



# REGIONAL REVIEW NOTIFICATION

Atlanta Regional Commission • 229 Peachtree Street NE | Suite 100 | Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • ph: 404.463.3100 fax: 404.463.3205 • atlantaregional.org

**DATE:** June 28, 2021

**ARC REVIEW CODE:** P2106281

**TO:** Mayor Patti Garrett, City of Decatur  
**ATTN TO:** Angela Threadgill, Director, Planning and Economic Development  
**FROM:** Douglas R. Hooker, Executive Director, ARC

Digital signature  
Original on file

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has received the following proposal and is initiating a regional review to seek comments from potentially impacted jurisdictions and agencies. The ARC requests your comments related to the proposal not addressed by the Commission's regional plans and policies.

**Name of Proposal:** 2021 City of Decatur Comp Plan Update

**Review Type:** Local Comprehensive Plan

**Description:** A regional review of the draft 2021 City of Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Submitting Local Government:** City of Decatur

**Action Under Consideration:** Approval

**Date Opened:** June 28, 2021

**Deadline for Comments:** July 19, 2021

**Earliest the Regional Review can be Completed:** Upon approval by Georgia DCA

## THE FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES ARE RECEIVING NOTICE OF THIS REVIEW:

ARC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
ARC RESEARCH & ANALYTICS  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
MARTA  
CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES

ARC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS & MOBILITY  
ARC AGING & HEALTH RESOURCES  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DEKALB COUNTY

ARC NATURAL RESOURCES  
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
GRTA/SRTA  
CITY OF ATLANTA

**Attached is information concerning this review.**

If you have any questions regarding this review, please contact Greg Giuffrida at [ggiuffrida@atlantaregional.org](mailto:ggiuffrida@atlantaregional.org) or 470-378-1531. If ARC staff does not receive comments from you on or before **Monday, July 19, 2021**, we will assume that your agency has no comments and will close the review. Comments must be emailed. The ARC review website is located at <http://www.atlantaregional.org/land-use/planreviews>.

**NOTICE OF LOCAL PLAN SUBMITTAL AND HEARING/COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

<b>Submitting Local Government:</b>	City of Decatur	<b>Date Received:</b>	June 28, 2021			
<b>Local Contact:</b>	Angela Threadgill, Director, Planning and Economic Development, City of Decatur					
<b>Phone:</b>	404-371-8386	<b>E-Mail:</b>	angela.threadgill@decaturga.com			
<b>Fax:</b>		<b>Website:</b>	www.decaturga.com/planning			
<b>Street</b>	509 McDonough St. PO Box 220	<b>City State, Zip:</b>	Decatur, GA 30031			
<b>Department of Community Affairs Review Required</b>						
<b>Review Title:</b>	2021 City of Decatur Comp Plan Update					
<b>Description:</b>	A regional review of the draft 2021 City of Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update.  Document can be viewed on the ARC website at: <a href="http://www.atlantaregional.org/landuse">http://www.atlantaregional.org/landuse</a> Under Plan Review, search for the City of Decatur.					
<b>The submitted documents are available for review at ARC and the local government.</b>						
<b>Reviewing Regional Commission:</b>						
Atlanta Regional Commission 229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 100 Atlanta, GA 30303  Phone 404-463-3100						
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Greg Giuffrida, Plan Reviews Program Manager					
<b>E-Mail</b>	<a href="mailto:ggiuffrida@atlantaregional.org">ggiuffrida@atlantaregional.org</a>					

**DATE:** June 28, 2021

**TO:** ARC Managers

**Community Development:** Giuffrida, Greg

**Transportation Access & Mobility:** Mangham, Marquitrice

**Research & Analytics:** Skinner, Jim

**Review Type:** Local Comprehensive Plan

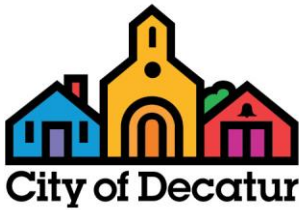
**Submitting Local Government:** City of Decatur

**Date Opened:** June 28, 2021

**Deadline for Comments:** July 19, 2021

- 1) ☐ Proposal is CONSISTENT with the following regional development guide listed in the comment section.
- 2) ☐ While neither specifically consistent nor inconsistent, the proposal relates to the following regional development guide listed in the comment section.
- 3) ☐ While neither specifically consistent nor inconsistent, the proposal relates to the following regional development guide listed in the comment section.
- 4) ☐ The proposal is INCONSISTENT with the following regional development guide listed in the comment section.
- 5) ☐ The proposal does NOT relate to any development guide for which this division is responsible.
- 6) ☐ Staff wishes to confer with the applicant for the reasons listed in the comment section.

[illegible]



509 North McDonough Street  
P.O. Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031  
404-370-4100 ■ Fax 404-378-2678  
info@decaturga.com ■ www.decaturga.com

June 22, 2021

Atlanta Regional Commission  
229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 100  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

**RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal**

The City of Decatur has completed an update of its comprehensive plan as part of the initial draft of the Decatur Strategic Plan, which accompanies this letter for review by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

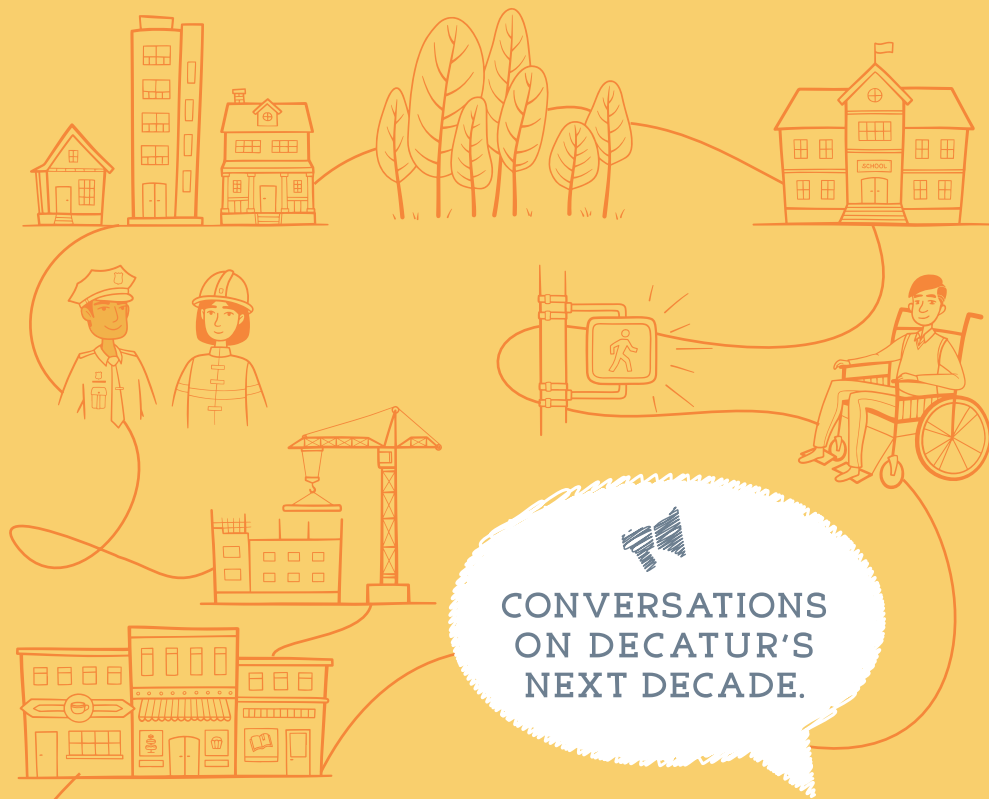
I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Angela Threadgill, Planning and Economic Development Director, at [angela.threadgill@decaturga.com](mailto:angela.threadgill@decaturga.com) or 678-553-6575.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Garrett  
Mayor

Enclosures



CONVERSATIONS  
ON DECATUR'S  
NEXT DECADE.

# DESTINATION: 2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

**DRAFT | June 21, 2021**



# Acknowledgments

## Thanks for your support!

### **City of Decatur**

Patti Garrett, Mayor

Andrea Arnold, City Manager

Linda Harris, Assistant City Manager

David Junger, Assistant City Manager

Hugh Saxon, Deputy City Manager

Angela Threadgill, Planning & Economic  
Development Director

Rena Madison, Communications Manager

John Maximuk, Design, Environment &  
Construction Director

Ryan Sellers, Senior Planner

Ash Kumar, Operations Analyst

David Nifong, Lead for America Fellow

### **Decatur City Commission**

Tony Powers, Mayor Pro Tem; At-large  
Commissioner

Kelly Walsh, District 1

Lesa Mayer, District 2

George Dusenbury, District 1

### **Decatur Planning Commission**

Harold Buckley, Jr., Chair

Mike Travis, Vice Chair

Gregory Chilik

Rachel Cogburn

Joe Greco

Lori Leland-Kirk

Todd Ohlandt

### **Consultant Team**

Sarah McColley, TSW

Woody Giles, TSW

Scott Doyon, Placemakers

Ben Brown, Placemakers

Jen Price, Sycamore Consulting

Geoff Koski, KB Advisory Group

# Decatur Citizens

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To everyone who participated in the  
Roundtables, meetings, and online  
engagement: Thank you!



# Decatur Strategic Plan Comprehensive Plan, LCI Update

# 3PLA



Opening Night

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT | June 21, 2021

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# 3 Plans, 1 Process

## Meeting Each Plans' Requirements

Decatur has three citywide plans: the Strategic Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). Each of these plans is due for an update.

Rather than run three separate processes and develop three separate plans, the City embarked upon one streamlined process—Destination 2030—to create a single planning document that meets the objectives of all three plans.

The Destination 2030 public engagement process exceeded the requirements of all three plans. Here are some innovative ways the requirements were met:

- » The Engagement Squad and City staff team fulfilled the need for a traditional “Steering Committee” for all plans, and Mayor Patti Garrett served as the elected official. Angela Threadgill fulfilled the role of a representative of the Economic Development community.
- » The citizen-led Roundtables identified the Needs and Opportunities through group conversations with 800 participants. Citizen facilitators led each roundtable group.
- » Opening Night, four virtual Decatur 202s, and final Pop-up Event fulfilled the requirements for a series of public hearings to gather input.

Citizen  
Input

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

Updated  
every 10  
years

**DECATUR  
LCI**

Mandatory  
update every  
5 years

**DECATUR  
COMP  
PLAN**

Mandatory  
update every  
5 years

**1** process  
and plan

Required Element	Comprehensive Plan	LCI Update	Strategic Plan
Public Hearing 1 ★	Opening Night   January 23, 2020		
Public Hearing 2 ★	Virtual Decatur 202s   four dates November 2020 - February 2021		
Public Hearing 3 ★		Pop-up Event   June 26, 2021	
Steering Committee ★	Must include an elected official		
Public Engagement ★			
Visioning & Goals			
Needs & Opportunities ★	Identified through a SWOT Analysis		
Market Study ★			
Future Land Use ★			
Transportation ★			
Housing			
Broadband			
Concept Plans for small areas	Can include		Can include
Work Program / Action Plan	Capital Improvements Program		Detailed strategy for implementation
Notify Interested Parties			
ARC Review			
Georgia DCA Review			LCI plan referenced in Comp Plan
City Adoption			
5-year update			
10-year update			
Budget			
Review Regional Water Plan			



Required by plan



Fulfilled through innovative effort in this process



Not required by plan



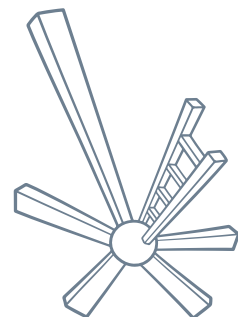
Making space for Decatur's expected growth and community desires while managing expectations.



Looking at what has changed since the last plan in 2010, and how that affect this plan.



Setting up the framework to look to the future.





# CHAPTER 1

## Discovery

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Purpose & Context

Decatur Today:

Equity & Racial Justice

Climate Action

Civic Trust

Affordable Housing

Mobility

Economic Growth



# Purpose & Context

## Decatur where it's greater

### Context

Decatur's city limits include 4.7 square miles, more than 25,000 residents as of the 2020 Census, and more than 17,000 employees. While this is only a fraction of the metro region, and while many local concerns (such as the climate crisis and racism) go far beyond our borders, this plan seeks to address broader issues in the context of Decatur's limited resources and influence. For the purpose of this plan, the study area is the entire city limits.

Downtown, Oakhurst, and other major commercial nodes within Decatur are surrounded by primarily residential neighborhoods. A diverse mix of institutions, businesses, and housing provides the walkable feel that has made Decatur an urban success story within a sprawling, car-dominated region. New nodes, including development around the Avondale MARTA station, are also beginning to emerge, even as growth continues in other areas, especially downtown.

Development patterns are typical of many historic cities and offer the timeless benefits of traditional planning. These make Decatur a place where daily needs can be met within the city limits, where young people can walk or bike to school (and after-school hangout spots), and where people of different lifestyles have ample civic spaces in which to interact.

## Managing Expectations

How can a small but growing city within a region of 6 million people address its local issues and growing national changes, while also maintaining a high quality of life?

**~28,000**  
Projected 2030  
Population

Atlanta

Fulton  
County

Decatur

DeKalb  
County

# Purpose & Context

## Decatur where it's greater

### Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Decatur's Strategic Plan guides City government at the highest level by providing direction on policies and actions to bring the community's vision for its future to life. It is also the foundation for Decatur's annual budget, each part of which must be tied directly to this plan.

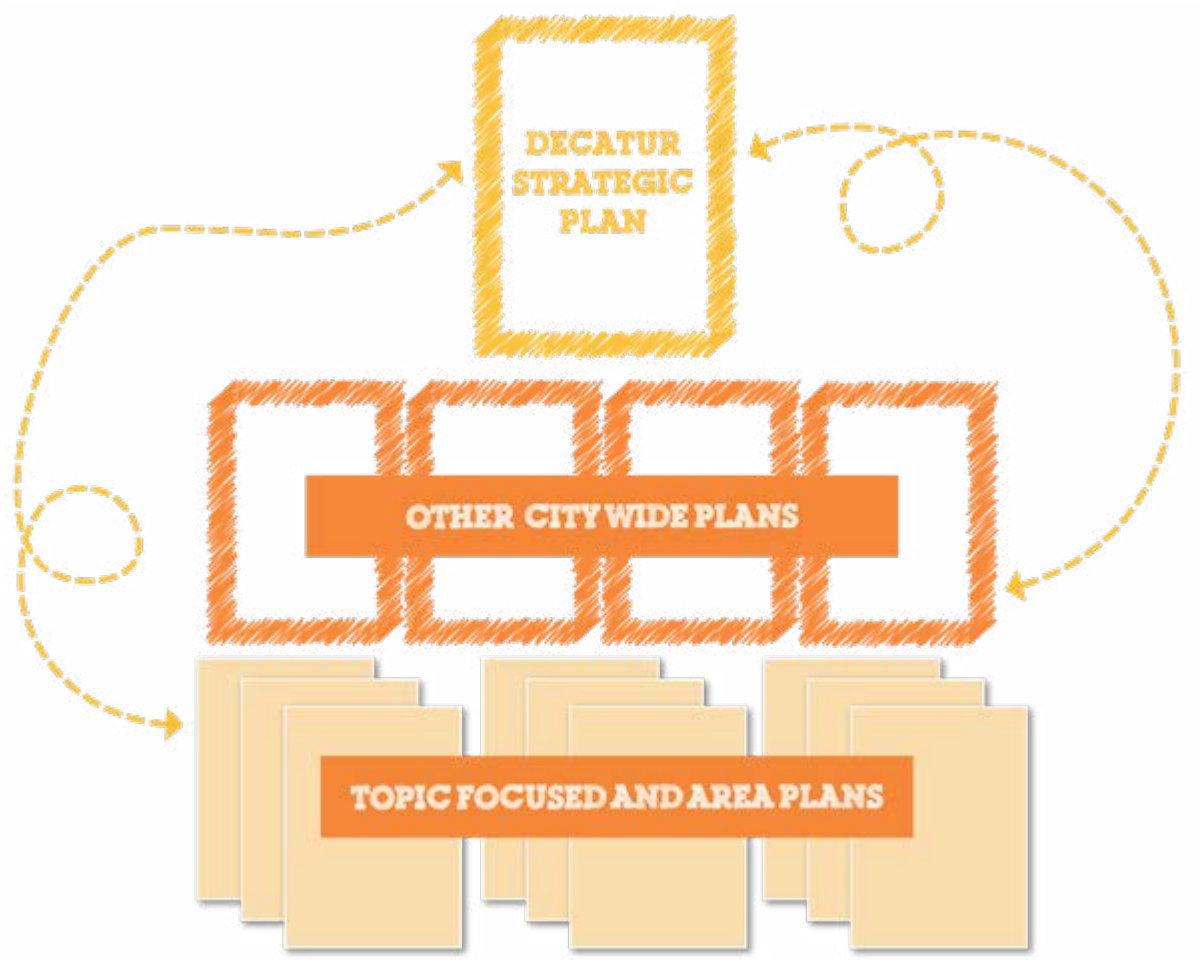
In addition, the Strategic Plan is a collection of the highest level recommendations of other City plans, while also providing direction to how those plans should be updated and implemented.

Unlike previous City plans that provided a broad analysis, this document focuses its analysis on the six themes that emerged from community conversations, and which serve as the organizing principles for the recommendations and the entire plan. The facts and context on the following pages directly informed community thinking on these issues.

It's also important to remember that these topics are interrelated, such that discussions of housing, for instance, easily cross over into race and equity. This holistic thinking runs throughout the figures on the following pages, as well as the structure of this plan.

## Strategic Plan + Our Budget





All plans inform and are informed by the Strategic Plan.  
Detailed plans should be consistent with the vision and policies of the Strategic Plan.

# DESTINATION: 2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

This plan's six topics

Equity & Racial Justice

Climate Action

Civic Trust

Affordable Housing

Mobility

Economic Development

# Decatur Today

## Equity & Racial Justice

National events sparked widespread conversations about equity and racial justice in Decatur in 2020, propelling this theme to the forefront of the strategic planning process. This comes after a decades-long trend of declining racial and economic diversity as Decatur has become more white and affluent. The conversation has shifted from preserving to restoring diversity.

But progress has been made in the past decade. The removal of the confederate memorial from the Decatur Square, a Black Lives Matter mural,

and the installation of a Martin Luther King, Jr. historic marker are initial outward steps that have been paralleled by conversations and civic forums around broader issues of racial justice.

As home values continue to rise and high-wage job growth outpaces low-wage jobs, the challenge is not only to understand racial diversity, but the economic and cultural diversity that is vital to creating a true city. Young people who participated in the Strategic Plan indicated that this true diversity would be crucial to their desire to continue live in Decatur.

## City Employee Diversity

City Employees	Decatur Residents
63% Male	42% Male
33% Female	58% Female
51% Black	22% Black*
39% White	69% White*
1.9% Hispanic	3.8% Hispanic*
1.5% Asian	4.1% Asian*

\*4% indicated two or more races

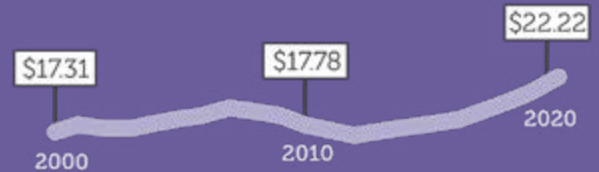
City employee data is based on full-time equivalent employees

Source: City of Decatur website; U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts

*City of Decatur staff is significantly more diverse than its residential population.*

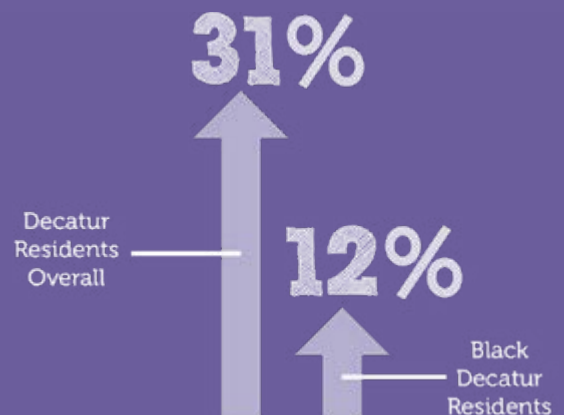
# What does the data say?

## Average Retail Rent



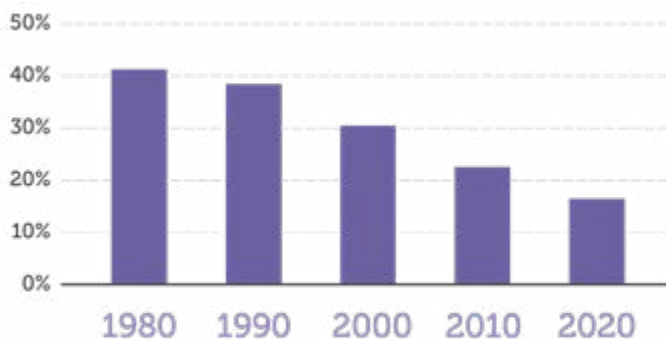
*The cost of renting commercial space in Decatur has increased 28% over the last 20 years, presenting a challenge for local businesses, especially those with minority owners.*

## Income Growth



*Decatur, historically a bastion of the LGBTQ+ community, now has only 0.8% same-sex households.*

## Decline in Decatur's Black Population since 1980



## Households with Six-Figure Incomes



*Decatur's affluence has increased in the last decade, with nearly half of all households earning six-figure incomes.*

## "The Bottom"

"Known as 'the Bottom' in its earliest days, when it was settled by freed slaves after the Civil War, this square mile of Decatur was the site of a thriving African-American community of homes, business, churches, and schools. In the early part of the 20th century, the area became known as 'Beacon Hill' or just 'Beacon.' ... it had its own landmarks, characters, business and community leaders, and other common threads that formed a rich fabric of life."



"White Decatur largely considered the Beacon Community a blighted slum, and in the 1930s began to condemn sections of it to make way for public housing."

## Redlining Map and the beginning of Urban Renewal

1930's

1950's -  
1960's

## Urban Renewal expands

"Urban renewal expanded in the 1960s. Families and businesses were again displaced to make way for the Swanton Heights housing project..., Decatur High School, and the county courthouse."

*"Decatur's African-American community faced the destruction of their homes and businesses with strength and resilience."*

## Civil Rights Movement & DeKalb NAACP Chapter forms in Decatur

"The fight for equal rights had long been waged in Decatur's Beacon community in myriad ways, but it began to coalesce as a movement around 1950 with the formation of the Decatur Colored Citizen League. In 1955, the DeKalb Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was organized in Decatur."

## Today

The Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights was formed to advocate, educate, and organize "people of African descent affected by systemic racism and oppression on issues of equity in education, housing, and the legal system in the City of Decatur and surrounding communities."

Decatur Day is hosted annually at McKoy Park.

A Beacon Hill Municipal Complex display commemorates the history of the Beacon Hill neighborhood.

### Sources:

Timeline information summarized and adapted from the "Beacon Community" timeline on the City of Decatur website at [www.decaturga.com/beacon](http://www.decaturga.com/beacon). Redlining map adapted from: HOLC Neighborhood Redlining Grade map for Atlanta accessible at <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=ef0f926eb1b146d082c38cc35b53c947>



# What's changed since 2010?

## Black Lives Matter and Nationwide Protests

*Black Lives Matter was formed in 2013 in response to police brutality and racially motivated violence. Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, greater calls to end police brutality resulted in nationwide protests, including calls for action in Decatur.*

## Removal of DeKalb County Confederate Monument

*Activism by the Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights and Decatur High School students led to the removal of the confederate monument in June 2020.*

## Anti-Racism Speaker Series

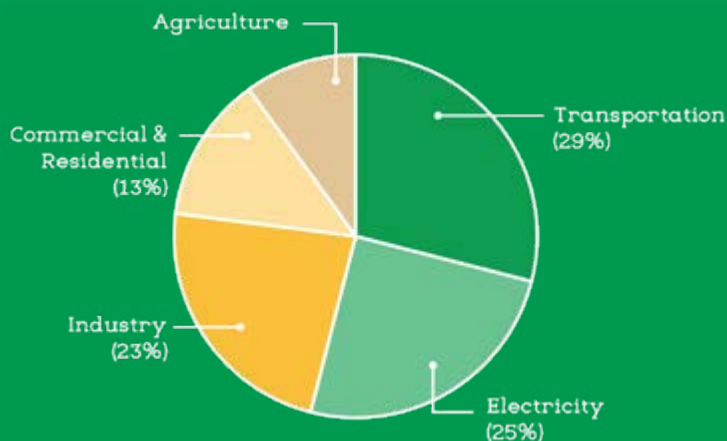
*The Better Together Advisory Board, with funding from the City of Decatur, hosted a four-part online speaker series that featured local and national experts to foster greater and understanding about race and equity.*

## COVID-19 Pandemic

*The global pandemic brought systemic inequities further into the spotlight, as low-income and minority Americans experienced more health and financial hardships, and were required to work in "essential" jobs, putting them at higher risk of illness.*

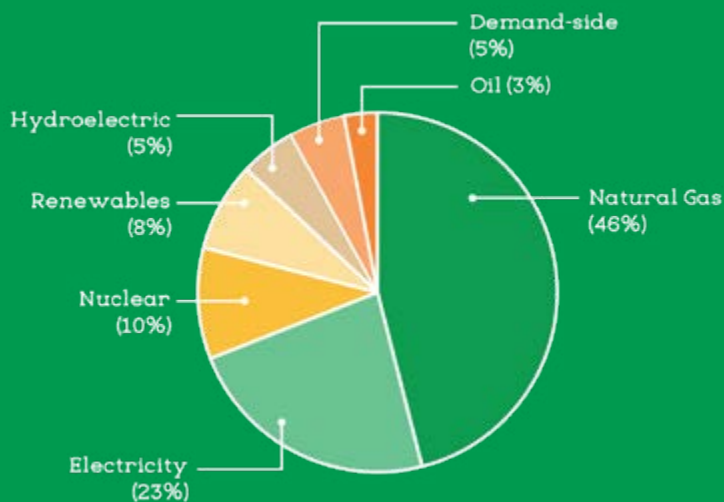
# What does the data say?

## U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector



*This 2019 data shows the variety of sectors that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>).*

## Decatur's Energy Mix



*The 2020 ESB report showed how the energy mix was distributed in 2019, based on Georgia Power data.*

## Decatur Today Climate Action

The climate crisis is on the minds of many Decaturites, including the group of youth protesters who carried signs at Opening Night to underscore the need for City action. Global climate issues such as sea level rise and climate refugees may seem distant from Decatur, but the impacts of higher temperatures and more intense storms are already being felt.

City government's carbon footprint is distinct from its citizens' footprint, and Decatur is part of an energy grid and other networks whose impact extends beyond the city limits, and over which the City has limited control. This means that solutions will have to include partners to be effective.



*Residents of more suburban, car-centric places have higher carbon footprints. More affluent people also typically have significantly higher carbon footprints. Both of these affect the impact of Decatur residents.*



*Compared to a historic building, it can take up to 80 years for a new "energy-efficient" building to overcome the climate impacts of new construction. (Source: [https://living-future.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The\\_Greenest\\_Building.pdf](https://living-future.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The_Greenest_Building.pdf)).*

# What's changed since 2010?

## Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB)

*The ESB was formed to provide recommendations to the City Commission about environmental regulations, plans, and initiatives. The board also helps implement city projects that impact the natural environment. They created the Environmental Sustainability Plan in 2012.*



## High Performance Building Standards (2014)

*As part of the UDO, High Performance Building Standards now require all new residential and commercial buildings to be certified under an existing green building program.*

## Youth Activism

*The number and volume of young climate activist has increased in recent years, as Greta Thunberg and others ring the alarm over fears that their generation will bear the brunt of climate change.*

## Public Green Infrastructure Projects

*The City and their partners have added green infrastructure to new public facilities and streetscapes. Examples include the bio-swales at Trinity Walk apartments (pictured here), stormwater planters at the new Public Works building on Talley Street, and bio-swales on McDonough Street with the new cycle track.*

# Decatur Today

## Civic Trust

Decaturites expect robust civic engagement not only for specific planning efforts, but also as an ongoing community conversation. It's the foundation of civic trust, providing the "consent" in "consent of the governed."

The ladder on the next page illustrates how decision-making power can move from the hands of leaders exclusively to everyone who chooses to participate. Over time, Decatur has climbed this ladder, and citizens applaud its efforts.

But there's always room for improvement, especially in times of rising concerns and frantic competition for attention via social media. Decatur citizens are already engaging themselves in civic efforts, including through a robust group of citizen boards and councils, which are already at work on the issues tackled in this plan. Citizen Surveys every two years (see highlights on page 23) gauge feelings on what's working and what isn't.

*"I feel like there are lots of forms of communication for the city, but there is not one shared space that everyone should go to find out about meetings, events, votes, alerts."*  
—City Communications Audit participant

*"I miss some info. Would prefer a single tool for info and events."*  
—City Communications Audit participant

*"I often find out about things after they have happened, but sometimes before."*  
—City Communications Audit participant

*"I haven't lived here long enough to know what I might be missing out on, but it would be nice to have a weekly or bi-weekly round up of all things going on in the city."*  
—City Communications Audit participant

*"I live just outside the city but work on the square. I sometimes miss things I wish I had known about because it seems as though communications with businesses is different than communications with residents. I live so close, I wish there was a way to get resident info."*  
—City Communications Audit participant

## Citizen Empowerment



## Collaborate



## Involve



## Consult



## Inform



## 2010 - Present Day

### Decatur Strategic Plan, etc.

- » Citizens help direct yearly budget
- » Decatur 101: a 7-week course to inform and involve citizens
- » Multiple advisory boards
- » Citizen satisfaction surveys
- » Inclusive planning processes
- » Website and online transparency

## 1982

### Decatur Town Center Plan

- » Citizens nixed original plan and were involved in making new plan
- » Task force consisted of developers and a consulting group
- » Citizens made up one-fourth of the participation groups

## 1962

### Decatur Urban Renewal Plan

- » Citizens were asked to vote on demolishing historic neighborhoods on 'Decatur Forward Day'
- » City officials handed out pamphlets characterizing the current area in a negative way
- » Research conducted by planning consultants did not include community feedback

## Decatur Today

# Civic Trust

In return for citizens' trust, the City must deliver on its promises. Besides publicly asserting those promises, this plan provides the framework for organizing the means—including the City's annual budget—for making good on them.

All the communication and collaboration tools used to inform this plan will remain in play as it moves through its implementation phases. Citizen boards, local partners, and individual citizens themselves all are encouraged to lean in on the process of putting ideas into action—and when necessary, helping refine strategies as changing situations require.

## Decatur 101 Grads

# 1,295

## Decatur's Bond Rating

# AA1

*This bond rating allows the City to get better interest rates on bonds, which results in major savings over time.*

## Vision-based Budgeting

*The annual budget is the primary tool to make the Strategic Plan vision come to fruition. The public can weigh in on the City's budget-setting process every year.*



# What's changed since 2010?

## Citizens' Survey Results

### Top 5 Positives

1. Decatur is a safe place to live
2. Downtown & neighborhood safety
3. Fire service
4. Overall quality of life
5. Would recommend living here (2010)  
Good place to raise children (2018)

### Top 5 Negatives

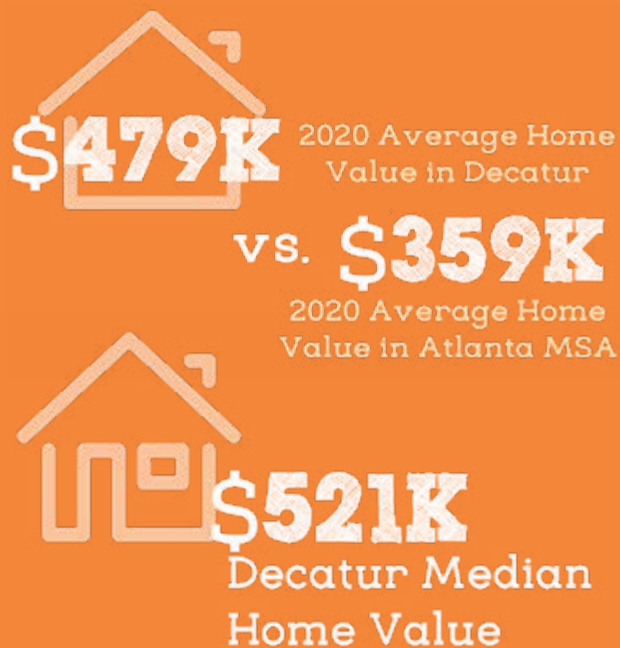
1. Traffic signal timing
2. Amount and ease of public parking
3. Traffic flow on major corridors
4. Availability of affordable, quality childcare (2010)  
Availability of affordable, quality housing (2018)
5. Services to low-income people (2010)  
Variety of housing options (2018)

## Rise of Social Media



*Since 2010, the proliferation of Facebook, NextDoor, and other online communications tools have significantly changed the tone of civic conversations in Decatur. Online comments tend to be reactive rather than proactive, less civil, and not reflect the larger context of city decisions and the community processes that inform them.*

# What does the data say?



*Compared to the Atlanta region, Decatur's average home price is \$120K higher than the average home price for the Atlanta region. In fact, the median home value is \$521,000, making it hard for most households to afford. The necessary salary to buy a home will vary depending on numerous variables, including down payment, interest rate, and other costs.*

## Average Home Sales Price



## Average Rent



## Decatur Today Affordable Housing

There was near-universal agreement during this process that Decatur is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. Increasing home values are an indicator of Decatur's appeal, but have eroded diversity and have made homeownership attainable by only the most wealthy families and individuals.

Demographic data underscores this fact, and shows a need for affordable housing at all levels, from those with little to no income, to those with more significant income.

## Housing + Transportation Costs

*In addition to the cost of operating a car (more than \$8,000 per year), parking significantly increases the cost of housing. Single-family garages may increase mortgages by 10-20%, and costly parking decks for multifamily housing can add 17% or more to monthly rent. Parking garages and parking lots also take up valuable land that could be used for development or greenspace.*

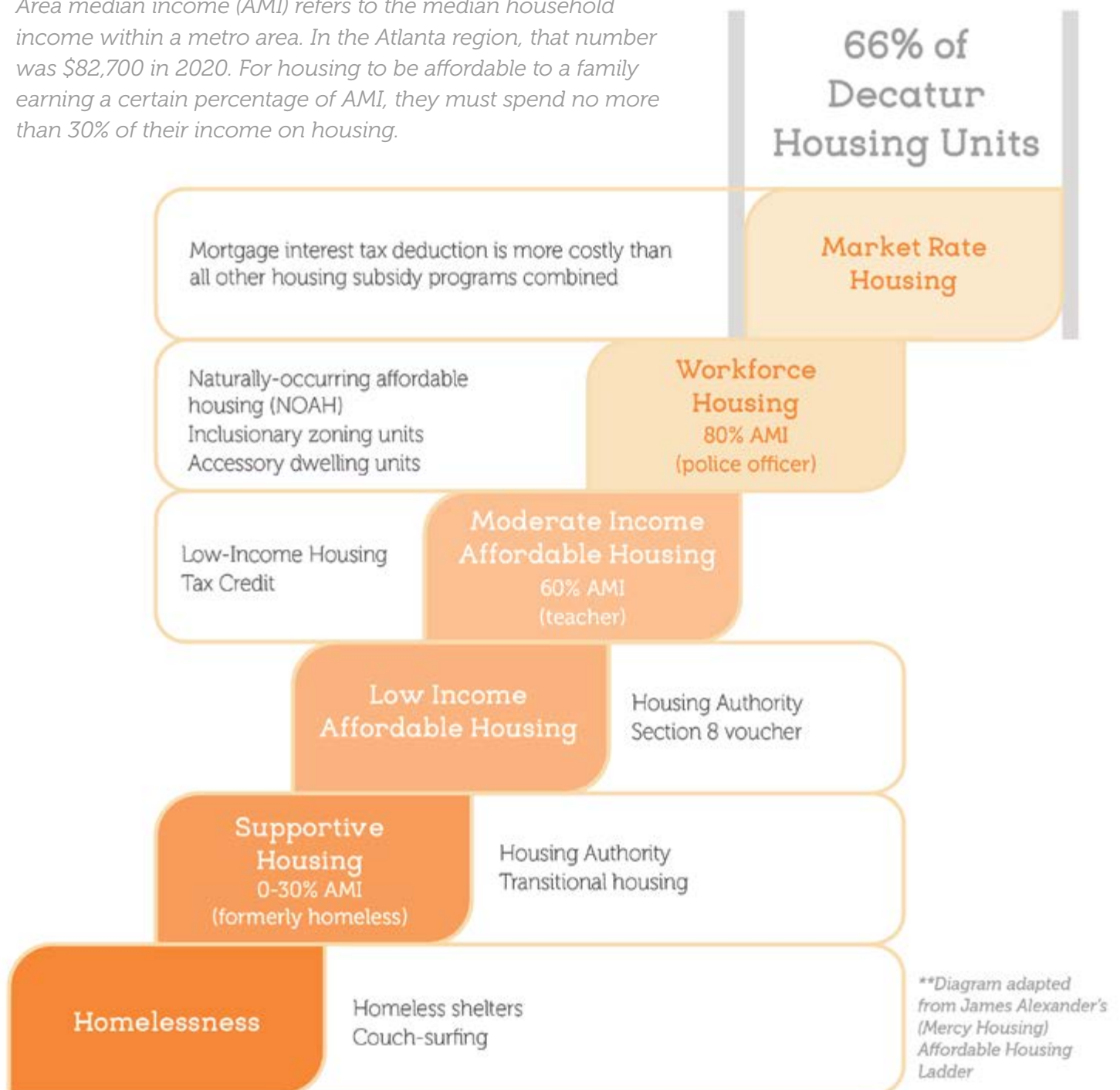
(<https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking/>)

# All Housing is Subsidized

Those on the lower rungs of the ladder need direct public assistance with their housing costs. At the higher rungs, homeowners can take advantage of mortgage interest deductions when they buy and capital gains protections when they sell. Because there's not just one kind of customer for housing, there's no one-size-fits-all solution for providing it. Creating and maintaining a mix of affordable housing solutions requires recognizing the complexity and committing the resources at the scale of the challenges.

## What is AMI?

Area median income (AMI) refers to the median household income within a metro area. In the Atlanta region, that number was \$82,700 in 2020. For housing to be affordable to a family earning a certain percentage of AMI, they must spend no more than 30% of their income on housing.



Decatur has taken some significant initial steps in the past decade, including hosting an Affordable Housing Summit, and establishing an Affordable Housing Task Force.

The Decatur Housing Authority is a major partner in this work, providing affordable units for more than 1,000 Decaturites, but with a wait list of 5-10 years. In the past decade they have implemented Phase 3 of the Allen Wilson Housing and the Trinity Walk housing.

## Building Affordable Housing

# 200 NEW AFFORDABLE UNITS since 2010

200 new units of affordable housing have been built in the past decade, but the percentage of Decatur's housing that is affordable has decreased.

Maximum affordable rent for 2-bedroom rental apartment at 80% AMI:

**\$1,490**

Average rent for new apartments in Decatur (including one-bedroom, and studios):

**\$1,777**

Cost to build a new unit:

**\$225K to \$280K**

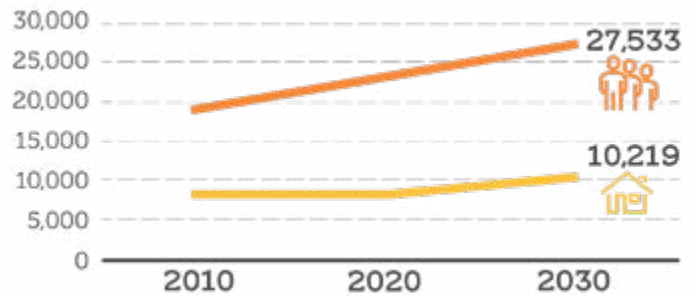
**\$45K to \$80K**

Affordability Gap

Cost to build an attainable unit at 80% AMI:

**\$180K**

## Projected Population and Household Growth



Decatur's population is projected to increase by more than 50% between 2000 and 2030. Because Decatur's average household size is small and decreasing, more housing units will be needed to accommodate this growth.

**↑ 40% since 2010**  
**Population 50+**

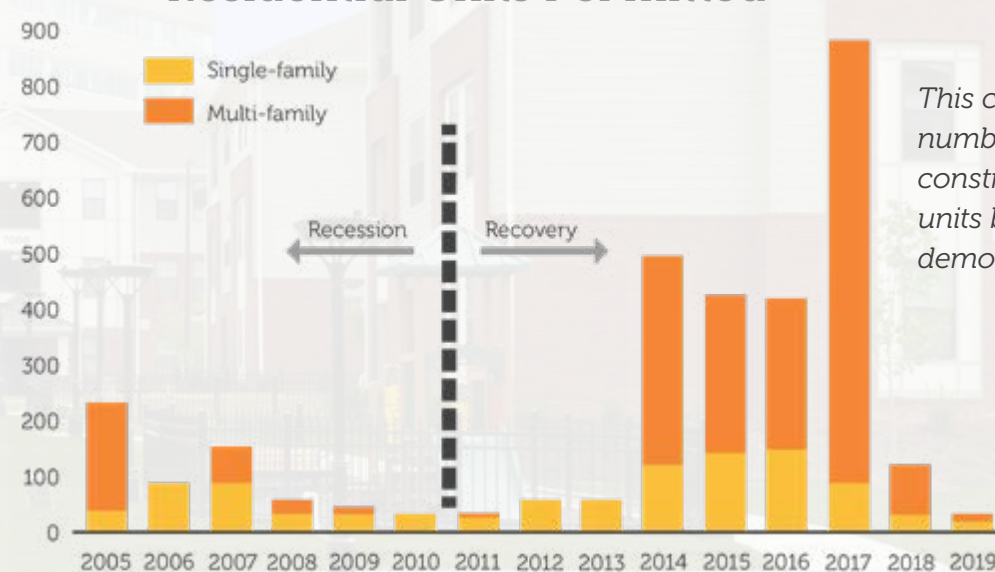
The percentage of Decaturites above age 50 has significantly increased in the last decade, leading to changes in the demand for different housing types.

**71% households without kids**

Despite fears that new housing is creating crowded schools, most Decatur households don't have children at home. And nearly half of Decatur households are single people. These demographic facts show that different (and more affordable) housing types are needed.

# What's changed since 2010?

## Residential Units Permitted



*This chart shows the number of new units constructed, including units built after demolition.*



image courtesy Eric Kronberg

## Zoning Reform

*Across the country, cities are shifting their approach to zoning to accommodate growth at neighborhood scales without some of the historic barriers to minority and low-income families. Decatur already allows accessory dwelling units and is requiring new apartment developments to provide some affordable units.*

# Decatur Today

## Mobility

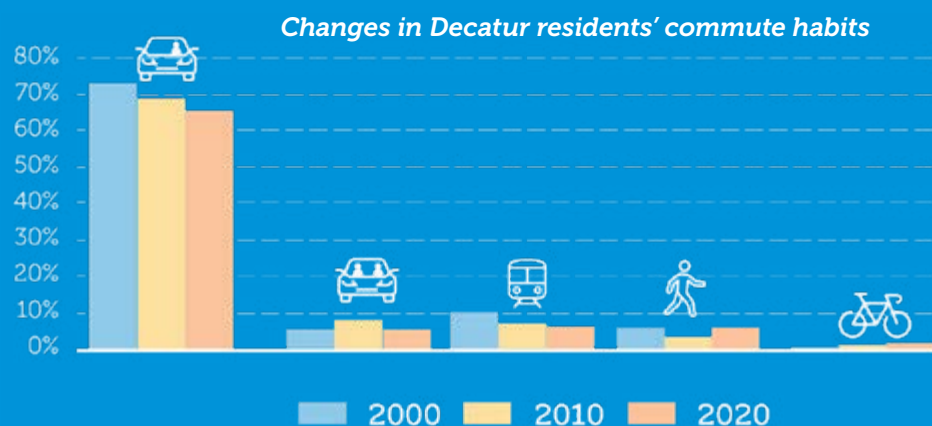
Decatur is an easy city to get around, largely because of its size, but also because there are so many options: walking, biking, driving, buses, and trains. And because there are so many places within walking distance: schools, places of worship, restaurants, shops, and jobs.

