

# REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

August 2011

## 2011 Atlanta Region Population

### ECONOMY SLOWING POPULATION GROWTH

ARC estimated that the 10-county Atlanta region added 34,550 new residents between April 1, 2010, and April 1, 2011. This growth is dramatically slower than what metro Atlanta region is accustomed to as the anemic national economy continues to take its toll on the region's growth.

Over the last three years, essentially since the recession began, the 10-county region has added approximately 91,000 people. To put this into perspective, during the fast-growing 1990s and the 2000 decade, the Atlanta region routinely added 100,000 new residents *each year*.

The Atlanta region's slowdown is directly attributable to the national economy. During weak economic periods, people don't relocate as much because, firstly, job opportunities are slim, thus people aren't

moving to take new jobs. Secondly, with the housing market in such disarray, it is hard to sell a house, which tends to keep people in place.

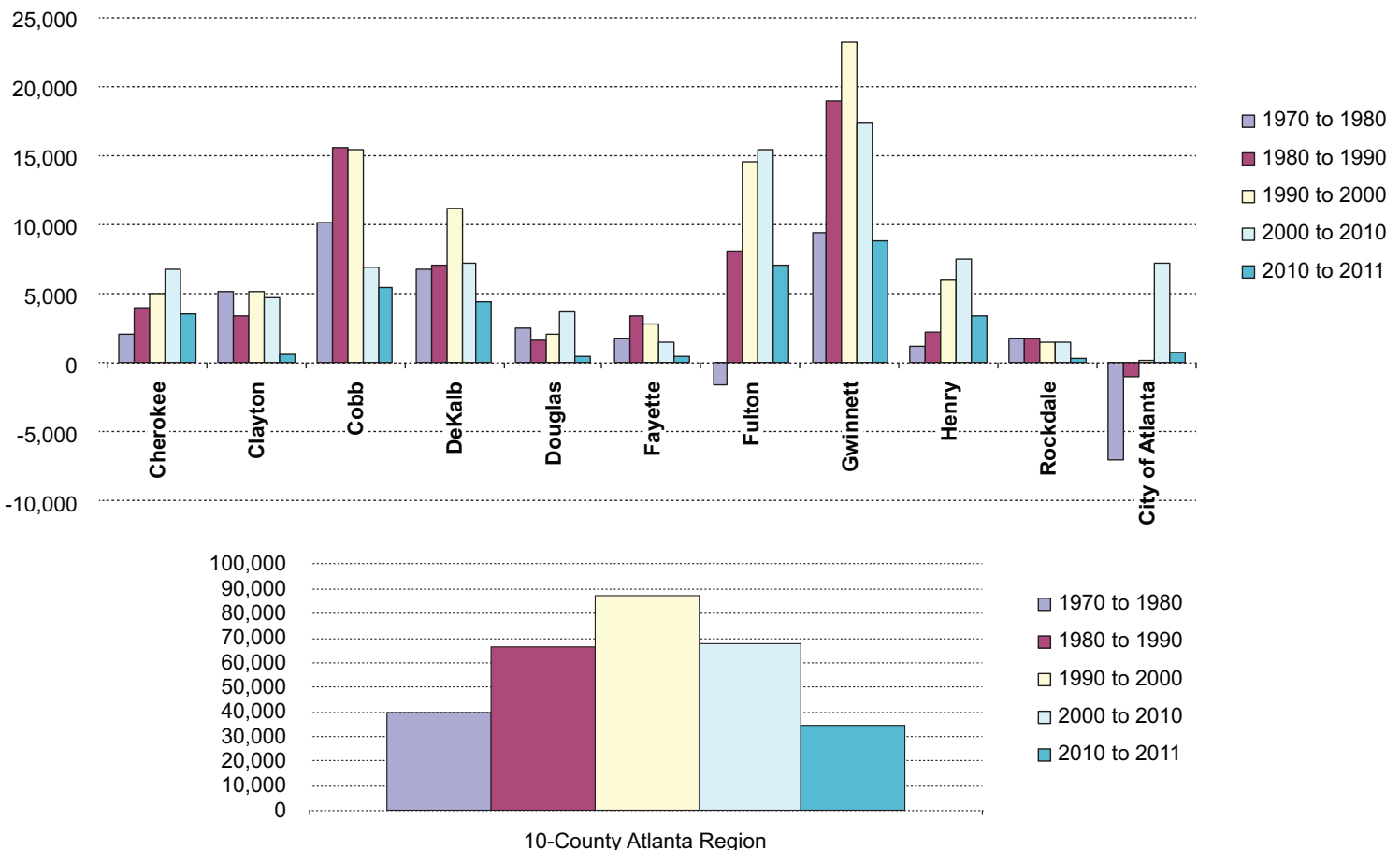
Still, according to the 2010 Census, Metro Atlanta (28 counties) ranked third in overall growth in the nation between 2000 and 2010, adding more than one million people. Only Dallas and Houston added more population during that period.

Further, the 10-county Atlanta region is now home to 4,142,300 people, a population larger than 24 states, according to the latest Census figures.

