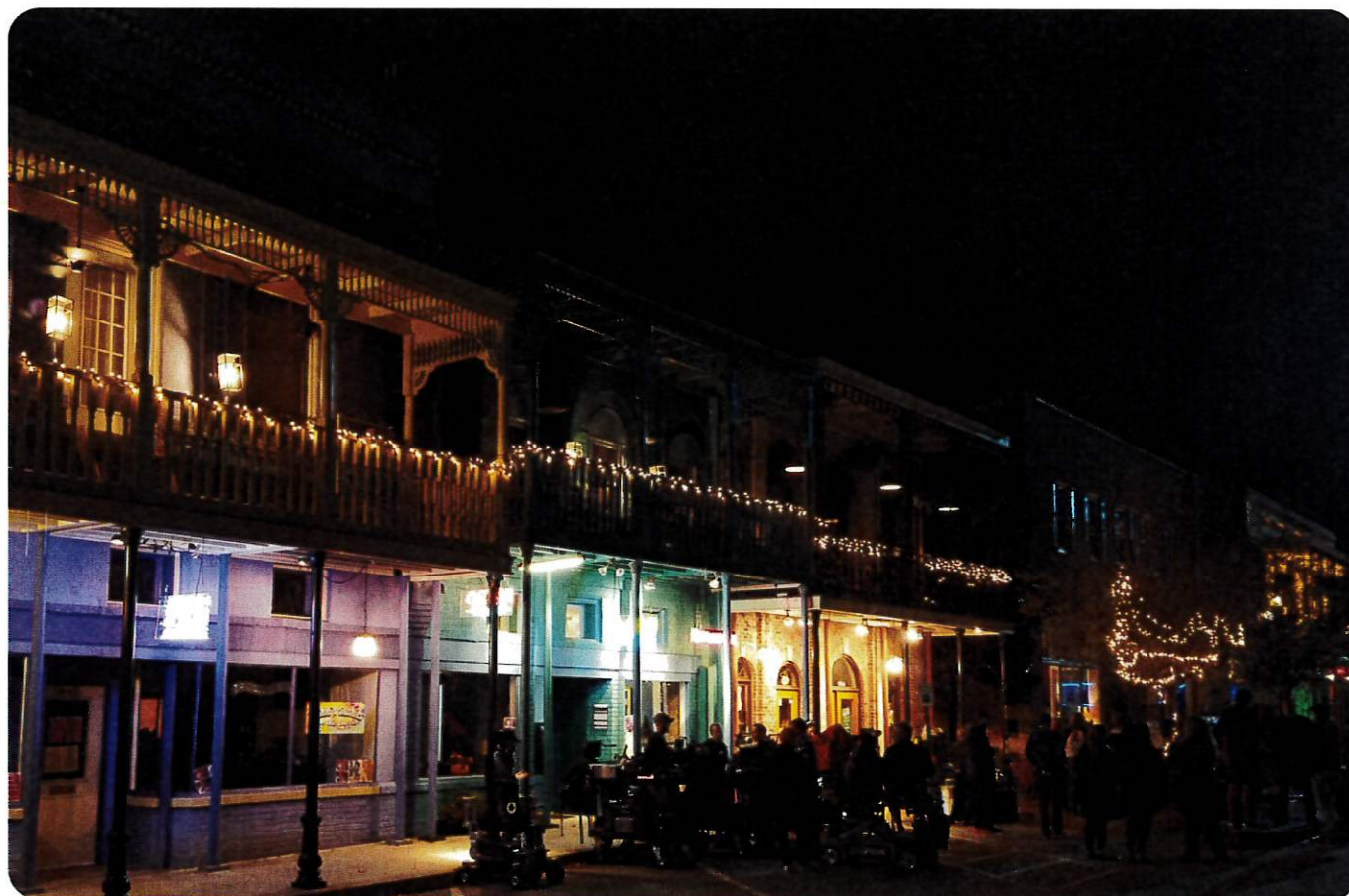
The county’s historical land use patterns, which heavily favor low-density, single-family development, contribute to a low value per acre that necessitates a higher tax burden per household. Data shows that low-density development requires significant infrastructure investment—such as roads, utilities, and emergency services—while generating comparatively low tax revenue. Currently, Rockdale’s residential value per capita and per acre is weak compared to regional peers. Increasing residential density is identified as the most effective strategy to raise the value per acre, which would allow the county to generate more revenue from its existing land and eventually lower the tax burden for individual residents.



3

Key Finding #3: Cost burden affects about 35% of households and is rising for renters and seniors without mortgages.

The third key finding reveals a severe financial strain on Rockdale County residents, where housing costs have increased disproportionately versus local income levels. While median household income in Rockdale is higher than in the City of Conyers, it remains lower than the broader Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) average. In addition, the median monthly housing costs in Rockdale exceed those of both the City of Conyers and the Metro area, creating an affordability gap. This imbalance has resulted in roughly 5,000 homeowners and 6,000 renters being classified as “cost-burdened,” meaning over 30% of their household income is consumed by housing expenses. The consequences of this trend go beyond personal finances; they lead to reduced spending on essential goods like healthcare and food, disrupted learning for children, and the displacement of workers who must move further away from their jobs to find affordable shelter.

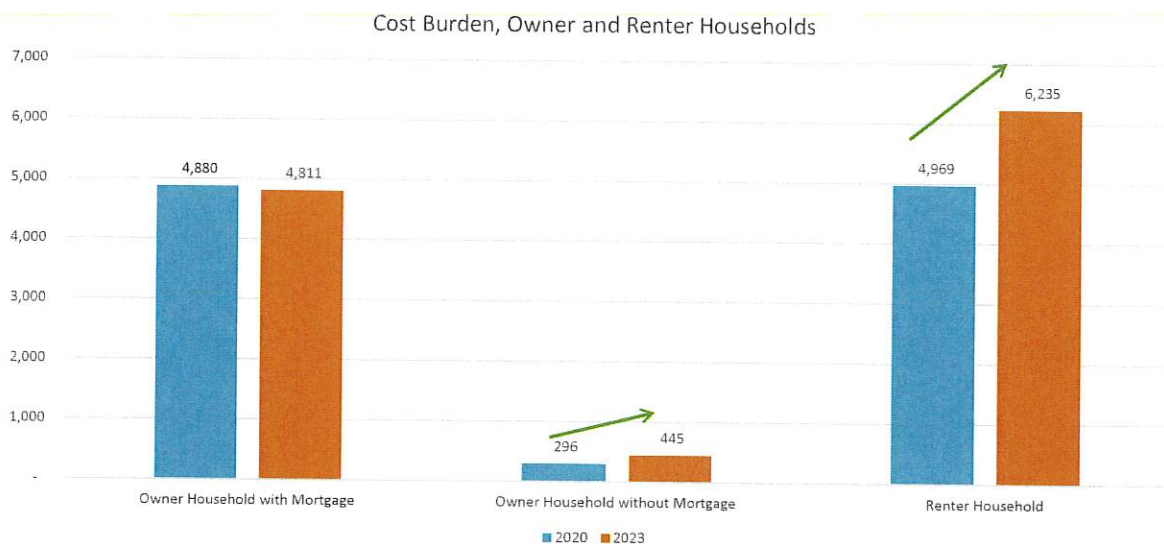
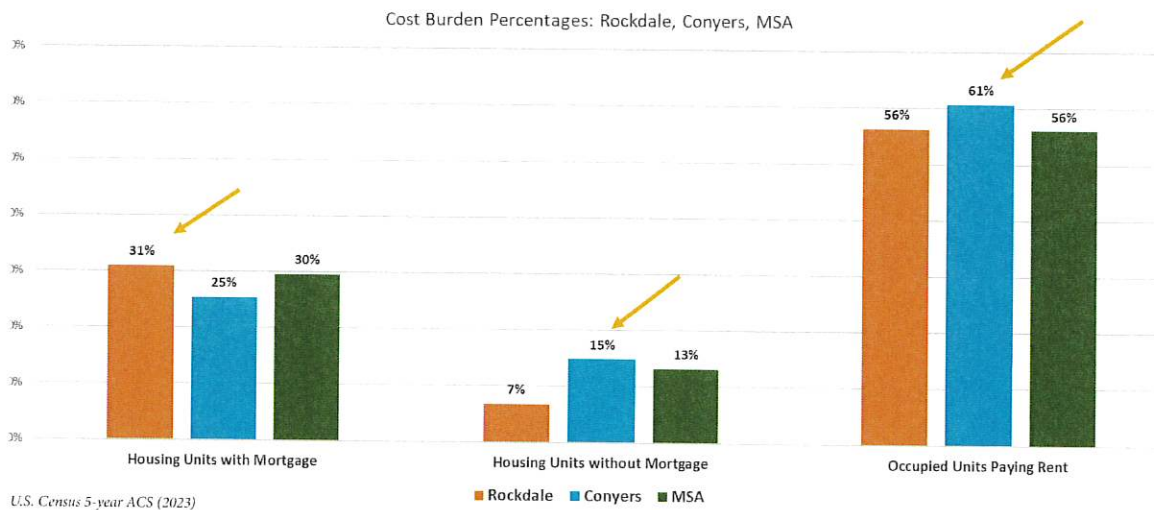


NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF COST-BURDENED RESIDENTS

In Rockdale, owners with a mortgage represent a high percentage of those under financial strain, with cost-burden rates sitting at 31%. In the City of Conyers, 61% of renters are cost-burdened, compared to 56% in Rockdale County and the wider MSA. Owners without a mortgage are more likely to be senior residents, many of whom may be on fixed income.

Increasing cost burden implications:

- Household financial strain
- Reduced spending on goods, health care, food
- Disrupted learning
- Displacement
- Moving further from jobs

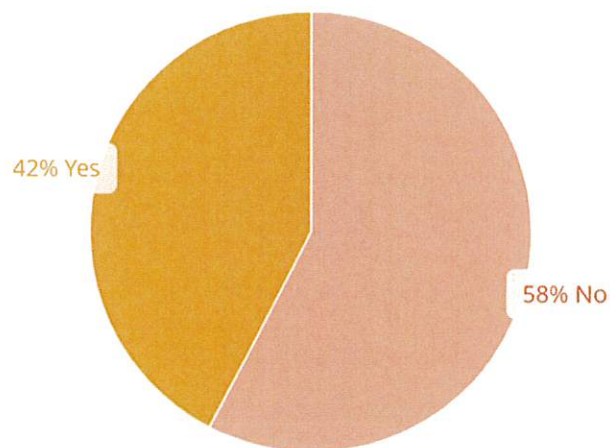


US Census Bureau, 5-year ACS, 2020-2023; The Dynamics of Housing Cost Burden Exposures: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2023.22>

SURVEY RESULTS AND REALIZED DIFFICULTY

The statistical data is reinforced by the lived experiences of residents captured in ARC Housing Assessment Survey. Over 40% of survey respondents reported that they had experienced direct difficulty paying for housing-related costs—including rent, mortgages, and utilities—within the past year. Specifically, 42% of respondents answered “Yes” when asked if they faced such financial hurdles.

In the past year, have you experienced difficulty paying for housing-related costs (rent mortgage, utilities)?

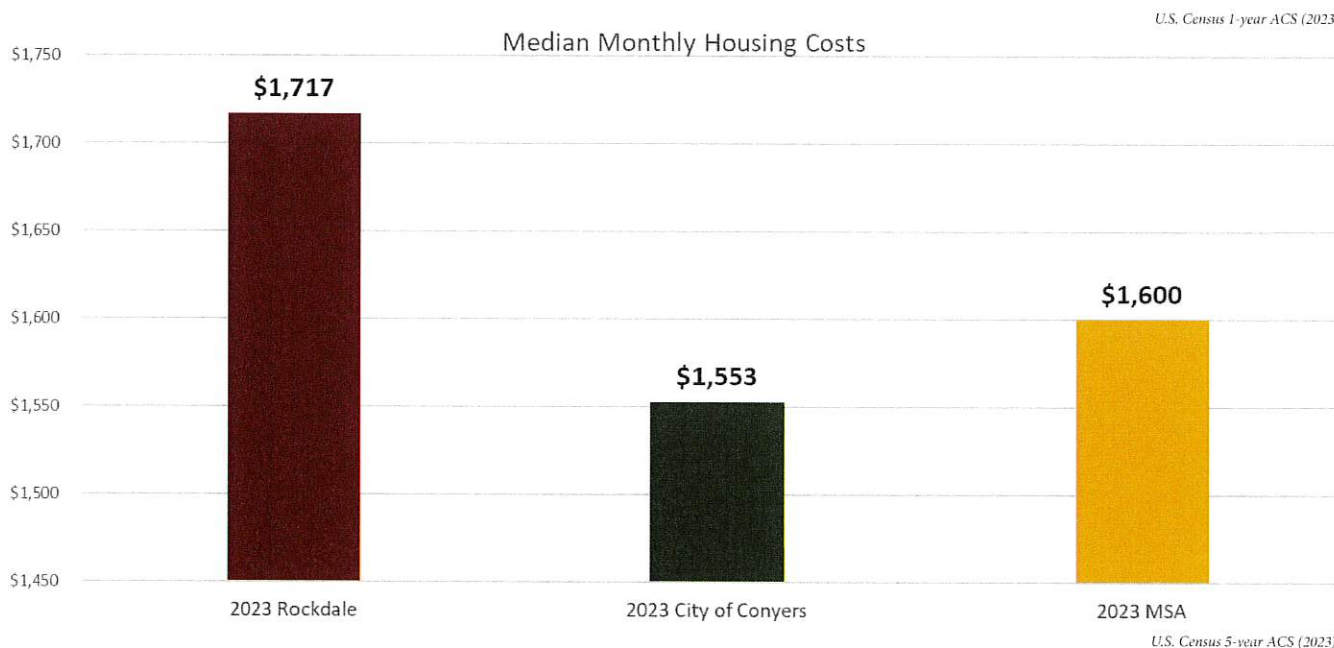
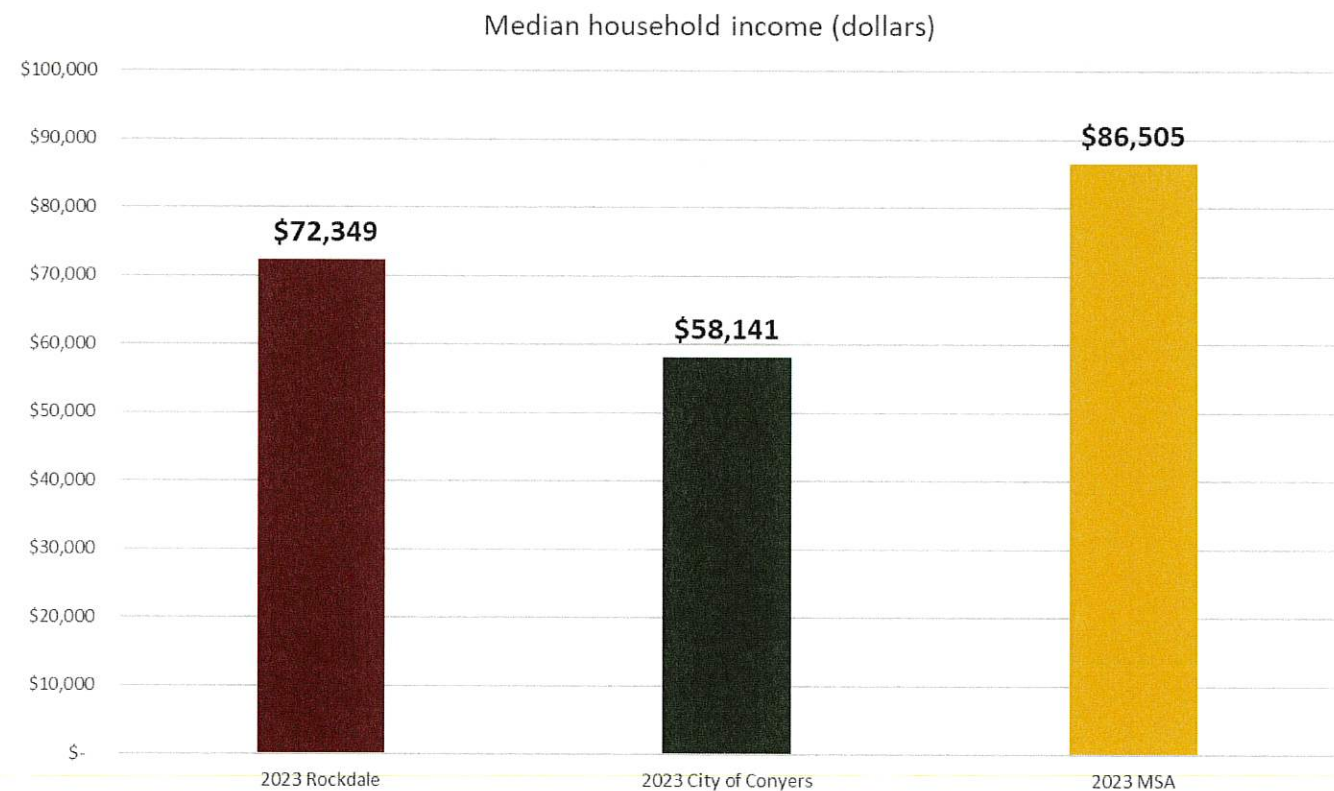


391 respondents



HOUSEHOLD INCOMES VS. HOUSING COSTS

There is a misalignment between what Rockdale residents earn and what they pay for housing. While the median household income in the county sits at approximately \$72,349—higher than Conyers' \$58,141 but lower than the MSA's \$86,505—the monthly housing costs tell a different story. Rockdale's median monthly housing cost of \$1,717 is higher than the \$1,553 paid in Conyers and the \$1,600 average for the Metropolitan Area.



