



# CITY OF DECATUR, GA 2010



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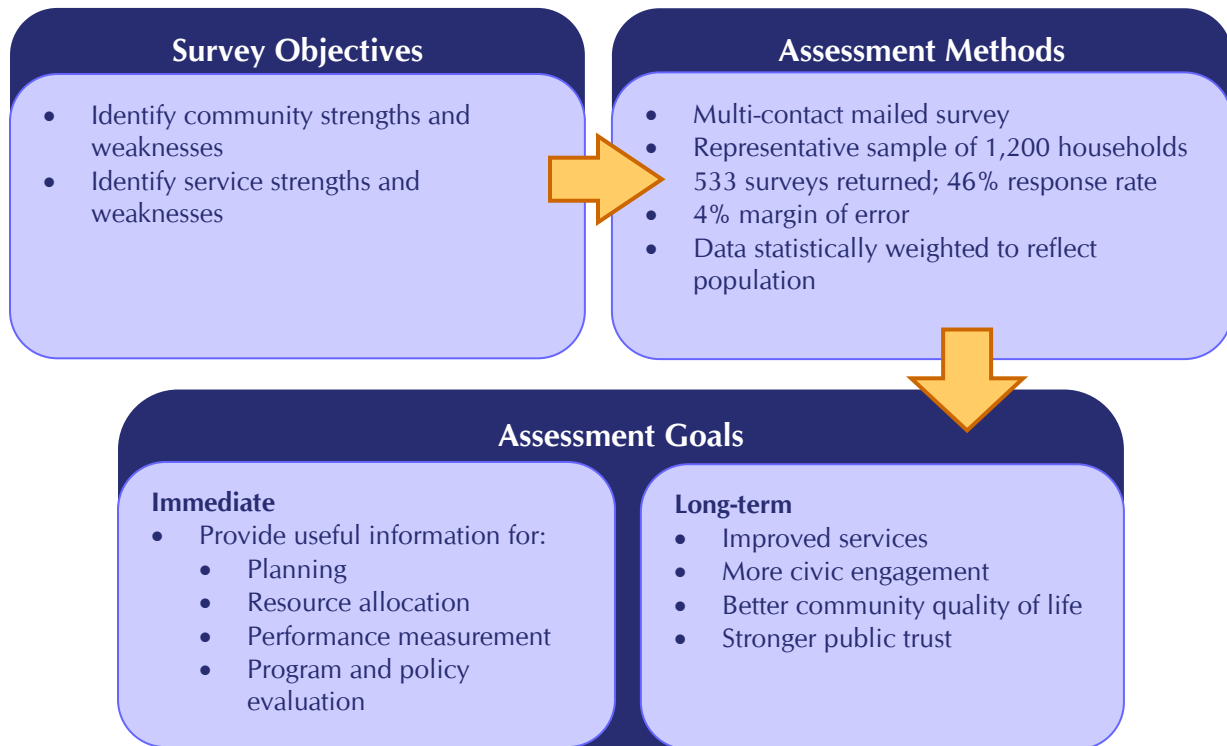
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## SURVEY BACKGROUND

### ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The NCS was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community and services provided by local government. The survey results may be used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy making.

FIGURE 1: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ METHODS AND GOALS



The NCS focuses on a series of community characteristics and local government services, as well as issues of public trust. Resident behaviors related to civic engagement in the community also were measured in the survey.

FIGURE 2: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ FOCUS AREAS



The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage-paid envelopes. Additionally, some survey recipients were given the option of completing the survey online. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community. A total of 533 completed surveys (of these, 515 were received via mail and 18 were completed on the internet) were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 46%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the City of Decatur was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Decatur staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community issues and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Decatur staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service through a

variety of options including the option for a portion of respondents to complete the survey online and several policy questions.

## UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' reports about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each section begins with residents' ratings of community characteristics and is followed by residents' ratings of service quality. For all evaluative questions, the percent of residents rating the service or community feature as "excellent" or "good" is presented. To see the full set of responses for each question on the survey, please see Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies.

### Margin of Error

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a "level of confidence" and accompanying "confidence interval" (or margin of error). A traditional confidence level, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the estimates made from the survey results. The confidence interval for the City of Decatur survey is no greater than plus or minus four percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (533 completed surveys). A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, the population response to that question would be within the stated interval 95 times. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as "excellent" or "good," then the 5% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that the range of likely responses for the entire jurisdiction is between 70% and 80%.

### Comparing Survey Results

Certain kinds of services tend to be thought better of by residents in many communities across the country. For example, public safety services tend to be received better than transportation services by residents of most American communities. Where possible, the better comparison is not from one service to another in the City of Decatur, but from City of Decatur services to services like them provided by other jurisdictions.

### Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years

This report contains comparisons with prior years' results. In this report, we are comparing this year's data with existing data in the graphs. Differences between years can be considered "statistically significant" if they are greater than six percentage points. Trend data for your jurisdiction represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines. Deviations from stable trends over time, especially represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs or public information may have affected residents' opinions.

### Benchmark Comparisons

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services and gave their opinion about the quality of community life. The City of Decatur chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database (Populations 15,000 - 40,000 in the Southern region). A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been

provided when a similar question on the City of Decatur Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons were available, the City of Decatur results were noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar to" the benchmark. This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of the City of Decatur's rating to the benchmark.

### **"Don't Know" Responses and Rounding**

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer "don't know." The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select more than one answer. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents did select more than one response. When a table for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice of percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

For more information on understanding The NCS report, please see Appendix B: Survey Methodology.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report of the City of Decatur survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

Most residents experience a good quality of life in the City of Decatur and believe the City is a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Decatur was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 95% of respondents. Almost all report they plan on staying in the City of Decatur for the next five years.

A variety of characteristics of the community was evaluated by those participating in the study. Among the characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were the overall image or reputation of Decatur, overall appearance of Decatur and opportunities to volunteer. Among the characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were the amount of public parking, traffic flow on major streets and the availability of affordable quality housing.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 32 characteristics for which comparisons were available, 28 were above the benchmark comparison, two were similar to the benchmark comparison and two were below.

Residents in the City of Decatur were somewhat civically engaged. While only 32% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 94% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. About half had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the City of Decatur, which was higher than the benchmark.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated strong trust in local government. About eight in ten rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Decatur as “good” or “excellent.” This was higher than the benchmark. Those residents who had interacted with an employee of the City of Decatur in the previous 12 months gave high marks to those employees. Most rated their overall impression of employees as “excellent” or “good.”

On average, residents gave favorable ratings to most local government services. City services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 32 services for which comparisons were available, 27 were above the benchmark comparison, four were similar to the benchmark comparison and one was below.

A Key Driver Analysis was conducted for the City of Decatur which examined the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Decatur's services overall. Those key driver services that correlated most strongly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Decatur can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Services found to be influential in ratings of overall service quality from the Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Public information services
- Economic development



## COMMUNITY RATINGS

### OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY

Overall quality of community life may be the single best indicator of success in providing the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to quality of community life in the City of Decatur – not only direct questions about quality of life overall and in neighborhoods, but questions to measure residents’ commitment to the City of Decatur. Residents were asked whether they planned to move soon or if they would recommend the City of Decatur to others. Intentions to stay and willingness to make recommendations provide evidence that the City of Decatur offers services and amenities that work.

Almost all of the City of Decatur’s residents gave high ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, almost all reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years.