### VACANCY RATES SKYROCKETED DURING THE 2000 DECADE; HOUSEHOLD SIZE DECLINED

Explanations for the stagnating growth of the region are found in the increasing number of vacant units and the decrease in house-

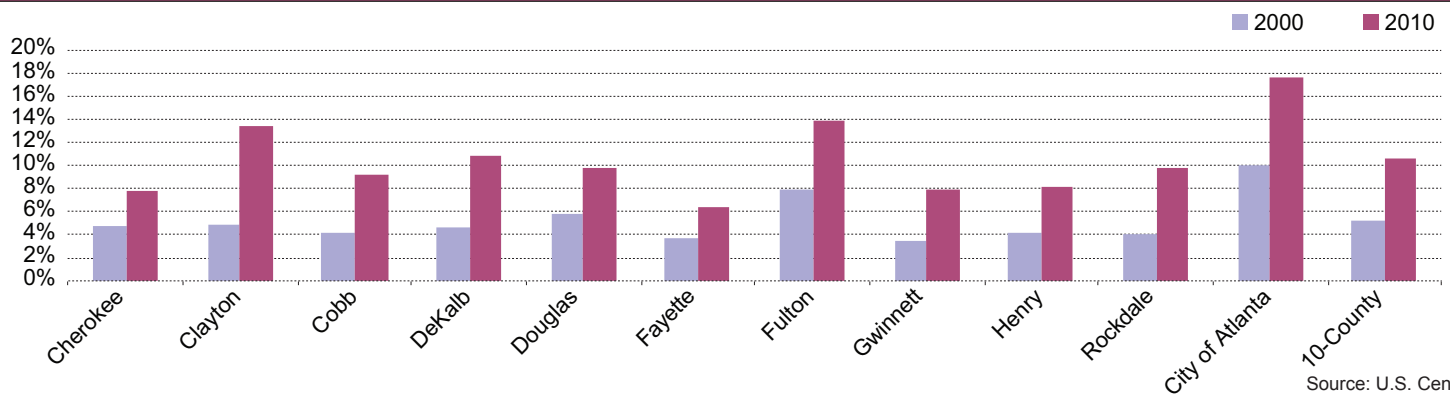
Chart 1 – Average Annual Population Growth by Decade 1970-2011



Source: ARC and Census Bureau

# 2011 Atlanta Region Population

Chart 2 – Vacancy Rates, 2000 and 2010



Source: U.S. Census

hold size. In 2000, there were just over 69,000 vacant units in the 10-county region, and of the occupied housing units, the average size was 2.62 persons per household. By 2010, due mostly to the recession of 2007, vacant units increased almost threefold to 181,000. And the average household size dipped to 2.58. (See Chart 2)

Overall, the 2000 decade will be remembered for fast growth, but the recession of 2007 largely stopped that growth in its tracks and the region is still trying to recover.

## GWINNETT COUNTY LED REGION IN GROWTH

Gwinnett County, which has long been a leader among metro Atlanta counties in population growth, once again led the region in growth last year (2010-2011), adding almost 8,800 new residents. This growth,

as in almost every other county in the region, is well below the annual average growth experienced in the 1990s and 2000s, where Gwinnett averaged approximately 22,000 new residents each year.

Fulton County added about 7,600 new residents last year, ranking second in the 10-county region. Next are Cobb (+5,500) and Cherokee (+4,200).

## POPULATION SLOWING IN EVERY COUNTY

Between 1990 and 2010, the 10-county region added 77,500 new resident each year, for a total of almost 1.6 million people in that 20-year time frame. As can be seen in Table 1, today every county in the region is well below that historic pace.

Table 1 – Atlanta Region Population 1970-2011

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2011	Change 2010-2011	Average Annual Change 1990-2001
Atlanta Region	1,500,823	1,896,182	2,557,800	3,429,379	4,107,750	4,142,300	34,550	77,498
Cherokee	31,059	51,699	91,000	141,903	214,346	218,500	4,154	6,167
Clayton	98,126	150,357	184,100	236,517	259,424	260,000	576	3,766
Cobb	196,793	297,718	453,400	607,751	688,078	693,600	5,522	11,734
DeKalb	415,387	483,024	553,800	665,865	691,893	694,400	2,507	6,905
Douglas	28,659	54,573	71,700	92,174	132,403	133,000	597	3,035
Fayette	11,364	29,043	62,800	91,263	106,567	107,100	533	2,188
Fulton	605,210	589,904	670,800	816,006	920,581	928,200	7,619	12,489
Gwinnett	72,349	166,808	356,500	588,448	805,321	814,100	8,779	22,441
Henry	23,724	36,309	59,200	119,341	203,922	207,800	3,878	7,236
Rockdale	18,152	36,747	54,500	70,111	85,215	85,600	385	1,536
City of Atlanta	495,039	424,922	415,200	416,474	420,003	420,700	697	240

Source: ARC; U.S. Census Bureau

For more information on these issues or to suggest new subjects, please email [mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com](mailto:mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com).

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