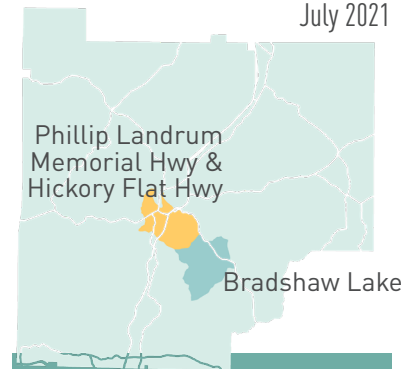


Life Expectancy in Cherokee County

Across metro Atlanta, lifespans vary by as much as two decades or more based on geography. Life expectancy is shaped by numerous complex factors beyond an individual's control, such as access to food, sidewalks, and quality education. Many of these factors can be influenced by our work at ARC and that of our partners.

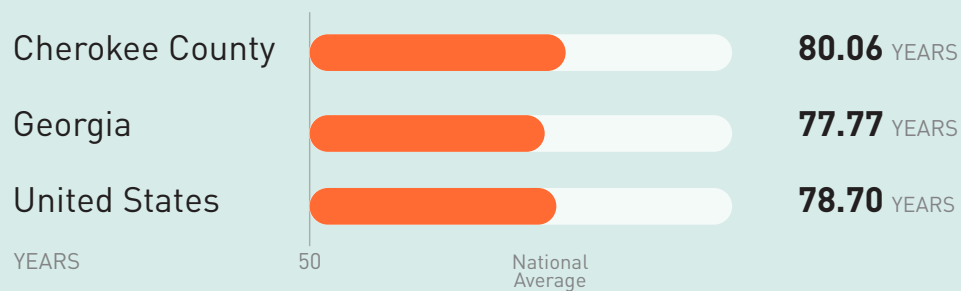
This document provides a snapshot of select social and economic characteristics that vary between the census tracts with the lowest and highest life expectancy in Cherokee County: Phillip Landrum Memorial Hwy & Hickory Flat Hwy and Bradshaw Lake, respectively. Consideration of these factors can inform strategies that help to extend lifespans and improve quality of life.

July 2021



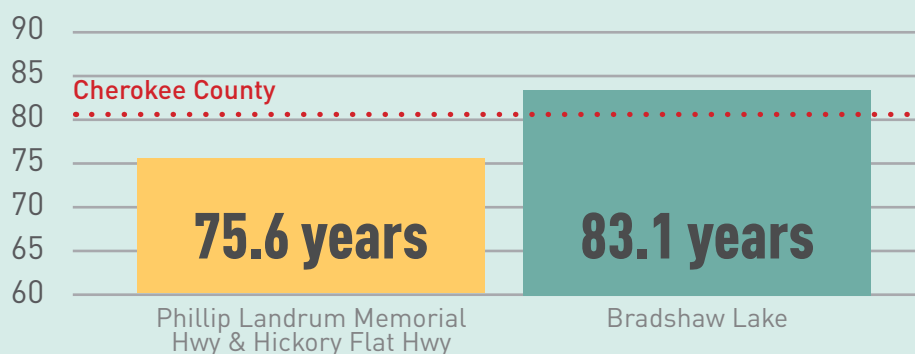
Two adjacent neighborhoods where the average resident has a life expectancy difference of 7.5 years.

Average Life Expectancy Comparison



Data Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Life Expectancy Tool, January 2020

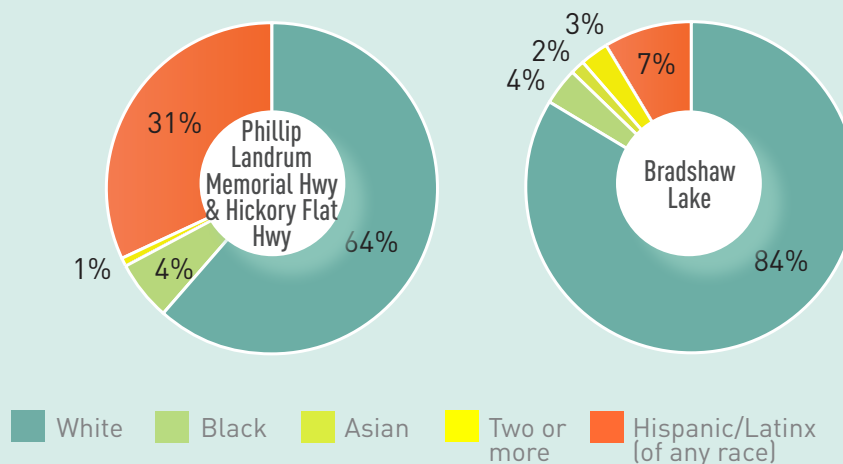
Life Expectancy in Cherokee County



Data Source: U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project, 2010-2015