Unlike more suburban areas, streets form an interconnected network punctuated by three state routes, which are designed primarily for drivers without thought for other modes of travel.

Over the past decade, sidewalk improvements and new bike facilities have made it easier and safer to get around without a car.

Decatur is fortunate to be served by MARTA rail service as well as multiple MARTA and CCTMA bus routes, although transit usage has decreased in Decatur in the last decade, as it has in much of the United States.

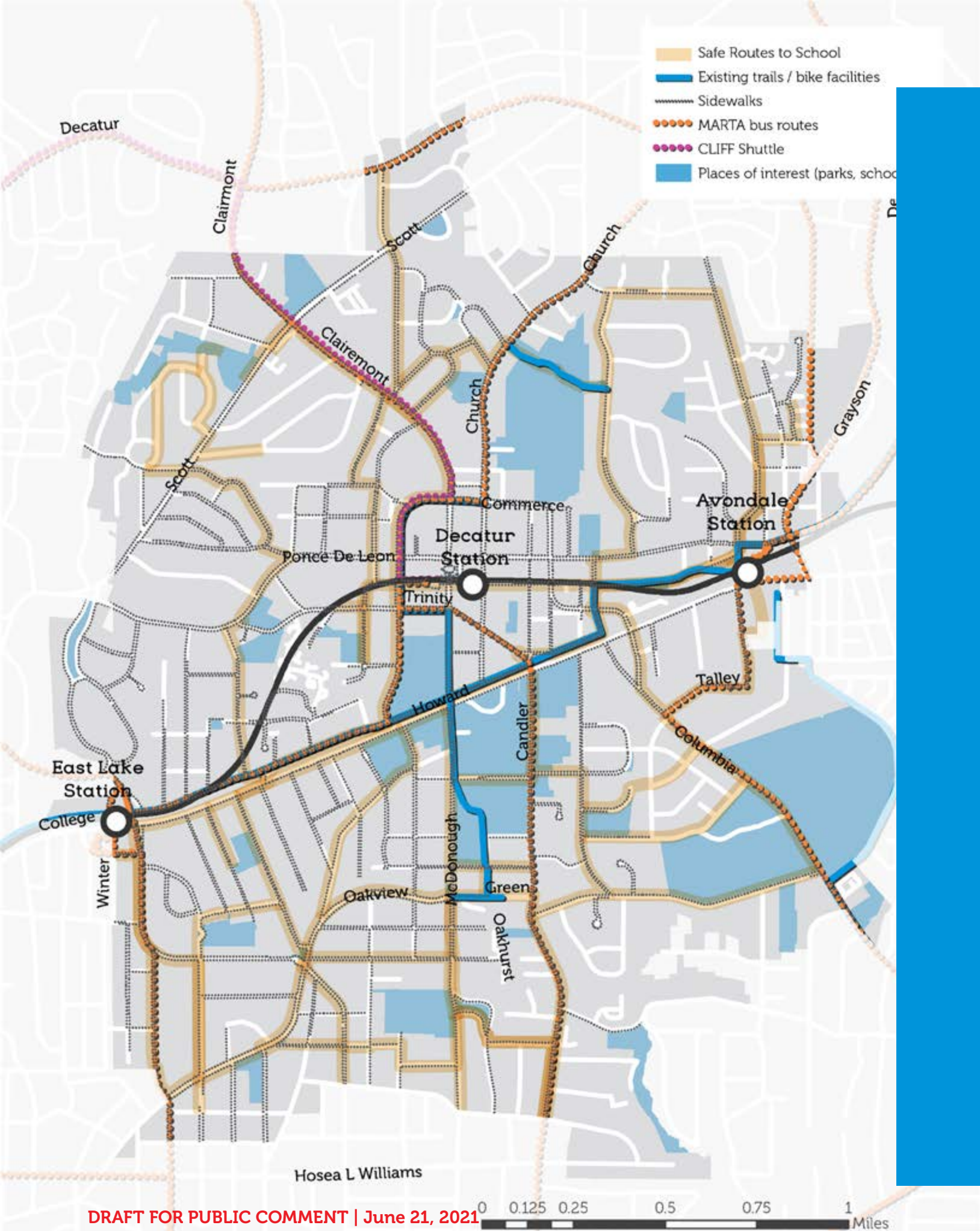
## What does the data say?



Nearly everyone in Decatur commutes by automobile  
Source: U.S. Census

**54%**  
Households  
with 2+ Cars

With high car ownership rates, it is easier for most Decaturites to drive to get to where they are going. According to AAA, the average cost to own and operate a car is **\$8,558 per year**.



# The Value of Walkability

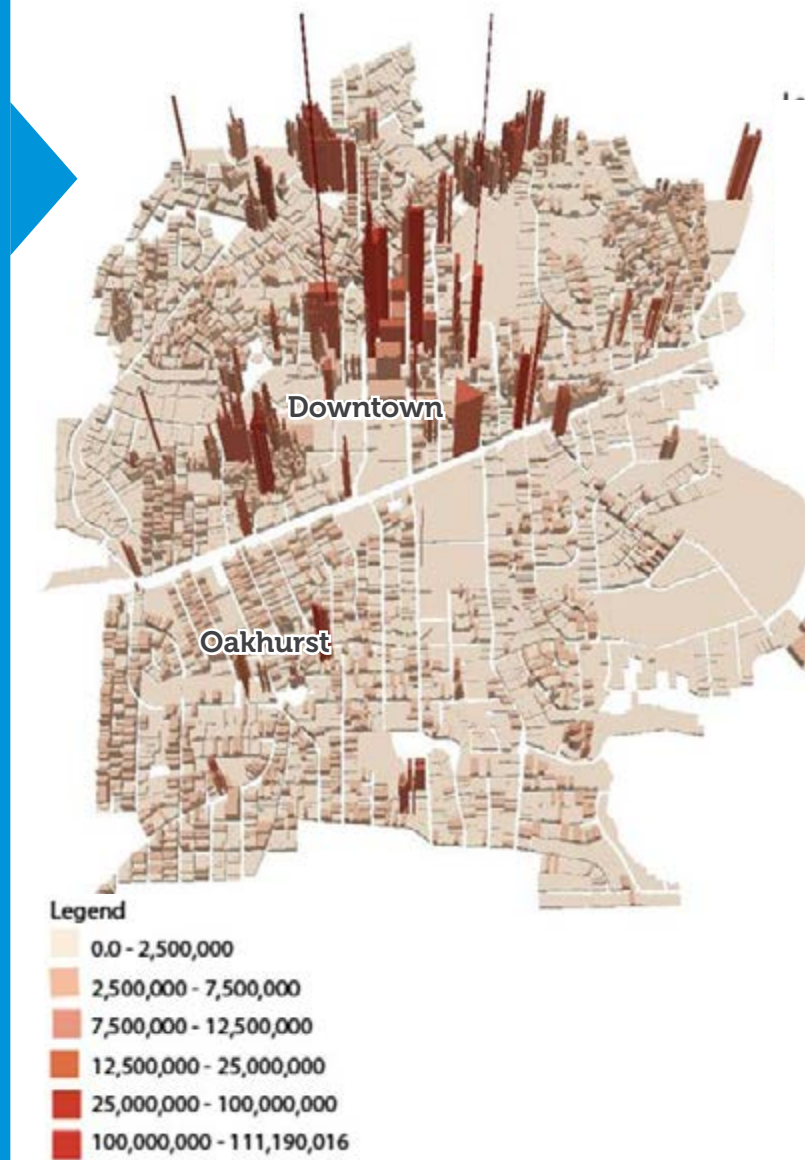
*Walkable communities not only have many community benefits—they also have fiscal advantages. More dense, walkable development is correlated with higher tax values that provide additional revenue. In Decatur, the most valuable properties near Downtown clearly show this relationship. This is underscored by the property value map (right).*

## Parking Surplus

*Underutilized parking spaces in Decatur, whether they are on-street, in parking lots, or in parking decks, come with a high cost, particularly where they are subsidized with tax dollars, but also where vacant private parking contributes to higher housing and retail costs. Downtown Decatur currently has more than 10,000 parking spaces.*

## Health Benefits

*The positive effects of walking and biking on both physical and mental health are well documented. When we experience the city at lower speeds, we're more likely to enjoy it, stop at local businesses, and make connections with our neighbors. Driving commutes are directly correlated to stress levels and negative mental health.*



# What's changed since 2010?

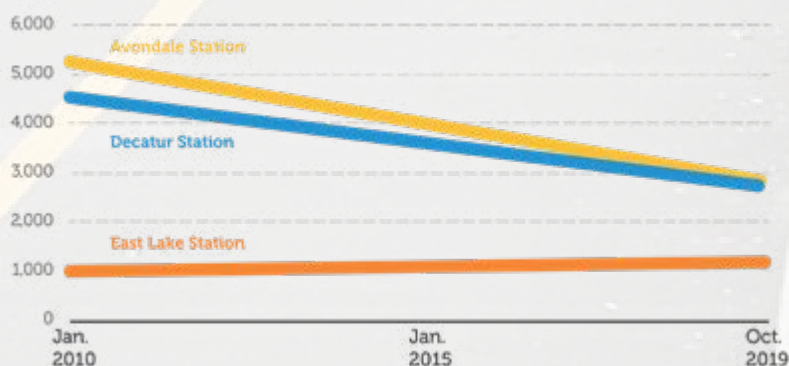
## Shared Mobility

Changing transportation technologies in the past decade have provided many more options for Decaturites, especially in terms of ride share services and electric scooters. At the same time, these technologies have contributed to declining MARTA use, and present their own set of challenges, including sidewalk clutter that inhibits movement for pedestrians.

## Infrastructure

The City of Decatur and the PATH Foundation have built a number of new bicycle projects. These include separated bike lanes along McDonough Street (which also filters stormwater) and Commerce Drive, as well as the East Decatur Greenway along Katie Kerr Drive.

## Declining MARTA Use in Decatur



The number of average daily passengers at Decatur's transit stations has declined over the past decade, as it has throughout the U.S.

# Decatur Today

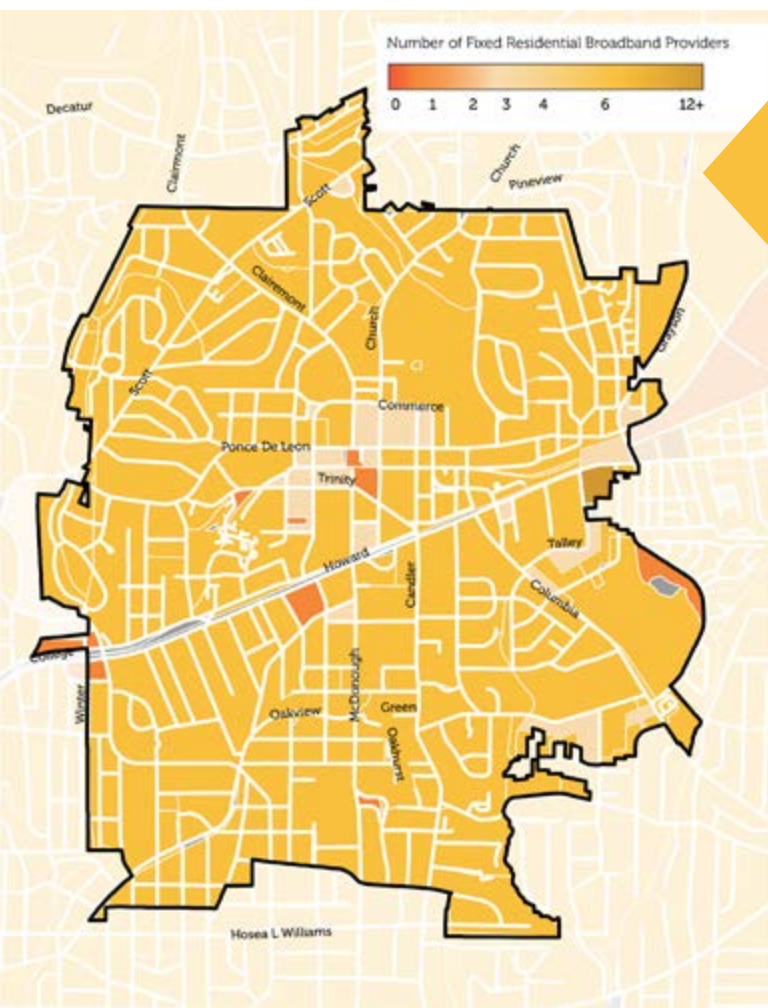
## Economic Growth

Decatur's economy remains strong. In fact, many of the challenges the city confronts—greenhouse gas emissions, affordable housing, declining diversity, and mobility issues—are in part because of Decatur's success at attracting new residents, jobs, and investment.

And a lot has changed in the local and national economy in the past decade. We've emerged

from the Recession, but wages continue to stagnate even as unemployment has dropped.

The City and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) have also advanced on a number of economic development initiatives, including specific initiatives related to small business assistance due to COVID-19.



## High Speed Internet

### Existing broadband

This map shows the number of internet providers advertising download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps, based on the 2020 data provided by the Federal Communications Commission.

### Data limitations

This map is based on the latest federal data, but does not include all internet providers in all areas, and is based on reported (rather than actual) internet speeds. A federal effort is currently beginning to obtain better data on internet access.

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT | June 21, 2021**

# Top Employers

Not surprisingly for a county seat, more than a third of all jobs in Decatur are in the public sector, and most of these are located downtown.

- ① DeKalb County (1,773)
- ② Emory (983)
- ③ City Schools of Decatur (955)
- ④ Agnes Scott College (420)
- ⑤ City of Decatur (240)
- ⑥ USPS (190)

## The Labor Market

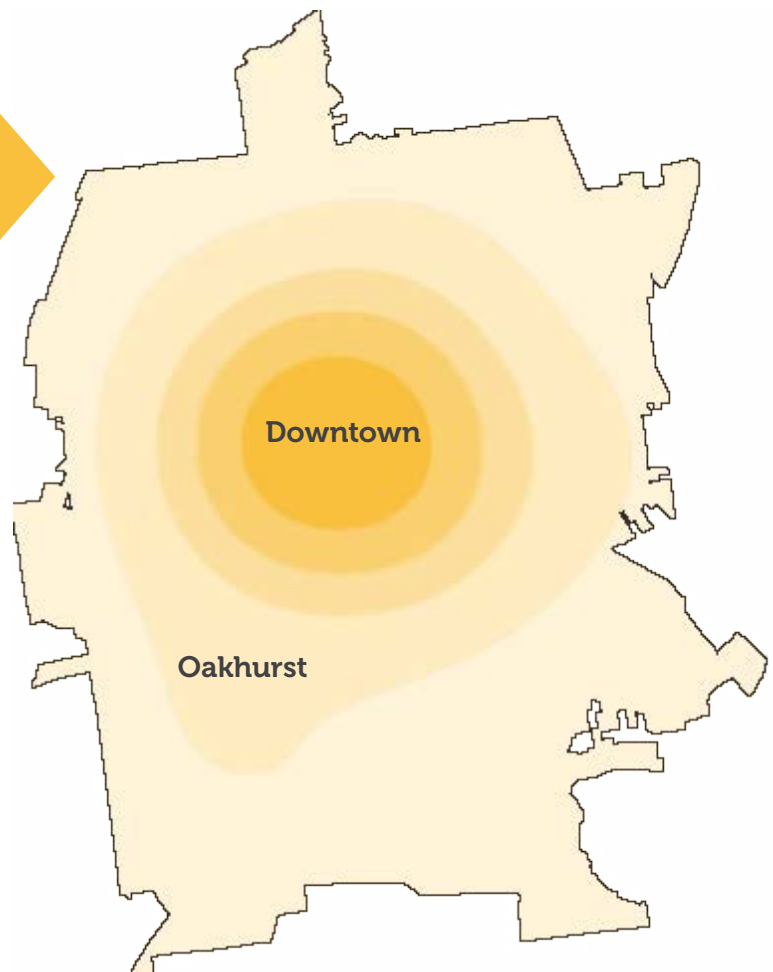
Many Decatur jobs in the public and private sector require advanced college degrees. Significantly more of Decatur's jobs are in the IT sector compared to the regional average. High wage jobs are increasing at nearly 3 times the rate of low-wage jobs.

**17,400**  
Current Total  
Employment

**7% increase**  
since 2016

**21,600**  
2040 Projected  
Employment

Decatur is  
expected to add  
more than 4,000  
jobs by 2040.



## Tax Digest\*

**80%** Residential  
**20%** Commercial

Residential uses comprise 80% of the tax digest, compared to 20% for commercial uses. However, commercial land earns a much higher tax value per acre than residential land, as shown in the diagram on page 30.

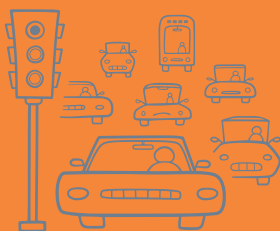
\*Source: City of Decatur

# 2

Roundtable Discussions throughout 2020 with more than 600 participants



Decatur 202s, led by subject matter experts, discussing conflicting ambitions within the top 4 topics



Virtual engagement with video conference meetings and multiple online surveys and activities





# CHAPTER 2

## Engagement

---

Overall Strategy

Key Themes, Concerns, & Ambitions

To Go Big, Go Together

From Input to Recommendations

# Community Engagement

## Overall Strategy

### OVERVIEW

A strategic plan maps a path from the present to a desired future, a future without facts as waypoints. This makes the mapping process educated guesswork. For a community that accommodates all sorts of interests and perspectives, this process must be highly collaborative. Without agreement on goals and consent for action, ambitions will stall as challenges mount. The key is to move beyond harvesting opinions to a place where conflicts and information gaps are sufficiently resolved to justify confidence in the proposed strategies.

Here's how this process worked:



## Fall 2020 - Spring 2021

### PROGRESSIVE FOCUSING, REVIEWING, DRAFTING, REPEAT

Citizen Roundtables participants identified ideas that enjoyed broad support as well as issues they couldn't resolve without more discussion. These issues became the focus of four virtual "Decatur 202" sessions on mobility, housing, equity, and climate change. Invited experts shared research and lessons learned, and participant breakout discussions allowed for ideas to be refined in that context, and in dialog with diverse opinions from other citizens.

Decatur 202s

Virtual Forums

## Spring 2021 - Fall 2021

Over the course of the process, we compensated for the participation challenges imposed by the pandemic with online Virtual Forums where residents could help guide the plan—across all topics—from the safety and convenience of their computer or mobile device. Online surveys of draft ideas and a day of "pop-up" activities offered review opportunities and informed an emerging draft for consideration by Decatur's City Commission.

## The Future

### THE PUDDING, THE PROOF, AND THE PROMISE

The "proof is in the pudding" adage is especially apt when it comes to leveraging collaboration in planning. You can talk about listening all you want, but if you can't demonstrate that what you've heard ends up shaping both policy and implementation, you can't build and maintain the trust that bold ambitions require. A commitment to accountability is implied throughout the Vision and Mission Statements (page 47) derived from months of listening and idea sorting. And it's made explicit in Mission 4:

**"We will embrace accountability: Define what success looks like, measure outcomes along the way, and tell our story."**

The City of Decatur has made the promise a best practice. The to-do list in the 2010 Strategic Plan, for instance, became a framework for budgeting and implementing projects and programs over the last decade. By the time planning began for the next decade, 93% of the tasks on that previous list had been accomplished or were underway. Delivering on promises bolsters confidence for future promises. A good thing, given the sense of urgency citizens brought to the conversation this time around.

*"We are proud of Decatur and the progress it is making," said one participant in the Citizen Roundtables. "We want MORE and DEEPER – deeper relationships, deeper opportunities, deeper options for work and living."*

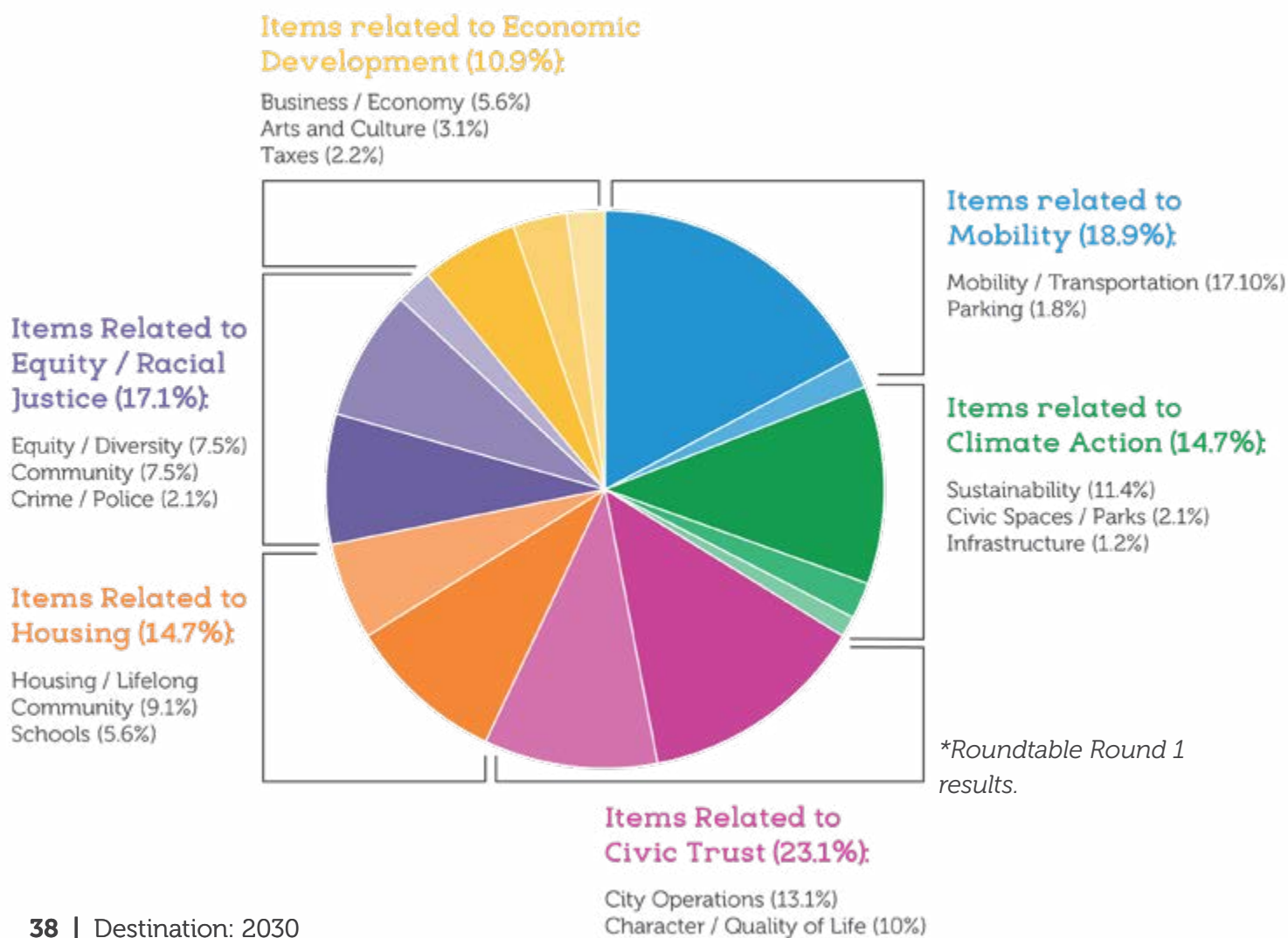
**93%**  
of projects

**2010  
Strategic  
Plan  
Progress**

# Community Engagement

## Key Themes, Concerns, & Ambitions

From the beginning of the engagement process, it was clear participants were anxious to talk about big, complex issues. Of the 3,278 comments in our three Roundtables discussions, all addressed concerns under the six headings shown below. What distinguished 2020 priorities from past rankings was the sense of urgency imposed by the times—protests throughout the nation over treatment of Black and Brown people; widening gaps between rising housing costs and incomes; mounting evidence of climate change; and a pandemic that exposed vulnerabilities in social and economic systems.





## BY THE NUMBERS

90

Engagement  
Squad Members

Volunteers on the Engagement Squad shared promotional materials with their online and physical networks to encourage participation.

792

Citizen Roundtable  
Registrants



3  
Rounds of  
Conversation

3 rounds of group discussion occurred throughout 2020, starting after "Opening Night" then continuing online after the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions required it. Later, City staff led city employee focus groups to discuss the recommendations.

6

City Employee  
Focus Groups

723

Recommendations Surveys  
Respondents

98.5%

of ALL  
Recommendations  
supported



75 to 125

Decatur 202  
Participants per Event

Four Decatur 202s began with presentations from experts in each topic (mobility, housing, equity & racial justice, and climate change), then groups followed a discussion guide to provide input..

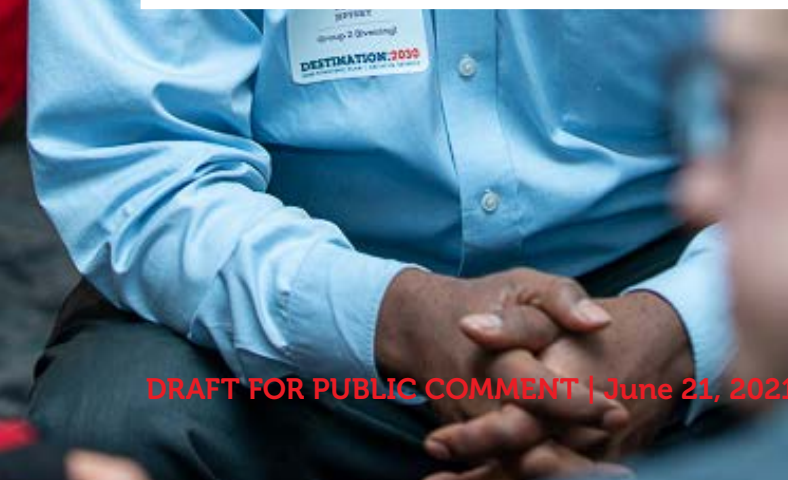
15

Different  
Surveys

344

Virtual Forum  
Participants

Surveys for the Vision & Mission Statements and all the topic recommendations were released weekly throughout Spring 2021. Nearly all the recommendations received community support.



# Community Engagement

## To Go Big, Go Together

From discussions stretching over 18 months and from the expectations many Decaturites brought to it from the start, we know the determination is there to take on the most challenging issues of our time. But there are limitations on what Decatur can do alone to determine the outcomes citizens want. And those limitations are directly linked with the advantages Decatur enjoys as a quality-of-life destination.

Decatur encompasses 4.7 square miles, only a tiny fraction of the 10-county planning area represented by the Atlanta Regional

Commission. Its population of 26,000 is less than one percent of the population of that region. Yet it's possible to walk from Decatur's downtown to the heart of Atlanta or connect with the whole metro area via Decatur's three MARTA stops.

The connectivity goes both ways, bringing those from the region and beyond who support schools that are the envy of surrounding communities and dining, arts, and entertainment amenities that add to the city's attractiveness.

*"We all agreed that the time for action is NOW – we're behind the 8-ball, so we need to aim high and be ambitious. We feel strongly that the city should set a goal of zero net emissions by 2030. Is it possible – we don't know, but we need to try." —Decatur 202 Group*

*"Decatur citizens need to walk the talk. Lots of concern over lack of affordable housing but citizens passed the laws that redlined the city, changed the zoning, prevented density, and the current citizens need to recognize that affordable housing means tough choices. They need to stop complaining if the answer is NIMBY." —Roundtable Participant*

*Make bike paths all throughout Decatur, not just on one road. Maybe an "explore Decatur" route that takes riders through neighborhoods and down to Oakhurst or Avondale" —Ideas Wall participant*



"We don't have a drawbridge we can just raise," said a senior staffer at the 2020 Strategic Plan kick-off presentation. So what are the options? Participants in the various engagement sessions hit on a bang-for-the-buck approach leveraging complementary strategies. For instance:

"We note that the housing and transportation issues we discussed all have environmental impacts," said one commenter. "These initiatives all intersect."

*"Climate change is a racial equity issue as well," offered another participant. "People of color bear a disproportionate burden of pollution, energy and food costs."*

From that persistent theme came the first of our five Mission Statements:

"We will think holistically: Identify and leverage opportunities to create interconnected policies, programs, and projects that achieve equitable outcomes across all community priorities."

And recognizing that Decatur will need to join with others to advance its boldest ambitions, community engagement participants argued for doubling down on what the City prides itself in – influence by example:

"Let's make Decatur a national leader in bike-ability! We've got great bones for it and are off to a good start" wrote one online commenter. "Decades of research shows widening roads doesn't decrease traffic congestion. The only way to reduce traffic (and also a key to fighting climate change) is to have fewer people in cars."

Out of that evolving conversation came Mission Statement 5: "We will pioneer innovation: Inspire ourselves and others by continuing to seek bold and creative solutions in planning and doing."

*"We can be leaders. We can leverage others," said a Roundtables participant.*



# Community Engagement From Input to Recommendations

Change zoning to increase density, adding efficiency apartments, duplexes and triplexes to housing options already available in Decatur..." -- *Ideas Wall Participant*

"If the city insists on higher density housing, it should perhaps consider taking a more active role in maintaining "niceness" by enforcing parking and traffic rules, keeping overgrowth of the sidewalks, making sure city trash cans are emptied, upgrading city parks and pools, etc." -- *Roundtable participant*

I am curious about the status and plans for the report produced by the Decatur Affordable Housing Task Force earlier this year. My understanding is that the city has "received" it and I would be interested whether any specific recommendations are being considered for adoption on implementation" - *Ideas Wall participant*.

"Someone has to pay to make the city more affordable. We should be up front and honest about the tax burden." -- *Roundtable participant*

"Cost of housing isn't just the housing unit – also need to include transportation costs + utilities" -- *Decatur 202 Discussion Group*

## Preferred Affordable Housing Tools

1

### Owner incentives

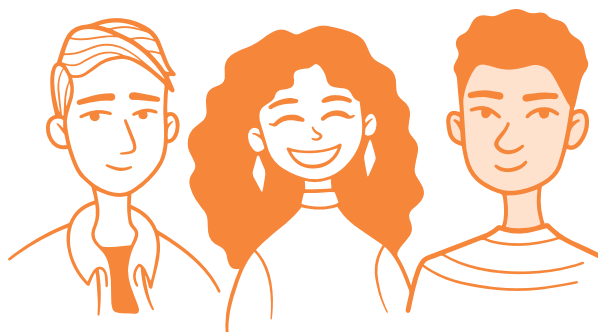
like tax abatements to preserve existing naturally-occurring affordable housing units and revisions to the tax payment assistance program

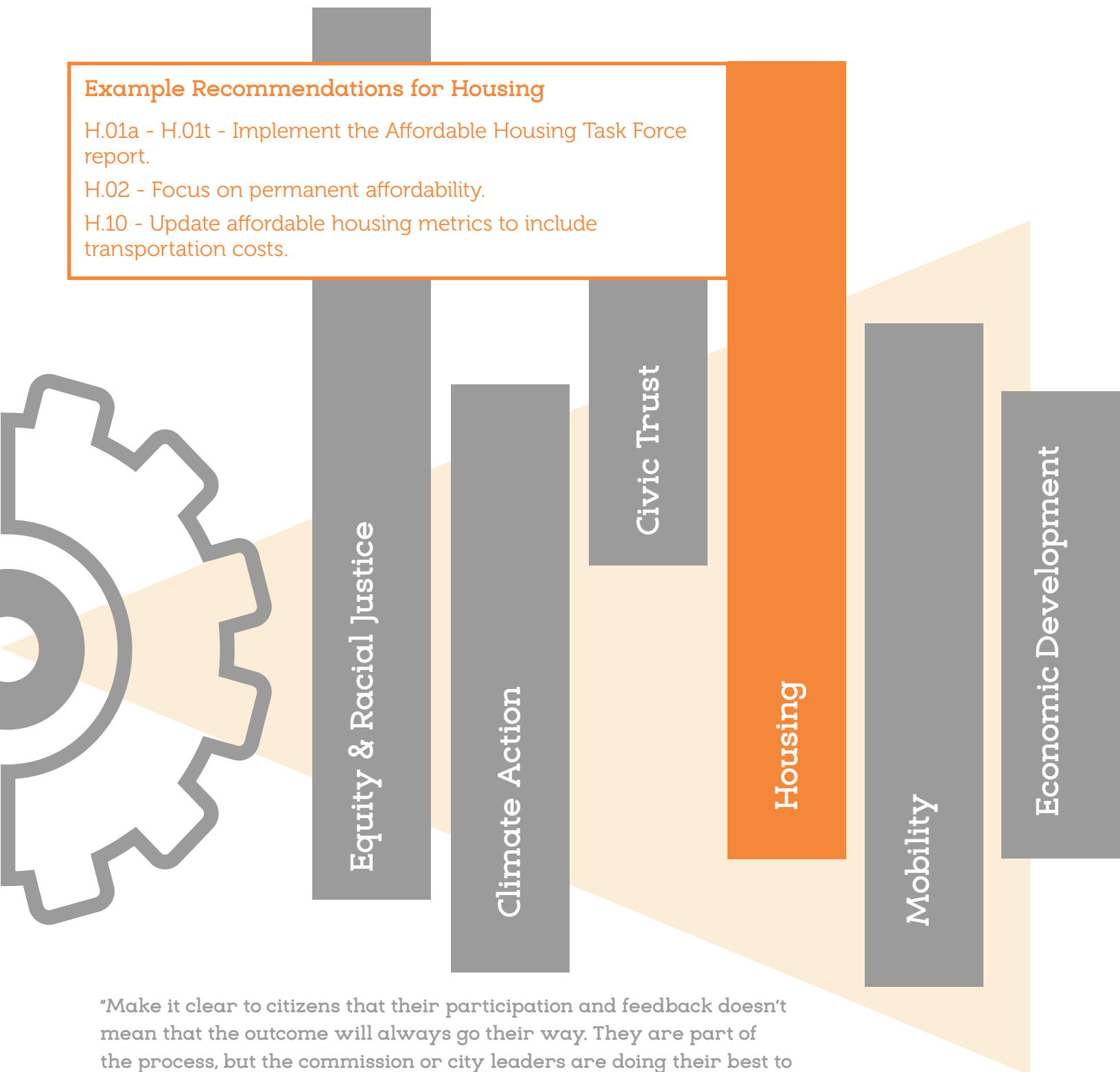
2

### Strategic Partnerships

like the Decatur Land Trust and Decatur Housing Authority

--Online Topic Survey Ranking (209 responses)





"Make it clear to citizens that their participation and feedback doesn't mean that the outcome will always go their way. They are part of the process, but the commission or city leaders are doing their best to represent the whole city (all 25k), not just the citizens who show up to meetings." -- Roundtable Participant

# 3

Examining recommendations through an equity and racial justice lens and confronting climate challenges.



Establishing a long-term vision and mission statements that will drive planning decisions for the next 10 years.



Demonstrating the interconnectivity between all of the topics.





# CHAPTER 3

## Decatur 2030: The Vision

---

Vision & Mission

Everything is Connected

Goals & Tasks:

Equity & Racial Justice

Climate Action

Civic Trust

Affordable Housing

Mobility

Economic Growth

# Decatur 2030

## Vision & Mission Statements

Decatur will foster an equitable, thriving, and welcoming community for all its residents, businesses, and visitors today and in the future.



# We Will:

## 1 Think holistically.

Identify and leverage opportunities to create interconnected policies, programs, and projects that achieve equitable outcomes across all community priorities.

## 2 Confront climate challenges.

Align our goals and practices to strengthen environmental sustainability and resilience in our city and region.

## 3 Work together.

Design and promote ample and ongoing opportunities for community engagement, collaboration, and regional, cross-sector partnerships.

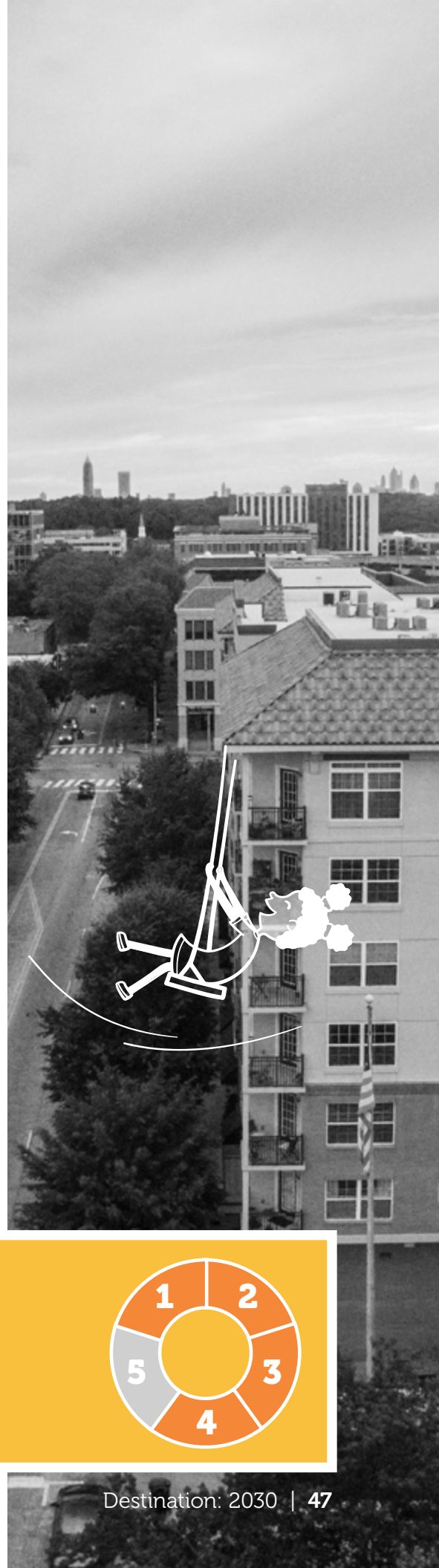
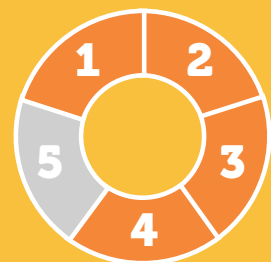
## 4 Embrace accountability.

Define what success looks like, measure outcomes along the way, and tell our story.

## 5 Pioneer innovation.

Inspire ourselves and others by continuing to seek bold and creative solutions in planning and doing.

Where you see this graphic, it indicates how each goal and task supports these mission statements.



# Decatur 2030

## Everything is Connected

The goals and tasks in this chapter are the most important component of the plan. They are Decatur's roadmap for implementing its vision. The structure of this chapter, and of the entire Strategic Plan, was determined by the priorities emphasized by the community. Goals and tasks are grouped into the six color-coded topics, below, which reflect the themes that emerged from the outreach process.

It's hard to talk about one theme without touching on another, and the recommendations intentionally bridge multiple topics. Mobility choices, for instance, have a big impact on the climate. And affordable housing initiatives are inseparable from equity and race. For this reason, icons show how each recommendation may touch on multiple topics.

Where you see these icons, they show how each goal or task is connected to multiple topics.



Equity &  
Racial Justice

Climate Action

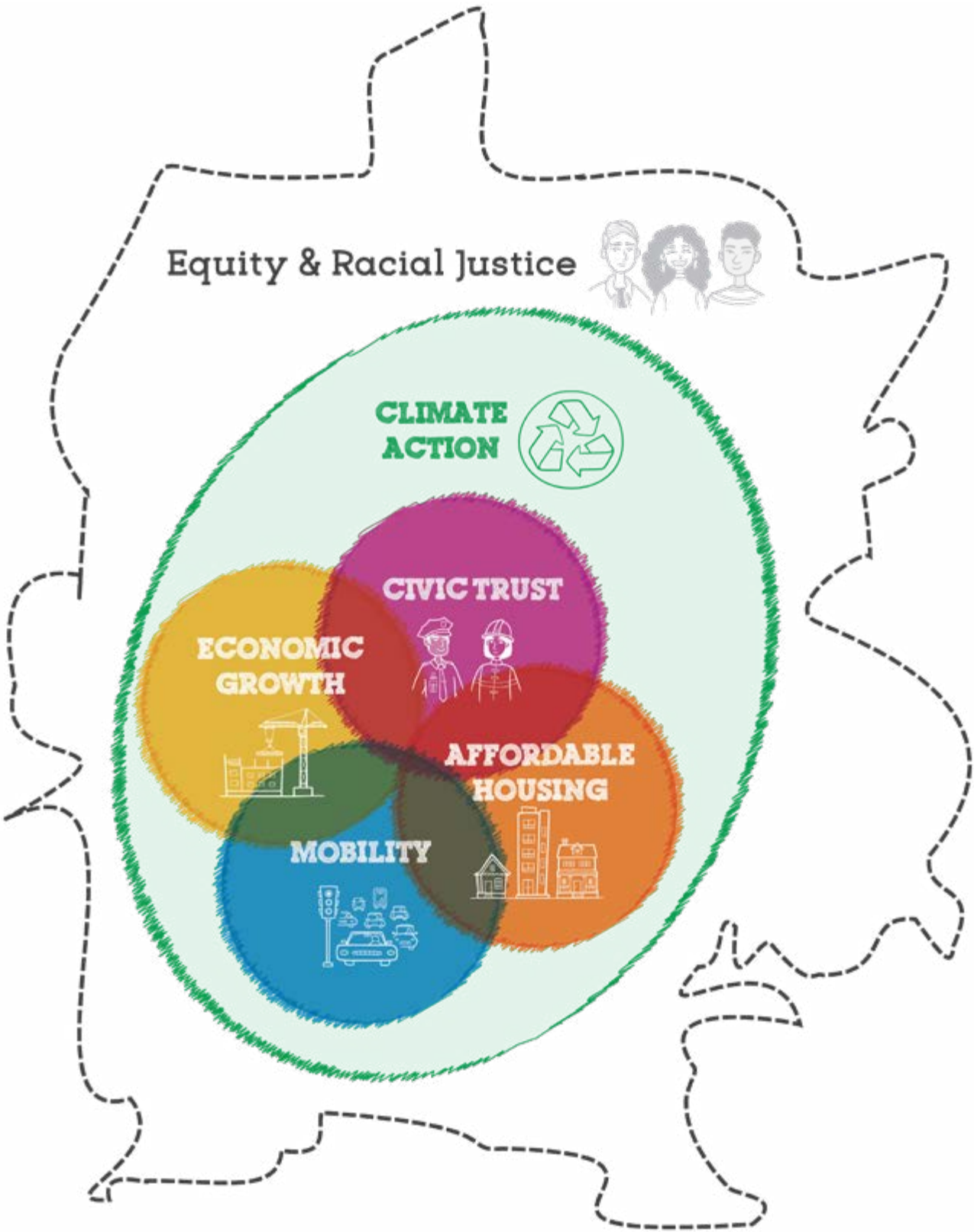
Civic Trust

Affordable  
Housing

Mobility

Economic  
Growth

Each topic is interconnected with the others. Equity and climate action are overarching themes that encompass all topics.



# Goals & Tasks

## Equity & Racial Justice



Integrating proactive equity  
ambitions into every plan





If equitable and anti-racist outcomes are what we want, then our policies, programs, and projects should be shaped with those in mind. That means planning that honors all perspectives and storytelling that incorporates the complete history of our community, including the painful lessons of the past. It means recognizing that learning from those lessons may require rethinking old priorities and altering status quo assumptions unlikely to pass the equity test. While such changes are too often framed as sacrifices, we know they're accelerants for achieving the stabilizing, long-term goals of shared social and economic opportunity for all.

## DEFINING DIVERSITY

When we talk about equitable outcomes for everyone, it's important to define what we mean by "everyone." Throughout this plan, when we talk about diversity and equity, we are referring to the full spectrum of Decatur's community, including all aspects shown in the graphic on the previous page.

### Why call out race?

If we're talking about diversity more broadly, why is this plan specifically addressing racial justice? Because sometimes people use "diversity" as a euphemism to avoid addressing the specific concerns of black people, and the specific injustices that the black community in Decatur continues to face. So we wanted to be clear that this plan intentionally seeks to further anti-racism in Decatur's policies and actions.

## THE DARK SIDE OF SUCCESS

Competition for access to Decatur's pluses has had a negative impact on its economic, racial, and LGBTQ diversity, as the city has become dominated by affluent whites. The conversation in the past decade has shifted from preserving Decatur's diversity to rebuilding it, in order to be sure that the Decatur experience does not remain a luxury good.

