

Life Expectancy in DeKalb County

July 2021

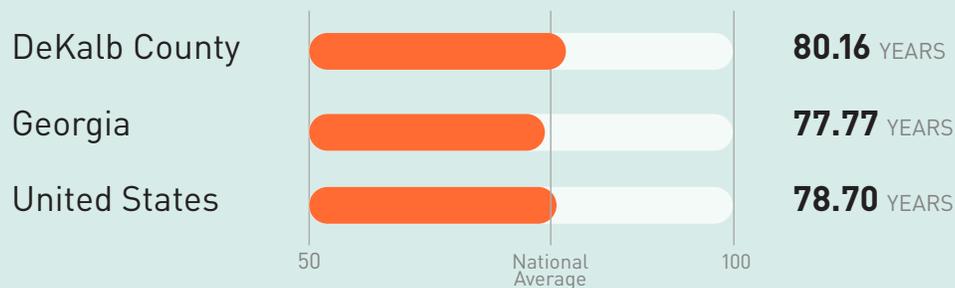
Across metro Atlanta, lifespans vary by as much as two decades or more based on geography. Life expectancy is shaped by numerous complex factors beyond an individual's control, such as access to food, sidewalks, and quality education. Many of these factors can be influenced by our work at ARC and that 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 DeKalb County: Brook Run Park and Brook Run Park, respectively. Consideration of these factors can inform strategies that help to extend lifespans and improve quality of life.

Two neighborhoods 8.2 miles apart where the average resident has a life expectancy difference of over 18 years.