Factors Affecting Life Expectancy in Cherokee County

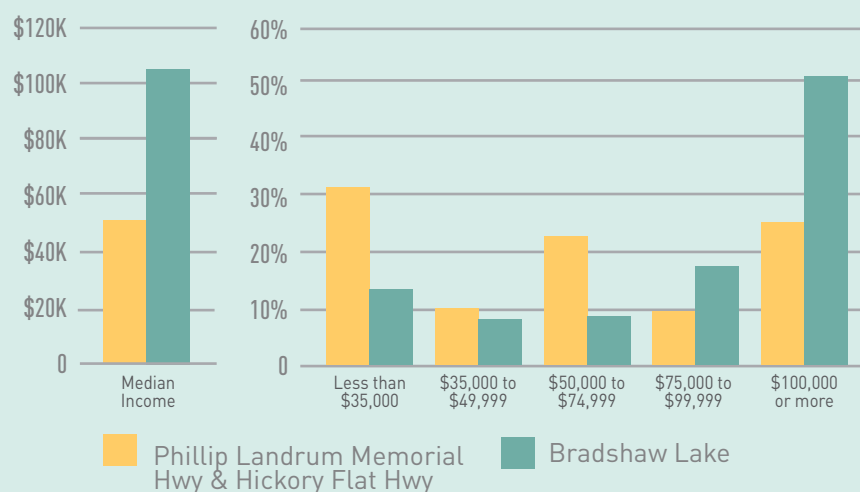
Race & Hispanic Origin



On average, with some minor exceptions, studies have shown that white individuals outlive other individuals at every age and level of education. Reasons for this discrepancy vary by individual, but in general, multiple factors are at play associated with systemic racism, including socioeconomic status and access to health care.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

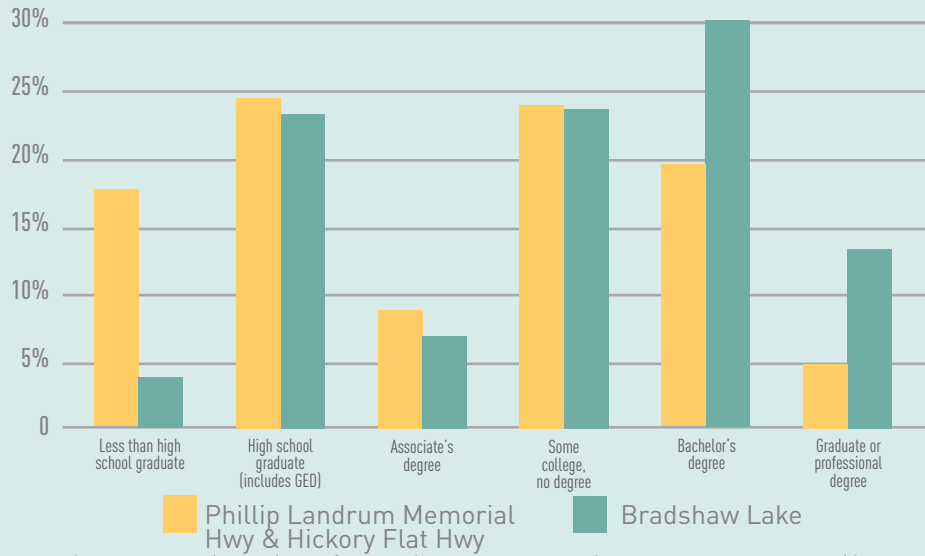
Household Income



Many studies have found income to correlate with life expectancy, as higher incomes correlate directly with things like better diets, healthier lifestyles, and access to medical care.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