## Anti-racist Tools and Policies



### Tools

**EQ.01** Update the Decatur Police Department's Strategic Plan.

**EQ.02** Utilize an Equity Tool.

**EQ.03** Follow the Welcoming Standard.



### Policies

**EQ.04** Establish a Reparations Task Force.

**EQ.05** Offer affordable housing to displaced Decatur residents.

**EQ.06** Focus on place- and people-based economics.

**EQ.07** Diversify events and festivals.

**EQ.08** Proactively hire diverse staff.

**EQ.09** Develop City and department-level Racial Equity Action Plans.

**EQ.10** Strengthen minority participation requirements for City contracts.

**EQ.11** Provide housing options that restore Decatur's diversity.

**EQ.12** Retain and recruit a diversity of businesses

**EQ.13** Consider impacts on vulnerable groups.

## Broadening the conversation



### Communication & Outreach

**EQ.14** Work to make sure all voices are heard.

**EQ.15** Tell all Decatur's stories.

**EQ.16** Install community information kiosks.

**EQ.17** Promote continuing community conversations.

**EQ.18** Communicate existing initiatives and successes.

**EQ.19** Achieve recognition as a Child Friendly City.

**Mission Statement**

**Interconnected Topics**



## It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 54.



The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## TOOLS

**EQ.01 Update the Decatur Police Department's Strategic Plan.** This plan guides all aspects of the Police Department, including equity and use of force policies.

**EQ.02 Utilize an Equity Tool.** This set of questions should be used to help evaluate all City actions, including hiring, communications, events and programs, fees, spending, procurement, and more. The goal should go beyond equity to encourage anti-racist and anti-classist actions.

**EQ.03 Follow the Welcoming Standard.** This benchmark, prepared by Welcoming America, provides a guide to inspire Decatur to be a fully welcoming community.

## POLICIES

### **EQ.04 Establish a Reparations Task Force.**

Black people in Decatur have been unjustly enslaved, segregated, incarcerated, denied housing, displaced, and faced redlining, blockbusting, and gentrification. The Task Force should document the City's role in these injustices and address reparations.

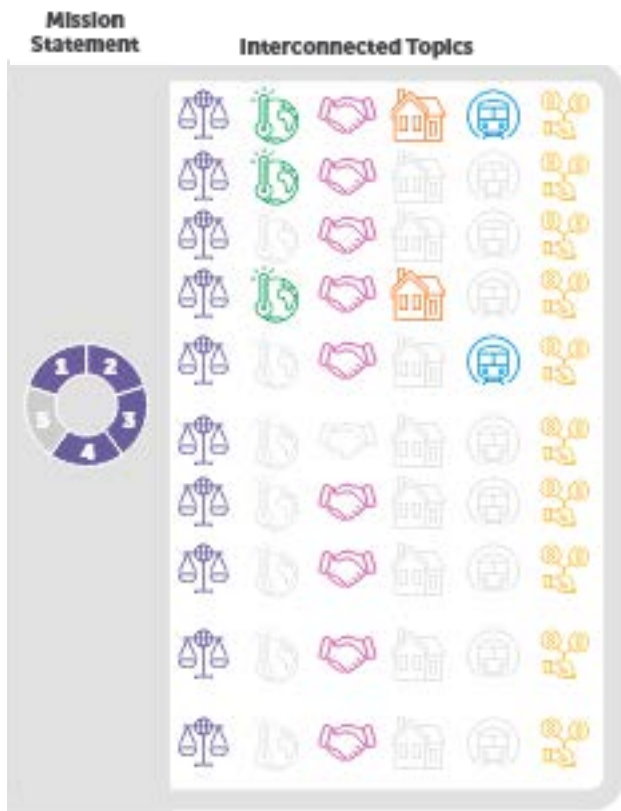
### **EQ.05 Offer affordable housing to displaced Decatur residents.**

This reparations effort could focus on former residents or their descendants who were relocated due to urban redevelopment or outpriced due to gentrification.

### **EQ.06 Focus on place- and people-based economics.**

Grow the economy in a way that builds on Decatur's unique sense of place, and emphasizes people above simple economic trends.

**EQ.07 Diversify events and festivals.** Offerings and attendees at current and future events should bring together a broad cross section of



people.

**EQ.08 Proactively hire diverse staff.** City employees should reflect the full diversity of the Atlanta region and be educated on the City's commitment to equity.

**EQ.09 Develop City and department-level Racial Equity Action Plans.** A City Racial Equity Action Plan should be created, and each City department should prepare and implement a plan that outlines their role in implementing this plan and city-wide policies.

**EQ.10 Strengthen minority participation requirements for City contracts.** Targets for minority-owned businesses should be increased for all types of public contracts.

**EQ.11 Provide housing options that restore Decatur's diversity.** Preserve and expand affordable and diverse housing types to create a more inclusive community.



**EQ.12 Retain and recruit a diversity of businesses.** Business owners, offerings, and clientele should better reflect and serve Decatur's diverse audiences, including residents, employees, and commuters, whether they are locally serving or destination businesses.

**EQ.13 Consider impacts on vulnerable groups.** The impacts of city policies and actions, as well as the broader climate crisis, should be evaluated based on how they affect more vulnerable groups and amended as appropriate.

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

**EQ.14 Work to make sure all voices are heard.** Underrepresented groups must be intentionally invited to participate in civic discussions. Safe space must be made for all perspectives.

**EQ.15 Tell all Decatur's stories.** Continue to tell the stories of diverse Decaturites, past and current, including their role in and contributions to the community. Public art, historic markers, exhibits, online media, and the 200th anniversary celebration should be used to showcase past and present stories.

**EQ.16 Install community information kiosks.** These digital and paper kiosks should be located in activity centers and provide information about events, community meetings, and commonly asked questions.

**EQ.17 Promote continuing community conversations.** These citizen- or city-hosted events could provide a space for true dialog on key city issues in intentionally diverse groups. Resources or discussion guides could be provided by the City.

**EQ.18 Communicate existing initiatives and successes.** Publicize existing efforts related to diversity and equity in Decatur, such as updated policing policies.

**EQ.19 Achieve recognition as a Child Friendly City.** Partner with local child-serving organizations, youth and adult community members to ensure that Decatur is safe, equitable, just, inclusive, and responsive to children.

## ACTIONS

**EQ.20 Implement existing TOD plans.** Work with MARTA and private developers to implement transit oriented development (TOD) around transit stations.

**EQ.21 Update the Better Together Community Action Plan.** This plan addresses equity, inclusion, justice, and engagement and should guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Continue to revisit and update the plan on a regular basis.

**EQ.22 Provide permanently affordable retail space.** The Land Trust should acquire strategic retail space and offer flexible lease terms or below market rate rent to businesses that meet agreed-upon goals.

**EQ.23 Make public spaces more welcoming.** Redesign, contextualize, rename, and otherwise update parks, civic buildings, streets, and other public spaces, understanding that these places may communicate different meanings to people from different backgrounds. Evaluate how programming, usage, and policing can be improved.

**EQ.24 Acknowledge and document Decatur's entire history.** This documentation should address all narratives that have formed part of Decatur's history, and be shared through different vehicles such as walking or biking tours, online resources, monuments or exhibits, and cultural tourism strategies.

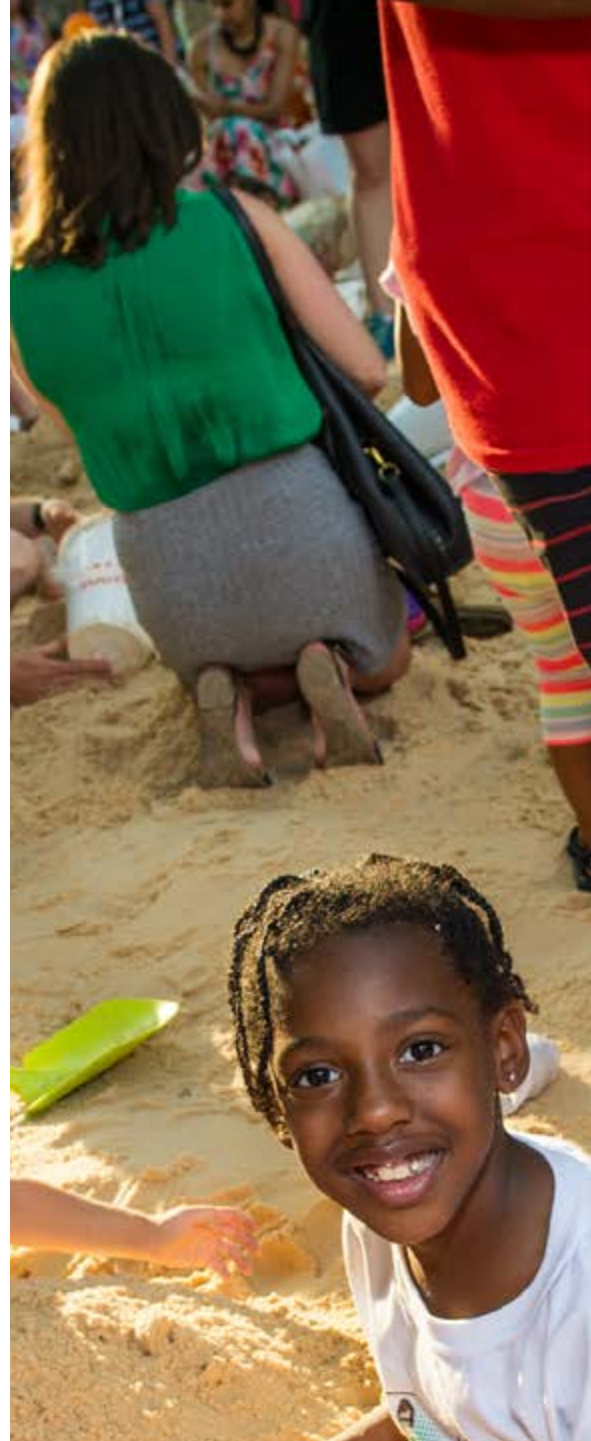
**EQ.25 Establish a childcare voucher pilot program.** This program could expand childcare access for lower income City employees.

**EQ.26 Establish an Equity Director position.** This City staff position should help create and evaluate toolkits and policies related to equity and racial justice.

**EQ.27 Establish an Employee Relations Coordinator position.** This City staff person should coordinate anti-racism training, advise on conflict resolution, investigate concerns related to workplace retaliation, and manage relationship building and morale boosting.

**EQ.28 Partner to create a diversity, equity, and inclusion certificate program.** This educational credential could provide training for community members, especially those who serve on City boards or commissions.

**EQ.29 Draw on local and national resources.** Resources such as the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, the Partnership for Southern Equity, and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce ATL Action for Racial Equity provide a variety of tools, trainings, and playbooks to address discrimination, equity, and economic mobility.



*In 2015, a community effort created the Better Together Community Action Plan, which includes “specific action items for individuals, organizations, and local government to undertake in order to cultivate a just, welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and compassionate city.” The Better Together Advisory Board, established in 2016, assists City staff with public education and outreach activities that promote equity, inclusion, and engagement.*

# Goals & Tasks

## Climate Action



Cut emissions for the long-term,  
prepare to adapt now.

Considering  
alternatives



Energy

- CA.01 Establish greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy targets.
- CA.02 Expand local renewable energy production.
- CA.03 Prepare for emerging technologies.
- CA.04 Identify creative clean energy funding.
- CA.05 Update regulations to require alternative fuels infrastructure.
- CA.06 Convert all City lighting to LED.



The climate crisis demands strategies that mitigate impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ones that help us adapt to changes already underway. Challenges are global. But Decatur can build local resilience by: planning for intense storms, heat waves, and other shocks; combining climate action policies with those addressing challenges in transportation, housing, and equity; and expanding partnerships with governments and non-profits at all levels. Residents, neighborhoods, and businesses have roles, too. Our diets, our energy consumption, and waste disposal habits contribute to the problem and to potential solutions. Without action, impacts will fall disproportionately on those already socially and economically disadvantaged.



## It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 64.

## Establishing a culture of solidarity



### Policies

- CA.07 Create a Climate Action Plan.
- CA.08 Update the City's internal sustainability policies.
- CA.09 Evaluate the carbon impact of City decisions.
- CA.10 Incorporate green infrastructure into all City projects.
- CA.11 Join the Climate Disclosure Project.
- CA.12 Commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.



### Education & Culture Change

- CA.13 Educate the community on true sustainability.
- CA.14 Continue education about water quality.
- CA.15 Establish a green business certification.
- CA.16 Establish a sustainable neighborhood certification.
- CA.17 Empower youth activists.
- CA.18 Create a climate action resource dashboard.



### Resource Recovery

- CA.19 Recover discarded resources appropriately.
- CA.20 Create a pilot compost collection program.
- CA.21 Reduce construction waste.
- CA.22 Reduce single-use materials.



### Food

- CA.23 Expand sustainable and edible landscapes.
- CA.24 Continue to support farmers' markets.



### Resilience

- CA.25 Conduct an urban heat island assessment.
- CA.26 Increase the tree canopy goal.
- CA.27 Prepare for sustained power outages.

## Using existing resources

**Mission Statement**

**Interconnected Topics**



## Growing green



### Green Buildings

- CA.28** Encourage the reuse of historic buildings.
- CA.29** Promote local building traditions
- CA.30** Continue to push the envelope on City facilities.
- CA.31** Amend the High-Performance Building requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance to require carbon footprint documentation.



### Green Infrastructure

- CA.32** Implement the Stormwater Master Plan.
- CA.33** Update the Community Forestry Management Plan.
- CA.34** Acquire additional greenspace.
- CA.35** Prepare a Facilities and Greenspace Master Plan.
- CA.36** Encourage usable green space in new developments.
- CA.37** Remove all creeks from the list of impaired waters.
- CA.38** Promote green stormwater infrastructure first.

## Mission Statement



## Interconnected Topics



# DECATUR



Photo courtesy: PATH Decatur Commerce Drive Cycle Track completed in 2020 through the City of Decatur's partnership with the PATH Foundation

The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## ENERGY

**CA.01 Establish greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy targets.** Aspirational yet realistic goals with specific timeframes should address 24-hour clean energy usage as well as Decatur's carbon footprint (for all Decaturites in addition to City government operations). These should address electrification and be consistent with the Clean Energy Plan.

**CA.02 Expand local renewable energy production.** Encourage regionally sourced renewable energy and on-site energy generation, especially in high-visibility locations on publicly-owned land.

**CA.03 Prepare for emerging technologies.** Ensure opportunities for new renewable energy sources, sustainable infrastructure, and low-impact building materials are not hindered or prevented by current policies and development codes.

**CA.04 Identify creative clean energy funding.** Reinvest savings from energy efficiency in further efficiency improvements, clean energy, or community sustainability projects.

**CA.05 Update regulations to require alternative fuels infrastructure.** Zoning and building code requirements should enlist the private sector in expanding options for electric vehicle charging and other fuels.

**CA.06 Convert all City lighting to LED.** Streetlights and all outdoor fixtures, as well as indoor lighting, should be converted to energy saving LED.

## POLICIES

**CA.07 Create a Climate Action Plan.** The 2012 Environmental Sustainability Plan should be updated and incorporated into this plan.

**CA.08 Update the City's internal sustainability policies.** Revisit policies related to purchasing, building construction and performance, events, resource usage, and more to include lifecycle impacts and be consistent with other plans. Create a sustainability handbook for employees.

## Which actions have the biggest impact on climate change?

Many environmental priorities (such as single-use plastics) have a minimal impact on the climate. Other actions (such as plant-based diets and lifestyle changes) can be hard for local government to influence. This plan focuses on actions that the city government can take to reduce its own climate impact and help citizens do the same.



**CA.09 Evaluate the carbon impact of City decisions.** Develop a procedure for understanding and mitigating the environmental consequences of City policies and spending.

**CA.10 Incorporate green infrastructure into all City projects.** Transportation, building, and public space improvements should include elements of stormwater treatment, energy generation, education, recycled materials, habitat creation, and similar elements.

**CA.11 Join the Climate Disclosure Project.** This platform will allow Decatur to manage its emissions data and make them public.

**CA.12 Commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.** This public pledge will provide transparency about Decatur's sustainability goals.

## EDUCATION & CULTURE CHANGE

**CA.13 Educate the community on true sustainability.** Increase awareness of the true impacts of everyone's decisions on the climate and the local environment and water quality, including the balance of technology compared to lifestyle changes, and which changes have the most impact. Provide educational resources to allow homes and businesses to prepare emergency plans

**CA.14 Continue education about water quality.** Help the public understand existing pollution levels, stormwater management, pet waste, landscaping alternatives, and how they can improve local stream health.

**CA.15 Establish a green business certification.** In partnership with the Decatur Business Association, this program could establish tiered criteria to encourage and promote local sustainable businesses.

**CA.16 Establish a sustainable neighborhood certification.** In partnership with the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance, this program could encourage friendly competition between neighborhoods to gain points related to sustainable criteria.

**CA.17 Empower youth activists.** The worldwide student climate movement should be leveraged in Decatur by adding a youth member to the Environmental Sustainability Board and enlisting youth in implementing climate and sustainability goals.

**CA.18 Create a climate action resource dashboard.** This online resource should link to local non-profits that provide services to help citizens live more sustainably.

## RESOURCE RECOVERY

**CA.19 Recover discarded resources appropriately.** Opportunities to reuse, compost, and recycle items should be promoted and expanded to reduce waste, based on the results of the Waste Characterization Study.

**CA.20 Create a pilot compost collection program.** This fee-supported City program would collect compostable material from local homes and businesses.

**CA.21 Reduce construction waste.** Educate homeowners and contractors on how to reduce the amount of construction and demolition debris as part of the building permit application process.

**CA.22 Reduce single-use materials.** Educational campaigns, policies, and ordinances should help local businesses and consumers choose sustainable or reusable alternatives to disposable plastic and other materials, including at City facilities and City-sponsored events.

## FOOD

**CA.23 Expand sustainable and edible landscapes.** Create a toolkit for citizens and developers, update policies, and fund demonstration projects that focus on plants and trees that produce food or require fewer pesticides and less irrigation.

**CA.24 Continue to support farmers' markets. Ensure regular access to fresh, local produce throughout the City.** Provide permanent market space at Legacy Park and encourage pop-up farm stands in commercial areas and MARTA stations.

## RESILIENCE

**CA.25 Conduct an urban heat island assessment.** This study should evaluate neighborhood-level impacts of increasing temperatures, heat waves, and power outages, particularly with regard to vulnerable populations.

**CA.26 Increase the tree canopy goal.** This citywide goal, currently at 50%, should be increased to help reduce the heat island effect. Different goals will be appropriate for different areas.

**CA.27 Prepare for sustained power outages.** Ensure that adequate backup systems, alternative energy sources, and emergency supplies are available.

## GREEN BUILDINGS

**CA.28 Encourage the reuse of historic buildings.** These can be as energy efficient as new construction and preserve the embodied carbon in existing structures.

**CA.29 Promote local building traditions.** Historic building types are well adapted to the Georgia climate and may include elements such as porches, curtains, eaves, or masonry construction, in addition to being smaller or more space efficient.

**CA.30 Continue to push the envelope on City facilities.** Consider how new and renovated facilities can become living buildings or achieve the highest levels of green building certification.

**CA.31 Amend the High-Performance Building requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance to require carbon footprint documentation.** Simple calculations based on construction type, embodied energy, and lifetime energy usage could educate applicants and provide valuable data.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

**CA.32 Implement the Stormwater Master Plan.** This plan should shape City stormwater infrastructure in addition to the next generation of private stormwater investment.

**CA.33 Update the Community Forestry Management Plan.** Broaden the scope of the plan and focus on how to adapt to the changing climate as well as tree preservation, care, and planting.

**CA.34 Acquire additional greenspace.** The City should strategically acquire land when it becomes available and meets broader City goals.

### **CA.35 Prepare a Facilities and Greenspace**

**Master Plan.** This plan should address construction, upgrades, and maintenance of City buildings, parks, and other facilities and be sure that they reflect Decatur's priorities and are attractive, efficient, sustainable, and accessible. It should also create an inventory of land that could be used for agriculture. It should also recommend adequate heating and cooling centers for heat waves or other climate emergencies.

**CA.36 Encourage usable green space in new developments.** Promote creative solutions to existing open space requirements, especially in urban areas.

**CA.37 Remove all creeks from the list of impaired waters.** Several creeks in Decatur violate state water quality standards. Interrelated efforts should be made to reduce pollution by targeted education, monitoring, enforcement, and restoration.

**CA.38 Promote green stormwater infrastructure first.** Create a handbook of tools for developers and engineers, as well as applications in parks or rights-of-way, to encourage green stormwater design.



*The Stormwater Master Plan was updated and adopted in 2020. Up next: a Clean Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan.*



# Goals & Tasks

## Civic Trust

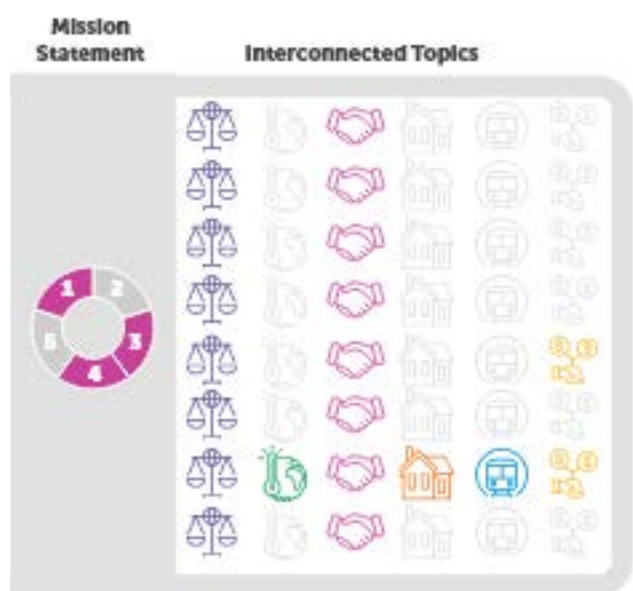


Empowering bold ambitions  
with high trust





A community thrives when governments and citizens work together to respond to challenges. Success moves at the speed of trust that comes with citizens' confidence that government is responding to their concerns with action that solves problems and expands opportunities. The higher the trust, the more support for ambitious plans. The proven tools for inspiring that virtuous circle? Constant community conversation about the alignment of goals and the strategies to achieve them; a track record of connecting listening, action, and measurable outcomes; and a commitment to transparency every step along the way.



## It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 72.

## Building trust



### Telling Our Story

- C.09 Tell and re-tell Decatur's success stories.
- C.10 Develop a formalized public information process.
- C.11 Reposition communications channels.
- C.12 Develop city staff communication protocols.

## Fostering transparency



### Ongoing Conversation

- C.13 Broaden the means of engagement.
- C.14 Leverage existing citizen networks.
- C.15 Continue the tradition of educational lectures.
- C.16 Convene a forum for non-profits and institutional organizations.



### Specific Tools

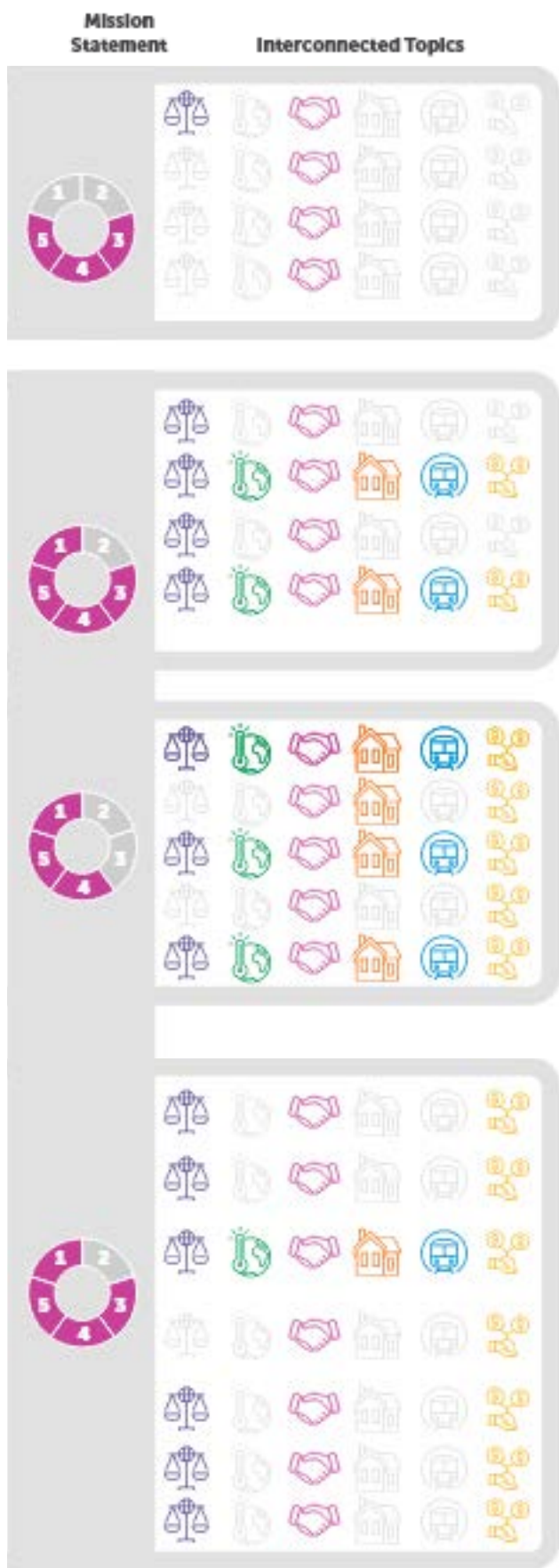
- C.17 Create a one-stop app.
- C.18 Develop an online permit portal.
- C.19 Launch a plan implementation dashboard
- C.20 Update the Welcome to Decatur packet.
- C.21 Update the City's Emergency Response Plan

## Tools & resources



### Other Strategies

- C.22 Update the Cultural Arts Master Plan.
- C.23 Consider creating a neighborhood mini-grant program.
- C.24 Reaffirm the commitment to financial accountability.
- C.25 Support an innovative and creative work environment.
- C.26 Recruit the best employees possible.
- C.27 Retain the best employees.
- C.28 Align procurement policies with this plan.



The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## **BUILDING TRUST**

### **Collaboration, Transparency, & Accountability**

**C.01 Clearly assert the City's responsibility to its citizens.** The list of expectations for elected officials and city employees should include accountability, ethics, transparency, and responsiveness.

**C.02 Continue to empower Decatur's citizens.** Provide opportunities not only for public input, but for citizens to take ownership of and actively shape municipal affairs.

**C.03 Inspire civic responsibility.** Emphasize that relationships between citizens and the City must go beyond online conversations in order to produce real change. Actively promote all channels that are open for democratic participation.

**C.04 Improve understanding of the planning process.** Show how compromises are made between divergent opinions and how community needs are prioritized above individual needs.

**C.05 Become a Plan First Community.** This state designation recognizes communities that show a pattern of successfully implementing plans.

**C.06 Create a civic-savvy certification.** Graduates of the Decatur 101 program could be allowed to apply for this credential to show their understanding of the local democratic process and their commitment to participate in the ongoing development and implementation of Decatur's vision.

**C.07 Draw on the expertise of advisory boards.** These groups should continue to provide recommendations on a variety of matters to city government.

**C.08 Continue to involve youth in decision making.** Ensure that members of the Decatur Youth Council contribute to all major planning efforts and that middle and elementary school students are also included.

### **Telling Our Story**

**C.09 Tell and re-tell Decatur's success stories.** Using messaging consistent with the Strategic Plan, communicate Decatur's demonstrated commitment to listening and history of keeping promises, including the intent behind new or controversial decisions and how they connect with the community's vision.

**C.10 Develop a formalized public information process.** A Public Information Officer should be authorized to establish consistent communications protocols, serve as the single voice for the city, and build a website-centric communications strategy.

**C.11 Reposition communications channels.** The city's broad diversity of communications channels (social media, the Focus, email newsletters, etc.) should continue to be leveraged, but should be repositioned from primary sources of information to promoting information that lives and evolves on the website.

**C.12 Develop city staff communication protocols.** These should direct media and other notable inquiries to the PIO rather than individual staff in order to ensure consistent and accurate responses that reflect all relevant considerations.

## FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY

### The Ongoing Conversation

#### **C.13 Broaden the means of engagement.**

Build on the momentum of online engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and use more tools to engage citizens in new ways.

#### **C.14 Leverage existing citizen networks.**

Establish a list of communications partners that will distribute official City information to their interest groups.

**C.15 Continue the tradition of educational lectures.** Community educational events such as the Anti-Racism Speaker Series and the Decatur 202s should become a recurring forum for information and dialog on relevant topics, such as density.

**C.16 Convene a forum for non-profits and institutional organizations.** This annual forum will allow ideas, resources, and strategies to be shared among organizations and with the City.



The Decatur Focus remains one of the City's best communications tools. A centralized approach to outreach and communications should rely on this publication as well as the City's website.

## Specific Tools

**C.17 Create a one-stop app.** The functionality of the existing Decatur app should be expanded and should include relevant content along with the functionality of the updated website.

**C.18 Develop an online permit portal.** This easy-to-use website should include all city applications, provide information on proposed developments, and allow fees to be paid online.

**C.19 Launch a plan implementation dashboard.** This webpage should show progress on the adopted plans.

**C.20 Update the Welcome to Decatur packet.** This information should build on the content published yearly in the Focus, and should be distributed to new homeowners, renters, and business owners to introduce Decatur's values, and explain how to find information and get engaged.

**C.21 Update the City's Emergency Response Plan.** Document lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing climate, and update emergency plans as appropriate.

## Other Strategies

**C.22 Update the Cultural Arts Master Plan.** This plan should consider public art, interactive and performance art, the role of arts in all City efforts, the feasibility of a small theater, and how art can better tell the diverse stories of Decatur.

**C.23 Consider creating a neighborhood mini-grant program.** The budgeting process already invites citizen engagement, but funds should be set aside for specific community-nominated projects in line with the Strategic Plan.

**C.24 Reaffirm the commitment to financial accountability.** Maintain the highest standards of financial accountability of public funds.



Mayor Patti Garrett speaks to a Decatur 101 class

**C.25 Support an innovative and creative work environment.** Attract the best employees, provide them with and maintain the tools they need to perform their work safely and effectively, and set an expectation of exceptional public service. Establish an employee innovation program to promote and fund the implementation of new ideas.

**C.26 Recruit the best employees possible.** Focus on knowledge and skills, a commitment to high performance, and an appreciation for Decatur's unique character.

**C.27 Retain the best employees.** Provide just compensation and benefits, the highest level of employee training possible, and a commitment to developing leadership potential. Expand the employee recognition program.

**C.28 Align procurement policies with this plan.** City purchasing and contracting policies should be examined as opportunities to increase diversity and sustainability, as well as promote a living wage and access to childcare.



# Goals & Tasks

## Affordable Housing



Ensuring housing diversity  
through innovative policy-making



The City of Decatur hosted an Affordable Housing Summit in 2018 to advance the housing conversation. Then, the Affordable Housing Task Force, established the following year, drew from a wealth of local experts to create a detailed analysis and set of strategies to move forward. The City has started to implement recommendations since the report was accepted by the City Commission. Some cannot be implemented due to legal limitations in the state of Georgia, however, including the recommendations in the Strategic Plan now makes them official City policy.



Safe, stable housing is the foundation on which families and entire communities build their futures. And it's not just about shelter—expanding access to housing serves a range of goals, particularly equity and diversity goals. Since Black families are over-represented among those forced out when costs of living soar, the city is increasingly becoming an exclusive enclave of white wealth. Attainable housing in the right places also makes biking and walking more convenient and helps reduce our carbon footprint by living in more compact neighborhoods.

#### Mission Statement



#### Interconnected Topics



### It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 80.



## Accountability and long-term success



### Goals & Guidelines

H.02 Focus on permanent affordability.

H.03 Ensure that each neighborhood provides its fair share of affordable housing.

H.04 Create an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

H.05 Implement the housing recommendations of the Legacy Park Master Plan.

H.06 Generate a comprehensive list of City incentives and exemptions.

H.07 Adopt universal building design guidelines.

H.08 Create an affordable housing tracker.

## Considering the comprehensive cost of living



### Housing & Transportation

H.09 Update affordable housing metrics to include transportation costs.

H.10 Master plan proposed transit stations.

H.11 Establish minimum density thresholds near MARTA stations.

H.12 Require some parking-free housing.



### New Initiatives

H.13 Start an employer assisted housing program.

H.13 Explore a short-term rental fee.

H.15 Support the creation of a shelter for the homeless.

H.16 Encourage a variety of unit sizes.

H.17 Expand where boardinghouses and roominghouses are allowed.

**Mission Statement**

**Interconnected Topics**



The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## THE FOLLOWING ARE BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

**H.01-a Create an Affordable Housing Advisory Board.** This board should have the experience and expertise to tackle one of the most pressing and urgent issues facing the city.

**H.01-b Hire permanent staff to advance affordable housing goals.** This person would provide needed staff capacity for planning and implementation, and could potentially be a shared position between the City and Decatur Housing Authority.

**H.01-c Amend RS-17 zoning.** Make townhouses a conditional use and allow accessory dwelling units for single-family homes.

**H.01-d Revise the tax payment assistance program.** Increase the income eligibility limit from \$20,000 to 100% of area median income (AMI).

**H.01-e Create a rental assistance program.** This program would be set up under the Legacy Project and provide assistance on upfront rental costs to those who work in Decatur, want to live in Decatur, and make 120% of AMI or less.

**H.01-f Create an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) finance program.** This soft-loan program would leverage homeowner commitments to create ADUs and keep them affordable to households earning 80% of AMI or less for the duration of the loan.

**H.01-g Develop innovative pipelines of available land.** Increase the supply of affordable housing on property owned by the City (including Legacy Park), County, MARTA, non-profits, churches, parking lots, and more.

**H.01-h Help fund the Decatur Land Trust.** The City should build capacity and momentum in

this crucial organization.

**H.01-i Allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes in single-family zoning.** Design, height, and scale requirements will ensure compatibility, but increased FAR should be allowed.

**H.01-j Provide developer incentives for all affordable housing.** These should include reduced permit fees, priority review, and reduced parking requirements.

**H.01-k Actively encourage innovative housing types, and remove barriers that prevent the opportunities for construction.** Encourage co-housing, co-living, and cottage courts.

**H.01-l Adopt development impact fees.** While impact fees cannot directly support affordable housing, they can be used to free up other City resources.

**H.01-m Pursue affordable housing funding structures.** Housing opportunity bonds and tax allocation district (TAD) financing can help fund affordable housing or help offset development costs of projects that contain affordable housing that meet or exceeds requirements.

**H.01-n Dedicate general funds to affordable housing.** This funding could cover administration, planning, and management of affordable housing efforts.

**H.01-o Explore additional sources of revenue.** A real estate transfer tax, for instance, could be a dedicated source of revenue for affordable housing.

**H.01-p Form strategic partnerships.** The City should form working relationships with the Decatur Housing Authority, local non-profits, and other entities to leverage their strengths, relationships, funding access, and legal authority.

**H.01-q Finance the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.** Establish an ongoing source of funding

and investment strategy for this entity, which should be the primary container of affordable housing dollars.

**H.01-r Expand create effective community engagement and education.** Determine the best messaging and approaches to address myths and build allies for achieving affordable housing goals.

**H.01-s Identify high-impact messaging.** Tell the story about making Decatur a diverse and vibrant city. Elevate the issue, explain disparities, and highlight solutions.

**H.01-t Develop new affordable housing units.** Promote the development of at least 60 units per year that are affordable to households earning 30-60% of Area Median Income and at least 100 units per year that are affordable to households earning 60-120% of Area Median Income.

**H.01-u Preserve existing affordable housing units.** Preserve 933 existing affordable housing units and 518 existing Decatur Housing Authority units.

## OTHER INITIATIVES

### Goals & Guidelines

**H.02 Focus on permanent affordability.** All affordable housing preservation and creation should have the goal of permanent affordability.

**H.03 Ensure that each neighborhood provides its fair share of affordable housing.** Neighborhoods should be allowed to choose affordable housing strategies that fit them best, but each area of the City must do its part.

**H.04 Create an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.** Decatur is already designated as an AARP Age-Friendly Community but needs to write, adopt, and monitor implementation of an Action Plan.

**H.05 Implement the housing recommendations of the Legacy Park Master Plan.**

**H.06 Generate a comprehensive list of City incentives and exemptions.** Determine which code or density requirements and permit fees can be reduced or waived and establish an eligibility threshold based on number and price of affordable units.

## Decatur Land Trust

Community Land Trusts are non-profit organizations that hold land and sell or lease homes on that land to ensure permanently affordable housing while also allowing homeowners to build wealth. The Decatur Land Trust has been in existence for several years but has not been fully funded or staffed.



**H.07 Adopt universal building design guidelines.** Allow new commercial buildings, businesses, and homes to be visitable by those with mobility impairments.

**H.08 Create an affordable housing tracker.** Provide accountability by showing the number of units preserved and developed each year toward the goals of the Affordable Housing Task Force Report.

## **Housing & Transportation**

**H.09 Update affordable housing metrics to include transportation costs.** Targets based on AMI should also incorporate transportation costs to incentivize developments with less parking and near transit or in major centers. Metrics should apply to all affordable housing efforts.

**H.10 Master plan proposed transit station areas.** Work with MARTA and DeKalb County to develop master plans around Clifton Corridor light rail stations adjacent to the city limits. Plans should address density, parking, affordable housing, and annexation potential.

**H.11 Establish minimum density thresholds near MARTA stations.** Overlay zoning districts with minimum units per acre would prohibit low density development while also limiting scale appropriately.

**H.12 Require some parking-free housing.** Limit parking in affordable housing developments to no more than one parking space per housing unit.

## **New Initiatives**

**H.13 Start an employer assisted housing program.** Create a pilot program to help subsidize City employees' housing costs, then partner with other major local employers.

**H.14 Explore a short-term rental fee.** Regulate short-term rentals and assess appropriate taxes, such as hotel/motel taxes, which could provide a dedicated funding source for Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

**H.15 Support the creation of a shelter for the homeless.** Work with a local church or other partner to set up a small shelter that also provides services related to employment, long-term housing, and health.

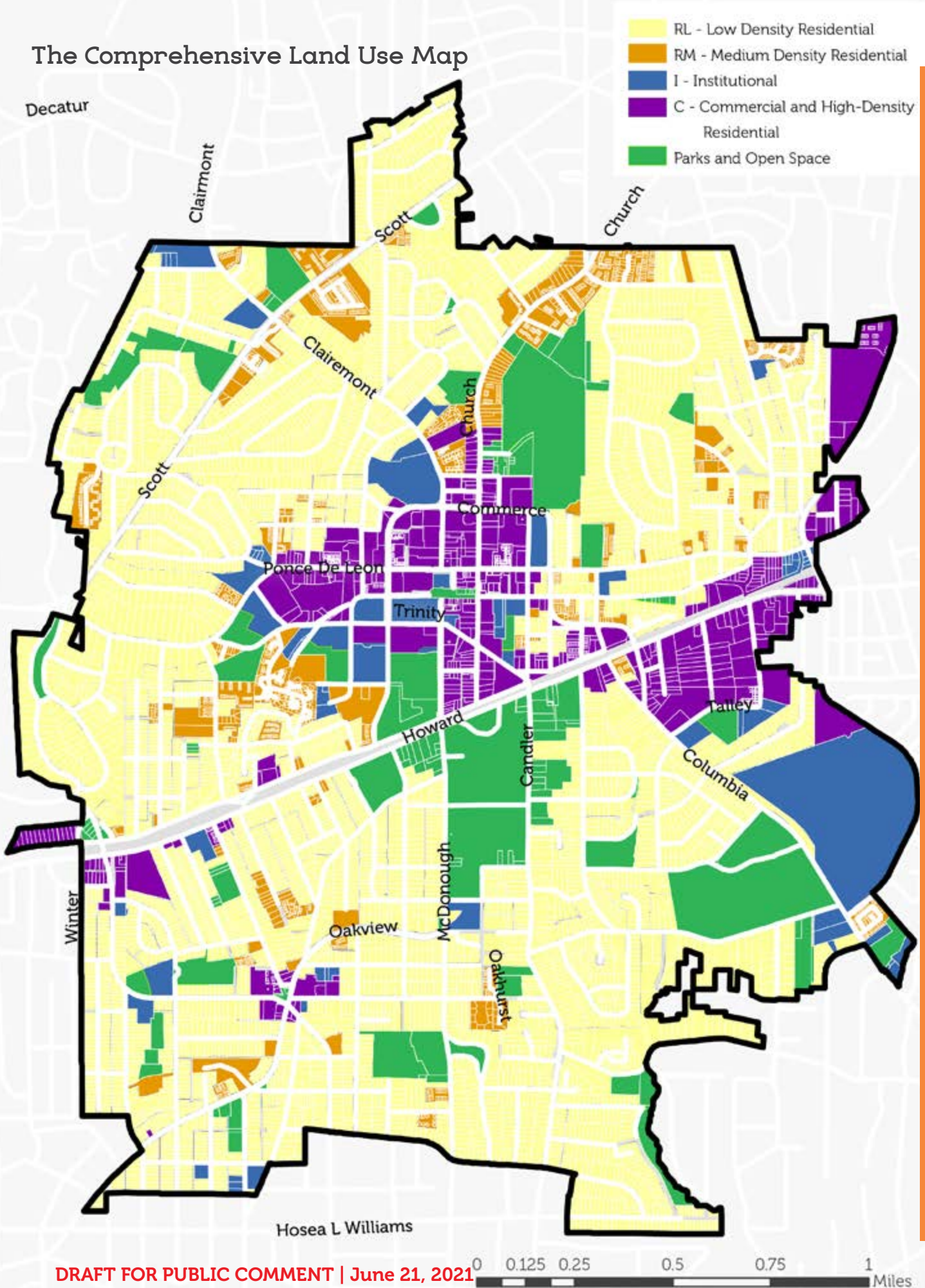
**H.16 Encourage a variety of unit sizes.** A percentage of new units in multifamily developments should be required to be micro units to ensure relative affordability, as well as 3+ bedroom units to accommodate larger households.

**H.17 Expand where boardinghouses and roominghouses are allowed.** The Unified Development Ordinance should be amended to allow these once-popular housing types as limited uses in additional zoning districts.

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

The City of Decatur's existing and future land use maps are the same (see right), named the Comprehensive Land Use Map. Decatur has a fine-grained existing land use pattern characterized by commercial, mixed-use, or institutional nodes of activity surrounded by lower density, primarily residential uses. This plan recommends no changes to the land use map; however, some zoning modifications as recommended in other city plans may be needed to align the zoning and land use.

# The Comprehensive Land Use Map



# Goals & Tasks

## Mobility



Safer and more affordable ways  
for getting around—  
for more people, more of the time.





Making biking, walking, and transit more convenient has bonus value. Eliminating just one household car can free up \$700 or more a month (AAA estimate) to buy or rent a home—a boost for equity, since Black families are more likely to be caught in the housing crunch. Fewer cars means lower greenhouse gas emissions and opportunities to transition pavement and parking to other uses, including trees or stormwater management. Add in the health benefits, too, not only for individuals, but also for a community that feels more neighborly experienced on foot or bikes instead of through a car window.

#### Mission Statement

#### Interconnected Topics



## It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 88.

## Changing mindsets



### Culture

- M.11** Expand access to safety training for drivers and cyclists.
- M.12** Expand the existing Transportation Management Association (TMA) servicing Decatur or explore creating stand-alone Decatur TMA
- M.13** Embrace "deep walkability."
- M.14** Install more wayfinding signs focused on walking and biking.

## Expanding transportation options



### Walking & Biking

- M.15** Expand pedestrian amenities.
- M.16** Continue citywide sidewalk assessment.
- M.17** Improve crosswalks.
- M.18** Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program.
- M.19** Encourage more bike parking.
- M.20** Continue implementation of the Decatur PATH plan.



### Transit

- M.22** Increase transit service.
- M.23** Create a neighborhood circulator bus.
- M.24** Improve MARTA stations.

