

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

In order to provide services in the most efficient and effective ways, the City of Decatur maintains agreements with several different governmental and non-governmental entities. Effective ongoing coordination with these entities ensures maximum efficiency and quality of services for residents and businesses in Decatur. For these reasons, the comprehensive planning process includes intergovernmental coordination as an element for inventory and assessment.

This element provides local governments with the opportunity to inventory and to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination for the current and future needs of Decatur. The Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Decatur Comprehensive Plan consists of three (3) sections: the inventory of existing conditions, the assessment of current and future needs, and the intergovernmental coordination community vision and goals.

Inventory

Entities

The City of Decatur coordinates with several different local governments, governmental agencies, and private entities. In accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning, each entity that concerns the City of Decatur is included in this section. Each entity is described in terms of the existing coordination mechanisms, the parties or offices within the local government with primary responsibility for coordination, and the adequacy of the coordination mechanism.

Adjacent Local Governments

City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta abuts the City of Decatur at southwestern and southern boundaries. Since part of the City of Atlanta is located in DeKalb County, the City of Atlanta is included in the DeKalb County Service Delivery Strategy. For this reason, the City of Decatur's coordination with the City of Atlanta is formally based on a Service Delivery Strategy. The Service Delivery Strategy must be updated at the same time that the community's plan is updated. However, no services are exchanged between the two governments. In addition, no formal agreements exist between the two governments. Coordination on current issues or concerns is handled on an as needed basis through City of Decatur staff.

DeKalb County

The City of Decatur's coordination with DeKalb County is based on a Service Delivery Strategy. Current services are listed in the State Programs and Activities section of this element. The City of Decatur maintains the 1999 Service Delivery Strategy with DeKalb County and is in the process of updating the document in 2005. No other formal coordination mechanisms exist.

School Boards

City Schools of Decatur, Board of Education

Regarding the coordination mechanism for the City of Decatur and the City Schools of Decatur (CSD), the City of Decatur maintains a relationship with the School Board through mutual agreements between the City Manager and the School Superintendent as well as the City Commission and the Decatur School Board. The City Manager and the School Superintendent have agreed to meet at least every other month to discuss current issues. Starting in 2003, the School Board and the City Commission have had a policy to hold a joint meeting annually to provide structured opportunities for general coordination. There have been two (2) annual joint meetings since 2003.

Development Authorities

Downtown Decatur Development Authority/

Citywide Decatur Development Authority

The Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was established in 1982 through State legislation. The creation of the DDA board was one of the first priorities recommended by the Decatur Town Center Plan that was adopted by the Decatur City Commission in 1982. The Downtown Development Authority focuses on the historic commercial downtown central business district and works to market a positive image for the city. The mission of DDA is to assure the long-term economic stability of downtown Decatur by maintaining the small town character of the district and supporting values that assure Decatur is a great place to live, work, play, invest and do business. Coordination is conducted by the Assistant City Manager for Community & Economic Development.

The Citywide Decatur Development Authority was also established by State legislation. The Citywide Development Authority was established in order to build on the success of the Downtown Development Authority. It is empowered to work with neighborhood business districts and other commercial zoning districts in the city to promote business and identify opportunities for business. The City of Decatur provides direct staff assistance to the DDA.

Decatur Housing Authority

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) manages public housing in the City of Decatur. Activities of the DHA are summarized in the housing element of the comprehensive plan. The DHA is an independent housing agency, having separated from the DeKalb Housing Authority in 2003 so that both agencies could operate more effectively.

The Decatur Housing Authority is governed by a six (6) member board. Five (5) members are appointed to a five (5) year term each and one (1) member is appointed to a one (1) year term. The Authority does not receive funding from

the City of Decatur. Funding sources include rent from residents of public housing, grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and revenues from DHA's programs and activities.

Though the City does not provide funding for the DHA, appointments to the Board are made by the Mayor of Decatur. Coordination between the City of Decatur and the DHA is provided through the Director of the DHA and the Decatur City Commission.

Other Units of Local Government and Utility Companies

Utility Companies

The City of Decatur maintains franchise agreements with a number of utility companies including Atlanta Gas Light Company (natural gas), Bell South (telephone), Georgia Power Company (electricity), and Comcast (cable television). Coordination is conducted through the City Manager on an as needed basis.

Other Organizations (Regional and State)

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro Atlanta area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties, as well as the City of Atlanta. Though the City of Decatur utilizes the ARC directly, the City is officially represented at the ARC by DeKalb County.

The ARC is also the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and is responsible for programming and prioritizing transportation projects. In its role as the MPO, the Atlanta Regional Commission administers a program known as the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). Established in 1999, the LCI Program provides transportation funds to local ARC communities improving mobility and enhancing livability. The fundamental concepts of the program include connecting homes, shops and offices, enhancing streetscapes and sidewalks, emphasizing pedestrian amenities, improving access to transit and other transportation options, and expanding housing options.

The City of Decatur benefited from the LCI Program in 2002 when it received a grant to develop a comprehensive development strategy and master plan around the Avondale MARTA station. The Decatur Avondale Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a plan that builds upon the success of the City's ongoing revitalization efforts. The City used this chance to further define the quality and character of its community while creating a new neighborhood centered around the Avondale MARTA station. The LCI program has provided multi-million dollar grants for capital improvements at the Decatur MARTA Station and the Avondale Station.

Georgia Department of Transportation

The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for the operation of the state and federal highway system in Georgia. Portions of the following state and federal highways run through the City of Decatur: State Route 8 (U.S. Route 78 and U.S. Route 29) Scott Boulevard, State Route 155 (U.S. Route 23) Clairemont Avenue-Commerce Drive-South Candler Street), and State Route 10 (U.S. Route 278) East Lake Drive-East and West College Avenue.

The Georgia Department of Transportation provides funding for local road improvement projects. The City of Decatur coordinates with the Georgia Department of Transportation on these routes and would be required to work closely with the Department if a future transportation planning project were initiated.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has helped the City complete several streetscapes and pedestrian improvements through Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. The City of Decatur benefits from the programs that the DCA provides to local governments including comprehensive planning guidance, dissemination of building codes, solid waste reduction efforts, and technical assistance. In addition, the DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs and serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development.

DeKalb Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber promotes businesses in DeKalb County and administers economic development initiatives of its members. There is minimal collaboration or coordination with the City of Decatur or the Decatur Development Authority.

Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA)

MARTA provides rail, bus, and paratransit service in the City of Decatur. In addition to the countywide sales tax which partially supports MARTA, the City has formal agreements regulating the use of the pedestrian mall at the Decatur Station and local roads. Coordination between the City of Decatur and MARTA is conducted on an as needed basis by the municipal staff member associated with any given issue or project. Recent examples of successful coordination between the City and its departments and MARTA include the successful relocation of the MARTA bus area from Church Street to Swanton Place and the upcoming redevelopment of the MARTA rail station entrance on Church Street.

State Programs and Activities

Service Delivery Strategy

Georgia cities maintain an agreement known as a service delivery strategy to maintain legal, administrative, and cooperative agreements with the County to which it belongs. The City of Decatur agreed to the present service delivery strategy which was authorized in August 1999. Other parties in this service delivery strategy include DeKalb County, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, City of Atlanta, City of Avondale Estates, City of Chamblee, City of Clarkston, City of Doraville, City of Lithonia, City of Pine Lake, City of Stone Mountain, Decatur-DeKalb Housing Authority, and the DeKalb Development Authority.

The City of Decatur and DeKalb County provide services to residents and businesses in Decatur. The following table provides a list of the services provided by DeKalb County in the left column and the exact language of the Service Delivery Strategy in the right column.

Table 7.1 – Services Provided by DeKalb County in Decatur

| Government Service | The Agreement for Delivery of Service |
|--|--|
| Elections | Provided by Intergovernmental Agreement with DeKalb County and partially provided by Decatur |
| Sheriff/Jail and Evictions | Provided by DeKalb County |
| Emergency Medical Service | Provided by DeKalb County |
| Emergency Management | Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur and by DeKalb County independently |
| Community Development Block Grant Program | Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur |
| Water Treatment and Water Distribution/ Wastewater Collection and Treatment | Provided by DeKalb County as an enterprise fund paid by user fees. There are no fee differentials between customers living in incorporated cities and customers in unincorporated DeKalb County. |
| Libraries | Provided by Intergovernmental Agreement with DeKalb County |
| Storm Water Management | Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur |
| Traffic Engineering | Provided by DeKalb County |

Source: Service Delivery Strategy

Like other municipalities in Georgia, the City of Decatur maintains relationships with neighbor jurisdictions and other municipalities to provide emergency services for extraordinary events. This cooperation is known as “reciprocal

emergency service.” Such agreements have been established by the City Commission and administered through the Decatur Fire and Police Departments.

In addition, a significant part of the existing service delivery strategy is the Summary of Land Use Agreements. The document includes several agreements between DeKalb County and its municipalities including the following:

- 1) A statement of understanding that there are no “incompatibilities or conflicts between the land use plans of local governments identified in the process of developing the 1999 service delivery strategy.”
- 2) For the “process that will be used to resolve disputes when a county disagrees with the proposed land use classification(s) for areas to be annexed into a city, the present Service Delivery Strategy states the following:

“Prior to initiating any formal annexation activities that would involve land use or zoning classification changes, the City of Decatur will notify the County and all contiguous property owners of the proposed annexation and of the schedule for public hearings. The County may review and provide comments and must raise any bona fide land use classification objections at this time. If the County does not object, the City may proceed with the annexation. If the County does not object, the City may proceed with the annexation. If the County does object, the City and County agree to either (a) implement the County’s conditions and remove the objection; (b) stop the annexation; or (c) initiate a 30-day negotiation period. If the City proceeds with the annexation, a vote by the County on whether or not to authorize the annexation (pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 36-36-70) constitutes final resolution, provided however that the County cannot refuse to authorize an annexation due to a bona fide land use classification objection if the objection was resolved or not already raised in accordance with these procedures.”

Due to changes in state law, this must be amended in the new Service Delivery Strategy.

- 3) For policies and/or processes established by local governments to ensure that new extraterritorial water and sewer service will be consistent with all

applicable land use plans and ordinances, the Service Delivery Strategy states the following:

“The County provides water and sewer service in the entire County and therefore ensures that all service is consistent with all applicable land use plans and ordinances.”

2005 Service Delivery Strategy Update

The Service Delivery Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. As of April 2005, discussions and negotiations between the City and the County for the update of the 1999 Service Delivery Strategy had begun. The parties will continue and eventually conclude in 2005. All parties agree that pending issues will be resolved by the comprehensive plan deadline later this year.

The City of Decatur has identified three (3) issues to resolve during the 2005 Service Delivery Strategy update process. The first of these issues is the County’s definition of a “sewer service tap.” The definition is important for the City of Decatur because high-density residential development in the downtown area is desired by the City and tap fees based on individual dwelling units would amount to higher sewer service fees.

The City of Decatur has also identified the need to revise the previously described Summary of Land Use Agreements, Section 3, so that changes made by the General Assembly can be formalized in the document.

And third, the City of Decatur would like the service delivery strategy to be updated so that the Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) appears in text instead of the Decatur-DeKalb Housing Authority. The separation took place in May 2003.