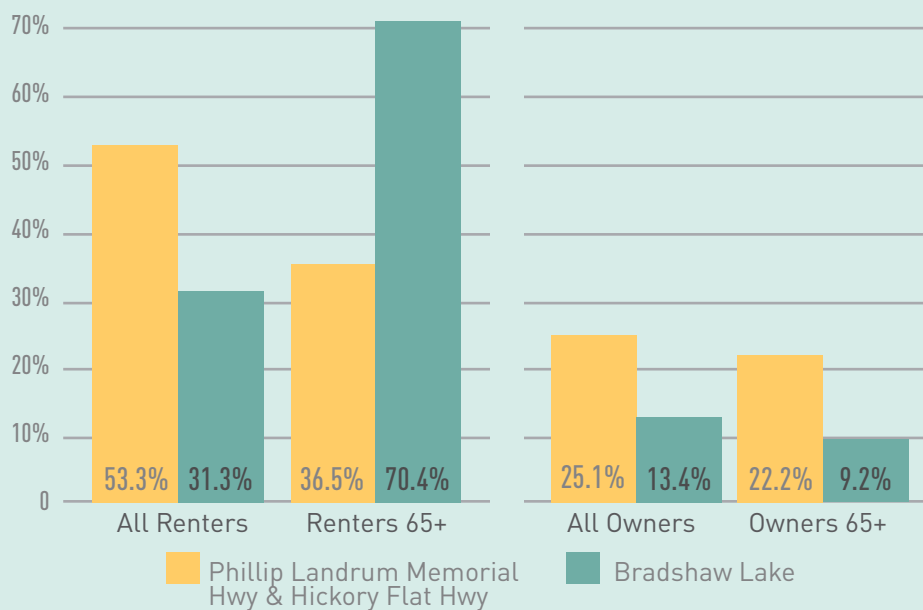
Education



Education level is found to impact longevity regardless of gender or race. Within racial and ethnic groups, life expectancy is found to vary by as much as 13 years between those with the highest and those with the lowest levels of education.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

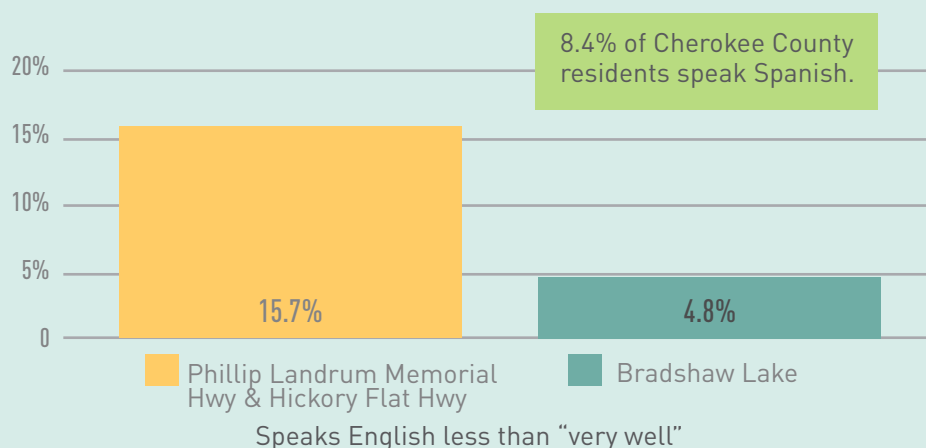
Housing Cost-Burdened Households



Housing cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, potentially leaving insufficient funds for necessities such as food and medicine.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Limited English Proficiency



People who do not speak English well often rely on informal networks and sources of information unless translated and culturally-appropriate information and services are available.

Data Source: US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Cherokee County Food Insecure

2018 7.9%

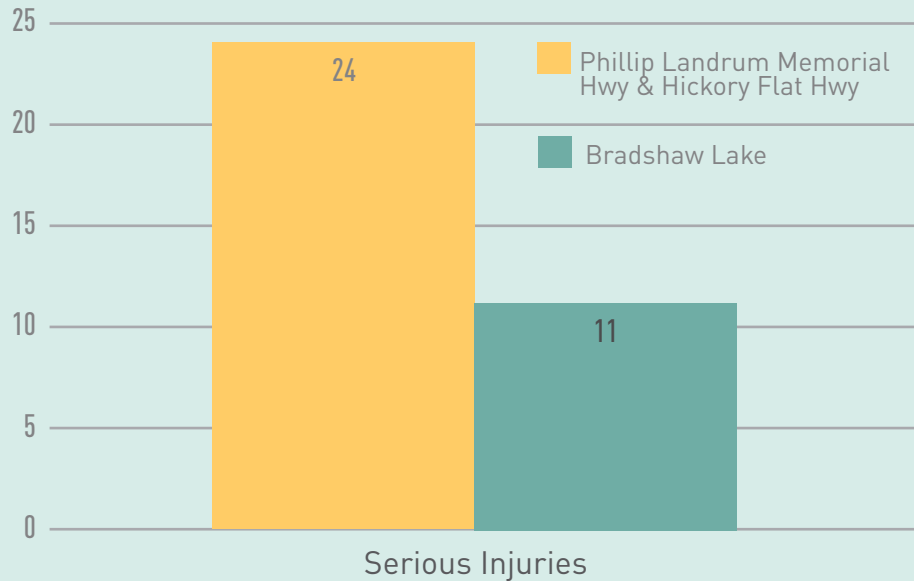
COVID-19* 10.7%

**projected rise due to COVID*

Food insecurity is limited or uncertain access to enough food. A lack of access to healthy food is linked to a greater likelihood of developing chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease—which have been shown to significantly affect life expectancy.