## Parking management



### Parking

- M.25** Manage the supply of parking for efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- M.26** Update regulations to prevent the construction of space exclusively for automobile parking.
- M.27** Emphasize long-term parking sustainability.
- M.28** Conduct a parking utilization study for all activity centers.

**Mission Statement**

**Interconnected Topics**



The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## THE BIG PICTURE

### **M.01 Implement the 2018 Community Transportation Plan (CTP),** including:

- » Priority corridor improvements, working with the Georgia Dept. of Transportation on improvements to state routes
- » Intersection improvements
- » Traffic calming improvements

### **M.02 Plan for the “10-minute neighborhood.”**

Make sure that people of all abilities can safely get to a local activity center within 10 minutes without a car (see below).

### **M.03 Become a gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community,** based on the American League of Bicyclists scorecard.

### **M.04 Become a gold-level Walk Friendly Community,** based on the assessment tool from Walk Friendly Communities.

### **M.05 Promote connectivity.** Support opportunities to better connect the street grid and trail systems.

### **M.06 Explore the redesign of some streets.** Designate streets—especially downtown—for periodic conversion to event spaces or pedestrian-only streets.

### **M.07 Expand intelligent transportation**

**systems (ITS).** Install smart traffic signals and crosswalk signals. Improve signal timing and the ability to adjust them remotely.

### **M.08 Prepare for the impact of new**

**technologies.** Evaluate how future transportation technologies will impact the priorities of this plan and adjust policies appropriately.

### **M.09 Plan for a resilient transportation**

**network.** Consider alternate routes, transportation modes, and redundancy to better prepare for the increasing impact of storms and other emergencies.

### **M.10 Perform a curb management study.**

Examine loading, rideshare drop-off/pickup, bus stops, and parking in activity centers to ensure efficient use of curb space.

### **M.11 Consider the environmental impact of transportation investments.** Evaluate how public improvements will affect travel behavior and associated carbon footprints, stormwater impact, habitat, and other environmental factors.

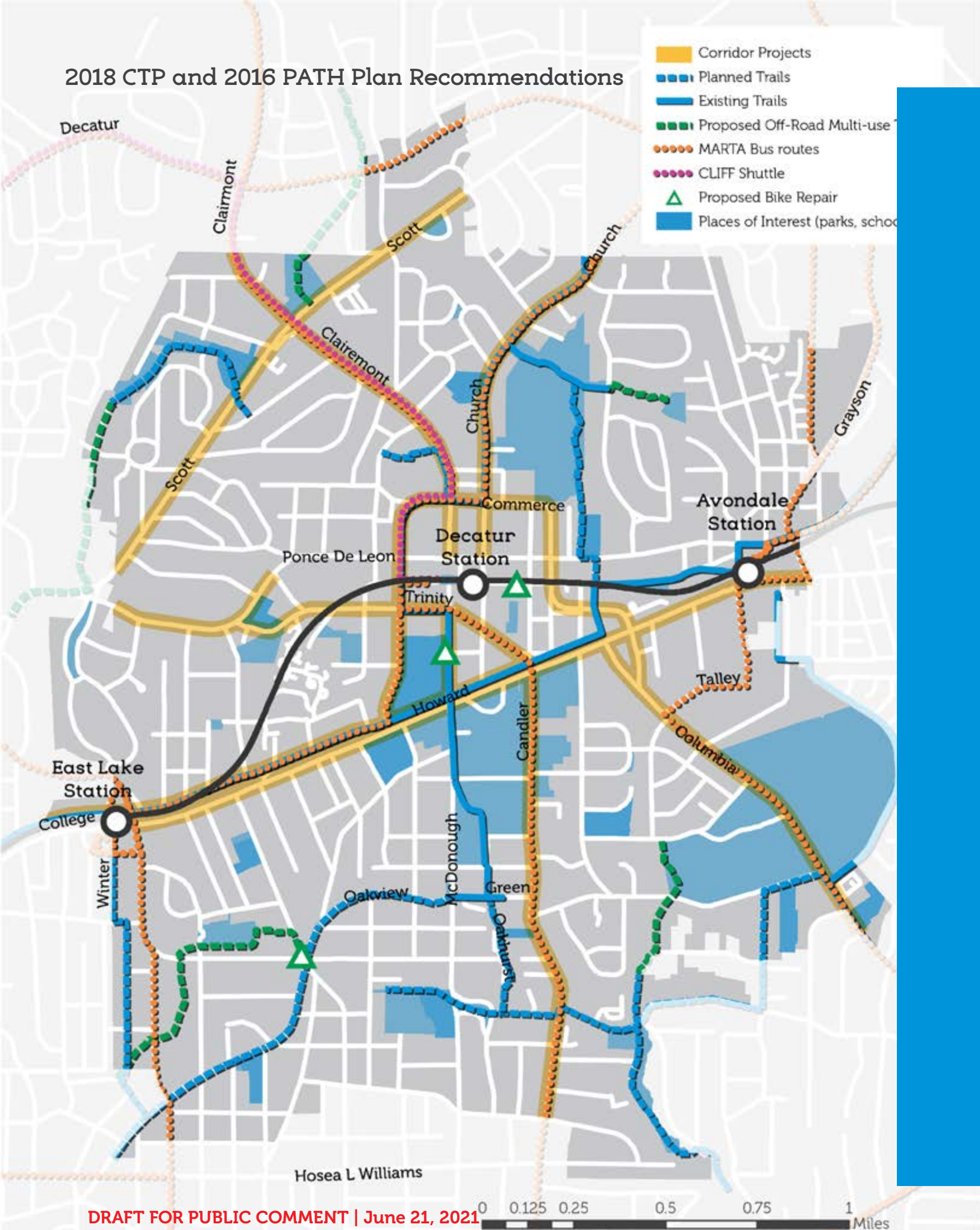
### **M.12 Promote the use of neighborhood electric vehicles.** The low energy usage of these small vehicles could help replace some car trips and reduce carbon footprint.

## What is a 10-minute neighborhood?

A 10-minute neighborhood provides most daily needs within a short walk or bike ride. These include a mix of housing types and prices, groceries, restaurants, shops and services, public transportation, parks and playgrounds, libraries, and schools.



## 2018 CTP and 2016 PATH Plan Recommendations



## CULTURE

**M.13 Expand access to safety training for drivers and cyclists.** Promote safe cycling classes offered by the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition to encourage bicycling.

**M.14 Expand the existing Transportation Management Association (TMA) servicing Decatur or explore creating a stand-alone Decatur TMA.** The TMA should manage a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, incentives, and transit passes. It should also develop a transportation trade-offs education program to highlight safety, cost, environmental impact, and equity.

**M.15 Embrace “deep walkability.”** Promote walking by stressing the interrelatedness of transportation infrastructure costs, the advantages of density, quality public spaces, public health, greenhouse gas reduction, and a diversity of small businesses.

**M.16 Install more wayfinding signs focused on walking and biking.** Signs should highlight both the walking and biking times to major destinations and include facts about safety, health, and cost savings.

**M.17 Encourage commuting by foot and on bike.** In 2018, only 10% of Decatur residents’ commutes occurred via walking or biking. Continue the awareness campaign about walking distance and calories burned.

**M.18 Establish metrics to evaluate the success of implementation of alternative transportation goals.** Establish specific timelines for increasing the percentage of trips made in Decatur without a car. Evaluate the impact of transportation investments on achieving this goal.

## WALKING & BIKING

**M.19 Expand pedestrian amenities.** Provide amenities such as benches, street trees and shade structures, public restrooms, and drinking fountains to make walking more appealing.

**M.20 Continue the citywide sidewalk assessment.** Make sure all sidewalks are in good repair and meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**M.21 Improve crosswalks.** Use public art, better signaling systems, and other means to ensure safe and easy street crossings.

# Transit Oriented Development Guidelines

MARTA’s Transit Oriented Development (TOD) guidelines are intended to ensure appropriate development and public spaces in the areas around transit stations. Following these guidelines will help create deep walkability and reach climate, equity, and affordable housing goals.

### Decatur Station (Town Center Classification)

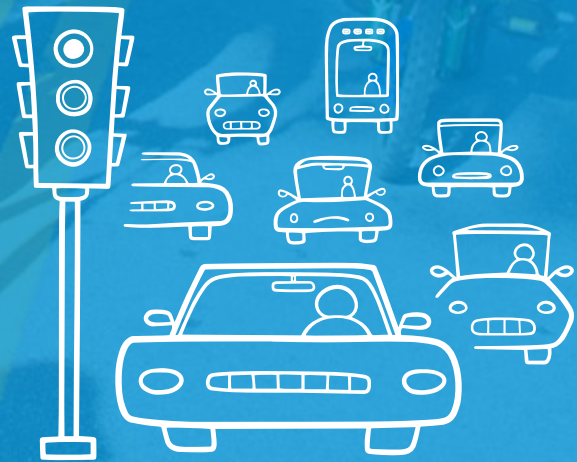
Should continue to include a balanced mix of residential, office, retail, restaurant, and civic uses in mid-rise buildings. The station should be the center of a pedestrian network. Parking should be limited and hidden.

### East Lake and Avondale Stations (Neighborhood Classification)

Should include multi-family residential buildings with a neighborhood-scale mix of uses. A pedestrian network should lead to the station. Development should transition to lower-density surroundings.

# What is a Transportation Management Association (TMA)?

TMA's are non-profit organizations focused on helping employees and residents find alternate commutes. They educate on and advertise options for walking, biking, and public transit, and help connect people to carpools. The Clifton Corridor TMA already provides service to Downtown Decatur from the Emory University area.



**M.22 Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program.** Partner with the City Schools of Decatur to support the program at each school location.

**M.23 Encourage more bike parking.** Update the City's Bicycle Parking Guidelines to include numerical requirements, design standards, and long vs. short-term parking. Incorporate bicycle parking requirements into the UDO and create standards for City facilities.

**M.24 Continue implementation of the Decatur PATH Plan.** Increase efforts to create an interconnected network of paved trails to link neighborhoods with Decatur destinations and the region.

## TRANSIT

**Work with MARTA to:**

**M.25 Increase transit service.** Increase bus and train frequency and restore train speeds.

**M.26 Provide circulator bus service.** Create new routes to better connect neighborhoods to activity centers, including MARTA stations.

**M.27 Improve MARTA stations.** Enhance station aesthetics, access, and amenities, including retail options.

## PARKING

**M.28 Manage the supply of parking for efficiency and cost-effectiveness.** Encourage the best use of on-street parking spaces, parking lots, and parking decks in activity centers by using smart meters, smart phone apps, advertising, and electronic signage. Determine where new on-street parking meters could address parking demand.

**M.29 Update regulations to prevent the construction of space exclusively for parking.** Eliminate minimum parking requirements citywide and establish below-market-rate maximums, district caps, and a prohibition on new parking lots near MARTA stations. Update regulations to incentivize unbundled, shared, public, on-street, and district parking.

**M.30 Emphasize long-term parking sustainability.** Require new parking decks to be designed to convert to other uses in the future or to be easily removable. Require new parking spaces to document their lifecycle carbon impact in the building permit application.

**M.31 Conduct a parking utilization study for all activity centers.** This should be updated every five years, including an updated inventory of spaces. Data should help make better use of existing parking and avoid building new parking near existing underutilized spaces.

## Circulator Shuttle Routes

The 2018 Community Transportation Plan recommended two circulator shuttle routes as shown on the map to the right, called the North Loop and South Loop. The City has conducted preliminary feasibility studies for these routes since the plan's adoption and has determined that they could be cost prohibitive. During this planning process, the community expressed continued support for a shuttle system. At this time, it is recommended that the City partner with MARTA to accommodate the routes or to evaluate their current bus service for modifications that could better serve Decatur residents.

## 2018 CTP Recommendations for Shuttle

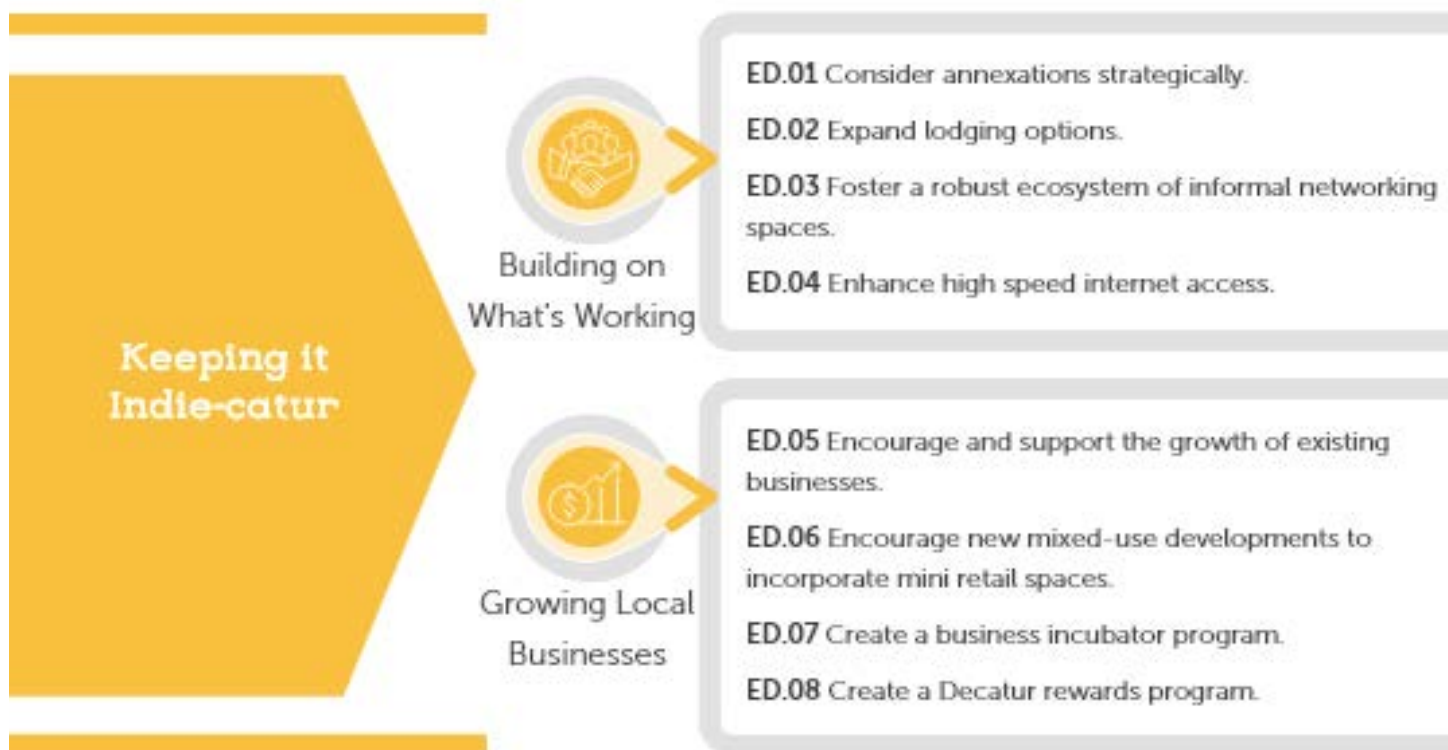


# Goals & Tasks

## Economic Growth



What's good for quality of life for all  
is good for business

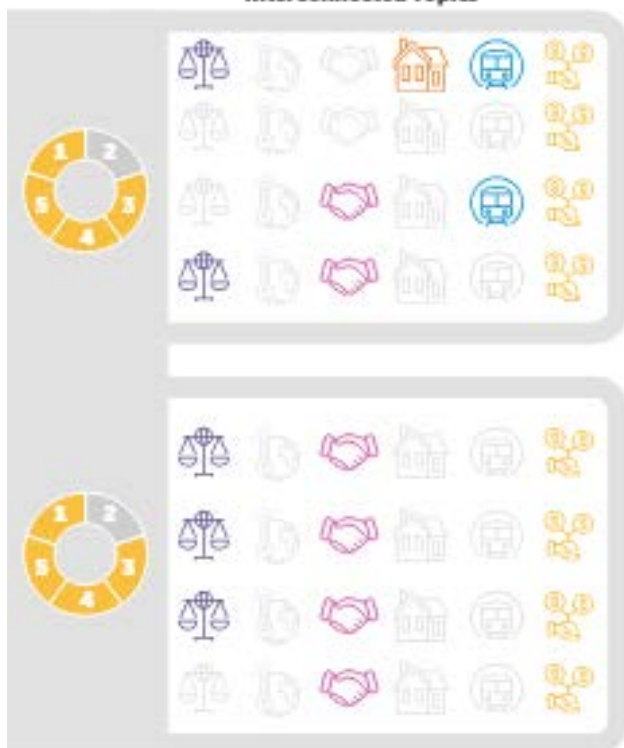




How can we leverage Decatur's unique identity and amenities to grow not just jobs, but social and economic opportunity for all? Every step toward broadening opportunity serves other goals, as well—our ambitions for expanding affordability, equity, and diversity in particular. It starts with understanding what's already working, what we can do to help existing businesses grow, and how to improve the support system for new launches. And in a post-pandemic era in which businesses are thinking more about employees' quality of life, Decatur has a compelling story to tell to firms considering relocation.

#### Mission Statement

#### Interconnected Topics



### It's all connected!

These icons show how each goal or task meets the vision and mission statements, and connects with the other topics. More details for each project start on page 98.



## What is human-centered design?

Buildings and outdoor spaces should take into account the unique needs of the people that use them. This means making sure they are based on a realistic understanding of the diversity of potential users, and their habits, desires, and behaviors.

**Mission Statement**

**Interconnected Topics**



The following list provides more detailed explanations for each task shown in the charts.

## BUILDING ON WHAT'S WORKING

### **ED.01 Consider annexations strategically.**

Future land annexations should be contemplated with regard to their impact on diversity, affordable housing, the tax base, schools and City services, and Decatur's vision and mission.

**ED.02 Expand lodging options.** Attract a boutique hotel and a bed & breakfast. Encourage the appropriate use of accessory short-term rentals.

**ED.03 Foster a robust ecosystem of informal networking spaces.** Places beyond home and work attract the creative class and allow for an exchange of ideas that builds social and economic capital.

**ED.04 Enhance high speed internet access.** Encourage the expansion of the fiber optic network to increase upload speeds and competition among providers. Expand the free wifi service area to increase citizen and visitor access and accommodate smart city technology.

## GROWING LOCAL BUSINESSES

**ED.05 Encourage and support the growth of existing businesses.** Support business retention through marketing and promotions for existing businesses to thrive and expand their offerings. Explore the creation of a facade improvement program.

**ED.06 Encourage new mixed-use developments to incorporate mini retail spaces.** New businesses can thrive on their own if provided affordable opportunities such as tiny retail spaces, food carts, or a bazaar.

### **ED.07 Create a business incubator program.**

Create an incubator program to grow the next generation of local businesses.

### **ED.08 Create a Decatur rewards program.**

This program could include joint marketing, branded gift cards for participating businesses, City employee discounts, and rewards points to encourage keeping it in Decatur.

## ALIGNING POLICIES

**ED.09 Diversify the tax base.** Reduce the tax burden on homeowners by encouraging the redevelopment of commercially-zoned land and attracting visitors to increase sales and hotel tax revenues.

**ED.10 Build incrementally but look toward the future.** Small yet intentional steps can build significant momentum over time, but should prepare for unexpected opportunities or market jolts.

**ED.11 Continue to tie budgeting to the Strategic Plan.** Budget items should be evaluated based on how well they implement the recommendations of this plan. Each item should be indexed to these recommendations.

## PLACEMAKING

**ED.12 Replicate successful public spaces.** Learn from the best of what's already working in public and semi-public spaces and apply these lessons to new gathering spaces.

**ED.13 Update the sign ordinance.** Flexible regulations for electronic signs, historic storefronts, and more should be considered in the context of legal limitations.

**ED.14 Adopt healthy building design guidelines.** This advisory document should help architects and developers create buildings that encourage physical activity and use natural light and ventilation.

**ED.15 Fill in the gaps.** Maximize the community benefit of vacant properties, parking lots, empty buildings, and underutilized ground-floor space. Opportunities include retail, living space, food production, and gathering spaces.

**ED.16 Create human-centered design parameters.** Ensure that new development and public spaces or facilities are designed to be welcoming, interesting, and enduring, while also creating beauty and positive spaces for mental and physical health. Use design principles and best practices beyond the requirements of current codes.

**ED.17 Prepare a new Downtown Master Plan.** This plan should recommend a comprehensive vision that includes public space improvements, new green space, economic growth strategies, shared street designations, and more.

## RECRUITING FOR SHARED VALUES

**ED.18 Market and enhance Decatur's authentic brand.** Our unique culture and offerings should be the centerpiece of efforts to recruit visitors and businesses that will grow and diversify what is best about our city.

**ED.19 Recruit employers that fit Decatur's personality.** Focus on high-paying jobs, large employers, and companies that will patronize MARTA and local restaurants and businesses. Potential job sectors include health, IT, professional or government offices, and the film industry.

**ED.20 Look for opportunities for national retailers.** A general merchandise store in an urban format and appropriate context could attract shoppers that would also spend at local businesses.

**ED.21 Focus marketing on conferences and conference attendees.** More small conferences in Decatur, and better marketing to large Atlanta conference attendees, can build on Decatur's strengths as an authentic retail and restaurant destination and increase spending at local businesses.

**ED.22 Market to event attendees.** Encourage the full range of community event attendees to become Decatur "return customers."

## Decatur's Unique Economic Vibe

Our economy has thrived, not on Fortune 500 companies, but because of our unique quality of life—great neighborhoods, quality schools, and vibrant downtown. As we think about growing Decatur's economy and making it more inclusive, we'll want to build on what's unique—and what's best—about our city.

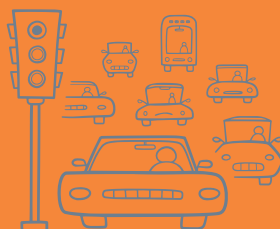


# 4

On-going projects mean that the City will continue to implement, monitor, and make progress through the next ten years.



The Action Plan provides timelines for "one-time" projects that have a start and end date.



The Scorecards will help the City evaluate private and public investment projects for the impacts on equity and climate change.





# CHAPTER 4

## How We Get it Done

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Decatur City Employees  
Partnerships  
Community Work Program  
On-going Projects  
Action Plan

# City of Decatur Employees

## Many Hands Make Light Work

The successes of Decatur’s two previous decades—and two previous strategic plans—have rested largely on the shoulders of the City staff whose daily job it is to implement the plan. Their big picture efforts have integrated the Strategic Plan into the budget and culture of the City of Decatur and made implementation second nature, at the level of individual city departments as much as for the City Commission and city management.

This current Strategic Plan, with its ambitious goals and focus on the interrelatedness of challenges and solutions, will require even greater effort and coordination on the part of city employees. This plan also asks them to take

the lead in modeling the diversity, sustainability, and transparency that are envisioned for city government, and the Decatur community as a whole.

Other planning efforts should also be shepherded by city staff in a way that ensures that they appropriately refine and implement the broader vision of this Strategic Plan.

After the 2010 Strategic Plan was adopted, city staff added an additional section to the plan to specifically call out their roles in implementing the plan, the quality of service they provide, and how to foster a better work environment. This updated Strategic Plan incorporates these goals and more.

# Partnerships

## Success through Collaboration

### IMPLEMENTING THIS PLAN WILL REQUIRE JOINT EFFORTS THAT GO BEYOND CITY GOVERNMENT.

The success of this plan cannot rest on the City of Decatur alone, even with the support of its boards and commissions. The City should explore supportive partnerships with local experts and organizations to bring the vision to fruition. This approach will continue to make the best use of limited government resources and yield better results through cooperation with the following groups.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City Schools of Decatur, the Decatur Police Department, the Downtown Development Authority, and other Decatur government organizations.



#### OTHER GOVERNMENTS

Federal, state, and county partners, as well as the Atlanta Regional Commission, MARTA, and other public agencies.



#### THIRD PARTY ENTITIES

Religious, environmental, activist, and other non-profit organizations and citizens groups, as well as developers and for-profit entities.





# Community Work Program

## On-going Projects

On-going projects are those that the City will be continually implementing over the next 10 years or in perpetuity. Some examples include implementing existing plans with 10 to 20 year project timelines, like the Community Transportation Plan, TOD plans for MARTA stations, the PATH Connectivity Plan, or enduring policies for City operations, considering impacts on vulnerable populations, communication protocols, and the creation of affordable housing units. Approximately half of all goals and tasks fall into this category. They are listed in the following tables by topic (Equity, Climate Action, Civic Trust, Housing, Mobility, Economic Growth) and color-coded like in the recommendations chapter.



Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
EQUITY			
Tools			
EQ.02	Utilize an Equity Tool	CoD, BTAB	
EQ.03	Follow the Welcoming Standard	CoD, BTAB	
Policies			
EQ.05	Offer affordable housing to displaced Decatur restaurants	CoD, Decatur Land Trust	
EQ.06	Focus on place- and people-based economics.	CoD	
EQ.07	Diversify events and festivals.	CoD	
EQ.08	Proactively hire diverse staff.	CoD	
EQ.10	Strengthen minority participation requirements for City contracts.	CoD, BTAB	
EQ.11	Provide housing options that restore Decatur's diversity.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA, third party	
EQ.11	Retain and recruit a diversity of businesses.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
EQ.13	Consider impacts on vulnerable groups.	CoD, ESB, third party, educational institutions	
Communication & Outreach			
EQ.14	Work to make sure all voices are heard.	CoD, third party	
EQ.17	Promote continuing community conversations	CoD, third party	
EQ.18	Communicate existing initiatives and successes.	CoD, DPD	
Actions			
EQ.20	Implement existing TOD plans	CoD, MARTA, third party	
EQ.23	Make public spaces more welcoming.	CoD	
EQ.29	Draw on local and national resources.		
CLIMATE ACTION			
Energy			
CA.02	Expand local renewable energy production.	CoD, ESB, third party	
CA.03	Prepare for emerging technologies.	CoD, ESB, third party	

Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
CLIMATE ACTION			
Energy			
CA.04	Identify creative clean energy funding.	CoD, third party	
CA.06	Convert all City lighting to LED.	CoD	
Policies			
CA.09	Evaluate the carbon impact of City decisions.	CoD, ESB	
CA.10	Incorporate green infrastructure into all City projects.	CoD, ESB, third party, educational institutions	
Education & Culture Change			
CA.13	Educate the community on true sustainability.	CoD, ESB, third party	
CA.14	Continue education about water quality.		
CA.17	Empower youth activists.	CoD, ESB, third party	
Resource Recovery			
CA.19	Recover discarded resources appropriately.	CoD, DeKalb, third party	
CA.21	Reduce construction waste.	CoD, third party	
CA.22	Reduce single-use materials.	CoD, ESB, third party, educational institutions	
Food			
CA.23	Expand sustainable and edible landscapes.	CoD, ESB, third party organizations	
CA.24	Continue to support farmers' markets.	CoD, third party, MARTA	
Green Buildings			
CA.28	Encourage the reuse of historic buildings.	CoD, third party	
CA.29	Promote local building traditions.	CoD, third party	
CA.30	Continue to push the envelope on City facilities.	CoD	
Green Infrastructure			
CA.32	Implement the Stormwater Master Plan.	CoD, third party	
CA.34	Acquire additional greenspace.	CoD, third party	
CA.36	Encourage usable green space in new developments.	CoD, third party	

Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
CLIMATE ACTION			
Green Infrastructure			
CA.37	Remove all creeks from the list of impaired waters.	CoD, DeKalb, third party	
CA.38	Promote green stormwater infrastructure first.	CoD	
CIVIC TRUST			
Building Trust			
C.01	Clearly assert the City's responsibility to its citizens.	CoD	
C.02	Continue to empower Decatur's citizens.	CoD	
C.03	Inspire civic responsibility.	CoD	
C.04	Improve understanding of the planning process.	CoD	
C.07	Draw on the expertise of advisory boards.	CoD, all advisory boards	
C.08	Continue to involve youth in decision making.	CoD, educational institutions, third party	
Fostering Transparency			
C.13	Broaden the means of engagement.	CoD, third party	
C.14	Leverage existing citizen networks.	CoD, third party	
C.15	Continue the tradition of educational lectures.	CoD, educational institutions, third party	
C.16	Convene a forum for non-profits and institutional organizations.	CoD, third party	
Specific Tools			
C.20	Update the Welcome to Decatur packet.	CoD	
Other Strategies			
C.24	Reaffirm the commitment to financial accountability.	CoD	
C.25	Support an innovative and creative work environment.	CoD	
C.26	Recruit the best employees possible.	CoD	
C.27	Retain the best employees.	CoD	

Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
HOUSING			
Implement the Affordable Housing Task Force report			
H.01-g	Develop innovative pipelines of available land	CoD, Land Trust	
H.01-h	Help fund the Decatur Land Trust.	CoD, Land Trust	
H.01-k	Actively encourage innovative housing types, and remove barriers that prevent the opportunities for construction.	CoD, Land Trust	
H.01-m	Pursue affordable housing funding structures.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	
H.01-n	Dedicate general funds to affordable housing.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	
H.01-o	Explore additional sources of revenue	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	
H.01-p	Form strategic partnerships.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA, third party	
H.01-q	Finance the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.	CoD, Land Trust	
H.01-t	Develop new affordable housing units.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA, third party	
H.01-u	Preserve existing affordable housing units.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA, third party	
Goals & Guidelines			
H.02	Focus on permanent affordability.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	
H.03	Ensure that each neighborhood provides its fair share of affordable housing.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	
H.16	Encourage a variety of unit sizes.	CoD	
MOBILITY			
The Big Picture			
M.01	Implement the 2018 Community Transportation Plan (CTP),	CoD, GDOT, DeKalb	
M.05	Promote connectivity.	CoD, GDOT, DeKalb, third party	
M.07	Expand intelligent transportation systems (ITS).	CoD, DeKalb, GDOT	
M.08	Prepare for the impact of new technologies	CoD	
M.11	Consider the environmental impact of transportation investments.	CoD, GDOT, DeKalb, MARTA, third party	

Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
M.12	Promote the use of neighborhood electric vehicles	CoD, third party	
Culture			
M.15	Embrace “deep walkability.”	CoD	
M.17	Encourage commuting by foot and on bike.	CoD	
Walking & Biking			
M.19	Expand pedestrian amenities.	CoD	
M.20	Continue the citywide sidewalk assessment	CoD	
M.21	Improve crosswalks.	CoD, DeKalb	
M.22	Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program.	CoD, GDOT, CSD	
M.24	Continue implementation of the Decatur PATH Plan.	CoD, PATH	
Transit			
M.25	Increase transit service.	CoD, MARTA, DeKalb	
ECONOMIC GROWTH			
Building on What’s Working			
ED.01	Consider annexations strategically.	CoD, CSD, DeKCo	
ED.02	Encourage more lodging options.	CoD, DDA	
ED.03	Foster a robust ecosystem of informal networking spaces.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
Growing Local Businesses			
ED.05	Encourage and support the growth of existing businesses.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.06	Encourage new mixed-use developments to incorporate mini retail spaces.	CoD, DDA, DBA, third party	
Aligning Policies			
ED.09	Diversify the tax base.	CoD, DDA	
ED.10	Build incrementally but look toward the future.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.11	Continue to tie budgeting to the Strategic Plan.	CoD	
Placemaking			
ED.12	Replicate successful public spaces.	CoD	
ED.15	Fill in the gaps.	CoD, DDA, DBA, third party	

Destination 2030 On-Going Projects			
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Notes
ED.17	Encourage human-centered design in new development.	CoD	
<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH</b>			
<b>Recruiting for Shared Values</b>			
ED.18	Market and enhance Decatur's authentic brand	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.19	Recruit employers that fit Decatur's personality.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.20	Look for opportunities for national retailers.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.21	Focus marketing on conferences and conference attendees.	CoD, DDA, DBA	
ED.22	Market to event attendees.	CoD, DDA, DBA	



# Community Work Program Action Plan

Projects in the Action Plan are those that have a target date for completion. Some examples include updating codes to allow different types of affordable housing, updating or writing new plans, setting metrics or standards to measure the impact of projects, or creating tools, like dashboards, for greater transparency about plan progress. Approximately half of all goals and tasks are in the Action Plan, with years

indicating the anticipated target year for project completion. They are listed in the following tables by topic (Equity, Climate Action, Civic Trust, Housing, Mobility, Economic Growth) and color-coded like in the goals and tasks chapter.



## Opening Night of the 2020 Strategic Plan

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT | June 21, 2021

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
EQUITY				
Tools				
EQ.01	Update the Decatur Police Department's Strategic Plan	CoD	2022	
Policies				
EQ.04	Establish a Reparations Task Force	CoD, BTAB		
EQ.09	Develop City and department-level Racial Equity Action Plans	CoD, Decatur Land Trust	2022	
Communication & Outreach				
EQ.16	Install community information kiosks.	CoD, third party	2025	
EQ.19	Achieve recognition as a Child Friendly City.	CoD	2026	
Actions				
EQ.21	Update the Better Together Community Action Plan.	CoD, BTAB	2023	
EQ.22	Provide permanently affordable retail space.	CoD, DDA, DBA, Land Trust	2028	
EQ.24	Acknowledge and document Decatur's entire history .	CoD, third party	2023	
EQ.25	Establish a childcare voucher pilot program	CoD	2024	
EQ.26	Establish an Equity Director position.	CoD	2022	
EQ.27	Establish an Employee Relations Coordinator position.	CoD	2024	
EQ.28	Partner to create a diversity, equity, and inclusion certificate program.	CoD, educational institutions, third party	2025	
CLIMATE ACTION				
Energy				
CA.01	Establish greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy targets.	CoD, ESB, third party, educational institutions	2022	
CA.05	Update regulations to require alternative fuels infrastructure	CoD	2023	
Policies				
CA.07	Create a Climate Action Plan	CoD, ESB		
CA.08	Update the City's internal sustainability policies	CoD, ESB	2023	
CA.11	Join the Climate Disclosure Project.	CoD	2022	

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
CA.12	Commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy	CoD	2022	
CLIMATE ACTION				
Education & Culture Change				
CA.15	Establish a green business certification.	CoD, ESB, DBA, third party	2023	
CA.16	Establish a sustainable neighborhood certification.	CoD, ESB, third party	2025	
CA.18	Create a climate action resource dashboard.	CoD	2023	
Resource Recovery				
CA.20	Create a pilot compost collection program.	CoD, third party	2022	
Resilience				
CA.25	Conduct an urban heat island assessment.	CoD, third party, educational institutions	2022	
CA.26	Increase the tree canopy goal.	CoD	2022	
CA.27	Prepare for sustained power outages.	CoD, DeKalb	2027	
Green Buildings				
CA.31	Amend the High-Performance Building requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance to require carbon footprint documentation.	CoD	2024	
Green Infrastructure				
CA.33	Update the Community Forestry Management Plan.	CoD	2027	
CA.35	Prepare a Facilities and Greenspace Master Plan.	CoD	2022	
CIVIC TRUST				
Building Trust				
C.05	Become a Plan First Community.	CoD, DCA	2023	
C.06	Create a civic-savvy certification.	CoD, educational institutions	2028	
C.10	Develop a formalized Public Information process.	CoD	2022	
C.11	Reposition communications channels.	CoD	2023	

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
<b>CIVIC TRUST</b>				
<b>Building Trust</b>				
C.12	Develop city staff communication protocols.	CoD	2021	
<b>Specific Tools</b>				
C.17	Create a one-stop app.	CoD	2026	
C.18	Develop an online permit portal.	CoD	2025	
C.19	Launch a plan implementation dashboard.	CoD	2022	
C.21	Update the City's Emergency Response Plan.	CoD, DeKalb, third party		
<b>Other Strategies</b>				
C.22	Update the Cultural Arts Master Plan.	CoD, Arts Alliance	2023	
C.23	Consider creating a neighborhood mini-grant program.	CoD		
C.28	Align procurement policies with this plan.	CoD		
<b>AFFORDABLE HOUSING</b>				
<b>Implement the Affordable Housing Task Force report</b>				
H.01-a	Create an Affordable Housing Advisory Board.	CoD	2024	
H.01-b	Hire permanent staff to advance affordable housing goals	CoD, DHA	2022	
H.01-c	Amend RS-17 zoning.	CoD	2021	
H.01-d	Revise the tax payment assistance program.	CoD	2022	
H.01-e	Create a rental assistance program.	CoD	2022	
H.01-f	Create an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) finance program.	CoD	2024	
H.01-i	Allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes in single-family zoning.	CoD	2022	
H.01-j	Provide developer incentives for all affordable housing.	CoD	2023	
H.01-l	Adopt development impact fees.	CoD	2021	
H.01-r	Expand and create effective community engagement and education	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	2022	
H.01-s	Identify high-impact messaging	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	2022	

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
AFFORDABLE HOUSING				
Goals & Guidelines				
H.04	Create an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.	CoD, Lifelong Communities Board	2022	
H.05	Implement the housing recommendations of the Legacy Park Master Plan.	CoD, Land Trust	2027	
H.06	Generate a comprehensive list of City incentives and exemptions.	CoD	2025	
H.07	Adopt universal building design guidelines.	CoD	2023	
H.08	Create an affordable housing tracker.	CoD, Land Trust, DHA	2023	
Housing & Transportation				
H.09	Update affordable housing metrics to include transportation costs.	CoD	2024	
H.10	Master plan proposed transit station areas	CoD, MARTA, DeKalb	2026	
H.11	Establish minimum density thresholds near MARTA stations.	CoD, MARTA	2024	
H.12	Require some parking-free housing.	CoD	2024	
New Initiatives				
H.13	Start an employer assisted housing program.	CoD, Land Trust	2023	
H.14	Explore short-term rental fees.	CoD	2023	
H.15	Support the creation of a shelter for the homeless.	CoD, third party	2026	
H.17	Expand where boardinghouses and roominghouses are allowed.	CoD	2026	
MOBILITY				
The Big Picture				
M.02	Plan for the 10-minute neighborhood	CoD	2024	
M.03	Become a gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community	CoD	2026	

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
MOBILITY				
The Big Picture				
M.04	Become a gold-level Walk Friendly Community	CoD	2026	
M.06	Explore the redesign of some streets.	CoD	2022	Begin as part of Downtown Master Plan (ED-18)
M.09	Plan for a resilient transportation network.	CoD, GDOT, DeKalb	2024	Begin as part of Downtown Master Plan (ED-18)
M.10	Perform a curb management study	CoD	2022	Plan (ED-18)
Culture				
M.13	Expand access to safety training for drivers and cyclists.	CoD, third party	2025	
M.14	Expand the existing TMA servicing Decatur or Explore creating a stand-alone Decatur Transportation Management Association (TMA).	CoD, MARTA, ARC	2025	
M.16	Install more wayfinding signs focused on walking and biking.	CoD	2024	
M.18	Establish metrics to evaluate the success of implementation of alternative transportation goals.	CoD		
Walking & Biking				
M.23	Encourage more bike parking.	CoD	2023	
Transit (work with MARTA to:)				
M.26	Provide circulator bus service.	CoD, MARTA, DeKalb	2026	
M.27	Improve MARTA stations.	CoD, MARTA, DeKalb	2025	
Parking				
M.28	Manage the supply of parking for efficiency and cost-effectiveness.	CoD	2023	Concurrent projects
M.29	Update regulations to prevent the construction of space exclusively for automobile parking.	CoD	2023	
M.30	Emphasize long-term parking sustainability.	CoD	2023	
M.31	Conduct a parking utilization study for all activity centers.	CoD	2023	

Destination 2030 Action Plan				
#	Project Name	Responsible Parties	Year	Notes
<b>ECONOMIC GROWTH</b>				
<b>Building on What's Working</b>				
ED.04	Enhance high speed internet access.	CoD, third party	2026	
<b>Growing Local Businesses</b>				
ED.07	Create a business incubator program.	CoD, DDA, DBA	2022	
ED.08	Create a Decatur rewards program.	CoD, DDA, DBA	2023	
<b>Placemaking</b>				
ED.13	Update the sign ordinance.	CoD, DDA, DBA	2026	
ED.14	Adopt healthy building design guidelines.	CoD	2025	
ED.17	Prepare a new Downtown Master Plan.	CoD, DDA, DBA	2022	



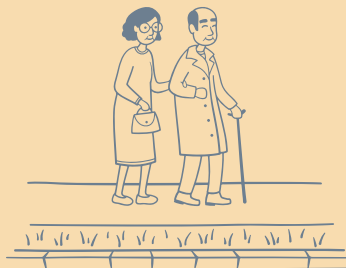
Local businesses contribute to Decatur's "brand."

# 5

Previous plans are a wealth of existing recommendations and information to be considered and integrated into the Strategic Plan.



Decatur has implemented or made progress on most of the tasks in the 2010 Strategic Plan and 2011 LCI study.



The engagement process involved hundreds of Decaturites that provided their ideas through multiple means of participation.





# APPENDIX

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Previous Plans Summary

Report of Accomplishments

Major Engagement Event Summaries, Discussion  
Guides, and Registrant Lists

Public Engagement Event Advertisements



## Previous Plan Summary Decatur's Culture of Planning

Decatur has a strong history of planning and community engagement. The majority of the plans directly reference the Principles, Goals, and Tasks from the 2010 Strategic Plan. The three plans that will be updated through this process are described in the call-out box on page ## and on pages ## to ##, and the others are described below.

### Decatur Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2018)

The original Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan (CTP) was completed in 2007, and this update was guided by the Decatur 360 Comprehensive Plan, which proposed a dynamic and well-rounded transportation network that enhances the environmental health of the city. One of the key recommendations was to update the street typologies and align City policies in the Unified Development Code to support the new ones: urban core (downtown streets, urban (major corridors), suburban (only Scott Boulevard). The plan identified priority corridors, intersection improvements, traffic calming corridors, routes for multi-use trails, circulator and micro-transit routes, EV infrastructure, and intelligent transportation systems and parking solutions. The plan also included recommendations for Safe Routes to School, particularly around Talley Street School, Westchester Elementary, and Glennwood Elementary School. In addition to

specific projects, there were recommendations for other studies, including crash data collection, corridor plans, parking occupancy survey, smart parking technology assessment, micro-transit feasibility study, and an EV infrastructure policy.

### Decatur Stormwater Master Plan (2019)

The Stormwater Master Plan identified many areas of concern along the stormwater system. The plan notes that each project area will be evaluated for green infrastructure and capacity solutions when it reaches the design phases. The plan recommends many new projects throughout the city including stormwater infrastructure improvements, green infrastructure, additional inlet capacity, and pipe size upgrades. The prioritization for these projects is determined by how the location is affected by critical storms, the position in the watershed, ownership (publicly-owned can be completed faster), flood impacts, and impact to major thoroughfares, facilities, and the number of households. Stormwater fees pay for staff and facilities, equipment, professional engineering services, and capital expenses like construction projects, but because of increase in impervious surfaces citywide in the last 20 years and the fact that single-family homes are all charged the same rate, the City is missing significant revenue. Some of the policy recommendations from this plan include:

- » Encourage green infrastructure, even on
- DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT | June 21, 2021**

- single-family residential properties;
- » Develop a comprehensive stormwater inspection and maintenance policy to describe the assets the City maintains, outline expectations for privately-owned infrastructure, and establish an acquisition policy;
- » Reduce harm to existing trees
- » Increase the stormwater utility fee and adjust residential billing structure to allow more projects to be completed annually.

## Decatur Environmental Sustainability Plan (2012)

This plan addresses the 2010 Strategic Plan Principle C: Serve as good stewards of the environment and community resources, and many strategies are pulled directly from the Strategic Plan. It recommends partnerships with City Schools of Decatur, DeKalb County, and other organizations. The plan is relatively comprehensive in addressing environmental issues, and the major recommendations include:

- » Promote sustainable practices within local government operations to reduce the overall

- environmental impact of facilities, fleet, programs, and practices;
- » Promote healthy food options within a sustainable food system;
- » Maintain healthy ecosystems and outdoor recreation opportunities;
- » Increase the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings, and increase the use of clean energy sources;
- » Increase the opportunity for using alternative transportation and reduce the environmental impact of current transportation systems;
- » Minimize waste and reduce consumption; and,
- » Raise public awareness and engagement in the City's Sustainability Initiatives, educate and encourage residents and businesses to adopt more sustainable behaviors, and ensure Decatur is recognized for its leadership in its sustainability programs.