FIGURE 3: RATINGS OF OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BY YEAR

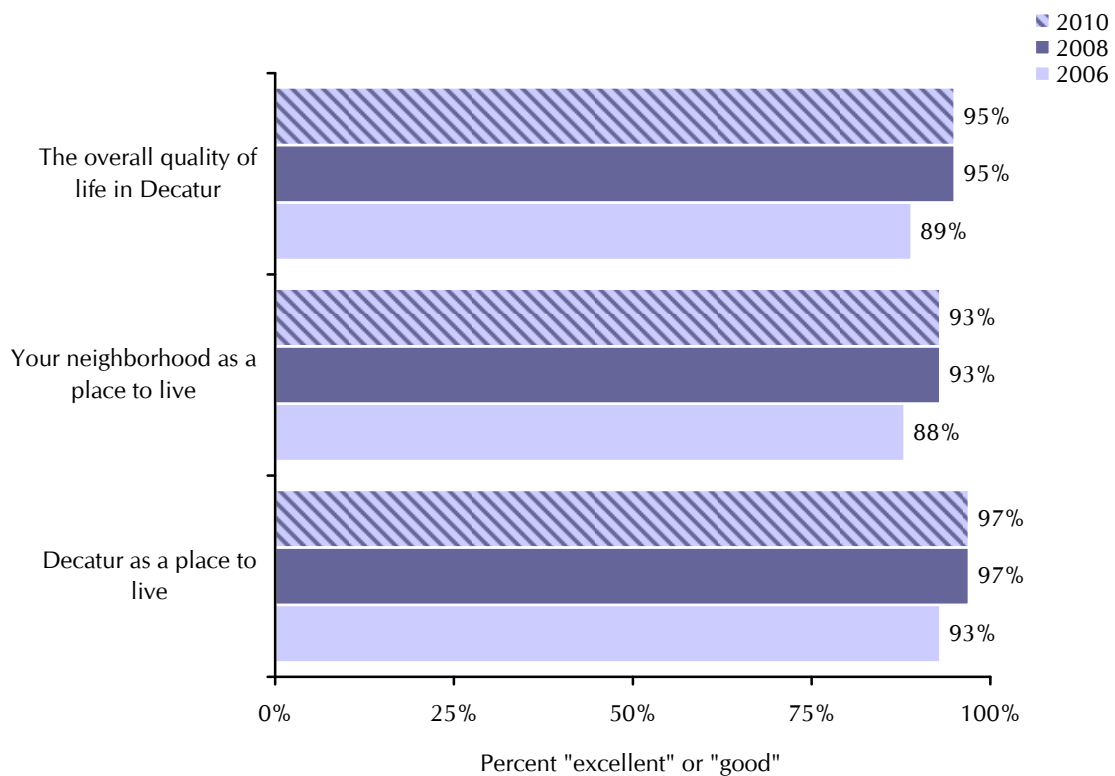


FIGURE 4: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY BY YEAR

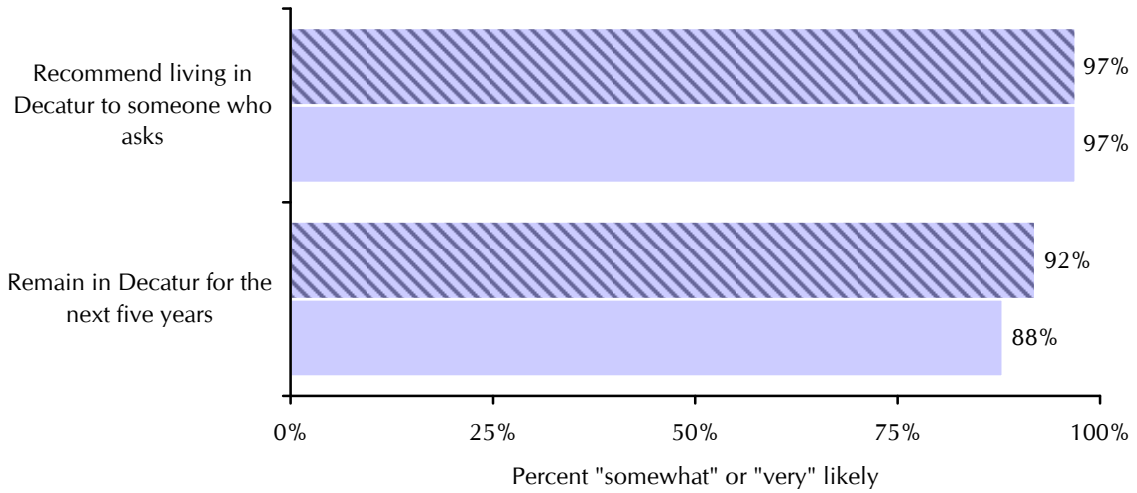


FIGURE 5: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Overall quality of life in Decatur	Above	Above
Your neighborhood as place to live	Above	Above
Decatur as a place to live	Above	Above
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	Above	Above
Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks	Above	Above

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

### Transportation

The ability to move easily throughout a community can greatly affect the quality of life of residents by diminishing time wasted in traffic congestion and by providing opportunities to travel quickly and safely by modes other than the automobile. High quality options for resident mobility not only require local government to remove barriers to flow but they require government programs and policies that create quality opportunities for all modes of travel.

Residents responding to the survey were given a list of seven aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of "excellent," "good," "fair" and "poor." Ease of walking was given the most positive rating, followed by ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur. These ratings tended to be higher than the benchmarks and similar to years past.

FIGURE 6: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

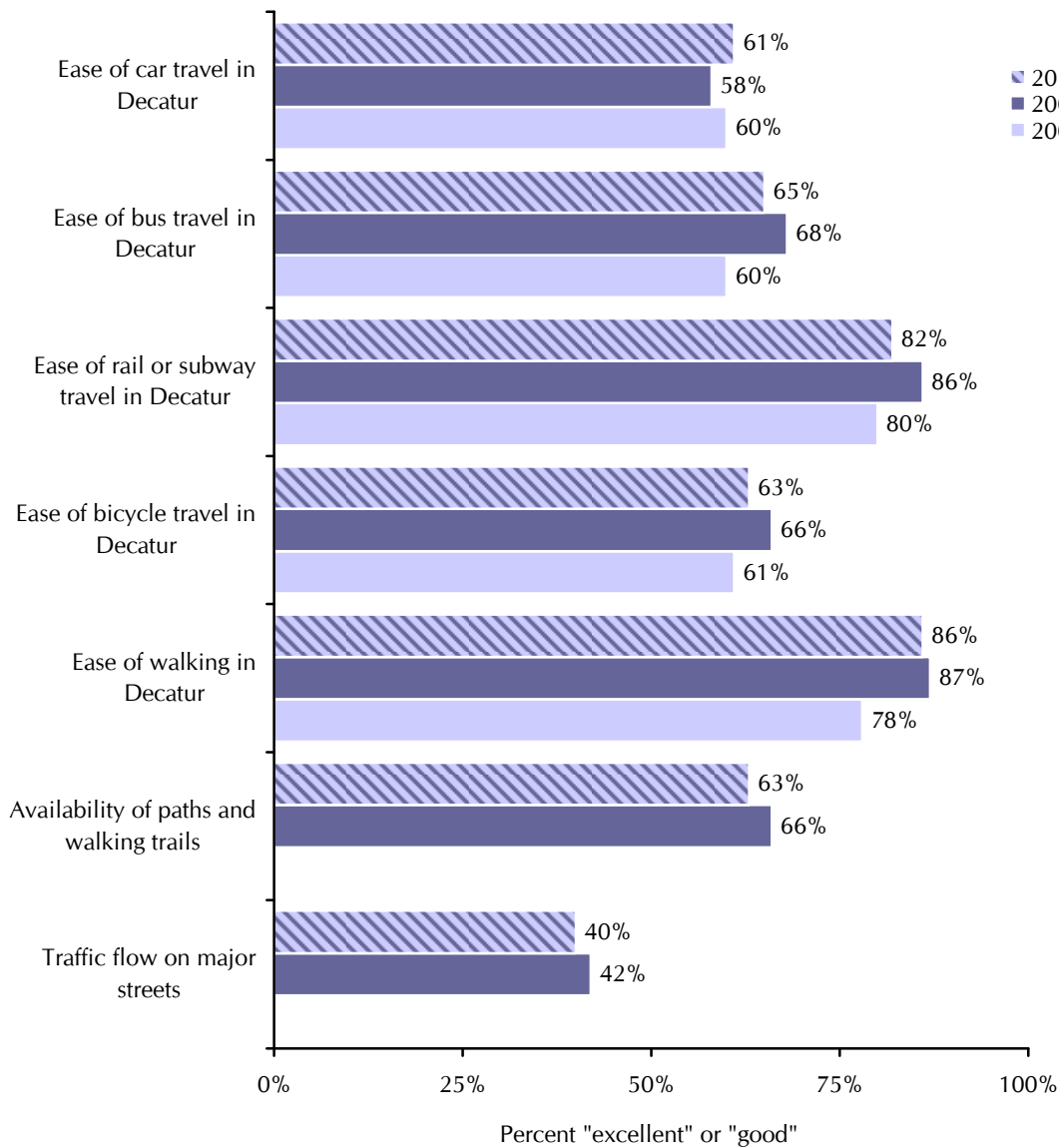


FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	Above	Above
Ease of rail or subway travel by in Decatur	Above	Not available
Ease of car travel in Decatur	Above	Above
Ease of walking in Decatur	Above	Above
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	Above	Above
Availability of paths and walking trails	Above	Above
Traffic flow on major streets	Similar	Below

Seven transportation services were rated in Decatur. Three were above both benchmarks, two were below the benchmarks and one was similar to the benchmarks. The rating for sidewalk maintenance was similar when compared to the nation and above the custom benchmark.