Georgia’s Greenspace Program

The following section provides information about the City’s greenspace activities and participation in the State of Georgia’s Greenspace Program. In Decatur, the Greenspace Commission is an advisory and advocacy group for greenspace protection and enhancement in the city. The Commission is responsible for developing and implementing a greenspace preservation strategy for the city, advising the City Commission on greenspace-related issues, and administering the State’s Greenspace Program locally.

With the exception of minor pending standard administrative activities, the City has completed the program in accordance with state procedures. The City of Decatur elected to use the entire \$187,047 program land protection funds for three (3) land acquisitions and one (1) conservation easement.

The Greenspace Commission is staffed by the Planning Services Officer of the City of Decatur. The Planning Services Officer is the official point of coordination between the Greenspace Commission and the City of Decatur.

Water Planning Districts

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

As a municipality of DeKalb County, the City of Decatur is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD). The MNGWPD was created by state law on April 5, 2001. The general purposes of the District are to establish policy, create plans, and promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues in a 16-county area including Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale and Walton Counties.

It is the primary purpose of the District to develop regional and watershed-specific plans for storm-water management, wastewater treatment, water supply, water conservation, and the general protection of water quality. Responsibility for implementation will be by local governments in the district. Through a two-year planning effort, the Districts have developed a District-wide Watershed Management Plan to address the Atlanta Region's stormwater management issues. The City of Decatur, as well as other jurisdictions in the 16-county district will be responsible for implementing the provisions of the Watershed Management Plan.

The Watershed Management Plan is designed to address all aspects of stormwater management including water quality, water quantity, and maintenance issues. Each local government is required to develop and implement its own storm water management program which should be coordinated with the DeKalb County government. Aspects of the storm water management program include adoption of model ordinances, operation and maintenance requirements, total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements, enforcement of associated State programs and requirements, rehabilitation efforts in impaired watersheds, land use planning provisions, and public education. In 2004, the City of Decatur completed the Storm Water Master Plan. The Stormwater Master Plan includes an inventory of the stormwater system and an assessment of the condition of the system. The City will utilize the plan to improve maintenance and upgrade operations and prioritize capital improvements.

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

As a relatively small municipality, the relationships and coordination described in the inventory are important for service delivery. The City of Decatur finds that existing mechanisms and agreements are generally adequate for each of the entities and programs/requirements in the inventory. However, based on the

inventory provided in this section, the assessment of intergovernmental coordination has resulted in the following findings.

Regarding a specific issue with DeKalb County, the City would like to negotiate with DeKalb County on the definition of a sewer tap in regard to high-density residential development.

Regarding other governments, the inventory of coordination mechanisms did not result in new issues regarding growth and development in nearby municipalities.

Regarding land use issues, no specific land use conflicts or lack of information about DeKalb County or City of Atlanta land use were identified. As stated previously, the City of Decatur has acknowledged that minor changes to the Summary of Land Use Agreements will be necessary to reflect changes in state legislation since 1999. The City will have the opportunity to update the Summary of Land Use Agreements during the 2005 Service Delivery Strategy update process.

Regarding services to residents and businesses, the City of Decatur will continue to work with DeKalb County to obtain a satisfactory delivery of services so that no service redundancy appears to exist.

Regarding other plan elements, no other specific problems or needs were identified in any of the comprehensive plan sections that would benefit from improved or greater intergovernmental coordination.

The intergovernmental coordination element concludes with a community vision and a set of goals. These items reflect the inventory for intergovernmental coordination and the findings of the assessment.

Intergovernmental Coordination Community Vision and Goals

Community Vision for Intergovernmental Coordination

The City of Decatur vision for intergovernmental coordination reflects the need for strong and sound relationships and the highest level of coordination with DeKalb County, the City of Decatur Schools, and other governmental entities, and agencies. The vision recognizes relationships between the City of Decatur and other entities should maximize services to residences and businesses and minimize inefficiency and redundancy.

Goals for Intergovernmental Coordination

- Update the Service Delivery Strategy and monitor the relationships within the agreement during its five-year period.
- Resolve sewer service tap fee disagreements with DeKalb County in a way that is favorable for high-density residential development.

- Maintain quality services for residents and businesses through effective intergovernmental coordination with other governmental entities and agencies in the area.

LAND USE

Introduction

The City of Decatur covers 4.2 square miles of land area, or about 2,700 acres. Decatur lies directly east of the City of Atlanta, approximately 6 miles from Atlanta's central business district. It is the second oldest municipality in the Atlanta region, incorporated in 1823. Due to Decatur's age and proximity to a major metropolitan area, the majority of Decatur's land area has been developed for the last fifty years.

Decatur's general pattern of development can be described as a central business district in the geographic center of the community, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The town center is characterized by the Old DeKalb County Courthouse, the DeKalb governmental complex, mid-rise office and professional buildings, a retail-entertainment district, and high-density residential buildings. Medium and low-density residential neighborhoods radiate from this central core.

Three MARTA stations are located within the City limits. The Decatur MARTA Station is located in the center of downtown Decatur. MARTA's East Lake and Avondale transit stations lie on west and east boundaries of the city. The historic Georgia Railroad corridor, now owned by CSX, bisects the City east to west.

Other significant land uses include two additional commercial nodes located in the southern portion of the City in Oakhurst Village and along the College Avenue corridor. The campuses of Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary anchor the southeastern quadrant of the City.

Through a long history of land use planning and zoning, Decatur has been successful in preserving the character and integrity of its existing historic single-family neighborhoods. The City has been equally successful in redeveloping the downtown area into a compact urban community with high-density residential, non-motorized access to heavy rail transit, a profitable employment center and a vibrant entertainment district.

Inventory of Existing Land Uses

To ensure consistency with the land use standards established by the Department of Community Affairs, land use in the City of Decatur is inventoried according to the categories listed below. This information is also illustrated in table 8.1 and the Existing Land Use Map.

Low-Density Residential

These are properties developed with single and two-family dwellings with densities not exceeding seven (7) dwellings per acre. Low-density residential development is the most common land use in Decatur, covering approximately

1,415 acres or 52% of Decatur's land area.

Medium-Density Residential

Medium-density residential developments include multiple family properties and townhouse communities with up to 18 dwellings per acre. About 181 acres, or 7%, of Decatur's land area is developed with medium density residential dwellings. Most medium density residential development is located near the downtown area and along major thoroughfares such as Clairemont Avenue, Scott Boulevard and Church Street.

High-Density Residential

Properties in the high-density residential class include multiple-family dwellings of up to 43 units per acre. Presently, most high-density residential dwellings are located in or near downtown Decatur. About 22 acres, or less than 1% of the City's land area, are developed with high-density residential developments.

Commercial

Commercial properties include those where business and trade activities are conducted, and include such uses as office buildings, establishments for the retail sale of goods and services, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment facilities. About 132 acres, or 5% of Decatur's land area is used for commercial development, primarily in the downtown area and commercial districts along College Avenue and in Oakhurst Village.

Industrial

Industrial properties include facilities for manufacture, distribution and storage of goods and products. Industrial properties make up one of the smallest land uses in Decatur, covering only about 13 acres, less than 1% of the City's land area and could be more properly described as "heavy commercial" uses rather than industrial. This use is generally located in the district south of East College Avenue.

Public/Institutional

About 299 acres or 11% of Decatur's land area is presently used for Public/Institutional purposes. Typical uses in this category include public and private schools, churches and other places of worship, institutions of higher learning such as Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary, governmental offices such as the Decatur City Hall and DeKalb County Government Center and similar uses. Institutional uses are located throughout the City.

Parks, Recreation and Conservation

This is land and buildings used for both active and passive recreational activities. Included are public parks, recreational facilities and conservation areas such as Decatur City parks, the Decatur Cemetery and the Woodlands. Approximately 127 acres, 5%, of Decatur's land area is presently devoted to this use. These

uses are located throughout the City.

Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

This category includes such uses as the Avondale, Decatur and East Lake MARTA transit stations, power substations, and similar uses. Separately listed within this category are public streets and rights-of-way. About 483 acres or 18% are used primarily for transportation, communications and utility purposes.

Undeveloped/Vacant

This includes land not presently developed for a specific purpose. There are presently only about 28 acres of vacant land in Decatur, or about 2% of the City's total land area.

Agricultural

This category is reserved for land used for farming, livestock, timber production, and similar activities. No land in Decatur is presently included in this classification.

Table 8.1 – City of Decatur 2005 Existing Land Use

| Land Use | Area (acres) | Percentage of Total Land Area |
|--|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Low-Density Residential | 1415 | 52 |
| Medium-Density Residential | 181 | 7 |
| High-Density Residential | 22 | <1 |
| Commercial | 132 | 5 |
| Industrial | 13 | <1 |
| Institutional | 299 | 11 |
| Parks, Recreation, and Conservation | 126 | 5 |
| Transportation, Communication, and Utilities | 483 | 18 |
| Vacant | 28 | 2 |
| Total | 2700 | 100 |

Source: City of Decatur

(Insert Existing Land Use Map)

Existing Land Use Assessment

Historic Factors

Historic land use and zoning policies adopted by the City Commissioners have been designed to protect, preserve and enhance the City's residential neighborhoods and to limit commercial development to existing commercial areas. As a result, Decatur's land use has remained remarkably stable for the last half of the 20th century.

As early as 1925, City ordinances were approved which enacted limited zoning restrictions. Decatur's first general zoning plan was established in April 1937. Comprehensive development plans were developed as early as 1958 and 1972.

The construction of the downtown MARTA heavy rail station in the 1970's disrupted the downtown area and both retail sales and real estate values declined steadily. In the early eighties, business owners, leaders, and residents rallied and developed a groundbreaking revitalization plan. The 1982 Decatur Town Center Plan set in motion a renewed vision for the downtown emphasizing mid-rise office buildings, pedestrian-friendly retail and high-density residential developments. Although it took years to manifest, the overwhelming success of the plan is evident today as Decatur leads the Atlanta Region as a model urban center. The downtown MARTA station is now considered one of the greatest assets of the City.

Land Use Patterns and Densities

As a mature community, the City has not had to "catch up" with rampant rapid growth and haphazard development. Instead, Decatur has focused a large amount of attention on preservation of existing neighborhoods and redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized commercial areas. The City has been successful with matching appropriate development with areas of existing infrastructure. The City has one of the highest densities of single-family residential areas in the state. High-density residential development is located in the downtown area along with commercial and retail properties and transit, providing a pedestrian scale, mixed-use downtown. Underutilized industrial parcels have been redeveloped as medium density facilities with mixed-use commercial and retail space. The result has been the creation of a compact urban community that encourages alternative forms of transportation and efficient delivery of City services.

Redevelopment Areas

The City has identified several areas that are in need of redevelopment. These include:

Downtown Decatur MARTA Redevelopment Plan

In mid-2005, the City will begin implementation of the Downtown Decatur MARTA Plaza Redevelopment Plan. The project includes the redesign of the entrance and plaza of the downtown MARTA station. Specifically the plan calls for the removal of the large planter walls, expansion of stairs and expansion of the sidewalks on either side of the plaza. Streetscape improvements will be extended along the retail sidewalks to add street trees, street lamps and more room for outdoor dining. Handicapped access will be provided to the plaza level from both sides of the station area and the upper brick level will be expanded to allow for more effective use during festivals and special events.