## Affordable Housing Task Force Report (2020)

The City of Decatur hosted an Affordable Housing Summit in 2018 to advance the housing conversation. Then, the Affordable Housing Task Force, established the following year, drew from a wealth of local experts to create a detailed analysis and set of strategies to move forward. The City has started to implement recommendations since the report was accepted by the City Commission. Some cannot be implemented due to legal limitations in the state of Georgia, however, including the recommendations in the Strategic Plan now makes them official City policy.

## Better Together (2015)

This plan was created to encourage and empower individuals and community-based organizations to take a lead role in making Decatur a more welcoming, inclusive, and

## Older and Area-Specific Plans to Note:

- » Avondale LCI (2002)
- » City of Decatur Affordable Housing Study (2008)
- » Athletic Facilities Master Plan
- » Cultural Arts Master Plan (2010)
- » East Decatur Station Plan & Regulating Plan (2014-2018)
- » East Lake MARTA LCI (2018)
- » Oakhurst for Everyone (2017)
- » Reimagine West Howard (2018)
- » MARTA TOD Guidelines (2011)

# Previous Plan Summary

## Decatur's Culture of Planning



### Citywide Plans

#### 2010 Strategic Plan

**Vision:** *The City of Decatur will assure a high quality of life for its residents, businesses, and visitors both today and in the future (verbatim from 2000 Strategic Plan).*

The Plan includes 4 Principles with corresponding Goals and Tasks (projects).

**A** Manage growth while retaining character.

**B** Encourage a diverse & engaged community.

**C** Serve as good stewards of the environment & community resources.

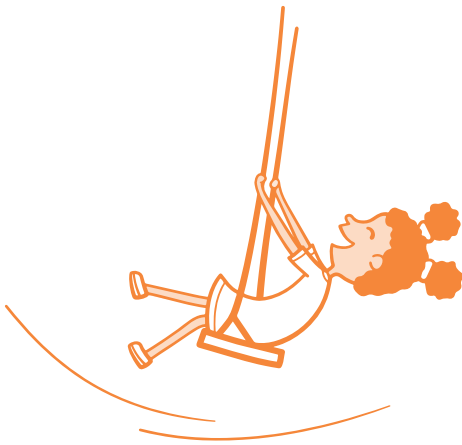
**D** Support a safe, healthy, lifelong community

This plan also included small area concept plans for key locations to illustrate how long-term development may occur, including multiple Downtown Decatur sites and the East Lake MARTA station. Subsequent planning efforts have specifically addressed the Principles, Goals, and Tasks from the 2010 Strategic Plan, and the studies were often a direct recommendation from the Plan. The majority of the Tasks have been implemented or are underway (see page ##).

#### Decatur LCI (2011)

The 2011 Decatur LCI study was an update to the original LCI. The plan makes recommendations for land use, zoning, transportation, housing, economic development, urban design, environment and open space, and historic resources. 59 projects

were related to improvements in Downtown Decatur. Six catalyst projects were identified as those that have the ability to set the City apart, continue to define its character, enforce its role as a destination, and continue positive economic trends. Projects are directly tied to the 2010 Strategic Plan, and the majority have been implemented (see page ##).



## Decatur 360 Comprehensive Plan (2016)

In addition to following and exceeding the requirements of the DCA Comprehensive Planning process, this plan uses the same Principles and many of the same Tasks as defined in the 2010 Strategic Plan. Decatur 360 checked in on the progress from the Strategic Plan and is intended to lay the groundwork for the 2020 Strategic Plan. It also recommended a number of additional studies and code changes to achieve the vision set forth in the LCI study, Strategic Plan, and Comprehensive Plan.

equitable place to live, work, and visit. The short-term Community Action Plan was created out of public engagement led by a Leadership Circle of 19 people representing a mix of races, ages, faiths, neighborhoods, and incomes. This plan supports Principle B from the 2010 Strategic Plan. Many recommendations revolve around transparency for the government and police department, communication, affordable housing, and public spaces. The plan is organized into 6 focus areas with recommendations for individuals, organizations, and local government:

- » Support community participation and engagement among all members of the city's population;
- » Prioritize racially-just community policing by improving relationships between community members and law enforcement and ensuring all community;
- » Ensure the availability of diverse and affordable housing in order to prevent the displacement of existing residents and provide for a variety of housing types and prices;
- » Cultivate a welcoming and inclusive retail environment for serving a diverse clientele;
- » Maximize the use of public spaces for the enrichment and well-being of all Decatur residents, workers, and visitors; and
- » Facilitate low-cost transportation options for people of all ages and abilities.

# Previous Plan Summary

## Decatur's Culture of Planning

### Legacy Park Master Plan (2018)

The Legacy Park Master Plan studied the 77-acre former United Methodist Children's Home property, which the City annexed and designated as a park since the plan's adoption. The plan's Guiding Principles were to:

- » Establish the place as a community space for all;
- » Preserve and enhance the park;
- » Create a sustainable, well-connected master plan that builds community; and
- » Incorporate a wide range of uses.

The master plan (right) reuses existing buildings, provides affordable housing, recommends programs for all ages and abilities, encourages alternative transportation modes, minimizes parking, and provides passive and active recreation space. Some of the specific projects include a track and field; outdoor sports fields; medium density housing in two villages; a 3.1-mile cross country course; structured grass parking; playgrounds; a creative village; an orchard, arboretum, and meadow; interpretive markers and history; adaptive re-use of some buildings; active use of the pond with a dock and canoes; and a partnership with PATH to construct a multi-use path on the east side of South Columbia Drive (now complete). The implementation plan recommends partnerships with non-profits, community organizations, and housing organizations.



## Decatur Path Connectivity & Implementation Plan (2016)

This plan encourages connections throughout the city of Decatur that link existing networks and other destinations, and connections to major regional nodes, like Downtown Atlanta, the Atlanta BeltLine, and the Stone Mountain Trail. The goal is to build 9.2 miles of Decatur PATH trails by 2027, and the plan recommends different types depending on the context of the route (greenway trails, side-path trails, and cycle tracks). The seven trail segments are:

- » Commerce Drive Cycle Track from West Trinity Place to Church Street (Completed);
- » Agnes Scott College Connector that connects the college to Downtown;
- » Oakview Road Connector that connects Downtown to Oakhurst;
- » East Decatur Connector that connects the south side of Decatur to Downtown;
- » Glennwood Elementary Connector that connects the existing Glenlake Park Trail to Sycamore Place and Sycamore Street where the Stone Mountain Connector is;
- » Westchester Elementary Connector that connects the neighborhoods and the school; and
- » East Lake MARTA Connector which connects to the Stone Mountain Trail.

The plan recommended that the Commerce Drive cycle track be the first implementation project, that a non-profit Friends Group for PATH and an implementation committee be created, that the City update ordinances for motorized use of trails and the land uses allowed adjacent to trails, that the City start acquiring parcels and apply for state and federal funding for projects scheduled after 2020.

## The Citizens' Survey

Every two years, the City conducts a resident survey about life in Decatur. Throughout the years, many of the responses have remained constant, and people love Decatur. The infographics below show a summary of the results from 2010 (during the last Strategic Plan) and 2018 (right before this process began).

### Top 5 Positives

1. Decatur is a safe place to live
2. Downtown and neighborhood safety
3. Fire Service
4. Overall Quality of Life

**2010**

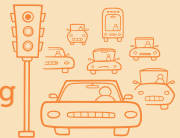
5. Recommend living here

**2018**

5. Good place to raise children

### Top 5 Negatives

1. Traffic signal timing
2. Amount / ease of parking
3. Traffic flow on major streets



**2010**

4. Availability of affordable, quality childcare

5. Service to low-income people

**2018**

4. Availability of affordable, quality housing

5. Variety of housing options

# Report of Accomplishments

## Implementation of Previous Plans

Decatur's deeply rooted history of planning is paralleled by a culture of bringing plans to reality. Nearly all of the recommendations of the previous Strategic Plan and Livable Centers Initiative study have been brought to fruition or are in progress.

● Complete

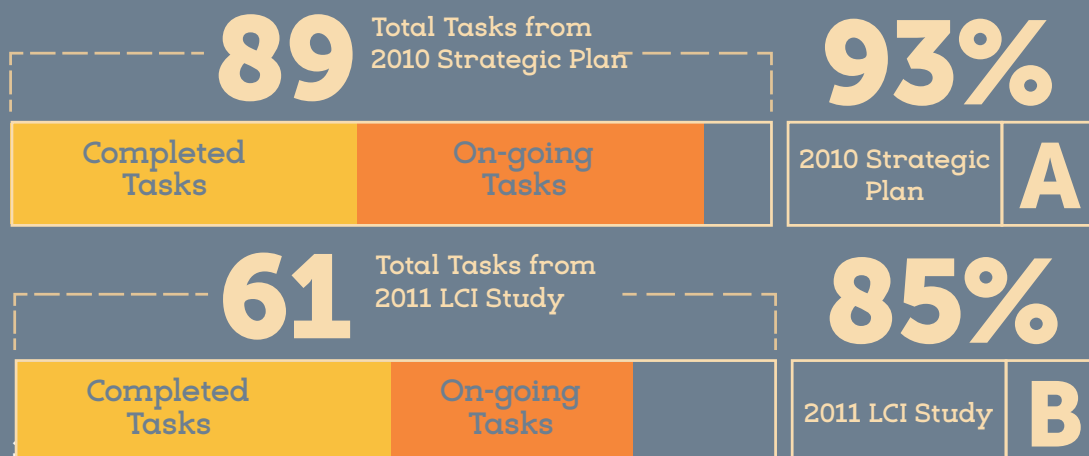
○ Incomplete

### 2010 Strategic Plan

● On-going / In progress

● Similar recommendation in 2020 Plan

Principle A: Manage Growth while Retaining Character			
Goal 1: Retain and enhance the character of existing commercial districts and expand it to new districts			
#	Project Name	Status	2020
1A	Refine citywide commercial design standards	●	
1B	Adopt new sign ordinance requirements	○	●
1C	Update downtown special pedestrian area guidelines and expand streetscape program	●	
1D	Improve the appearance of Decatur's commercial districts to reinforce the roles as community focal points	●	
1E	Improve the landscaping and physical appearance of the square	●	
1F	Install new waste and recycling bins	●	



**Goal 2: Encourage a diversity of business types with particular focus on small businesses and businesses that provide daily needs**

#	Project Name	Status	2020
2A	Develop a recruitment strategy that targets retail businesses and restaurants that meet identified community needs or new service businesses that respond to specific requests like a downtown boutique hotel.	●	●
2B	Continue to focus marketing and advertising efforts designed to support and enhance the "Decatur brand," to attract quality new business that meet the community's vision, and to assure the success of existing businesses.	●	●
2C	Identify available areas for light manufacturing and market them to potential businesses	●	
2D	Explore amending vending and food cart regulations to permit them in commercial districts and parks	●	
2E	Explore partnership opportunities to create a business incubator or provide other incentives that support business start-ups in the areas of technology, artisanal manufacturing, media content production services, and similar creative business types.	●	●

**Goal 3: Protect existing neighborhoods while promoting growth in desired areas and adopting standards that guide future growth**













#	Project Name	Status	2020
3A	Adopt new transitional design standards to integrate commercial, mixed-use, and residential districts.	●	
3B	Continue to encourage mixed-use development in existing commercial and mixed-use zoning districts, including retail, restaurant, office, and residential uses to increase pedestrian connectivity	●	●
3C	Adopt long-term build-out visions for remaining underutilized commercial areas	○	●
3D	Study if live-work housing can be implemented in existing neighborhoods without a negative impact on nearby homes	●	
3E	Improve the predictability and efficiency of the process for new development approval by establishing development standards and requirements that are consistent with the goals of the strategic plan	●	

**Goal 4: Protect and encourage the creative reuse of historic buildings, structures, and places**





#	Project Name	Status	2020
4A	Reexamine historic design standards and restrictions against home demolition	●	
4B	Pursue efforts to educate and involve neighborhood residents in determining the best methods for preserving the historic character of neighborhoods while accommodating appropriate new construction on a regular basis as a way of accomplishing this task	●	
4C	Educate commercial property owners about historic preservation tax credits and the Georgia Cities Foundation loan program. Encourage expanded use of these tools.	●	
4D	Place all eligible buildings and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.	●	
4E	Increase public awareness of historic buildings and places and provide appropriate staff support to accomplish the historic preservation goals of the community.	●	
4F	Develop regulations regarding demolition of significant commercial structures that are outside the scope of local historic districts	○	

## Principle B: Encourage a Diverse and Engaged Community









**Goal 5:** Maintain and encourage diversity of race, ethnicity, income, culture, age, family type, and other kinds of diversity

#	Project Name	Status	2020
5A	Promote Decatur as a lifelong community that is welcoming to people of all ages and supports programs that allow older residents to stay in their homes, stay in the community, and age in place. Explore options like Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) or Senior Village Support Networks that address this task.		
5B	Continue to encourage the participation of artists and performers that represent a broad range of cultures at festivals and special events. Expand outreach efforts to encourage diverse audience attendance and find methods to measure the results.		
5C	Develop an outreach plan targeting diverse population groups, including expanded marketing efforts and media outlets, to encourage diverse cultures to live, work, and play in Decatur.		
5D	Support efforts to expand diversity in community leadership roles.		
5E	Support programs that help elderly, low-income residents remain in the community.		
5F	Adopt universal design guidelines to allow new commercial buildings, businesses, and homes to be visitable by those with mobility impairments.		

**Goal 6:** Strengthen communication and involvement in and among neighborhoods, city government, volunteer boards and commissions, institutions, community organizations, local businesses, and Decatur as a whole

#	Project Name	Status	2020
6A	Provide communication in a variety of formats to reach a broad audience. Expand the use of social media and electronic tools such as Open City Hall to encourage citizen participation.		
6B	Provide focused support to improve interaction between neighborhood and community groups, and focus on developing a community that supports aging in place.		

**Goal 7:** Support, expand, and develop programs, services, events, and opportunities that respond to diverse interests, encourage community interaction, and promote a stronger sense of community

#	Project Name	Status	2020
7A	Continue to provide volunteer support services and maintain programs like the Martin Luther King Day service project, Season of Giving, and special event support.		
7B	Explore the opportunity for an event that educates citizens about their community and connects them with community, institutional, and nonprofit organizations to promote community pride, volunteerism, neighborhood interaction, and communication with the public.		
7C	Expand the Decatur 101 program to reach as many citizens as possible.		
7D	Consider creating a neighborhood mini-grant program that encourages grass roots community improvement projects such as neighborhood kiosks, public art, tree plantings, neighborhood signs, and park improvements, and builds a stronger partnership between city government and neighborhood organizations.		
7E	Partner with City Schools of Decatur to establish a Decatur Youth Council		

**Goal 8:** Promote a culture of creative innovation and expression

#	Project Name	Status	2020
8A	Support the implementation of the Cultural Arts Master Plan.		

8B	Support the development of the Arts Partnership identified in the Cultural Arts Master Plan to bring collective, institutional support for the Decatur Arts Alliance and better coordination of cultural arts facilities.	●	
8C	Integrate art into public facilities, such as sidewalks or new buildings, in partnership with local schools, the Arts Alliance and local artists.	●	
8D	Create a Decatur smart phone application to serve as a visitor and resident guide for local businesses, as well as a source of event and other information.	●	●

## Principle C: Serve as Good Stewards of the Environment and Community Resources

### Goal 9: Expand and diversify the city's revenue base

#	Project Name	Status	2020
9A	Find opportunities to redevelop existing commercially zoned properties to their highest and best use.	●	●
9B	Explore annexation options in partnership with the City Schools of Decatur that expand the property tax base and enhance school operations.	●	●
9C	Support the redevelopment of surface parking lots and underperforming properties in the Downtown and Oakhurst commercial districts, and the development of the former Devry University property and East Decatur Station area with a mix of uses that meet community needs and help accomplish the community's vision.	●	●
9D	Promote other revenue sources in addition to property taxes, such as increased sales tax revenues.	●	●

### Goal 10: Continue to provide quality services within fiscal limits acceptable to the community

#	Project Name	Status	2020
10A	Pursue energy saving options and long-term sustainability policies to reduce the cost of providing services.	●	●
10B	Continue to access grant funding opportunities to pay for capital projects, support strategic goals, and improve quality of life.	●	
10C	Use the budget process to assure the most cost effective use of city resources to implement the city's vision.	●	●
10D	Evaluate homestead exemptions, including their effect on residential tax burden and city's ability to provide services.	●	

### Goal 11: Assure the efficient use and coordination of all community facilities by strengthening community partnerships

#	Project Name	Status	2020
11A	Create facility committees as needed to work with community institutions to identify opportunities for shared use of public facilities, to allow for more efficient use of these facilities, and to make certain that existing partnerships like the athletic facilities partnership meet regularly to accomplish this goal.	●	
11B	Incorporate multi-use rooms into as many city-owned buildings as possible to provide for flexible community use opportunities.	●	
11C	Convene an annual forum for non-profit, public, religious, and institutional organizations to share ideas, resources, and strategies to meet the strategic goals of the community.	●	







































### Goal 12: Foster environmental, social, and economic sustainability in all aspects of city life and government practice








#	Project Name	Status	2020
12A	Develop a citywide sustainability plan with the assistance of the environmental sustainability board to address issues such as the creation of a climate action plan, initiatives such as an ordinance to limit motor vehicle idling, and roof color standards to reduce the heat island effect.	●	●


































12B	Update and create a unified land development ordinance that requires sustainable building practices throughout the community.	●	
12C	Support the expansion of urban gardening opportunities.	●	●
12D	When building public facilities, design them to achieve LEED or equivalent certification and to assure quality construction that will serve the community for 50 years.	●	
12E	Complete energy conservation audits of city facilities.	●	●
12F	Expand the use of more sustainable lighting options on streets and within city parks and public areas.	●	●
12G	Support the installation of alternative fuel source stations in public or semi-public places.	●	●
12H	Purchase additional alternative fuel vehicles for city use.	●	
12I	Support efforts to convert traffic signals to low-energy LEDs and implement a pilot program for LED street signals	●	●
12J	Expand the existing recycling program to include commercial properties and address the need to dispose of unique and/or hazardous materials like paint, motor oil, and electronics.	●	
<b>Goal 13: Protect and restore natural resources, support environmental health, and increase ecological awareness</b>			
#	Project Name	Status	
13A	Create an urban forest management plan to assess Decatur's existing tree canopy, recommend strategies for protection, maintenance, and new tree plantings, and revise the city's tree ordinance.	●	●
13B	Create an updated storm water management plan. Continue to upgrade the storm water system and pursue opportunities for shared storm water detention systems as well as shared retention systems that can serve as public amenities.	●	
13C	Support educational programs to encourage individual support of environmental sustainability programs such as the Kilowatt Crackdown.	●	●
13D	Adopt a long-range maintenance schedule for parks and greenspace to assure that facilities are maintained and repaired, and that greenspace areas and trails are well managed	●	●
13E	Acquire and expand greenspace holdings when opportunities and resources are available.	●	●
13F	Conduct stream bank restoration and naturalization of stream channels. Install signs along each creek to increase public awareness.	●	●
13G	Remove all invasive plant species from city property and ban the sale of invasive species on city property.	●	
13H	Adopt light pollution guidelines to lessen the impact of light sources on the night sky.	●	
13I	Install additional dog waste bag stations in public places and along streets to reduce the amount of dog waste that pollutes streams.	●	
<b>Principle D: Serve as Good Stewards of the Environment and Community Resources</b>			
<b>Goal 14: Enhance mobility options within and to Decatur</b>			
#	Project Name	Status	
14A	Implement the recommendations of the Community Transportation Plan.	●	●
14B	Continue to implement the Safe Routes to Schools program.	●	●

14C	Be recognized as a bicycle friendly community. Provide more bike racks, bike lockers at MARTA stations, and a bike station downtown featuring showers, secure storage, and repair.	●	●
14D	Review existing conditions to establish appropriate and consistent speed limits on all city streets to increase safety and make walking and biking more desirable.	●	
14E	Strengthen partnerships between the City, the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association, and major Decatur employers to encourage alternative transportation	●	●
14F	Encourage MARTA to improve maintenance and cleaning at Decatur Station, especially the bus bay.	●	●
14G	Continue to support other creative transportation options, like car sharing and scooters, through public education and by providing parking opportunities.	●	●
14H	Update parking standards to allow innovative parking strategies, such as shared or unbundled parking, that create pedestrian friendly, environmentally sustainable, and affordable developments.	●	
14I	Promote more efficient use of parking with electronic signs shared use of existing lots and decks, consolidated parking meters, more strict enforcement, higher parking fines, and similar techniques.	●	●
<b>Goal 15: Expand the variety of high quality housing options to meet the needs of a diverse community</b>			
#	Project Name	Status	
15A	Request that the Decatur Housing Authority Board and staff take the lead in implementing the goals of the Decatur Affordable Housing Study.	●	
15B	Adopt ordinance changes that allow smaller homes, support accessory dwellings, and encourage other creative housing options that provide affordable housing in single family neighborhoods. Educate the public about their characteristics and benefits.	●	●
15C	Encourage the development of new apartment buildings in commercial districts, and encourage the renovation and preservation of existing apartment housing throughout the community to address our commitment to provide quality housing for all stages of life.	●	
15D	Support the expansion of the Decatur housing trust fund by revising and expanding affordable housing incentives like the housing density bonus to encourage private developer funding.	●	●
15E	Support comprehensive efforts that go beyond the cost of rent and home price to keep Decatur affordable.	●	●
<b>Goal 16: Provide programs and services that support and enhance a safe, healthy, and active lifestyle</b>			
#	Project Name	Status	
16A	Expand the off-street path system throughout the community, especially by using vacant or unbuildable lots, utility corridors, or stream corridors to create mid-block passages.	●	●
16B	Expand program offerings such as a "walk there" campaign and bicycle training/ education activities to encourage active, healthy lifestyles for all age groups.	●	●
16C	Continue to provide safe, healthy, and affordable after school and summer programming for Decatur's children.	●	
16D	Install active living facilities in parks and public spaces to promote physical activity and human interaction among all age groups.	●	
16E	Pursue the redevelopment of the Beacon Hill complex to provide for improved police and court facilities that support the productivity and effectiveness of our police force.	●	
16F	Develop internal city policies to promote and support physical activity and walking, such as additional police patrols on foot and/or bicycles and expanding car-free day activities.	●	●

## 2011 LCI Study

Land Use and Zoning			
Land Use			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Policy	Continue to encourage mixed-use development in existing commercial and mixed-use zoning districts, including retail, restaurant, office, and residential uses to increase pedestrian connectivity		
Policy	Find opportunities to redevelop existing commercially zoned properties to their highest and best use		
Policy	Support a holistic understanding of housing affordability		
Project	Amend the Future Land Use Map		
Zoning			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Project	Refine citywide commercial design standards		
Project	Adopt new sign ordinance requirements to encourage more compatible signage in commercial districts		
Project	Update the Downtown Decatur Special Pedestrian Area guidelines and expand the downtown streetscape program		
Project	Adopt universal design guidelines to allow new commercial buildings, businesses, and homes to be visitable by those with mobility impairments.		
Project	Adopt ordinance changes to allow more housing options		
Project	Support the expansion of the Decatur housing trust fund		
Transportation			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Policy	Implement the recommendations of the Community Transportation Plan		
Policy	Continue to implement the Safe Routes to Schools program		
Policy	Be recognized as a bike friendly community		
Policy	Review existing conditions to establish appropriate and consistent speed limits to increase safety and make walking and biking more desirable		
Policy	Strengthen partnerships between the City, the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association, and major Decatur employers to encourage alternative transportation		
Policy	Encourage MARTA to improve maintenance and cleaning at Decatur Station, especially the bus bay		
Policy	Continue to support other creative transportation options, like car sharing and scooters, through public education and by providing parking opportunities		
Policy	Promote more efficient use of parking		
Policy	Expand the off-street path system		
Policy	Expand program offerings such as a "walk there" campaign and bicycle training/education activities to encourage active, healthy lifestyles for all age groups.		
Project	Commerce Drive road diet		
Project	Improve intersection of Commerce Drive and Clairemont Avenue		

Project	Improve intersection of Commerce Drive and Church Street		
Project	Phase V pedestrian improvements along East Trinity Place		
Project	Clairemont Avenue pedestrian improvements and road diet between Ponce de Leon Avenue and Commerce Drive		
Project	Church Street pedestrian improvements and road diet between Ponce de Leon Avenue and Commerce Drive		
Project	Church Street pedestrian improvements		
Project	Oakhurst Village pedestrian improvements		
Project	South Columbia Drive multi-use path		
Project	Howard Avenue pedestrian improvements		
Project	Improvements at the intersection of South Candler Street, East College Avenue, East Howard Avenue, and the railroad		
Project	Improvements at the intersection of McDonough Street, College Avenue, Howard Avenue, and the railroad		
Project	North McDonough Street road diet		
Project	Improvements at the intersection of West College Avenue, West Howard Avenue, Atlanta Avenue, and the railroad		
Project	Traffic calming on neighborhood conservation streets		
Project	Clairemont Avenue complete street improvements		
Project	College Avenue pedestrian improvements		
Project	Scott Boulevard sidewalks		
Project	Extend pedestrian tunnel under College Avenue		
Project	ADA upgrades at transit stations and schools		
Project	Add bicycle lanes along South Candler Street		
Project	Install bicycle facilities at MARTA stations, including a downtown bike station		
Project	Add shared lane bicycle markings where appropriate		
Project	Create a circulator shuttle		
Project	Construct a new street between Derrydown Way and Sams Street		
Project	Construct a new street in the Montgomery Street right of way		
Project	Update parking standards		
<b>Marketing / Economic Development</b>			
<b>Type</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2020</b>
Project	Develop a business recruitment strategy		
Project	Continue to focus marketing and advertising efforts designed to support and enhance the "Decatur brand," to attract quality new business that meet the community's vision, and to assure the success of existing businesses		
Project	Identify available areas for light manufacturing and market them to potential businesses		
Project	Explore amending vending and food cart regulations to permit them in commercial districts and parks		

Project	Explore partnership opportunities to create a business incubator or provide other similar incentives		
<b>Urban Design</b>			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Policy	Adopt long-term build-out visions for remaining underutilized commercial areas		
Policy	Consider a creating a neighborhood mini-grant program		
Policy	Integrate art into public facilities, such as sidewalks or new buildings, in partnership with local schools, the Arts Alliance and local artists		
Project	Improve the landscaping and physical appearance of the Square		
Project	Install new waste and recycling bins that are more clearly distinct from each other and more aesthetically pleasing		
Project	Adopt new transitional design standards to integrate commercial, mixed use and residential districts		
Project	Study if live-work housing can be implemented in existing neighborhoods without a negative impact on nearby homes		
Project	Improve the predictability and efficiency of the process for new development approval		
<b>Historic Resources</b>			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Policy	Pursue efforts to educate and involve neighborhood residents in determining the best methods for preserving character of neighborhoods while accommodating appropriate new construction		
Policy	Increase public awareness of historic buildings and places and provide appropriate staff support to accomplish the historic preservation goals of the community		
Project	Reexamine historic design standards and restrictions against historic home demolition		
Project	Educate commercial property owners about historic preservation tax credits and the Georgia Cities Foundation loan program		
Project	Place all eligible buildings and districts on the National Register of Historic Places		
<b>Environment and Open Space</b>			
Type	Project Name	Status	2020
Policy	Support the expansion of urban gardening opportunities		
Policy	When building public facilities, design them to achieve LEED or equivalent certification and to assure quality construction that will serve the community for 50 years		
Policy	Expand the use of more sustainable lighting options on streets and within city parks and public areas		
Policy	Support the installation of alternative fuel source stations in public or semi-public places		
Policy	Support efforts to convert traffic signals to low-energy LEDs and implement a pilot program for LED street lights		
Policy	Support educational programs to encourage individual support of environmental sustainability programs such as the Kilowatt Crackdown		
Policy	Acquire and expand greenspace holdings when opportunities and resources are available		
Project	Develop a citywide sustainability plan		

Project	Update and create a unified development ordinance that requires sustainable building practices	●	
Project	Complete energy conservation audits of city facilities	●	●
Project	Purchase additional alternative fuel vehicles for city use	●	●
Project	Expand the existing recycling program	●	●
Project	Create an urban forest management plan to assess Decatur's existing tree canopy, recommend strategies for protection, maintenance, and new tree plantings, and revise the city's tree ordinance	●	●
Project	Create an updated storm water management plan. Continue to upgrade the storm water system and pursue opportunities for shared storm water detention systems as well as shared retention systems that can serve as public amenities.	●	●
Project	Adopt a long-range maintenance schedule for parks and greenspace to assure that facilities are maintained and repaired, and that greenspace areas and trails are well managed	●	●
Project	Conduct stream bank restoration and naturalization of stream channels. Install signs along each creek to increase public awareness	●	●
Project	Remove all invasive plant species from city property and ban the sale of invasive species on city property	●	
Project	Adopt light pollution guidelines to lessen the impact of light sources on the night sky	●	
Project	Install additional dog waste bag stations in public places and along streets to reduce the amount of dog waste that pollutes streams	●	
Project	Install active living facilities in parks and public spaces to promote physical activity and human interaction among all age groups	●	
<b>Public Facilities</b>			
Type	Project Name	Status	
Project	Pursue the redevelopment of the Beacon Hill complex to provide for improved police and court facilities that support the productivity and effectiveness of our police force	●	
<b>Downtown Catalyst Projects</b>			
Type	Project Name	Status	
Project	Commerce Drive (between Clairemont Avenue and North Candler Street)	●	
Project	East Ponce de Leon (between Church Street and North Candler Street)	●	
Project	Clairemont Avenue (between West Ponce de Leon and Commerce Drive)	●	
Project	West Trinity Place (between Commerce Drive and North McDonough Street)	●	
Project	East Trinity Place (near intersections with E/W Howard Avenue)	●	
Project	Shared Parking	●	●

# Public Engagement Materials

## Summaries, Discussion Guides, Registrant Lists

### ENGAGEMENT SQUAD (STEERING COMMITTEE)

#### Community Members

April Biagioni  
Alison Weissinger  
Amy Hawkins  
Andrew Rutledge  
Anne Clarke  
Annie Archbold  
Anton Flores  
Ash Miller  
Beate Sass  
Beth Byrnes  
Betty Blondeau  
Blair Brooks Keenan  
Bruce Tarnopolski  
Bryan Russell  
Carol Hostetter  
Casie Hughes  
Cheryl Kortemeier  
Christie Kuropatwa  
Clare N Schexnyder  
Courtenay Dusenbury  
Cynthia Cass  
David Sizer  
Donald S. Horace  
Doug Eidle  
Douglas Aholt  
Elizabeth Burbridge  
Ellen Mathys  
Ellen Sechrest  
Erika Wilson Wells  
Erin Braden

Erin Murphy  
Gary Garrett  
Greg Coleson  
Gregory White  
Irm Diorio  
Jack Kittle  
Janice Yates  
Jennifer Walcott  
Jodi Cobb  
Joel Riggs  
John Harrisson Stuckey  
Joy Martin  
Kimberly Head Amos  
Kira Zender  
Kiril Staikov  
Kreton Mavromatis  
Kristen Thornton-Webb  
Kumar Batra  
Laura Fehrs  
Laura Spriggs  
Lila Miller  
Lisa Turner  
Lucy Larrousse  
Maria Alvarez  
Marifel Verlohr  
Marti Hand  
Mary Chavannes  
Maureen P Nolan  
Meaghan Flood  
Melinda James Mobley  
Michael Black  
Michael D. Alexander

Michael Johnson  
Natalie Jo Williams  
Neha Patel  
Nha Nguyen  
Ozee Owsiak  
Paul G. Sherer  
Phillip McGinnis  
Preeti Jaggi  
Princess London  
Rebecca Slemons  
Reggie LaFond  
Richard Malerba  
Ruby Doyon  
Sara Weathersby  
Sarah Hagenbush Jones  
Scot Hollonbeck  
Scott Doyon  
Shannon Scalese  
Shelly M Head  
Sonali Saindane  
Spencer Hostetter  
Steed Robinson  
Steve Collins  
Steve Vogel  
Terri Kruzan  
Therese May  
Todd Speed  
Tonio Andrade

#### City Staff

Mayor Patti Garrett  
(Elected Official)  
  
Angela Threadgill  
(Economic  
Development  
Representative)  
  
Andrea Arnold  
Linda Harris  
David Junger  
Hugh Saxon  
Renae Madison  
John Maximuk  
Ryan Sellers  
Ash Kumar  
David Nifong  
LeeAnn Harvey  
Aileen de la Torre

## ROUNDTABLE GROUP FACILITATORS

Roundtable Group participation changed between each round, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some groups chose not to participate after the pandemic began.

Group 1 - Sandro Gisler  
Group 2 - Annie Archbold  
Group 3 - James Faris  
Group 4 - Miguel Alandete  
Group 5 - Shelia Payton  
Group 6 - Preeti Jaggi  
Group 7 - Denise Henderson  
Group 8 - Nina Johnson  
Group 9 - Jessica VanLanduyt  
Group 10 - Kathryn Cooper  
Group 11 - Ed Lee  
Group 12 - Monica Lascala  
Group 13 - Libby Egnor  
Group 14 - Keri Chayavadhanangkur  
Group 15 - Brooke Schembri  
Group 16 - Scotland Stephenson  
Group 17 - Julia Levy  
Group 18 - Elizabeth Eppes  
Group 19 - Shannon Johnson  
Group 20 - Bob Leitch  
Group 21 - Jay Schroeder  
Group 22 - Joy Pope  
Group 23 - Anton Flores  
Group 24 - Joy Rose  
Group 25 - Erin Culbertson  
Group 26 - Leah Humphries  
Group 27 - Genevieve Edwards  
Group 28 - Patricia Liscio  
Group 29 - Kurt Ronn  
Group 30 - Sue Derison  
Group 31 - Natalie Williams  
Group 32 - Erika Wells  
Group 34 - Tanya Coventry-Strader  
Group 35 - Michelle Krahe  
Group 36 - Lauren Pelissier  
Group 37 - Gregory White

Group 38 - Maya Hahn  
Group 39 - Tim Moore  
Group 40 - Melinda Mobley  
Group 41 - Karyl Davis  
Group 42 - Haqiqa Bolling  
Group 43 - David Balcom  
Group 44 - Mark Arnold  
Group 45 - Steed Robinson  
Group 46 - Kelly Richardson  
Group 47 - Jody Girard  
Group 48 - Robyn Zurfluh  
Group 49 - Mali Noel  
Group 50 - Andrew Brock  
Group 51 - Meredith Swartz  
Group 52 - Sara Yurman  
Group 53 - Kaveh Kamooneh  
Group 54 - Nick Cavaliere  
Group 55 - Stacey R Rodriguez  
Group 56 - Gloria Wilson Moore  
Group 57 - Jeff Taylor  
Group 58 - Taylor Spicer  
Group 59 - Taylor Hirose  
Group 60 - Karen Mock  
Group 61 - David Harry  
Group 62 - Gwendolyn Shaw  
Group 63 - Nan Schivone  
Group 64 - Robin Chanin  
Group 65 - Sherry Wallace  
Group 66 - Aimee Wise  
Group 67 - Aaron Marks  
Group 68 - Angela Jiang  
Group 69 - Frank Burdette  
Group 70 - Shelley Rogers  
Group 71 - Daniel Newman  
Group 72 - Amy Marti

# TOPIC ROUNDTABLES SUMMARY REPORT

INSIGHTS FROM DECATUR BOARDS, ORGANIZATIONS,  
AND INDUSTRY PRACTITIONERS IN ADVANCE  
OF THE CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES

DECEMBER, 2019

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEETING**

December 4, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- Recognition of the sense of urgency for ramping up efforts to deliver affordable housing across a range of area median household incomes.
- Key recommendations for strategies that are in the about-to-be presented Affordable Housing Task Force study.
- Acknowledgment of widespread confusion about what's meant by "affordable," especially as AMI metrics apply locally and to the broader Atlanta Metro.
- The gap between affordable housing supply and demand is so large and growing that it's not likely to be significantly closed in the near term using current approaches (primarily federal tax credit programs, market rate development, and potential City subsidies).
- Multiple strategies outlined in the Task Force study, including preservation of current housing.
- New partners and new revenue sources will be required to close the demand/supply gap, including, perhaps, more active participation by commercial businesses.
- Too often, those at the table for community discussion of affordable housing are over-represented by secure home owners and not the growing proportion of struggling renters.
- In the intense competition for scarce public resources, affordable housing policies and programs may be underrepresented compared to the scale of the challenges faced — especially when other topic areas have permanent agencies advocating for budget allocations.

## **YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING**

December 4, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- While some of their ambitions may have been disciplined by the realities of competing community priorities, Youth Council members are clearly confident of their capacities and are organizing themselves to influence policies and policymaking important to them.
- One big takeaway from Youth Council projects is the discovery that many young people seem to be more interested in volunteering for events and projects than attending as spectators or participants. (Though because of the predominance of International Baccalaureate students in the Youth Council, the group stressed they and their networks might not represent the broader demographic of teens in the area.)
- Among the topics of particular interest to them: safety in public areas, transportation, and schools; better communication with those who enforce City policies — especially the police; and sustainability concerns — proliferation of plastic bags, etc.
- Echoes of community-wide concerns about the rapidly changing downtown landscape (apartments, condos, etc.), parking, and traffic congestion.
- There was general agreement among Youth Council members that they'd like to be included in regular progress reports about the strategic planning process.

## **ARTS AND CULTURE MEETING**

December 4, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- While there's an assumption among most people that Decatur is an art-friendly town, the art community struggles for the financial support required to fulfill the promise.

- Decatur has grown exponentially since 2010 in supporting local artists and being open to ideas, but it's more of a project to project situation.
- It's increasingly clear that the City needs to declare more precisely the value Decatur places on the arts and match the intention with dedicated resources.
- Given the current trajectory of Decatur demographics, Decaturites may be growing "house rich and art poor." The range of interests in art is narrowing. Less opportunities for the kinds of edgy work that inspires young artists and boosts the community's reputation as an art center.
- When it comes to supporting artists, there's the same challenges that frustrates other community sectors – affordability. Artists struggle to pay for housing and other services. Many live elsewhere and exhibit and sell work in Decatur.
- Affordable studio and exhibit space is increasingly a challenge.

## **ENVIRONMENT/SUSTAINABILITY/RESILIENCE MEETING**

December 5, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- Acknowledgement of a commitment – at least at high altitude – of the City of Decatur to integrating sustainability/resilience concerns into long-range policy.
- Weak connections between the City's Environmental Sustainability Board's recommendations and City policies and programs.
- A general under appreciation by the community of the sense of urgency for prioritizing sustainability/resilience strategies.
- The increasingly obvious linkages between sustainability/resilience topics and other community concerns such as land use and transportation planning, housing affordability, storm water management, etc.
- Insufficient data, consistently collected and reported across multiple sectors, to inform policy-making.
- Lack of focus on specific, measurable sustainability/resilience goals.

## **INTERFAITH LEADERS MEETING**

December 5, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- Community affordability (or the lack thereof) is an overarching issue, especially for people of faith determined to serve those less fortunate.
- The demographic transformations of Decatur from White Flight, to gentrification and then to Black Flight – is putting enormous pressure on the City's historic institutions of worship to redefine themselves and their mission.
- Despite shrinking congregations and offerings, many of the institutions have expanded outreach and social service to those most in need of help – the homeless, refugees of war, children, etc. In some cases, the strain is putting the churches at risk for survival.
- Some City and regional government policies work against the churches' efforts to retain their congregations and maintain their services to the needy. Among them: rerouting MARTA buses that congregation members forced to move to more affordable communities count on to stay connected; fees that severely hamper churches' operations (kitchens treated like commercial enterprises, for instance).
- While the faith leaders express appreciation for the ways in which senior City staff listen to the issues of the residents the churches aim to serve and cooperate with their social service efforts when possible, the capacity and funding shortfalls are serious and getting more so.
- Faith leaders are acutely aware of the need for and welcome partnering opportunities – including partnering with the City on projects and programs.

- Since the churches serve many who are no longer or who have never been residents, there's a recognition that outreach beyond City borders will be essential both for those in need and for the City's longterm health.

## **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MEETING**

December 5, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- Those in the meeting describe mostly positive experiences related to serving on citizen boards that address land use regulations, historic preservation, downtown development, etc.
- For the most part, they'll feel supported by elected officials and senior staff.
- They are, however, aware of and disturbed by the same trends that worry other citizens – community affordability, managing appropriate density, linking transportation and land use planning, etc.

## **LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY MEETING**

December 3, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

#### **The Good:**

- City helps businesses be more unified by having meetings with retailers to discuss issues
- City helps by promoting businesses and supporting local
- City attempts to attract a good mix of businesses downtown, assisting potential businesses find space
- DBA/City works to come up with ways to get businesses involved
- DBA sponsors events focused on bringing people downtown
- Supportive of efforts to grow existing businesses (facelifts, improvements. efforts to improve spaces)
- Provide demographic data about customers are and where they are coming from
- Large scale events:
  - » Police helpful by making sure people knew where to go, understanding ordinances.
  - » City officials host sessions re: rules, noise ordinances, etc., in advance of the event
- Police are very accessible, and friendly; have been trained to deescalate and manage people with kindness
- Local businesses are asked to vend at the Beach Party (not the same at some of the other events like the book festival)
- Art walk that precedes the art festival is a well-done event that other businesses benefitted from. The walk was taken away from the festival but businesses were not made aware of it
- Need to make sure Decatur businesses get the City's calendar of events

#### **The Bad:**

- Parking:
  - » Customers frustrated that meters are limited to only 2 hours
  - » Some businesses have parking lots deal with the issue of people using lots and not patronizing the businesses (court parking)
  - » Pricing to park in some lots is frustrating
- No short term \$4 parking
- Time limits either allow for short term (30 min) parking or a 3+ hour range. Gets expensive
- Prohibitive for lower income visitors and residents
  - » Can city engage with parking companies to set a max on the amount that can be charged? Is there some calculation that could benefit both?
  - » Create signage that points to free parking or parking that is available after certain hours (e.g., The

- Trash
  - » Restaurant dumpsters are sometimes overflowing and need to be better regulated particularly after long holiday weekends or if there are large events.
  - » Need to scrub the trash cans. They look messy to visitors who see this and have a different view of the city
- There are more destinations competing for customers now (Ponce City Market, Summerhill, Krog Street, etc.). Sales are down in Decatur 10 – 15%
- Changing laws have altered the way business is done.

#### The Ideas:

- Take down barricades for events and festivals
  - » This impacts other businesses on contained 'within' the boundaries of the events
  - » Visitors are captive for that event
  - » Events that are not fenced in allow other businesses to benefit
- Expand Christmas décor beyond the square. Spread it out throughout the city to spread the cheer and show the holiday spirit throughout the city
- Lantern Parade route has been altered and no longer passes by businesses that are open at night. This hurts businesses
- Businesses not on the Square suffer when events are held on the square:
  - » This sucks the energy toward the Square and away from other businesses
  - » There are limited non-corralled events that offer opportunities for businesses outside of the Square to be involved
  - » e.g., the book festival events can be hosted at other local business locations not being engaged to be a part of them
- Time to rethink and refresh some of these events (e.g., the beer festival, etc.) to be more inclusive of all residents
- Signage on sidewalks:
  - » There are current limitations on what is allowed
  - » This is sometimes needed for small and new businesses or those that are tucked away
  - » It's hard to get noticed if this is not allowed
  - » Is there an opportunity for the city to paint/signage on buildings "more shops this way"?
  - » Landlord dictates signage in many cases.
  - » City has a limit on the number of signs you can put up based on your square footage. A frames not included.
  - » Conversely, convenience stores and their signage in the windows looks unattractive. There needs to be a balance
- Public restrooms needed:
  - » Businesses with back alley access have issue with people using the bathroom outside of/behind the businesses
  - » Create signage or map that shows where visitors can go use the bathroom
  - » There is a balance between kindness and doing business
  - » Piedmont park public bathrooms – the policy has changed to make this safer or so that only one person is allowed at a time. Look into this
- Could we subsidize parking?
- Consider a shuttle service
  - » Is there room in the budget for this?
  - » Shuttle can transport visitors around the city so that they can park far away and ride the shuttle to local businesses?
  - » Shuttle can have set stops in each of the districts so that people know when and where to catch the business
  - » Atlanta Rides – used on Terrific Thursdays
  - » Electric shuttle busses are expensive but could this be made feasible? Partner with a local business? Partner with DBA?