4

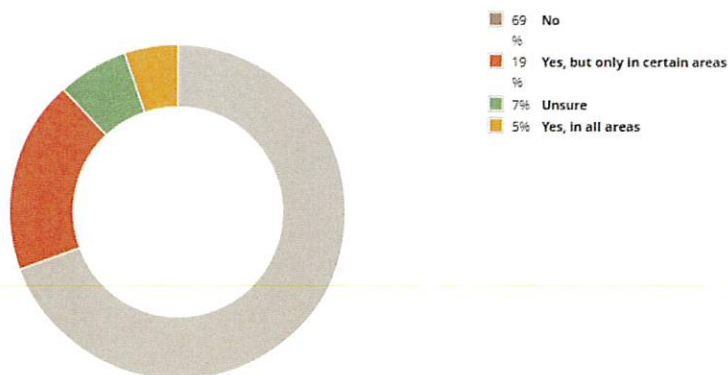
Key Finding #4: The housing stock is dominated by single-family homes and lacks missing-middle, senior-friendly, and attainable options.

Based on the ARC's Housing Assessment Survey results, 76% of respondents feel they could not find an affordable home in their own neighborhood if they needed to downsize or upsize. Housing types that could enable more options include, senior housing, starter homes, and cottage clusters—which residents actually express an interest in, despite their general opposition to new construction. While the county has a good level of existing stock around the \$270,000 price point, new developments and rents are trending much towards a higher range than considered “affordable” for the local workforce. This creates a stagnant market where residents are effectively “locked in” to homes that no longer fit their life stages.

SURVEY RESULTS: DEVELOPMENT VS. MOBILITY

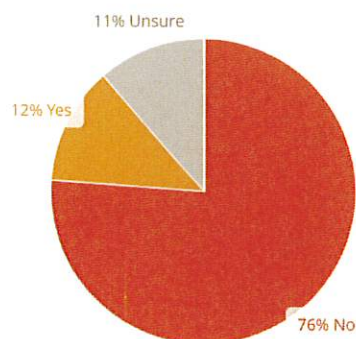
There is overall opposition to developments as 69% of survey respondents explicitly stated they do not support more housing development. However, the survey points to the need for more housing, as 76% admitted they would be unable to find an affordable option within their current neighborhood if their circumstances changed. This suggests that the current housing market is no longer serving the natural life-cycle needs—such as downsizing for seniors—of the people already living there.

13. Do you support the development of more housing in Rockdale County?



424 respondents

15. If you needed to move to a smaller or larger home in your neighborhood, do you feel that you could find something affordable to your household to move into?



377 respondents

DEFINING AFFORDABILITY BY AMI

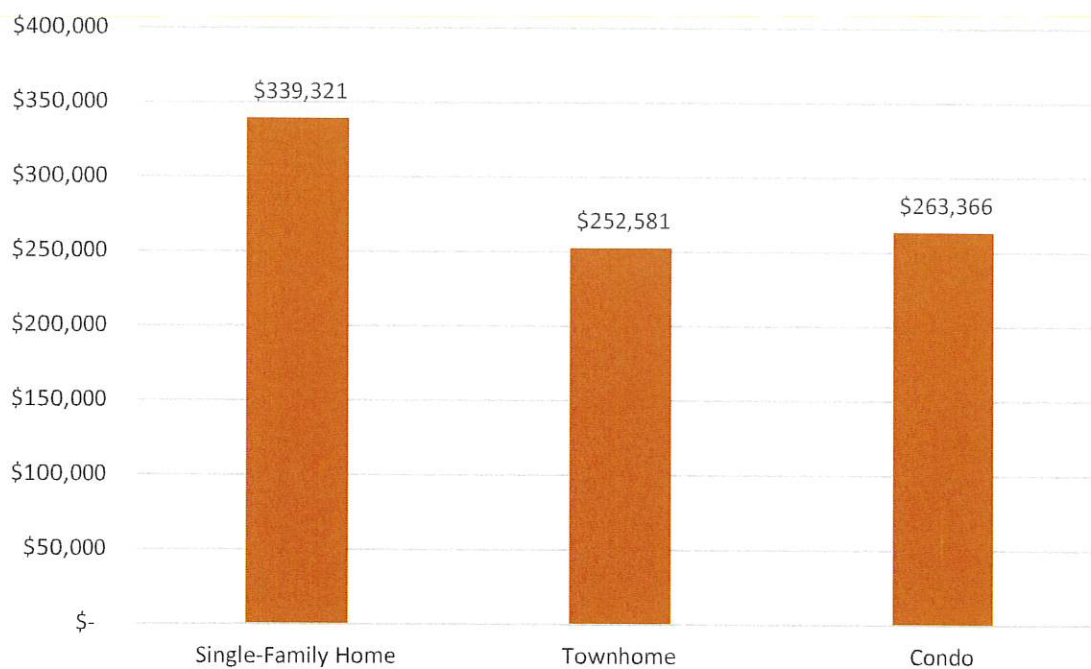
For the median renter household in Rockdale earning \$48,594 (50–60% AMI), an affordable rent is considered to be between \$1,285 and \$1,542. For owner-occupied households earning closer to 100% AMI (\$87,862), an affordable home price ranges between \$250,000 and \$310,000. While the county’s average sale price of \$269,589 currently fits within this “affordable” window, the trend for new construction is significantly higher, threatening to price out the very residents who form the county’s economic base.

	Median Household Income	% AMI (Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell)	Affordable Home Price (2-bedroom)	Affordable Rent Price (2-bedroom)
Median HH Income	\$72,349	60-80% AMI	\$185k - \$250k	\$1,550 - \$2,050
Owner Occupied Income	\$87,862	80-100% AMI	\$250k - \$310k	\$2,050 - \$2,570
Renter Occupied Income	\$48,594	50-60% AMI	Under \$185k	\$1,285 - \$1,542

U.S. Census ACS 1-year Estimates

HOME SALE PRICES BY HOUSING TYPE

Average Sale Price: Rockdale County (2024)



ParcelLabs 2024: Home Sales Rockdale County

Home sale prices vary by housing type, and therefore adding different housing types to the mix can add more homes at attainable levels. As seen in the data below, both the average sale price for condos and the average sale price for townhomes fall below the average price for a single-family home in Rockdale County, according to ParcelLabs 2024 home sales data.

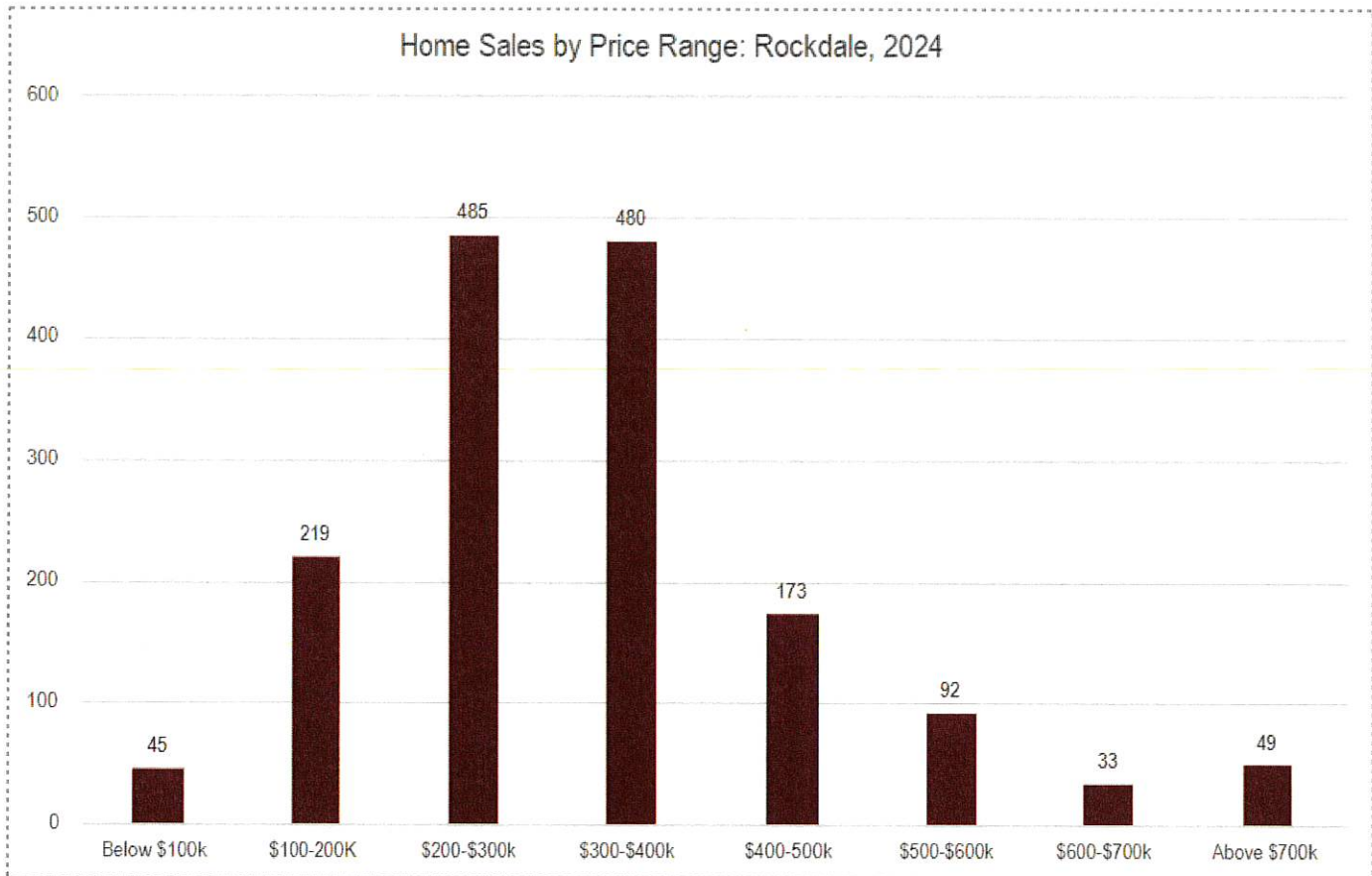
AVERAGE HOME SALE PRICES (2024): ROCKDALE

Average Sale Price: \$269,589 Average SF Home (1,335): \$339,321

High Sale Price: \$1,130,000 Average Condo (29): \$263,366

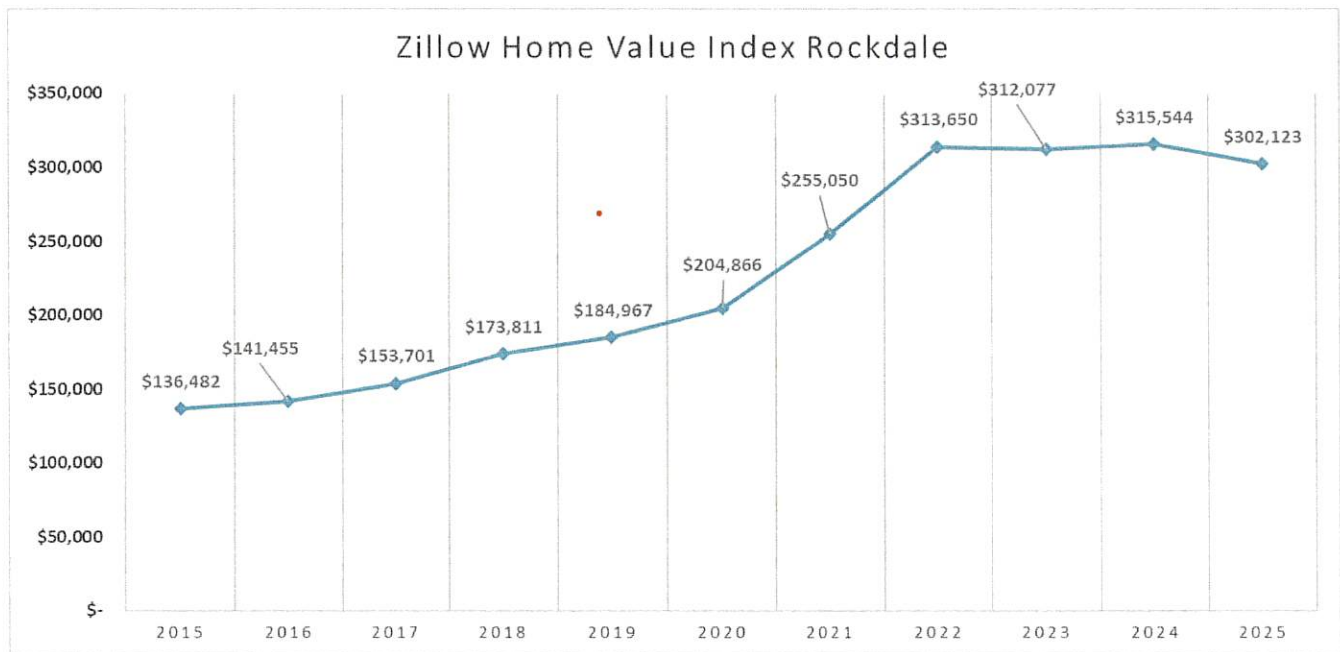
Low Sale Price: \$68,200 Average Townhome (101): \$252,581

Majority of Home Sales in the \$200-\$400k Range



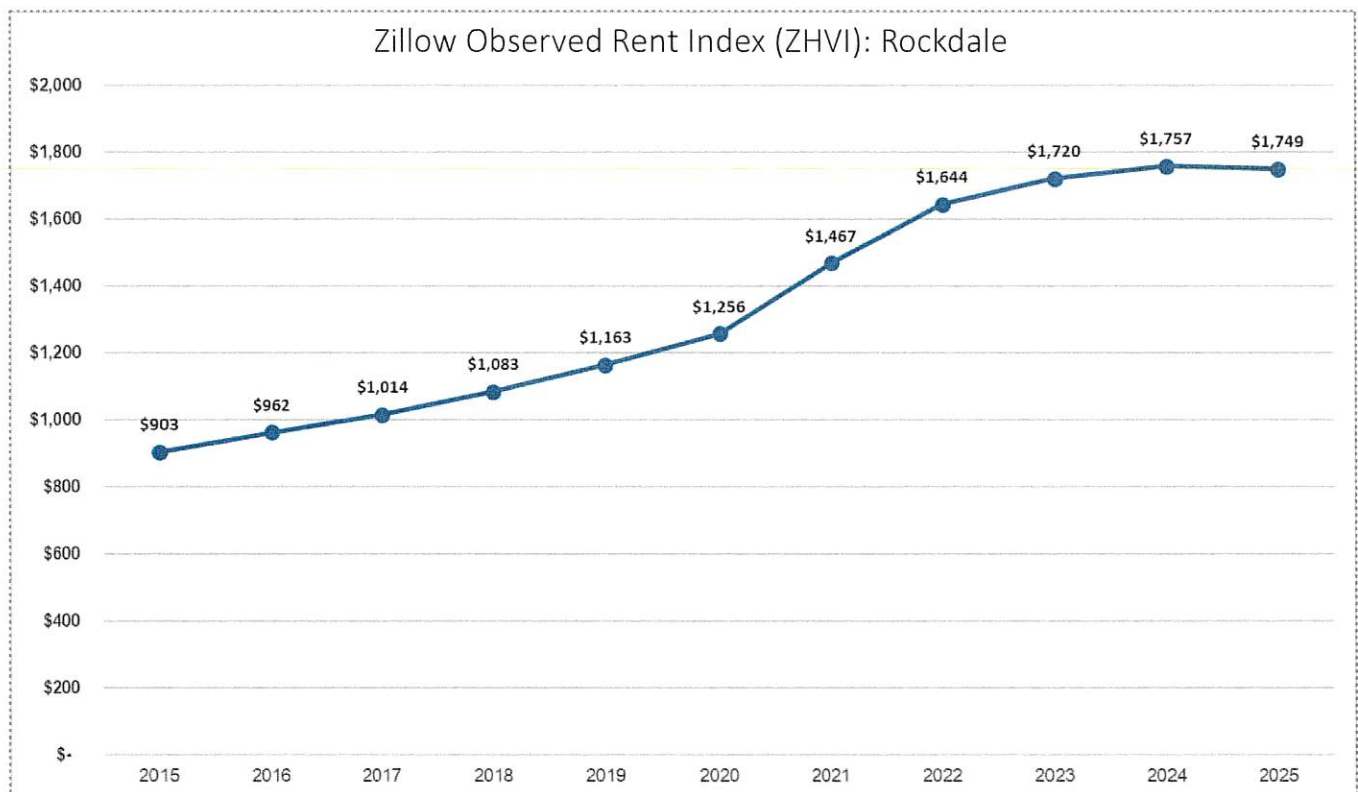
Source: ATTOM Data Analytics, 2024; ParcelLabs 2024