FIGURE 8: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BY YEAR

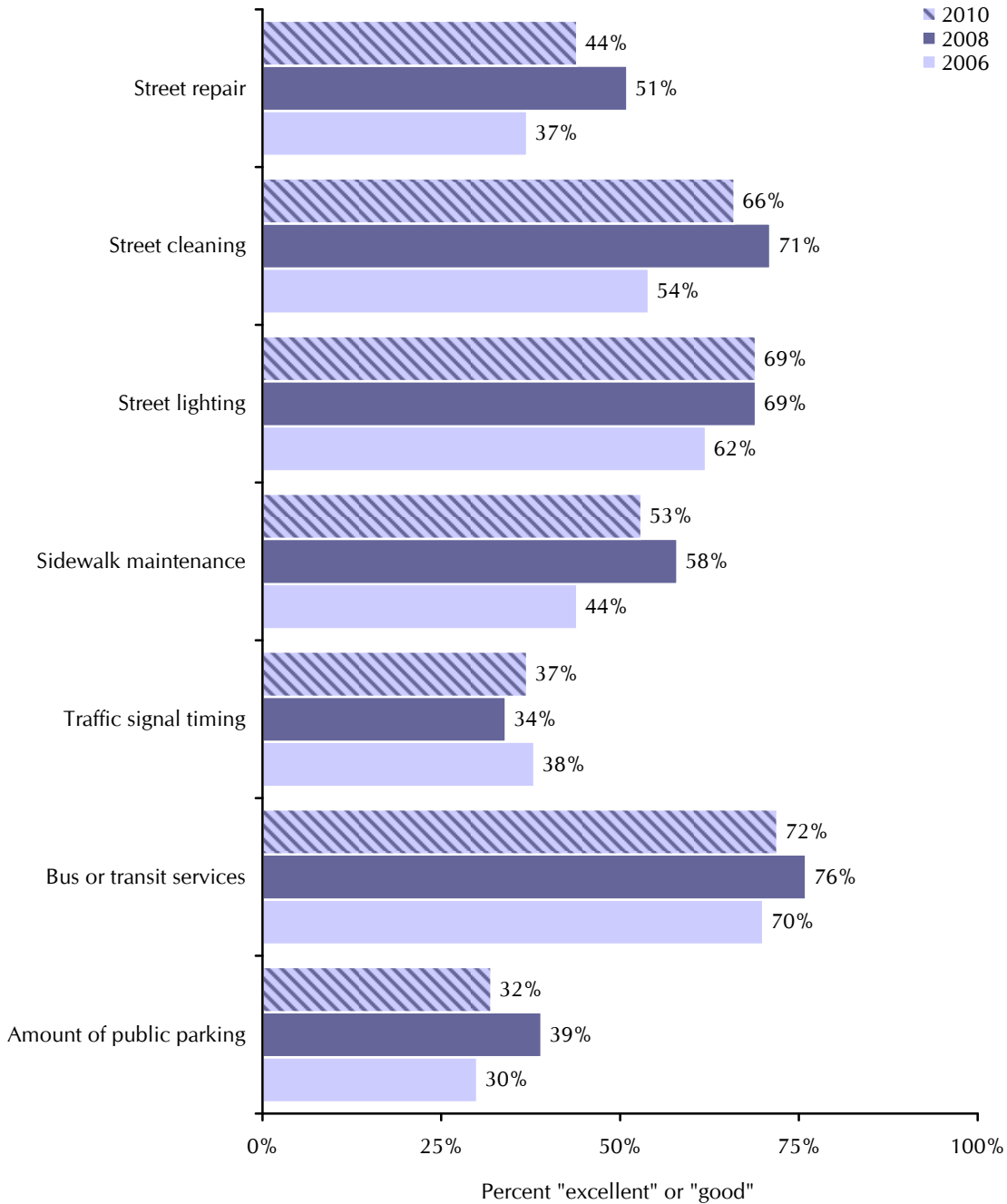


FIGURE 9: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Street repair /maintenance	Similar	Similar
Street cleaning	Above	Above
Street lighting	Above	Above
Sidewalk maintenance	Similar	Above
Light timing	Below	Below
Bus or transit services	Above	Above
Amount of public parking	Below	Below

By measuring choice of travel mode over time, communities can monitor their success in providing attractive alternatives to the traditional mode of travel, the single-occupied automobile. When asked how they typically traveled to work, single-occupancy (SOV) travel was the overwhelming mode of use. However, 7% of work commute trips were made by transit, 2% by bicycle and 5% by foot.

FIGURE 10: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

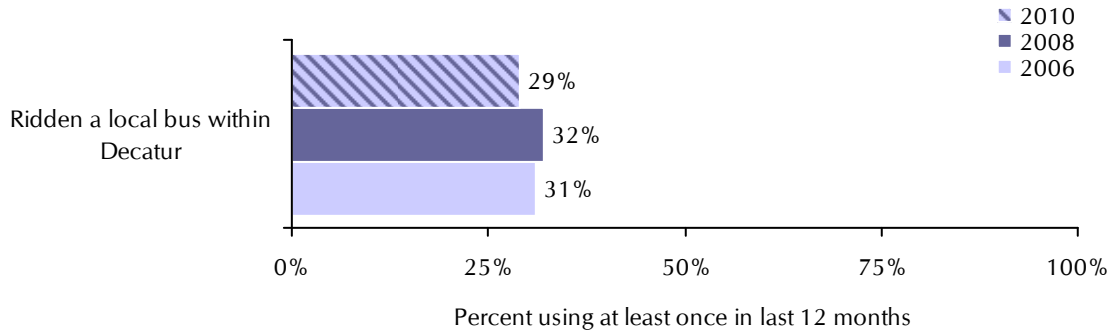
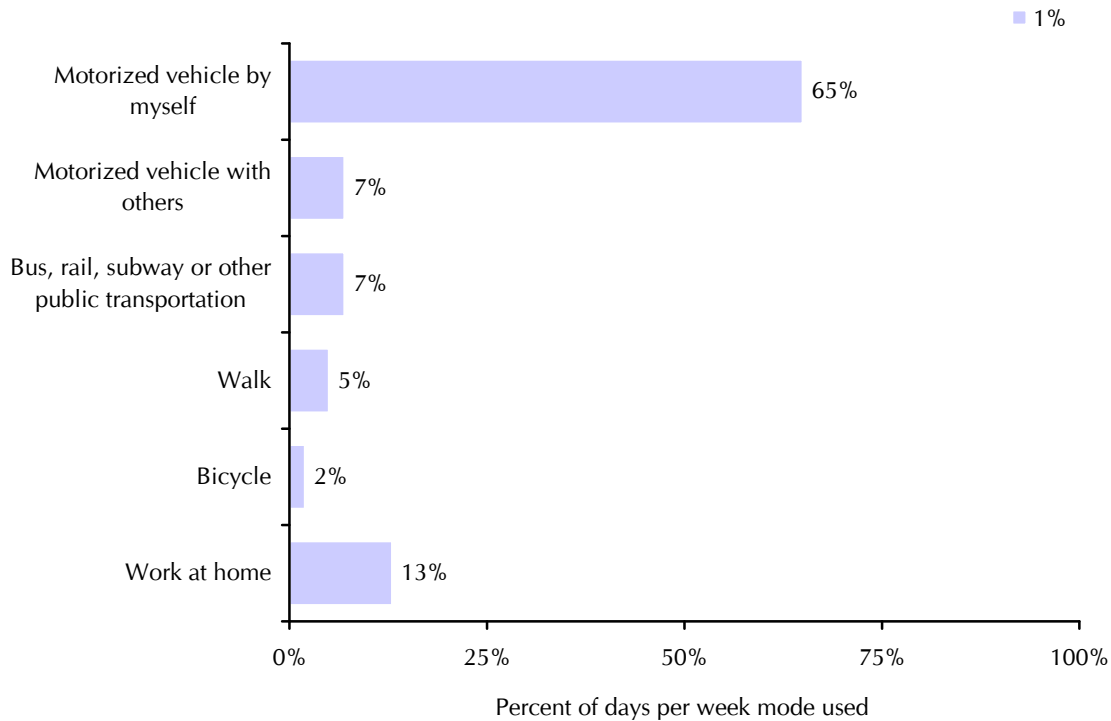


FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Ridden a local bus within Decatur	More	More

FIGURE 12: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE



## Housing

Housing variety and affordability are not luxuries for any community. When there are too few options for housing style and affordability, the characteristics of a community tilt toward a single group, often of well-off residents. While this may seem attractive to a community, the absence of affordable townhomes, condominiums, mobile homes, single family detached homes and apartments means that in addition to losing the vibrancy of diverse thoughts and lifestyles, the community loses the service workers that sustain all communities – police officers, school teachers, house painters and electricians. These workers must live elsewhere and commute in at great personal cost and to the detriment of traffic flow and air quality. Furthermore lower income residents pay so much of their income to rent or mortgage that little remains to bolster their own quality of life or local business.