- » Can golf carts be considered?
- » A shuttle would create a better distribution of customers throughout the city and would stimulate business. People shop where they park.
- Improve wifi. Free access is good but it is a hassle to utilize. Free and improved wifi is a perk and gives people freedom to move about the city.
- DBA would like to do short videos that create a digital and video presence to attract millennials and others who are digitally focused to promote businesses even more. Digital access is a must!!
- Improve lighting to promote safety or the perception of it!

## **CITY SCHOOLS OF DECATUR MEETING**

December 16, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

#### The Good:

- A very collaborative relationship between the two regarding spaces and buildings. This benefits the tax payers. There is a seamless delivery of services. Sometimes looks like one piece of property
- Joint work sessions 2 per year help to understand priorities
- Interim conversations are happening, monthly meetings with City Manager, meetings with commissioners.
- Collaboration between communications departments at CSD, the Police, and the City
- Great connections on the staff level happens.
- When new development occurs, CSD meets with downtown development authority and joint meetings to work through impact of developments; operational issues
- CSD and the City have different aims, ultimately, but the City is open to hearing what CSD feels and often make changes based on feedback. There is some collaboration to a point
- CSD gets a development report about issues that should be on the CSD radar such as the growth in density. This helps CSD to estimate student enrollment increases.
  - » Concern is that new apartments at former Callaway site could require CSD to open another facility
  - » The cost of staffing a new school site before you even add students, has a very significant operational overhead
  - » Strategic use of land that is available and that can be acquired that make CSD more operationally efficient
- Conversations on how to collaborate on spaces:
  - » Legacy Park - currently used for cross country; talking about a potential track.
  - » Relationship with the Wylde Center for after school programs
- School safety plans with Police have created a great working relationship.

#### The Bad:

- Development
  - » CSD have the capacity to absorb growth?
  - » Can CSD do so without significant capital costs?
  - » Does CSD we have the funding to add capacity?
  - » As Decatur continues to grow and evolve, we see more and more inequities in housing. The majority of CSD staff have to live outside of Decatur. It is a challenge for staff to live and work in the district.
  - » Up to 10 students of full time staff can attend CSD schools tuition free (courtesy tuition). Slots are always full. How are these allocated?
  - » Opportunity to collaborate with city and the housing authority on after school programs
- Annexation
  - » Does CSD have seats for these students living in annexed areas? What is the impact on expenses? How do we serve these students?
  - » When evaluating annexation proposal – consider what it costs and how many students are being served
  - » Concerned about commercial tax revenue. The proportion of residential to commercial is unbalanced
- Transportation
  - » New signals for Talley Street hung for a year before being turned on. This is a priority to CSD

- » Road diets: CSD never consulted with these and the impacts they have on bus routes. Have to add more buses because lane diets make buses less efficient
- » Safe Routes to School program reduces traffic and keeps kids walking, benefit to city is that it keeps more traffic off the roads

#### The Ideas:

- Fiber project has been a thoroughly planned effort and could model the City's collaboration on other projects
- Racial equity is a big concern:
  - » Having diversity training for all decisions (fees, curriculum, hiring, graduation rate, sports, music, academic achievement)
  - » The Better Together initiative is a good city effort
  - » Could do a better job of collaborating /sharing experiences with training with the City
  - » Exploring why the African American student population at schools has not grown in 20 years.
  - » Lack of or decreasing diversity ties directly into affordable housing
  - » If we really want to work on attracting a diverse student body this requires a larger conversation with the City
  - » Diversity in other areas is increasing but CSD is not seeing growth in racial /ethnic diversity
- Explore opportunity for Decatur businesses to engage with CSD - what can the city do to incentivize opportunities for students to learn from local business owners?
- As we move forward with technology, it will be increasingly important that the city move forward with technology in a way that protects citizens and students
- Recommend an IT specific roundtable for the strategic plan. Implications for EMS, police, etc. using older and slower technology because it works better than some newer technology

#### How to engage the community:

- Decatur Education Foundation is a good group to partner with
- Generally a high level of engagement but want to ensure that you're getting input from all constituents
- Parents are very engaged but CSD struggles with reaching people who are not parents
- Opportunity for collaboration to help communication with populations who are not engaged by overlapping outreach efforts with CSD

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MEETING

December 3, 2019

#### Key Themes:

##### The Good:

- Direct staff does a good job of guiding and facilitating and has been great to work with (Linda, Ash, Renae)
- Feel empowered at times
  - » Committee gave feedback on the Non Discrimination Policy
  - » Provided input on Obelisk on the square
- Police Department conversations have been good; is an open working relationship that has been working/ making progress
- City is committed to values in theory but it gets hard when it comes down to individual decisions that need to be made re: inclusion and diversity
- CSD hired an officer and staff development was happening re: equity and is a topic more often woven into the conversation. However, not sure the city of Decatur has the appropriate language re: equity
- There are staffers that have a commitment to equity but don't know how to implement it. What does this term mean?
- People have to apply/practice what diversity means. The dinners were a good way to see the value in this conversation and created a better understanding
- City does follow Strategic Plan – need to be sure we have voices at the table so that those priorities are placed in this plan

– The Decatur that we know now was thought of decades ago and is a massive success in some ways but now is a very different city

#### The Bad:

- Is there a real value on equity?
- In 2010 there was a lot of talk about diversity and affordability.
  - » These concerns were shaped into specific priorities for staff that were very limited and narrow in scope and didn't address the broader issue
  - » Didn't look at how we prioritize development
  - » Zero inclusion of affordable housing
  - » How do priorities get translated into staff goals? This is where we need focus, a staff person, someone in charge who can lead the priorities
- Need more citizen pressure on commissioners. They need to be held accountable
- Have built 1200 units and none are affordable. If it was a priority it would have happened.
- Some key decisions made around economic development around making a city center were good decisions (i.e. walkability, destinations, bars, etc.)
- Public and subsidized housing contributes a large amount of money to the city
- This Committee does not feel empowered:
  - » Should be invited to have conversations to listen and understand what is happening re: affordability. For example, the quad units being built are not for affordable housing
  - » Hierarchy exists: what does the committee want to do vs what the city wants the committee to do may be at odds. Consider – litigation, understanding the chain of command.
  - » Want to know from the city what they think this group should be doing
  - » Board lacks independence and authority because it is limited in scope/ability
  - » There is no budget set aside for diversity, inclusion and equity. If it's not in the budget, it's not important. It's an unfunded mandate
- There is an Affordable Housing Task Force but the City is moving forward with permitting. City is not managing the growth with what they're asking these groups to do
- Diversity and affordable housing link is hard to miss. It's hard to have one without the other
- Having a dedicated person to focus on this topic would be key. A champion of equity and affordable housing... could this be the same person or are these 2 different staff persons?

#### The Ideas:

- Create an economic narrative of the city:
  - » What story do the numbers tell in terms of historic tax revenues, the way the city has leveraged itself, bonds, etc.?
  - » There's been a huge amount of revenue coming into the city, but who benefits from this?
  - » What are the City's debts and obligations?
  - » What are the City's key opportunities?
- Legacy Park
  - » Housing mentioned 50+ times but it was not a priority
  - » Future processes should be clear and tell the public what is realistically going to happen
  - » Hired historic preservation-based consultant led a process that screamed affordable housing
- Would like to see more coordination between the City and DeKalb County throughout this process.
  - » Can we do something different and set up a different trajectory that works with the county to figure out that we're on the same team?
  - » Show that interests are aligned and not opposed; coordination is key in this step

#### How to engage community:

- Empower this Committee to assist with outreach for Strategic Plan
  - » Committee can invite strangers, people who we don't normally see people.
  - » Visit places we don't normally go and extend invitations

- Decatur roundtables 2009 a good model
  - » First conversations were without consultants, just facilitators.
  - » Created an accountability committee so that when ideas came up, there was a way to hold the process accountable to be sure that things happened
  - » Need to find ways to increase the levels of accountability from meetings to the actual creation of plans
- Host meetings in different areas of City – public housing, near seniors,
- Need ambassadors who can invite different groups
- Layer outreach:
  - » Use frequent notifications
  - » Postcards
  - » Tell people many times about how they can be involved
  - » Use the Focus, website, Next Door
- There is a need for new ideas and new faces (young voices/people)
- Find a way to make it easy for people with younger children to participate
- Engagement Squad is a good idea but it will be the same people who always participate
- People need to believe that their voice matters and are heard
- Many groups working on these issues in Decatur; Important that we reach out to them. Maybe go them instead of asking them to come to us. Coalition sends out a monthly email with info to a good sized list. Can include an ask that folks sign up for the strategic plan

Anything else?

- Set realistic expectations of what is required
- Educate all of the advisory boards on what's happening and how they can help spread the word

## **ACTIVE LIVING ROUNDTABLE**

December 3, 2019

### **Key Themes:**

- The City shows a real commitment to active living (e.g., the establishment of this Board).
- A full spectrum of classes are offered through the recreation center for citizens of all ages/all stages of life
- Camps sports programs, after school programs are top notch
- City took over Safe Routes to School program
  - » Crossing guards throughout the city create safe walking routes for students
  - » Big focus on walking to school
- Holistic approach to active living offers a variety of options (walking, biking, competitive sports, club activities. Shows a commitment to wanting everyone to be participating and doing something actively
- Infrastructure promotes walkability. Decatur has a clear vision
- It is encouraging that Decatur is focused on being active
- City shows support for active living by being willing to take risks and make change
- Financial assistance for children in sports shows commitment to all residents
- Legacy Park
  - » Allowing the cross country team to practice here shows collaboration between organizations
  - » The active recreation component happening at Legacy Park is really important as the city grows from 18 to 20K people
- City is cognizant of green space needs for active recreation
- Events like Streets Alive! help change the culture and highlights the City's commitment to get people active and outdoors
- Personal goals to stay active and keep moving
- City values personal passions
- City has programs that fulfill needs of kids and seniors but not as many options for parents/those in between.
- City should focus on bringing other issues into the mix of programming such as health, wellness, and nutrition
- Safety: Aggressive/dangerous drivers make it difficult to encourage people to come out if they don't feel it's safe
- Hardscape, infrastructure improvements are slow to implement
- Lacking funding availability
- DeKalb and GDOT overlap makes it difficult to get some infrastructure implemented

- Rate of development is a concern:
  - » How does this interplay with the reduction of lanes that are dedicated to active living?
  - » There is a tension between biking, driving and walking, and infrastructure needed to support all of this
  - » Adding new residents
  - » Growth is outpacing infrastructure
  - » Too many people in too many cars
  - » Private development is approved without funding for sidewalks
  - » Some developments are building bike lanes. Can this be required in future developments?
- PATH Decatur and Church Street plans that are being implemented are too far out and take too long to implement
- Lack of greenspace
  - » Because of population growth, mobile units at schools are taking up green space
  - » No place to play during non-school hours
  - » To get kids to activities is difficult – no soccer fields in the city. To have to leave the city for activities is a frustration point
  - » How can the City find more active green space? Implement impact fees? What can we trade off with private developers? Have to make decisions on what to do with limited space
- Corner at Commerce and Trinity that the school system owns/formerly owned by the housing authority is green space but what will it become? Future school site?
- City/county/state coordination on bike-ped issues is complicated to navigate
- MARTA is an underutilized option for a lot of people, especially the station in Decatur Some people drive to Candler Park MARTA station instead of using Decatur because it's easier to access and navigate
- Rising taxes is an issue:
  - » Decatur is creating an upper class here and that's all who can afford to live here. This arose at the civic dinners as an issue
  - » This is not the kind of city that we want. There is a missing middle class. Can Decatur be a model for creating a middle class?
  - » Where is the money going?
  - » There is an imbalance between what the City gets in tax dollars and the return on investment especially for infrastructure projects.
  - » How is the city spending money and is it being spent in the right places?

## CIVIC INSTITUTIONS ROUNDTABLE

December 16, 2019

### Key Themes:

- Educational opportunities are paramount to good communities. ASC and CSD are great tools. The City is safe and small enough for students to feel at home – and it has great amenities.
- The City makes an effort to show that its residents and partners are important.
- City staff is very supportive of infrastructure issues with DeKalb, CTS and ASC. It's a great asset to be able to pick up the phone and call Hugh Saxon or David Junger if there is an issue and have it resolved quickly.
- Small town feel fosters unintentional partnerships – ASC working with Decatur Fire Department, DBA and other organizations provide volunteer/career resources for students.
- City hosts a Welcome to Decatur event for students. Great opportunity to introduce students to what Decatur has to offer.
- CTS feels like Atlanta gets prospective student's attention, but once on campus it is all about Decatur.
- Access to MARTA is great. However, better headways on bus routes would be helpful. Route 114 is used by CTS students a lot.
- Decatur Focus is a great tool for employees to know what's going on in Decatur. The events the city throws are great not only for residents, but for folks who live outside – but work – in the city.
- We feel like we are always invited to participate in city planning, city events.
- Safe environment.
- Open dialogue between courts and police (regarding homelessness).
- Employees can't afford to live in Decatur – or even particularly close. My employees are from South Fulton, Clayton County, and Rockdale. There is not enough affordable housing. It's too expensive to live here and feels elitist.
- Parking is a big issue for the county and courthouse. The parking deck fills up. The county is working on other options.
- Homelessness is problematic, but figuring out the best way to help is difficult. It seems the City is handling some issues appropriately such as de-escalation, crisis training. Police seem to be handling the issue more delicately. It's not a problem you can arrest your way out of.

## CITY OF DECATUR STAFF ROUNDTABLE

December 16, 2019

### Key Themes:

- The City offers some great perks for staff including:
  - » Tuition assistance program
  - » Offering health and wellness programs
  - » Professional development opportunities (training, conferences, etc.)/leeway to grow within positions and departments
- E-5 Leadership program
- Facilities – though sometimes quirky – are well maintained
- City is good at finding room in budgets for new ideas and programs and innovative/high tech solutions
- Building teams of people across many departments to solve problems
- Supportive of outside of the box ideas/creative problem solving
- Staff feel supported within their departments
- City often promotes/recruits from within for new positions
- Decatur 101 a good program
- Obstacles:
  - » Challenges to upgrading or renovating historic buildings/sites for new uses
  - » Need greater clarity in many policies:
    - » When they're updated or created, staff need to be notified and educated on changes
    - » Staff seeks clearer understanding of when and how new policies may impact their job
    - » Standard Operating Procedures need to be in writing
- Timelines to see projects implemented sometimes take a very long time
- Some departments that have been assembled from different departments struggle due to lack of ownership
- Coordination required with other departments to finish certain projects can lag in implementation because too many people have to be at the table or the decision is actually made by other people in different divisions.
- Benefits were once a major selling point for new employees and needs to be addressed if City plans to retain and recruit talented employees. How employees are treated will impact customer service and how staff treats the public. Things to address include:
  - » Vacation time needs to be addressed:
    - » Cannot use your carry over time
    - » Would like to see a benefit – go towards retirement, cash it out, etc.
    - » Cannot take time if workload doesn't allow
  - » Ideas: put time in a pool for others to take, cash out (if it cannot roll over)
  - » How are employees compensated for work completed at home/after hours?
  - » Is there a policy re: working from home and outside of normal work hours? Getting paid for being on-call?
  - » Consider returning to the 5% raise in current economy. Currently, everyone gets same 2.5%, so there is no incentive to do better
  - » There is a 'marriage tax' in re: to insurance
  - » Consider converting to 'Paid Time Off' model to address the concern with staff mis-using sick time
- Some departments once 'trend setters' are no longer considered as such
- Some departments with decreasing staff and aging equipment feel overworked
- Some departments are struggling with staffing due to the rapid growth of the city, which is not balanced by hiring more staff.

# YOUTH ROUNDTABLES

## SUMMARY REPORT

KEY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND AMBITIONS  
AS EXPRESSED BY THE DECATUR YOUTH COUNCIL

OCTOBER, 2020

22  
Participants

Chat

Share Screen

Record

Reactions

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## INTRODUCTION

A key goal of the community-wide engagement strategy for Decatur's 2020 Strategic Plan is to assure participation opportunities for those who don't always show up at the usual meetings. That often means connecting with them where they already gather, as opposed to summoning them to meetings and locations elsewhere. Young people are among those harder-to-reach groups. Fortunately, the City of Decatur regularly convenes a Youth Council of local teens who self-organize for projects and programs of interest to their peer groups. So members of the consulting team attended two of their virtual meetings in October to facilitate conversations about their concerns and hopes for the future. Their responses, summarized below, will be added to those from the Citizen Roundtables and folded into the overall community conversation moving towards a first draft of the new Strategic Plan.

## SESSION ONE: OCTOBER 7, 2020

After an introduction outlining the 2020 Strategic Plan process, the 16 Youth Council members were divided into two break-out Zoom groups for moderated discussions around the following three questions:

1. How do you "talk up" Decatur? What are the positive qualities or successes that you hold and share as a source of pride? What positive stories or descriptions do you share with those who don't know our community as you do?
2. What problems or challenges do you see or experience in our community? How do those issues impact your positive thoughts about Decatur?
3. Many if not most of you will be going off to college and then moving on into your adult lives. Describe the Decatur that would need to exist in the future for you to consider returning and making your home here.

### Group 1

Group 1 was a diverse collection of Decatur teens, exclusively female save for one male participant. They spoke candidly and without reservation, and demonstrated some unique takes on larger topics oft-mentioned in the Roundtable process.

For example, among Decatur's positive qualities, they spoke in depth about walkability, noting its impact on local character, its role in building relationships between neighbors, business owners and employees, and its availability as a much-appreciated option when driving isn't possible. Paths and greenways were also called out as positive amenities. But there were also fears that too much urbanization detracts from the small town qualities many appreciate.

They spoke fondly of our local businesses (with the caveat that unique specialty retail and restaurants at premium price points can raise equity concerns), but also noted the need for national brands and providers so long as they're located in close proximity to Decatur's borders. Emphatically **not** as a part of downtown.

The city's sense of safety was also appreciated. One participant indicated that she lived right at Decatur's border and, when going out for a run, could choose either direction to go — inside or outside the city. Her choice? Inside the city because her surroundings felt safer.

Contrasting these feelings were concerns — felt across the group — about dwindling diversity and the city's failure to act sufficiently in addressing the problem. Variations of

the theme, “Decatur prides itself on its diversity but doesn’t walk the talk” were repeated during the session, and the city’s single family neighborhoods were called out specifically as the areas where the lack of diversity was most apparent. It was generally agreed that a more aggressive approach to affordable housing was the number one thing the city could do in response.

However, these thoughts culminated in a certain level of cynicism that anything would be done. “Adults in Decatur need to realize,” said one participant, “that they’re not as liberal as they think they are.” Their collective take? To return after college to build their lives here, the city would need to become significantly more diverse. Not just in terms of black and white or rich and poor but across all ethnicities and income levels.

## Group 2

The eight teens in Group 2 were easily engaged and clearly accustomed to expressing well-thought-out views. All participated in the discussion, hitting on themes similar to ones in the broader Citizen Roundtable conversations. For instance: action on climate change, diminishing housing affordability, and the broader issues of inclusivity.

Unsurprisingly, their responses to the question about what they like reflected their appreciation of Decatur amenities they were most likely to take advantage of: public open spaces like the Square and parks; civic facilities like the library; and arts and music events where they were likely to enjoy the company of others in their age group.

What concerned them is a sense of shrinking community diversity. And not just as it applies to race, gender, and income. Though they assumed those topics to be essential for an honest community conversation, they wanted to include what they see as intolerance for political perspectives at odds with Decatur’s majoritarian liberal vibe. While none volunteered they felt their views were unwelcome, they were concerned that a standard for true diversity, for an atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves, was threatened by political intolerance.

So strong was the general feeling in the group that Decatur has much work to do to deliver on its promises of diversity and inclusion, improvement on those ambitions, they said, would be a factor in whether or not they’d return after their college years to build careers and start families.

## SESSION TWO: OCTOBER 21, 2020

The second and concluding Youth Roundtable session involved the same Decatur Youth Council members participating in the same groups. Questioning resumed where the previous session had left off.

### Group 1

1. Responding to the question: “Many if not most of you will be going off to college and then moving on into your adult lives. If you got cut short in our previous discussion, describe now the Decatur that would need to exist in the future for you to consider returning and making your home here. How can Decatur make that vision a reality?”

Following up on this question cut short in their first session, the group continued with its theme that any reluctance to return to Decatur would be rooted in the city’s dwindling diversity. Expressing an absence of confidence that Decatur would, or even could, become a more diverse community in the coming decade, one participant commented, “I want my kids to grow up in a diverse place to see the world as it really is and experience all races.”

Another noted that our well-regarded school system would not be enough to bring her back to Decatur if her kids would be talking about diversity in classes that are predominantly white, adding that the schools are an example of how diversity and equity can be pursued earnestly and yet nothing substantive ever seems to materialize.

Others echoed this absence of confidence, noting that a lack of diversity is rooted in the city's lack of affordability, making for a challenge on a grand scale that the city's not equipped to take on. One noted that meaningful change was going to require forceful demands on the part of the community — what she characterized as “the energy that was invested in the monuments coming down” — something unlikely in an affluent and largely comfortable community such as Decatur. However, this view was contrasted by more hopeful suggestions that “Decatur needs to buy and hold more land to subsidize housing costs,” pursue more aggressive inclusionary zoning, and cap the maximum size of new homes.

Accepting that dwindling diversity is a problem the city won't likely solve on its own, one participant suggested that Decatur explore opportunities to be more connected and integrated with its more diverse surrounding communities — seeking not to impose itself upon them but to learn from them and provide for mutual benefit. This could be done through reciprocal school system programs so that kids interacting becomes a bridge bringing families and neighborhoods together.

The group further agreed that the Strategic Plan and related meetings are good, productive vehicles for pursuing change, but that they're too infrequent and too formal. Many people don't enjoy going to city meetings, they said, so they end up not sharing their opinion. It's incumbent on the city to consistently reach out.

2. Responding to the question: “In our previous session there was some discussion of the environment. Let's elaborate on that. To what degree do you see climate change as a threat to both you and our future? What actions, if any, do you think Decatur should take in response? What actions are you personally willing to take, like reducing or ending your car usage?”

Climate change, according to the students in this group, is very real and very top of mind. “It's painful to act like it's a future thing,” said one, stressing that the city needs to require sustainability measures now like solar on public buildings or a solar farm to create local energy.

Other solutions were offered as well. “We're going to need to be more adaptive in materials, packaging, new ways to create renewables. If we continue on the path we're on our lives will be significantly different.” This extended to requests for local initiatives, like regulations on plastic bags or programs to incentivize reusable bags.

Transportation and equity also entered the conversation, as the oft-discussed subject of a local shuttle system was again suggested, while composting — which is currently available to residents only through private, pay-for-service companies and organizations — was identified as something to be provided by the city or through partnering with multiple cities, spreading costs across the broader community so those unable to pay can still participate. And harking back to plastic bag regulations, one student suggested collecting a bag tax and using the revenue to fund individual sustainability efforts for residents who can't already afford them.

The economic component of climate action, and its impact on making change, was further acknowledged. One student noted that someone looking to contribute in the form of an electric vehicle can find themselves spending \$100,000 on a Tesla.

This led to discussion of what students can do personally. As in other parts of these discussions, there was talk of the need for reduced car use, increased investments in public transportation, and efforts to disincentivized driving. But these sentiments were not universally shared, as one student pushed back on efforts to build out biking networks, noting that they “remove lanes and create congestion which leads to more idling and pollution.” She further noted the impact of congestion on convenience and time.

Ultimately, the students were united that the city should be aggressive in its commitment to addressing climate change, and that that commitment should extend to partnering with other communities to work together on a larger scale.

3. Responding to the question: “Since last March, much has impacted our community and what we might consider our most pressing challenges and priorities — from a pandemic public health crisis to escalating efforts to combat racial discrimination and injustice. How is being a well connected community an asset in the face of such challenges? What could Decatur do to improve our web of connections to each other and to the city?”

According to the students, one advantage of the pandemic is that it exposed the fragility of our community. Decatur is not as tight knit as it once was, they said. The pandemic “exposed injustices that were otherwise overlooked.”

The key to strengthening the community and taking on our big issues? Discourse, and more of it. “Public discourse is how we solve our issues,” said one student. “People talking and finding common ground is the key.”

“We need to be more open to difficult conversations with other people,” offered another. People aren’t open to really listening and hearing what others have to say. Decatur, it was added, has become too focused on staying comfortable. More discussions with more people is how the city can work its way through.

Concluding with a focus on solutions, the students stressed that, as the most connected generation in human history, it’s on them to get the word out, utilizing the internet and social media and constantly pressing for change. Bringing the topic around to Decatur itself, there was a push for further utilizing the Square as our central civic hub and for creating more events to help people make connections across neighborhoods.

## Group 2

1. Responding to the question: “Many if not most of you will be going off to college and then moving on into your adult lives. If you got cut short in our previous discussion, describe now the Decatur that would need to exist in the future for you to consider returning and making your home here. How can Decatur make that vision a reality?”

Expanding on the walk-your-talk discussion from the first session, the teens were aware that Decatur’s character was evolving and were concerned that the changes were toward less diversity and more crowding. An African-American student felt the declining percentage of Black households would probably continue, making it less likely he’d want to return.

Most struggled to reconcile the appeal of a more urbanized environment with more choices for activities they enjoy and the loss of the small town feel they identify with quality of life. One said, “I just don’t want Decatur to grow.” Some in the group seemed hopeful planning and design strategies – especially strategies that increased housing affordability and expanded public green space – might mitigate the downsides of growth. But worries about “too many people packed together” were persistent.

Bottom line: Even the more optimistic in the group shared a general concern that the changes they noticed – or anticipated – were going in the wrong direction. No one volunteered that returning to Decatur was a high-priority goal, at least at this stage in their lives.

2. Responding to the question: “In our previous session there was some discussion of the environment. Let’s elaborate on that. To what degree do you see climate change as a threat to both your and our future? What actions, if any, do you think Decatur should take in response? What actions are you personally willing to take, like reducing or ending your car usage?”

Everyone in the group seemed aware of – and concerned about – the broader themes of climate action. It’s an emergency. Something has to be done. “If we don’t fix climate change, we won’t be able to fix anything,” said one participant. But they worried about apathy in the broader population and among their peers. And uncertainty about what climate change solutions would look like led to a wide-ranging discussion.

Water conservation, city-wide composting, intensified recycling programs, alternative energy systems, electrification of buses, expanded transit options, better managed waste programs in schools were all topics the teens hit on. They recognized the potential conflict between the need to reduce reliance on private automobiles and their own preferences for cars. Females in the group expressed concern that fear of personal safety on transit systems – especially MARTA – kept them from regularly choosing that option over automobile travel.

The group as a whole was good at thinking about what might be done effectively at local – even neighborhood – levels to make a difference. For instance: An adopt-a-street program for regular neighborhood clean-ups and even peer support for safer-feeling MARTA trips.

Bottom line: Exposure to climate change issues in schools and in media they consume has inspired high levels of awareness about the topics in this group. They’re already thinking about small efforts that can have large effects. And they appear up for learning more about specific strategies and actions they can participate in – and perhaps share with peers.

3. Responding to the question: “Since last March, much has impacted our community and what we might consider our most pressing challenges and priorities – from a pandemic public health crisis to escalating efforts to combat racial discrimination and injustice. How is being a well-connected community an asset in the face of such challenges? What could Decatur do to improve our web of connections to each other and to the city?”

The group responded to this topic on a personal level: How connected do they feel to the community? And what might increase that connection?

Their comments again revealed their concern about general apathy. Among those in their age group, said one teen, these topics “are just not on their radar.” So how best to engage them? Would someone their own age have more credibility leading a discussion or an activity?

Not necessarily, they were quick to say. If expected to respond to a speaker just because they were young, “I’d just role my eyes,” said one participant. The key to engagement is to be engaging, the group suggested – to approach topics that have the potential to command action with approaches and discussion leaders that command attention.

So would they as a Youth Council or as individuals help design those kinds of approaches and help pick the right discussion leaders? Sure, they said. And the session wrapped with an invitation to follow up with questions for the consulting team, via Meredith, to assure they maximized their chances to participate – and influence – the ongoing Strategic Plan process.

Bottom line: Members of this group feel connected to Decatur daily life and value the efforts of the City to formally include them as a Youth Council. At the same time, they're as concerned as other residents that Decatur is at risk of losing some of the things that make it distinctive in a sprawling region of millions. And they're up for being part of the conversation that addresses those concerns.



# CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES

## ROUND ONE SUMMARY REPORT

KEY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND AMBITIONS  
AS EXPRESSED BY RESIDENT PARTICIPANTS

FEBRUARY, 2020

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## Introduction

Beginning with a standing-room-only kickoff on January 23, 2020, some 800 volunteers committed to three subsequent small-group Roundtable meetings to drill down on priorities for Decatur's next decade of policy planning and implementation. Before the emergence of COVID-19 forced a pause in group meetings, the first of these Roundtables was completed in its entirety. So there's a base for considering the broadest categories of citizen concerns and aspirations.

Comments from each of 71 individual citizen groups was collected via flip-chart during a two-hour discussion. Each set of flip-chart notes was then transcribed and submitted to the project team, formatted for consistency, and combined into a collective spreadsheet of 3,278 unique contributions.

These comments fall under 15 broad topic areas. Below the following overview is a list of those topics ranked by the percentage of total comments that apply. And under each are capsule summaries of the comments.

Here are the potential takeaways from this early conversation:

## Overview

First of all, many of the comments received could apply to more than one category. Since this whole effort is about strategic planning that will be implemented by the City of Decatur, most comments imply complaints or recommendations related to City services. Concerns about community character reflect degrees of worry about equity and diversity. Infrastructure is part of the mobility discussion, as is parking.

Bottom line: Talking about strategic planning means talking about many things at once.

So what's on citizens' minds? Worries about change, mostly.

- » Costs of living, particularly housing costs, are increasing faster than household incomes, frustrating attempts to keep median and lower wage workers in town. The same goes for assuring seniors can age in place.
- » There's definitely a need for more housing, especially at lower price points. But not at the cost of letting developers and builders run the show. And not if it requires reducing the tree canopy.
- » Do new apartments in the downtown mean more crowding for the already over-crowded schools? If the City is committed to expanding mobility choices, what about more safe, dedicated routes for bikes and pedestrians? But on the other hand, if more public space is reserved for biking and walking, won't that make traffic worse? (And how about those planters!)

There are no surprises when it comes to citizens' views about taxes (less, please) and parking (more, please). But those perennial complaints ranked much farther down in the category list than topics related to multiple options for getting around, protecting diversity, expanding affordable housing, and viewing strategies through a sustainability/resilience lens. Does that suggest citizens are already thinking about tradeoffs for doing what they say they value?

That discussion will increasingly be the focus as process builds on this foundation of community engagement.

## Topic Categories Ranked by Percentage of Total Comments

### – Mobility/Transportation > 17.1% of comments

There is widespread appreciation for and pride in Decatur's MARTA access, bike-ability, and walkability. And while there are certainly complaints about congestion, particularly at peak hours, there are more comments about increasing and better integrating Complete Streets-style policies that expand pedestrian and biking options. Mentioned by several: a desire for an expanded network of linked walking and biking routes, including greenways, that safely connect neighborhoods and commercial destinations. Also multiple comments backing intra-city transit like a free shuttle. Under suggestions for improvement: concerns about needed repairs to streets and sidewalks, cut-through traffic in neighborhoods, and accessibility for the disabled.

### – City Operations > 13.7% of comments

Most commenters laud City officials and staff for their commitment to long-range planning, policy-making transparency, responsiveness to citizens' concerns, and accessible leadership. Under the general category of growth management, some are concerned about what they see as over-catering to developers and builders when it comes to regulating things like tree removal and the growth of apartment developments that may put additional pressure on crowded schools. Many seem worried over how to cope with what they see as an expanding population of the homeless. And under the "Aspirations" heading, several commenters suggest strengthening the City's online communications efforts about specific projects and programs.

### – Environment/Sustainability > 11.4% of comments

While there's appreciation from commenters regarding Decatur's recognition of sustainability/resilience priorities, a high percentage argue for stronger initiatives with regard to clean energy, recycling, composting, parks and other green spaces. "Trees" and "tree canopy" were among the most frequently appearing words and phrases. Intersections with other topic groupings: clean energy and mobility strategies, community character and parks, environmental communications, and city operations.

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*"We are proud of Decatur and the progress it is making. We want MORE and DEEPER – deeper relationships, deeper opportunities, deeper options for work and living."*

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### – Character/Feel/Quality of Life > 10% of comments

One comment that captures much of the sentiment: "In general, we are proud of Decatur and the progress it is making. We want MORE and DEEPER – deeper relationships, deeper opportunities, deeper options for work and living." General appreciation for small town feel (family oriented, access to leadership, involved citizenry, local shopping and entertainment) and worries about losing it (intensity of downtown development, larger homes, and those PLANTERS). Appreciation of quality schools that attract families but concerns that people will move when their children graduate.

### – Housing/Lifelong Community > 9.1% of comments

A representative aspiration: "Decatur as a magnet for all people, a place where people want to put down roots and remain, a place that people return to at all life stages." One overwhelming concern is a perception of diminishing affordability for those with median wealth and below. Worries about tear-downs for McMansion building, regulations that

appear overly friendly to developers, apartment development that may put added pressure on schools and city services. Biggest subset of comments under the general affordability topic: the challenges of aging in place. Intersections with other topics: costs of living and city character/McMansions and neighborhood character, aging in place and equity/diversity/inclusion.

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*"Decatur as a magnet for all people, a place where people want to put down roots and remain, a place that people return to at all life stages."*

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– **Equity/Diversity/Inclusion** – 7.5% of comments

The central fear in one quote: "In the end, we begin to be a less inclusive community." While there is appreciation for the diversity and inclusiveness Decatur has achieved (diversity of voices at the table, women-led civic initiatives, youth involvement), worries fall under the broad, but vaguely defined category of "gentrification." The challenge, for most commenters, is directly connected with costs-of-living topics, particularly costs of housing and the inability to comfortably age in place for many citizens.

– **Community/Neighborliness/Volunteering** > 7.5% of comments

Comments are overwhelmingly supportive of the sense of community in Decatur and the opportunities to engage with other citizens and with City leaders. There are shout-outs to the ways the arts and festivals bring people together and to a physical environment conducive to walking and gathering (particular on the Square). The concerns expressed are about potentially unhealthy trends related to neighborhood turnovers (gentrification) and diverging interests of newcomers compared to long-time residents. So there are direct crossovers with topics like City Operations, Diversity/Inclusion, and Community Feel.

– **Business/Economy/Indiecatatur** > 5.6% of comments

While there's strong support for the prevalence of local shopping and entertainment options, there are just as strong concerns for perceived changes in the mix of local vs. chain businesses, principally because of high rents for small businesses. There are shout-outs to specific examples of local enterprises like the Little Shop of Stories, the Brick Store, Eddie's Attic and the Indiecatatur initiative. But there's a desire for a greater mix of businesses beyond the restaurant category. Similar to concerns under other categories about the costs of living, commenters lament the lack of sufficient businesses paying higher wages to match the rising costs of housing.

– **Schools/Education** > 5.6% of comments

Commenters leave no doubt about their pride in the quality of schools. They appreciate the ability of many students to walk to school and their access to advanced study (like the International Baccalaureate program). Concerns revolve around what many see as pressure on the system by the number of students schools are expected to serve. Overcrowding worries dominate the comments. Also an issue for many: a perception that the school system and the City aren't always on the same page. As with quality of life and other topics, concerns here are related to fears of losing something of high value to the community.

– **Arts and Culture** > 3.1% of comments

Comments are universally positive about Decatur arts events such as the Book Festival and music on the Square. The aspiration is for more diversity (including a performance

arts center and a downtown movie theater) and for affordable space for rising artists and more opportunities for youth/student involvement.

— **Taxes** > 2.2% of comments

Besides the universal complaint that taxes are generally too high, commenters point to the need for better diversification of funding sources – more commercial properties and property taxes, for instance, to help offset the reliance on residential property owners to pay for schools and city services. Lots of comments about the need for additional strategies to lower the tax burden on lower-income seniors.

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*“Some commentators note the advantages of walkability and the efforts of police to maintain the sense of safety, especially for “our free range kids.”*

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— **Crime/Police/Safety** > 2.1% of comments

There are concerns about lax enforcement of existing laws like noise ordinances, smoking, and traffic violations. And there are worries among some commenters that Decatur is becoming less safe and that police aren’t as visible on walking patrols as they should be. But there are others who make the point that the perception of crime is at odds with the reality as reflected in crime stats. Some commentators note the advantages of walkability and the efforts of police to maintain the sense of safety, especially for “our free range kids.”

— **Civic/Assets** > 2.1% of comments

This is the category with the most specific references to things commenters especially liked. Among them: the Square, the library, the Rec Center, Agnes Scott College, the potential for Legacy Park, Focus magazine. Under aspirations, the call is for more of the same, especially parks and green space, and continued promotion of opportunities to utilize civic assets.

— **Parking** > 1.8% of comments

Some commenters suggest perceptions of a lack of parking, especially in the downtown, is different from the reality. But most commenters lamented the difficulty of finding convenient, affordable parking. Among their complaints: aggressive booting practices; inconvenient parking garages; insufficient reserved parking for neighborhood residents, the elderly, and the disabled; and inconsistent rules between City parking facilities and those privately owned.

— **Infrastructure/Utilities** > 1.2% of comments

Commenters call out general complaints: stormwater management/flooding issues and pothole repair/road maintenance. A few connected infrastructure planning with sustainability/resilience planning, including a suggestion for using stormwater to irrigate green space. And some lauded Decatur’s commitment to biking and pedestrian mobility while suggesting improvements in infrastructure supporting that commitment (protected routes, greenways).

# DECATUR CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

## ROUND ONE: FEBRUARY 8 THROUGH 13

### PRE-ROUNDTABLE

- » Stay tuned to your email and to our website for the latest logistics updates.
- » Provide your group a reminder via phone, email or text in advance of your Roundtable session.
- » If you need contact information for your group, send a request with your Group number to: [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com)

### AT YOUR ROUNDTABLE

- » Together with your group, establish a note taker to capture the conversation's key points on your flip chart. Please be frugal with pages used, as each flip chart will be serving multiple groups.
- » You lead the discussion, following guidelines found in your Discussion Guide.
- » At the close of your discussion, remove your flip chart pages and take them with you.

### POST-ROUNDTABLE

- » Within three days, transcribe your flip chart pages into a Word or Mac Pages document
- » Title the file "Session 1 Group XX 02-XX-2020," substituting your specifics for the Xs
- » Email the file to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com).
- » Use email subject: "Roundtable 1 Notes: Group XX"

# ROUNDTABLES ROUND 1: DISCUSSION GUIDE

## ASSESSING OUR PRESENT, IMAGINING OUR FUTURE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES TOTAL)

Welcome by facilitator

*(If your facilitator is a no-show, choose someone to assume those duties for today)*

Overview of the process:

- » Leading the conversation requires a neutral role
  - » Facilitators can contribute as individuals but should not **advocate** for particular positions or otherwise **influence** the direction of the discourse.
  - » Facilitators ensure the group stays focused with a fair and productive conversation.
- » Ground rules:
  - » Everyone gets a chance to speak.
  - » One person speaks at a time.
  - » Speak for yourself, not as a representative for others.
  - » Help the facilitator keep things on track with time monitoring or flip chart note taking.
  - » Do not quote or attribute group conversation outside the group.
  - » Keep cell phones muted or off.
  - » Listen to understand before responding.

### THE DECATUR WE ARE (55 MINUTES TOTAL)

#### 1. Introductions (15 minute subsection)

*(If your full group met at the Kick-Off, you may expedite this section as appropriate)*

- » For the benefit of those who have not yet met everyone:
  - » Where did you grow up?
  - » What brought you to Decatur? Where in town do you live or work?

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## 2. Where are we now? (40 minute subsection)

- » Please discuss the following questions:
  - » How do you “talk up” Decatur? What are the positive qualities or successes that you hold and share as a source of pride? What stories do you tell to those who don’t know our community as you do?
  - » What problems or challenges do you see or experience in our community? How do those issues impact your positive thoughts about Decatur? What stories do you tell in sharing such problems?

## THE DECATUR WE COULD BE (45 MINUTES TOTAL)

- » Please discuss the following questions:
  - » Describe community qualities that would inspire you. Are such qualities within Decatur’s grasp?
  - » What does the *future Decatur* you envision look like? How does it differ from today?
  - » How do you want Decatur to be known? Please complete the phrase: “In my ideal future, Decatur is a city where \_\_\_\_\_.”

## WRAP-UP (10 MINUTES TOTAL)

- » Solicit suggestions for ensuring the group is well connected and everyone’s effectively receiving updates and reminders.
- » Confirm everyone knows the dates for subsequent rounds of meetings. Groups will continue to occur on the same day. Times are expected to stay the same. Locations may vary based on space availability so stay tuned for confirmed information.

### ROUND TWO

Monday Groups: March 9  
Tuesday Groups: March 10  
Wednesday Groups: March 11  
Thursday Groups: March 12  
Saturday Groups, March 14

### ROUND THREE

Saturday Groups: March 28  
Monday Groups: March 30  
Tuesday Groups: March 31  
Wednesday Groups: April 1  
Thursday Groups: April 2

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# CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES

## ROUND TWO SUMMARY REPORT

KEY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND AMBITIONS  
AS EXPRESSED BY RESIDENT PARTICIPANTS

MARCH, SEPTEMBER, 2020

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## Introduction and Overview

In the first of our three Roundtable discussions for Decatur's 2020 Strategic Plan, Decatur residents shared their thoughts about the city — what they're proud of, what needs work, and what aspirations they hold for the future.

In the second Roundtable session — detailed in this Summary Report — residents explored specific issues raised in phase one where there was no clear agreement among participants regarding how to move forward — neighborhood zoning changes that could assist in affordable housing and inclusivity efforts, managing traffic as we build out our walking and biking networks, and how aggressively we should address climate change at the local level.

Paused in March for reorganization in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the phase two Roundtable discussions resumed in August of 2020. Almost all of the 17 groups that had not completed meetings before the pandemic forced an end to in-person sessions agreed to reassemble virtually or masked and distanced to complete the second of the three Roundtable discussions planned.

As a result, we have more than 2,000 comments and recommendations from participants of nearly 70 groups focusing on three broad topics: Housing and Inclusivity; Transportation; and the Environment.

In some sessions — particular ones dealing with Housing & Inclusivity — participants used discussion guide topics more as conversation-starters for expressing broader opinions, questions, and recommendations than to focus on the guide's specific questions. Even so, comments in all groups revealed aspirations and concerns that will be helpful in shaping the next stages of the Strategic Plan process.

It's important to note the willingness for so many citizens — both the recent participants of the phase two discussions and the phase three groups now organizing for their final discussion — to wedge Zoom meetings into family and business schedules turned upside down by the pandemic. That alone says something about the traditions of community engagement for Decatur planning. Commenters in some of the groups who met online spoke positively about the experience, even suggesting that video conferencing should become part of the regular suite of tools for City of Decatur communications with citizens. That, in itself, is an important takeaway.

Throughout the comments there ran a theme the City and its consulting team have hoped would emerge: connectivity. Challenges intersect and overlap. And so must solution paths. Under each topic, there were comments like this: Housing and transportation policies need to be examined through an environmental sustainability lens. Housing affordability is easier to achieve without the added expense of a car for everyone in the house older than 16. Energy efficiency saves money for homeowners and renters as it reduces levels of greenhouse gases required for energy production.

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*"Lower income housing must go hand in hand with walkability, bike lanes or public transit goals – higher density housing needs to be near this infrastructure."*

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*"We note that the housing and transportation issues we discussed all have environmental impacts. As noted in previous discussions, these initiatives all intersect."*

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The call to break through silo thinking applied to jurisdictional crossovers, as well. Is it possible, some asked, to scale up policy and program impacts by better connecting with the resources of the county, the City of Atlanta, and other governments? How about

public-private partnerships with businesses and non-profits, including educational institutions like Agnes Scott and Emory?