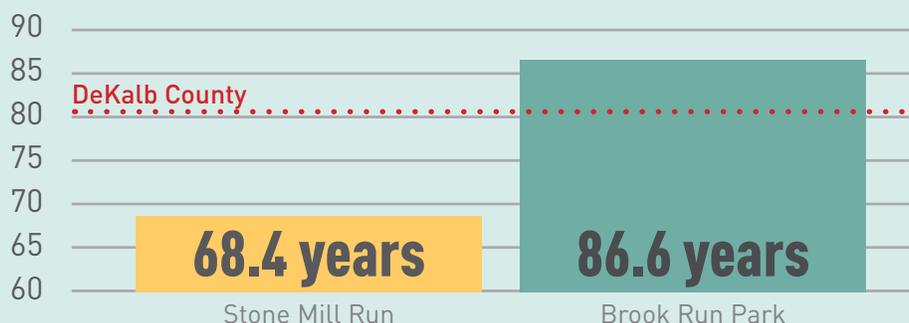


Average Life Expectancy Comparison



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

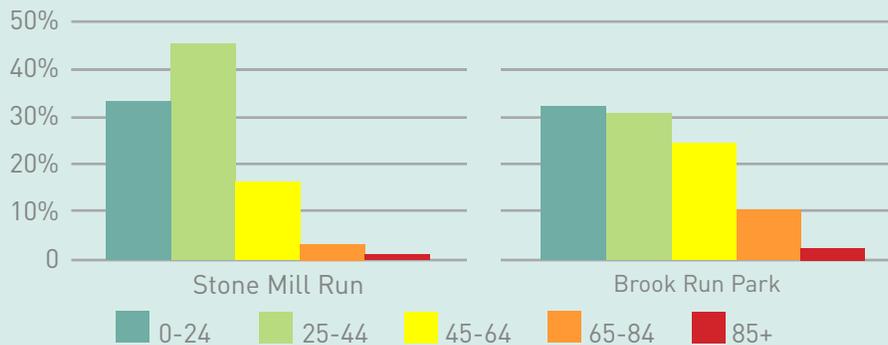
Life Expectancy in DeKalb County



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

Factors Affecting Life Expectancy in DeKalb County

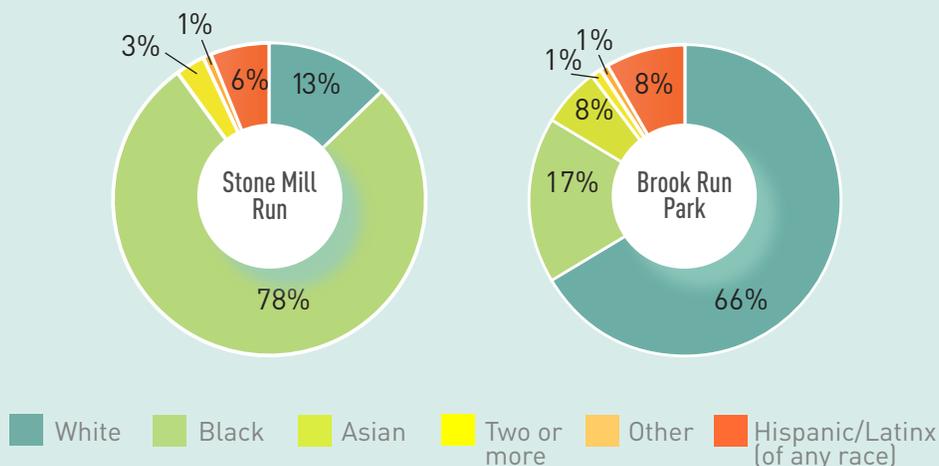
Age Distribution



80% of the residents of Brook Run Park are under 45, while about 35% of residents of Brook Run Park are 45 and older. The metro Atlanta region as a whole is more evenly distributed.