The survey of the City of Decatur residents asked respondents to reflect on the availability of affordable housing as well as the variety of housing options. The availability of affordable housing was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 43% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 65% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was better in the City of Decatur than the ratings, on average, in the national comparison jurisdictions and similar to ratings of jurisdictions included in the custom comparison.

FIGURE 13: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

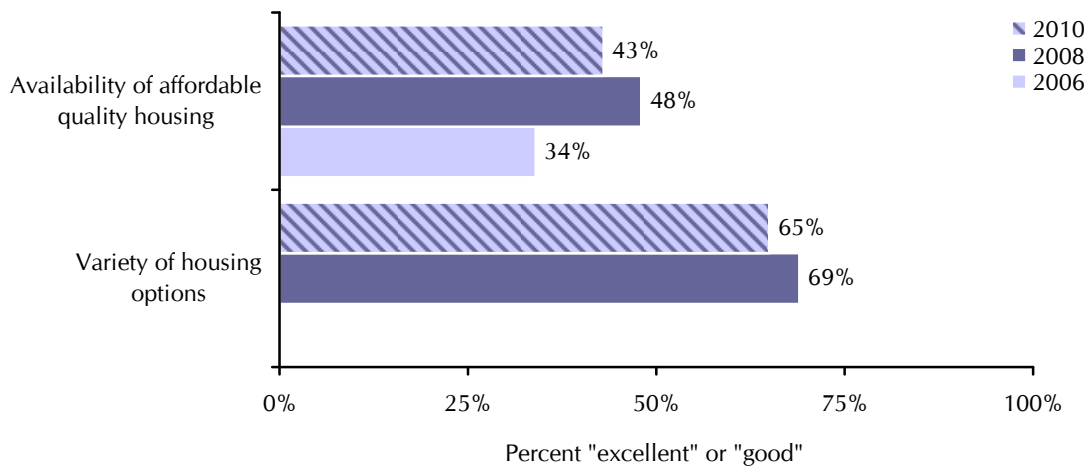


FIGURE 14: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Availability of affordable quality housing	Above	Similar
Variety of housing options	Above	Above



To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Decatur, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents' reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the City of Decatur experiencing housing cost stress. About 32% of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 15: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS ARE "AFFORDABLE" BY YEAR

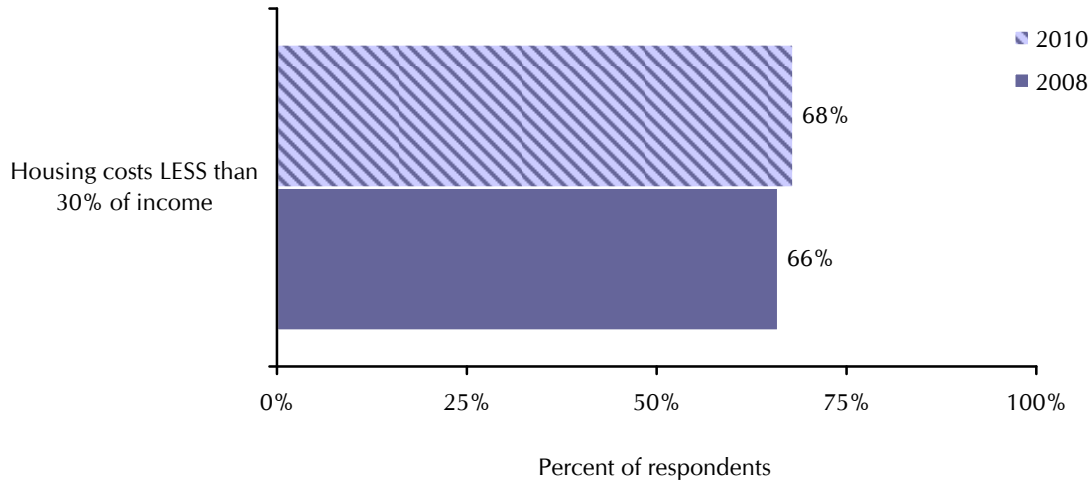


FIGURE 16: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Experiencing housing costs stress (housing costs 30% or more of income)	Less	Less

## Land Use and Zoning

Community development contributes to a feeling among residents and even visitors of the attention given to the speed of growth, the location of residences and businesses, the kind of housing that is appropriate for the community and the ease of access to commerce, green space and residences. Even the community's overall appearance often is attributed to the planning and enforcement functions of the local jurisdiction. Residents will appreciate an attractive, well-planned community. The NCS questionnaire asked residents to evaluate the quality of new development, the appearance of the City of Decatur and the speed of population growth. Problems with the appearance of property were rated, and the quality of land use planning, zoning and code enforcement services were evaluated.

The overall quality of new development in the City of Decatur was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 77% of respondents. The overall appearance of Decatur was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 90% of respondents and was higher than the benchmark. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the City of Decatur, 3% thought they were a "major" or "moderate" problem. The services of land use, planning and zoning, code enforcement and animal control were rated above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 17: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT" BY YEAR

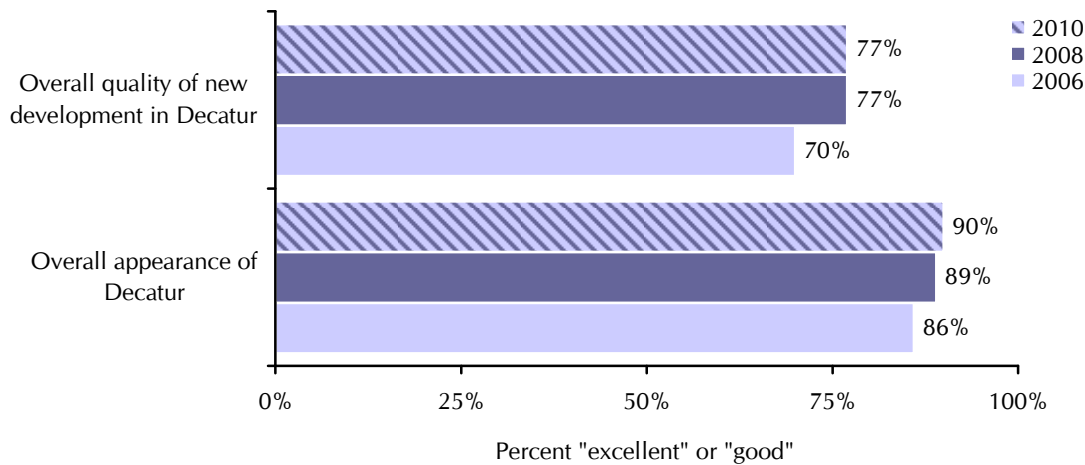


FIGURE 18: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Quality of new development in City	Above	Above
Overall appearance of Decatur	Above	Above

FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

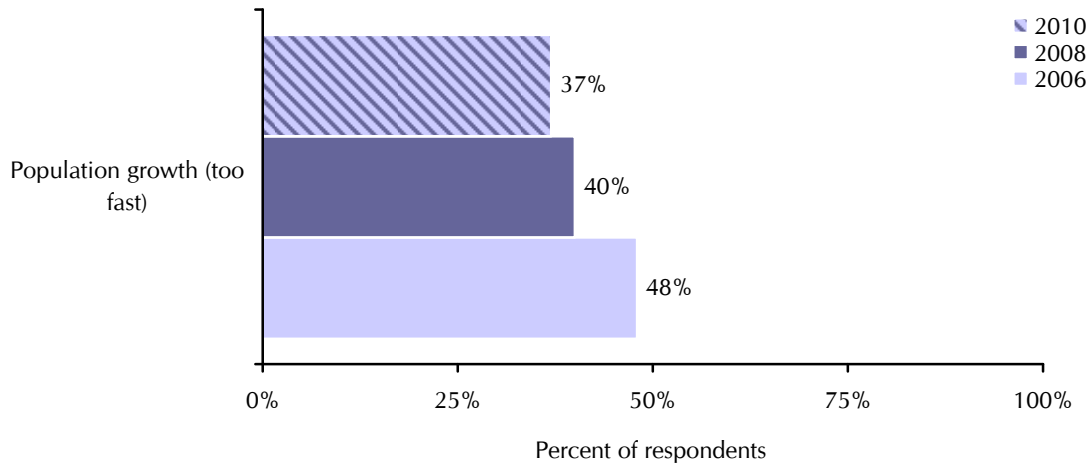


FIGURE 20: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Population growth seen as too fast	Less	Less

