

Regional Snapshot:



2021 Results Overview

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2021 Highlights

Crime is top of mind in 2021...everywhere and for (almost) everyone

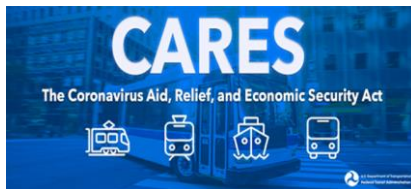
Economic Equity: Some positive signs, and propping (from stimulus), but pressures in some areas

Racial Equity: Is the window for change opening or closing? Results suggest either trend is possible

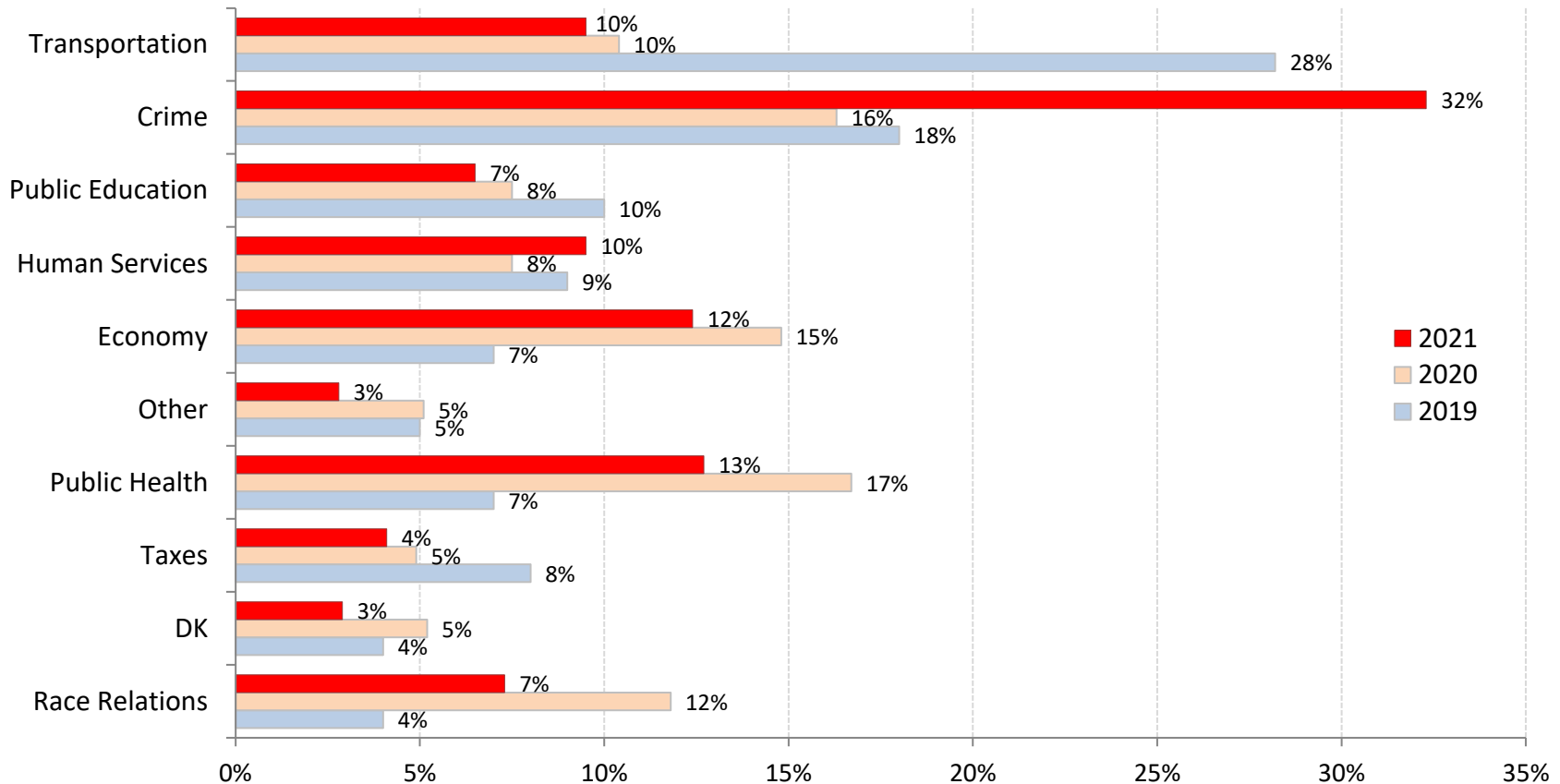
The pandemic's ongoing presence and its past effects play a part in clouding beliefs about the future

Genesis, Goals, Methods

- Origin was 2013 LINK Trip to Houston (now 9th year)
- **Goals:** Assess Perceptions, Gauge Opinions, Define Priorities
 - Demographic Crosstabs Critical
- **Method 2013-2019:** Random digit dial (RDD) sample survey of residents in the Atlanta Region
 - Added cell phone segment in 2015
 - 5,200 surveyed in 2019
- **New 2020-21 Method: Mixed-Mode**
 - 2021: RDD of 2,700 respondents (targeted); online panel of 2,100 (targeted)
- **2021 Focus:** Pandemic Impacts and Equity
- **2021 Sponsors:**