Calloway Building

The City of Decatur is working with DeKalb County on the redevelopment of the Calloway Building. The building is located on approximately 6+ acres in downtown Decatur adjacent to the Decatur High School. The City has prepared several alternatives for the reuse and redevelopment of the site. The City's vision includes a mix of uses – live/work housing, office and retail, consistent with other areas of downtown Decatur. Preliminary plans also include an underground parking deck and a new local road.

Avondale MARTA Station

Through a 2002 Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative grant, plans were designed for the redevelopment of a 40+-acre site on the south side of the station. The Decatur Housing Authority is spearheading the implementation of a mixed-use project that includes apartments, condominiums, 14,000 square feet of ground level retail and the construction of a parking deck for MARTA patrons on a 7.3-acre site. Permitting for Phase I of the project should begin in 2005.

Other areas noted by the City as ripe for redevelopment include the East Howard Street corridor, the East Trinity block from Church Street to College Avenue, the Selig property on Church Street and the Bank of America site on Commerce Drive. Through the Downtown Development Authority, the City plans increased contact with property owners to create redevelopment concepts and assist in appropriate ways.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The City is committed to protection of its greenspace, historic and environmentally sensitive natural resources. The City has a long history of preservation efforts. These efforts are coordinated by the Greenspace and Historic Preservation commissions. A full listing of the resources is located within the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of this document. The City has a strong policy of directing development away from these areas.

Other Land Use Issues

Annexation Study

In 2003, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government conducted a study for the City examining public policies by which future boundary changes related to annexation might be evaluated. The study not only looked at fiscal issues, but also other areas such as land use, service delivery, infrastructure and quality of life.

The Institute is currently applying those policies in an additional study examining the feasibility of annexing various parcels of land adjacent to the City. The study is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2005. Implementation of the plan's findings could begin as early as 2006.

Infill Design Guidelines

Infill development and recent teardown activity within the City's single-family neighborhoods have created the need for design guidelines. Throughout the public involvement process, dissatisfaction with new construction homes that are out of scale and architectural character of the surrounding neighborhoods was voiced.

Lifecycle Housing Ordinance

As a result of successful planning, property values are up and demand for Decatur residential property is high. The City is trying to provide for workforce and senior housing by encouraging a mix of housing types and by adopting a lifecycle housing ordinance. The ordinance offers density bonuses to developers who set aside a percentage of their residential developments for affordable housing.

Future Land Use Demand

Through the planning year 2025, the Atlanta Regional Commission forecasts an increase of 29% in population and 32% in households for the City of Decatur. Since the City is near 100% build-out, almost all of the forecast growth is expected to be absorbed through redevelopment of existing underutilized properties that are predominantly located in and around the downtown Decatur area. As depicted on the Future Land Use map, high-density residential and commercial are slated for the downtown central business core. Medium density residential corridors have been identified along Clairemont Avenue, Church Street, Scott Boulevard, and East College Avenue.

ARC forecasts a 23% increase in employment growth in Decatur. This growth is expected to be accommodated by redevelopment of existing commercial and office property in the downtown Decatur area and underutilized industrial property along East College Avenue.

No additional land area is expected to be needed for industrial uses in the 2005-2025 planning period. Acreage dedicated for this use has decreased significantly since 1995, with a 68% decrease. If present trends continue, even less land area than present may be needed for these uses.

Throughout the twenty-year horizon of this plan, it will remain a challenge to significantly increase the City's dedicated park and recreation acreage through land acquisition. The City will continue to participate in the Georgia Greenspace Program and purchase additional properties as they become available. The City also intends to continue coordination with private recreational organizations to offer residents a full spectrum of leisure opportunities.

Future Land Use Narrative

As previously stated, land use in Decatur is clearly not the result of haphazard and random development. Development patterns today are the result of plans and policies set in motion decades ago. The City has taken great care in preserving its single family and historic resources while encouraging managed growth in identified areas and corridors. Future land use, as depicted on the accompanying map and narrative, is continuation of these efforts.

Considering Decatur's build-out conditions, the Future Land Use map closely resembles the current Existing Land Use map. As such, future land use policies closely mirror present policies. The City will continue preservation efforts of its existing residential neighborhoods. While small amounts of infill housing will continue to occur, significant opportunities for growth will be directed to the redevelopment of previously identified downtown properties, nearby commercial properties, and surrounding corridors. This is illustrated in the Future Land Use map and in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 – City of Decatur Future Land Use

| Land Use | Area (acres) | Percentage of Total Land Area |
|--|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Low-Density Residential | 1421 | 53 |
| Medium-Density Residential | 199 | 7 |
| High-Density Residential | 32 | 1+ |
| Commercial | 160 | 6 |
| Industrial | 0 | 0 |
| Institutional | 287 | 11 |
| Parks, Recreation, and Conservation | 126 | 5 |
| Transportation, Communication, and Utilities | 447 | 17 |
| Vacant | 28 | 1 |
| Total | 2700 | 100 |

Source: City of Decatur

(Insert Future Land Use map)

Land Use Community Vision and Goals

The Land Use Community Vision is to provide for projected limited future development within the City in a manner that enhances and builds on the City of Decatur's existing "small town character."

- Maintain a small town quality of life and small town character while accommodating medium and high-density redevelopment in appropriate areas.
- Maintain and improve the individual character and identity of established neighborhoods and commercial centers.
- Limit future commercial development to the downtown area or to already established neighborhood commercial centers.
- Locate higher density residential developments either in previously identified commercial or transition areas adjacent to other higher density uses or in areas adjacent to rapid transit stations when compatible with existing uses.
- Create residential infill design guidelines to ensure compatibility of new construction with existing resources.

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

Transportation planning in any community is a complicated process. Regardless of the size of a jurisdiction, a considerable amount of data research and analysis is required. It is not enough to simply inventory the facilities; one must also examine the factors that contribute to the success and failure of the vehicular and non-vehicular transportation systems. The City of Decatur is no exception. Geographically a small community, 4.2 square miles, it is one of the densest cities in the region, with roughly 28 residents per acre. It contains an extensive transportation facility inventory, including three (3) heavy rail transit stations, three (3) state routes, a vast network of sidewalks, multi-use paths, and an historic industrial rail corridor.

The City differs from many of its regional neighbors in that it has been nearly built-out for decades. In contrast to many other jurisdictions suffering with the growing pains of an explosive population boom, the City instead faces unique challenges related more to redevelopment and the maximization of existing resources. The success of the central business district's commercial, entertainment and high-density residential developments present challenges to the downtown street network. The success has also brought to light the need for balance between providing facilities for the pedestrian as well as the vehicular needs of the retail customer, i.e. parking. In addition, single occupancy vehicle use is still a major form of transportation despite the availability of transit. Strategies are needed to decrease automobile use by increasing the use of alternative forms of transportation.

This section serves to satisfy the requirements of the transportation element as outlined by the Georgia DCA. It is intended to serve as an overview providing an inventory of the facilities, an initial assessment of the conditions in Decatur, and a preliminary discussion of the issues and opportunities. The City recognizes the need for a more intensive research and study outside of the comprehensive planning process. To that end, in FY 2005/2006 the City will retain the services of a consultant to prepare a Community Transportation Plan.

The Community Transportation Plan's first objective is to inventory, to a greater degree, much of the same conditions listed in this comprehensive plan. Through this inventory, the plan then will meet a number of goals including the most primary: *design a multi-modal transportation network that provides safe and efficient mobility to all users through identification of pedestrian, bicyclist, public transit, and vehicle mobility improvements.* The plan will build upon the objectives set forth by the "Active Living by Design" philosophy. It will design standards, facilities, and programs that emphasize "complete streets," encouraging residents, commuters, and visitors to use alternative forms of transportation. In addition, a number of specific issues will be addressed

including parking, connectivity impediments of the rail corridor, intersection improvements and funding.

Inventory of Existing Conditions

Functional Classification of Roadways

In 1974, the Federal Highway Administration published the manual Highway Functional Classification - Concepts, Criteria and Procedures. The manual was revised in 1989 and forms the basis of this roadway classification inventory.

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service that they are intended to provide. In general, there are three functional classifications: arterial, collector, and local roads. All streets and highways are grouped into one of these classes, depending on the character of the traffic (i.e., local or long distance) and the degree of land access that they allow. These classifications are further described in the following table.

Table 9.1 – Street and Highway Classification

| Functional System | Definition |
|--------------------------|--|
| Arterial | Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. Arterials can be further classified as principal or minor. Principal arterials generally move higher volumes of traffic at higher speeds over longer distances than minor arterials. |
| Collector | Provides a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials. |
| Local | Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement. |

Roadway Classification in Decatur

Information on functional classification for the Decatur street network was collected from the Georgia Department of Transportation DeKalb County database. Since Decatur is included within the Atlanta Urbanized Area, roads have been classified under the urban classification system. The following provides highlights of the findings and the Functional Classification Map graphically illustrates the inventory.

Urban Principal Arterials

The City of Decatur has one principal arterial, Scott Boulevard (SR 8 & US29). It traverses the northwest corner of the City connecting downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain and points further east.

Urban Minor Arterials

Decatur has good east-west and north-south connectivity provided for by a number of minor arterials. The City's minor arterials that generally run in an east-west direction include:

- East/West College Avenue (SR 10 & US 278)
- East/West Howard Avenue
- East/West Ponce de Leon Avenue
- North Decatur Road

Those arterials that run in a general north-south direction include:

- South Candler Street (Kirk Road south to City limits)
- South Columbia Drive
- Commerce Drive
- Clairemont Avenue
- East Lake Road