ZILLOW HOME VALUE INDEX (ZHVI): ROCKDALE



Housing Data - Zillow Research

DEFINING AFFORDABILITY BY AMI



Housing Data - Zillow Research

HOUSING FOR-SALE INVENTORY: ROCKDALE

Average Closing Price, New Homes: \$370,998

Average Closing Price, Resale Homes: \$323,845

Percent New Home Closings: 23.8%

Percent Resale Home Closings: 76.2%

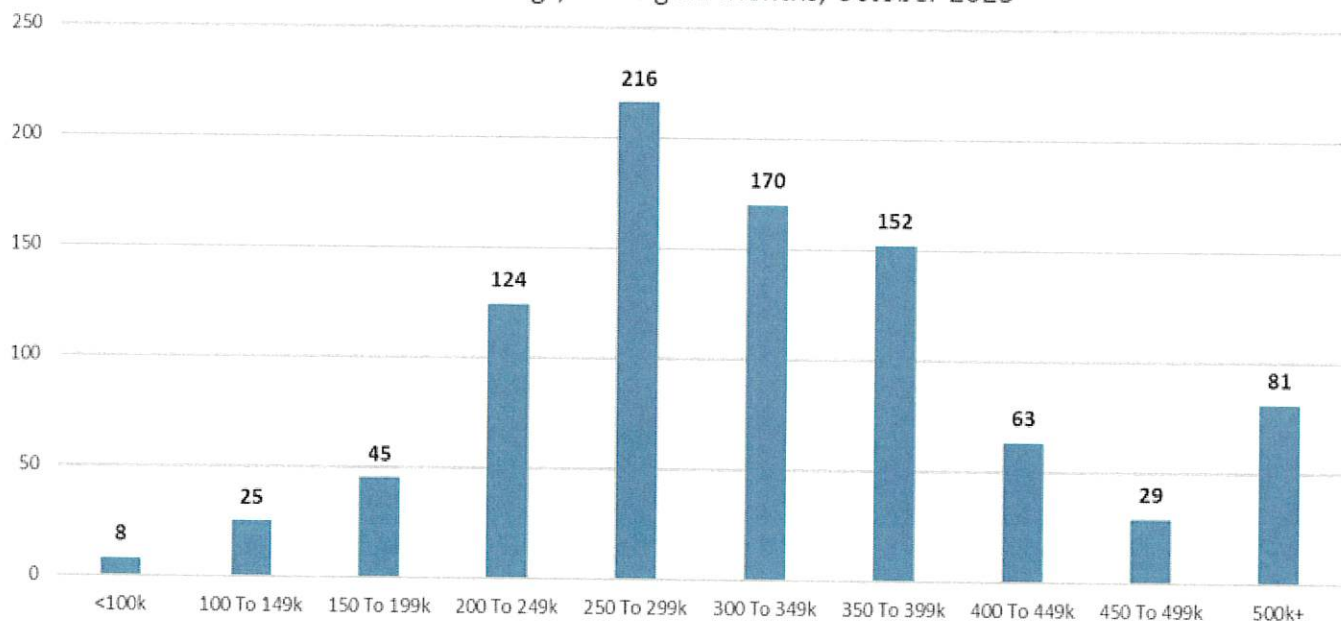
Deficit New Homes: **-25**

Deficit Resale Homes: **-70**

Total For-Sale Deficit: **-95**

MarketNisght, Trailing 12 Months, October 2025

Total Closings, Trailing 12 Months, October 2025



For Sale Inventory Surplus/Deficit

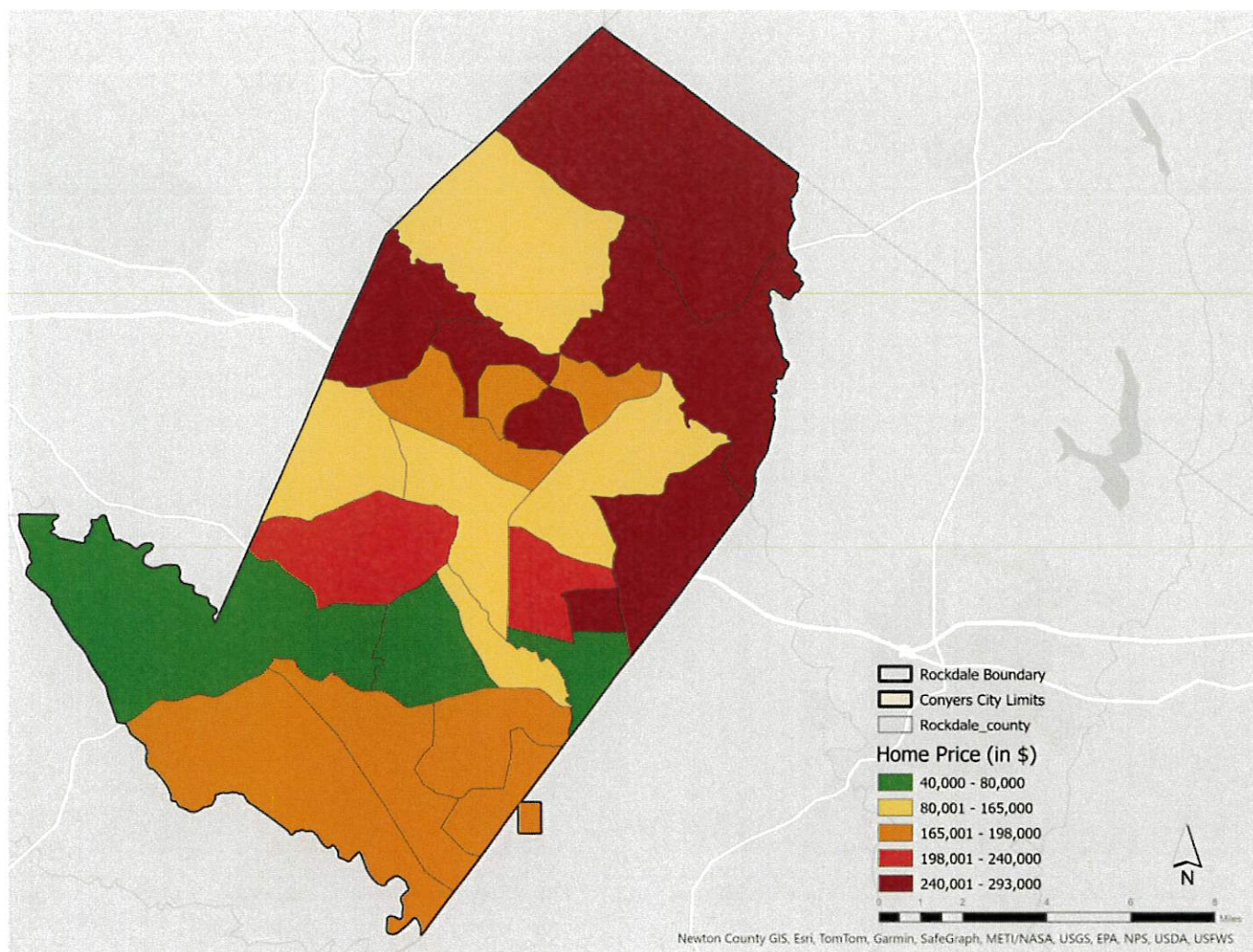
Trailing 12 Months, Oct. 2025



HOUSING INVENTORY AND SALES BY TYPE

Rockdale's inventory remains heavily dominated by detached single-family homes, which saw an increase of nearly 3,000 units between 2018 and 2023. In contrast, the county has seen a decrease in multi-unit options, such as 2-unit buildings and 5-to-9 unit complexes, which saw losses of 159 and 715 units respectively. The geographic price map shows home prices rising significantly in the northern and southern tips of the county. Residents have expressed interest in “missing middle” housing —such as senior homes (36%) and starter homes (18%)—but the current inventory growth is not aligned with these specific housing types.

	2018	2023	# Change
 Single Family (detached)	26,044	29,016	2,972
 Single Family (attached)	820	1,697	877
 2-units	877	718	(159)
 3 or 4 units	880	1,078	198
 5 to 9 units	1,802	1,087	(715)
 10 to 19 units	1,059	840	(219)
 20 or more units	948	974	26



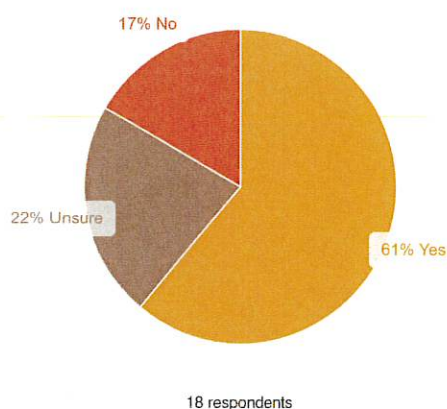
5

Key Finding #5: Housing costs and limited choice are harming workforce retention and increasing long commutes for employees.

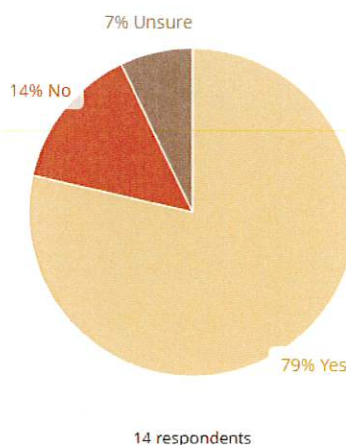
The housing assessment outreach included an ARC survey to Rockdale County employers, which had 18 respondents. This survey shows a link between housing affordability and stress of employee retention. Almost 80% of surveyed employers report that their workforce is currently struggling with housing cost burdens and payments and 61% of these employers believe that housing availability and affordability are now intrinsically linked to employee retention. In addition, Rockdale respondents to the [2025 ARC Metro Atlanta Speaks survey](#) indicated that the best way to attract and retain a skilled workforce is by primarily more affordable housing options. To remain competitive, the county must align its housing inventory with employment centers, ensuring that price points accommodate the current and future workforce—whose target affordability range spans from 30% to 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

IMPACT ON WORKFORCE AND RETENTION

6. Do you feel housing availability or affordability is related to employee retention?



7. Are employees burdened by housing costs and/or payments?



79% of respondents confirm that their employees face significant housing cost burdens. Furthermore, 61% of respondents to the ARC business survey for Rockdale County explicitly state that the lack of affordable housing is a primary driver of turnover and difficulty in retaining staff. Qualitative feedback from business owners reinforces this, with one noting that even for employees seeking “simple 3-bedroom” homes, a \$400,000 price tag in Rockdale is making local living an impossible option.

GROWING INDUSTRIES AND WAGE ALIGNMENT

The housing crisis is particularly acute for workers in Rockdale's fastest-growing sectors. Key industries such as Health Care and Social Assistance (353 new jobs at a \$60,592 average wage), Construction (223 jobs at \$79,595), and Accommodation and Food Services (169 jobs at \$20,490) form the backbone of the county's expansion. However, the wages in many of these high-growth areas—specifically in retail (\$35,341) and administrative support (\$55,212)—often do not align with the rising “premium” costs of Rockdale's current housing stock. If this pattern continues, it may force essential workers to commute from outside the county, contributing to a “spatial mismatch” that threatens long-term growth.

GROWING INDUSTRIES: ROCKDALE COUNTY



HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE +353 Jobs (\$60,592)



CONSTRUCTION +223 Jobs (\$79,595)



ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES +169 Jobs (\$20,490)



MANUFACTURING +125 Jobs (\$81,101)



PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL +134 Jobs (\$73,455)



OTHER SERVICES +93 Jobs (\$37,933)



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT +92 Jobs (\$55,212)



RETAIL TRADE +77 Jobs (\$35,341)



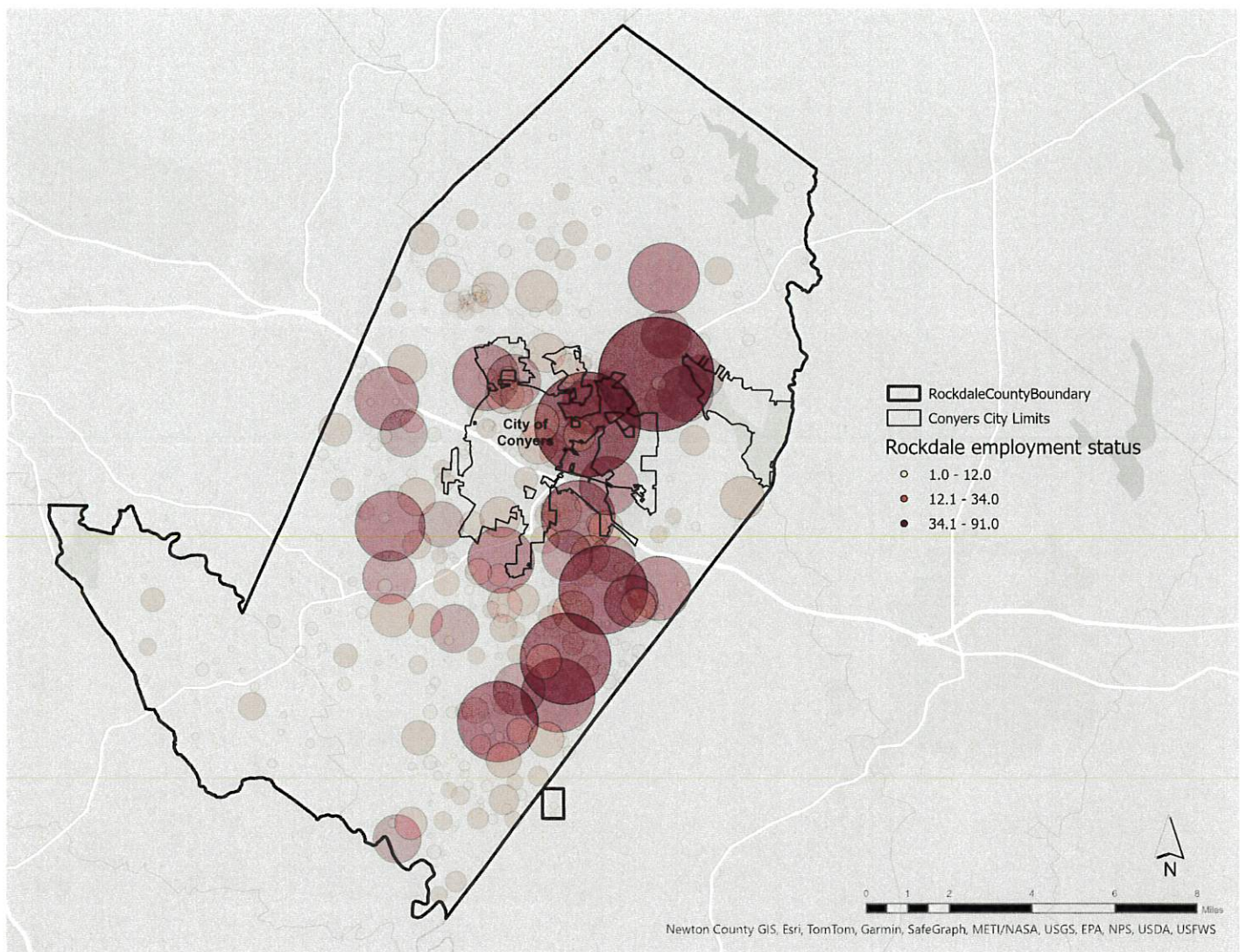
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION +71 Jobs (\$78,418)



TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING +70 Jobs (\$74,701)

ALIGNMENT WITH AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT

The geographic distribution of employment in Rockdale underscores the need for strategically placed, diverse housing. The “Areas of Employment” map shows heavy concentrations of jobs within the central corridor of the county. Developing affordable, diverse housing options in close proximity to these employment clusters is identified as a vital step to reduce transit times, lower cost burdens for the workforce, and support the operational needs of local businesses.



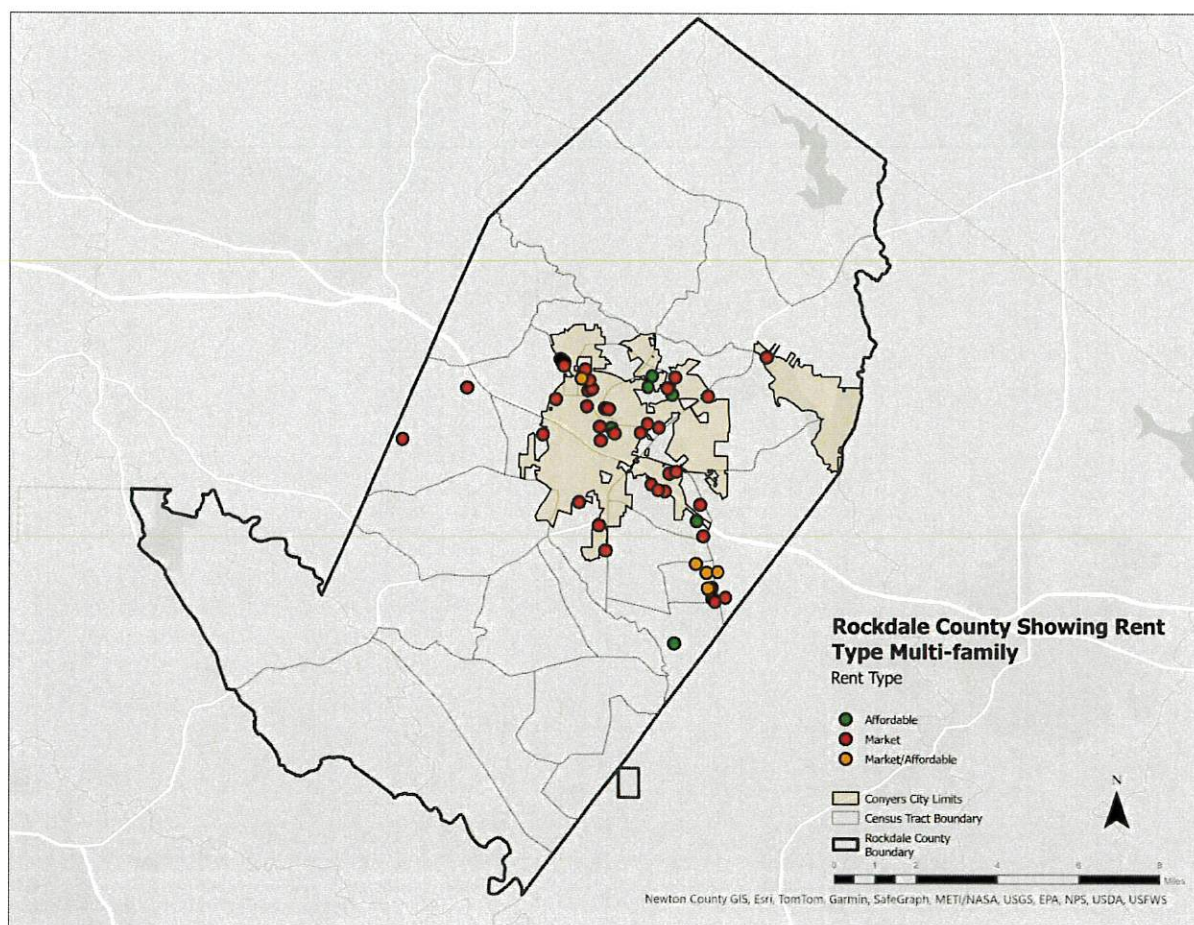
6

Key Finding #6: Rockdale can add more rentals and intentional density in targeted nodes and corridors to increase walkability and access to greenspace and amenities without sacrificing community character.