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

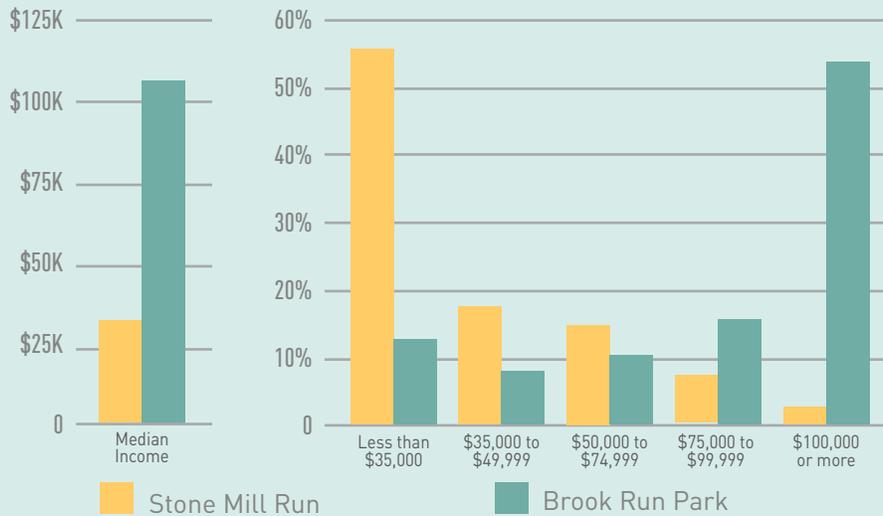
Race & Hispanic Origin



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

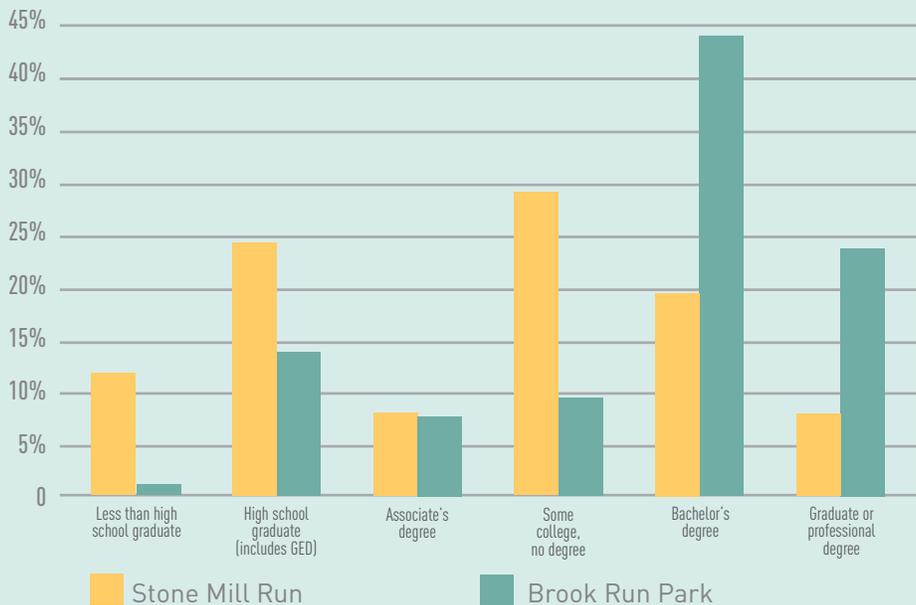
Household Income



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

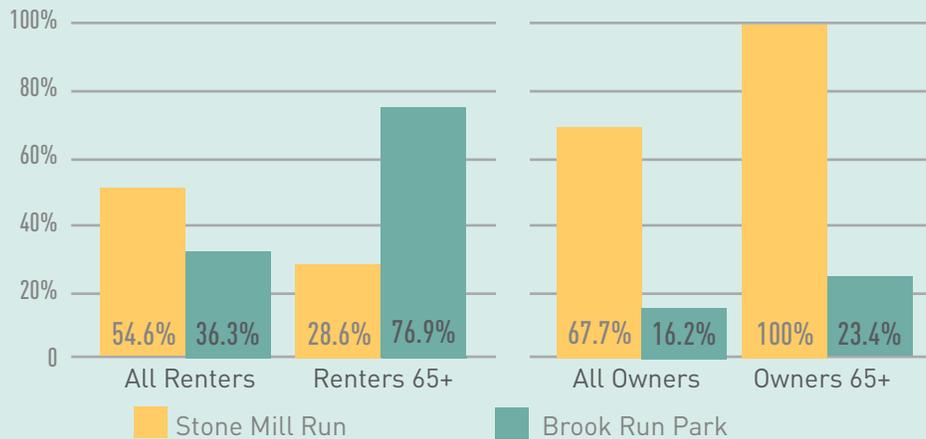
Education



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

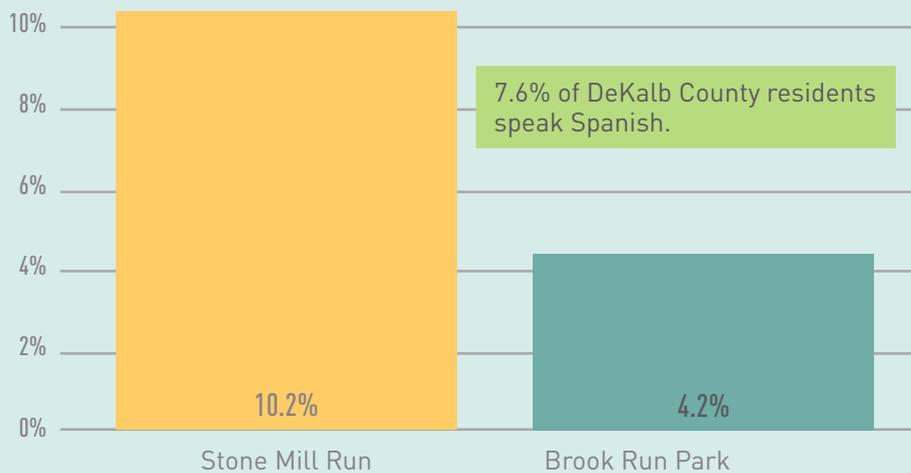
Housing Cost-Burdened Households



Housing cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, potentially leaving insufficient funds for necessities such as food and medicine. A greater percentage of homeowners over the age of 65 are cost-burdened than younger ones in both census tracts.