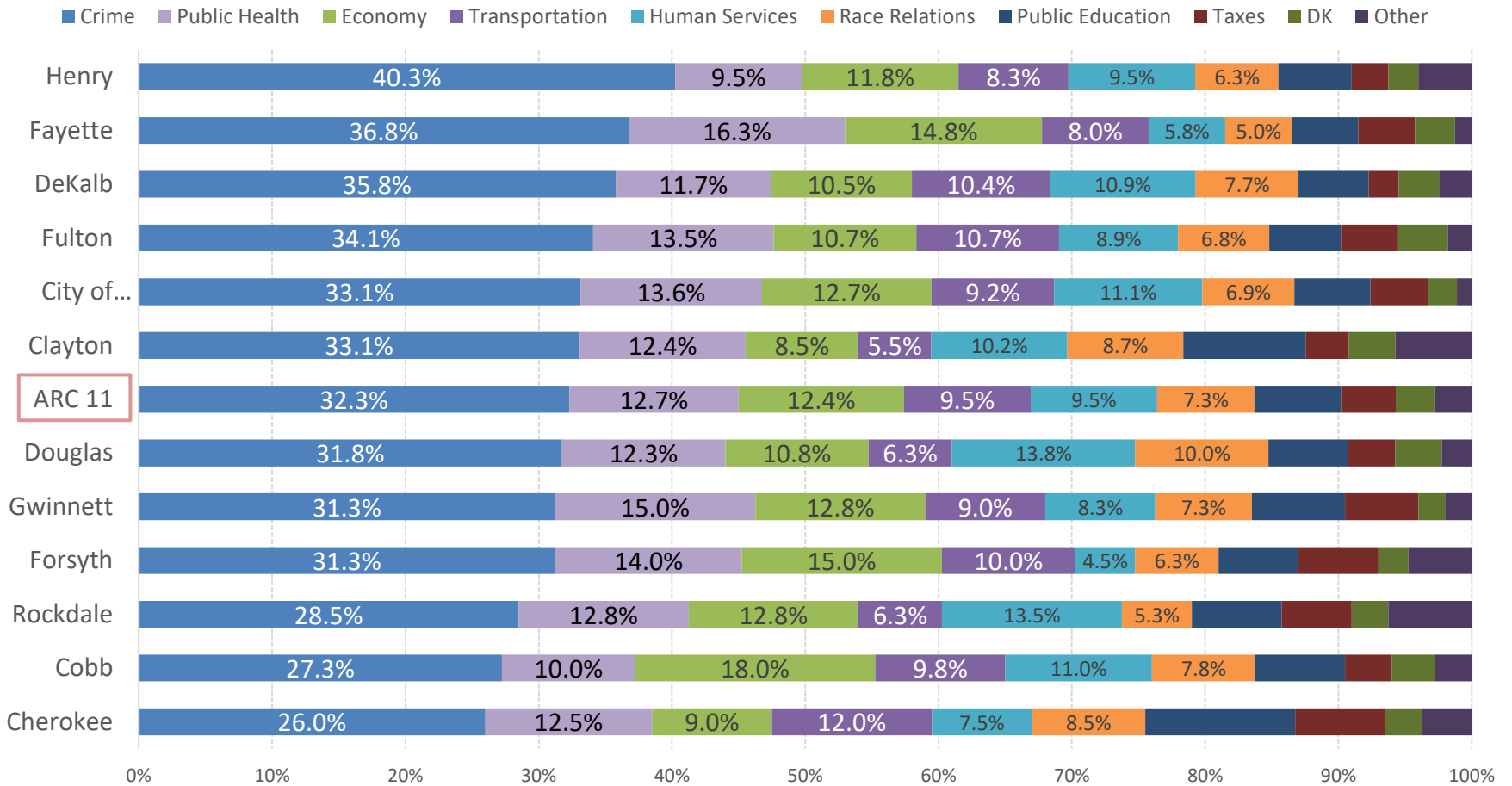


Our Perceived Biggest Problem Changed



Our biggest story is a change in perception about our biggest problem. With rare exceptions, transportation has been Metro Atlantans #1 concern since the outset of the survey. Above, we can see that the unprecedented times we live in have shifted that. Crime took position #1 by an unusually wide margin. In 2020, public health barely edged out crime for the #1 position.

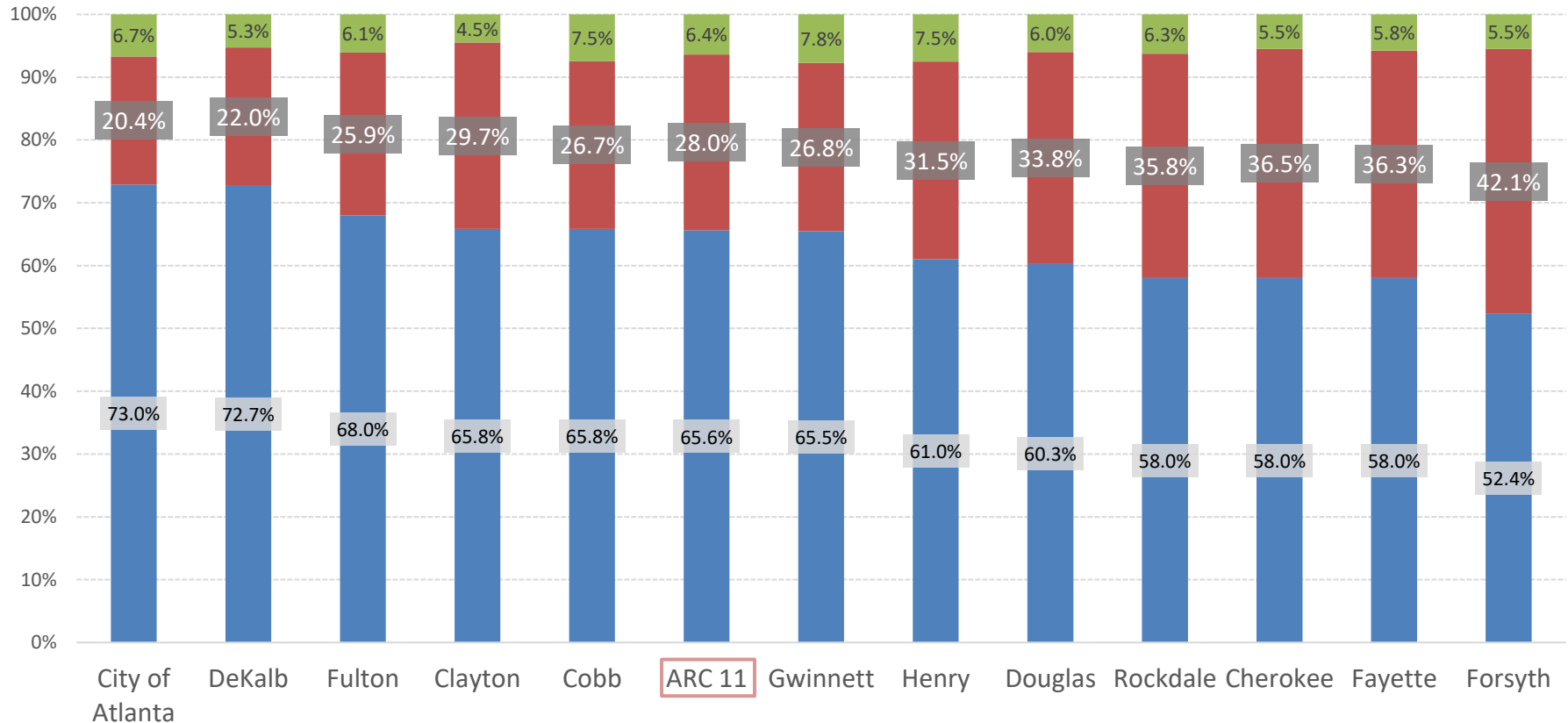
The Biggest Problem? 2021 by Area



Above, we are looking at county level variation in responses, ordered from highest to lowest share of area responses that perceived crime as the biggest problem. **While crime is the #1 response in all counties, the shares do vary widely.**

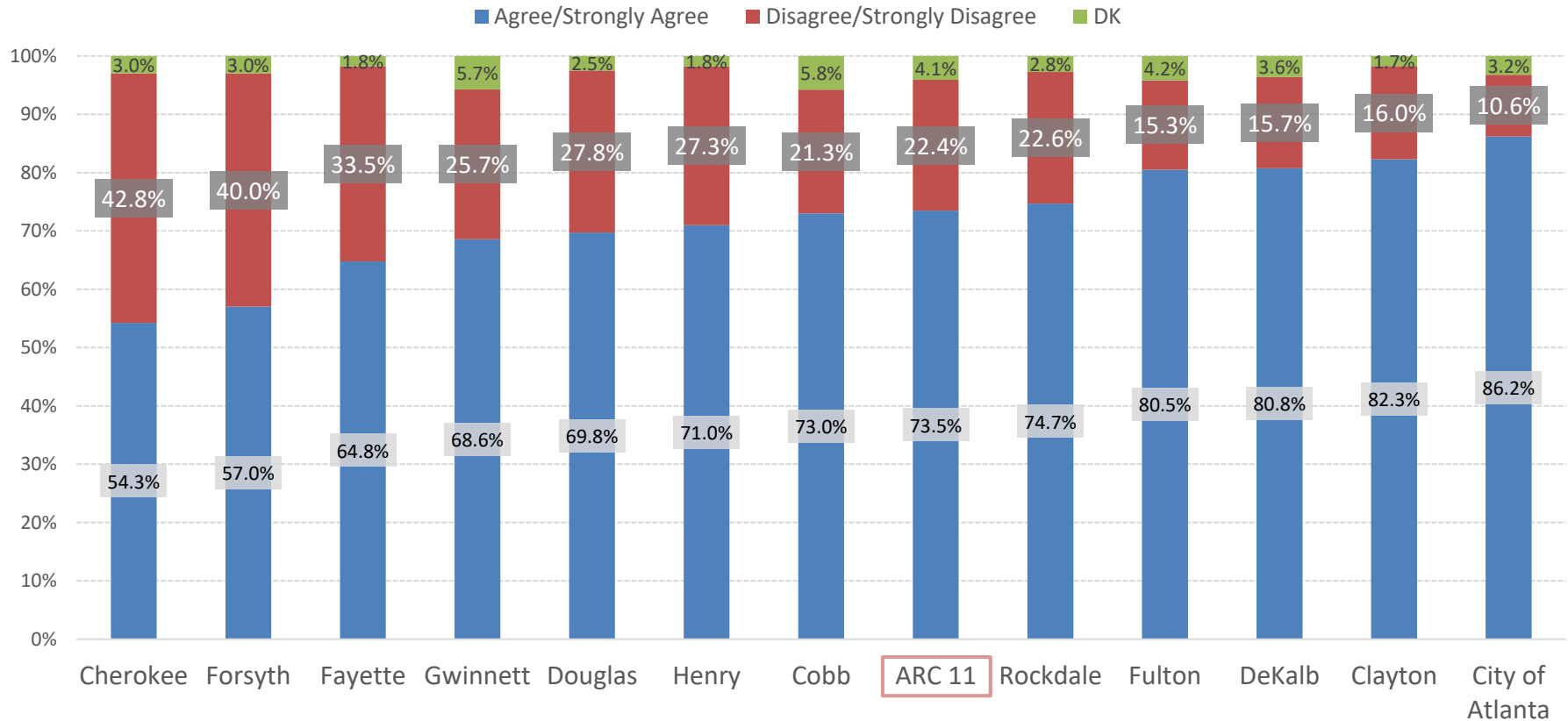
“High levels of income inequality have a negative impact on the economy”: 2021 by Area