Urban Collectors

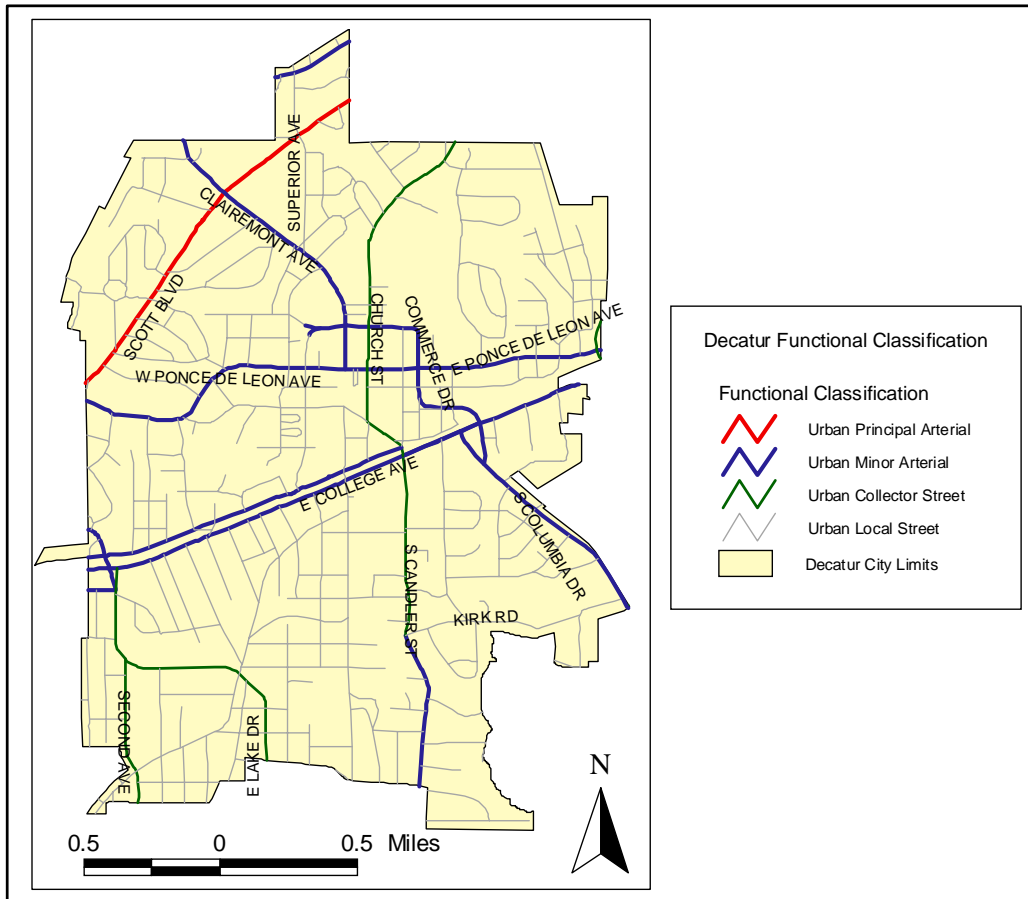
There are several collectors with the City limits. These roads generally run in north-south direction and include:

- Second Avenue
- East Lake Drive
- South Candler Street (E. College south to Kirk Road)
- East Trinity Place
- Church Street
- North Arcadia Avenue

Local Roads

The remaining streets in Decatur are considered local roads. The vast majority is located within the City's numerous single-family residential neighborhoods, as depicted on the accompanying Functional Classification Map.

Map 9.1 – Decatur Roadway Functional Classification Map



Number of Lanes, Volume, and Capacity

Data from the Atlanta Regional Commission's travel demand model utilized in the development of the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan was used for the compilation of this inventory. The accompanying table (Table 9-2) presents the number of lanes, volume and design capacity for arterials and collectors located within the city limits of Decatur. The figures for the estimated daily volume and capacity represent averages for the entire day and length of roadway (within City limits). Actual volumes and capacities will vary by specific time of day, (peak vs. non-peak) and individual roadway segment (cross street to cross street).

Table 9.2 – Number of Lanes, Volume, and Capacity

| Functional Class | Street | No of Lanes | Estimated Daily Volume | Estimated Daily Capacity |
|---------------------|---|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Principal Arterials | Scott Boulevard/SR8 | 4 | 19845 | 23000 |
| Minor Arterials | East/West College | 2-4 | 6778 | 11000 |
| | East/West Howard | 2 | 4885 | 8800 |
| | South Candler (Kirk Rd. south to City limits) | 2 | 10561 | 9300 |
| | South Columbia | 2 | 3840 | 6500 |
| | Commerce Drive | 4 | 2116 | 11000 |
| | East/West Ponce de Leon | 4 | 4150 | 7900 |
| | North Decatur Road | 4 | 8490 | 12000 |
| | Clairemont Avenue | 4 | 13221 | 19250 |
| | East Lake Road | 2 | 6375 | 7500 |
| | Park Place | 2 | 1085 | 7500 |
| | Second Avenue | 2 | 5030 | 6750 |
| Collector Streets | South Candler Street (E. College south to Kirk Rd.) | 2 | 9341 | 8100 |
| | East Trinity Place | 2 | 510 | 6000 |
| | Church Street | 4 | 6375 | 15000 |
| | North Arcadia Avenue | 2-4 | 7600 | 12300 |

State Routes

The state highway system is operated and maintained by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Portions of the following state and federal highways run through the City of Decatur:

- State Route 8 - US 78 - US 29 (Scott Boulevard)
- State Route 155 - US 23 (Clairemont Avenue/Commerce Drive/South Candler Street)
- State Route 10 (East Lake Drive/East and West College Avenue)

The primary purpose of the state route is regional mobility. It is important to note that any traffic calming or addition of pedestrian facilities that could potentially interfere with the flow of traffic must be coordinated and approved by GDOT.

Evacuation Routes

According to the DeKalb County Emergency Service Department, there is not an official evacuation route for the County, and subsequently the City of Decatur. In the event of an emergency, the County will work with the Georgia Department of Transportation in directing residents to the most efficient route out of the area.

Bridge Inventory

The Georgia Department of Transportation maintains an inventory and inspection report of all bridges and conditions on public roads. According to the inventory, there are seven bridges located within the City limits as listed below. Three are pertinent to the roadway network and are considered in overall good condition

(noted with *). The other four bridges are non-roadway structures carrying MARTA facilities.

- Arcadia Avenue over MARTA and CSX Railroad*
- Howard Avenue over SR 10 East Lake Drive*
- West College over SR 10 East Lake Drive*
- West Trinity Place under MARTA Rail
- DeKalb Avenue under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass
- SR 10 East Lake Drive under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass
- College Avenue under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass

Signalized Intersection Inventory

DeKalb County operates the traffic signal system in Decatur. DeKalb County Public Works database files were utilized in the compiling the inventory of signals for the City. According to the database, a total of 44 signalized intersections were identified. The signals are listed in the accompanying table and depicted in the Signal Location Map.

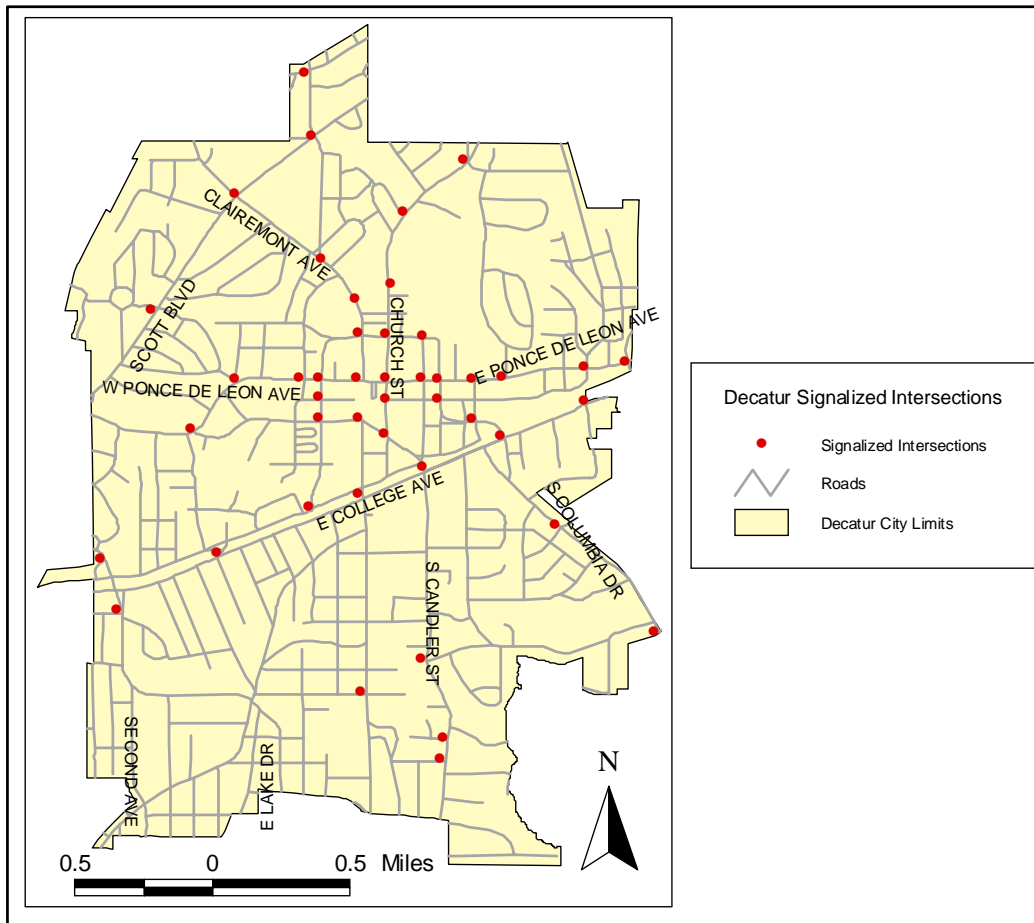
Table 9.3 – Signalized Intersections

| City of Decatur's Signalized Intersections |
|--|
| Atlanta Avenue / Olympic Place / West College Avenue / West Howard Avenue |
| Brower Street / South Candler Street |
| Church Street / Clairemont Oaks |
| Church Street / Commerce Drive* |
| Church Street / East Ponce De Leon Avenue* |
| Church Street / East Trinity Place* |
| Church Street / Forkner Drive / Medlock Road |
| Church Street / Glenlake Park / Lucerne Street |
| Church Street / Sycamore Street* |
| Clairemont Avenue / Clairemont Oaks |
| Clairemont Avenue / Commerce Drive* |
| Clairemont Avenue / East Ponce De Leon Avenue / West Ponce De Leon Avenue* |
| Clairemont Avenue / Scott Boulevard* |
| Clairemont Avenue / Superior Avenue / Wilton Drive* |
| Columbia Drive / Katie Kerr Drive |
| Commerce Drive / East College Avenue / South Columbia Drive |
| Commerce Drive / East Ponce De Leon Avenue* |
| Commerce Drive / North Candler Street* |
| Commerce Drive / Swanton Way* |
| Commerce Drive / Sycamore Place* |
| Commerce Drive / Sycamore Street |
| Commerce Drive / West Howard Avenue |
| Commerce Drive / West Ponce De Leon Avenue* |

| |
|--|
| Commerce Drive / West Trinity Place* |
| Coventry Road / Scott Boulevard |
| Derrydown Way / South Columbia Drive |
| East College Avenue / East-West Howard Street / North-South McDonough Street |
| East College Avenue / Sam's Street |
| East College Avenue / South Candler Street |
| East Hill Street / South McDonough Street |
| East Lake Road / Paden Circle |
| East Lake Road / Park Place |
| East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Glendale Avenue |
| East Ponce De Leon Avenue / North Arcadia Avenue / Sams Crossing |
| East Ponce De Leon Avenue / North Candler Street* |
| East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Sycamore Street / Sycamore Drive |
| East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Sycamore Place* |
| Kirk Road / South Candler Street |
| Midway Road / South Candler Street |
| Nelson Ferry Road / Northern Avenue / West Ponce De Leon Ave* |
| North Decatur Road / North Superior Avenue |
| North McDonough Street / West Trinity Place* |
| North Superior Avenue / Scott Boulevard / Superior Avenue |
| Ponce De Leon Place / West Ponce De Leon Avenue* |
| West Ponce De Leon Avenue / West Trinity Place* |

The City recognizes the need for a better coordinated and timed signal system for maximum roadway efficiency. As such, included in the Georgia Fiscal Year 2005-2007 State Transportation Improvement Program is the Downtown Decatur Signal Timing and Coordination Program. As its name suggests, the project consists of a signal timing study for 22 of the downtown Decatur intersections (denoted by *). The City is sponsoring the study, however implementation of the recommendations falls under the responsibility of DeKalb County.