Data Source: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2018

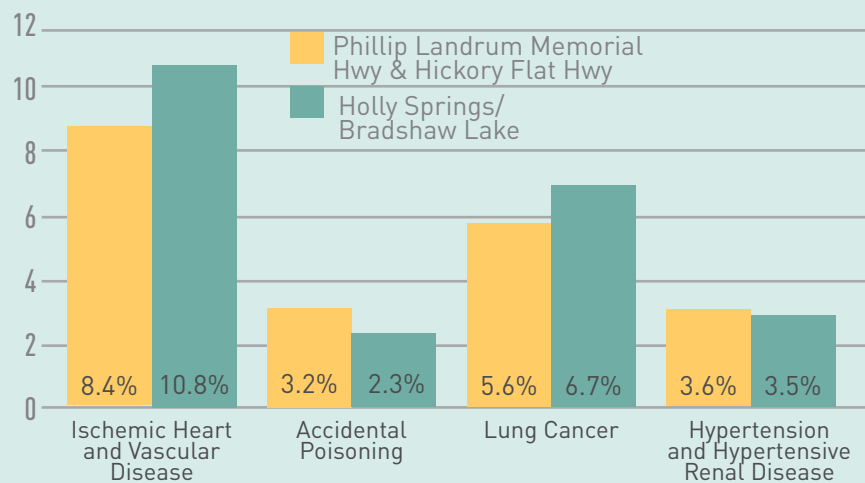
Crashes Involving Motor Vehicles



Research has found a disproportionate number of motor-vehicle-related pedestrian injuries and deaths take place in the nation's less pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.

Data Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Crash Data Portal, 2013-2019

Top Causes of Premature Death



Premature deaths due to these causes can be prevented through interventions in areas such as transportation, access to preventative care, disease management, and mental health services. In the Phillip Landrum Memorial Hwy & Hickory Flat Hwy tract, 3.6% of all premature deaths were due to suicide, yet there were fewer than five cases in Bradshaw Lake.

Data Source: Georgia OASIS, Mortality Mapping Tool, 2015-2019

Sustained Engagement

To better understand the issues facing residents in the Scott Mill Creek area, ARC embarked on a three-part community engagement process that identified and prioritized quality of life concerns and strategies for intervention. The process and findings are detailed below.



Focus Group

To supplement the data compiled above, ARC held a focus group with ten residents of the area who were compensated \$100 for their time in early 2022. During a two-hour session, ARC asked them questions about the assets of their community, their quality of life, and barriers they experienced to health. The focus group held in the Scott Mill Creek community shared 4 issues impacting their quality of life:

- Increased Transportation Options
- Affordable Housing
- Centralized Communication about existing resources
- Increased Bilingual Services

In the second quarter of 2022, ARC held a series of webinars with elected officials across the region where they shared the process of the focus groups and preliminary findings and invited them to engage with ARC in broader outreach.

Prioritization

In fall and winter of 2022-2023, ARC attended a community event in Cherokee County to conduct broader outreach. They engaged families attending a free food distribution held by MUST Ministries at a shopping center within the census tract. Most of the participants spoke Spanish as their primary language with little to no English proficiency; ARC brought Spanish-speaking employees to assist in data collection. At these events, ARC invited residents to vote on the issues that had arisen in the focus group to prioritize them. In broader community engagement, residents chose one of those issues as their primary concern. *

64% of residents chose affordable housing as their top issue

17% of residents chose increased transportation as their top issue

13% of residents chose increased bilingual services as their top issue

6% of residents chose centralized communication as their top issue

There was also space via comment cards for them to add supplemental information about personal experiences or suggestions for solutions. Residents overwhelmingly discussed skyrocketing rent prices and low-quality housing options as driving their choices.

*decimal points in percentages were rounded so total may not equal 100

Community Listening Sessions

Finally, in 2023, ARC conducted a listening session with leaders across Cherokee County, including elected officials, employees, service providers, and community leaders. Here, ARC presented their findings from the previous stages of community engagement and invited them to contribute insight on potential solutions. Based on this data, they are working with service providers and elected officials in Cherokee County to continue to design evidence-based approaches to health disparities in the county. This includes continuing outreach initiatives in the Scott Mill Creek neighborhood, promoting affordable housing and increased transportation options as important policy issues, and spreading awareness about existing disparities. Contact Arin Yost at ayost@atlantaregional.org if you have questions or are interested in partnering in Cherokee County.

Addressing the Problem

By working together across the region, we can address metro Atlanta's life expectancy disparities. The ingenuity and resources are here. ARC invites all interested individuals and organizations to join with us and our communities to ensure that the Atlanta region is a place where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can live high-quality lives, regardless of location. We are focusing on:

- Place** Concentrate on locations where residents experience the most inequity
- Policy** Work with governmental, philanthropic, educational, nonprofit, and business leaders to improve or amend policies that create inequities and advance policies that promote equity
- Practice** Provide services and programs that address unmet needs



For more information, please contact info@empowerline.org