■ Agree/Strongly Agree ■ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree ■ DK



The 2021 survey sought to better understand resident perceptions about the economy and about different options to address economic equity. Here, we can see county-level variation in belief that income inequality has a negative effect on the economy.

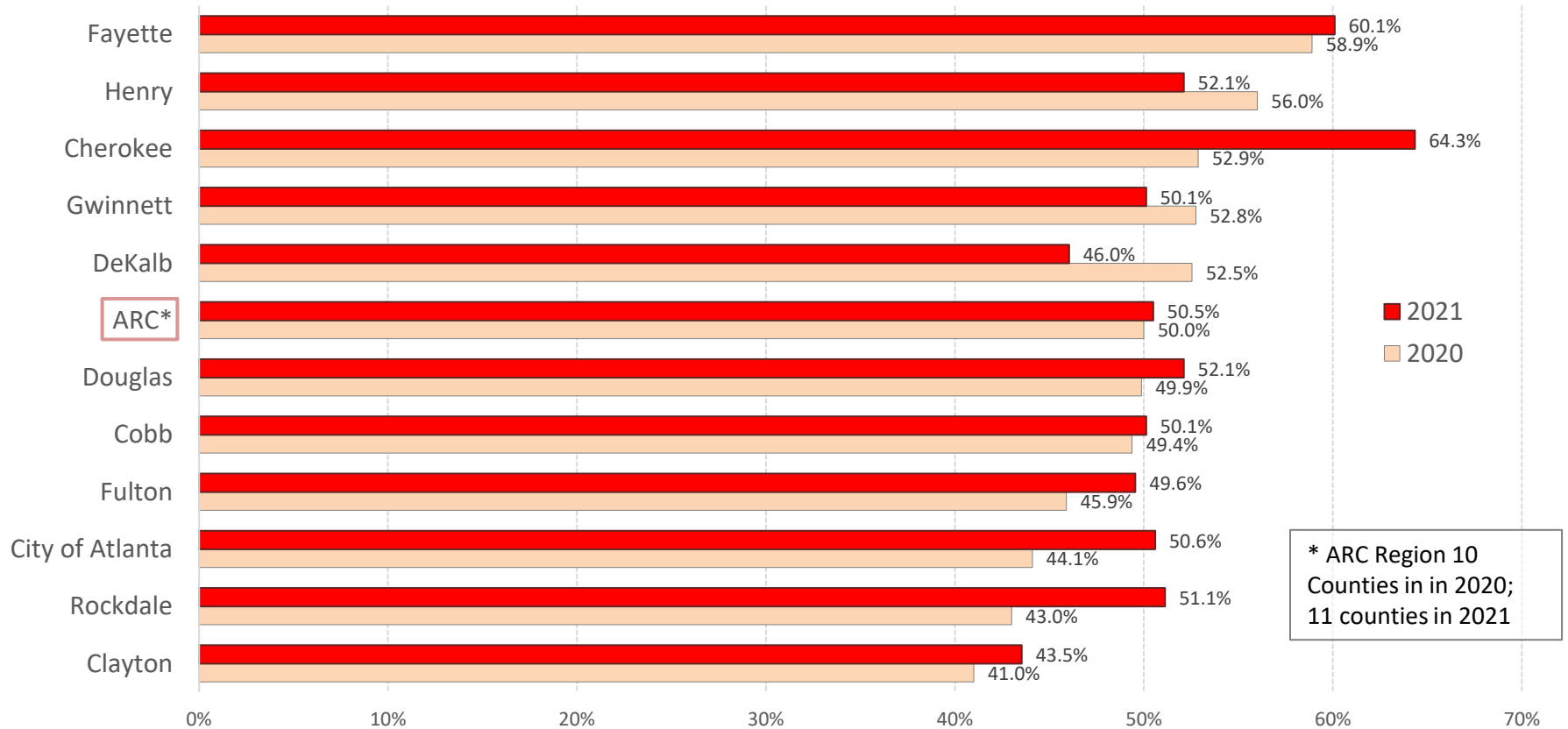
“Increasing the minimum wage would be good for the local economy”: 2021 by Area



This chart is arranged by agreement with the belief that increasing the minimum wage would help Atlanta’s economy. We can see that a majority of respondents in all counties agree, ranging from 54 percent in Cherokee County to 86 percent in the City of Atlanta. Three in four across the region agree.