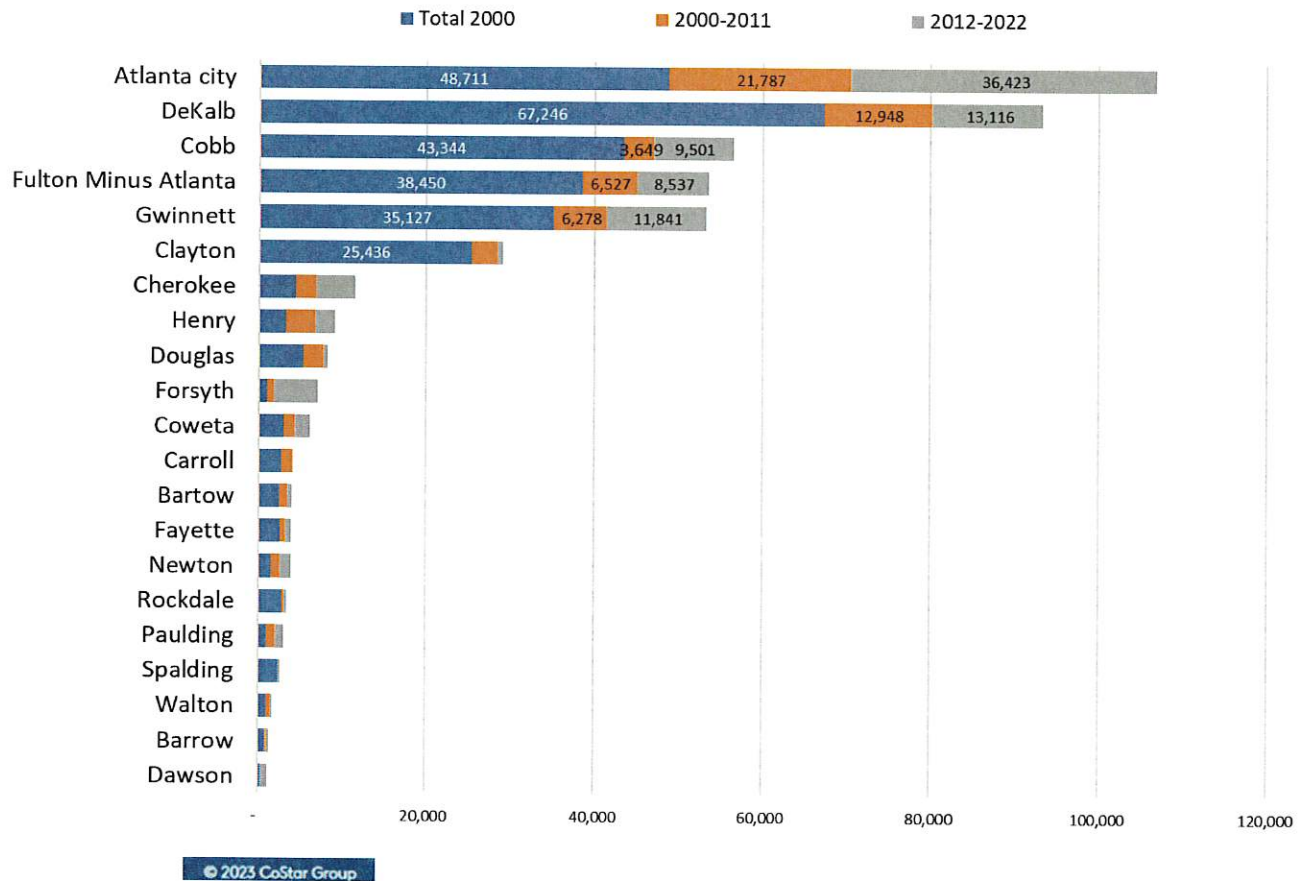
This finding highlights a significant opportunity for Rockdale County to address its housing shortage through strategic, higher-density development. Currently, the vast majority of multifamily housing is concentrated within the City of Conyers, leaving much of the unincorporated county with very few apartment options. By intentionally increasing density in specific growth nodes—aligning new housing with existing infrastructure, services, and community-requested features—the county can create a more balanced and sustainable residential landscape.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING LOCATIONS - ROCKDALE COUNTY

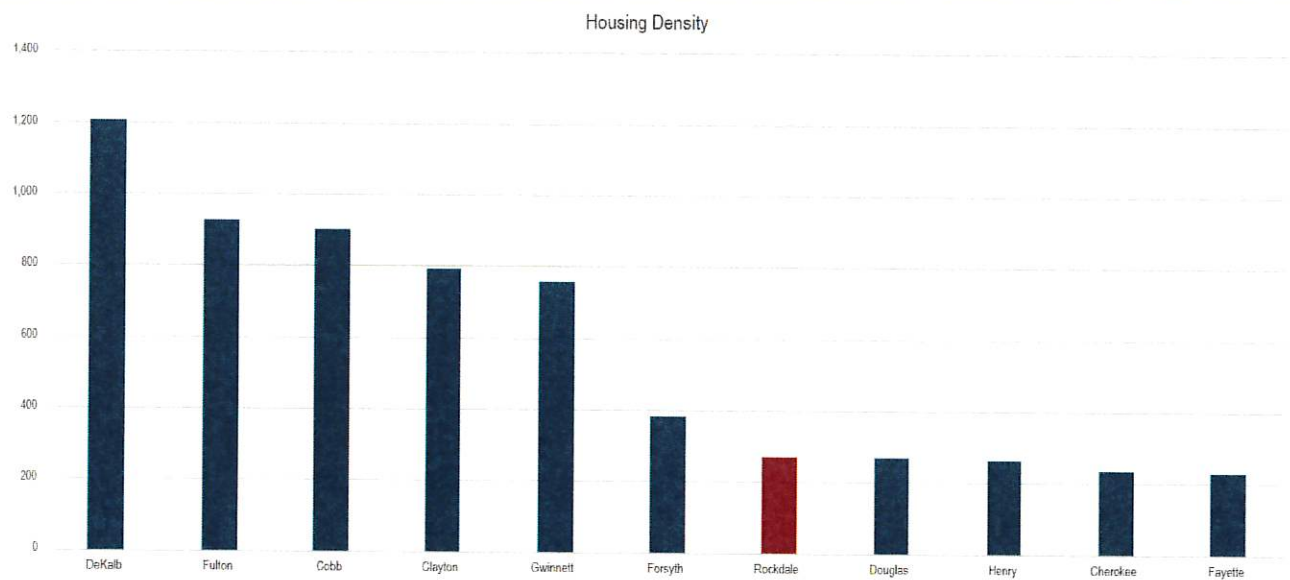
A spatial analysis of existing developments reveals almost all of Rockdale County's 44 market-rate, 6 affordable, and 5 mixed-type multifamily developments are clustered in or around the City of Conyers. This concentration limits residential choice for those who work or wish to live in unincorporated Rockdale.



REGIONAL MULTIFAMILY CONSTRUCTION TRENDS



ROCKDALE COUNTY HOUSING DENSITY (HOUSING UNITS PER ACRE)



Source: Demographics-us.com, www.indexmundi.com

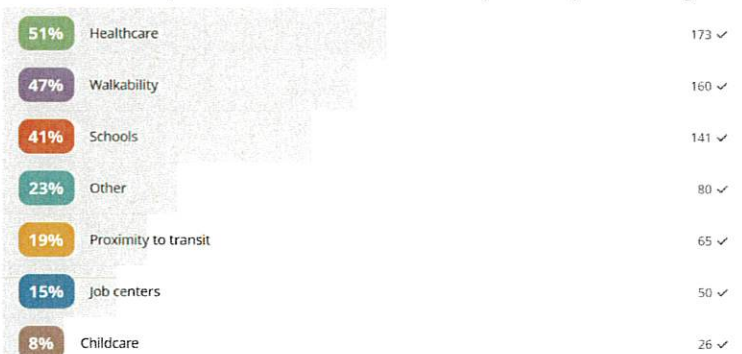
WHAT SERVICES AND FEATURES MATTER TO RESIDENTS?

Intentional densification is not just about adding units; it is about providing the amenities residents actually desire to improve their quality of life. Survey data indicates that Rockdale residents prioritize Healthcare (51%), Walkability (47%), and Schools (41%) when considering housing. Community feedback suggests that while the county's parks are valued, there is a strong desire for more integrated walkability between subdivisions and services. Strategic densification offers a path to create “walkable pockets,” bringing housing closer to the health centers and transit options that residents have identified as top priorities.

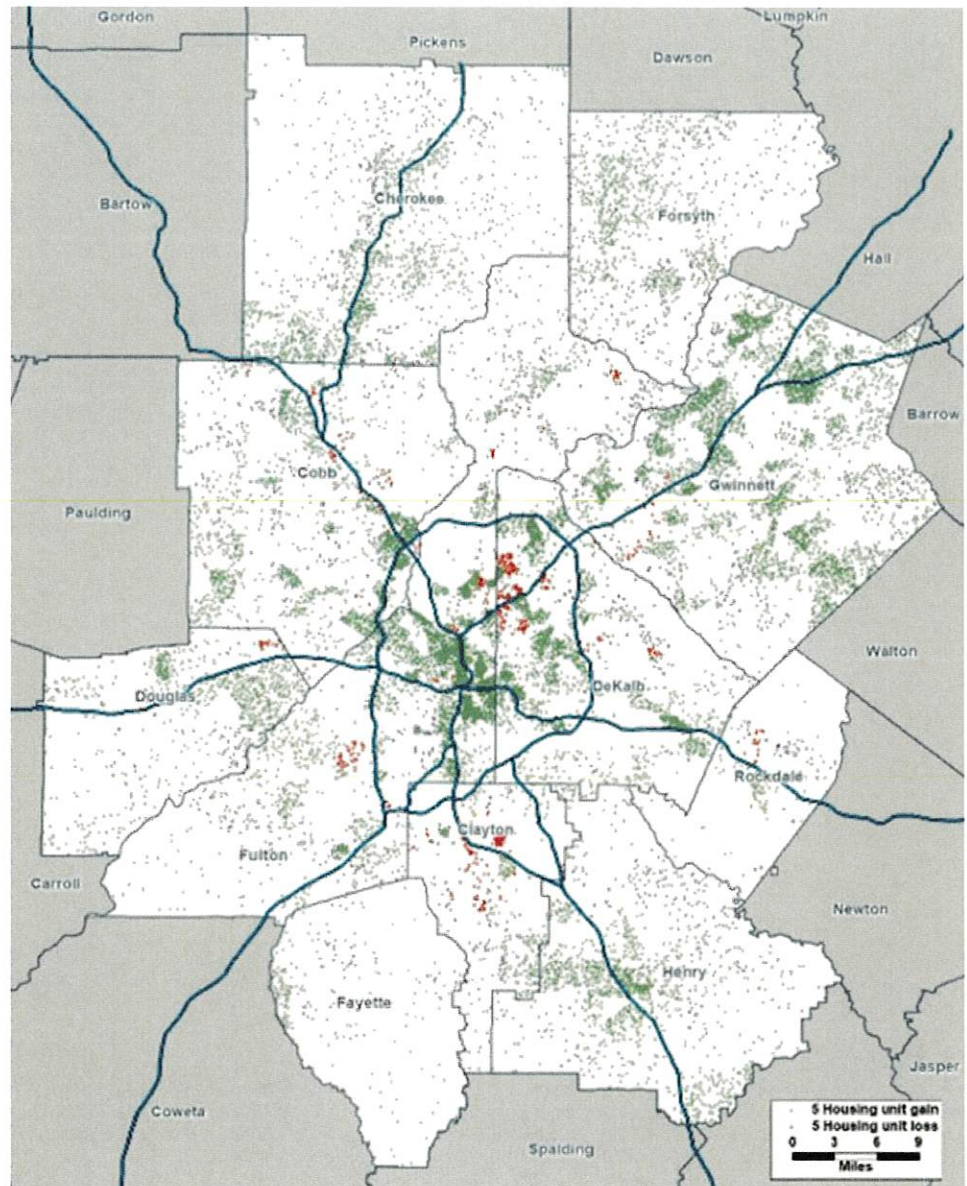
NET CHANGE IN HOUSING UNITS BY CENSUS TRACT

The geographic distribution of recent housing changes shows where growth is currently localized and where gaps remain. Feedback from residents emphasizes that while current parks are “great,” the necessity of driving to reach them highlights a lack of connectivity. Creating more walkability between subdivisions and existing amenities—or bringing new parks and transit systems directly to high-density areas—could lead to a significantly healthier county. Aligning housing growth with these census tracts ensures that densification happens where it can best leverage existing infrastructure.

9. Are there specific services or features that are important to you in housing?



342 Respondents

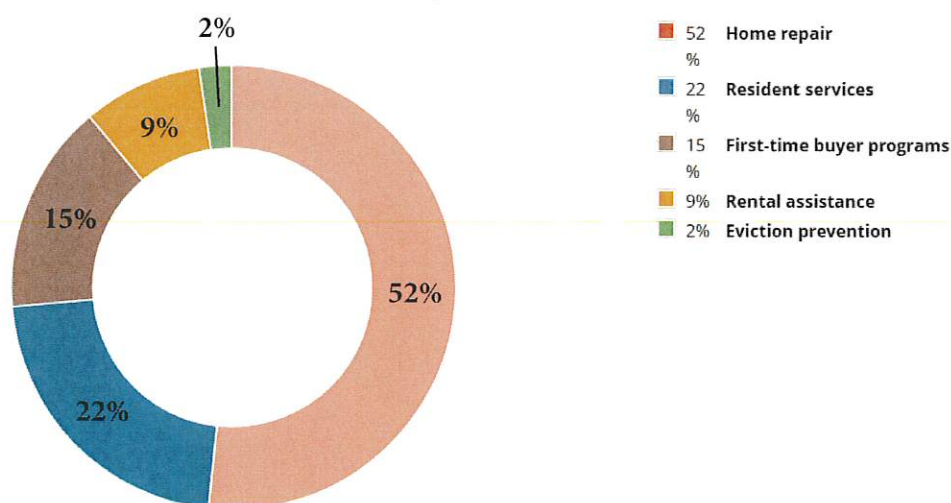


Key Finding #7: Data and survey feedback points to future need for aging homes and multifamily properties to require preservation, repair, and stabilization programs to prevent loss of affordability.

This finding emphasizes the growing need for targeted interventions to maintain the existing housing stock and support vulnerable populations in Rockdale County. Data indicates that a significant portion of the multifamily inventory is aging and may soon require rehabilitation or redevelopment. Simultaneously, nearly one-third of residents report that their own homes are in need of major repairs or accessibility modifications. Beyond physical infrastructure, there is an urgent community demand for programs that address housing stability and rising homelessness, ensuring that both residents and the buildings they inhabit remain viable parts of the county's future.

ADDRESSING STABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

14. What types of housing assistance or resources would be most helpful to you or your community?



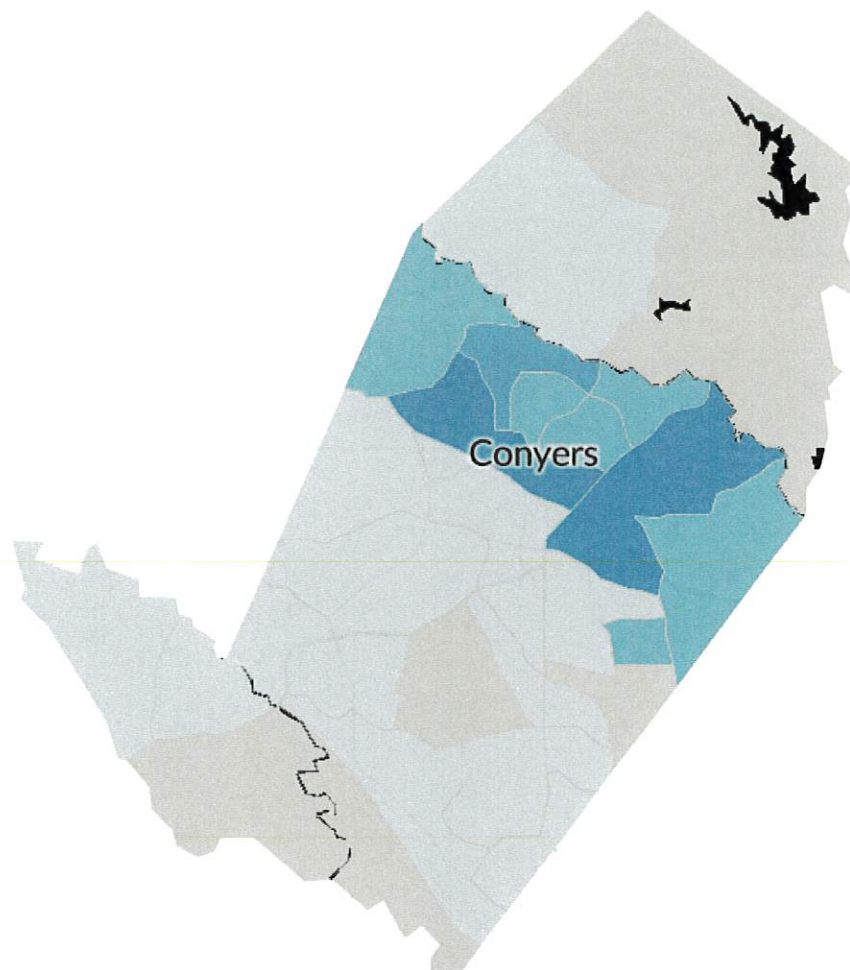
333 respondents

Community feedback indicates that housing instability and homelessness are becoming increasingly visible across Rockdale. Based on interview results, families are reportedly living in hotels, cars, or doubling up, which directly disrupts education and stability. Interviews revealed that current shelter and transitional housing options are viewed as insufficient and frequently at capacity. Consequently, when asked what assistance would be most helpful, a majority of residents pointed toward Home Repair (52%) followed by Resident Services (22%) and First-Time Buyer programs (15%) as essential tools for long-term stability.