Map 9.2 – Decatur Signalized Intersections Map



Bike and Pedestrian Trails

The PATH Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing a metrowide trail system for Atlanta. Within the City limits is approximately a 2-mile portion of the 18-mile Atlanta to Stone Mountain multi-use trail. The path enters the western Decatur border from Atlanta along Howard Avenue at the East Lake MARTA station. It follows Howard to Sycamore Street to East Ponce de Leon where it leaves the eastern city limits continuing onto Stone Mountain.

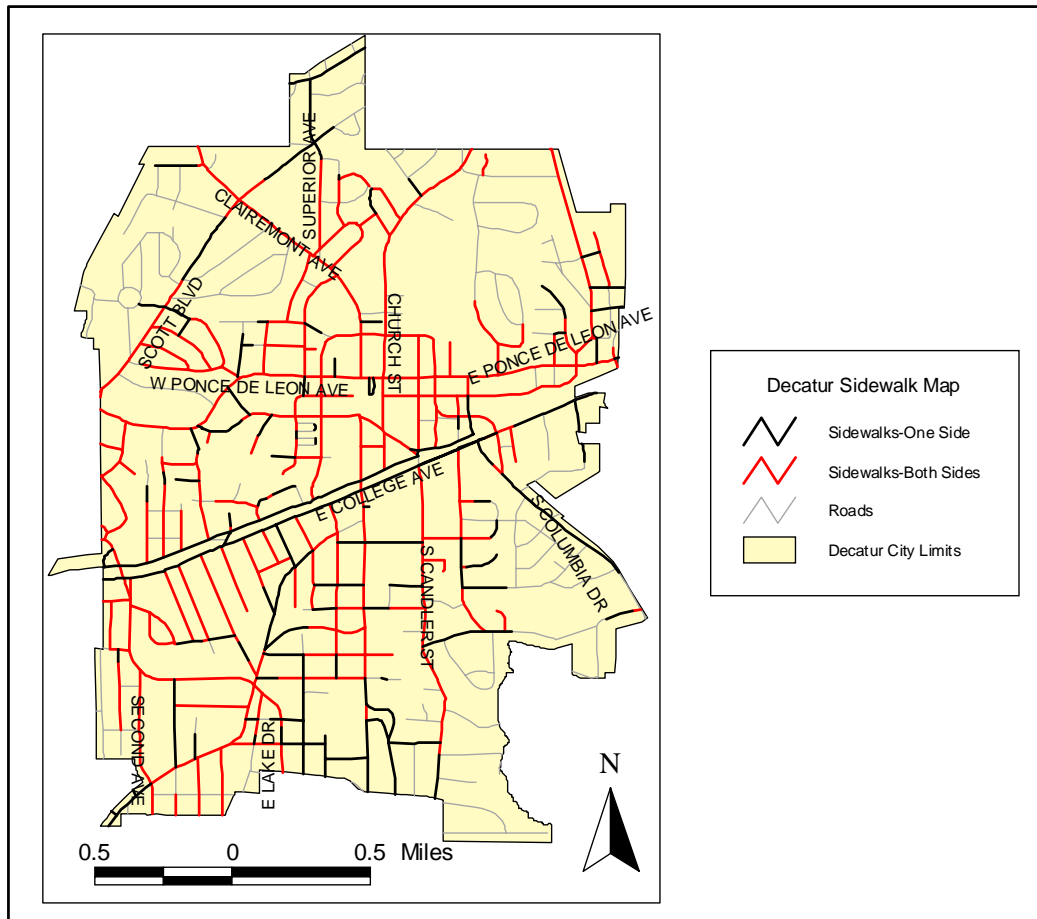
The City is also home to portions of the PATH Foundation's Trolley Line on-street bike route and greenway trail that originates in Atlanta. The on-street bicycle route enters Decatur's southwest border on Oakview Road and extends north to McDonough Street where it meets the multi-use trail. The greenway trail is a short paved multi-use trail through a woodlands area on the southern border of Agnes Scott College near East Davis Street and Green Street.

Sidewalk Inventory

A sidewalk inventory was prepared utilizing City of Decatur Public Works files. The following map illustrates where sidewalks are present on one side, both sides or on neither side. Sidewalks are found on the majority of streets in

Decatur including the major functional classifications. For fiscal year 2005-06, the City has identified 19 streets to receive a total approximately 8,450 linear feet of new or replaced sidewalk. The total cost of the improvements equal \$300,000.

Map 9.3 – Decatur Sidewalk Map



In early 2004, the Atlanta Regional Commission began an inventory of pedestrian facilities around transit. The scope of work includes inventorying areas within a half-mile radius of rail stations and within a quarter-mile radius of bus stops. Specifically, the inventory looks at land uses and the type and condition of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. The rail station portion of the inventory is complete. Results of this inventory were not available at the time of this document preparation. The data is anticipated to be released in time for the development of the Community Transportation Plan.

Parking Inventory

The most significant parking facilities are located within the Decatur downtown area. There are 300 metered spaces and 2,200 deck, lot, and private retail spaces.

For parking meters, a two-hour parking limit is enforced from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Metered parking is free after 6 p.m. and on Sundays. The cost is .05 cents for six minutes, .10 cents for 12 minutes and .25 cents for 30 minutes.

Rates in the downtown parking decks range from \$1.50 per hour to \$5.75 for all day. The First Union Deck offers a monthly parking rate of \$15.00. The DeKalb County Courthouse deck charges \$2.00 to park all day from 8:00am–6:00pm.

Public Transportation

MARTA

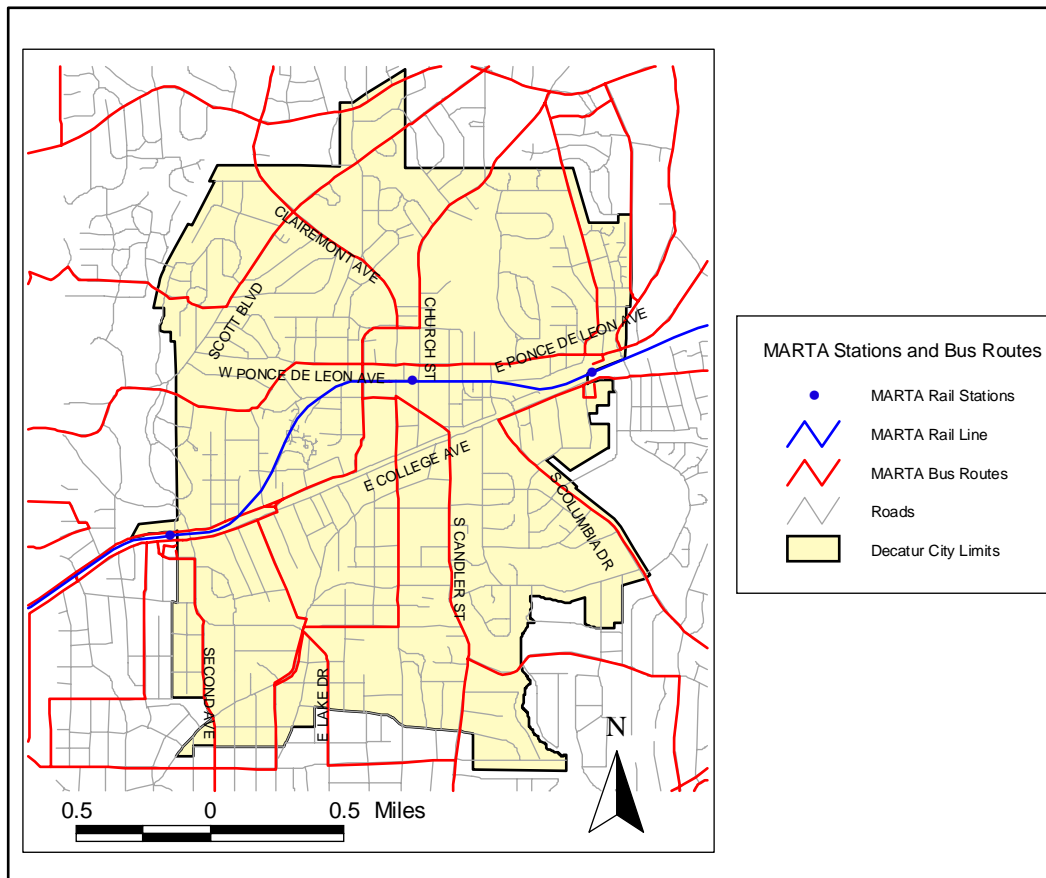
The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) operates three heavy rail stations located within the city limits along its East-West Line: East Lake Station, Decatur Station and the Avondale Station. In addition, sixteen bus routes serve the stations and the Decatur area. The following table provides details on station specifics. The MARTA Decatur Facility Map depicts station locations and bus routes.

Table 9.4 – Heavy Rail Stations within the City of Decatur

| Rail Station | Location | Parking Spaces | FY04 Average Weekday Rail Entries | FY05* Average Weekday Rail Entries | Station Bus Routes | Estimated Daily Ridership |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| East Lake | 2260 College Avenue | 611 | 993 | 883 | 123 | 622 |
| | | | | | 22 | 644 |
| | | | | | 24 | 417 |
| Avondale | 915 E. Ponce de Leon Avenue | 823 | 4377 | 5165 | 120 | 3132 |
| | | | | | 121 | 2380 |
| | | | | | 122 | 476 |
| | | | | | 125 | 2527 |
| | | | | | 2 | 1591 |
| | | | | | 36 | 929 |
| | | | | | 75 | 1772 |
| | | | | | 8 | 1823 |
| | | | | | 96 | 1332 |
| Decatur | 400 Church Street | 0 | 2986 | 3328 | 123 | 622 |
| | | | | | 15 | 4194 |
| | | | | | 18 | 2054 |
| | | | | | 19 | 2383 |
| | | | | | 2 | 1591 |

Source: MARTA (*To date: July 04 – March 05)

Map 9.4 – MARTA Stations and Bus Routes



Service Frequency, Facility Capacity, and Fare

MARTA train service runs generally from 5:00am to 1:00am on Monday through Friday and from 5:00am to 12:30am on weekends and holidays. For MARTA bus service, times vary on individual routes. In general, buses run from 5:00am to 1:30am Monday through Friday and from 5:30am to 12:30am weekends and holidays. Schedules are published online at the agency's website: www.itsmarta.com.

A headway is defined as the interval of time between a train or bus traveling in any given direction of travel. According to the published 2003 MARTA Service Standards, rail headways for weekday travel are within five (5) and ten (10) minutes, while weekday evening and weekend headway are between five (5) and fifteen (15) minutes. Bus headway for weekday morning and evening peak period is thirty (30) minutes or less. Weekday off-peak and weekend service maintain a headway of no more than sixty (60) minutes.

Load factors are defined as the ratio of passengers on a facility to the number of seats available. The maximum allowable load factor for train is 1.7 or

approximately 109 passengers on a rail car with a seating capacity of 64. For buses, the maximum allowable load factor is 1.25 during peak service or 1.00 in the off-peak or weekend service. Buses have a seating capacity average of 47.