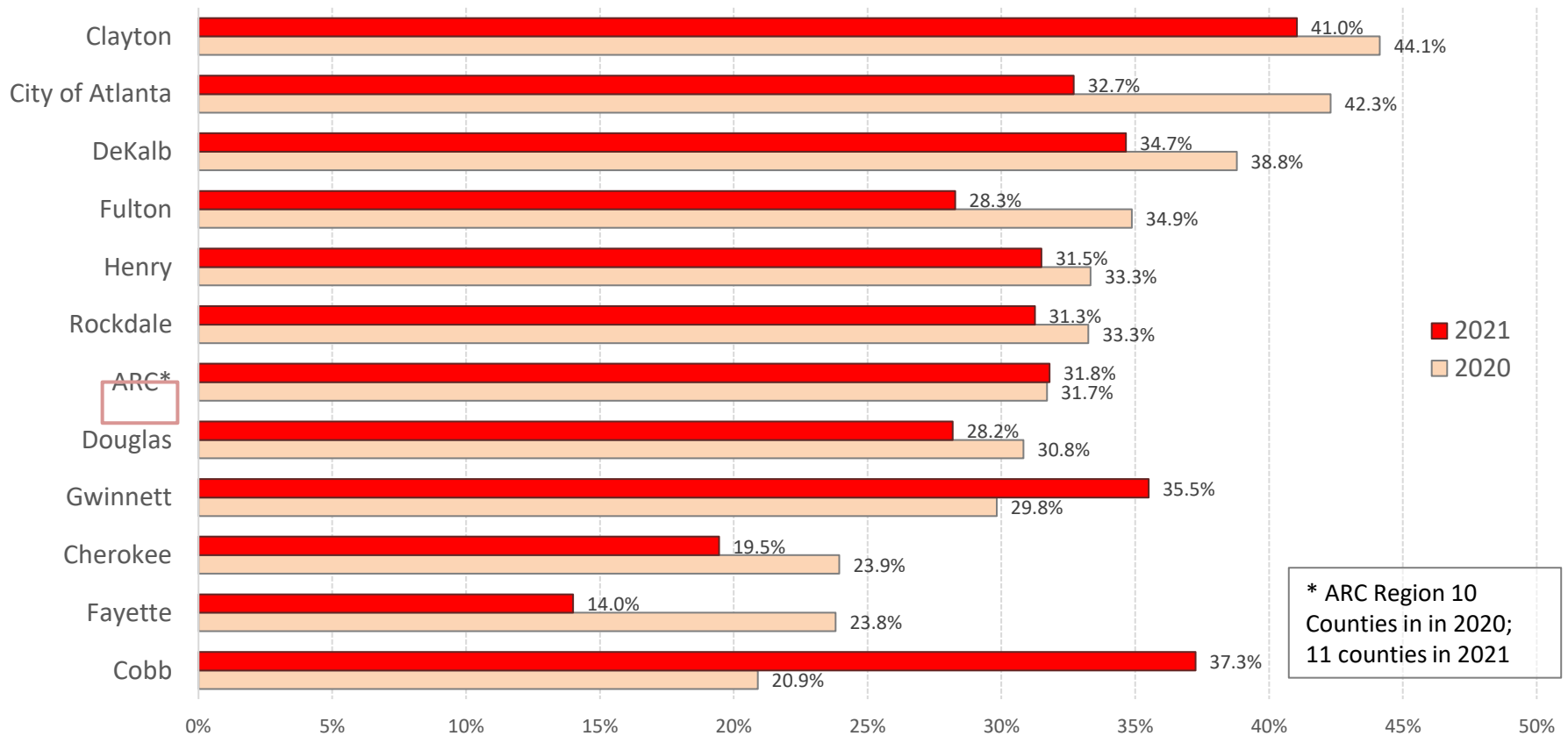


Could Pay for a \$400 Emergency with Cash/ Debit: Comparing 2021 to 2020



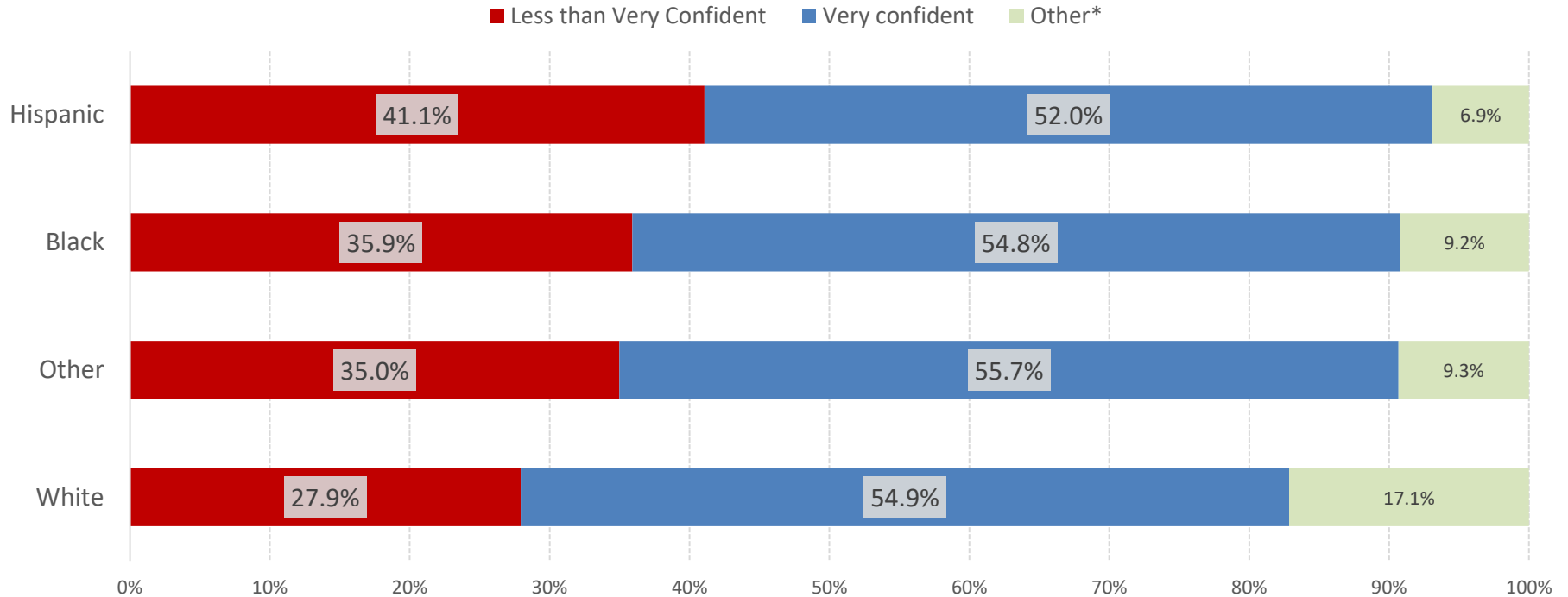
Economic stimulus and financial support were two of the biggest measures to help those suffering from pandemic-related job loss and other financial stressors. Here, we can get a guess about the effects locally, with more respondents able to absorb the cost of a \$400 expense in 2021 than 2020.

Share Less than Very Confident in Ability to Pay Next Mortgage or Rent Payment: Comparing 2021 to 2020



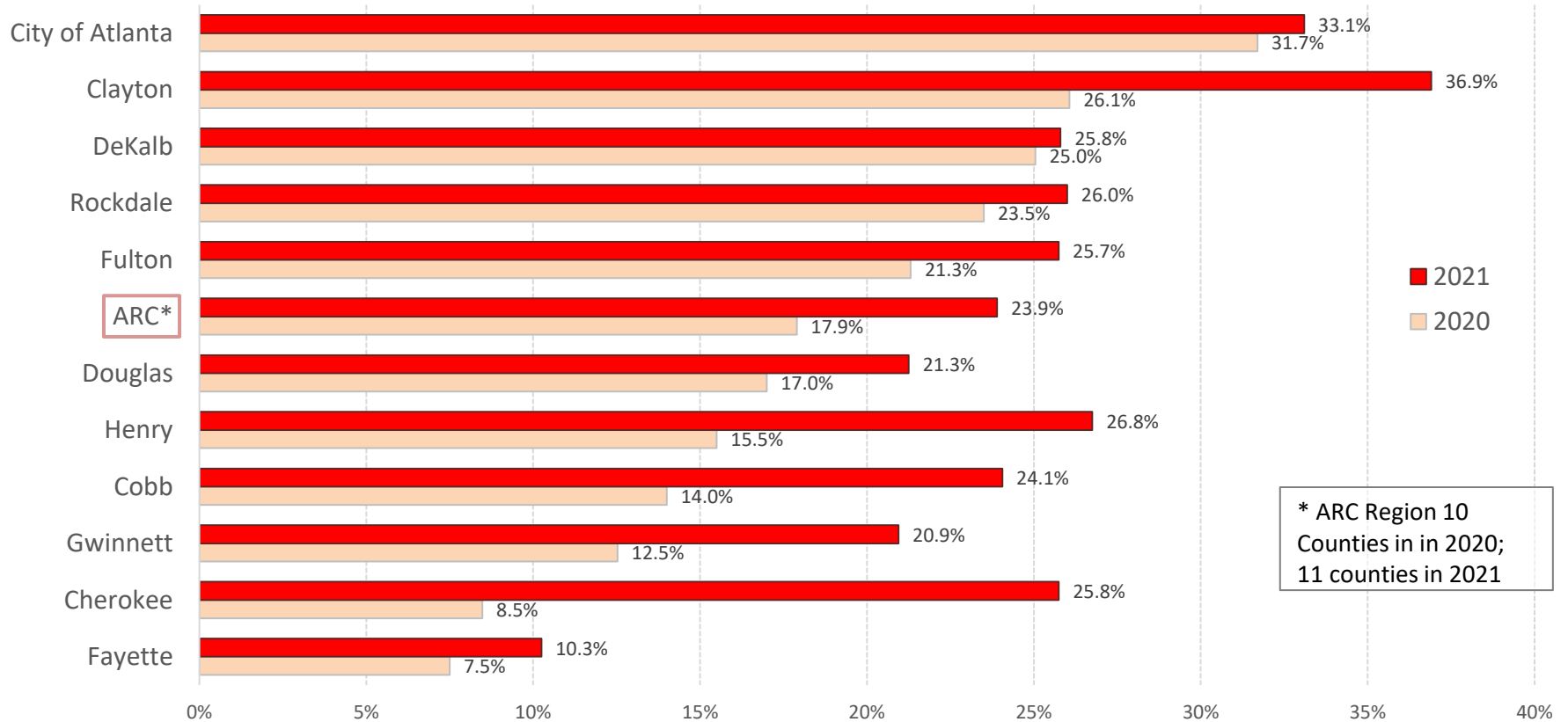
Across the region as a whole, even with mounting costs, about the same share of respondents in 2021 are worried about making payments as in 2020. Significant improvement is evident in higher-poverty areas like Clayton and DeKalb. However, it is notable that in the two of our larger counties (Gwinnett and Cobb) housing payment stress increased from 2020 to 2021.