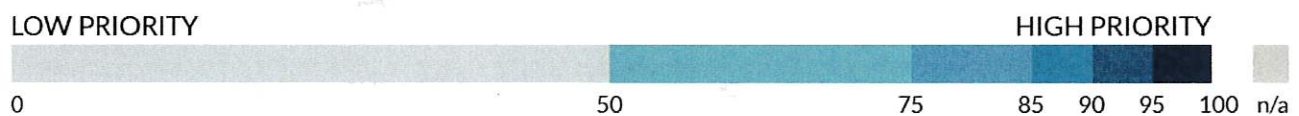
NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE HIGHEST RISK OF HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

The [Urban Institute's Emergency Rental Assistance Priority \(ERAP\) Index](#) is an interactive mapping tool designed to help local leaders identify neighborhoods where low-income renters are at the highest risk of housing instability and homelessness. By analyzing census tract-level data on housing costs, household characteristics, and income, the tool enables decision-makers to allocate resources equitably and prioritize emergency aid for the most vulnerable communities.

Based on the data from the Urban Institute's map, Rockdale County contains several census tracts that rank in the highest percentiles for housing instability risk in Georgia. These areas, particularly in and around Conyers, show a high concentration of renters with significant cost burdens and lower income levels, placing them in the higher percentiles for prioritizing emergency assistance.



Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index



HOMEOWNERS: WITH AND WITHOUT A MORTGAGE

Nationally, approximately 50–55% of homeowners who own their homes outright (i.e., without a mortgage) are seniors (aged 65+). As indicated on page 32 in this Housing Assessment, the number of cost-burdened households without a mortgage increased from 296 households to 445 households from 2020-2023.

Source: Housingwire

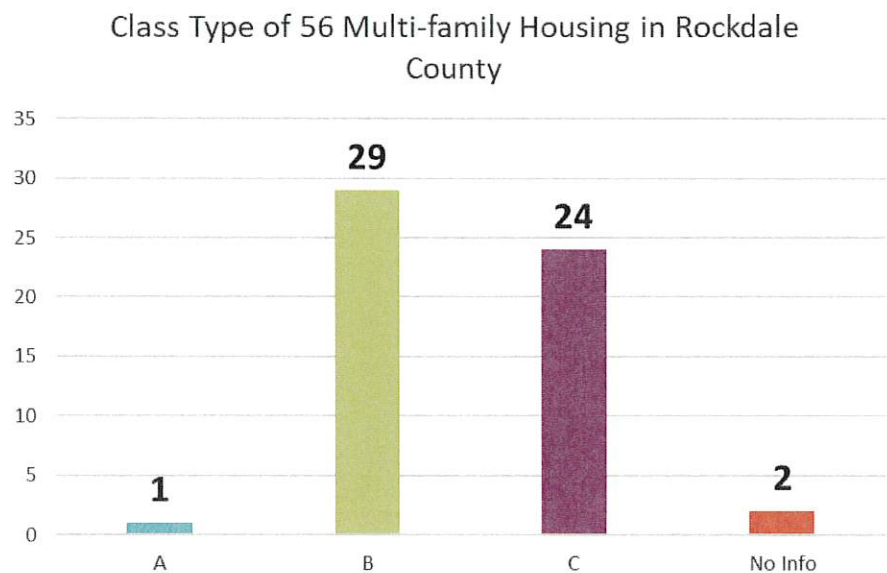


Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 – 2023, 5-year ACS



CLASS OF MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENTS

Out of 56 identified developments, only one is classified as Class A (highest quality/luxury), 29 are classified as Class B, and 24 buildings are classified as Class C (older buildings needing renovation). This suggests that a segment of the county's rental inventory may require future redevelopment or significant rehabilitation to remain safe and competitive in the regional market.



CoStar 2024 Multifamily Data

Class A

- Highest Quality
- Low Vacancy Rates
- High-Income Residents
- Luxury Fixtures
- Amenities

Class B

- Middle-Income Residents
- Non-Luxury Amenities

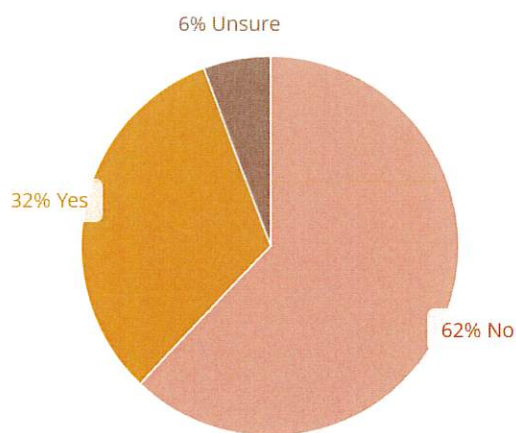
Class C

- Old Buildings
- May Need Renovation

HOME REPAIR AND ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Survey data reveals that 32% of respondents—nearly one-third of the sampled population—admit their current residence requires major repairs or upgrades to remain accessible. Qualitative feedback highlights a specific need for services that connect elderly residents with honest contractors or programs similar to those in neighboring counties that offer forgivable home improvement loans to help seniors age in place.

12. Does your current home need major repairs or accessibility upgrades?



384 respondents

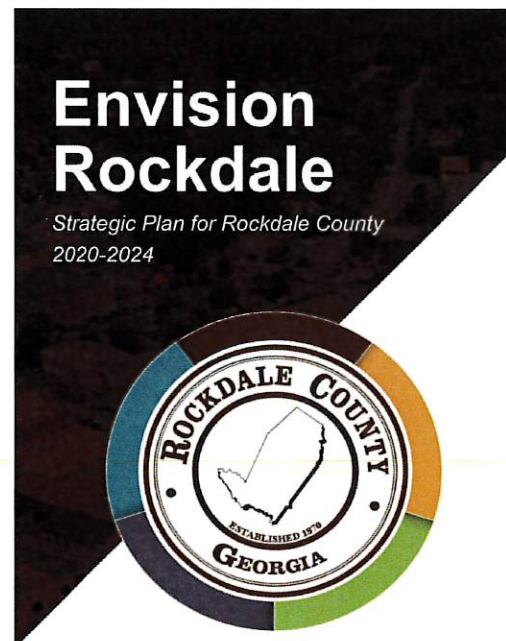
8

Key Finding #8: Rockdale County and the City of Conyers have established consistent housing policies over time, and the key challenge moving forward is translating these aligned plans into action through coordinated implementation, funding, and partnerships.

The Rockdale Housing Assessment largely reinforces existing county and city plans, which have already established a clear direction regarding housing quality, diverse options, and infrastructure-supported development. The primary challenge facing the region is not identifying new policies, but rather the effective implementation of adopted plans through coordinated leadership, sustained funding, and cross-sector partnerships. To move these plans to action, the county needs to identify specific areas for growth and connection, set numeric goals, and solidify partnerships.

ENVISION ROCKDALE STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2029)

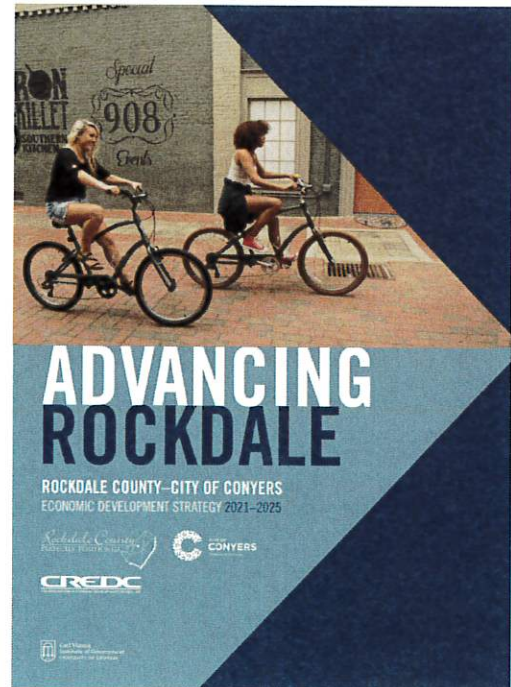
Current planning efforts emphasize a “Housing First” system to provide rapid access to emergency, interim, and permanent supportive housing supported by strong case management. The strategic plan positions housing as central to community well-being and economic competitiveness, calling for expanded options including emergency and transitional housing. These plans advocate for increased residential density where appropriate to better serve vulnerable populations and link housing strategy directly to infrastructure readiness and workforce growth.



- **Equity & Access:** Positions housing as the foundation of community well-being, advocating for expanded options—from emergency shelters to increased density—to support vulnerable populations and economic competitiveness.
- **Strategic Growth:** Links density and mixed-use development directly to workforce and population growth, ensuring infrastructure is prepared for intensive development in targeted areas.
- **Quality & Livability:** Enhances neighborhood standards through proactive code enforcement and land-use policies that balance growth with high-quality residential living.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2021-2025)

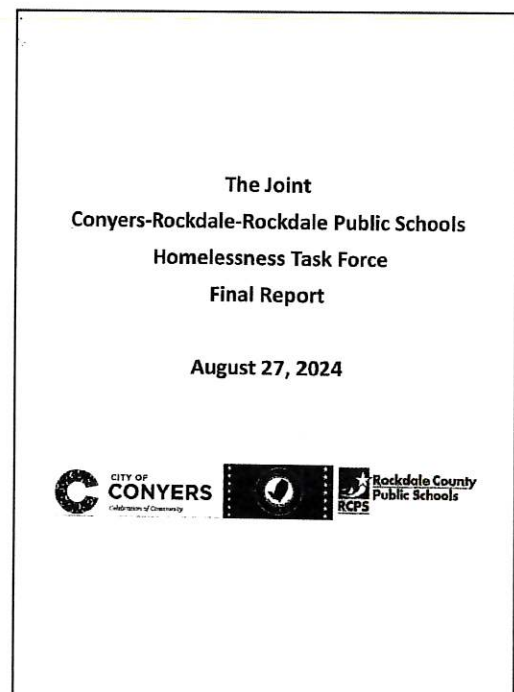
This strategy frames housing as a core economic development asset, emphasizing the need for a live-work-play environment to attract and retain businesses and talent. It identifies a critical need to update, expand, and modernize the existing housing stock to meet modern stakeholder demands while leveraging Rockdale's cost-of-living advantage. The strategy anticipates continued population growth and calls for coordinated investment in community amenities, transportation, and infrastructure to support long-term economic expansion.



- Economic Magnetism: Frames housing as a primary asset for business attraction, prioritizing affordability and “live-work-play” environments to secure top-tier talent.
- Stock Modernization: Targets the modernization and expansion of housing to meet current demand while capitalizing on Rockdale’s competitive cost-of-living advantage.
- Growth Readiness: Synchronizes housing expansion with infrastructure, transit, and amenity investments to proactively manage population growth and sustain long-term economic momentum.

JOINT CONYERS-ROCKDALE-ROCKDALE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT (AUGUST 2024)

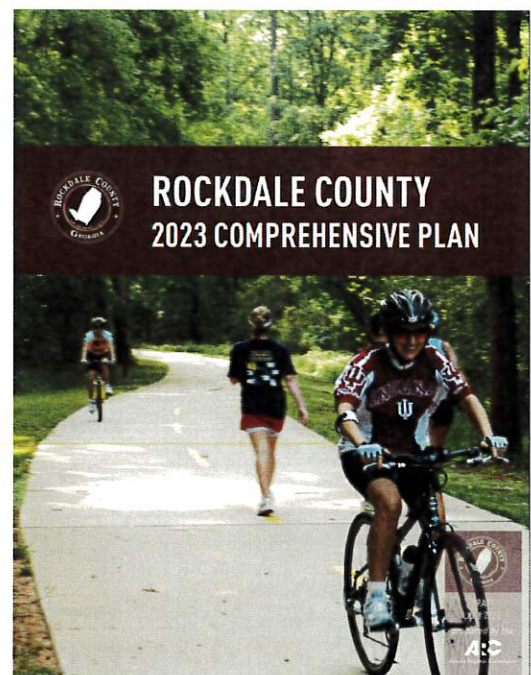
The Joint Conyers-Rockdale County-Rockdale Public School District Homelessness Task Force was established to identify and develop feasible solutions for combating homelessness in the community. The report emphasizes the “Housing First” model, which prioritizes providing stable, affordable housing quickly without prerequisites, while offering voluntary supportive services. Key objectives include providing immediate housing access, integrated case management, prevention strategies, and community outreach to identify those in need.



- **Housing Stability & Support:** Prioritizing the “Housing First” model to provide immediate, barrier-free access to stable housing while offering voluntary, wrap-around services like mental health counseling and employment training to ensure long-term success.
- **Proactive Prevention:** Identifying and addressing root causes—such as extreme cost burden and low income—to implement targeted strategies that prevent homelessness before it occurs and improve overall housing security for at-risk residents.
- **Collaborative Outreach:** Leveraging multi-sector partnerships between local government, public schools, and non-profits to create a unified system that identifies hidden homeless populations and provides clear pathways to permanent housing.

ROCKDALE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2023)

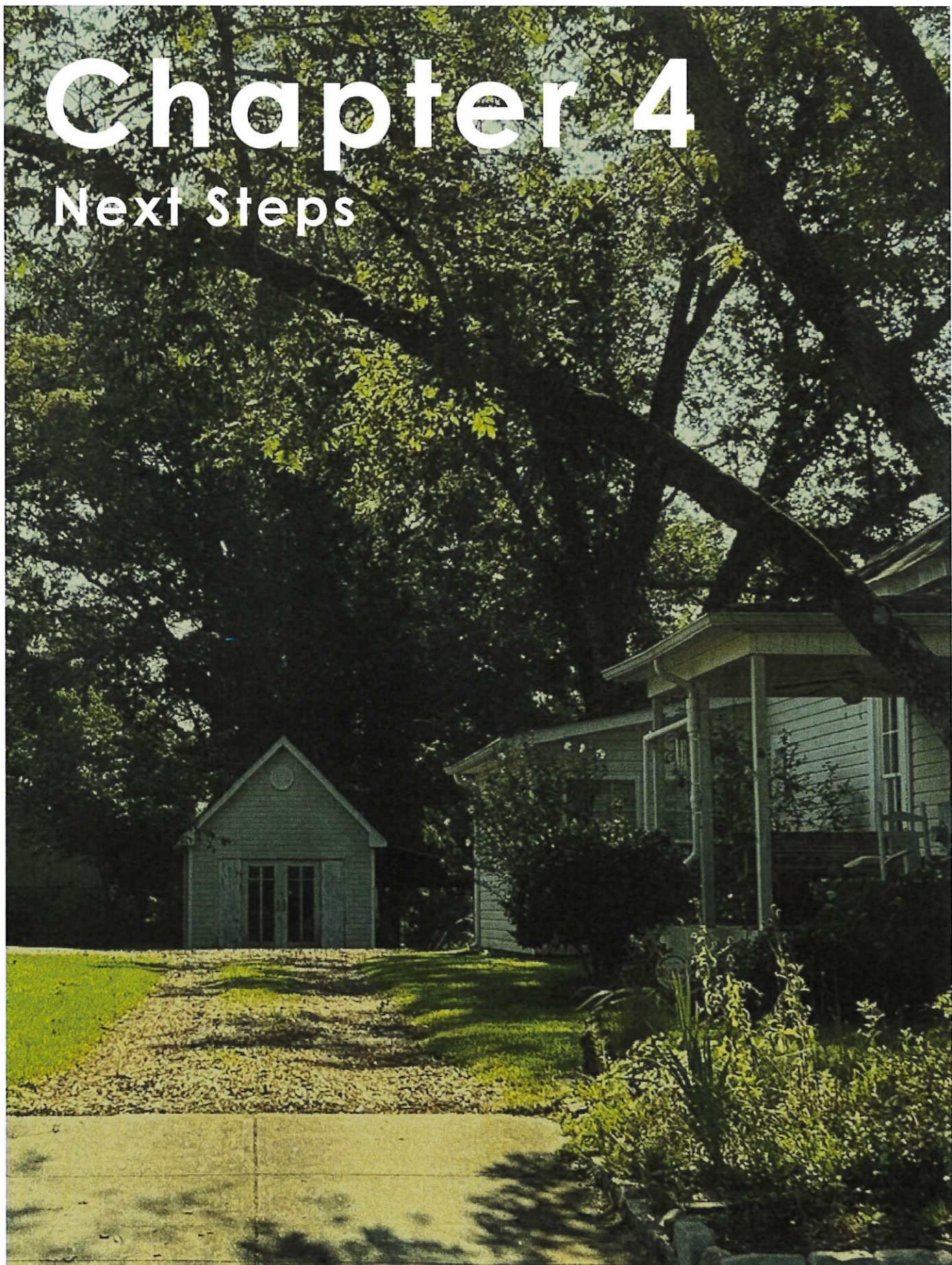
The Comprehensive Plan establishes a countywide framework for diverse housing types while emphasizing quality through rigorous maintenance standards and code enforcement. It guides smart growth by directing residential development to areas with existing infrastructure and discouraging development in environmentally sensitive or service-deficient areas. A key implementation tool is the Future Land Use Map, which manages residential density by directing higher-density housing toward employment hubs, activity centers, and transit areas to align housing with essential services.



- **Equity & Well-being:** Centering housing as a tool for equity by expanding options—from emergency shelters to higher-density builds—to support vulnerable residents and economic health.
- **Economic Connectivity:** Integrating density and mixed-use development with infrastructure readiness to drive workforce growth and support intensive development.
- **Quality & Livability:** Balancing growth with neighborhood character through proactive code enforcement and land-use policies that maintain high living standards.

Chapter 4

Next Steps



PART II: NEXT STEPS

This plan identifies and defines next steps that can be taken to meet the housing need and address issues and challenges outlined in Part 1 - Key Findings.

Building housing for the community is a community endeavor. No one entity can do it all. Although this plan primarily focuses on steps Rockdale County can take, it also highlights those that can be spearheaded and implemented by other local entities in whole or in part. Partnerships across the public, private, and non-profit sectors will be paramount.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This plan is not intended to be rigid, static, or to sit on a shelf; it is a living document. It is not a description of aspirations to strive for, but rather a list of key findings and next steps to take in the near term, and those to pursue over time. As with any plan, Rockdale County will need to sort out the specifics for implementation and may need additional planning assistance as the steps progress. Actions may evolve into something different than describe herein and priorities may shift - that is okay. The intent is to start addressing housing issues, and this plan offers a path to do that.