Single one-way fares are currently \$1.75 each way. There are a variety of special fare programs that exist for students, visitors and seniors. These programs are listed in detail on the MARTA website.

Clifton Corridor TMA

The Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA) offers free shuttle service from the Emory University campus on Clifton Road to downtown Decatur MARTA station. Known as the CCTMA-Decatur Shuttle, the shuttle operates from 5:30am to 7:00pm, Monday-Friday. Headways are generally 30-45 minutes. A schedule is published online at the organization's website: www.cctma.com.

Major Transit Trip Generators and Attractors

Major transit trip generators and attractors located in Decatur include the Downtown Decatur area with a 15-block commercial, specialty retail, and restaurant district, the DeKalb County Courthouse and administrative offices and over 500 units of high and medium-density residential. The first phase of the MARTA Avondale Livable Centers Initiative, permitted this year, will redevelop an existing MARTA parking lot adding over 250 residential units and 22,000 square feet of commercial and retail space. Major employers and destinations outside the downtown area that provide connections to MARTA include Emory University, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agnes Scott College.

Riders originating at any of the three Decatur MARTA stations can gain access to other stops along the East-West line such as Georgia State University, downtown Atlanta, CNN, Centennial Park and Phillips Arena. Riders can transfer to the North-South line at Five Point Station for such destinations as Underground Atlanta, World of Coca-Cola, historic West End, Fort McPherson, Lakewood Amphitheatre, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and major regional employment and retail centers in midtown Atlanta, Buckhead area, the Medical Center area north of Buckhead, and the Perimeter area. Shuttle access is also available from the Five Points Station to Turner Field.

Transit Ridership Profile

MARTA's Transit Research branch annually conducts a Quality of Service Survey. Quality of Service measures customer perception of how MARTA performs each aspect of the total transit experience. The Quality of Service data is also used to produce a demographic and usage profile of the customers. Demographic variables consist of age, household income, gender, ethnicity, and residency.

The following series of tables show the demographic profiles of the patrons that utilized MARTA in 2004.

Table 9.5 – Age Distribution of MARTA Patrons

| Age | Percent |
|----------|---------|
| Under 16 | 0.4 |
| 16-24 | 23.4 |
| 25-34 | 27.2 |
| 35-44 | 24.2 |
| 45-54 | 16.4 |
| 55-64 | 6.7 |
| 65+ | 1.7 |

Table 9.6 – Income Distribution of MARTA Patrons

| Household Income | Percent |
|--------------------|---------|
| Less than \$10,000 | 13.8 |
| \$10,000-14,999 | 11.6 |
| \$15,000-19,999 | 13.1 |
| \$20,000-24,999 | 14.2 |
| \$25,000-29,999 | 11.9 |
| \$30,000-34,999 | 10.2 |
| \$35,000-39,999 | 7.1 |
| \$40,000-49,999 | 6.4 |
| \$50,000-74,999 | 6.6 |
| \$75,000 or more | 5.1 |

Table 9.7 – Gender Distribution of MARTA Patrons

| Gender | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Male | 53.0 |
| Female | 47.0 |

Table 9.8 – Ethnic Distribution of MARTA Patrons

| Ethnicity | Percent |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Black | 78.3 |
| White | 12.5 |
| Hispanic | 6.0 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2.0 |
| Native American | 0.4 |
| Other | 0.8 |

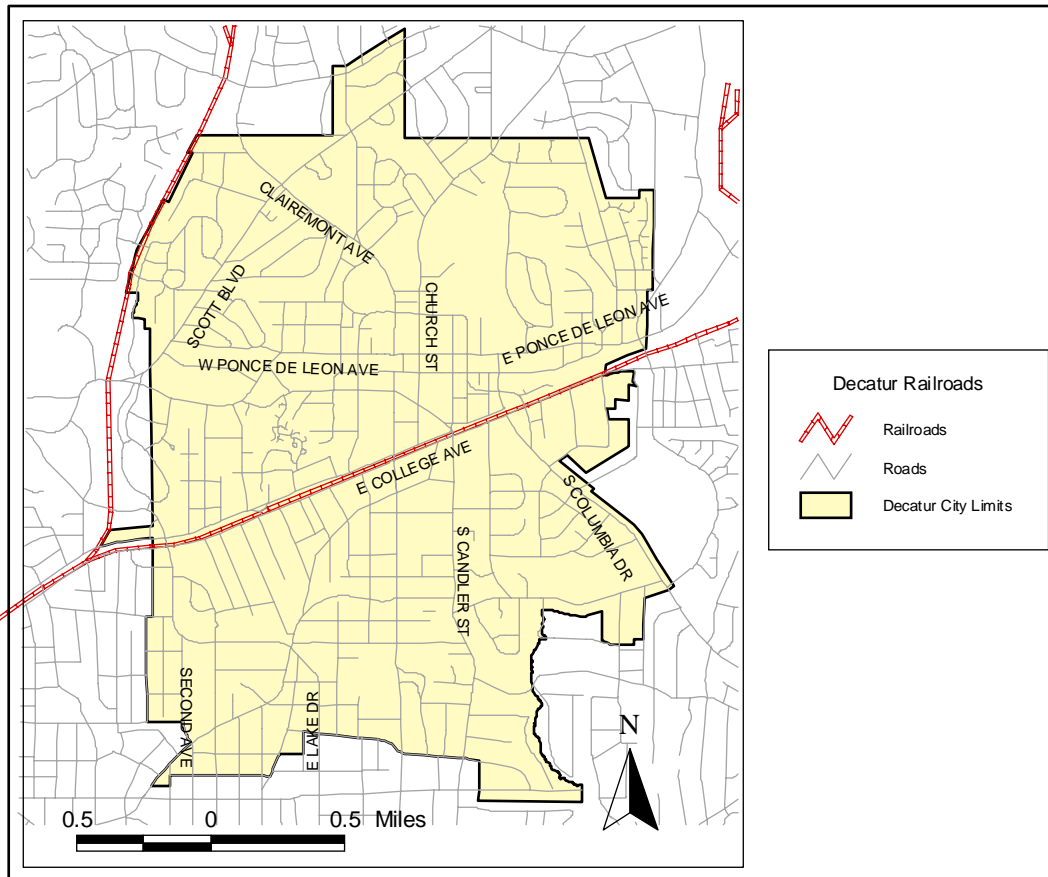
Table 9.9 – Residency Distribution of MARTA Patrons

| Residency | Percent |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Atlanta | 42.8 |
| Fulton | 14.2 |
| DeKalb | 33.0 |
| Outside Service Area | 10.0 |

Railroad Inventory

One industrial railroad corridor is located within the Decatur limits. The CSX line bisects the City from east to west as part of its Atlanta to Augusta service, as depicted on the Railroad Facilities Map. With this industrial railway service, there are approximately 10-15 trains per day. There are three at-grade crossings located within the City limits at major intersections. In Fiscal Year 2005-2006, the City plans to undertake a Community Transportation Plan in which these three crossings will be examined for improvements to provide a safer environment for pedestrians and to allow implementation of a Decatur Quiet Zone.

Map 9.5 – Decatur Railroad Map



Programmed STIP Improvements

The Georgia Fiscal Year 2005-2007 State Transportation Improvement Program includes one project located within the City of Decatur, the Downtown Decatur Signal Timing and Coordination Program. As its name suggests, the project consists of a signal timing study for 22 of the downtown Decatur intersections. Although maintenance of the signal system is under the purview of DeKalb County, the City is sponsoring the project.

Accident Frequency Data

Data on accident frequency was provided by the City of Decatur Department of Public Safety. For purposes of the analysis, the period from January - December 2004 was examined for trends. There were a total of 715 accidents in 2004. Table 9.10 lists the top ten roadways by number of accidents and the intersection(s) where most incidents occurred.

Table 9.10 – Decatur Roadways with the Highest Accident Frequency

| Roadway | Number of Accidents | Most Frequent Intersection |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Commerce Drive (SR 155) | 80 | Clairemont Avenue, Church Street |
| Clairemont Avenue | 71 | Commerce, Scott |
| East Ponce de Leon | 63 | Church, Commerce |
| East College Avenue (SR 10) | 58 | South Candler Street |
| South Candler Street (SR 155) | 55 | East College Avenue |
| Scott Boulevard | 52 | Clairemont |
| West Ponce de Leon | 47 | Commerce |
| Church Street | 47 | Commerce, East Ponce de Leon |
| West Trinity | 30 | Swanton Way |
| West Howard | 30 | Atlanta Avenue |

A correlation exists between Decatur's most congested streets and frequency of accidents. East Ponce de Leon, West Ponce de Leon, South Candler Street and Scott Boulevard all experience a high level of congestion on some segments and are included on this top ten list. Also contributing to the frequency of accidents is speed, turn geometries, and pedestrian facilities at intersections. In FY 2005-2006 the City intends to retain the services of a consultant to prepare a Community Transportation Plan to examine these and other issues. The majority of intersections listed above are included in the plan for specific study.

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

Assessment of the Road Network

Existing Level of Service on Roadways

To assess the adequacy of the existing roadway network for the City of Decatur, the Level of Service (LOS) was analyzed for the major classifications of roadways. For the analysis, data from the Atlanta Regional Commission's travel demand model for the network year 2005 was utilized.

LOS is calculated for individual road segments by determining the ratio of daily traffic volume to the roadway's capacity. The LOS is then coded by letter grades A-F, each grade corresponding to a certain range. For consistency, the same thresholds developed by the ARC in the Regional Transportation Plan model were utilized for this analysis, as detailed below.

Table 9.11 – Level of Service Definitions

| Level of Service (LOS) | Volume/Capacity Ratio |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| LOS A-B | .00-.55 |
| LOS C | .55-.77 |
| LOS D | .77-.93 |
| LOS E | .93-1.00 |
| LOS F | 1.00 |

Qualitatively, the LOS grades correspond to the degree of delay and maneuverability motorists experience, with A indicating little or no delay with adequate room to maneuver and F indicating long delays, low average speeds and little room to maneuver. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, LOS D has been adopted as the acceptable minimum standard. The following table details the roadways with an LOS of E or F, representing the most congested roadway segments in Decatur.

Table 9.12 – Most Congested Roadways within the City of Decatur

| Roadway | 2004 LOS |
|--|----------|
| South Candler Street (SR155) (from E. Howard south to City limits) | LOS F |
| Scott Boulevard (SR8) (from Coventry Road to Clairemont Avenue) | LOS E |
| North McDonough St (from East Trinity to East Howard) | LOS F |
| West Ponce de Leon (Commerce to East Court Square) | LOS E-F |
| East Ponce de Leon (East Court Square to Glendale Avenue) | LOS F |

As anticipated, the majority of segments experiencing the lowest level of services are located in the Decatur downtown area, ex. West and East Ponce de Leon and McDonough Road. This can be attributed to a heavy volume of traffic, frequency of curb cuts, traffic signals, mid-block pedestrian crosswalks and on-street parking. The Scott Boulevard (SR8) segment is characterized by residential driveways, multi-family housing, and Westchester Early Child Development Center. South Candler Street is a state route (155) that connects downtown Decatur to Interstate 20. It is a two-lane road characterized by residential driveways and traffic signals. Upon reaching DeKalb County limits, it expands to a 4-lane highway.