Confidence in Ability to Pay Mortgage or Rent: 2021 by Race/Ethnicity



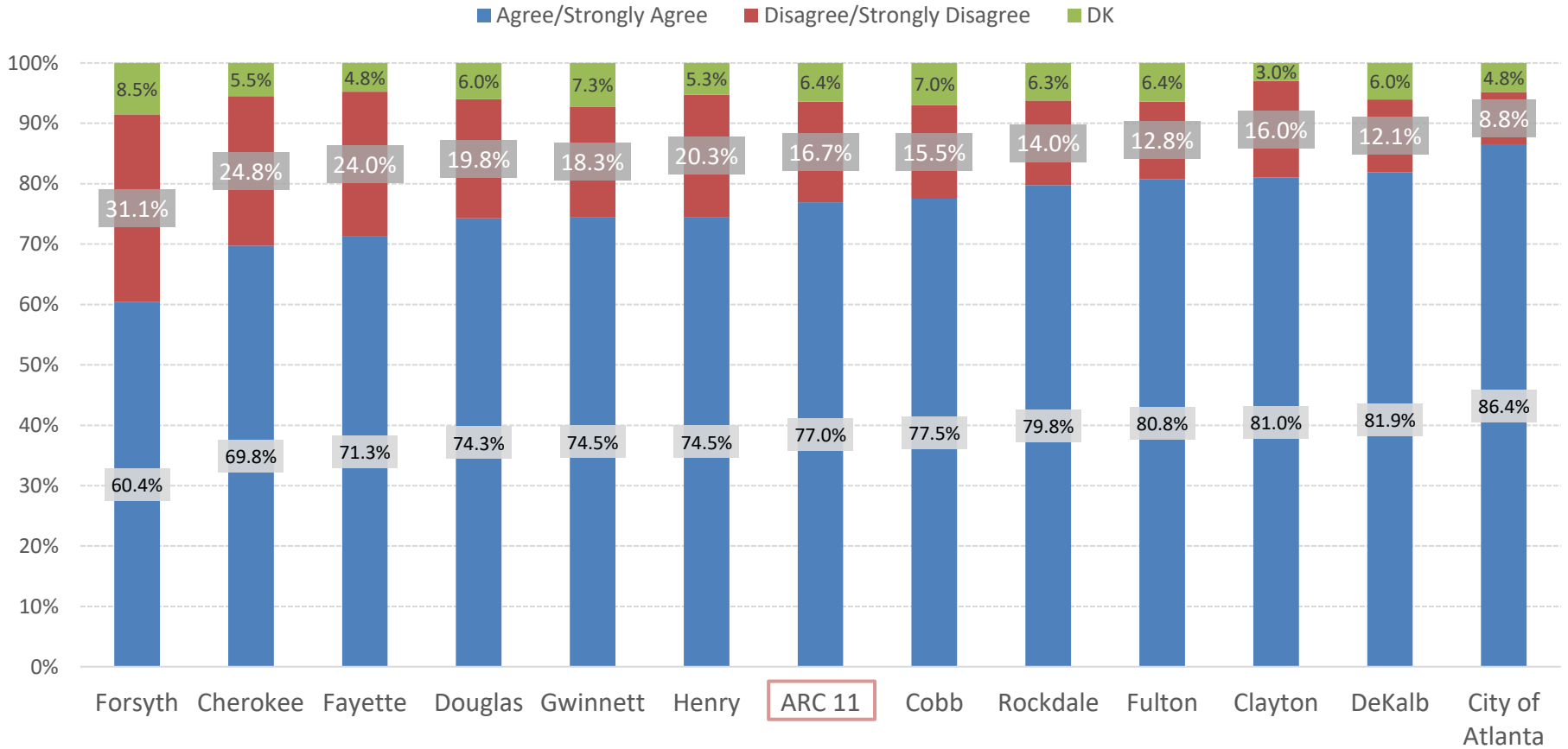
Here we can see differences in how confident respondents of different races and ethnicities are in handling their housing costs, with Hispanic respondents feeling most concerned about their ability to afford housing.