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*We can be leaders. We can leverage others... "*

---

Throughout discussions, regardless of issues intended as their focus, commenters felt it important to stress the need for broader community education, especially at neighborhood levels. Commenters were clear in their call for deeper explanations of the whys and hows of planning across sectors of concern.

It's important to note that though the broader topic headings didn't explicitly focus on the impacts of systemic racism and efforts to mitigate those impacts, both the discussion guide and the Roundtable participants assumed the connections. "Because race permeates all these conversations," said one commenter, "recommendations and decisions past and future, we recommend that we continue to be direct and intentional in confronting racial inequities in this process."

## HOUSING AND INCLUSIVITY

Thrown off a little by difficulties clarifying goals for "inclusivity" and "diversity," most Roundtable participants seemed more comfortable refocusing on the topic at higher altitude — simply "Affordable Housing."

Questions that then emerged: Affordable for whom? And how to deliver affordability?

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*"Everybody who comes to make this an awesome place to live should be able to be my neighbor if they want to be. (Some don't.) But some can't afford it. There's no middle anymore and there's little on the low end."*

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A consensus emerged around two priorities to address the "whom" question: Affordable housing policies and programs should assure opportunities for community service workers, especially City employees, to make their homes in Decatur. And there should be ways for long-time residents vulnerable to rising costs of living to remain in their homes and near their networks of support.

Tackling the "how" encouraged Roundtable participants back into the inclusivity and diversity issues prompted by the discussion guide. Particularly the thorniest issues about diverse housing types and the appetite for greater density in existing neighborhoods, wherein property zoned for single-family homes comprises 91% of the city's total residential land.

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*"Decatur citizens need to walk the talk. Lots of concern over lack of affordable housing but citizens passed the laws that redlined the city, changed the zoning, prevented density, and the current citizens need to recognize that affordable housing means tough choices. They need to stop complaining if the answer is NIMBY."*

---

Though there were dissenters, most commenters seemed ready to accept modest increases in density as long as new housing was at the duplex, triplex, or quad scale and achieved "blendability" with the existing neighborhood homes. Enthusiasm waned when examples grew in height and in the potential for families with children stressing local schools or with the prospect of absentee landlords failing to maintain their properties.

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*"We need to identify and focus on opportunities that are currently available and be alert to and prepared for opportunities in the future. Ideally, all neighborhoods will have affordable housing."*

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*"Well, we came from Buckhead because we wanted a small village/suburb. We don't want to become Buckhead. I'd like to see growth controlled rather than this becoming a blur in the city of Atlanta landscape."*

---

There were compelling arguments for protecting existing apartment buildings and smaller-scale multifamily housing that have become "naturally occurring affordable housing" by virtue of age and fewer amenities. More strictly regulating short-term rentals, such as those offered through Airbnb, might keep more affordable houses and apartments in the long-term rental market.

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*"If the city insists on higher density housing, it should perhaps consider taking a more active role in maintaining "niceness" by enforcing parking and traffic rules, keeping overgrowth off the sidewalks, making sure city trash cans are emptied, upgrading city parks and pools, etc."*

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Many were interested in talking about a variety of regulatory carrots and sticks aimed at developers. Among them: incentives for carving out affordable units in multifamily projects; impact fees; "tiered taxation" plans based on scale and units of development; inclusionary zoning; and rent control.

Most commenters acknowledged the high costs of development and urged exploration of creative financing to close gaps between market rate price points and affordable rents and mortgages: Land banking, community land trusts, tax funding, public-private partnerships.

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*"Someone has to pay to make the city more affordable. We should be up front and honest about the tax burden."*

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## TRANSPORTATION

As in our first round of conversations, it was clear in this second phase that support for the City's efforts towards increased options and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists is not universal. There remains a distinct segment of the community frustrated with traffic congestion, travel times and more, and unable or unwilling to view pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as a potential solution to these challenges.

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*"The community didn't ask for bike lanes and planters in the first place."*

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*"Hard for those living in Decatur to get through Decatur quickly with fewer car lanes, and traffic often diverts through neighborhoods."*

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These underlying sentiments may help explain why the City's alternative mobility ambitions are often supported in the abstract but then vocally opposed as implementation efforts begin.

Still, while some Roundtable participants certainly made it clear they were more concerned with the perennial hassles of traffic (too much), parking (not enough), and commuter traffic through neighborhoods, a majority of comments reflected a willingness to broaden mobility options beyond private automobiles.

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*"Citizens of this community and this country who only transport themselves in a car will always be frustrated by plans to improve roadways for pedestrians and bikers. They need to stop being the ruling voice on all matters regarding who owns the road."*

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Many recognized the advantages of living in neighborhoods with access to MARTA and wondered about ways to expand transit via hop-on/hop-off shuttles that connect key destinations with MARTA stops. How about dedicated bus lanes to speed commutes and attract more transit riders? Pedicabs?

There were numerous suggestions for supporting bicycling and pedestrian travel around town: more protected bike lanes, bike racks, and showering facilities; interconnected walking paths, wider sidewalks, and additional benches for rest breaks for pedestrians. Might Decatur schools be ready for limiting student parking and incentivizing biking and walking? And is anyone considering bridges over train tracks for safe crossings, especially for bikers and pedestrians?

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*"Walkability is a big plus in Decatur – especially for schools."*

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To cut down on traffic congestion at peak times, could the City facilitate moves to staggered times for work and school commutes? There was general support for encouraging more car pooling and for more rigid enforcement of speed limits. And is it time to consider banning autos altogether for areas around the Square?

Commenters seemed interested in the potential of electric bikes to increase the number of residents willing to move from cars to bikes for many daily tasks. And there was some discussion of supporting that idea with expanded bike infrastructure, such as free charging stations and bike repair facilities. (Electric vehicle comments crossed over into discussions under the Environment topic heading, as well.)

Most thought questions about ways to "minimize frustration," as outlined in the discussion guide, could also be addressed by improvements in policies and programs already underway, including: parking and traffic enforcement, sidewalk and pothole repair, and clear signage on biking and pedestrian routes.

## ENVIRONMENT

Clearly, Decatur's Environmental Sustainability Board members and supporters have already informed and influenced community discussions around sustainability and resilience topics.

Many in the Roundtable groups prioritized consideration of almost all policies and programs with a mind to impacts on the environment in general and on mitigation of

climate change threats in particular. Some commenters proposed that the Board be given the same role as citizen boards addressing planning and zoning.

Responding to prompts in the Roundtable discussion guide, commenters generally opted for a “think big” approach that reinforces the City’s role as a regional leader. That includes ramping up citizen and student education programs to address the sense of urgency, clarify broad goals, and support strategies at the speed and scale required.

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*“We cannot wait on the federal government to make good decisions for our local communities.” “Decatur should be a shining example. Aim to be the greenest city in the state!”*

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Many saw the linkages between environmental and transportation policies. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing dependency on private automobiles was a high priority. So there were lively conversations around accelerating bike, pedestrian, and transit options — echoing comments and suggestions under the Transportation topic area.

The “think big” commitment shouldn’t mean missing opportunities to maximize “act local” strategies where the City has direct control. Some commenters focused on better orienting City landscape maintenance priorities — including protecting and expanding the tree canopy. Perhaps a tree ordinance might integrate goals with storm water management and water conservation and reuse programs. The City should encourage native plantings, centralize compost collection, protect pollinators, and support community gardens.

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*“Strengthen the tree ordinance and integrate this with stormwater master planning given the value of trees as green infrastructure.”*

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In the realms of construction and development, energy efficiency should be a high priority, both in new construction and in retrofitting older structures. Might there also be more thought given to expanding permeable surfaces for storm water management? And shouldn’t there be a higher focus on creating and maintaining greenspace, including park space in the downtown core?

Because of Decatur’s proximity to higher ed institutions, there are likely to be opportunities for partnering with schools like Emory, Georgia Tech, and Agnes Scott for programs and workshops on sustainability and resilience. Long range programs, including those that might be candidates for the 2020 Strategic Plan, can be informed by those partnerships.

# DECATUR CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

ROUND TWO: MARCH 9 THROUGH 14

## PRE-ROUNDTABLE

- » Stay tuned to your email and to our website for the latest logistics updates.
- » Provide your group a reminder via phone, email or text in advance of your Roundtable session.
- » If you need contact information for your group, send a request with your Group number to: [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com)

## AT YOUR ROUNDTABLE

- » Together with your group, establish a note taker to capture the conversation's key points on your flip chart. Please be frugal with pages used, as each flip chart will be serving multiple groups.
- » You lead the discussion, following guidelines found in your Discussion Guide.
- » At the close of your discussion, remove your flip chart pages and take them with you.

## POST-ROUNDTABLE

- » Within three days, transcribe your flip chart pages into a Word or Mac Pages document
- » Title the file "Session 2 Group XX 03-XX-2020," substituting your specifics for the Xs
- » Email the file to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com).
- » Use email subject: "Roundtable 1 Notes: Group XX"

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

# ROUNDTABLES ROUND 2: DISCUSSION GUIDE

## AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE, MOBILE, AND GREEN

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES TOTAL)

#### Welcome by facilitator

*(Ensure the full group understands and is in agreement with the following parameters. If your facilitator is a no-show, choose someone to assume those duties for today.)*

#### » Introductions:

- » Most of your group has now likely met so you may expedite introductions as appropriate.

#### » Leading the conversation requires a *neutral role*

- » Facilitators can contribute as individuals but should not *advocate* for particular positions or otherwise work to *influence* other's opinions. Facilitators encourage discussion but *do not challenge comments or opinions shared within the group*.
- » Facilitators ensure the group stays focused with a fair and productive conversation.
- » For full transparency, notes should be taken on the flip chart provided so that all are in agreement with how comments are being documented.

#### » Ground rules

- » Everyone is given opportunity to speak, one person at a time.
- » No one should dominate the discussion. Support your facilitator's efforts to manage diverse personalities for a fair and inclusive discussion. We're all neighbors here.
- » Help the facilitator keep things on track with time monitoring or flip chart notes.
- » Speak for yourself, not as a representative for others.
- » Do not quote or attribute group conversation outside the group.
- » Keep cell phones muted or off.
- » Listen to understand before responding.

**DESTINATION:2030**

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

### CONTEXT:

The Affordable Housing Task Force report commissioned and recently accepted by the City Commission identifies density as one key tool in achieving broader affordability.

Among the report's many recommendations is this: "In order to increase the number of affordable units, the City will need to allow for a targeted increase in density in [residential neighborhoods]." This is recommended in the form of duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and cottage courts *scaled comparably to existing single family homes*.

This diversity of housing types in Decatur neighborhoods was the historical norm until 1988 when new duplexes, etc. were prohibited in response to the disinvestment and absentee ownership issues of the day.

Today, Decatur's need for more affordable housing exists in stark contrast to our issues of the 1980s, suggesting a need to restore our historical mix of housing types.

*Together with your group, discuss the following questions presented by such an approach:*

- » A diverse and inclusive Decatur has been a broadly shared community value for decades. How do we reconcile this with the reality that 91% of our residential land mandates single family homes, where the cost-of-entry starts at nearly a half million dollars and extends beyond a million?
- » Can we achieve greater economic diversity in our neighborhoods without a diversity of housing types? If so, how?
- » Many of our existing neighborhoods — like Oakhurst, Lenox Place, and Old Decatur — still provide some degree of this mix through duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings that pre-date the 1980s. Do you feel these units add to or detract from the desirability of these neighborhoods? How so?
- » Proposals of this nature are often supported in the abstract but opposed once the prospect of change on any particular street becomes evident. How might we as a community equitably act on this recommendation in the face of these conflicting feelings? Should we?

### CONTEXT:

Decatur has been committed to improved walkability — particularly throughout and connecting to downtown — since 1982's Town Center Plan; and to an integrated network of bike lanes and paths since 2000's Strategic Plan.

Since then, the Decatur community has repeatedly reaffirmed its support for both of these values through public process — 2007's Community Transportation Plan, the 2010 Strategic Plan, the 2012 Environmental Sustainability Plan, the Comprehensive and PATH Connectivity plans of 2016, and the 2018 Community Transportation Plan.

By allocating public space more equitably, Complete Streets can offer the prospect of safer mobility for the broadest array of people — motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, kids, and the disabled — and the most realistic means of reducing local automobile use and traffic congestion *over the long haul*.

But the infrastructure we build today reflects what we as a community aspire to. And that can create frustrations and inconvenience in the present as existing traffic and use patterns overlap with our ambitions for the future.

*In light of this difficult balancing act, consider the following questions with your group:*

- » How can Decatur minimize frustration and conflict while continuing its planned, step-by-step efforts towards safer walking, biking, and access for the disabled?
- » How can we further increase walking, biking, carpooling, or school bus use by K-12 students as an alternative to parent chauffeuring or older students driving themselves in single occupancy vehicles?
- » What other strategies — via employers, for example — might reduce current auto use, particularly at peak drive times?

### CONTEXT:

Environmental action in Decatur can extend from the most local (canopy regulations, green space preservation and acquisition, stormwater management, pollinator protection, etc.), to the regional (vehicle miles travelled, water quality, pollution emissions, etc.) to the most global (climate change).

The more local the challenge, the greater control we as a community have over the outcomes. In effect, we *own* the issue.

The larger, more widespread the issue, the more our actions might require support from or alignment with policy and action at the regional, state, Federal, and/or global levels to be most effective.

Given that we, like all communities, operate with limited resources and bandwidth, consider the following three position statements:

1. "Leadership must begin somewhere. Decatur should demonstrate tangible and meaningful action towards global climate change, even if such actions are not yet supported by government at the metro, state, and/or Federal levels."
2. "Decatur should address climate change, but only to the degree that we can *plug into* and support policy and action enacted at higher levels of governance."
3. "Think global but act local. Decatur should allocate its available resources towards the environmental outcomes we can directly affect or control locally."

*Now discuss these questions with your group:*

- » Which approach do you feel is best suited to Decatur? Can you achieve consensus within your group?
- » Within the limits of your answer to the previous question, what are the most important environmentally-focused actions Decatur should take in the next ten years?



# CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES

## ROUND THREE SUMMARY REPORT

KEY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND AMBITIONS  
AS EXPRESSED BY RESIDENT PARTICIPANTS

SEPTEMBER, 2020

**DESTINATION:2030**

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## Introduction

These summaries represent the last of three analyses of Decatur residents' focused discussions on topics to be addressed in the City's 2020 Strategic plan.

In phase one of the Roundtables, residents shared their thoughts about the city — what they're proud of, what needs work, and what aspirations they hold for the future. In the second, they were invited to dive more deeply into popular Round 1 issues where there was no clear agreement on the best ways to move forward. These included neighborhood zoning changes that could assist in affordable housing and inclusivity efforts; managing traffic as we build out our walking and biking networks; and how aggressively we should address climate change at the local level.

Paused in March for reorganization in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, phase two Roundtables resumed virtually in August of 2020 and were completed and summarized in early September. Round three virtual sessions began in mid-September, focusing on community connectivity and civic spirit. By the end of September, the Roundtables' last phase was sufficiently wrapped to inform the summaries here.

Given the pandemic's stress on families, it's a tribute to Decatur's tradition of community engagement that so many residents continued to make time for participating in Roundtables deprived of the advantages of in-person conversation with their neighbors. While there was some predictable pandemic-related attrition, there were enough recurring comments and suggestions to build confidence that a representative range of residents' opinions was captured.

## Overview

The third and final Roundtable session explored "how we become and stay connected — to the city, to nonprofits and civic organizations, and to each other — and how those connections can be strengthened and better leveraged in the service of addressing our challenges."

The Discussion Guide suggested specific questions to get the conversation started. But, as was the case with the other Roundtable discussions, participants saw the questions as interrelated and expressed opinions that might fit under any of the topic areas, regardless of the prompting question.

The experience of the pandemic and lockdown was obvious. Underlying many of the participants' responses was an appreciation of what's sacrificed when citizens can't talk to one another face-to-face.

Commenters recognized digital communication tools will be required — and perhaps enhanced — post-COVID. Many urged beefing up the main City website so that it's the go-to hub for all activities and engagement opportunities.

At the same time, lots of the same commenters stressed the importance of reviving and expanding in-person meetings, especially in small groups, after the pandemic. What's more, they said, online communications advancements shouldn't preclude improvements in old-school techniques like printed mailers, fliers, and posters. When it comes to tools and methods: more of everything, please.

In general, current City-to-resident communications earned approval. But there were also calls for more clarity and timely explanations of the whys of policies and programs, especially when it comes to potentially controversial projects. (The Legacy Park housing process was used as an example by several commenters.)

Some volunteered that any suspicions about a lack of transparency could be preempted if the City was more intentional about celebrating successes. Maybe point out how popular projects and programs are often the end product of inclusive engagement processes that set goals and strategies to achieve them.

There's a recognition that despite earnest efforts on the part of the City there are people and perspectives left out of planning conversations. And there were lists of potential outreach techniques to target them. A common admonition: Go to where the targeted populations are, and engage them when they're comfortable meeting; don't require people to gather at times and locations convenient only to those who are privileged to have flexible schedules and transportation options.

What's likely to be rewarding for the City and the consulting team is that at least some Roundtable participants figured out on their own the need for multi-session discussions to tease out conflicting perspectives and identity questions that need answering before the strategy-shaping phase begins. Some even acknowledged the need for topic experts to help them answer the questions.

That's a pretty good description of the approach baked into the 2030 Strategic Plan process. Even if the comments didn't explicitly call out the Roundtables-to-202s-to-draft-plan structure, seeing citizens "invent" the Roundtables validated the design of the process.

Here are summaries of comments organized under the three topic areas outlined in the Discussion Guide:

## **COMMUNICATION & COMMON GROUND: HOW WELL ARE WE CONNECTED?**

As suggested in the comments overview, Roundtable participants tended to provide and reaffirm similar responses under all three of the Discussion Guide's question prompts. That was especially true under this section and under the "What can we do?" question below.

When asked to name their principal resources for information about Decatur activities, they provided long lists, including: the City's website, Facebook, and "Focus" newsletter; the "Decaturish," "Next Door," and "Decatur Minute" blogs; the Decatur section of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution; and neighborhood listservs.

Pandemic restrictions didn't limit citizens' access to digital versions of those outlets; so there weren't concerns that the lockdown prevented most from keeping at least minimally informed. Some noted that the pandemic emergency accelerated adoption of virtual meeting techniques and encouraged the City to explore expanding digital tools. Might there be, for example, an online dashboard to monitor the City's progress on sustainability and resilience goals?

However, there were important caveats to the enthusiasm for online communications. Many were concerned that over-reliance on digital platforms excluded residents without adequate computer and wi-fi capacities. That's likely to further complicate the widely shared goal of engaging the broadest possible cross-sections of people without regard to whether they have access to the right hardware, software, and broadband connectivity.

Also worrying, said many, was the loss of crucial social connectivity when face-to-face meetings are restricted or curtailed. That concern was reflected in extended discussions under all topic categories. The overwhelming majority of commenters urged prioritizing and expanding in-person meeting opportunities, especially in small groups, once the COVID emergency passes.

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*"The idea of a connected community is a large part of why people want to move here. Face-to-face interactions are where we are at our best."*

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## CONTRIBUTIONS: WHAT CAN WE DO, ALONE AND TOGETHER?

Prioritizing in-person meetings in the post-COVID era led the groups toward suggestions for more targeted outreach to those missing from many community discussions. The most mentioned strategy:

Instead of asking folks to come to official meeting places, engage with them where they are, within the networks in which they're already comfortable. Is it possible, for instance, to plug into a wider variety of organizations, from service clubs and churches to neighborhood associations and cultural arts groups? Even block parties?

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*"Use different venues. Go to the neighborhoods. Don't make people come to you."*

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Might the City piggy-back information-sharing campaigns with those organizations and events? How about making more use of the Rec Center to reach regulars there who don't attend the usual meetings? And because this is Decatur: Schools. How can already active teacher, student, and parent organizations be used to communicate not only among their networks, but also with the broader population?

While applauding the efforts of Decatur's elected officials and senior staff to make themselves available to the community, some commenters suggested increasing opportunities for information sharing between citizen groups and staff with specific responsibilities in areas like transportation and housing policy. What people might suspect as a lack of transparency, some said, might just be a missing chance for clarity — to hear and discuss in greater detail the thinking behind some policy or program, especially as it applies to the concerns of a specific neighborhood or interest group. And some suggested occasional meetings with staff without official agendas to allow for open-ended Q&A.

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*"Make it clear to citizens that their participation and feedback doesn't mean that the outcome will always go their way. They are part of the process, but the commission or city leaders are doing their best to represent the whole city (all 25k), not just the citizens who show up to meetings."*

---

Popular models for person-to-person communication post-COVID: Community dinners like those focusing on racial equity. And the Roundtables themselves. Many volunteered appreciation of the value of a progressive meeting strategy to better focus questions and to resolve conflicts.

## LEVERAGING OUR COMMUNITY FABRIC IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

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*"Connectedness is a solace, and it is a buffer for the community that helps facilitate positive change. Connectedness can also serve the community to smooth tensions and keep highly contentious situations from developing."*

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Roundtable participants said the pandemic emergency made them appreciate what Decatur already has in place because of past planning:

A community in which it's possible to get outdoors in pleasant surroundings for walking

and biking. Existing social connectivity that could migrate to online forums for basic information sharing. Community-focused businesses that expanded services and volunteered space for City and non-profit use — all in line with infection-aware customer protections.

There was pride in what many saw as a demonstration of community adaptation to what the emergency required instead of demanding that reality conform to pre-COVID expectations. “A willingness to change to fit the model that is needed right now,” said one participant.

How might those lessons be applied to the Strategic Plan process and beyond?

Comments largely echoed suggestions under the other two topic categories: Yes, adopt and expand emerging digital tools for community engagement. No, don’t give up on the tried-and-true printed fliers, posters, and mailers — and definitely not on in-person meetings. Look for new opportunities, new groups, new events to expand conversations.

The pandemic and lockdown inspired a new respect for uncertainty — and perhaps for humility, as well. Given the challenge of figuring out what to expect in the next few months, let alone the next decade, one participant asked, “Can we even plan for 10 years out?” Maybe revisiting assumptions and recalibrating strategies in shorter time frames, perhaps in five-year increments, is a more realistic idea.

Participants implied throughout this final Roundtables phase that the adaptation mindset is woven into the Decatur community fabric. And they appeared to appreciate its value when tested by crisis and are open to be reminded of that as the planning process moves toward draft strategies for the future.

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*“As the group wrapped up discussion, one attendee raised the idea of our group’s continuing to meet, informally. We have created trust in this group, and the thought is that it would be a good platform to build upon the ideas we put forth today — creating community — connecting our neighborhoods, doing work together, getting to know each other and other neighborhoods better. It was a fitting conclusion.”*

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# DECATUR CITIZEN ROUNDTABLES

## FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

### ROUND THREE: SEPTEMBER 12 THROUGH 20

#### OUR FINAL ROUNDTABLE

- » These discussions will in most cases take place via video conferencing, though each group is free to determine amongst themselves how they'd like to gather.
- » Check back in with your group and establish an official meeting day and time between **Saturday, September 12** and **Sunday, September 20** (doodle.com offers an effective online tool for finding compatible schedules among a group).
- » Determine/reconfirm the manner (Zoom/videoconference, masked and distanced, etc.) by which participants are comfortable meeting.
- » If your group opts for a service like Zoom and no one in the group has a premium subscription for hosting, let us know and someone from the City of Decatur will be assigned to set up the online meeting, then assign hosting duties over to another participant and exit the discussion once it's underway.
- » Distribute an invitation to your group participants so they can mark their calendars, and instruct everyone to await final instructions as we get closer.
- » In the near future you'll be provided your discussion guide for advance distribution to your group, as well as any remaining instructions for taking and submitting your discussion notes.

# ROUNDTABLES ROUND 3: DISCUSSION GUIDE

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION, CIVIC SPIRIT

In our first Roundtable discussion we shared our thoughts about Decatur — what we're proud of, what needs work, and what aspirations we hold for the future.

In our second Roundtable session, we explored specific topics where there was no clear agreement among participants regarding how to move forward on some key issues — neighborhood zoning changes that could assist in affordable housing and inclusivity efforts, managing traffic as we build out our walking and biking networks, and how aggressively we should address climate change at the local level.

In this third and final Roundtable session we will explore how we become and stay connected — to the city, to nonprofits and civic organizations, and to each other — and how those connections can be strengthened and better leveraged in the service of addressing our challenges.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION

Welcome by facilitator [15 minutes total]

*Welcome, reconnection, and ground rules*

» Introductions:

» Much has happened since we last met in person. Take the necessary time for re-introductions and reconnection among the group.

» Leading the conversation requires a *neutral role*

» Facilitators can contribute as individuals but should not *advocate* for particular positions or otherwise work to *influence* others' opinions.

» Facilitators encourage discussion among the entire group but *do not challenge comments or opinions shared within the group*.

» Facilitators ensure the group stays focused with a fair and productive conversation.

» For full transparency, notes taken should be circulated among the group post-discussion to ensure that all are in agreement with how comments are being documented.

## » Ground rules

- » Everyone is encouraged to speak, one person at a time.
- » No one should dominate the discussion. Support your facilitator's efforts to manage diverse personalities for a fair and inclusive discussion. We're all neighbors here.
- » Help the facilitator keep things on track with time monitoring or flip chart notes.
- » Speak for yourself, not as a representative for others.
- » Do not quote or attribute group conversation outside the group.
- » Find a quiet space to remain focused and uninterrupted.
- » Keep cell phones muted or off.
- » If using Zoom or similar platform, use your camera for better social connections.
- » Listen to understand before responding.

## COMMUNICATION & COMMON GROUND: HOW WELL ARE WE CONNECTED?

Community thrives on inclusion, relationships, and participation. How well connected is Decatur? Please discuss the following questions. **[40 minutes total]**

- » How do you stay up-to-date on city issues? What channels of information do you find most effective? In what ways could the city better communicate with its residents?
- » How do we create ways for citizens to better engage with each other outside of often polarizing online forums? How might the city foster the neighborly connections and productive discourse that helps build common ground?
- » How can we get people involved in public life? What can we do to encourage all kinds of people to volunteer in the community and serve on community boards and commissions?
- » In this process, we've used the Roundtable approach for productive conversations towards community decision-making. What are some other Decatur ways to build and maintain common ground, even on difficult issues where we cannot reach agreement?
- » In what ways can the City of Decatur ensure that everyone, regardless of circumstances, has opportunity to participate in community decision-making?

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## CONTRIBUTIONS: WHAT CAN WE DO, ALONE AND TOGETHER?

Change happens when community members agree to take ownership and to work for change at different levels. Consider the following levels of change and make a list of what can be done at each of these levels. **[30 minutes total]**

- » **Individual change.** What can one person do to make progress on a particular issue?
- » **Organizational change.** What are the ways in which we gather and organize, both formally and informally? How can these groups of citizens most effectively make a difference?
- » **Institutional change.** How can our institutions like schools, religious congregations, governmental authorities, and others make a tangible civic difference? How might the City of Decatur partner with such institutions to solve specific problems?

## LEVERAGING OUR COMMUNITY FABRIC IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

Since last March, much has impacted our community and what we might consider our most pressing challenges and priorities — from a pandemic public health crisis, to escalating efforts to combat racial discrimination and injustice, to the growing signs and effects of climate change. Please discuss the following questions. **[25 minutes total]**

- » How is a stronger, more connected community an asset in the face of such challenges?
- » How might a strong and connected community be better leveraged to address problems of such overwhelming scale or to assist those suffering the effects of such problems?

## NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

This is the last of our three Roundtable discussions. Here's what to expect and how to participate as we move forward. **[10 minutes total]**

- » Roundtable input will be collected, distilled, and assessed. This assessment will further identify common themes, areas where the community is in solid agreement, and areas where potential conflicts exist among participant input.

- » Themes identified and questions raised will inform online participation opportunities such as surveys and comment forums this Fall.
- » Roundtable participants are encouraged to continue their participation with these activities as well as help spread the word to those who were unable to participate in the Roundtables. There are still substantive ways for all to contribute.
- » Later this Fall and following our online activities, our public input phase will conclude with the “Decatur 202s” in which the most challenging issues raised through the process — those with no clear direction from the community on how to proceed — will be addressed through a series of topic-specific online public meetings led by subject matter experts.
- » Upon the completion of the public input phase, the planning team will begin drafting the 2020 Strategic Plan which will be presented for public review, feedback opportunities, and final revision as it moves towards adoption in Spring 2021.
- » Stay tuned for further notice as we move forward.

*By participating in the Roundtable discussions, you have played an important role in shaping the future of our wonderful city. Thank you!*

**DESTINATION:2030**

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# THE DECATUR 202s

## SUMMARY REPORT

KEY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND AMBITIONS  
AS EXPRESSED BY PARTICIPANTS

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY: NOVEMBER 19, 2020

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY: DECEMBER 10, 2020

EQUITY & RACIAL JUSTICE: JANUARY 14, 2021

CLIMATE CHANGE: FEBRUARY 11, 2021

### DESTINATION:2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## INTRODUCTION

Emerging from the Citizen Roundtables that occurred between February and September of 2020, four overarching and interconnected challenges seemed to be on everyone's minds: How to better position Decatur to address climate change, racial inequities, affordable housing gaps, and the need for expanding choices for getting around.

To better understand and delve into these topics, the Decatur 202 sessions—a series of focused, online discussions—were held over a three month period between November, 2020, and February, 2021.

Each combined an hour's worth of presentation and panel discussion featuring a mix of national and local experts with breakout conversations in which participants could explore the issues in greater detail.

The sessions sought to put a finer point on topics too big to fully tackle in the context of the Roundtables, and to begin the process of reconciling conflicting opinions from participants.

## FOUR BROAD TAKEAWAYS THAT EMERGED

- » The topics were the right ones. The four selected topic areas—Mobility, Housing, Racial Equity, and Climate Change—were affirmed as key categories for policymaking over the next decade. Even when there was disagreement about specific approaches, there was no hint of concerns or priorities that could not be connected to one or more of those four themes.
- » Participants got the everything's-connected message. In almost all of the facilitators' notes, there was recognition that two or more of the topics are connected and that planning requires considering strategies through multiple lenses—notably the lenses of affordability and racial equity.
- » Participants approve of the City's stated commitments and affirmed the ambition that Decatur should be seen as a leader on these topics. When offered the chance to affirm or reject current City priorities, such as housing affordability or human-scaled mobility options, participants affirmed—at least at high altitude—the City's priorities.
- » But the pressure is on to move faster. Compared to discussions leading to the last Strategic Plan, there's clearly a growing sense of urgency to reverse—or at least address—troubling trends. Especially at the intersection of racial equity and affordability. Bottom line: There are rising expectations that meaningful action is forthcoming.

## **SESSION ONE: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY**

Thursday, November 19, 4-5:30pm

Registered participants: 105?

Speaker panel: Jen Price, Sycamore Consulting; Jack Kittle, Decatur Active Living Board; Heather Alhadeff, MARTA; and Charles Brown, Rutgers University.

Presentation and panel discussion archived at: <https://decatur2030.com/resources/>

As expected, given the car-centric realities of the Atlanta Metro, participants yearn for a balance between expanding bike, pedestrian, and transit options AND assuring smooth car traffic “flow” and access to convenient (and low cost or free) parking.

However, it’s clear advocates for alternatives to car dependence have gained traction over the last decade. That’s particularly true when the transportation topic is linked with racial equity, housing affordability, and climate change.

When asked to rank goals for transportation policymaking, groups prioritized safety, accessibility, bike and pedestrian uses, and the environment over cars. And there were helpful suggestions for getting more data to inform decisions (mapping current destinations and travel modes, for instance).

Still, there were dissenters in most groups when potential strategies were likely to inconvenience car drivers or if solutions require increasing the burden on taxpayers. There’s the recurring call for a circulator bus connecting MARTA stations with neighborhoods and the downtown. And there’s general agreement that the bus or trolley should be an EV, that it should be free, and that taxpayers shouldn’t shoulder all the costs.

## **SESSION TWO: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Thursday, December 10, 4-6:15pm

Registered participants: 152

Speaker panel: Geoff Koski, Bleakly Advisory Group; Elke Davidson, Decatur Affordable Housing Task Force; and James Alexander, Mercy Housing Southeast

Presentation and panel discussion archived at: <https://decatur2030.com/resources/>

Participants were nearly unanimous in supporting affordability as a priority. And most connected the priority with the increasing concern about racial equity and diversity.

In discussions on both housing and equity, many expressed worries that Decatur is fast becoming an enclave for wealthy white families only. Subsidies for teachers, City workers, and others whose incomes can’t match Decatur’s rising household incomes are probably required, some offered. The same with incentives for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and “Missing Middle” infill (multifamily housing at neighborhood scale). And it’s important, some volunteered, to expand the affordability conversation to include the costs of transportation and other family budget categories.

But many also expressed frustration that no solutions seemed free of impacts they hoped to avoid, like higher taxes. Many agreed that developers should pay impact fees to offset subsidies for lower-income housing opportunities. And perhaps bolstering partnerships

with non-profits and other government agencies (like the school district) could create opportunities for sharing costs.

### **SESSION THREE: EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE**

Thursday, January 14, 6-9pm

Registered participants: 170

Speaker panel: Ed Lee, EdD, Senior Director of the Alben W. Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue, Emory University, and Co-Chair of Decatur Better Together Advisory Board; Fonta High, Mawuli Davis, and Genesis Reddicks, Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights; Dr. Mari Ann Banks, City Schools of Decatur District Equity Coordinator; and Dr. Yves-Rose Porcena, Agnes Scott College Vice President for Equity & Inclusion  
Presentation and panel discussion archived at: <https://decatur2030.com/resources/>

The 2020 summer of Black Lives Matter protests and Decatur-focused conversations about the impacts of systemic racism clearly elevated priorities to recognize that history and to commit to change. But what does that change look like, especially at the policy level? This session, conducted in partnership with the Better Together Advisory Board and serving as both a Strategic Plan 202 session and the conclusion of the City's Anti-Racism Speaker Series, sought answers.

All the groups struggled with that question. "Maybe," one participant said, "the right question is, 'How can I make a difference?'" So in almost every group and in the after-session free-floating discussion, the conversation focused on how change might take place first on the personal level.

Evident throughout were worries that the issues were so much more complicated than many imagined and that frustration and cynicism about the pace of change might endanger policymaking at the speed and scale required. Some commenters, however, suggested there might be a carryover bonus for diminishing the frustration, if an equity lens were applied to strategies targeting affordability, mobility, and climate change.

### **SESSION FOUR: CLIMATE CHANGE**

Thursday, February 11, 6-9pm

Registered participants: 119

Speaker panel: Jen Price, Sycamore Consulting; Dr. Michael Black, Chair, Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board; Bahiyyih Grant, Decatur Youth Council; Dr. Brian Stone, Georgia Institute of Technology; and Kelly O'Day Weisinger, Emory University  
Presentation and panel discussion archived at: <https://decatur2030.com/resources/>

Group breakouts on this topic seemed to involve the most informed conversations. That was, more than likely, because of high participation by the City's Environmental Sustainability Board members and by young people inspired by sustainability and resilience curricula in their schools.

There was near unanimous support for setting ambitious goals for the City's conversion to renewable energy. And there were more specific policy recommendations than in any

# DECATUR 202s: MOBILITY

## BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Each group is tasked with *discussing and finding common ground* on the following questions. But first:

**Nominate** a note taker.

**Take the notes of your discussion**, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com) following the meeting.

**After the breakouts conclude** and we've returned to general session, your note taker will be prompted to share your group's highlights with all attendees via a tool called Mentimeter. To do so, go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code **49 02 83 2**. The specific polling questions your note taker will be asked are noted within this guide.

### 1. VISION & POLICY (10 MINUTES)

Decatur's commitment to human-scaled modes of travel is decades long and the city continues to expand routes and connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the mobility-impaired. This includes streetscape enhancements and bike lanes, an expanding trail network, recently completed streetscape and bicycling routes on N. McDonough Street, Trinity Place, and Commerce Drive, and approved but not yet implemented bike lanes on Church Street from Commerce Drive to the city limits.

Discuss your individual experiences and feelings about these efforts, then choose the statement that best describes your group's collective position:

- » a. The city should continue its policy focus on human-scale modes of travel.
- » b. The city should reconsider aspects of this focus.
- » c. We are unsure at this time.

## 2. A BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (10 MINUTES)

Traffic counts on Decatur's primary thoroughfares have remained relatively stable over the past 20 years, though congestion at key points and use of secondary streets has increased during peak hours. Traffic light timing and other investments could help improve traffic flow, but congestion isn't the only factor in transportation decisions.

Prioritize the following factors in terms of how they should influence future transportation spending and priorities.

- » a. Safety
- » b. Accessibility for the elderly or children
- » c. Accessibility for those with disabilities
- » d. Environmental impact
- » e. Efficient use of limited street widths
- » f. Health impact
- » g. Impact on drivers
- » h. Impact on bicyclists, pedestrians, or MARTA riders
- » i. Other factor (specify in your notes)

**TO BE ANSWERED VIA MENTIMETER WHEN WE RETURN TO GENERAL SESSION:**

What were your group's top 3 transportation priorities?

## 3. EQUITY (10 MINUTES)

Mobility decisions and investments can have different impacts on various groups, including racial minorities, different genders, people of varying abilities, low-income populations, and those who do not drive. Different groups also experience streets and public spaces differently.

1. What impacts do Decatur's mobility investments have on different groups, and how can Decatur make more equitable investments in the future?

2. How might the following aspects of mobility impact groups differently, and how should these impacts be taken into consideration as the city makes transportation decisions?

- » Parking
- » Transportation and car ownership costs
- » Access to nearby transit and jobs
- » Impact of new technologies
- » Safety and security

**TO BE ANSWERED VIA MENTIMETER WHEN WE RETURN TO GENERAL SESSION:**

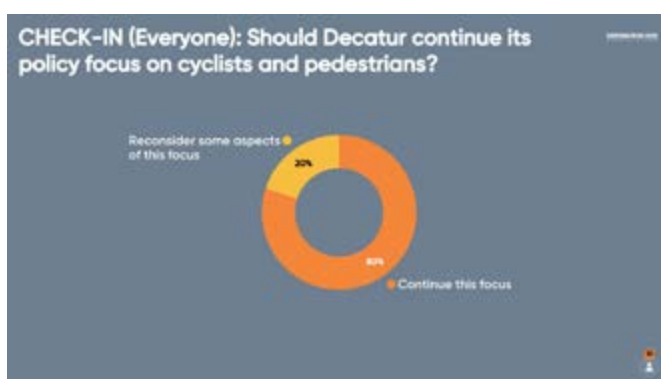
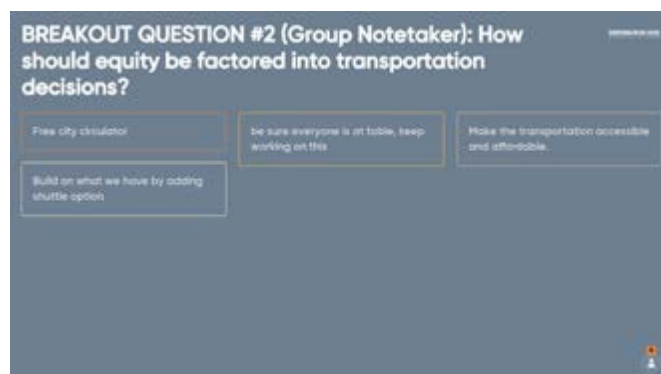
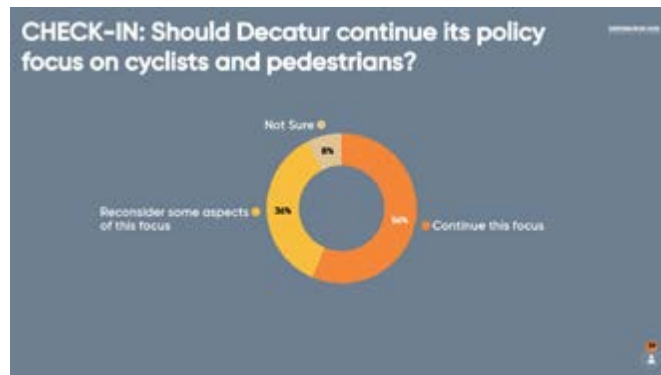
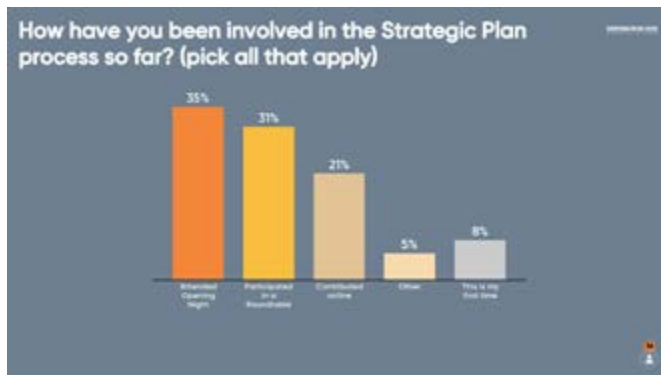
How should equity be factored into transportation decisions?

Submit 2-3 ideas your group came up with.

#### 4. CLIMATE ACTION (10 MINUTES)

Transportation is the largest contributor of greenhouse gases in the US and how we get around can make a big impact on our individual carbon footprint. Walking or biking have substantially lesser impacts than driving or using public transportation. And neighborhoods with a more dense concentration of housing, jobs, and services make it easier to walk or bike.

- » Currently, 89% of Decaturites drive to work, and very few commute by MARTA, walking, or biking. Is this an appropriate percentage or should we aim for a different number?
- » How can Decatur's transportation policies (related to street design, parking, housing and jobs near transit, and other factors) help the City government and its citizens reduce their carbon footprint?



## Mobility Decatur 202 Registration Report

First Name	Last Name				
Jerchelle	Jean-Poix	Sarah	Jones	Hobie	Stocking
lynn	russell	Louise	Reaves	Allen	Moye
Diana	Berman	Ryan	Sellers	Nancy	Hall
Nathan	Shaffer	David	Nifong	Danielle	Suchdev
Woody	Giles	Matthew	Hogben	Nathan	Soldat
Gail	Smith	Peter	Wakefield	Fran	Millians
Sandra	Gollmar	Denyse	Levesque	Sara	Odufolurin
Roxanne	Buckman	Ben	Brown	Justin	Hall
Debbie	Moore	Joyce	Davis	Jen	Price
Karyl	Davis	Wardell	Castles	Hugh	Saxon
Shelley	Parnes	Leah	Denison	Mark	Arnold
Rick	Kern	j Patrick	Murphy	Clay	Scarborough
Caroline	Enloe	Christina	Branum-Martin	Betty	Blondeau
Linda Harris		Shaun	Willie	Louise	Sussin
Heather	Alhadeff	Valerie	Nowell	Andrea	Arnold
Jason	Spoeth	Debra	Furtado	Lee	Cook
WILLIAM	Spoeht	Elizabeth	Howard	David	Junger
Tammy	BRANDT	Lynn	Gathercole	Aileen	de la Torre
Carson	Washington	Kathryn	Beane	Steve	Collins
Michael	Cook	Patti	Garrett	Prem	Goodnight
Lilabet	Black	Paul	Wagner	Bob	Leitch
MGB	Choate	Michael	Lehman	Murray Browne	
Joy	Martin	Kelly	Jordan	Shelley	Rogers
theresa	mittchell	Douglas	Faust	Preeti	Jaggi
Sarah	McColley	Paul	Hamalian		
Gary	Garrett	Holly	Grimes		
Brenda	Dietz	Carol	Hill		
Kris	Adams	Carmen	Dodson		
Donna	Bohanan	Jill	Thompson		
Ann	Abramowitz	Jennifer	Doty		
Nancy	Wilkinson	Jerry	Williamson		
Chris	Fisk	Cecilia	Harris		
Anja	Lee	Greg	Coleson		
Meredith	Lee	Angela	Threadgill		
Theresa	Roark	Nancy	Bartlett		
Mary	Sullivan	Mari	Banks		
Charles	Dell'Osso	Jimmy	Faris		
Alex	Brown	James	Radford		
Sonali	Schaefer	Amanda	Hallauer		
Heather Alhadeff	Saindane	Michael	Harbin		
Tammie		Michael	Waldbillig		
Scott	Danie	Wade	Roberts		
Kelly	Doyon	Terri	Kruzan		
Paula	McMichael	K.C.	Boyce		
Preeti	Collins	Olwyn	DeMarco		
Jack	Jaggi	Sara	Holmes		
	Kittle	Annie	Godfrey		

# DECATUR 202: HOUSING

## BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Each group is tasked with discussing and finding common ground on the following questions. But first:

**Nominate a note taker.**

Take the notes of your discussion, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com) following the meeting.

