



CENTER FOR  
HEALTHY CHURCHES

*DISCERNING  
GOD'S CALL  
FOR OUR CHURCH*

**CONGREGATIONAL  
CONVERSATION # 1**





# What is a Healthy Church?

A healthy church is a  
community of Jesus followers...

- with a shared vision,
- thriving ministry,
- and trusted leadership.



# What is a Healthy Church?

A healthy church is a  
community of Jesus followers...

- with a **shared vision**,
- thriving ministry,
- and trusted leadership.

**YOU ARE  
HERE** →

**THE  
PROCESS  
TIMELINE**





THE PLACE GOD CALLS YOU IS THE PLACE  
WHERE YOUR DEEP GLADNESS  
AND THE WORLD'S DEEP HUNGER MEET

*FREDERICH BUECHNER*



# Purpose of Today's Conversation:

- To look **inward** at our ourselves, giving voice to what is best about our congregation.
- To look **outward** at our community, paying attention to the needs and opportunities around us.

## Two Questions to Answer

- **Share your name and what year you connected to First Baptist (not necessarily membership, just connection)**
- **In your experience, from the past decade of church life, what's the most energizing and impactful thing First Baptist has done?**





## Two More Questions to Answer

- Using no more than five words, answer the following question  
“What is something you love about our church that makes us distinctive from other churches?”
- Once you’ve given your short answer, say why you think that is, and what value that represents.