Received Food from a Food Bank: Comparing 2020 and 2021 by Area



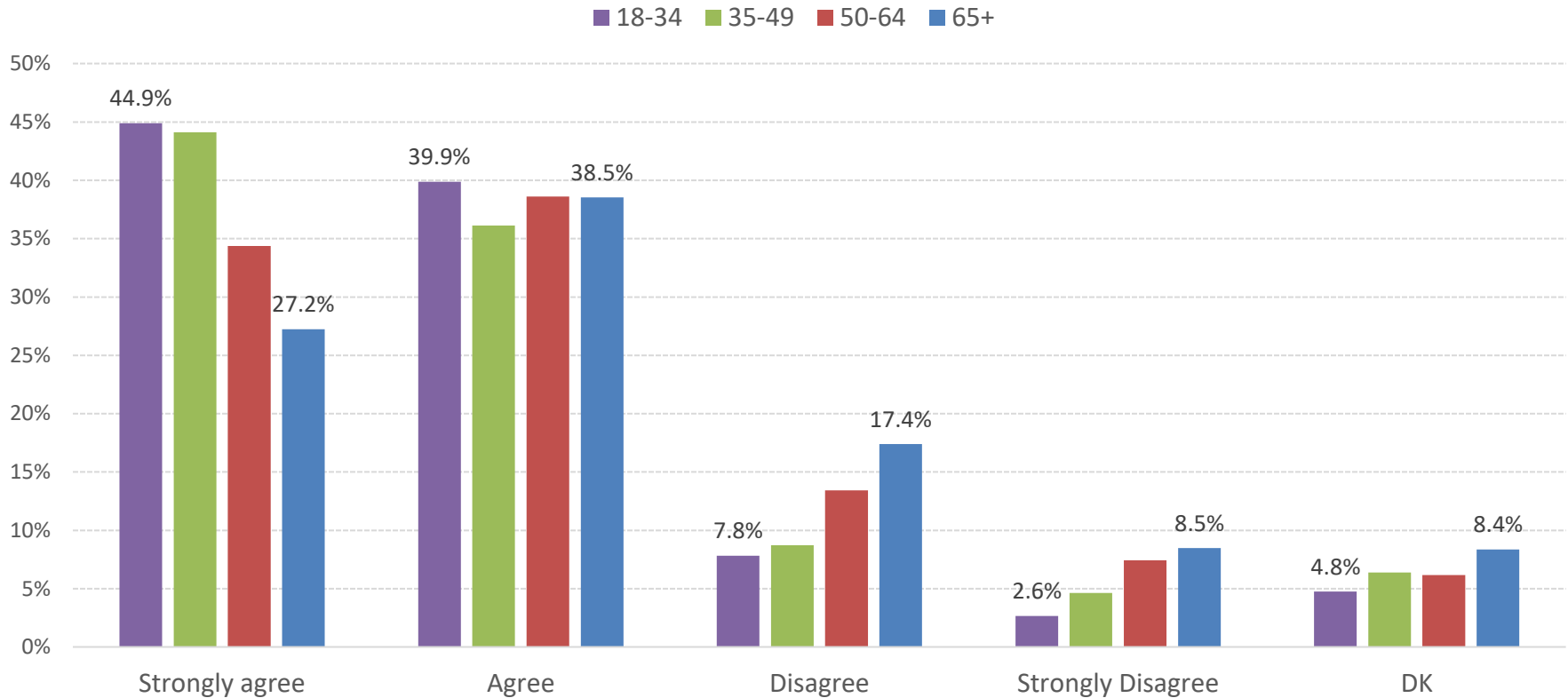
Respondents were far more likely to have turned to a food bank for assistance in 2021 than 2020, with the majority of geographies seeing around a fifth to a quarter of all respondents needing this service in 2021. This is another area where the stimulus checks in 2020 may have made a direct impact in increasing the ability of households to pay for food.

“Ensuring racial equity is essential to maximizing economic growth in our region”: 2021 by Area



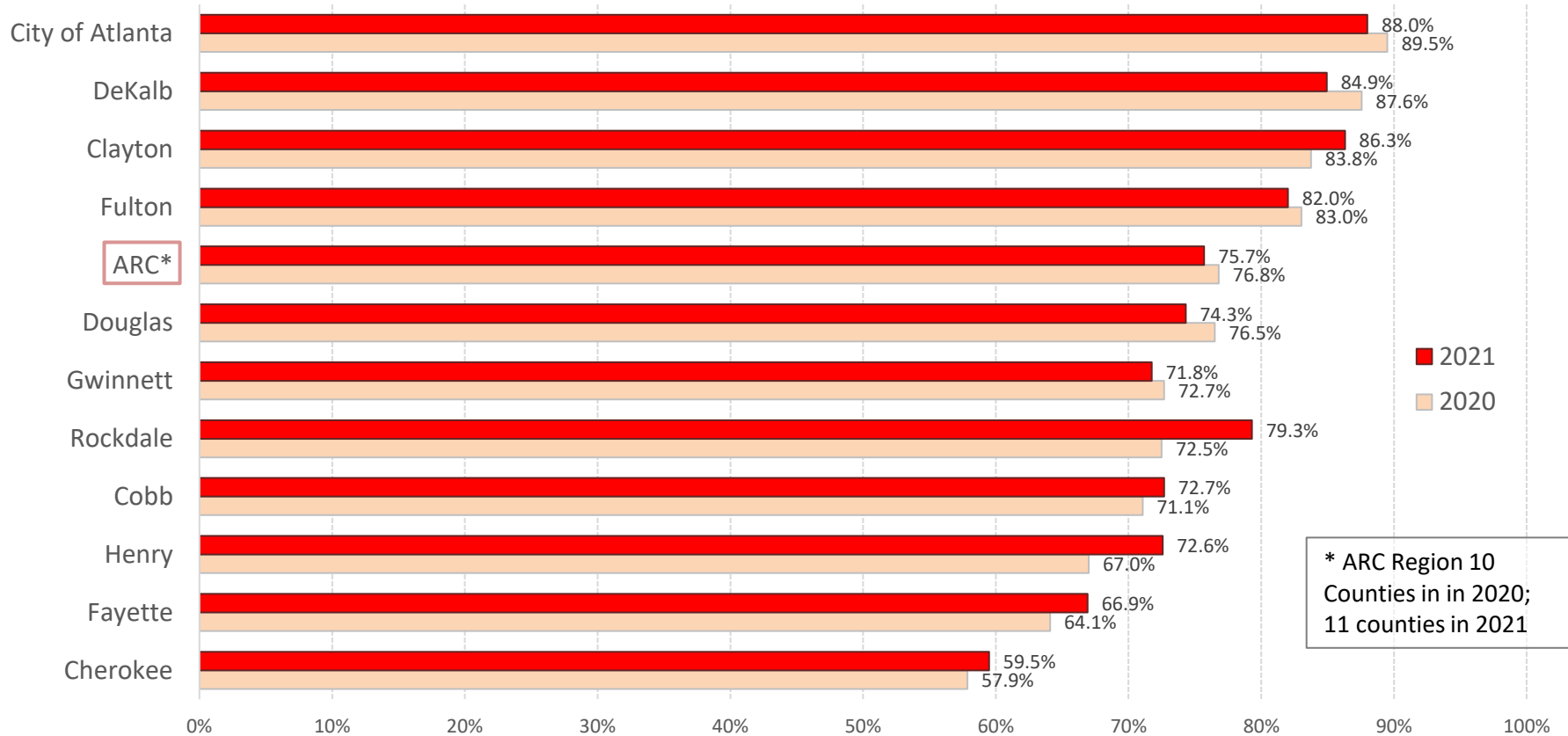
The 2021 survey also sought to understand beliefs about race relations and equity in the metro area. Above, geographies are arranged from lowest to highest shares of residents who responded in the affirmative to the idea that racial equity is an essential element of economic vitality.

“Ensuring racial equity is essential to maximizing economic growth in our region”: 2021 by Age Group