FIGURE 21: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS BY YEAR

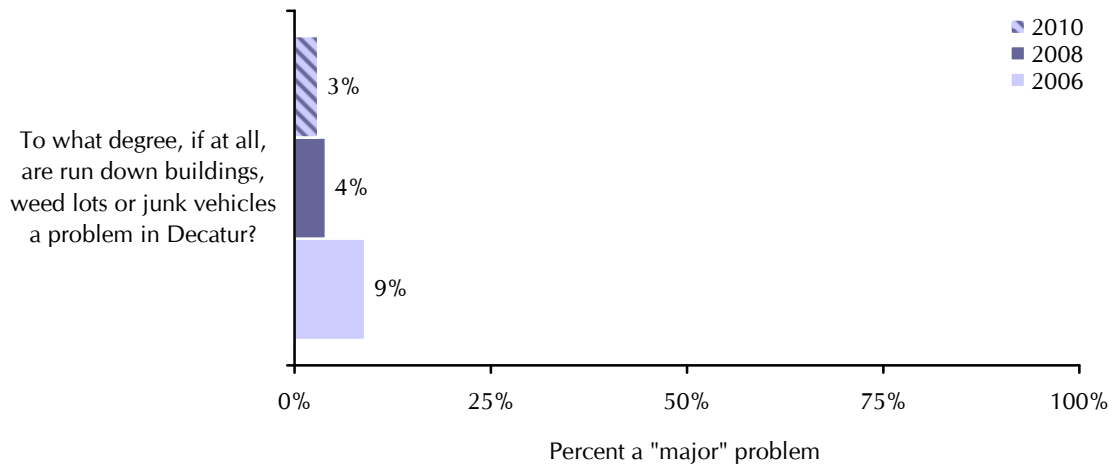


FIGURE 22: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Run down buildings, weed lots and junk vehicles are a "major" problem	Less	Less

FIGURE 23: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

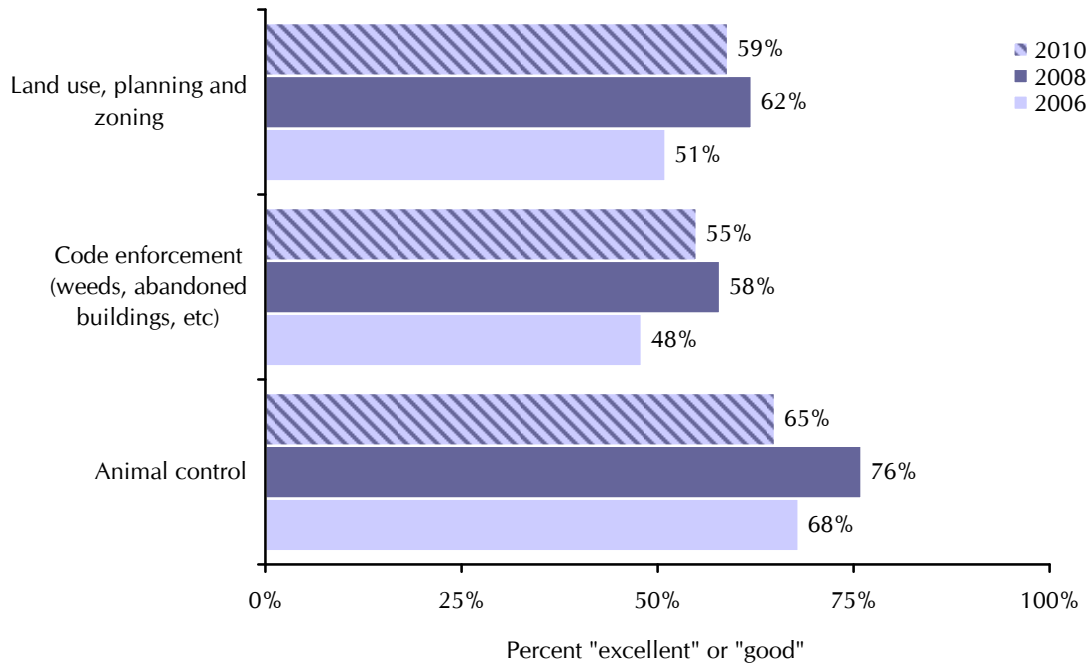


FIGURE 24: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Land use, planning and zoning	Above	Above
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	Above	Above
Animal control	Above	Above

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The health of the economy may color how residents perceive their environment and all the services that local government delivers. In particular, a strong or weak local economy will shape what residents think about job and shopping opportunities. Just as residents have an idea about the speed of local population growth, they have a sense of how fast job and shopping opportunities are growing.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most positively rated features were the overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur and Decatur as a place to work. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities.

FIGURE 25: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

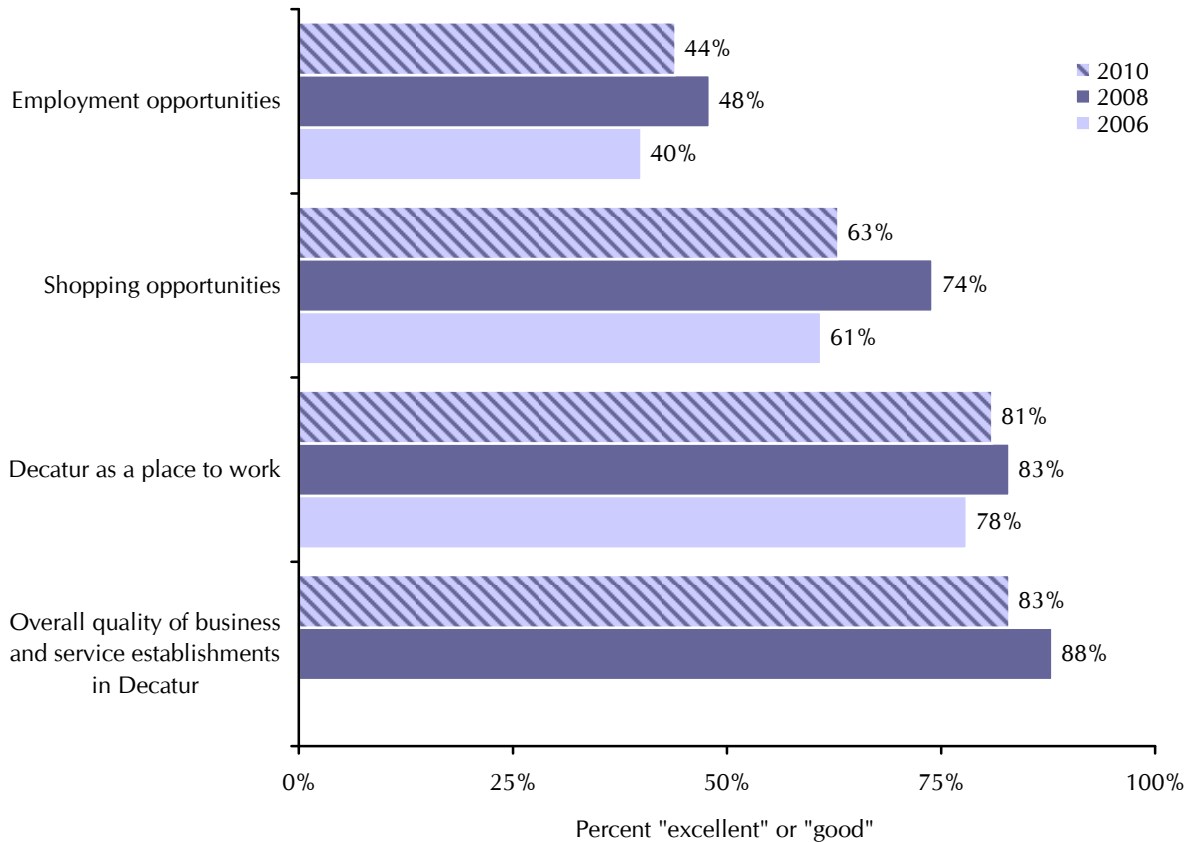


FIGURE 26: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Employment opportunities	Above	Above
Shopping opportunities	Above	Above
Place to work	Above	Above
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	Above	Above

Residents were asked to evaluate the speed of jobs growth and retail growth on a scale from “much too slow” to “much too fast.” When asked about the rate of job growth in Decatur, 78% responded that it was “too slow,” while 34% reported retail growth as “too slow.” Fewer residents in Decatur compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow and more residents believed that job growth was too slow.

FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BY YEAR

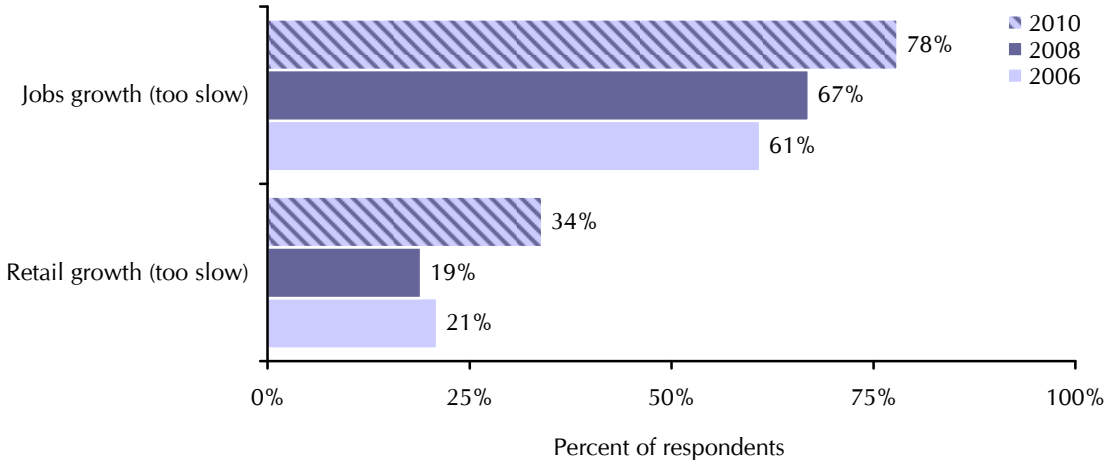


FIGURE 28: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Retail growth seen as too slow	Less	Less
Jobs growth seen as too slow	More	More

FIGURE 29: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

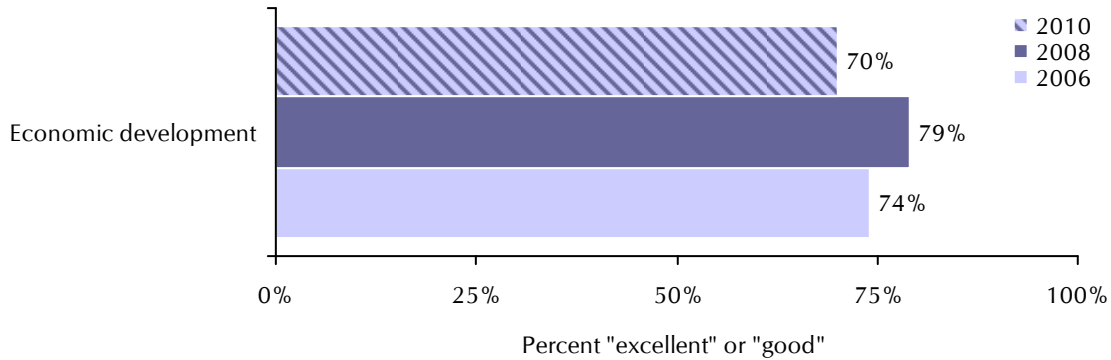


FIGURE 30: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Economic development	Above	Above

Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Fifteen percent of City of Decatur residents expected that the coming six months would have a “somewhat” or “very” positive impact on their family. The percent of residents with an optimistic outlook on their household income was the same as the national comparison and less than the custom comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 31: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BY YEAR

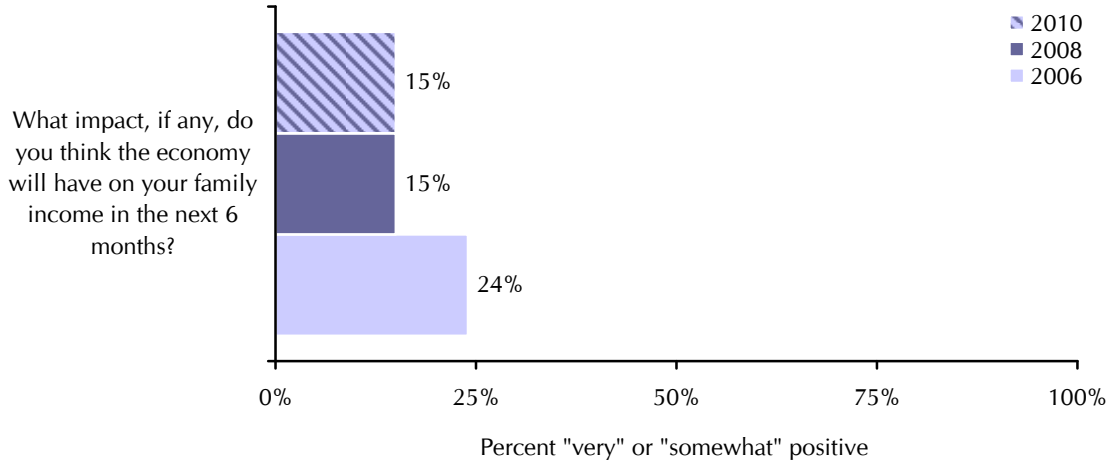


FIGURE 32: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

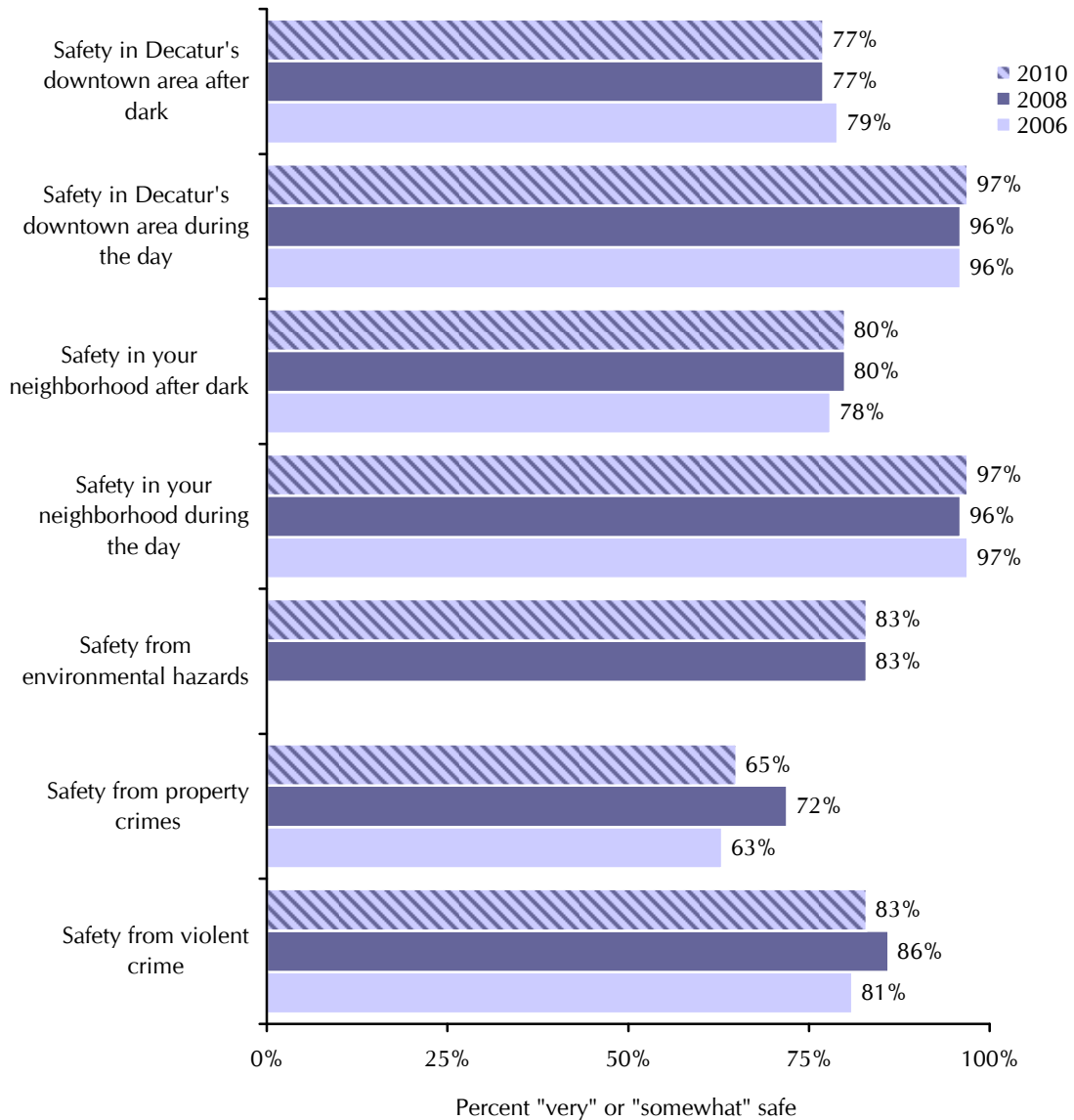
	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Positive impact of economy on household income	Similar	Below

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety from violent or property crimes creates the cornerstone of an attractive community. No one wants to live in fear of crime, fire or natural hazards, and communities in which residents feel protected or unthreatened are communities that are more likely to show growth in population, commerce and property value.