# Our Context



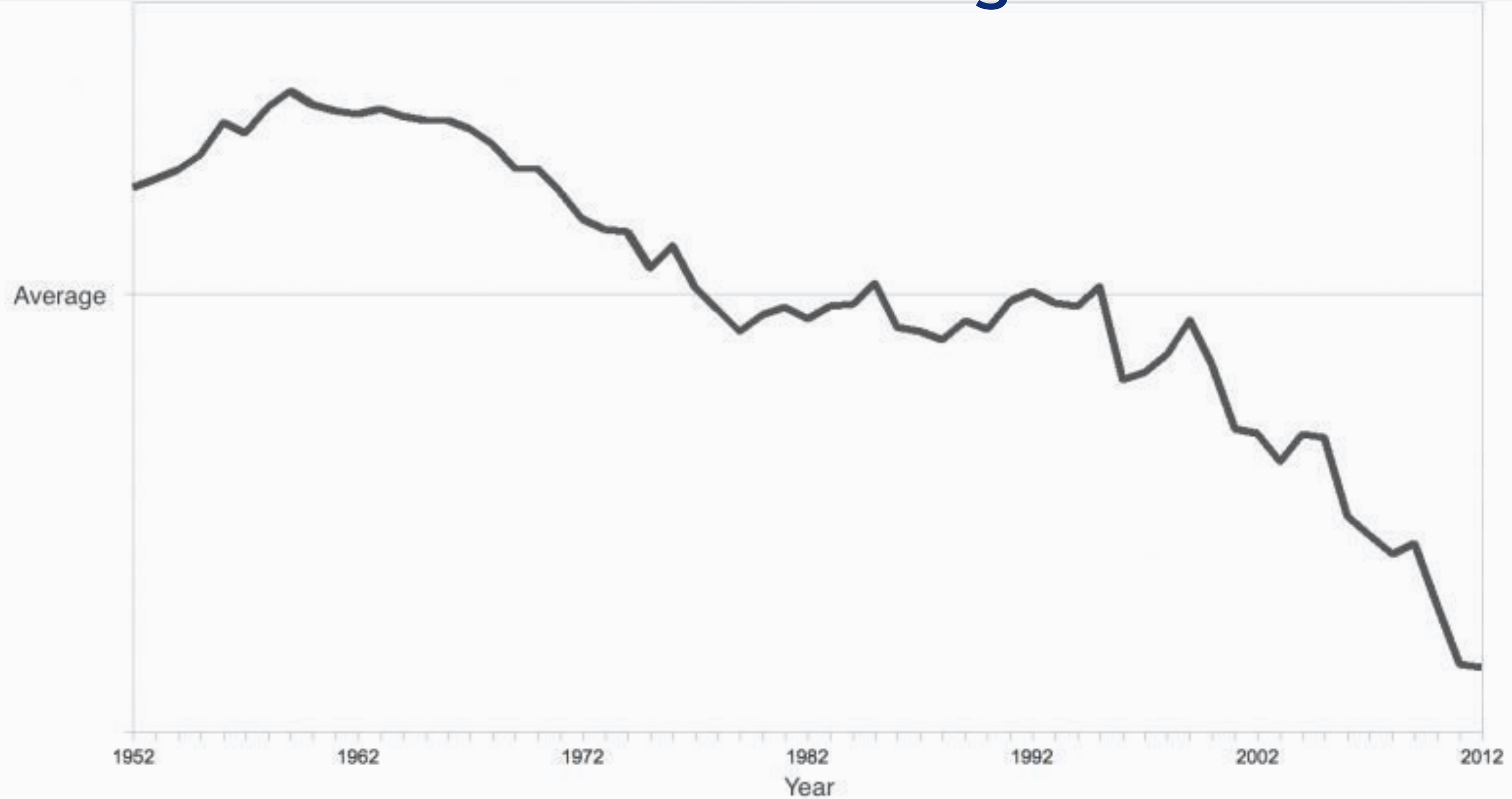
NATIONAL



OUR COMMUNITY

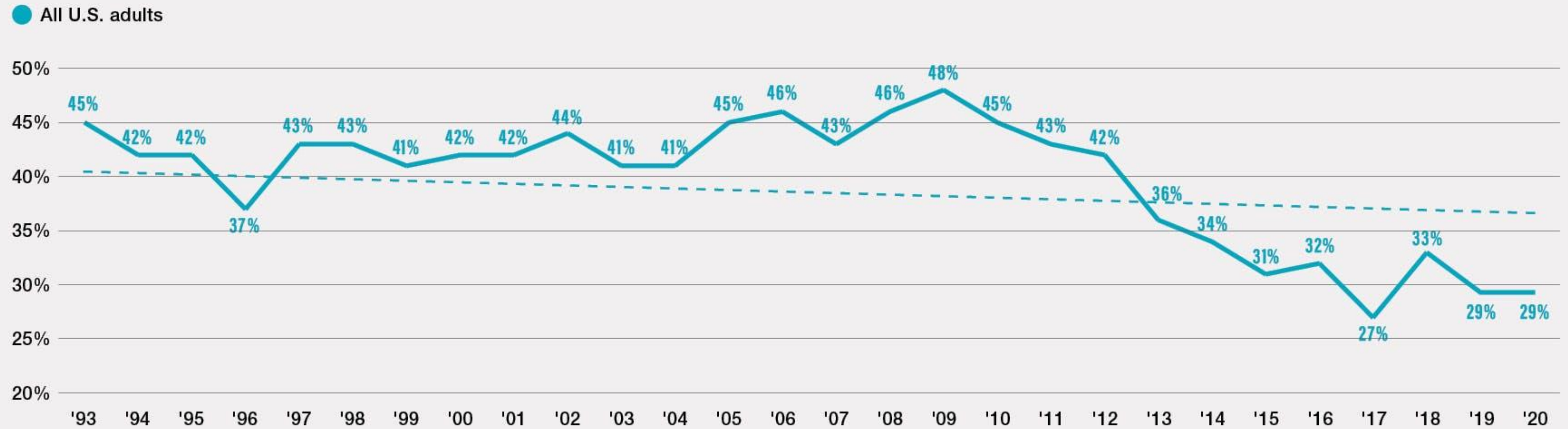
- National Context
- **Community Context**

# The Great Decline: 60 Years of Religion in America



Graph by Corner of Church & State, a Religion News Service blog  
Source: Aggregate Religiosity Index, J. Tobin Grant. *Sociological Forum*.

# WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE: 1993-2020



n = 103,603 U.S. adults | 1993-2020

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# Weekly Church Attendance 2022 Data



American Family Survey

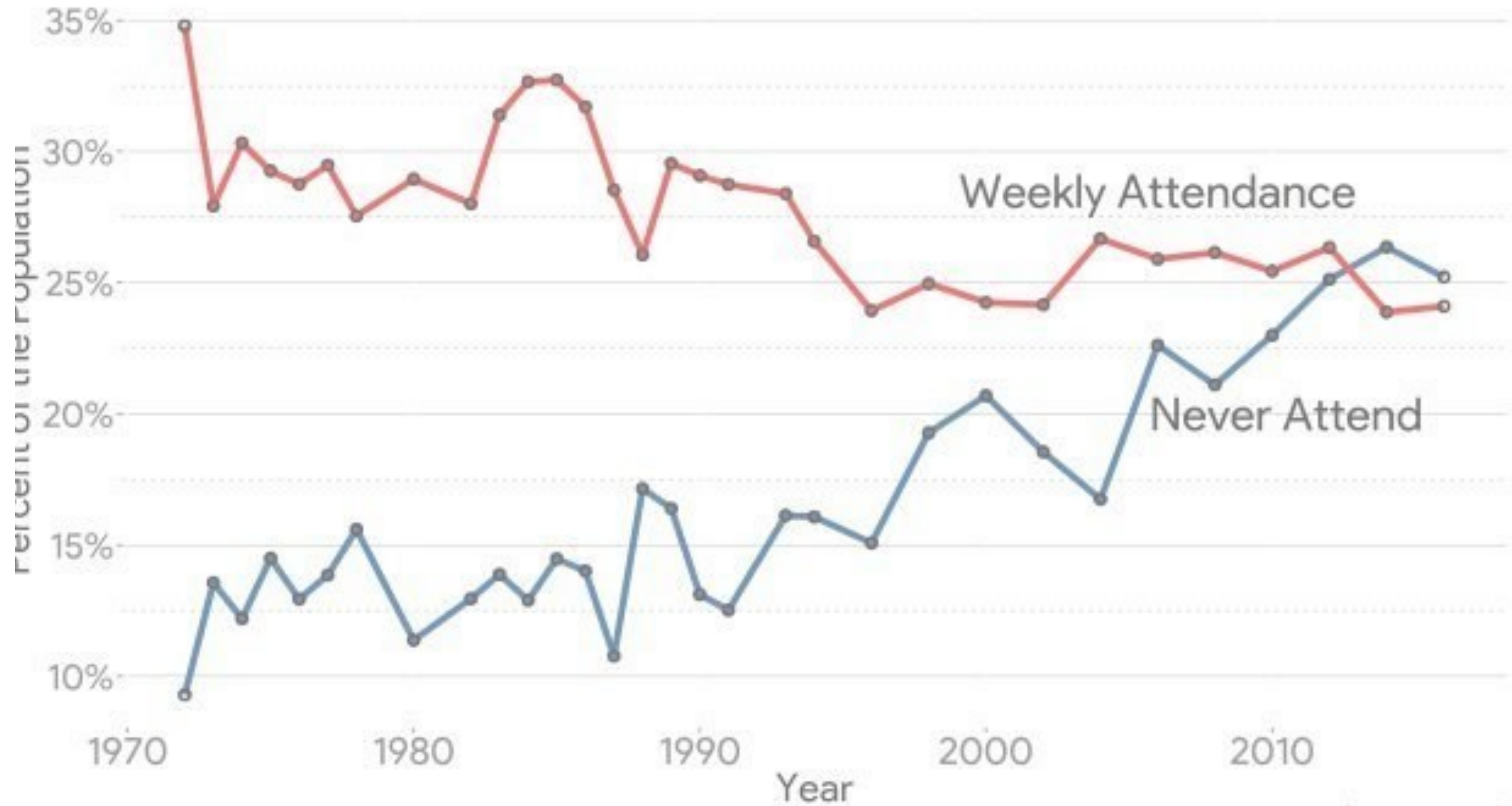
28%

Gallup 2023

20%



# Declines in Church Attendance



Data: GSS (1972-2016)