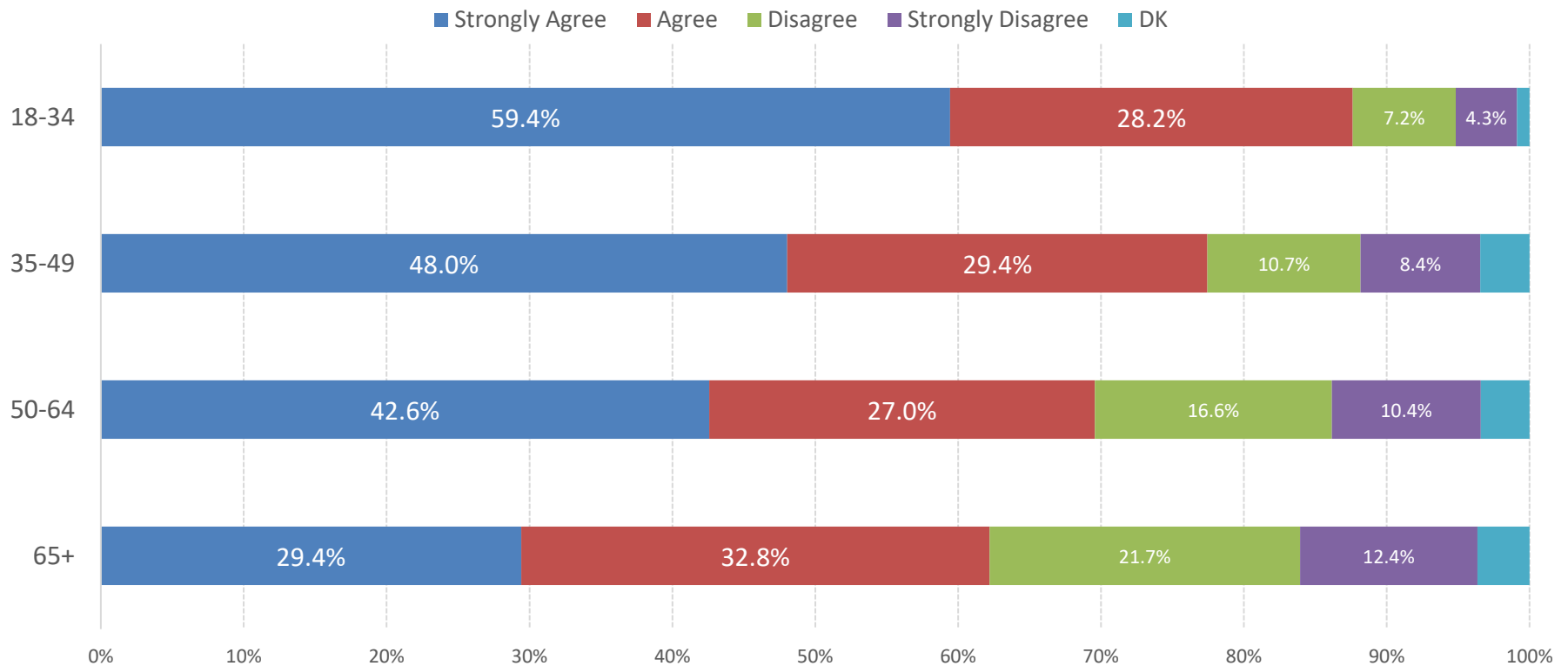
Here, we are looking at the same question and considering responses by age of the respondent. More respondents in every age group agreed with the statement than disagreed, though the rates of "strongly agree" varied significantly by age—decreasing the older the cohort.

“Discrimination against Black People is a Serious Problem”: Comparing 2020 and 2021



A majority of respondents in all our counties agreed that discrimination against Black people is a serious problem in both 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, these shares increased in half of ARC’s member counties between 2020 and 2021.

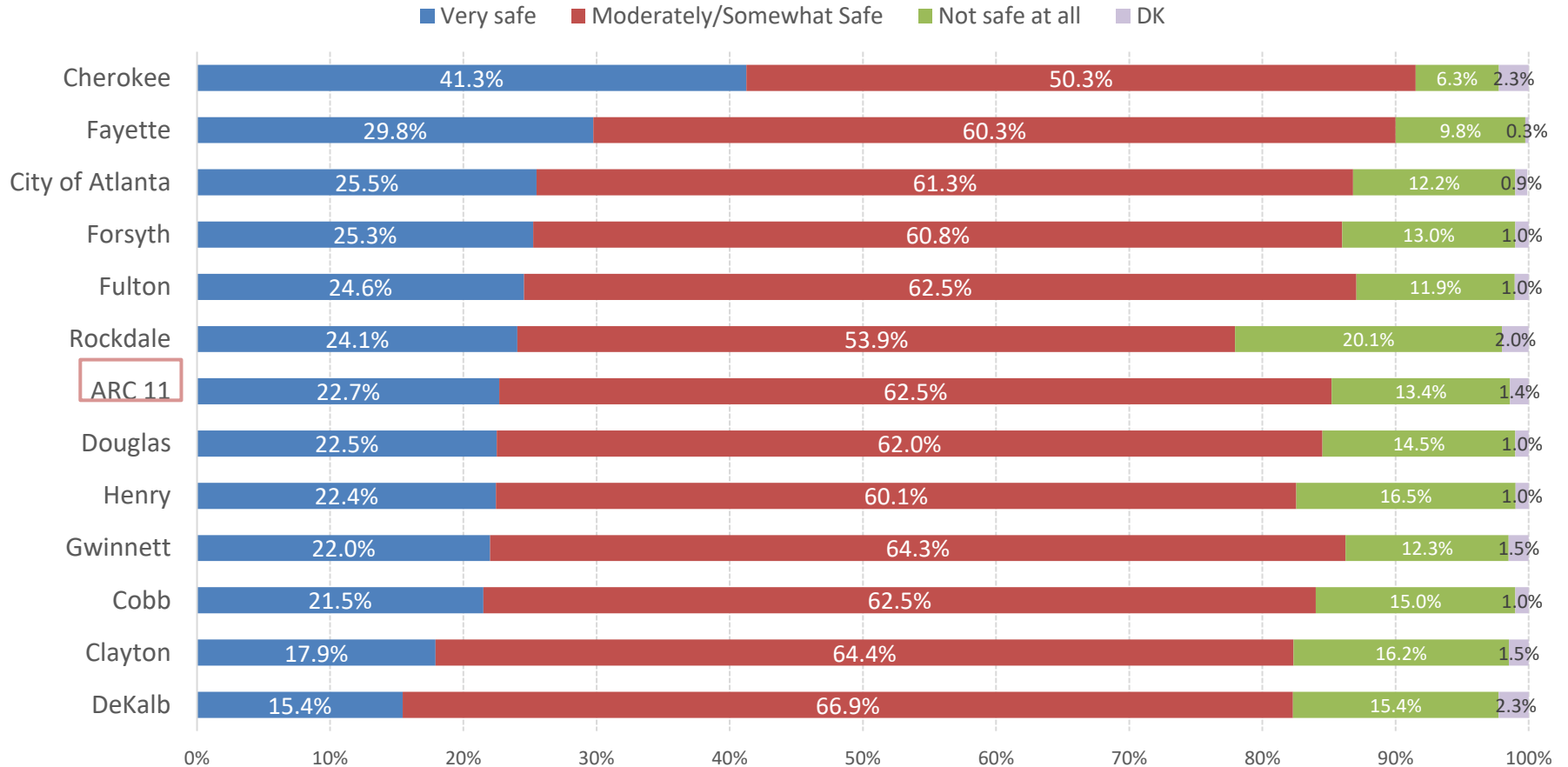
“Discrimination against Black People is a Serious Problem”: 2021 by Age Group



This chart shows that the likelihood of saying that discrimination against Blacks is a serious problem varies significantly by age. While the majority of respondents in all age groups say it is a serious problem, the highest rate of those who strongly agree are in the 18 to 34 age range.