Residents were asked to rate their feelings of safety from violent crimes, property crimes, fire and environmental dangers and to evaluate the local agencies whose main charge is to provide protection from these dangers. Most gave positive ratings of safety in the City Decatur. About 83% percent of those completing the questionnaire said they felt "very" or "somewhat" safe from violent crimes and environmental hazards. Daytime sense of safety was better than nighttime safety.

FIGURE 33: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BY YEAR



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.



FIGURE 34: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	Above	Above
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	Similar	Above
Safety in Decatur's downtown area during the day	Above	Above
Safety in Decatur's downtown area after dark	Above	Above
Safety from violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Above	Above
Safety from property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Above	Above
Toxic waste or other environmental hazard(s)	Above	Above

As assessed by the survey, 13% of respondents reported that someone in the household had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 87% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions about the same percent of Decatur residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and more Decatur residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police.

FIGURE 35: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BY YEAR

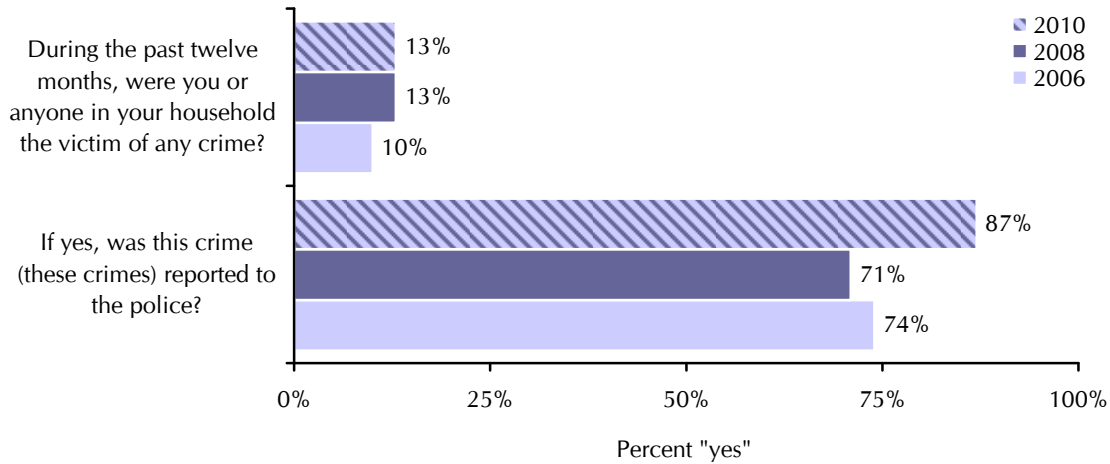


FIGURE 36: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Victim of crime	Similar	Similar
Reported crimes	More	More

Residents rated seven City public safety services; of these, all seven were rated above both the national and custom benchmark comparison. Fire and police services received the highest ratings, while municipal courts and traffic enforcement received the lowest ratings.

FIGURE 37: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BY YEAR

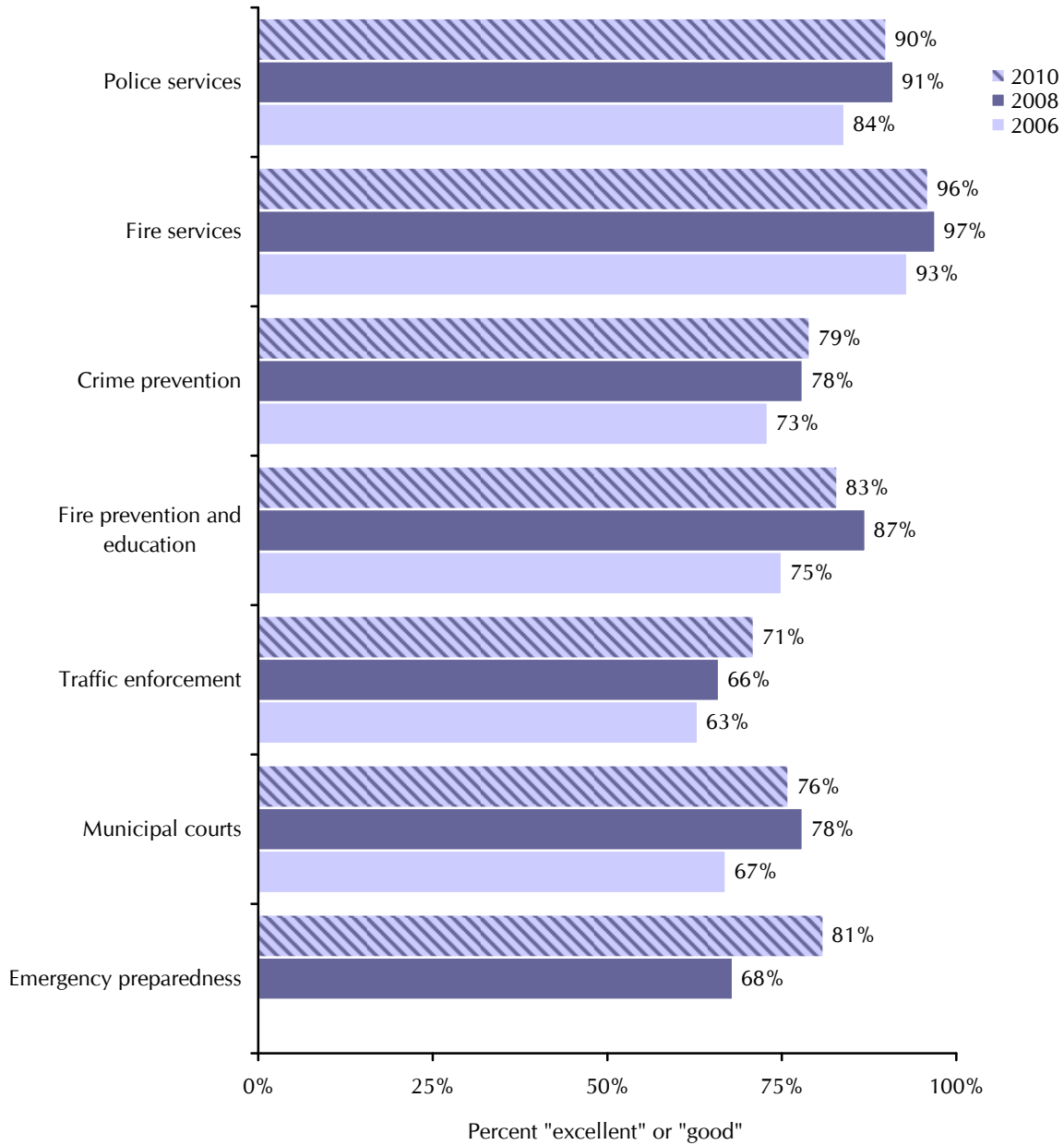


FIGURE 38: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Police services	Above	Above
Fire services	Above	Above
Crime prevention	Above	Above
Fire prevention and education	Above	Above
Traffic enforcement	Above	Above
Courts	Above	Above
Emergency preparedness	Above	Above

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Residents value the aesthetic qualities of their hometowns and appreciate features such as overall cleanliness and landscaping. In addition, the appearance and smell or taste of the air and water do not go unnoticed. These days, increasing attention is paid to proper treatment of the environment. At the same time that they are attending to community appearance and cleanliness, cities, counties, states and the nation are going “Green”. These strengthening environmental concerns extend to trash haul, recycling, sewer services, the delivery of power and water and preservation of open spaces. Treatment of the environment affects air and water quality and, generally, how habitable and inviting a place appears.