This plan is based on opportunities, constraints, and community input gathered throughout 2024-2025. The local housing market will continue to change along with local concerns and desires, so it is recommended that the county track housing and revisit it periodically and adjust priorities as appropriate. Moreover, opportunities should be capitalized upon when they arise even if they are not spelled out or are out of sync with the key findings, next steps, and timeline herein. Housing issues are complex, and it is important to avoid analysis paralysis and strive for continuous improvement.

Lastly, this plan should be used to implement community goals. Housing is a vital element of economic development, walkability, and employment, as well as a means to design infrastructure and greenspace. This plan should be used in collaboration with these broader community goals.



Next Steps

YEARS 0 - 1

Zoning and Land Use

- *Zone for more housing in nodes and corridors*: Shifts density away from sprawl and towards areas with existing infrastructure.
- *Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance*: Allows homeowners to build small secondary units.
- *Pilot “missing middle” and cottage court zoning*: Enables housing types between single-family homes and large apartments.
- *Determine mechanisms for smaller homes (Hi Roc, Milstead)*: Specifically targets neighborhoods for high-density, smaller-footprint living.
- *Zone for conservation neighborhoods in greenfields*: Ensures that when undeveloped land is used, it preserves significant open space and nature features.

Housing Mechanisms and Targets

- Plan and enable 6,000-8,000 new homes by 2050
- Stand Up Housing Mechanisms
- Establish partnerships for deep affordability

Stability and Community Engagement

- Create/expand eviction-prevention and rent-relief programs
- Implement Homelessness Task Force
- Quarterly Housing Forum

YEARS 0–1: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR ACTION

The first year of implementation is about establishing the foundations necessary for sustained, data-informed housing strategy. In this period, Rockdale County will leverage regional housing resources like the [Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit](#), which provides actionable policy examples and detailed data to help local governments understand their housing market and identify tailored solutions. This resource supports local analyses of housing characteristics, affordability challenges, and opportunity areas, setting the stage for informed decision-making grounded in regional trends.

A core focus is on early policy reforms that unlock opportunities for a broader range of housing types. Drawing on MAH Toolkit examples, tools such as **Accessory Dwelling Unit reforms, missing-middle housing incentives, expedited permitting practices, and inclusionary zoning incentives** are key building blocks for this initial phase. These strategies have been identified regionally as effective levers to increase housing supply while ensuring quality and compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Local planning efforts should include assessment and mapping of housing opportunities and constraints, using the toolkit's interactive data explorer to identify submarket characteristics and housing dynamics across different parts of the county. This analytical work informs where targeted policy changes—such as zoning updates or site readiness strategies—can be most impactful.

Early partnership building is also central. Establishing a **local housing task force** or steering committee, consistent with strategies recommended in the MAH Toolkit, creates a forum for cross-sector perspectives—public, private, nonprofit, and community. This body can help guide policy adaptation, coordinate data sharing, and begin early groundwork for funding strategies.

Finally, Year 1 should emphasize community education and engagement. Hosting public forums and leveraging regional leadership programs like the **Housing Leadership Academy** can help local elected leaders and stakeholders deepen their understanding of housing challenges, build shared language, and generate community support for early initiatives.

YEAR 2 - 3

Proactive Planning and Streamlining

- Develop pre-approved ADU plans with permitting incentives
- Create Small Area Plans for target densification
- Implement and refine zoning for missing middle and mixed-use
- Prepare for Strategic Plan update that incorporates findings from housing assessments and past planning

Direct Investment and Partnerships

- Work with DCA to deliver a senior Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project
- Deliver one new mixed-use project
- Identify partnerships on public/non-taxes land
- Targeted incentive packages for aging commercial centers

Preservation and Resident Stability

- Expand grant and low-interest loan repair programs
- Re-evaluate homestead exemptions and Homestead Option Sales Tax (HOST)
- Establish coordinated eviction-prevention programs
- Partner with community organizations for resident coaching

YEARS 2–3: MOVING FROM POLICY TO PRODUCTION

As policies and partnerships mature, Years 2–3 focus on turning plans into tangible outputs. This phase shifts from enabling conditions to **actual housing production, preservation, and stability interventions**. The Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit identifies actionable strategies such as collaborating with housing developers, forming housing trust funds, and leveraging Tax Allocation Districts—tools Rockdale can adopt to catalyze project development.

One of the most visible outcomes in this phase should be the launch of pilot housing developments—whether through incentive zoning, public-private partnerships, or nonprofit collaborations—that incorporate **missing-middle and mixed-income housing typologies**. These projects demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of a diversified housing portfolio and help accelerate learning across sectors. Regional data and case examples from the MAH Toolkit can guide project design and target outcomes.

Beyond new development, years 2–3 prioritize **preservation of existing affordable units**. Using guidance from the MAH Toolkit, Rockdale can conduct inventories of subsidized and naturally occurring affordable housing and establish preservation targets tied to funding tools such as housing trust funds and home repair/grant programs.

Stability-focused programs such as rent assistance, eviction prevention, and home-repair initiatives become more operational in this period. Regional strategies emphasize establishing or expanding these programs in coordination with local housing authorities, nonprofits, and social services to support residents through transitions and project completions.

Data and evaluation processes also take shape in Years 2–3. Rockdale can use the **housing indicators and metrics from the MAH Toolkit** to track progress on supply, affordability, and stability—enabling iterative refinement of policies and ensuring accountability to community expectations.

YEAR 4 - 5

Integrated Planning and Infrastructure

- Redevelop Corridors: Shifts focus to transforming aging commercial strips into vibrant, mixed-use residential corridors that reduce sprawl and maximize land use
- Align Transit and Trails: Ensures that high-density nodes are physically connected by transit and trails, lowering transportation costs for residents
- Institutionalize Strategy: Integrates housing goals into every future planning cycle to ensure consistency across departments

Data-Driven Monitoring and Fiscal Health

- Monitor and track the mix of housing types and affordability
- Track new developments for value per acre and millage stability

Funding and Scaling

- Create a Housing Trust Fund
- Scale home repair and weatherization programs

YEARS 4–5: SUSTAINING PROGRESS AND EMBEDDING HOUSING INTO LONG-TERM PLANNING

By Years 4–5, housing interventions should be institutionalized into Rockdale’s broader planning and budget frameworks. Regional guidance emphasizes leadership continuity, ongoing collaboration, and the integration of housing considerations into comprehensive plans, transportation planning, and economic development strategies—reflecting the interconnected nature of housing and regional competitiveness highlighted in the MAH Toolkit.

This period is also about scaling what works. A county housing trust fund, seeded and shaped through earlier policy groundwork and community engagement, can serve as a **dedicated, flexible source of capital** for ongoing development, preservation, and stability programs. Regional examples underscore how local funding mechanisms multiply the impact of external capital sources.

Embedding housing objectives in long-range land use and infrastructure planning ensures alignment with growth and investment priorities. Rockdale can utilize the **MAH Toolkit's submarket data** to direct resources where they will have the greatest opportunity-enhancing effects—such as near transit corridors, employment centers, or areas with unmet affordability needs.

Accountability and transparency in this phase are key. Regular reporting, perhaps tied to established metrics in the Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit, helps maintain public awareness, sustains political will, and shares Rockdale's progress with regional partners.

Finally, Rockdale's commitment to housing becomes part of a **continual improvement cycle**—one informed by data, community feedback, and regional collaboration. Through ongoing participation in housing forums and resource exchanges supported by ARC and the MAH Toolkit, the county can refine its approaches and remain adaptive to changing demographics, market conditions, and resident needs.



WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE HOUSING?

Area 1: Scott Hwy

Activate

Connect

Preserve

Density

Area 2: Food Depot

Activate

Connect

Area 3: Old Salem Rd SE

Activate

Connect

Rehabilitation

Area 4: Johnson Park

Connect

Preserve

Area 5: Yellow River

Preserve

Rehabilitation

Density

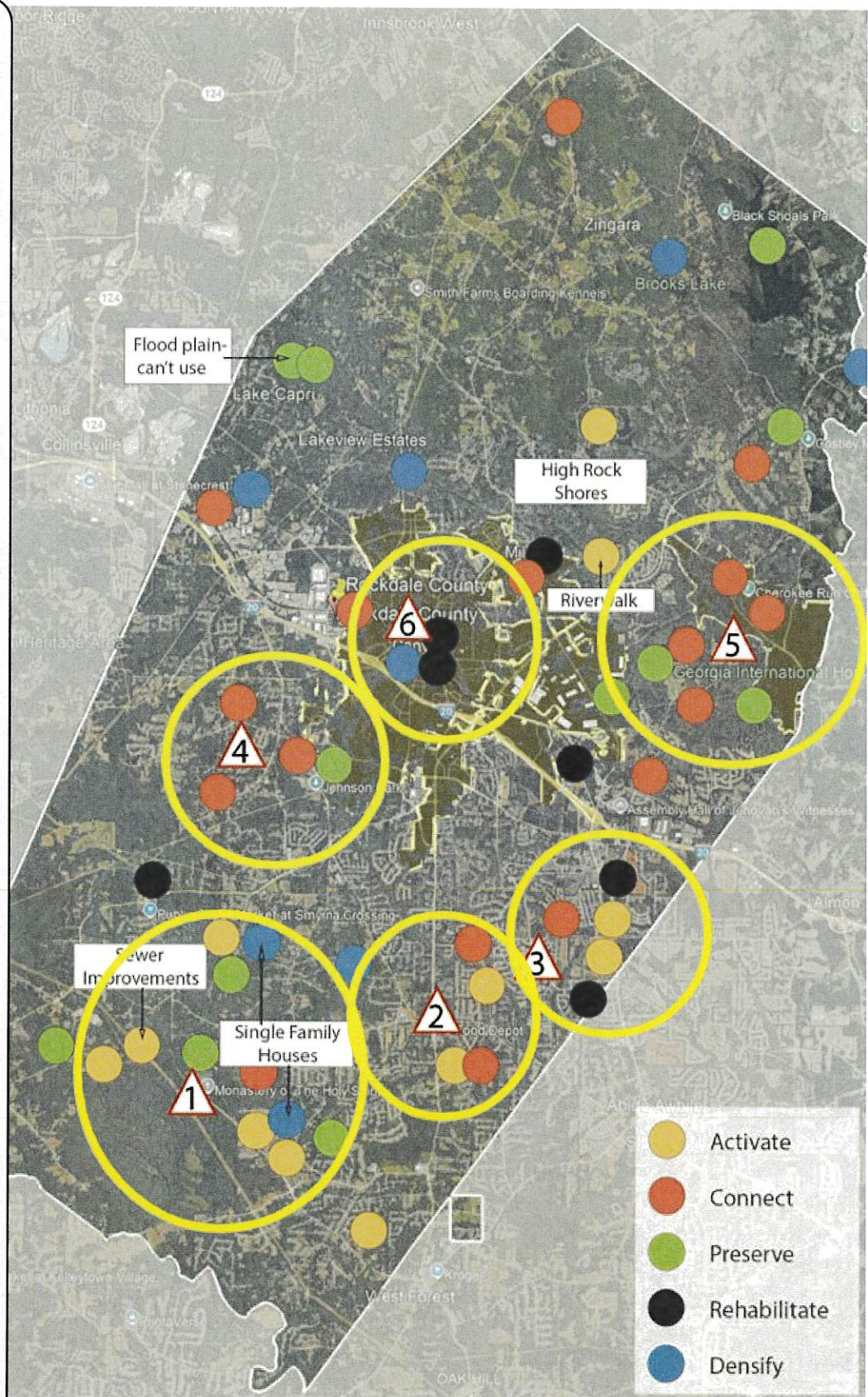
Area 6: City of Conyers`

Rehabilitation

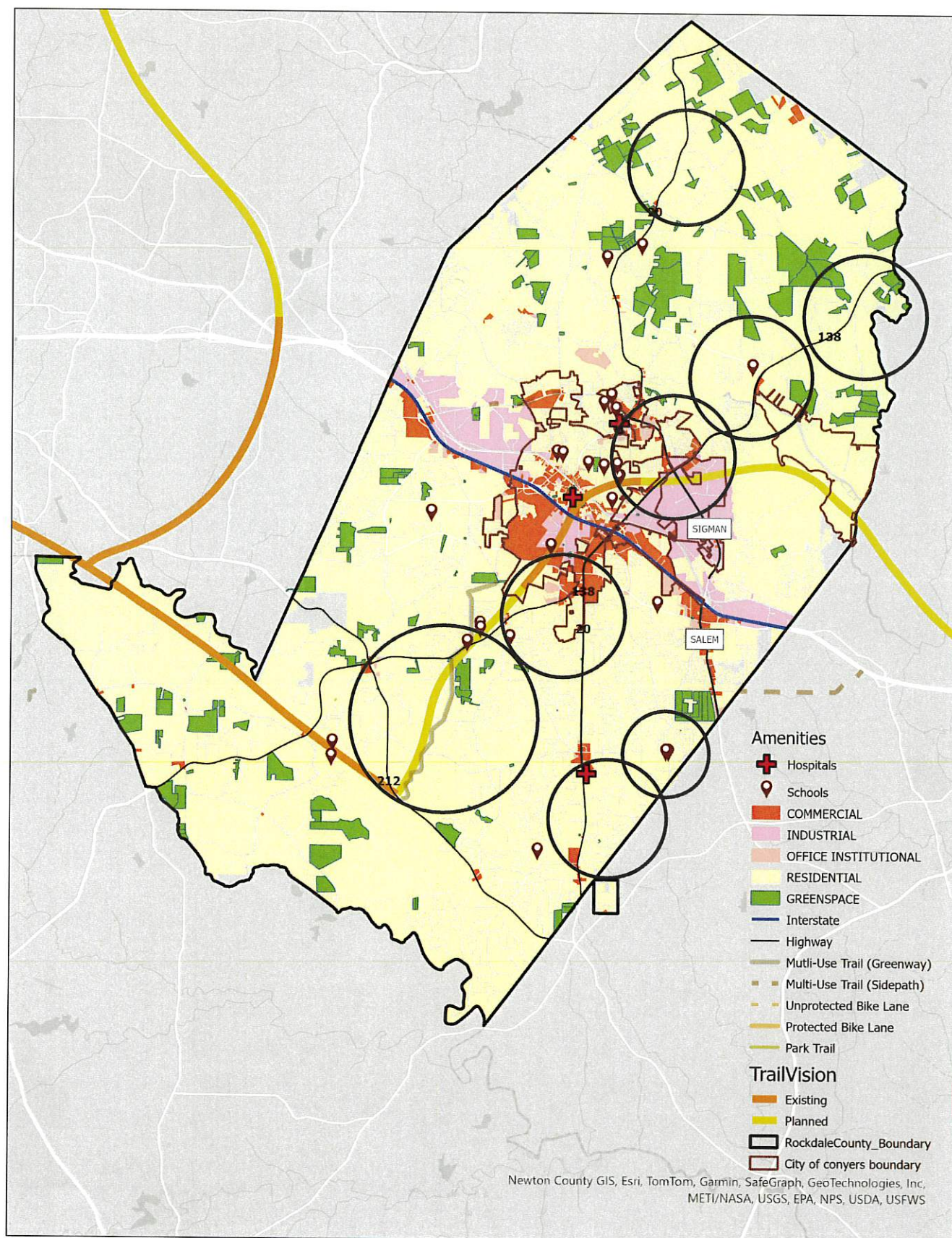
Density

Feedback-Potential Housing Locations

- There is an interest in activating housing and connectivity, adding density in the southern areas of Rockdale (south to I-20) especially along the Hwy 212 – Scott Hwy(1) and around the Food Depot area (2).
- There is a need to rehabilitate, activate new housing, and improve connectivity around Old Salem Rd SE (3).
- Housing and connectivity along the Johnson Park area (4) are also a priority.
- There is a desire to connect new housing to amenities as well as preserve greenspace near the Horse Park and Yellow River (5), including opportunities for trail networks and links to new housing.
- Rehab and densify areas in City of Conyers is recommended (6).



ARC ASSESSMENT OF AREAS OF AMENITIES FOR POTENTIAL DENSIFICATION



Chapter 5

Metro Atlanta Housing Toolkit: Rockdale Recommendations

Atlanta Regional Commission
METRO ATLANTA
HOUSING STRATEGY TOOLKIT

[MAP](#) [STRATEGIES](#) [RESOURCES](#) [ABOUT](#)

**A Guide to Help Communities
Understand Their Housing Challenges
and Explore Solutions through
Actionable Strategies**



Explore Housing Data by County/City

i.e., Cherokee or Sandy Springs



Explore Housing Data by [Metro Atlanta Region](#)



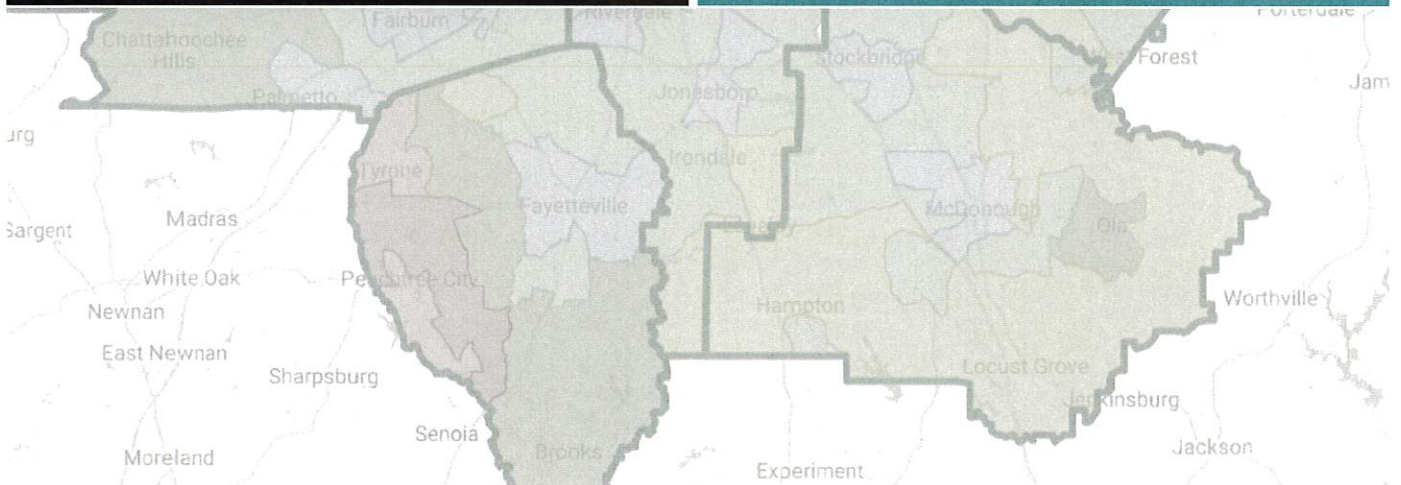
Strategies

Explore adaptable strategies that ignite conversations and offer tailored solutions for your community's unique needs.