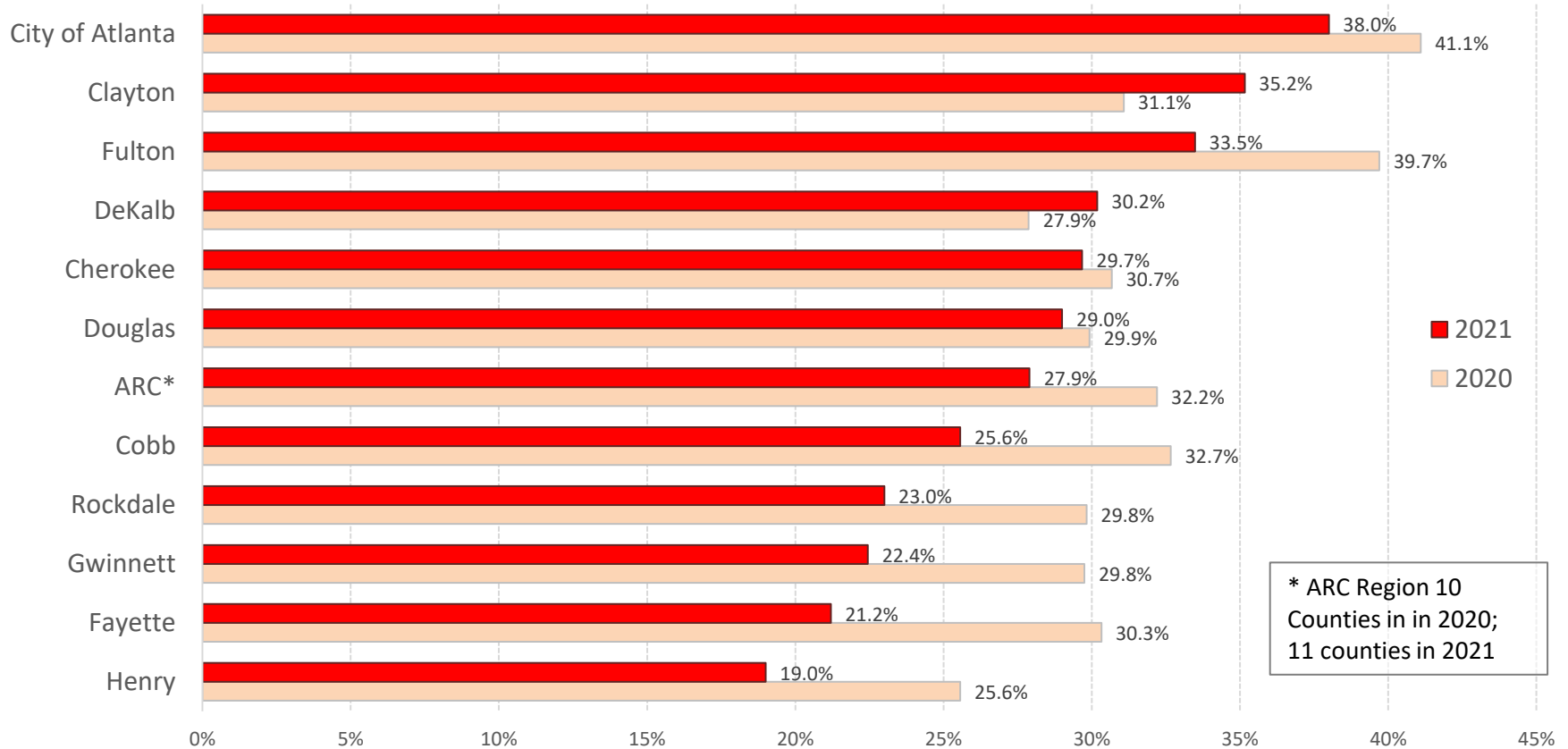
“How safe does respondent feel resuming normal activities as community recovers from COVID-19?”

2021 by Area



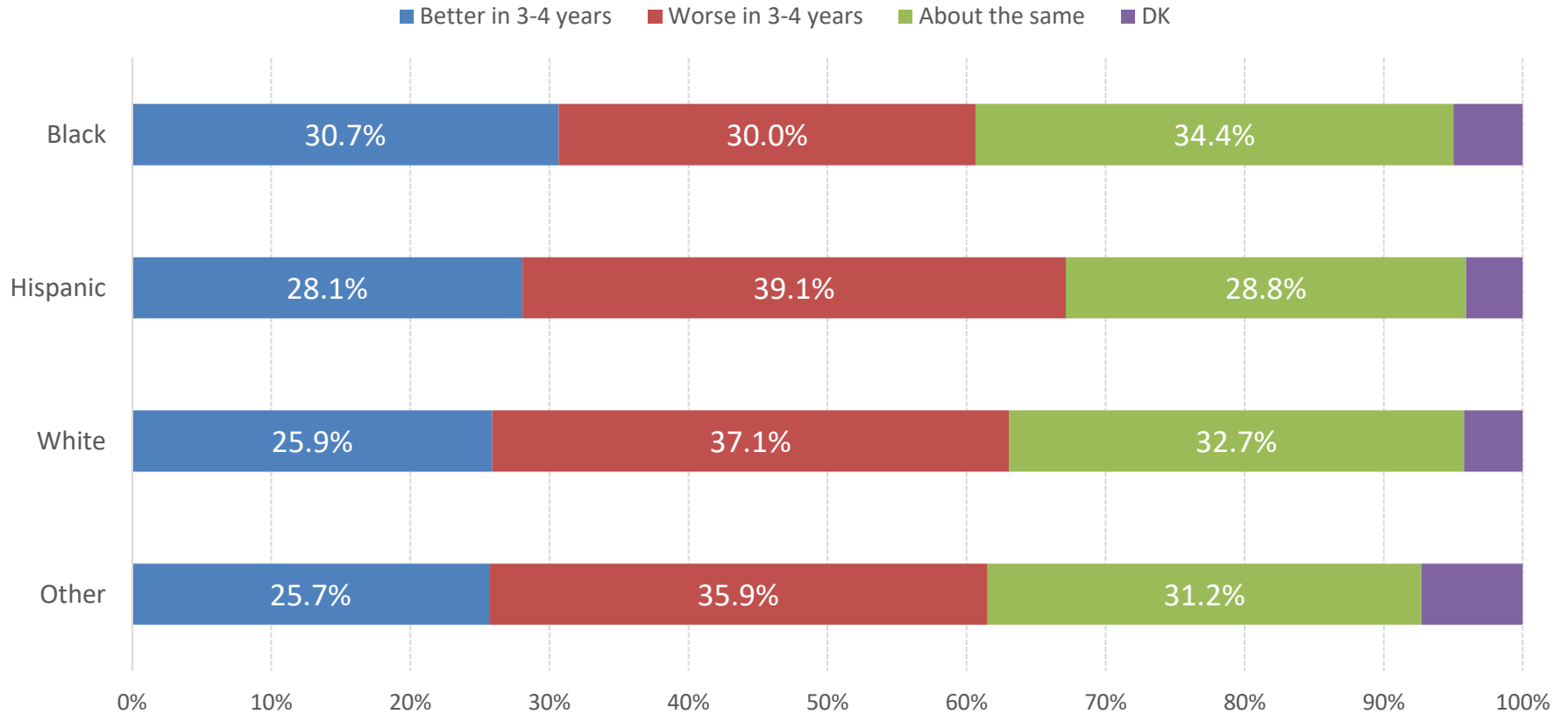
When it comes to getting back to normal, it’s safe to say that few respondents are feeling *very* safe. On a better note, however, a vast majority of respondents in all geographies feel somewhat or very safe.

Looking Ahead 3-4 Years... “Better?”: Comparing 2021 and 2020



While people might be feeling better about COVID, the same can't be said about the future of the area overall. Here, we can see that in most geographies, there was a decrease this year in shares of respondents who are feeling that things will be better short-term. Only in Clayton and DeKalb did a higher share feel more optimistic about short-term prospects this year than last year.

Looking Ahead 3-4 Years: 2021 by Race



Although responses didn't vary dramatically by race, the chart above does reveal interesting differences, with higher shares of Hispanic and White respondents believing things will be worse. Black respondents are most likely to say things will be about the same or better.



The highlights and more complete analysis: The Atlanta Regional Commission site has a [Metro Atlanta Speaks page](#) with overviews, slide decks, the question set, and a downloadable report.

POSTED IN: ATLANTA REGION PLANS & REPORTS

Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey Offers a Snapshot of Region's Top Concerns

The data:

Our 33N research blog has a [dashboard](#) with questions and responses dating to 2016.



Data stories:

The 33N blog has a [page](#) devoted to analysis of Metro Atlanta Speaks results.