**500  
ACTIVE  
MEMBERS**

**=**



**MONTH**

**375 AVERAGE ATTENDANCE**



**MONTH**

**250 AVERAGE ATTENDANCE**



# WHY IS FREQUENCY DROPPING?

- Youth sports leagues, competitions of all kinds
- Vacation homes, timeshares
- Collegiate and professional athletics/events
- The dramatic increase in the number of “holiday” weekends
- Illness (as people live longer, they are more likely to be seriously ill and unable to attend)
- Aging parents
- Exhaustion
- Ease of travel
- Work
- Commitment Level





# 20th Century

Some of the people → All the time

Most of the people → Most of the time

Small number → None of the time

# 21st Century

Small number → All the time

Most of the people → Some of the time

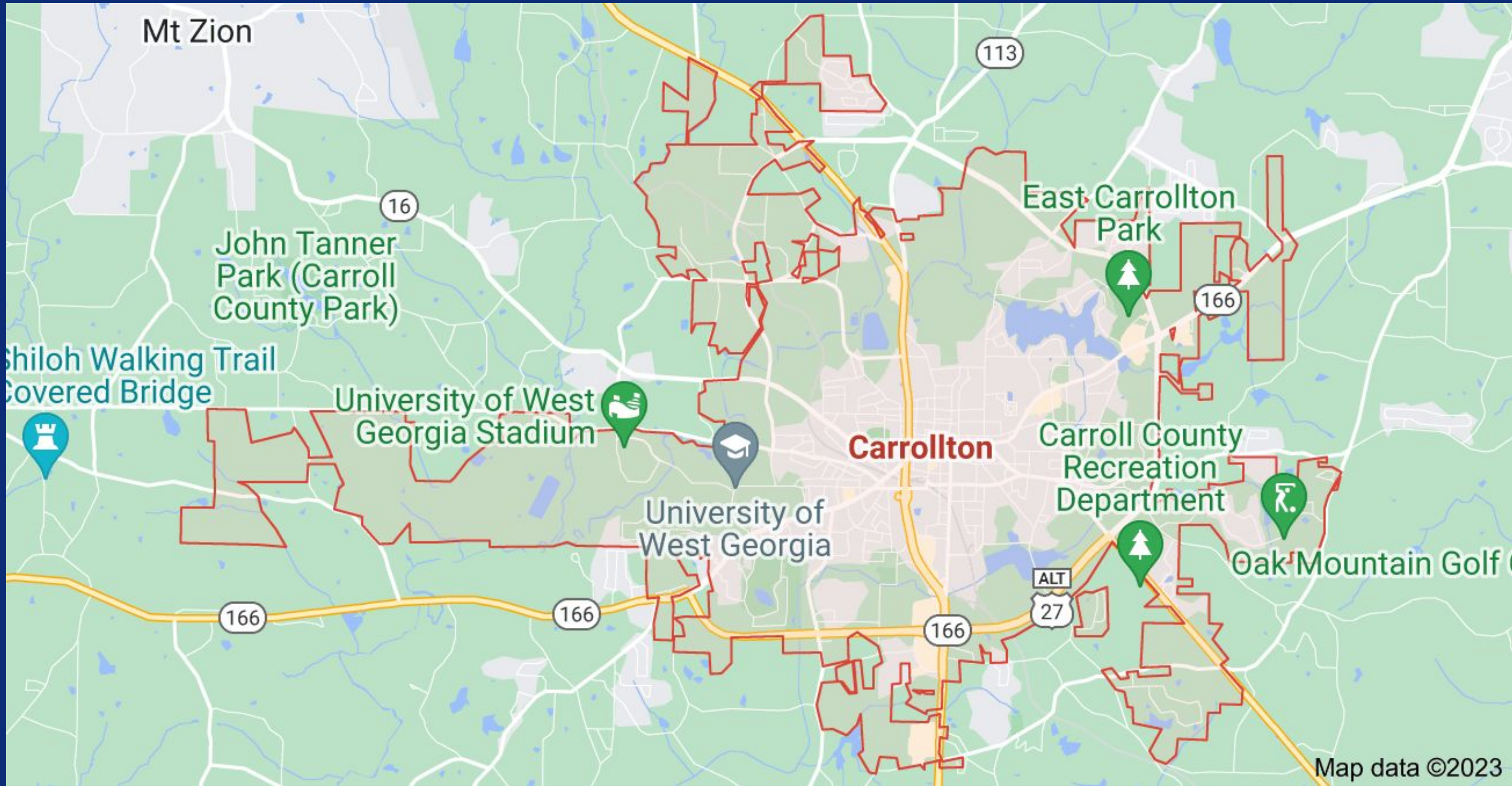
Some of the people → None of the time

Woo Hoo!