Resources

Use these resources to deepen your understanding and gain practical guidance for implementing the strategies effectively.



ARC METRO ATLANTA HOUSING STRATEGY TOOLKIT

Atlanta Regional Commission METRO ATLANTA HOUSING STRATEGY TOOLKIT

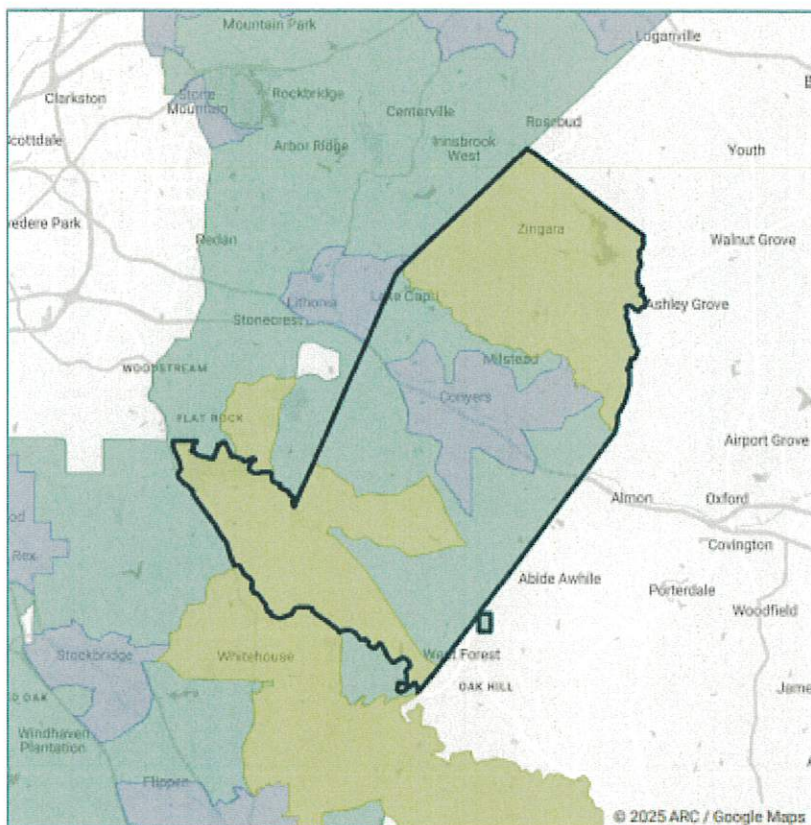
ROCKDALE COUNTY SNAPSHOT



53% SUBMARKET 9: BELOW-MEDIAN PRICED RURAL

34% SUBMARKET 7: BELOW-MEDIAN PRICED SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

13% SUBMARKET 8: BELOW-MEDIAN PRICED SUBURBAN EMPLOYMENT CORRIDORS & TOWN CENTERS



TOP SUBMARKET(S) BY PERCENTAGE

Submarket 9: Below-Median Priced Rural

Lower-priced rural areas with large lots and mostly single-family housing stock.

- High proportion of investor-owned properties (along with 7 & 8)
- Mostly owners
- Mostly SF housing units
- Highest proportion of cost-burdened owners

Median Home Sale Price (2024)	Home Sale Price Per Sq. Ft (2024)	Median Building Area	Median Year Built
\$339,000 +69.12% since 2018	\$154.14 per sq. ft. +71.88% since 2018	2,184 sq. ft.	2003

Data source: ARC analysis of ATTOM Data Solutions' home sale transactions, 2019-2024. Explore this data further in the [DATA EXPLORER](#)

Submarket 7: Below-Median Priced Suburban Neighborhoods

Lower-priced suburban neighborhoods with both single-family owners and a large, rapidly-increasing number of single-family renters.

- High proportion of investor-owned properties (along with 8 & 9)
- Mostly owners
- Mostly SF housing units
- Low proportion of cost-burdened renters (along with 8)

Median Home Sale Price (2024)	Home Sale Price Per Sq. Ft (2024)	Median Building Area	Median Year Built
\$330,000 +65.00% since 2018	\$161.19 per sq. ft. +75.28% since 2018	2,039 sq. ft.	1996

Data source: ARC analysis of ATTOM Data Solutions' home sale transactions, 2019-2024. Explore this data further in the [DATA EXPLORER](#)

TOP HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS FOR ROCKDALE COUNTY

ARC Atlanta Regional Commission

METRO ATLANTA HOUSING STRATEGY TOOLKIT

ROCKDALE COUNTY SNAPSHOT

TOP ACTION STEPS

Increase Supply

- Establish new or partner with existing housing entities
- Mandate and incentivize affordable housing through inclusionary zoning
- Support smaller homes and ownership opportunities

Expand Capital Resources

- Collaborate on new programs and partnerships
- Identify regional funding mechanisms

Develop Leadership & Collaboration on Affordability

- Form committees and work groups for housing
- Support local leaders through regional programs

Preserve Affordable Supply

- Address blight
- Leverage funding resources for preservation

Promote Housing Stability

- Establish housing stability policies and programs
- Reduce evictions and homelessness

Reduce Housing & Transportation Costs

- Increase walkability
- Reduce costs of housing near transit and amenities

COUNTY SNAPSHOT

Median Home Sale Price (2024)	\$272,000
Change in Median Home Sale Price (2019-24)	+72%
Home Sale Price Per Sq Ft (2024)	\$154.00 sq ft
Percent Change in Home Sale Price Per Sq Ft (2019-24)	+74%
Median Building Area of Home Sales (2024)	1,788 sq ft

Data source: ARC analysis of ATTOM Data Solutions' home sale transactions, 2019-2024. Explore this data further in the [DATA EXPLORER](#)

LEARN MORE

- [Explore Rockdale County on the Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy Toolkit website](https://metroatlhousing.org/counties/rockdale/) (https://metroatlhousing.org/counties/rockdale/)
- [Explore Housing Strategy Resource](https://metroatlhousing.org/resources) (https://metroatlhousing.org/resources)
- [Explore ARC Housing Success Stories](https://atlantaregional.org/what-we-do/housing) (https://atlantaregional.org/what-we-do/housing)

HOUSING ASSESSMENT THEMES, STRATEGIES

Several recurring themes emerged through community engagement and data analysis, and in this section we look for alignment with these themes, the ARC's Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy Recommendations, and Next Steps.

Housing costs are outpacing local incomes, putting financial strain on residents and the workforce and increasing housing instability.

The current housing stock is misaligned with demand, offering too many of a few product types and not enough affordable, senior, and "missing middle" options.

The combined impact of property taxes and modest wages is making it harder for people to afford to stay in Rockdale County long-term.

Resident feedback points to intentional, infrastructure-supported growth that emphasizes amenities and clear community vision rather than scattered, conventional development.

The recommendations in the ARC's Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy provide action steps to help Rockdale County meet their housing goals and address the themes that have been identified in the Housing Assessment.



Action Item #1 for increasing supply is support smaller homes and ownership opportunities. This strategy focuses on diversifying the housing stock by encouraging the development of "Missing Middle" housing types, such as cottage clusters, townhomes, and smaller-footprint single-family homes. By reducing minimum square footage requirements and adjusting lot sizes, the County can create more entry-level ownership opportunities for first-time homebuyers, young professionals, and seniors looking to downsize. These smaller-scale developments provide a more attainable price point than traditional large-lot suburban homes and allow for more efficient land use. Facilitating these opportunities ensures that residents at various life stages and income levels can build equity and remain invested in the Rockdale community.



Resources for Support Smaller Homes and Ownership Opportunities

[Allowing More and Different Types of Housing](#)

Expanding the variety of permitted housing types—such as duplexes and accessory units—can reduce overall development costs and increase the total volume of available homes. This guide provides a framework for how updating local land-use regulations can help a community better align its housing supply with the diverse needs and income levels of its residents.

[Missing Middle Housing](#)

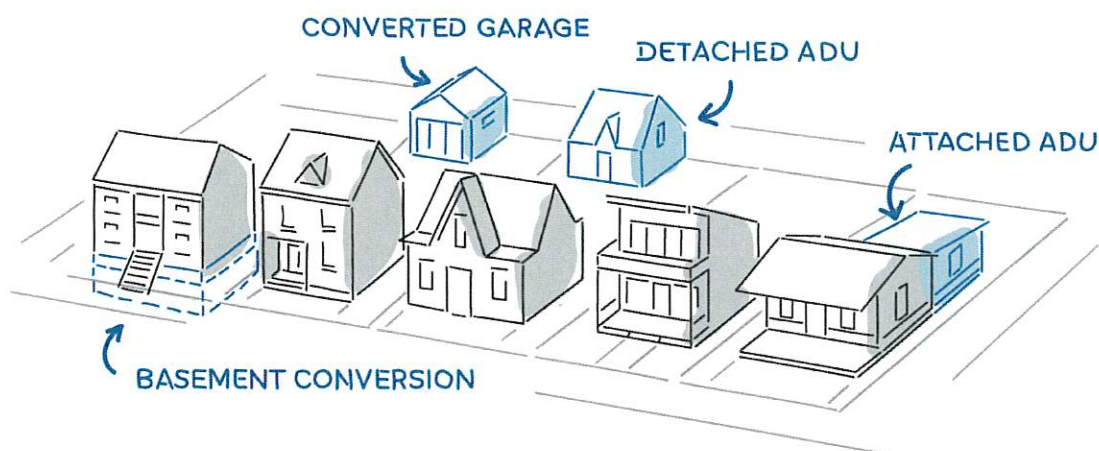
Focusing on housing types that fall between single-family homes and large apartment buildings provides more affordable ownership and rental options in walkable contexts. This brief helps identify specific building forms, like townhomes and courtyard clusters, that can gently increase neighborhood density while maintaining a scale and appearance that is compatible with existing residential areas.

[How Communities Are Rethinking Zoning to Improve Housing Affordability and Access to Opportunity](#)

This resource explores how modernizing land-use regulations and easing building restrictions can unleash the housing supply needed to meet the demands of a growing population. It is useful for identifying policy shifts that reduce development barriers, allowing for more diverse and integrated housing types across the community.

[The Promising Results of the Accessory Dwelling Unit \(ADU\) Reform](#)

This resource details how relaxing specific regulations, such as minimum lot sizes and parking requirements, can lead to a significant increase in the construction of secondary residential units. It is useful because it provides evidence-based results on how “gentle density” can increase housing options without significantly altering the existing neighborhood aesthetic.





Action Item #2 for increasing supply is to mandate and incentivize affordable housing through inclusionary zoning. This strategy involves requiring or encouraging developers to set aside a specific percentage of units in new residential projects for lower- and middle-income residents. By integrating these requirements into the local zoning code, the County can ensure that new growth contributes directly to the diversity of the housing stock without relying solely on public subsidies. To support development feasibility, the mandate can be paired with incentives such as density bonuses, fee waivers, or expedited permitting, which help offset the cost of providing affordable units. This approach fosters economically diverse neighborhoods and ensures that as the community grows, housing remains accessible to the local workforce and residents of all income levels.

Resources for Inclusionary Zoning and Affordable Housing Practices

Incentives - Inclusionary Housing

This resource examines how municipalities can offer developers incentives—such as density bonuses or fee waivers—in exchange for dedicating land or units for affordable housing. It is useful for structuring “win-win” scenarios where private sector growth directly contributes to the community’s inventory of price-restricted homes.





Action Item #3 for increasing supply is to establish new or partner with existing housing entities throughout Rockdale County. This may include collaborating with the Housing Authority of the City of Conyers, local non-profits, or establishing a Community Land Trust and/or Land Bank to oversee long-term affordability. Strengthening these partnerships allows for a more coordinated approach to land acquisition, funding, and the development of diverse housing types. By leveraging the expertise and resources of dedicated housing organizations, the County can better facilitate the construction of mixed-income developments and ensure that new inventory meets the specific needs of Rockdale's workforce and senior populations. These entities can also serve as a bridge between the public and private sectors, helping to navigate complex financing and regulatory requirements to move projects from concept to completion.

Resources for Establishing Housing Partnerships

[Public Housing and City Partnerships: How Collaboration Can Lead to Development](#)

This resource highlights how collaborative efforts between municipalities and housing authorities can unlock the potential of underutilized public assets to foster new development. It is useful because identifying new uses for underutilized land helps fill gaps in the community fabric and offers opportunities to create health, social, economic, and environmental benefits.

[Public Housing and City Partnerships: How Collaboration Can Lead to Development](#)

This resource highlights how collaborative efforts between municipalities and housing authorities can unlock the potential of underutilized public assets to foster new development. It is useful because identifying new uses for underutilized land helps fill gaps in the community fabric and offers opportunities to create health, social, economic, and environmental benefits.

	Land Banks	Community Land Trusts
Legal Structure	Public Entity (may be a nonprofit or public authority)	Private Nonprofit
Governance	Board/governance defined by state statute/intergovernmental agreement (mix of gov't/private/community)	Tripartite Board (Lease-holders, community members, and external stakeholders)
Mission	Acquire tax delinquent, vacant, abandoned property and connect to responsible end use/user	Acquire and hold land permanently for public good (e.g., affordable housing)
Acquisition	Special acquisition powers or preferred access to property (e.g., tax or lien foreclosure)	Status as nonprofit may allow for preferred access from local government
Management/Maintenance	Manage/maintain vacant and abandoned property, hold land tax exempt	Steward property, may hold land tax exempt
Disposition/End Use	Dispose of property to responsible transferee according to community goals	Permanently hold land for public good

Source: <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-opening-doors-land-banks-community-land-trusts-partner-affordable-housing>



Action Item #1 for preserving affordable supply is to address blight throughout Rockdale County. This strategy focuses on identifying and remediating vacant, abandoned, or deteriorated properties to prevent neighborhood decline and preserve the existing housing stock. By implementing proactive code enforcement and property improvement programs, the County can stabilize property values and ensure that older homes remain safe and habitable for current residents. Addressing blight not only removes physical hazards but also discourages predatory investment, allowing for the rehabilitation of homes that can serve as affordable options for low- to moderate-income families. Through targeted reinvestment and the return of neglected properties to productive use, the County can strengthen the community fabric and protect the long-term viability of its established residential neighborhoods.

Resources for Addressing Blight

[Marietta Housing Rehabilitation Program](#)

Funding provided through the Community Development Block Grant assists low-to-moderate income homeowners with repairs that address imminent health and safety threats, deferred maintenance, or code violations. These services are essential for helping vulnerable residents remain in their homes while ensuring the local housing inventory does not fall into a state of disrepair.

[GA Cities Blight Redevelopment Toolkit](#)

This centralized hub provides local officials with essential resources, including model ordinances for managing blighted properties and toolkits for neighborhood revitalization. Accessing these documents helps municipalities implement proven regulatory frameworks to mitigate the impact of derelict structures and encourage the return of neglected land to productive use.



Action Item #2 for preserving affordable supply is to leverage funding resources for preservation. This strategy involves identifying and securing diverse financial streams to maintain the long-term affordability and physical integrity of existing housing units. By layering federal and state resources, such as the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the County can provide low-interest loans or grants to property owners for essential repairs and system upgrades. These funds allow mission-driven organizations and local housing authorities to acquire and rehabilitate “naturally occurring” affordable housing before it is converted to market-rate or falls into terminal disrepair. Maximizing these financial tools ensures that current price-restricted units remain in the community’s inventory, protecting residents from displacement and preserving the county’s socioeconomic diversity.

Resources for Leverage Funding Resources for Preservation

[Affordable Rental Housing Preservation: Policies and Funding Strategies](#)

Federal funding sources such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program are primary tools for financing the acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable properties. These programs can be used to capitalize revolving loan funds or provide direct grants to property owners who agree to maintain affordability for a set period.

[Preservation Next: Funding Sources Inventory](#)

A robust preservation strategy often requires building a diversified “capital stack” that combines public, private, and philanthropic investment. Accessing specialized financing from Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and utilizing tools like Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) can help bridge financial shortfalls that conventional lenders may not cover for smaller or older multi-family buildings.

Funding Sources Inventory

Title	Market	
	Atlanta, GA Region	Search
Affordable Housing Program (AHP)		
Ascension Fund Grant - Eastside		
Ascension Fund Grant - Westside		

[Preservation Strategies for Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing \(NOAH\)](#)

Local governments can establish Housing Trust Funds (HTF) to provide a flexible and dedicated source of revenue for housing repairs and acquisition. Strategic mechanisms like Tax Allocation District (TAD) funds and Historic Tax Credits (HTC) offer additional pathways to fund significant maintenance and system upgrades for aging residential structures.



EXPAND CAPITAL RESOURCES

Action Item #1 for expanding capital resources is to identify regional funding mechanisms throughout Rockdale County and the surrounding metro area. This strategy focuses on moving beyond localized municipal budgets to tap into broader, collaborative financial structures that address housing needs at scale. By participating in or establishing regional housing trust funds and intergovernmental agreements, the County can pool resources with neighboring jurisdictions to attract larger private investments and competitive federal grants. Regional mechanisms provide a more stable capital base for large-scale developments and allow for the coordination of infrastructure improvements alongside housing projects. This approach ensures that Rockdale County can leverage the economic momentum of the region to create a sustainable and well-funded pipeline for affordable housing initiatives.