From an economic development standpoint, congestion on downtown streets through a central business district is not necessarily negative. Slower speeds are generally supportive of businesses and a pedestrian friendly environment. Traffic should be slowed for pedestrian safety and comfort. A slower speed affords motorists the opportunity to notice streetside retail, making them more likely to stop and patronize local businesses.

Modal Split and Vehicle Occupancy

Table 9.13 – Means of Transportation to Work, Decatur 2000

| Workers | Total (age 16 and older) | Percentage |
|--|--------------------------|------------|
| Car, truck, or van: | 7,620 | 78% |
| Drove alone | 7,077 | 73% |
| Carpooled | 543 | 6% |
| Public transportation: | 993 | 10% |
| Bus or trolley bus | 501 | 5% |
| Streetcar or trolley car (publico in Puerto Rico) | 0 | 0% |
| Subway or elevated | 479 | 5% |
| Railroad | 0 | 0% |
| Ferryboat | 0 | 0% |
| Taxicab | 13 | <1% |
| Motorcycle | 0 | 0% |
| Bicycle | 17 | <1% |
| Walked | 567 | 6% |
| Other means | 63 | 1% |
| Worked at home | 480 | 5% |
| Total | 9,740 | 100% |

Source: US Census 2000

Table 9.13 shows the means of travel to work for workers age 16 and older in the City of Decatur for the year 2000. Of the 9,740 workers, 78% utilized car, trucks, or vans for their commute with 6% carpooling. This compares closely with City of Atlanta, which had 76% of workers utilizing the same vehicles. Carpoolers in Atlanta accounted for 12%. DeKalb County had a higher rate of private vehicle use, 86%, with 15% of workers carpooling. In terms of vehicle occupancy, 73% of workers in Decatur drove alone in 2000. Both City of Atlanta and DeKalb County had lower percentages of 64% and 70%.

Looking at alternative forms of transportation use, 10% of the workers in Decatur utilized bus, train, or taxicab for their commute. This figure compares similarly to Atlanta at 15% and DeKalb County at 8%. Decatur had a higher percentage of workers walking and biking to work at about roughly 7% compared with the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County which had 4% and 2% respectively. About 5% of workers worked from home in Decatur, compared with 4% in Atlanta and 3% in DeKalb County.

Assessment of Public Transit Facilities

Given the availability of transit facilities in Decatur, three MARTA heavy rail stations and a wide network of sixteen MARTA bus routes, the percentage of workers utilizing public transit is expected to be higher. Travel trends in Decatur seem to mirror the larger regional trend of private automobile use as the

preferred method of transport, despite proximity to transit. This can also be seen in the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County which has similar transit facilities.

In order for transit to be attractive, it must offer both convenience and significant time savings. A frequent complaint of commuters regarding transit is that MARTA does not service the areas where commuters need to go. There is some credence to this given the development pattern of the region. MARTA is only located within two counties, Fulton and DeKalb, and employment/destination centers exist all around the region.

Another complaint of the transit system is the lack of travel time savings. The higher-income demographic in Decatur is highly sensitive to commute time. It averages approximately 25 minutes to travel from Downtown Decatur MARTA station to the Five Points station in downtown Atlanta. Factoring in a train or bus transfer, and the time rises considerably. Considering "Journey to Work" data from the 2000 U.S. Census reports an average commute time of 26.2 minutes for Decatur commuters, transit does not offer much of an incentive.

Percent of Auto Ownership

The following information on auto ownership has been provided by the 2000 U.S. Census. This information is important to factor in when considering an individual's likelihood to utilize transit. As the below table details, 96% of all homeowners and 74% of all renters in Decatur have access to at least one vehicle. It can be inferred from the data that renters in Decatur are more likely to be transit-dependent. This is useful for the City when considering the appropriate location of rental developments, e.g., apartments should be co-located with MARTA heavy rail transit stations and bus stops.

Table 9.14 – City of Decatur - Vehicles Available by Tenure

| Housing Type | Owner Occupied | | Renter Occupied | |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Count | Percentage | Count | Percentage |
| Total | 4,747 | | 3,321 | |
| No vehicle available | 210 | 4% | 853 | 26% |
| 1 vehicle available | 1,672 | 35% | 1,639 | 49% |
| 2 vehicles available | 2,323 | 49% | 729 | 22% |
| 3 vehicles available | 429 | 9% | 100 | 3% |
| 4 vehicles available | 94 | 2% | 0 | 0% |
| 5 or more vehicles available | 19 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Total Units: | 8,068 | | | |

Source: US Census 2000

Projected Overall System Levels of Service and System Needs

As the City of Decatur nears 100% build-out conditions, growth options are limited to redevelopment and infill. Current and future policies as demonstrated by the Existing and Future Land Use maps in the Land Use element of this document emphasize the preservation of existing single family residential and direction of mixed-use and medium to high-density residential development in the downtown or surrounding areas. These areas are located near, or in the case of the Avondale MARTA station on, mass transit facilities. Co-location of identified growth areas with mass transit should have a positive effect on congestion in the Decatur.

Proximity to transit does not alone facilitate use of the facility as demonstrated by the U.S. Census modal split data above. However, the type and density of development encouraged by the City is far more conducive to use of alternative forms of transportation than single-family or single-use commercial districts. In addition, the Vehicles by Tenure data showed renters in Decatur are more likely to be transit dependent. As such, the development planned for the Avondale MARTA station is comprised mostly of apartment type housing units.

Means of Optimizing Existing Facilities

Adding capacity to the road network as a means to control congestion in Decatur is not considered a feasible option. A reduction in vehicle trips may occur in areas of the city with high-density residential and mixed-use developments as

residents take advantage of the City's high quality pedestrian amenities to make more trips on foot. The City must take advantage of its existing resources in order to effect positive change for its residents.

The City has been successful in its use of land use controls as a way to maximize resources. Policies have directed growth to those areas well served by transit. While transit in Decatur is not the preferred mode of travel, as densities and awareness of air quality issues increase, transit use should rise over the twenty-year planning period.

The high percentage of commuters who bike and walk to work in Decatur is indicative of the high quality and availability of facilities. Most of the streets in Decatur have sidewalks on at least one side of the road. The City is committed to an annual expenditure for maintenance and improvement of these facilities. The public involvement process revealed a strong desire from the community for continued commitment to increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City is currently participating in a pilot "Safe Routes to Schools Program" through the Georgia Department of Transportation. At the completion of the program this year, the City will consider ways to incorporate lessons learned from the Safe Routes to Schools Program in the Community Transportation Plan.

The Community Transportation Plan is expected to identify in greater detail the methods and strategies to enhance the City's non-vehicular modes of transportation.

Transportation Requirements for Non-Attainment Areas

As a municipality within DeKalb County, the City of Decatur is subject to the same air quality standards as the Atlanta region. The Clean Air Act (CAA) is a law designed to ensure that all U.S. residents have the same basic health and environmental protections. Under the CAA, each state that does not meet one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) is charged with developing a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that outlines how air quality will be improved by a specified date. Of the six (6) pollutants that the CAA establishes standards for, two (2) are of particular concern in Atlanta, ozone and particulate matter. Atlanta is currently designated as a non-attainment area for ozone and fine particulate matter.

Local governments located within a nationally designated ambient air quality standards nonattainment area must include three elements in their comprehensive plan: a map of the area designated as a non-attainment area for ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter, a discussion of the severity of any violations contributed by transportation-related sources that are contributing to air quality non-attainment, and identification of measures, activities, programs, regulations, etc., the local government will implement consistent with the state implementation plan for air quality.

The following discussion on the severity of violations is taken from the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan's Conformity Determination Report.

Ozone

The Atlanta region is currently designated as a nonattainment area for ozone. Ozone is a primary component of smog and a powerful respiratory irritant when formed in the lower atmosphere. Ozone is not emitted directly from any source, rather it is formed when Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) combine in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. Air pollution control strategies are aimed at controlling NO_x and VOC, since they are precursors to ozone formation.

In 1990, the Atlanta metropolitan area was one of 91 areas in the United States designated as nonattainment under the one-hour ozone standard. Atlanta was classified as a serious nonattainment area based on ozone sampling measurements taken from 1987-1989. The designation identified a specific set of required regional emission control strategies that had to be implemented within the nonattainment area including, but not limited to, an enhanced Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) program, controls on fuel volatility, and implementation of a clean-fuel fleet program. The designation also defined a specific deadline of November 1999 for attaining the ozone standard.

The nonattainment area under the one-hour ozone standard consists of 13 counties – Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale. Effective January 1, 2004, the Atlanta nonattainment area was reclassified as a severe nonattainment area because the region was unable to attain the standard by the statutory deadline of 1999. Atlanta was reclassified (“bumped up”) because USEPA was delayed in its effort to control up-wind emissions from neighboring states that contribute to the ozone problem in the Atlanta area.

The Clean Air Act requires that the NAAQS be reviewed every five years to determine if they need to be updated. In 1997 the NAAQS for ozone was reviewed and revised to reflect improved scientific understanding of the health impacts of this pollutant. When the standard was revised in 1997, an eight-hour ozone standard was established. The eight-hour ozone standard is based on extensive air pollution research that indicated ozone is more harmful when a person is exposed over a longer period of time, even if the ozone concentration is lower. The eight-hour ozone standard is met when the three-year average of the annual fourth-highest daily maximum eight-hour ozone concentration within an area does not exceed 0.08 ppm².

In April 2004, 20 counties within the Atlanta metropolitan area were designated as nonattainment under the eight-hour ozone standard, with an effective date of June 15, 2004. The Atlanta eight-hour ozone nonattainment area was classified as marginal based on ozone measurements taken from 2000-2002. The

designation also defined a specific deadline of June 2007 for demonstrating attainment to the revised ozone standard. Transportation conformity under the eight-hour ozone standard is required by the Clean Air Act within one-year of the effective date of designation, i.e., by June 15, 2005. A conformity determination under the eight-hour ozone standard must be in place by June 15, 2005, or a conformity lapse will occur.

The counties within the Atlanta eight-hour ozone nonattainment area are Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale, Hall, Barrow, Walton, Newton, Spalding, Carroll, and Bartow. This is the 13-county one-hour ozone nonattainment area plus seven additional "ring" counties. The USEPA does not intend for there to be two ozone standards in place at the same time. The eight-hour ozone standard is a revised standard, not a new standard. For this reason, the less stringent, one-hour ozone standard will be revoked one year after the effective date of designations under the revised standard, i.e., the one-hour ozone standard will be revoked in full on June 15, 2005. Transportation conformity under the one-hour ozone standard will no longer apply in the 13-county one-hour ozone nonattainment area after June 15, 2005.