# What About Our Community



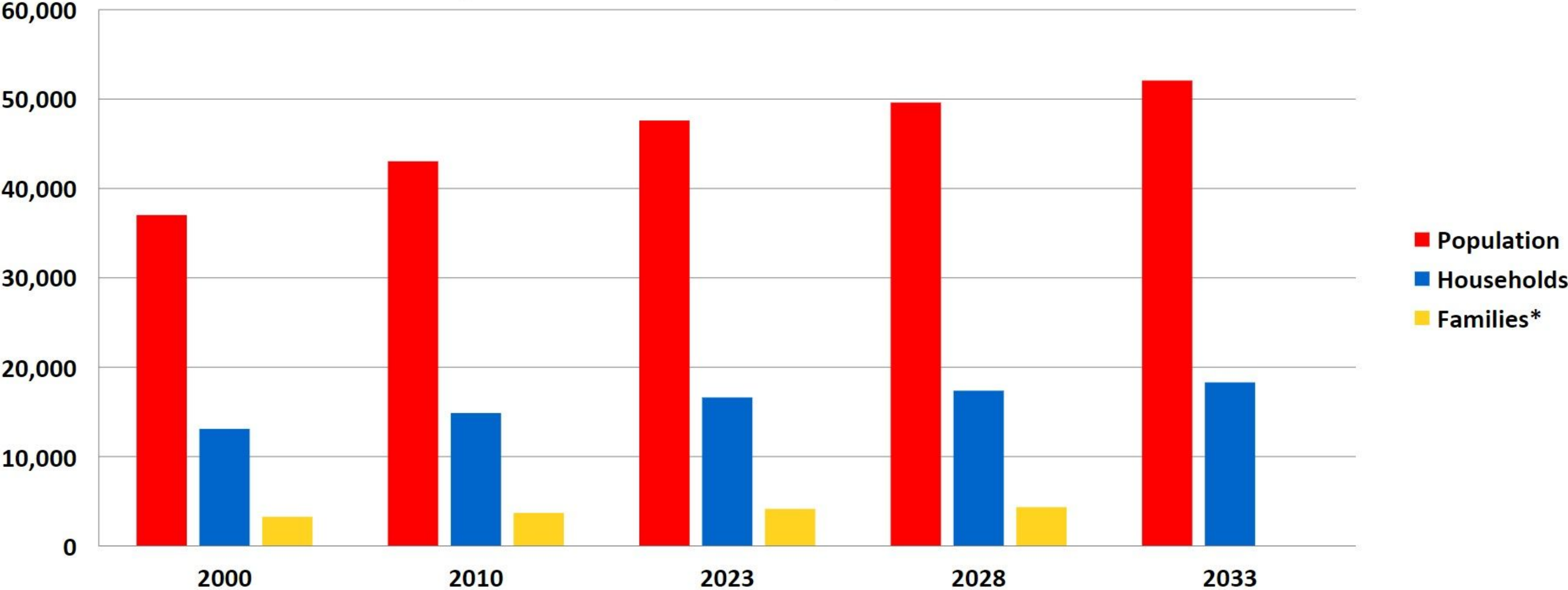




# CARROLLTON

## Population

History and 10 Year Forecast: Population and Households

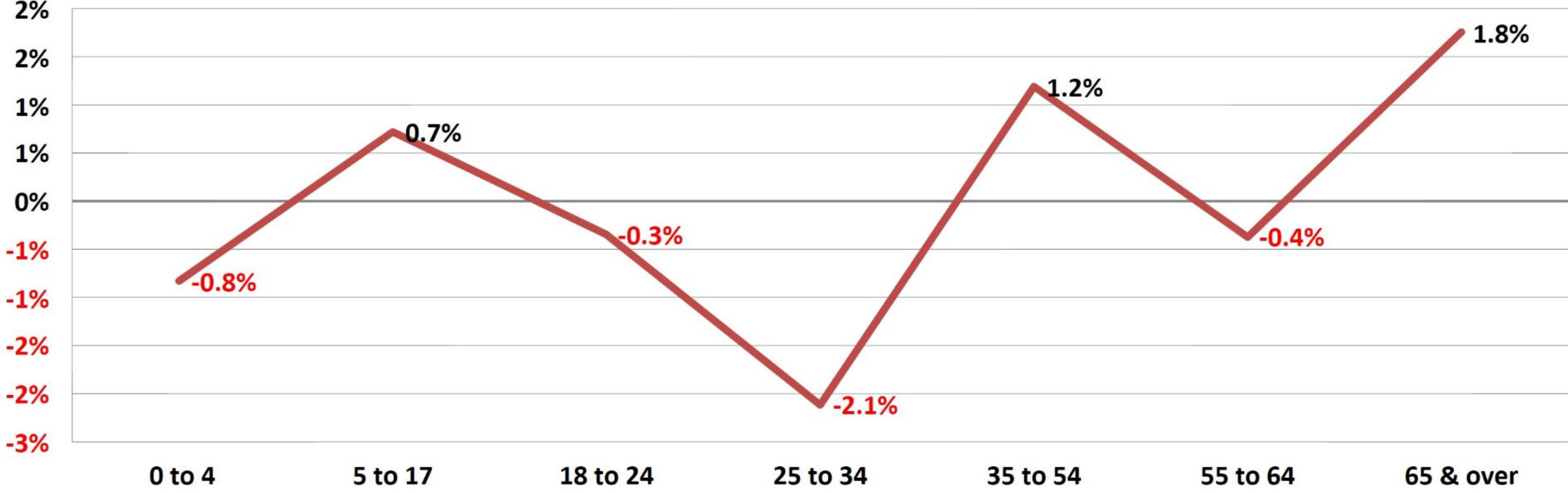




# CARROLLTON

## Population

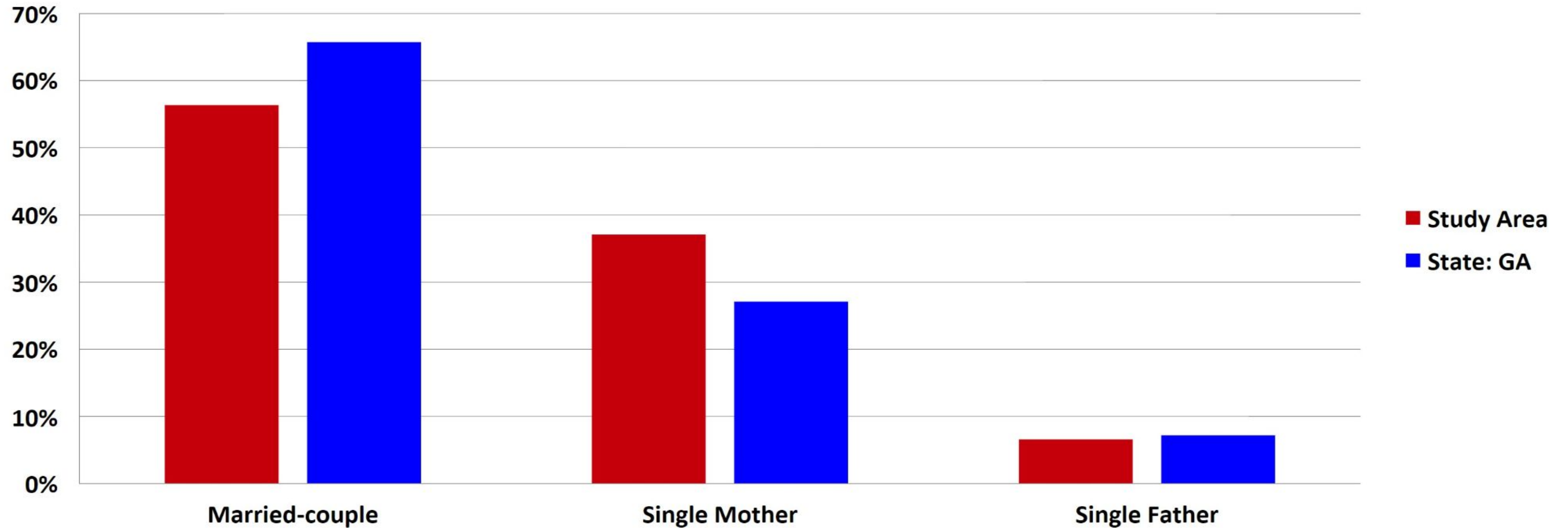
Phase of Life: 10 Year Change



# CARROLLTON

## Population

Family Households with Children by Type





# CARROLLTON

## Population

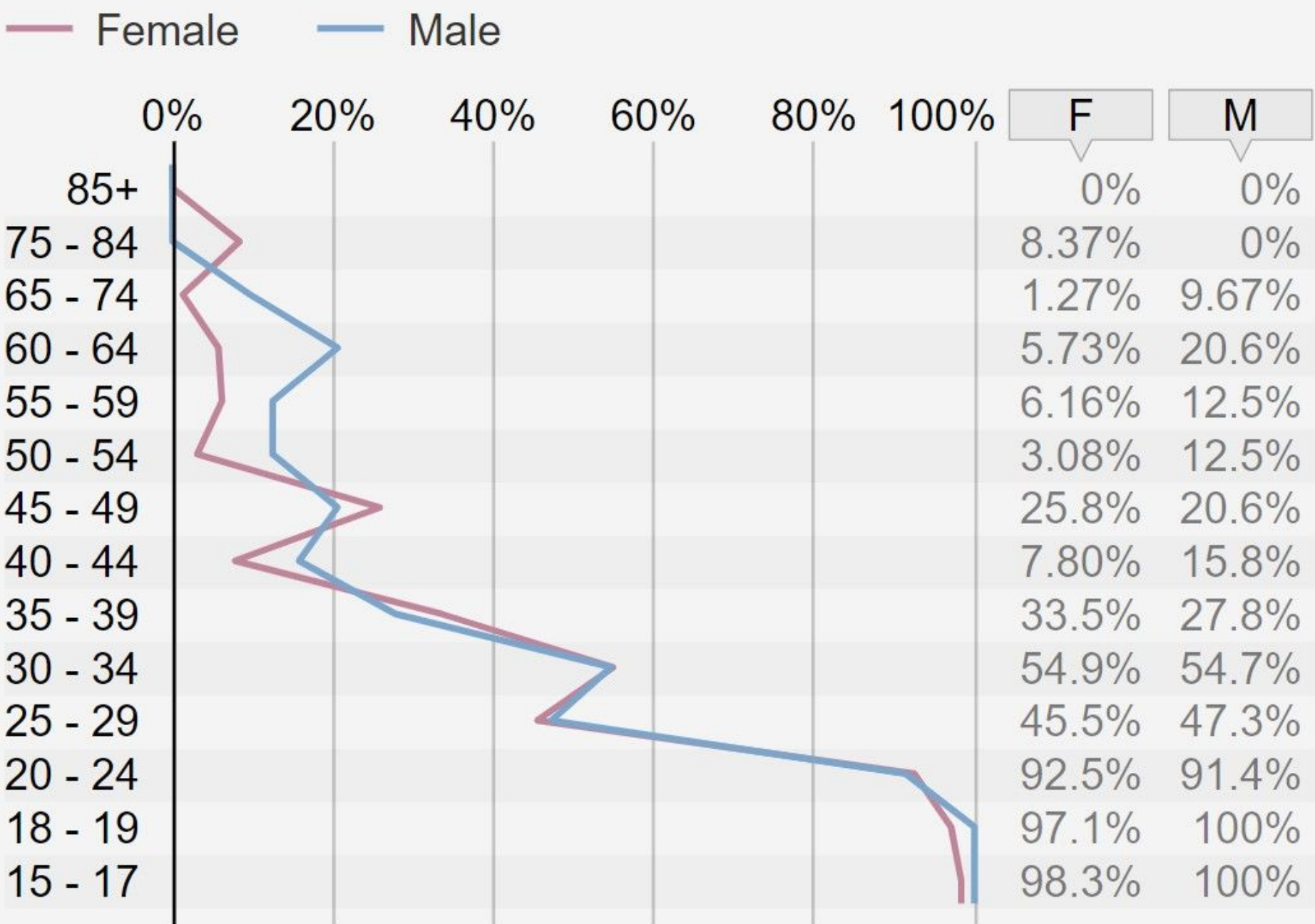
Households with Children	Actual Hhlds by Year			2010 to 2028	Percent of all Hhlds by Year			2010 to 2028 %
	2010	2023	2028	Change	2010%	2023%	2028%	Change
Family: Married-couple	3,051	2,684	2,738	-313	60.0%	56.4%	55.9%	-4.0%
Family: Single Mother	1,561	1,766	1,823	262	30.7%	37.1%	37.2%	6.6%
Family: Single Father	475	313	334	-141	9.3%	6.6%	6.8%	-2.5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,087</b>	<b>4,763</b>	<b>4,895</b>	<b>-192</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

# CARROLLTON

## Population

### The Never Married by Sex and Age

Percentage of age and sex cohort.

