



## Wealthy Atlanta Community Seeks to Break Away and Form Its Own City — and Police Dept.

Amid a surge in crime in cities all across America — intricately connected to the growing anti-police movement and calls to defund police departments — a wealthy section of Atlanta has had enough. The community known as Buckhead is moving to secede from Atlanta, form its own municipality, and hire and fund its own police department.

The anti-police sentiment of the past few years — and particularly over the last year — has predictably led to a major spike in crime, especially *violent* crime. That is true almost everywhere in the nation, but more so in larger cities — particularly those with a large black population. The reasons for this have nothing to do with skin color and everything to do with the rabid, poisonous anti-police rhetoric of BLM and other Leftist groups. That anti-police rhetoric has led to lawless behavior. Ideas, it turns out, have consequences.

Atlanta — far from being an exception — is a perfect example of this principle. Increased anti-police sentiment has created a situation where riots and other violent criminal activity hide behind the facade of “protest.” This has, in turn, created a situation where the safety of police officers is at even greater risk than usual. The response — as in police departments of large cities across the nation — is that the men and women in blue have been calling it quits in droves. The Atlanta Police Department lost more than 200 officers in 2020, [according to Atlanta PD spokesman Steve Avery](#).

Avery said the turnover is “not out of line with what we are seeing with numerous departments across the nation today, due to the current climate surrounding policing in United States.” He added, “The reasons for the attrition are varied, we have some officers opting for retirement, some deciding to pursue other careers outside of policing entirely, as well as officers taking advantage of opportunities with other departments outside of Atlanta.”

Attrition is one side of the coin. The other side of that coin is lower-than-usual recruiting as a result of anti-police sentiment. As cops are routinely portrayed as the bad guys, fewer men and women are signing up for a job with low pay, lousy hours, and dangerous working conditions. As of this writing, Atlanta PD is short-staffed to the tune of 400 officers.

To continue the downward spiral, fewer police — whether because of defunding, low recruiting, or attrition — means more crime. Before the end of last year, Atlanta was already experiencing the highest



Buckhead, seen through a broken fence (Sean Davis/iStock/Getty Images Plus)



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on June 12, 2021

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murder rates the city has seen in 30 years. To put that into perspective, the last time Atlanta saw this many murders, the crack epidemic — with all its accompanying violence — was in full swing.

Atlanta saw 157 murders in 2020. For perspective, there were 88 in 2018 and 99 in 2019. So far, 2021 is on track to be worse still, with close to 200 murders. In 2020, nearly 80 percent of the murder victims were black men — the vast majority of them killed by other black men in black neighborhoods. In the area known as “Zone 5” by Atlanta PD — an area which covers most of Downtown and Midtown — murders are up 317 percent since 2019.

Buckhead is six and a half miles from downtown. It is also worlds apart. Easily Atlanta’s most affluent section, Buckhead has enjoyed a low crime rate — especially where violent crime is concerned. But that has been shifting over recent years. Buckhead has seen increased crime as Atlanta PD is stretched thin between being understaffed and dealing with increased crime across the city.

Just recently, Buckhead saw a deadly shooting at the Intercontinental Hotel — an upscale resort billed as “Atlanta’s Landmark of Southern Luxury.” On June 6, [police responded to a report of a shooting](#) at the resort. 29-year-old Marquise Daniel was arrested and charged with involuntary manslaughter in the death of his unnamed 17-year-old brother.

The day before that deadly shooting, [Gaelen Kahrlee Newsom, 22, went on a drive-by shooting spree in Buckhead](#). He shot one jogger three times, fired at two other joggers, and rammed his car into another jogger. Fortunately, no one was killed, but it wasn’t for a lack of trying on the part of Newsom.

As CBS channel 46 in Atlanta reported, [these episodes are part of a growing trend of rising violent crime in Buckhead](#), including robberies, car-jackings, and murders. So, Buckhead — which began discussing independence from Atlanta back in 2008 — is pushing hard to become its own city.

This is not a novel idea; In 2005, neighboring Sandy Springs broke away from Atlanta and became its own city after a 30-year effort to do so finally paid off. Buckhead is tired of being tied to the politics, taxes, and crime of Atlanta. And the Buckhead City Committee — formed last year to explore and push for independence — [has raised more than \\$500,000](#) in donations to help lobby lawmakers to clear the legal path for the creation of Buckhead City.

According to the committee’s [website](#) (which still bears the original name “Buckhead Exploratory Committee), the process for becoming a city begins with a local group of residents deciding it wants to be a city. The next step is a bit of a hurdle: A state legislator must sponsor a bill to be passed by the General Assembly. That is a hurdle that has already been partially cleared. In April of 2021, Representative Todd Jones introduced the bill.

A recent fundraising event was a huge success and was attended by a number of state legislators, indicating that Buckhead may have a growing number of supporters in the General Assembly and may well raise sufficient funds to lobby for passage.

But there is also a two-year review process that must take place before the bill can come up for a vote.

In the meantime, the liberal media and Atlanta’s political establishment are pushing back with claims of racism and privilege. The rich, mostly white, community is [accused](#) of “crime fear that outpaces crime reality” in an area where “local crime rates are rising in key violent and property categories, but well below other areas of the city.” As if living in a crime-ridden city is some type of communal thing where everyone should bear their part of the violence and to not want to do so is somehow selfish.



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Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has ignored the correlation between an understaffed, underfunded police department and rising crime rates, calling the violent crime uptick a “Covid crime wave.”

And an Atlanta establishment organization has formed to fight for keeping Buckhead — and its property taxes — in the grip of Atlanta. Linda Klein and Edward Lindsey, co-chairs of the Committee for a United Atlanta, [told CNN](#), “We must reform city hall and elect candidates this fall who will listen, lead and be accountable,” adding, “Even attempting to divide Atlanta will damage our business reputation and cause long-term economic damage and a diminished tax base.” As CNN went on to lament:

Atlanta could see crushing economic damage if Buckhead broke free, some community members say. According to an April analysis by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Buckhead City would take nearly 20% of Atlanta’s population and remove more than 40% of the assessed value of its property.

“The impact on the City of Atlanta’s finances would be devastating, including on its ability to satisfy nearly \$3 billion of existing liabilities and unfunded pension obligations,” Jim Durrett, president and CEO of The Buckhead Coalition, also against the split, wrote in an op-ed in the Journal-Constitution last month. “The loss of the city’s excellent bond rating would impair its ability to fund infrastructure and city services in the future.”

But this more than a little like an abusive husband whining that his abused wife should not file for divorce because he is too lazy to work and her income pays the bills. And Bill White — chairman and CEO of the Buckhead City Committee — [told CNN](#), “We filed for divorce and our divorce is final,” adding, “We’re forming our own city, we’re establishing our own police force and we will eradicate crime.”

There is hope that the success of Buckhead could lead other communities across the nation to file for divorce from their abusive-husband cities, declare their own independence from the chaos, form their own police departments, and allow their citizens to live safer, more prosperous lives with greater freedom and a hope for a brighter future.



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