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

Limited English Proficiency



Speaks English less than "very well"

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 DeKalb County Food Insecure

2018 12.9%

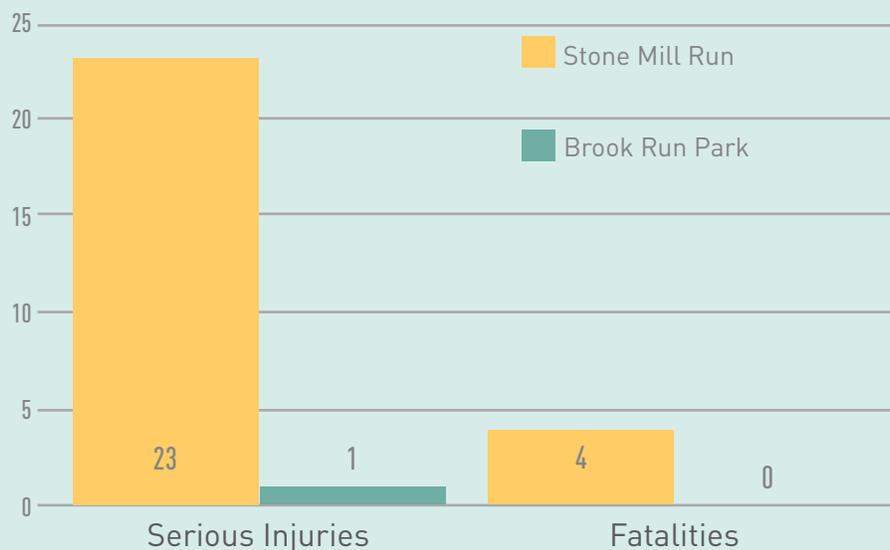
COVID-19* 16.7%

**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

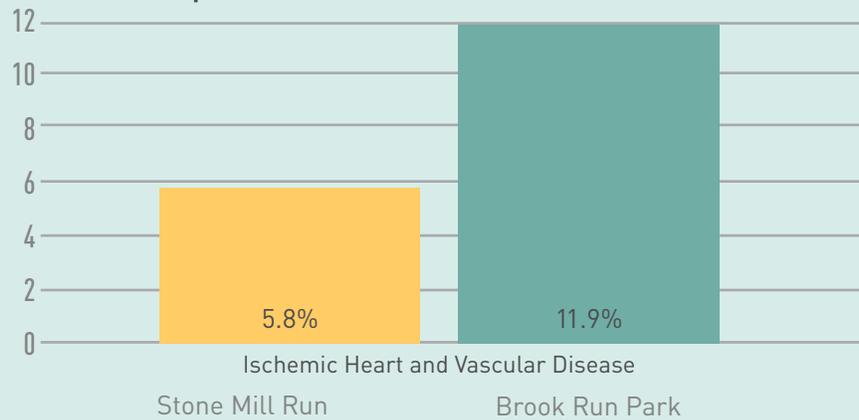
Crashes Involving Motor Vehicles



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 Tucker/Rock Mountain tract, 7.3% of all premature deaths were due to primary hypertension & hypertensive renal disease, yet there were fewer than five cases in Brook Run Park .

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

Sustained Engagement

To better understand the issues facing residents in the Juliette Road/Stone Mill Run neighborhood, 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 nine 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 Juliette Road/Stone Mill Run community shared 5 issues impacting their quality of life:

- Access to grocery stores
- Food quality
- Access to services
- Road maintenance
- Affordable housing

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 two community events in DeKalb County—a Fortitude Fitness Expo at Beulah Baptist church in partnership with Delta Sigma Theta and a Community Connect Day at East Ponce Village in partnership with DeKalb Health and Human Services—to conduct broader outreach. 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, 114 residents chose one of those issues as their primary concern. *

49% of residents chose affordable housing as the top issue facing their community.

20% were concerned with either grocery store access or food quality

18% of residents chose road maintenance/transportation as their primary concern

12% indicated that access to services was 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 rising rental costs and low-quality food in grocery stores that could only be reached by car as huge problems facing their communities.

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

Community Listening Sessions

Finally, in the first half of 2023, ARC conducted a listening session with leaders across DeKalb 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 DeKalb County to continue to design evidence-based approaches to health disparities in the county. This includes continuing outreach initiatives in the Juliette Road/Stone Mill Run neighborhood, promoting affordable housing and nutrition access 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 DeKalb 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