Resources for Identify Regional Funding Mechanisms

[Financing Affordable Housing with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit \(LIHTC\)](#)

One of the best-known and most competitive sources of funding for affordable housing construction is the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, or LIHTC. The most common form of the program, the 9 percent credit, is already a highly sought-after affordable housing construction subsidy, but LIHTC also offers a noncompetitive 4 percent tax credit.

[How TIFs Can Be Used for Affordable Housing](#)

Incorporating affordable housing into TIF programs/Tax Allocation Districts is important if the benefits of TIF/TADs are to be distributed equitably.



EXPAND CAPITAL RESOURCES

Action Item #2 for expanding capital resources is to collaborate on new programs and partnerships. This strategy focuses on building formal relationships with state agencies, housing authorities, and non-profit organizations to access specialized technical assistance and competitive funding. Collaboration allows the County to leverage public land and administrative resources to attract developers who have access to exclusive federal set-asides for building and rehabilitating affordable homes. By forming these alliances, the County can develop locally driven housing plans that provide a scoring advantage for those applying for housing tax credits within the jurisdiction.

Resources for Community Collaboration

[Community Land Trusts: A Guide for Local Governments](#)

Local governments can act as essential partners by providing start-up funding or donating surplus public land to community land trusts to ensure long-term housing stability. This guide explains how municipal support helps these organizations acquire property and manage ground leases that keep homes affordable for future generations of residents.



Action Item #1 for promote housing stability is to establish housing stability policies and programs. This strategy focuses on implementing localized protections and incentives that help residents remain in their homes despite rising costs or changing market conditions. By adopting tools such as homestead exemptions, the County can provide immediate property tax relief to permanent residents, ensuring that long-term homeowners are not priced out of their neighborhoods by increasing assessments. Additionally, clear regulatory frameworks for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) allow homeowners to generate supplemental rental income or house multi-generational family members. These combined efforts create a multifaceted support system that stabilizes the existing housing stock and provides residents with the financial flexibility needed to achieve long-term housing security.

Resources for Establishing Housing Stability Policies and Programs

[Is Coliving the Solution to the Housing Crisis?](#)

Establishing coliving as a recognized housing category and modernizing “unrelated person” ordinances allows for greater residential density and affordable options within high-cost urban centers. By consolidating utilities, amenities, and furnishings into an all-inclusive rental model, coliving reduces the financial barrier to entry for renters, often offering savings of 20% to 50% compared to traditional studio apartments.

[Home Preservation: Habitat for Humanity’s Home Repair](#)

Implementing home preservation programs, such as exterior painting, weatherization, and minor repair services, enables low-income homeowners to maintain safe and decent housing while extending the life of existing affordable housing inventory. By utilizing volunteer labor and donated materials, these programs reduce maintenance costs for residents, preventing displacement and ensuring that seniors and long-term inhabitants can age in place within their established communities.

[What is the Homestead Tax Exemption?](#)

Establishing homestead tax exemptions allows local jurisdictions to reduce the taxable value of owner-occupied primary residences, effectively lowering the property tax burden for permanent community members. By shielding a specific dollar amount or percentage of a home’s assessed value from taxation, these exemptions provide a critical financial safeguard that helps low-to-moderate income families maintain homeownership and resist displacement in areas with rapidly rising property values.





Action Item #2 for promote housing stability is to reduce evictions and homelessness.

This strategy focuses on “upstream” interventions that prevent housing loss before it occurs, such as emergency financial assistance and legal support for tenants in housing court. By establishing eviction diversion programs, the County can facilitate mediation between landlords and tenants to reach mutually beneficial agreements that keep families in their homes. For those already experiencing displacement, coordinating immediate access to permanent housing paired with supportive services provides the foundation needed for long-term retention. These coordinated efforts reduce the social and economic costs of displacement while ensuring that the most vulnerable residents have a clear path to stability.

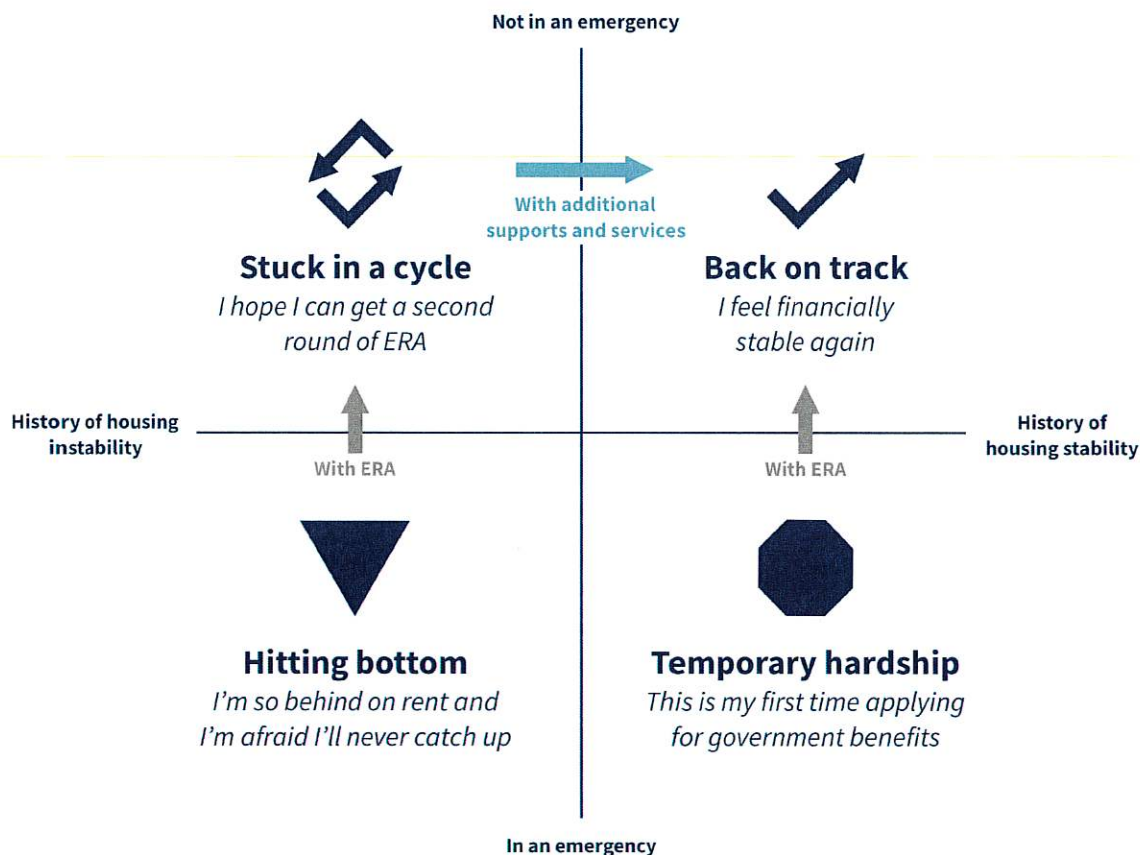
Resources for Reducing Evictions and Homelessness

[What Can \(and Can't\) Local Governments Do to Address Homelessness?](#)

Outlines the legal and policy boundaries for local governments, emphasizing that while cities often lack the authority to mandate federal funding, they can effectively lead through zoning changes, land use policies, and regional coordination.

[Breaking Down Barriers: Promising Programs and Initiatives to Reduce Evictions](#)

Details innovative, collaborative strategies like eviction diversion and centralized intake systems that emerged or expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep tenants in their homes. It demonstrates how partnerships between legal aid, pro bono volunteers, and community organizations can resolve housing disputes more efficiently and reduce the long-term economic impact of displacement.





DEVELOP LEADERSHIP

Action Item #1 for develop leadership and collaboration on affordability is to form committees and work groups for housing. This strategy focuses on creating a formal structure for decision-making and project oversight by bringing together diverse stakeholders, including local officials, developers, advocates, and residents. By establishing these groups, the County can ensure that housing initiatives are informed by a broad range of perspectives and that there is sustained accountability for meeting affordability goals. These committees serve as the primary vehicle for reviewing policy proposals, monitoring progress on the housing plan, and fostering the long-term political and community will necessary to implement complex housing solutions.

Resources for Forming Committees and Work Groups for Housing

[Affordable Housing Task Force](#)

Appointing a diverse group of community members and experts to research local housing barriers ensures that resulting policy recommendations are both data-driven and reflective of community needs. This task force model serves as the foundation for identifying high-priority measures like inclusionary zoning and land trust formation to address specific gaps in the local housing market.

[Decatur Housing Summit](#)

Hosting a community-wide housing summit allows a jurisdiction to establish a shared understanding of affordability and gather broad public input before official policy is drafted. The outcomes of these summits often lead to the creation of permanent advisory boards and staffing positions dedicated to advancing long-term affordable housing goals within the municipal strategic plan.





DEVELOP LEADERSHIP

Action Item #2 for develop leadership and collaboration on affordability is to support local leaders through regional programs. This strategy recognizes that housing affordability is a regional challenge that requires a unified front among neighboring jurisdictions. By engaging in regional cohorts and peer-learning networks, local officials and staff can exchange best practices, share data-driven insights, and coordinate on large-scale infrastructure and transit projects. Supporting leaders through these collaborative frameworks ensures that local policy decisions are informed by broader market trends, allowing for more effective and consistent housing solutions across the region.

Resources for Supporting Local Leaders through Regional Programs

[Regional Housing Task Force ARC](#)

Brings together a diverse cross-section of leaders to address the underlying causes of the regional housing crisis through shared data and policy coordination.

[Georgia Initiative for Community Housing \(GICH\)](#)

Offers local leadership teams technical assistance and facilitation to help them cross-train and collaborate on long-term housing solutions tailored to their specific community needs.





REDUCE HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION COST

Action Item #1 for reduce housing and transportation cost is to Increase Walkability. Increasing walkability in areas of high density, as well as in lower density neighborhoods, can improve health and wellness, reduce car trips, and provide better access to amenities.

Resources for Increase Walkability

[Encouraging walkable mixed use development](#)

Mixed-use development may or may not include affordable housing. However, the creation of walkable mixed-use districts can drive up property values and market rents in the surrounding neighborhood, making it difficult to create new affordable units and leaving existing lower-cost housing vulnerable to loss. Communities that are interested in increasing mixed-use development should consider adopting policies at the same time that help to promote housing affordability in mixed-use areas.

[Redefining Walkability](#)

Based on new research, we seek to expand the definition of walkability beyond the quality of infrastructure to emphasize equity and to inform policymakers who are working to meet Vision Zero goals.

[Have we zoned great, walkable places out of existence?](#)

Zoning codes are the unseen yet decisive guiding force that can either help or hinder the creation of great, walkable, people-scaled places.

What makes a neighborhood walkable?

- **A center:** Walkable neighborhoods have a center, whether it's a main street or a public space.
- **People:** Enough people for businesses to flourish and for public transit to run frequently.
- **Mixed income, mixed use:** Affordable housing located near businesses.
- **Parks and public space:** Plenty of public places to gather and play.
- **Pedestrian design:** Buildings are close to the street, parking lots are relegated to the back.
- **Schools and workplaces:** Close enough that most residents can walk from their homes.
- **Complete streets:** Streets designed for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit.

Source: <https://www.walkscore.com/walkable-neighborhoods.shtml>



REDUCE HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION COST

Action Item #2 for reduce housing and transportation cost is to Reduce Cost of Housing Near Transit and Amenities. Reducing the cost of housing near transit can include proximity as well as climate mitigation, energy savings, and ensuring affordability is included in new housing near transit.

Resources for Reduce Cost of Housing Near Transit and Amenities

[*As More Cities Eliminate Parking Minimums, What Happens Next?*](#)

Every municipality has unique geographical, historical, cultural and economic factors that influence parking requirements. This is why parking is probably the most varied aspect of municipal zoning codes. Additionally, parking codes often conflict with policy goals that promote mixed-use, dense and walkable areas.

[*Housing Affordability in Transit-Oriented Developments*](#)

Transit-oriented developments (TODs) provide access to high-quality transit that connects residents to resources and amenities across a city or region.

[*How Transit-Oriented Housing Can Advance Access to Opportunity While Curbing Climate Change*](#)

Access to public transportation connects people to work, health care, entertainment, and more.



HOUSING METRICS

Rockdale County expressed the need to identify housing metrics to track progress and change in housing in the city. Housing metrics include:

- New housing units compared to job and population growth
- New housing units by price point and type of unit (rental vs. owner, and housing type)
- Change in cost burdened residents by age, income
- Increase in housing units in areas that are targeted for economic development
- Increase in home ownership opportunities
- Use of incentives for housing affordability and workforce housing
- Number of engagement and education events for community members, employers, partners
- Increased walkability: new sidewalks, paths to amenities, increased opportunities for diverse transportation
- Increase or decrease in age groups, household sizes, and income levels over time
- Number of housing pilot projects
- Number of housing grant applications (HOME, CDBG, other)
- Number of new housing programs and the number of residents reached through these programs



GOAL: HEALTHY HOUSING FUTURE

- Housing along the *supply spectrum*: supportive housing to home ownership
- Housing to meet *income levels*, current and projected
- Housing for *age groups and age trends* identified
- Housing to meet *projected population growth*
- Housing to *fill identified gaps and stabilize owners and renters*
- Housing as *integral to*: connectivity | economic development | workforce development | preservation and green spaces | health and wellness | stability

RECOMMENDED BALANCE: HOUSING TYPES

- Higher-value housing in the right places to strengthen the tax base and support schools and services.
 - *Smaller footprint homes for infill and in desirable locations (small single-family, townhomes, cottages)*
 - *Smaller-to-moderately-sized single-family homes in conservation neighborhoods*
 - *Larger single-family homes in strategic locations, in areas that already have infrastructure capacity (roads, sewer)*
- Pair with a strong supply of middle-income housing so Rockdale's workers can afford to live here.
 - *Smaller homes built in collaboration with the land bank, partnerships*
 - *Multi-family and mixed-use housing for live-work-play*
- Commit to deeply affordable homes so long-time residents and vulnerable households aren't pushed out as the county grows.
 - *Housing on public and private non-taxed land*
 - *Partnerships for development, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credit properties*

RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS

- **Home Rehabilitation Assistance** – Provides financial or technical support to repair, maintain, or improve existing homes, helping ensure they remain safe and livable. Housing to meet *income levels*, current and projected
- **Downpayment Assistance for Homeowners** – Offers grants or low-interest loans to help first-time or low-income buyers cover upfront home purchase costs.
- **Emergency Rental Assistance** – Helps renters facing financial hardship pay overdue rent or utilities to prevent eviction or housing instability.

- **Tenant and Resident Education Programs** – Provide workshops or counseling on tenants’ rights, financial literacy, and maintaining stable housing.
- **Property Tax Assistance Programs** – Reduce or defer property tax burdens for eligible homeowners, often seniors or low-income households; property tax exemptions
- **Title-Clearing Assistance / Heirs Property** – Helps families resolve ownership issues or obtain clear property titles to secure legal rights and access to benefits.
- **Rapid Rehousing / Homelessness Assistance** – Provides short-term rental support and case management to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and regain stability.

RECOMMENDED HOUSING MECHANISMS

- **Land Bank:** A land bank acquires, holds, and repurposes vacant or tax-delinquent property so it can be assembled and transferred for affordable housing at reduced cost.
- **Housing Trust Fund:** A housing trust fund is a dedicated, renewable local revenue source that provides flexible gap financing to create and preserve affordable housing and to fund housing stability and repair programs.
- **Affordable Housing Development Fund:** An affordable housing development fund offers project-ready loans or grants—often revolving—to help developers cover predevelopment and construction gaps tied to affordability goals.
- **Community Land Trust:** A community land trust separates land ownership from building ownership, keeping homes permanently affordable by leasing the land long-term under resale and rent restrictions.
- **Housing Advisory Group:** A housing advisory group is a standing committee of local stakeholders that guides policy, funding priorities, and project alignment to advance affordable housing goals.
- **Housing Forum:** A housing forum is a regular public convening that shares data, spotlights projects, and builds community and developer support for affordable housing strategies and investments.

TOOLS TO LEVERAGE FOR HOUSING PRODUCTION

- **Targeted Incentives:** Local governments can tailor incentives—like gap financing, fee waivers, expedited permitting, or density bonuses—to make affordable units pencil out in specific corridors or for specific income targets. By tying incentives to clear affordability and location goals, they steer private investment toward mixed-income and workforce housing.

- **Downtown Development Authority / Development Authority (DDA/DA):** DDAs/DAs can assemble land, issue bonds, and provide low-cost financing or infrastructure support in redevelopment areas, reducing upfront risk for affordable housing projects. Their convening power also helps align property owners, lenders, and developers around downtown mixed-use projects that include affordable units.
- **Tax Abatements:** Property tax abatements lower operating costs during the critical early years of a project, improving cash flow enough to support below-market rents. When structured with affordability requirements, abatements become a direct tool to secure long-term affordable or workforce units.
- **Private Enterprise Agreements (PEAs):** PEAs (or similar development agreements) help negotiate project-specific benefits, such as set-aside affordable units, reduced parking, or phased compliance, in exchange for zoning flexibility or public support. They create a predictable deal framework that can lock in affordability while still meeting developer return needs.
- **DCA's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH):** GICH provides a state-supported planning and partnership framework to help communities identify housing needs, build local capacity, and implement proven strategies and award QAP points. The City of Conyers can take steps to re-establish its GICH status.
- **Conyers Housing Authority:** leverage funds and potential redevelopment sites, vouchers to partner with Conyers Housing Authority for strategic redevelopment and acquisition.

RECOMMENDED HOUSING TYPES

Smaller Homes



Workforce Housing (LIHTC)



Senior Housing (LIHTC)



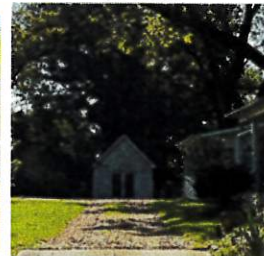
Conservation Neighborhoods



Cottage Courts



ADU's



Mixed-Use



Supportive Housing



Townhomes



Missing Middle