After the breakouts conclude and we've returned to general session, your note taker will also be prompted to share highlights from your group using the Zoom chat function. The specific polling questions your note taker will be asked are noted within this guide.

Take a moment to say hello to your fellow participants. **Now let's begin.**

### 1. IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD (15 minutes)

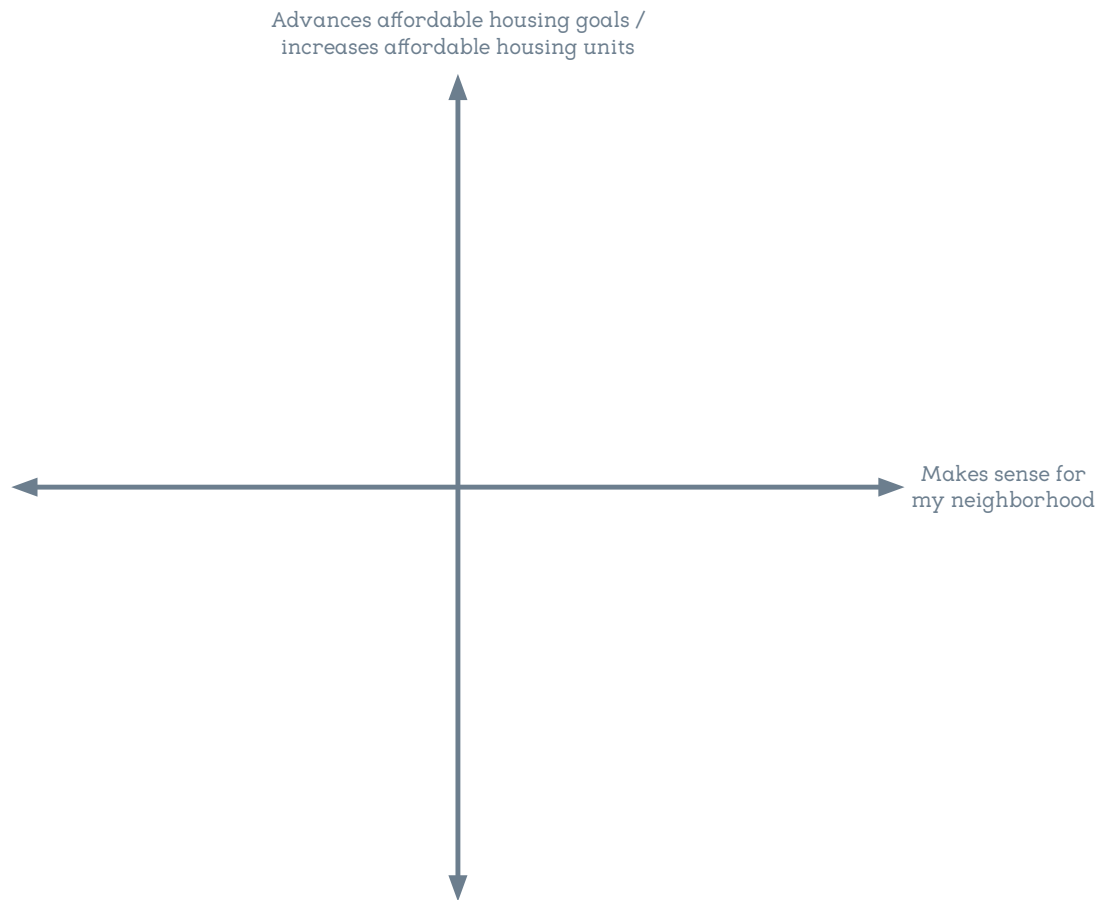
Larger affordable housing projects near MARTA, or on one of the few large parcels still available in Decatur, are important options, but there is also a need for affordable housing within each neighborhood.

- » On the following page is a blank matrix with six neighborhood-based affordable housing strategies taken from the Affordable Housing Task Force Report. The vertical axis measures the degree to which a strategy advances affordable housing goals and/or results in additional affordable units; the horizontal axis charts the degree to which each strategy makes sense for your neighborhood.
- » Discuss with your group, then mark the grid in the agreed upon spot with the number for each affordable housing strategy. (Snap a picture of your completed matrix and submit it with your notes.)

**TO BE ANSWERED VIA ZOOM CHAT WHEN WE RETURN TO GENERAL SESSION:**

Which affordable housing strategies did you place in the upper right-most corner of your Question 1 matrix?

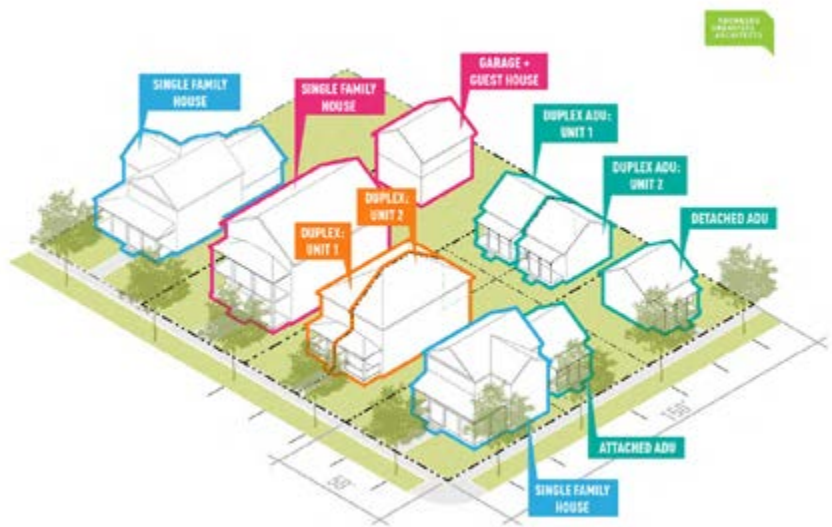
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## RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FROM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE REPORT

(does not include funding strategies or city-wide efforts)

1. **Naturally occurring affordable housing** (tax abatements to keep existing units affordable)
2. **Duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and cottage courts** on single-family lots (zoning changes with size and height limits to respect neighborhood context)
3. **Accessory dwelling units** (finance program to encourage what is already allowed by zoning)
4. **Co-housing/communal living** (expand zoning districts where this is allowed as a limited or conditional use)
5. **Land acquisition** (identify, purchase, and partner to develop affordable housing at all scales)
6. **Decatur Land Trust** (long-term land ownership of affordable housing at all scales to ensure permanent affordability)



Graphic courtesy Kronberg Urbanists + Architects

## 2. COSTS AND COMMITMENT (10 minutes)

Financial obstacles are the greatest hurdles to achieving affordability. Federal and state funding is limited and subject to strong competition. Local progress is dependent on political determination and the willingness to play a primary or supporting financial role. Discuss the following with your group:

- » Given the limited scope of funding options, will you continue to support affordable housing strategies in instances where the city must contribute financially, whether in the form of land acquisition, infrastructure, tax incentives, loans, direct financial support, or other options?
- » The expansion of affordable housing options is a long-term effort, far beyond the term of any one elected official. How can Decatur residents organize in ways that build and maintain momentum and continue to send strong messages of support to elected officials?

## 3. EQUITY (15 minutes)

An increase in housing costs in Decatur has significantly eroded our racial and economic diversity over the past few decades. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How has the racial and economic makeup of your neighborhood changed over the past ten years?
- » How could each of the personas shown in the presentation (or others like them) be able to afford to live in your neighborhood or elsewhere in Decatur? The personas are available for review on the following page.
- » How can Decatur promote an inclusive, anti-racist housing policy to help Decatur's neighborhoods become truly diverse?

**TO BE ANSWERED VIA ZOOM CHAT WHEN WE RETURN TO GENERAL SESSION:**

List one of your group's key ideas for promoting anti-racist housing policy in Decatur.

## HOUSING PERSONAS FROM PANELIST SLIDES

(examples of the types of people that might need affordable housing in Decatur)



### DESIREE

Teacher's aide salary: \$21,000

Can afford: \$375 monthly rent or \$60,500 home



### MICHAEL

Custodian salary: \$35,000

Can afford: \$875 monthly rent or \$130,000 home



### ADRIAN

Police officer salary: \$43,000

Can afford: \$1,075 monthly rent or \$170,000 home



### EMILY

Teacher salary: \$57,400

Can afford: \$1,435 monthly rent or \$240,000 home



### SARAH

Consultant salary: \$82,000

Can afford: \$2,050 monthly rent or \$400,000 home

(the average home in Decatur costs \$650,000)

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#### 4. CLIMATE ACTION (10 minutes)

Neighborhoods with a more dense concentration of housing, jobs, and services make it easier to walk or bike, and allow some people to reduce or forego the cost of car ownership, which the AAA says averages \$9,282 per year. This would free up personal or family budget for housing expenses and can help Decaturites significantly reduce their carbon footprint. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How can Decatur encourage increased housing in locations that are close to jobs, services, and public transportation?

The costs of parking are often hidden, but can increase monthly rent or mortgage payments by 10-15% when the cost to construct a garage, parking lot, or parking deck is considered. And parking takes up land that could be used for additional housing, green space, or businesses. Widely available “free” parking also increases our carbon footprint by making it easier to drive everywhere. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How can Decatur’s parking policies and regulations be updated to avoid unintentionally encouraging too much parking?
- » Would you be willing to walk, bike, or take MARTA more places if it meant that more people could afford to live in Decatur, more affordable housing units could be built, and more green spaces would be available?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR NOTES  
AND MATRIX PICTURE TO [DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM)

WE'LL SEE YOU BACK IN THE GENERAL SESSION!

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## Housing Decatur 202 Poll Report

### User Name

Scott Doyon	Sue Lin Yee	Rob O'Callaghan	Tom Gladis
Ash Kumar	Lynn Gathercole	Scott Doyon	K.C. Boyce
Carol Hadley	David Draper	Annie Godfrey	Richelle Patton
Mary Karwoski	Sonali Saindane	Kathryn Beane	Kathryn Lee
Benjamin Davidow	theresa mitchell	Richard Malerba	Kathleen Kelly
Mark Burnette	Jennifer Doty	Debra Furtado	Alvin Burrell
Diana Berman	Lilabet Choate	Douglas Faust	Holly Grimes
Deena Keeler	Bob Leitch	Lisa Daily	Rob O'Callaghan
James Radford	Brenda Oprisch	Sue Lin Yee	Scott Doyon
Gary Garrett	John Ellis	Lynn Gathercole	Annie Godfrey
Betty Blondeau	Bill Adams	David Draper	Sara Patenaude
Beate Sass	Kathie Gannon	Kelly Jordan	Kathryn Beane
Jack Kittle	Dan Immergluck	Sonali Saindane	William Markert
David Harry	Paul Hamalian	theresa mitchell	Richard Malerba
aimee1@gmail.com wise	Patti Garrett	Jennifer Doty	Debra Furtado
Erin Braden	Hobie Stocking	Lilabet Choate	Douglas Faust
Paula Collins	Carol Hadley	Bob Leitch	Lisa Daily
Joy Martin	Mary Karwoski	John Ellis	Sue Lin Yee
Shelley Rogers	Benjamin Davidow	Bill Adams	Lynn Gathercole
Melinda Mobley	Mark Burnette	Kathie Gannon	David Draper
Scott Presson	James Radford	Dan Immergluck	Kelly Jordan
David Lewicki	Gary Garrett	Paul Hamalian	Sonali Saindane
Catherine Carter	Betty Blondeau	Patti Garrett	theresa mitchell
Nancy Hall	Beate Sass	Carol Hadley	Jennifer Doty
Shelly Fine	Jack Kittle	Mary Karwoski	Lilabet Choate
Barbara Joye	aimee1@gmail.com wise	Benjamin Davidow	Bob Leitch
Frank Burdette	Erin Braden	Mark Burnette	Brenda Oprisch
Bert Bender	Paula Collins	Diana Berman	John Ellis
Tom Gladis	Joy Martin	James Radford	Bill Adams
K.C. Boyce	Shelley Rogers	Gary Garrett	Kathie Gannon
Richelle Patton	Melinda Mobley	Betty Blondeau	Dan Immergluck
Kathryn Lee	Scott Presson	Beate Sass	Paul Hamalian
Kathleen Kelly	David Lewicki	Jack Kittle	Patti Garrett
Alvin Burrell	Catherine Carter	aimee1@gmail.com wise	Hobie Stocking
Holly Grimes	Nancy Hall	Erin Braden	
Rob O'Callaghan	Shelly Fine	Paula Collins	
Scott Doyon	Barbara Joye	Joy Martin	
Annie Godfrey	Frank Burdette	Shelley Rogers	
Sara Patenaude	Bert Bender	Melinda Mobley	
Kathryn Beane	Tom Gladis	Scott Presson	
Candace Fuqua	K.C. Boyce	David Lewicki	
William Markert	Richelle Patton	Catherine Carter	
Richard Malerba	Kathryn Lee	Nancy Hall	
Debra Furtado	Kathleen Kelly	Shelly Fine	
Douglas Faust	Alvin Burrell	Barbara Joye	
Lisa Daily	David Nifong	Frank Burdette	
	Holly Grimes	Bert Bender	

# EQUITY & RACIAL JUSTICE FORUM

## BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Each group is tasked with discussing and finding common ground on the following questions. But first:

**Nominate a note taker.**

Take the notes of your discussion, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com) following the meeting.

After the breakouts conclude and we've returned to general session, your note taker will have the opportunity to share your group's highlights with all attendees..

Take a moment to say hello and review these rules of engagement with your fellow participants. **Now let's begin.**

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Conversations about race are important but are not always easy. Keep in mind the four rules of courageous conversations as your discussion group embarks on these questions.

1. Stay engaged
2. Expect to experience discomfort
3. Speak your truth
4. Expect and accept a lack of closure

### 1. HISTORY (15 minutes)

Jane Elliott relayed her husband's experience with racism in small-town Iowa in the 1960s. The Beacon Hill Black Alliance shared some of what is going on here in Decatur. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How do you see the history of racism and how it informs economic disparities showing up in Decatur today?
- » Jane Elliott said that "the only thing necessary for the perpetuation of evil is for good people to do nothing." How are individual and collective actions in Decatur perpetuating the problem by ignoring or not actively fighting back against discrimination?



## 2. EMPATHY & HEALING (15 minutes)

Dr. Catherine Meeks talked about how confronting racism begins inside each of us and how “the personal and the collective are connected.” Dr. Yves-Rose Porcena shared about some of the progress Agnes Scott has made in the collective conversation. Discuss the following with your group:

- » When is a time when you became aware of your inner voices and how did you grow through that experience? What can local institutions do to help facilitate this work in each of us?
- » Catherine Meeks identifies our “inner community” as one impediment to racial healing. What are other impediments to healing and reconciliation in Decatur?

## 3. POLICIES, PRACTICES, & PROCEDURES (10 minutes)

Tim Wise explained how racism is inherently about systems and doesn’t require overtly bigoted individuals in order to perpetuate inequity. Dr. Mari Ann Banks shared about some of the work that City Schools of Decatur has been doing as an institution to combat this. Discuss the following with your group:

- » How is systemic discrimination perpetuating racist outcomes in Decatur even where there are not explicit individual expressions of hatred?
- » How can we uproot or reform policies, practices, and procedures in Decatur to address institutionalized discrimination and systemic inequity? What specific City policies, practices, or procedures could help bring this about? (Potential topics may include City policies, policing strategies, community education and communication, business diversity, public spaces, public events, transportation, and more.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. DON'T FORGET TO  
SUBMIT YOUR NOTES TO [DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM)

WE'LL SEE YOU BACK IN THE GENERAL SESSION!



## Equity & Racial Justice Decatur 202 / Anti-Racism Speaker Series Registrant Report

First Name	Last Name	Tracy	Oosterman	Lesley	Guyot	Richard	Phillips
Gregory	White	Waverly	Wesson	Holly	Grimes	William	Waugh
Nathan	Shaffer	Paula	Collins	Fonta	High	Chris	Kanne
John	Schwenkler	Andrea	Ryan	Colby	Lancelin	Marni	Pittman
don	rubin	Robert	Moore	Jennifer	Doty	Jen	Price
Taylor	Spicer	Nellie	Ruby	Brittany	Judson	Lissa	Tchernis
Woody	Giles	Jennifer	Walcott	Cecilia	Harris	Terrie	Moore
Shyam	Kumar	I. David	Daniels	Lesley	Grady	Tracy	Pondo
Mary Sidney	Harbert	Sylvia	Beverly	Valerie	Lemmie	JoeAnn	Cohen
Garett	Heysel	Sharifa	Ebrahimi	Debra	Furtado	Syreeta	Campbell
Cathy	Harmon-Christian	Kimberly	Watson	Clarissa	Ilyas	Betty	Blondeau
Roxanne	Buckman	Richelle	Patton	Courtenay	Dusenbury	Erin	Braden
Karyl	Davis	Yael	Fletcher	Susanne	Fincher	Alexis	Jones
Lee Rose	Cooper	Jack	Kittle	Barbara	Gray	M	P
Kelly	Walsh	Peggy	Merriss	Angela	Threadgill	Nate	Harris
Shelley	Parnes	Lila	Miller	Nancy	Bartlett	Breanna	Wodnik
Pam	Wuichet	Joan	Schork	Rae	Oglesby	Karen	Brierley
Robyn	Zurfluh	Charlene	Marsh	Gwen	Blackwell	Aileen	de la Torre
Ash	Kumar	Amy	Chastain	Mari Ann	Banks	Olen	Wood
Kim	Anderson	Andrew	Marti	Leanne	Rubenstein	Steve	Collins
Amy	Lovell	Kimberly	Amos	Cynthia	Wood	Kai	Jackson
Tammy	Washington	Joyce	Davis	Melissa	Arvay	Robert	Jeffrey
Rutledge	Hutson	Beatrice Perry	Soublet	Yolanda	C.	Sandra	Kruger
Beth	Champ	Elizabeth	N	James	Radford	Yolanda	C.
Carson	Cook	Wardell	Castles	Elizabeth	Hackett	Jumoke	Ifetayo
Michael	Black	Becky	Slemons	Kunle	Oguneye	Johnny	Mason
Rob	O'Callaghan	Tovah	Melaver	Leocadia	Zak	Dana	Kahn
Lilabet	Choate	Julie	Shaw	Chantal	Tusher	Shelley	Rogers
Joy	Martin	Shaun	Willie	Haqiqa	Bolling	Glenn	Francis
Ruth	Shults	Sheba	Ehteshami	Alvin	Burrell	Regine O	Jackson
Audra	Ferguson	Yves-Rose	Porcena	Sarah	Ku		
Mawuli	Davis	Michael	Leavey	Sara	Holmes		
Sarah	McColley	Mollie	Bogle	Annie	Godfrey		
James	Herndon	Tony	Powers	Jeremy	Cole		
Carolyn	Rose-Avila	Adam	Horowitz	Hobie	Stocking		
Kathryn	Lee	Alexandra	Gellin	Courtney	Chartier		
Susan	Sparks	Kathryn	Beane	Frank	Burdette		
Phil	Cuffey	Bert	Bender	India	Epps		
Kris	Adams	Carol	Palmer	Pam	privette		
Susan	Camp	Patti	Garrett	Danielle	Suchdev		
Ann	Abramowitz	Preeti	Jaggi	Debbie	Forde		
Anja	Lee	Jameelah	Saleem	Nathan	Soldat		
Meredith	Roark	Michael	Lehman	Fran	Millians		
Theresa	Sullivan	Jason	Craw	Juanita	Simmons		
Karen	Andes	Pete	Pfeiffer	Brenda	Oprisch		
Bill	Adams	Sue	Gilman	Syreeta Carr	Campbell		
Danna	Lipton	Sara	Patenaude	Justin	Hall		

# DECATUR 202: CLIMATE BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Each group is tasked with discussing and finding common ground on the following questions. But first:

**Nominate a note taker.**

Take the notes of your discussion, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com) following the meeting.

After the breakouts conclude and we've returned to general session, your note taker will be prompted to share your group's highlights with all attendees.

Take a moment to say hello to your fellow participants. **Now let's begin.**

## 1. GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE (10 minutes)

It's not always easy to see how our individual actions contribute to climate change, and it's even harder to know what we can do as individuals to stop climate change.

- » In what ways have you come to understand how your choices affect climate change?
- » How can educational tools, social media campaigns, and other efforts help citizens see the true impact of their actions on the climate?

## 2. WHAT CAN WE DO? (15 minutes)

Governments (even small ones like our City) will play a major part in combating climate change. But each of us as individuals also need to do our part. Our decisions about how we get around, what we eat, and how much electricity we use have a significant impact.

- » There are many ideas for how we can live more sustainably, but what choices can we make as individuals to make the biggest impact on our carbon footprints?
- » What tools can the City and local non-profits provide to support individual and family-level efforts to move toward carbon neutral lifestyles?

	Climate-Specific Impact	Impact on Environmental Sustainability More Generally
Individual Actions		
City Government Actions		

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### 3. SETTING REALISTIC AND FAIR GOALS (10 minutes)

City policies in response to climate change would impact all City operations and set aspirational goals for what Decatur wants to achieve. Our policies could also become a model for other cities in the region. A study is being conducted to document our current emissions, but we already know that most of Decatur's energy comes from fossil fuels.

- » Should we adopt a specific target for renewable energy use for City operations? Should we adopt a specific target amount or year for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for City operations or Decatur as a whole?
- » How can we implement climate policies so that the cost burden does not fall on disadvantaged households? How can the benefits of sustainability initiatives be extended to those who can't afford it?

### 4. GROWING SMART (15 minutes)

The form that future development takes in Decatur will have a significant impact on our environmental footprint for decades. More dense development makes it easier to walk or bike, saves energy through smaller or multifamily buildings, and conserves land.

- » The City has already completed plans for infill development near its three MARTA stations. How can we leverage these plans and encourage density in the right places to help reduce our carbon footprint and provide alternatives to driving, including for those who can't afford a car?
- » New construction has a significant carbon impact compared to re-using historic buildings (even if they are not energy efficient). How can Decatur encourage renovations or additions rather than tear-downs?
- » Trees are an ideal way to capture carbon and have many other benefits. How do we balance tree preservation with planting new trees, especially as new development occurs?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR NOTES AND MATRIX PICTURE TO [DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM)

WE'LL SEE YOU BACK IN THE GENERAL SESSION!

**DESTINATION:2030**  
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

## Climage Change Decatur 202 Poll Report

### User Name

Harrison Goodman Cohn  
Lily Green  
Cam Marston  
Lee Cook  
Beatrice Pritchard  
Paula Collins  
hunter ramseur  
Sandro Gisler  
O'Callaghan Rob  
Kaveh Kamoonneh  
Scott Doyon  
Gary Garrett  
Henry Slack  
Annie Archbold  
David Peisner  
gary menard  
Lisa Coronado  
Nathan Shaffer  
james radford  
Ryan Sellers  
Bert Bender  
Erin Murphy  
Hobie Stocking  
joy Martin  
Carlee Bishop  
Shelley Parnes  
Jameelah Saleem  
Cherie Kunik  
Betty Blondeau  
Jack Kittle  
Richard Malerba  
Denyse Levesque  
Theresa Mitchell  
Kristin Allin  
Mike Barcik  
KC Boyce  
Linda Grant  
Nancy Green  
Angela Threadgill  
Angela Jiang  
David Junger  
Sandy Goodman Cohn  
Diana Berman  
Lily Mae Barcik  
Kelly Walsh  
Gavin Grant

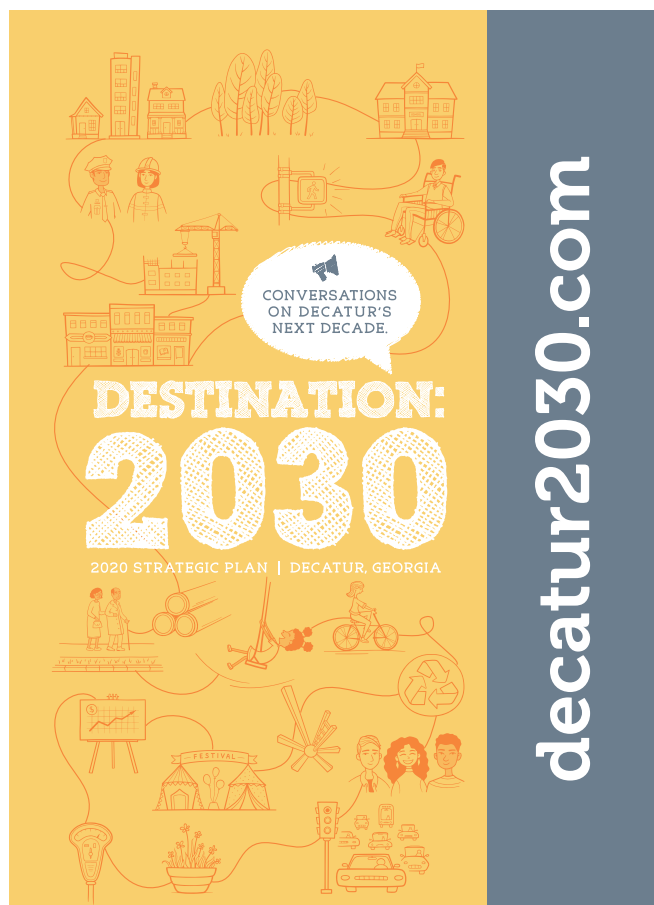
Melissa Mauldin  
David Nifong  
Georgette Gafford  
Craig Hofmeister  
Mary Jane Leach  
Harrison Goodman Cohn  
Lily Green  
Cam Marston  
Paula Collins  
Jennifer Hogan  
hunter ramseur  
Sandro Gisler  
O'Callaghan Rob  
Kaveh Kamoonneh  
Scott Doyon  
Gary Garrett  
Henry Slack  
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Ryan Sellers  
Bert Bender  
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Hobie Stocking  
joy Martin  
Carlee Bishop  
Shelley Parnes  
Jameelah Saleem  
Cherie Kunik  
Betty Blondeau  
Jack Kittle  
Richard Malerba  
Scott Presson  
Denyse Levesque  
Richelle Patton  
Theresa Mitchell  
Ali Gellin  
Kristin Allin  
Mike Barcik  
KC Boyce  
Natalie Chu  
Linda Grant  
Nancy Green  
Angela Threadgill

Angela Jiang  
Guest  
David Junger  
Sandy Goodman Cohn  
Diana Berman  
Lily Mae Barcik  
Kelly Walsh  
Gavin Grant  
Melissa Mauldin  
Georgette Gafford  
Craig Hofmeister  
Paula Collins  
Sandro Gisler  
O'Callaghan Rob  
Kaveh Kamoonneh  
Scott Doyon  
Ryan Sellers  
Jack Kittle  
KC Boyce  
David Junger  
Kelly Walsh  
Craig Hofmeister

# Public Engagement Materials

## Event Advertisements

Engagement Squad & Opening Night Advertisement from January 2020



## Opening Night postcard mailed to all Decatur residents



## Pause the Planning Process Advertisement - May 2020 Decatur Focus



## Sidewalk Art Social Media Initiative - September 2020



## Virtual Forums Social Media Posts - September 2020



## Virtual Forums Yard Signs - September 2020



## Decatur 202s Social Media Posts - Mobility



## Decatur 202s Social Media Posts - Housing



## Decatur 202s Social Media Posts - Equity & Racial Justice



## Equity & Racial Justice Decatur 202 Advertisement

**A JOINT, ONLINE PUBLIC FORUM  
FOR EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE**

PRESENTED BY THE BETTER TOGETHER ADVISORY BOARD AND  
THE CITY OF DECATUR'S 2020 STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT.

Join us, together with local partners, as we wrap up our  
**Anti-Racism Speaker series** with a review of its highlights,  
then adjourn to breakout discussions that explore real  
world options for change in the coming decade.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14  
6-8PM ON ZOOM  
Register now to attend:  
[decatur2030.com/the-decatur-202s](http://decatur2030.com/the-decatur-202s)



With your host, Ed Lee, Ed  
Senior Director, Alben W. Barkley Forum for Debate,  
Deliberation, and Dialogue, Emory University




## Decatur 202s Social Media Posts - Climate








## Decatur 202s postcards mailed to all Decatur residents





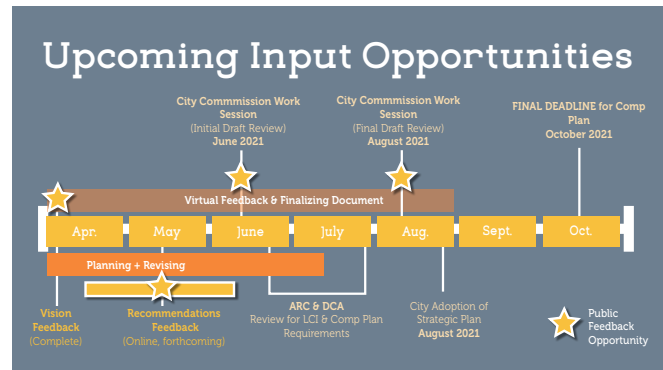

## Youth Engagement Social Media Posts - February 2021



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Mobility



## Process Timeline in May 2021 Decatur Focus



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Housing



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Civic Trust



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Climate Change



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Economic Development



## Recommendations Surveys Social Media Posts - Equity & Racial Justice



## Pop-up Event Social Media Advertisements - June 2021



## Plan Review Postcard for Pop-up



## All other Press Releases and Email Blasts (click links to see online content)

### Engagement Squad

Video Release Email: <https://mailchi.mp/b356fcd33d48/off-to-a-great-start-374949>

Reminder: <https://mailchi.mp/57ecd1ea1e8d/off-to-a-great-start-390653>

Yard sign request: <https://mailchi.mp/038baa2cb4d7/off-to-a-great-start-12577702>

### Process Registrants

Registration acknowledgement: <https://mailchi.mp/590b900a69c2/off-to-a-great-start-387465>

Kick-Off reminder: <https://mailchi.mp/7afbbe68acc4/off-to-a-great-start-394589>

Kick-Off reminder final reminder: <https://mailchi.mp/63e80161d73a/off-to-a-great-start-398425>

Discussions instructions: <https://mailchi.mp/5afbd33f4489/off-to-a-great-start-406801>

Save the dates: <https://mailchi.mp/aed090d18e64/off-to-a-great-start-420329>

Round 2 updates: <https://mailchi.mp/d05d05caac2a/off-to-a-great-start-428493>

COVID announcement: <https://mailchi.mp/e4611f5536df/off-to-a-great-start-436874>

COVID update: <https://mailchi.mp/79fc5d5f5059/off-to-a-great-start-12277118>

COVID participant survey: <https://mailchi.mp/bae424392906/off-to-a-great-start-12460214>

Virtual Forums: <https://mailchi.mp/28fd7ed5b1e8/off-to-a-great-start-12582882>

Keep the conversation going: <https://mailchi.mp/05ab4aabb60e/off-to-a-great-start-12590818>

Decatur 202s: <https://mailchi.mp/51d0a15189d3/off-to-a-great-start-12599694>

Vision and mission: <https://mailchi.mp/b24d3bd12cee/off-to-a-great-start-12938838>

Housing recommendations: <https://mailchi.mp/bc99dc652abd/off-to-a-great-start-12951698>

Civic trust recommendations: <https://mailchi.mp/4d394cb57551/off-to-a-great-start-12953318>

Econ dev recommendations: <https://mailchi.mp/0879154d3da6/off-to-a-great-start-12954438>

Climate recommendations: <https://mailchi.mp/1072c881b11d/off-to-a-great-start-12956302>

Equity recommendations: <https://mailchi.mp/b3a2badf4170/off-to-a-great-start-12958030>

[Here We Go: Strategic Plan Process is Underway](#) (Decatur:2030, Monday, December 9, 2019)

[City of Decatur in search of Engagement Squad members for the 2020 Strategic Plan](#) (Decaturish, Thursday, December 19, 2019)

[City of Decatur to launch strategic planning process with community meeting Jan. 23](#) (Decaturish, Thursday, January 16, 2020)

[600+ Residents Kicked Off Decatur's 2020 Strategic Plan](#) (Decatur Patch, Friday, January 24, 2020)

[Let the Conversation Begin: Huge turnout for Roundtables opener](#) (Decatur:2030, Monday, January 27, 2020)

[Roundtables Respond to COVID-19](#) (Decatur:2030, Thursday, March 12, 2020)

[Roundtables Wrapped: Let's review what we learned](#) (Decatur:2030, October 10, 2020)

[The Community Conversation Continues: Welcome to the Virtual Forums](#) (Decatur:2030, Tuesday, October 20, 2020)

[Decatur launches virtual forum for strategic planning process](#) (Decaturish, Wednesday, October 21, 2020)

[After long COVID interruption, Decatur continues with 2020 Strategic Plan](#) (Atlanta Journal Constitution, Wednesday, October 28, 2020)

[Share your thoughts on Decatur's 2020 Strategic Plan](#) (Decaturish, Wednesday, November 4, 2020)

[A Vision Coming Into Focus: Decatur 202 sessions set to dig deeper](#) (Decatur:2030, Wednesday, November 11, 2020)

[Decatur to begin hosting more detailed meetings about 2020 Strategic Plan](#) (Decaturish, Thursday, November 12, 2020)

[Next Up, Let's Talk Housing: Decatur 202 Session set for Thursday, Dec. 10](#) (Decatur:2030, Wednesday, December 2, 2020)

[Decatur Strategic Plan 202 session will focus on housing](#) (Decaturish, Wednesday, December 9, 2020)

[Decatur Strategic Plan 202 session on Climate Change scheduled for Feb. 11](#) (Decaturish, Monday, February 8, 2020)

[Into the Home Stretch: Applying What We've Learned](#) (Decatur:2030, Tuesday, February 23, 2021)

[Decatur seeks public comment on Strategic Plan vision, mission statements](#) (Decaturish, Tuesday, March 30, 2021)

[Decatur invites public to vote on Strategic Plan recommendations](#) (Decaturish, Monday, May 3, 2021)

[Decatur updates deadlines for Strategic Plan input](#) (Decaturish, Monday, May 24, 2021)

[Full Decatur Strategic Plan Draft Ready for Community Review](#) (Decatur:2030, Tuesday, June 22, 2021)





# What does the data say?

## INFOGRAPHIC RE: SFH VS. EVERYTHING ELSE

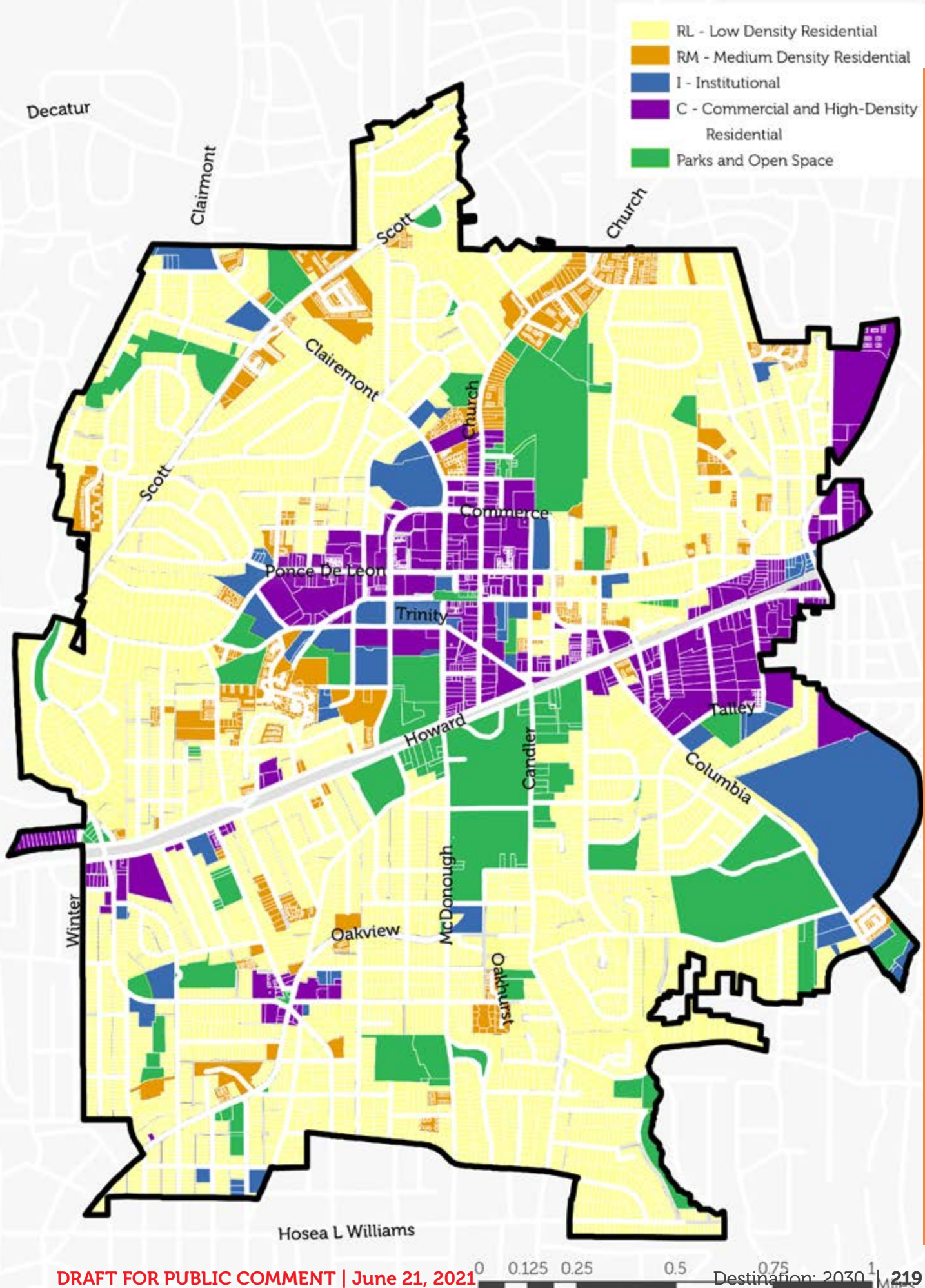
### Decatur Today Land Use

Decatur has a fine-grained existing land use pattern characterized by commercial, mixed-use, or institutional nodes of activity surrounding lower density, primarily residential uses. Downtown is the most intense and features an increasingly diverse mix of public uses, commercial uses, and multifamily housing. Other nodes include Oakhurst – a historic neighborhood commercial area – and emerging mixed-use areas around the East Lake and Avondale MARTA Stations. The lower density residential areas that surround them are dominated by single-family houses, but also contain smaller multifamily buildings, townhouses, and civic uses. Please see the map at right for more details.

This land use pattern is typical of many older cities and offers many of the timeless benefits of traditional planning. These include making Decatur a compact place where daily needs can be met within the city limits. The diverse, fine-grained pattern also permits a range of housing types that can serve people of different ages, lifestyles, and incomes, and more easily supports walking, bicycling, and transit use than a coarse, spread out land use pattern would.

Decatur is primarily comprised of its historic, centrally-located downtown; many historic neighborhoods, including the once-independent town of Oakhurst; walkable neighborhood schools; and 129 acres of parks and greenspace sprinkled throughout.

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT | June 21, 2021**  
Decatur's expected growth. How can we accommodate and do our part within the constraints we have?



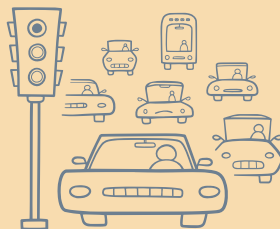
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infographic



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Chapter Name Goes Here

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Existing Conditions Summary  
Public Engagement Summary  
Vision & Mission Statements  
Priority Projects  
Implementation & Evaluation Matrix

# Decatur Today

## Existing Conditions Summary

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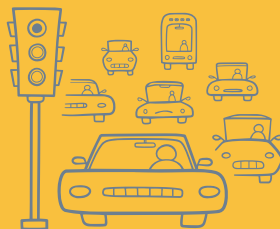
# What We Heard Public Engagement Summary

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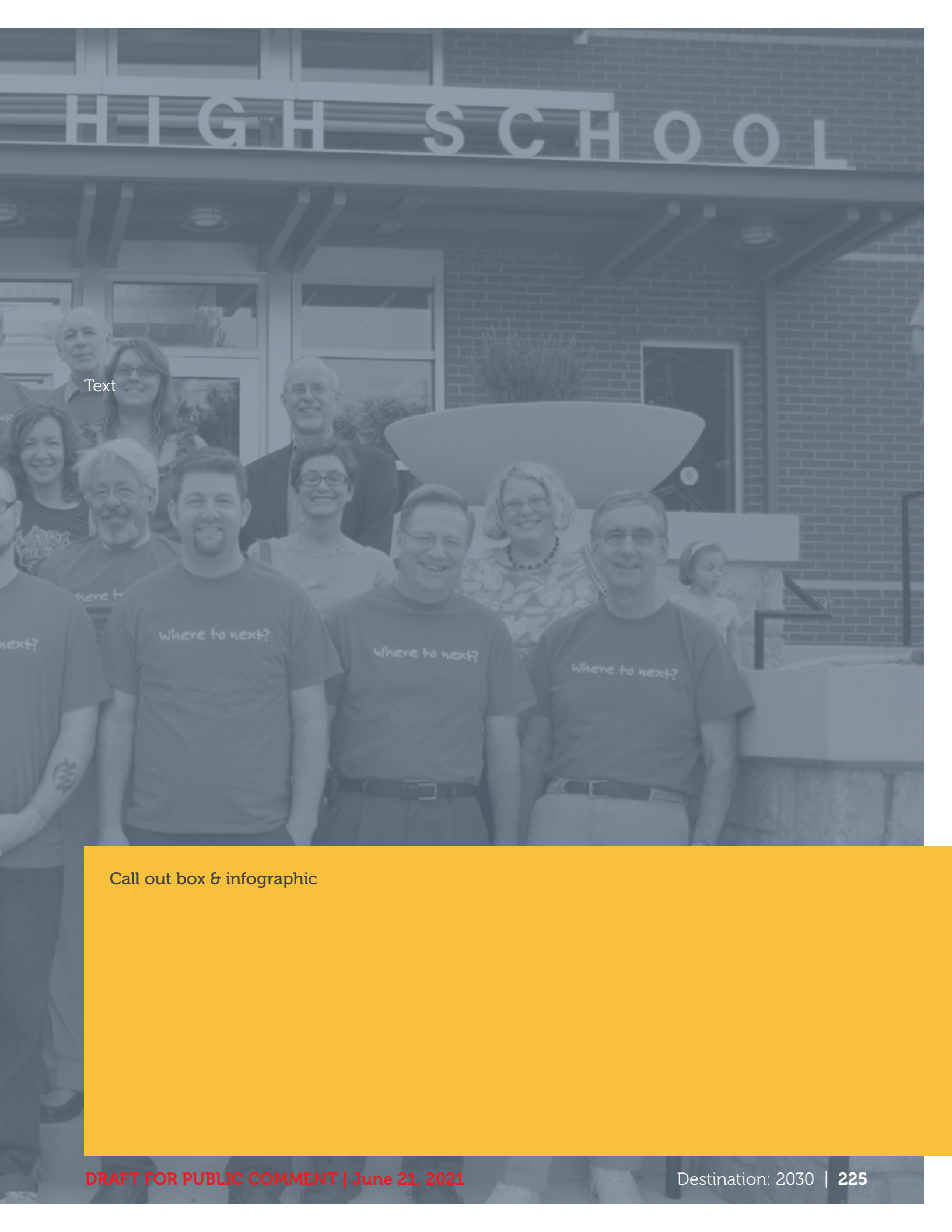


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# Decatur 2030

## Vision & Mission Statements

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OR  
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Text

# 30

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infographic



# Decatur 2030

## Priority Projects Recommendations

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OR  
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# Getting it Done Implementation & Evaluation Matrix

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OR  
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# Future Implementation Evaluation Matrix / Scorecard

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infographic

# Future Implementation Evaluation Matrix / Scorecard

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