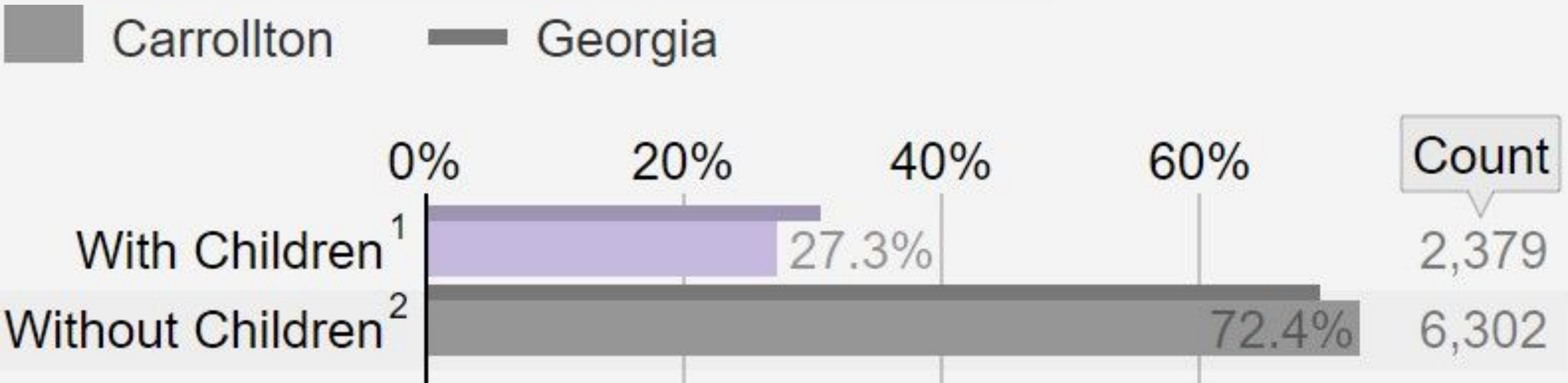


# CARROLLTON

## Population

### Families with Children

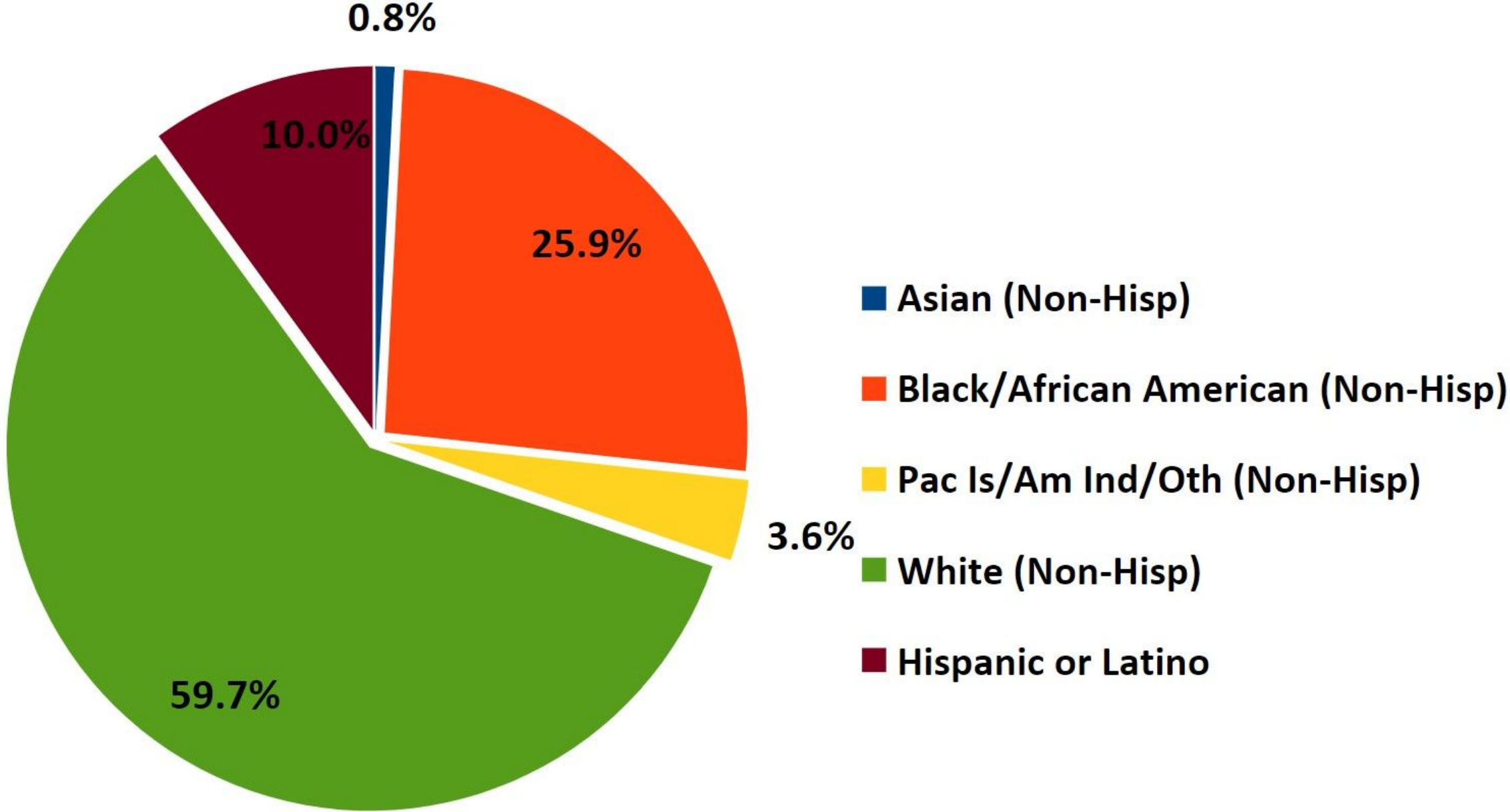
Percentage of households.