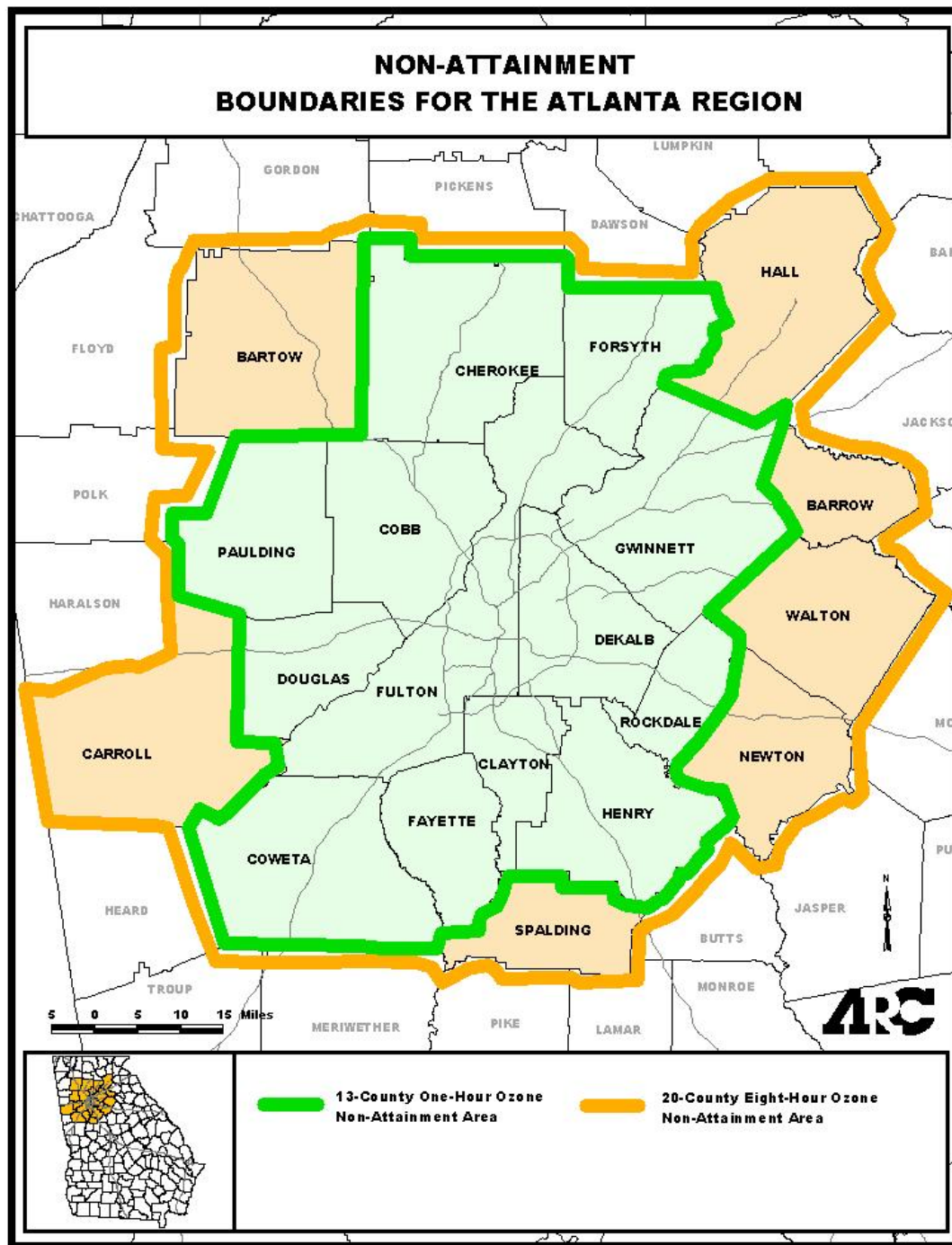
A map illustrating the one-hour and eight-hour non-attainment area boundaries appears on the following page.

PM-2.5

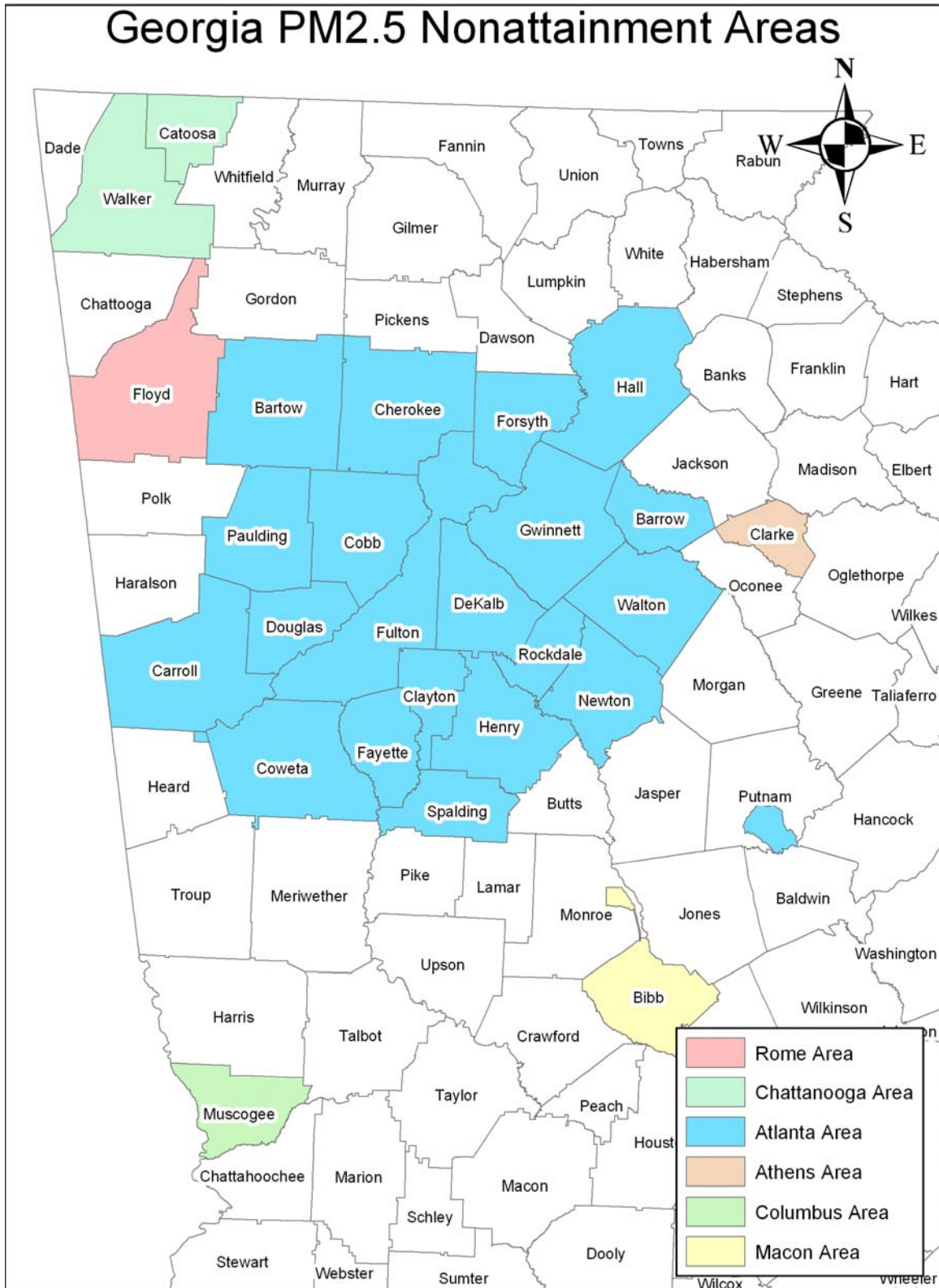
Particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Fine particulate matter, referred to as PM-2.5, are airborne materials that measure 2.5 micrometers in diameter. In 1997, a fine particulate standard was established to reflect latest research which revealed that smaller particles can more easily penetrate into the lungs and the bloodstream than coarse particles, causing increased health risks.

Effective April 5, 2005, the US EPA designated a 20+ county metro Atlanta nonattainment area for fine particulate matter (see Map 9.7). A transportation conformity determination under the standard will be required by April 5, 2006. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Atlanta region, the Atlanta Regional Commission will be working over the course of the next year to establish a PM-2.5 modeling methodology with planning partners to ensure the conformity requirements are met.

Map 9.6 – Atlanta Region Nonattainment Boundaries



Map 9.7 – Georgia PM 2.5 Nonattainment Areas



The minimum standards and procedures for comprehensive planning require local governments to inventory activities which are consistent with the state implementation plan for air quality. The City of Decatur actively promotes measures which collectively contribute to improved air quality. One of the most significant measures is a strong commitment to high-density transit oriented mixed-use development close to the Downtown Decatur and Avondale MARTA rail stations. A major component of the downtown development has been the construction of residential projects in the central business district. Since 2000, 28 townhouse units, 417 condominium units, and 105 apartment units have been added in the central business district.

The City has also identified similar transit oriented development opportunities around the Avondale MARTA rail station through a 2002 Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study. Columbia Park, a 350-unit residential development is planned on the current site of a MARTA parking facility. The project also contains about 14,000 square feet of commercial space. The development is anticipated to be permitted in 2005. Within walking distance of the station, the Talley Street Lofts, a 90-unit condominium development is also planned for permitting in 2005.

In addition, the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association provides services to employer members located within a three-mile radius from the intersection of Clifton Road and Haygood Drive in DeKalb County. Emory University, the largest employer in DeKalb County, leads the CCTMA in developing and providing member services to the various hospitals, non-profit organizations, and government agencies in the surrounding area. The CCTMA offers a free shuttle from the Emory University campus on Clifton Road to downtown Decatur MARTA station. Known as the CCTMA-Decatur Shuttle, the shuttle operates from 5:30am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday.

In regard to pedestrian and bicycle mobility, the City of Decatur identifies, on an annual basis, streets missing sidewalks or those with sidewalks in need of repairs. For 2005-2006, the City has identified 19 streets to receive a total approximately 8,450 linear feet of new or replaced sidewalk. In addition, the City has produced six walking tours for people interested in walking and seeing the sights of Decatur. The routes and key points of interest are presented in free brochures which are available at the Decatur Recreation Center, the Downtown Development Authority office, local shops, and the Decatur internet site. The PATH Foundation has also built several miles of multi-use trails through Decatur. The City of Decatur also promotes bicycle use on the Decatur internet site by offering maps of the Decatur 10 Mile Fun Ride. The maps are provided by Bike DeKalb.

Finally, the City of Decatur promotes improved air quality through organizational memberships in both the Clean Air Campaign and the International Council of

Local Environmental Initiatives. In 2005, the City of Decatur held memberships in both of these organizations.

Transportation Community Vision and Goals

The transportation community vision is to establish a safe and efficient multi-modal system that maximizes and enhances Decatur's vehicular and non-vehicular resources.

Associated Goals:

- Increase transit use with the co-location of mixed-use and higher density residential developments with transit facilities.
- Study mobility and connectivity Citywide.
- Create and maintain a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community.
- Consider improvements to the CSX Railroad to create a quiet zone in Decatur.
- Design innovative parking options for the downtown central business core.
- Increase connectivity between the Oakhurst & Downtown business districts.
- Identify improvements to pedestrian facilities at key intersections that are gateways to Downtown Decatur.
- Identify traffic calming mechanisms along Church St and W. Ponce de Leon.

This vision and goals will be the expressed focus of the Community Transportation Plan.