# CARROLLTON

## Population

Current Year Racial/Ethnic Percentages





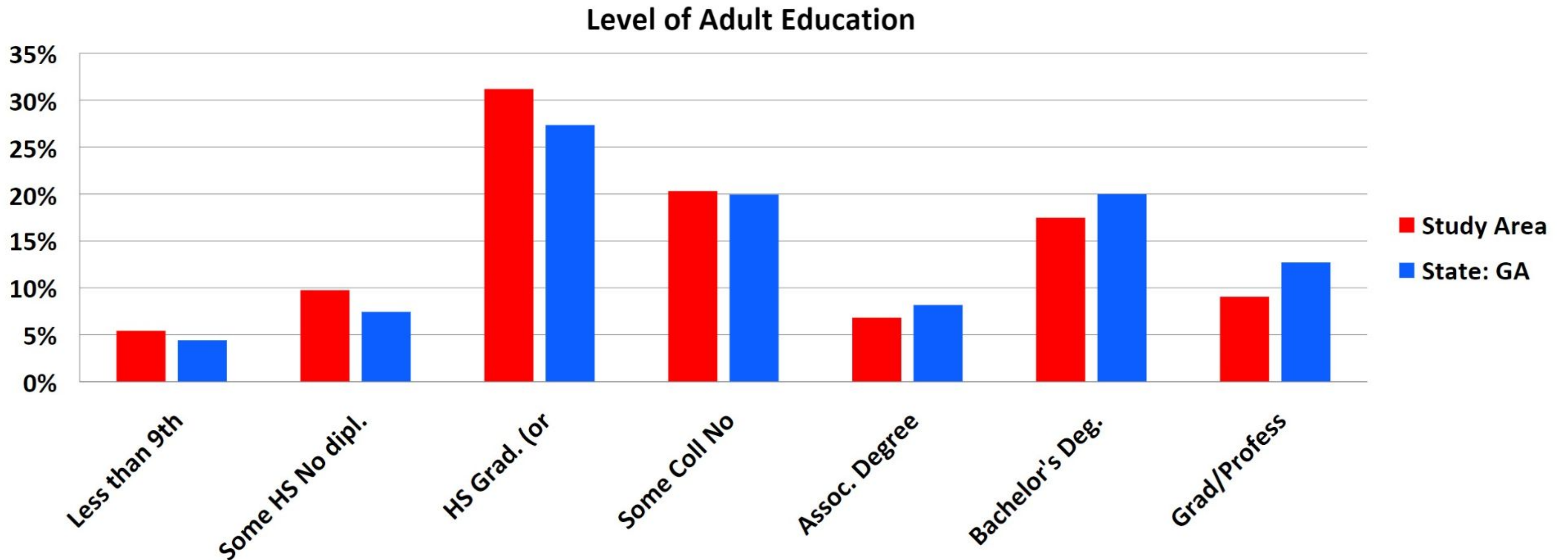
# CARROLLTON

## Population

Racial/Ethnicity by Year	Actual Population by Year			2010 to 2028 Change	Percent of all Pop by Year			2010 to 2028 % Change
	2010	2023	2028		2010%	2023%	2028%	
Asian (Non-Hisp)	414	395	429	15	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	-0.1%
Black/African American (Non-Hisp)	10,704	12,311	12,797	2,093	24.9%	25.9%	25.8%	0.9%
White (Non-Hisp)	26,755	28,401	29,261	2,506	62.2%	59.7%	59.0%	-3.2%
Hispanic or Latino	4,140	4,778	5,111	971	9.6%	10.0%	10.3%	0.7%
Pac Is/Am Ind/Oth (Non-Hisp)	1,021	1,717	2,012	991	2.4%	3.6%	4.1%	1.7%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>43,034</b>	<b>47,602</b>	<b>49,610</b>	<b>6,576</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

# CARROLLTON

## Education Levels



# CARROLLTON

## Faith and Culture

- **Pastoral Pride** - Eclectic mix of lower-middle class consumers who settle in country and small town areas
- **Singles and Starters** - Young singles starting out and some starter families living a city lifestyle
- **Thriving Boomers** - Upper middle class baby boomer-age couples living comfortable lifestyles settled in suburban homes



# CARROLLTON

## Faith and Culture

- **Golden Year Guardians** - Retirees living in old homes, settled residences and communities
- **Suburban Style** - Upscale, middle-aged couples with school-aged children living active family lifestyles in outlying suburbs
- **Autumn Years** - Established and mature couples living gratified lifestyles in older homes

**Group N:*****Pastoral Pride***

**Eclectic mix of lower-middle class consumers who have settled in country and small-town areas**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

**Religious Experience in a Nutshell**

Religious Perspective:

*The Lord is my shepherd*

Spiritual Issues:

*Feelings of estrangement, anxieties about fate and emptiness*

**Common Church Presence**

- Small traditional churches
- Intimate and long-term trusted relationships
  
- Traditionally high moral standards
- Simple, essential faith for hard times
  
- Anxious about encroaching urbanization
- Respect credible spiritual leadership





## Group O: *Singles and Starters*

**Young singles starting out and some starter families living a city lifestyle**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

### **Religious Experience in a Nutshell**

Religious Perspective:

*Looking for heroes of faith*

Spiritual Issues:

*Feelings of guilt, anxieties about abuse and shame*

### **Common Church Presence**

- Sceptical of religion
- Open to personal spirituality
- Materialistic and ambitious
- Digitally savvy and intense social media
- Often frustrated, sometimes angry
- Fragile self-confidence





## Group E: *Thriving Boomers*

**Upper-middle-class baby boomer-age couples living comfortable lifestyles settled in suburban homes**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

### **Common Church Presence**

- History of church involvement
- More “spiritual” than “religious”
- Global perspectives
- Quest for quality
- Conflicted between self-absorption & social service
- Strong support for non-profits



### **Religious Experience in a Nutshell**

Religious perspective:

*Reasonable religion, from privileged perspective, for a better world*

Spiritual Issues:

*Feeling flawed and aging, anxieties over meaninglessness and death*



## Group J:

## *Autumn Years*

**Established and mature couples living gratified lifestyles in older homes**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

### **Religious Experience in a Nutshell**

Religious Perspective:

*God's mission, our community, my church*

Spiritual Issues:

*Feeling one's age and lonely, anxieties over death and estrangement*

### **Common Church Presence**

- Church is an oasis in a stressful world
- Local church loyalty
  
- Committed to faith formation of grandchildren
- Predictable, traditional worship
  
- Face-to-face fellowship central to church life
- More open minded than boomer children think





## Group Q:

## *Golden Year Guardians*

### **Retirees living in old homes, settled residences and communities**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

### **Religious Experience in a Nutshell**

Religious Perspective:

*Faith of our fathers (and mothers) living still*

Spiritual Issues:

*Feelings of loneliness, anxieties about displacement and abandonment*

### **Common Church Presence**

- Church participation part of a weekly routine
- Church as a center for key friendships
  
- Lifetime loyalty to a denomination
- Respect for, and reliance on clergy
  
- Strong task group volunteers
- Strong financial supporters



# CARROLLTON

## Population Segments with Kids

- **Singles and Starters** - Young singles starting out and some starter families living a city lifestyle
- **Suburban Style** - Upscale, middle-aged couples with school-aged children living active family lifestyles in outlying suburbs



# CARROLLTON

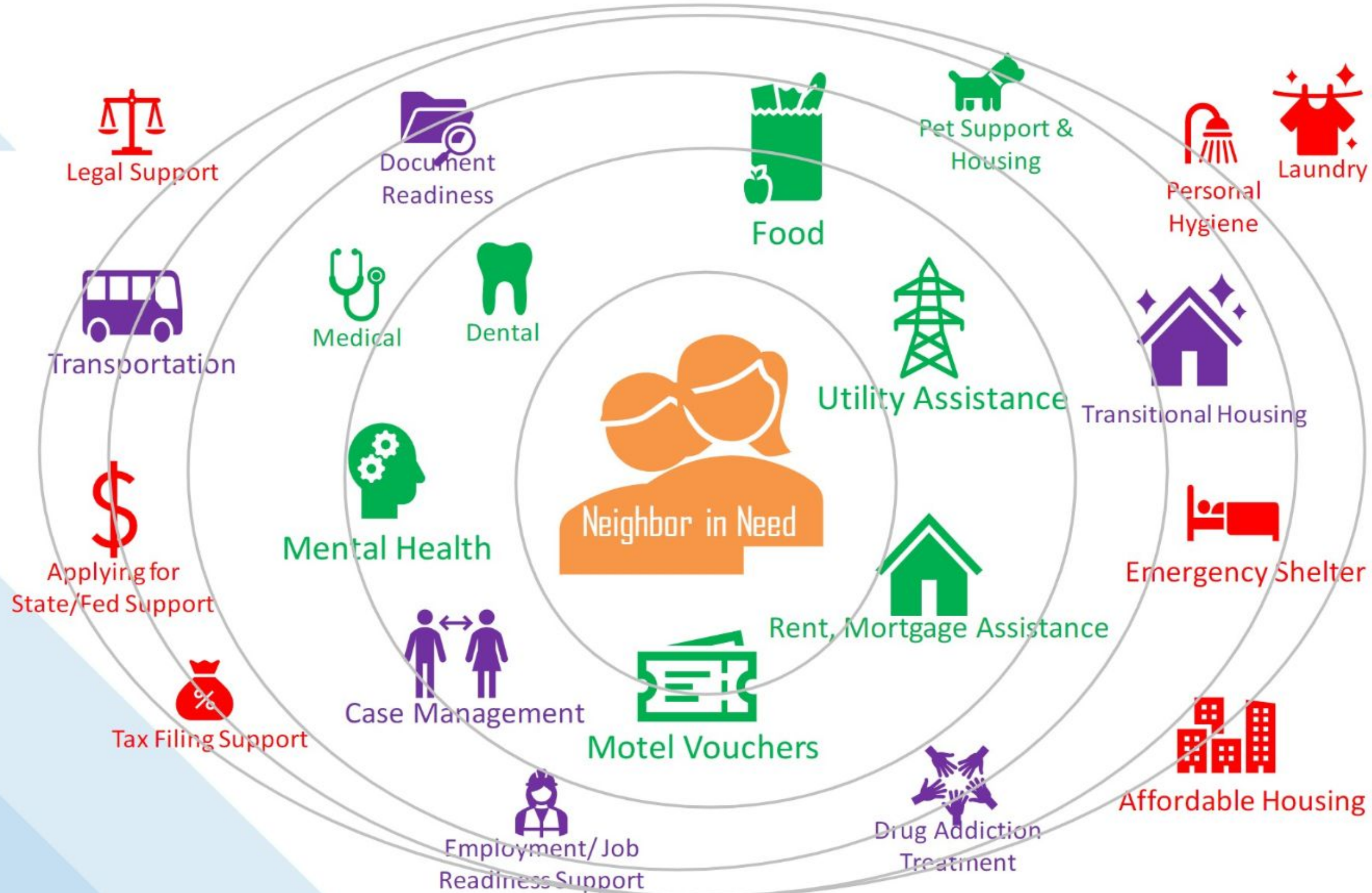
## Population Segments w/o Kids at Home

- **Pastoral Pride** - Eclectic mix of lower-middle class consumers who settle in country and small town areas
- **Thriving Boomers** - Upper middle class baby boomer-age couples living comfortable lifestyles settled in suburban homes
- **Golden Year Guardians** - Retirees living in old homes, settled residences and communities
- **Autumn Years** - Established and mature couples living gratified lifestyles in older homes

# CARROLLTON

What are the biggest  
needs in our community?

# Expanding Resources



	Established Service Offerings
	Available but Limited
	Unavailable or Difficult to Obtain



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## Community Needs

### Established Support

- Food
- Medical
- Dental
- Utilities
- Rent
- Mental Health
- Hotel Vouchers
- Pets

### Limited Support

- Transitional Housing
- Drug Addiction
- Employment Support
- Case Management
- Document Readiness

### No Support/Difficult

- Laundry
- Personal Hygiene
- Emergency Shelter
- Affordable Housing
- Legal Support
- Applying for Federal or State Support
- Tax Filing

# CARROLLTON

## Community Needs

Fos



### Foster Care in Carroll County

- 187 children in care
- 10 foster homes
- 31 family preservation cases

Source: *West Georgia Community Foundation*

# CARROLLTON

What is taking place around us  
that should impact  
our future dreams as a church?





# TIME FOR DISCUSSION

What concerns  
you from the  
previous slides?

What inspires  
you from the  
previous  
slides?



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CENTER FOR  
HEALTHY CHURCHES

**THANK  
YOU FOR  
PARTICIPATING**

Our next Congregational  
Conversation is [January 21st](#)

We will be talking about our future,  
and the shape it might take. Please  
plan on taking part!