Residents of the City of Decatur were asked to evaluate their local environment and the services provided to ensure its quality. The overall quality of the natural environment was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 76% of survey respondents. Cleanliness of Decatur received the highest rating, and it was above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 39: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BY YEAR

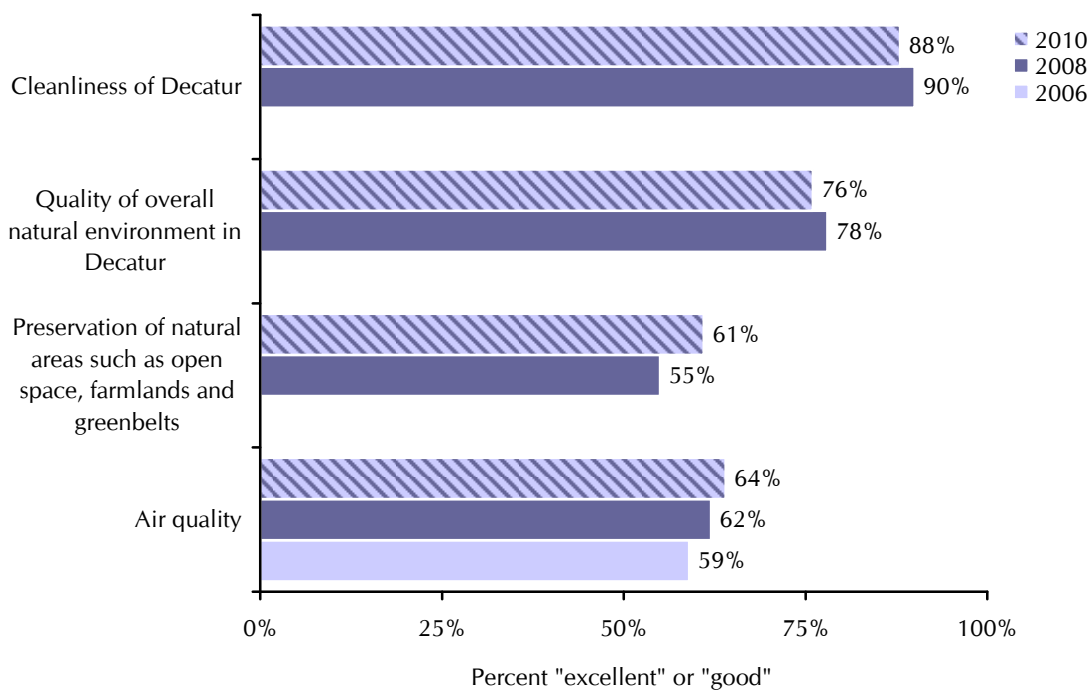


FIGURE 40: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Cleanliness of Decatur	Above	Above
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	Similar	Similar
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	Above	Similar
Air quality	Below	Above

Resident recycling was greater than recycling reported in comparison communities.

FIGURE 41: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS

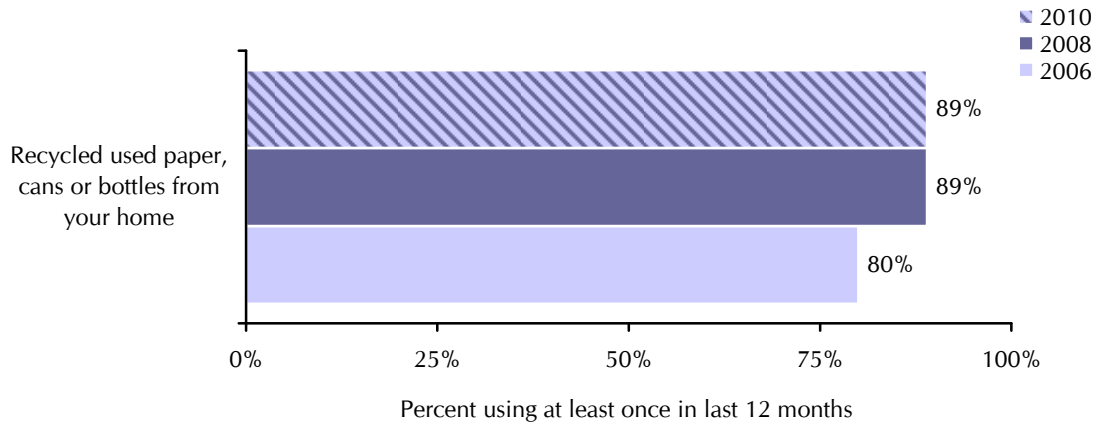


FIGURE 42: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	More	More

Of the four utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire, three were higher than the benchmark comparisons. Storm drainage was similar to the national benchmark and higher than the custom benchmark.

FIGURE 43: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES BY YEAR

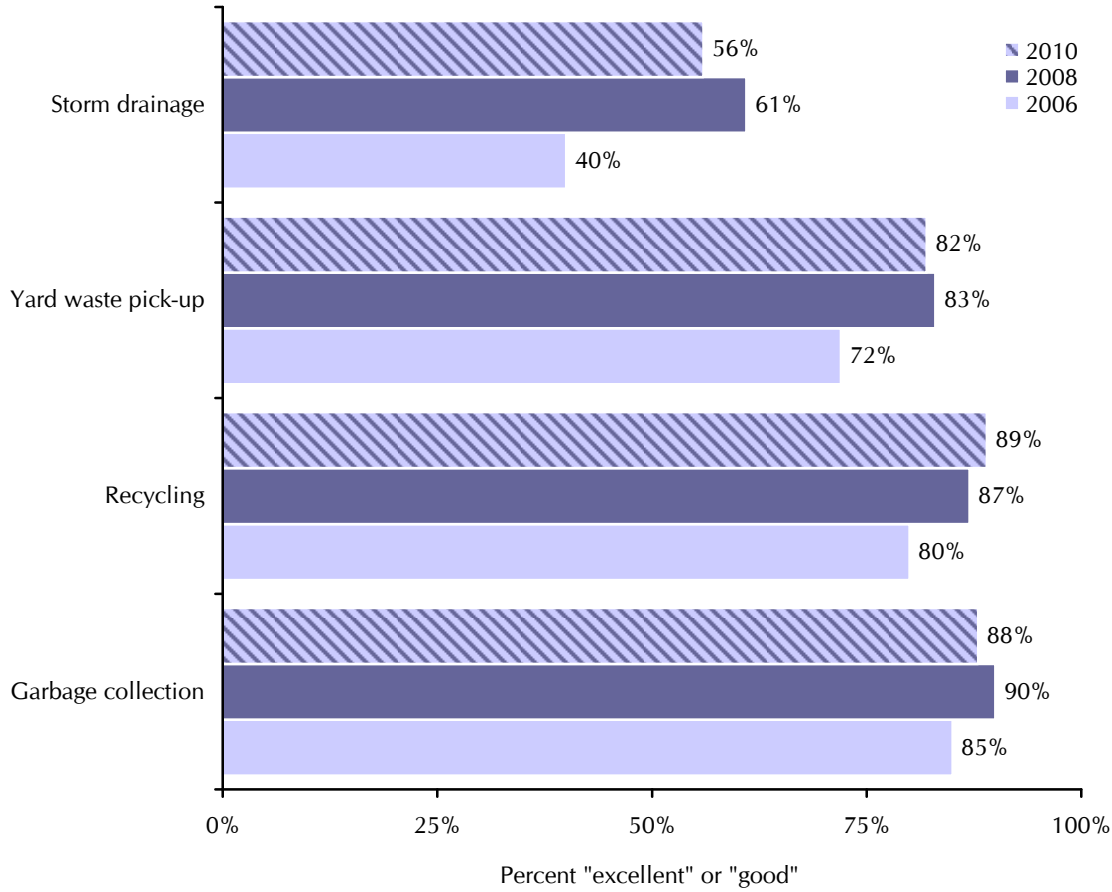


FIGURE 44: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Storm drainage	Similar	Above
Yard waste pick-up	Above	Above
Recycling	Above	Above
Garbage collection	Above	Above

## RECREATION AND WELLNESS

### Parks and Recreation

Quality parks and recreation opportunities help to define a community as more than the grind of its business, traffic and hard work. Leisure activities can vastly improve the quality of life of residents, serving both to entertain and mobilize good health. The survey contained questions seeking residents' perspectives about opportunities and services related to the community's parks and recreation services.

Recreation opportunities in the City of Decatur were rated positively as were services related to parks and recreation. City parks and recreation programs or classes were rated higher than the benchmarks. Recreation centers and facilities received the lowest rating and was similar to the national benchmark.

Resident use of Decatur parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. The percent of residents that used Decatur recreation centers was smaller than the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions. Recreation program use in Decatur was about the same as use in national comparison jurisdictions and higher than in custom comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 45: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

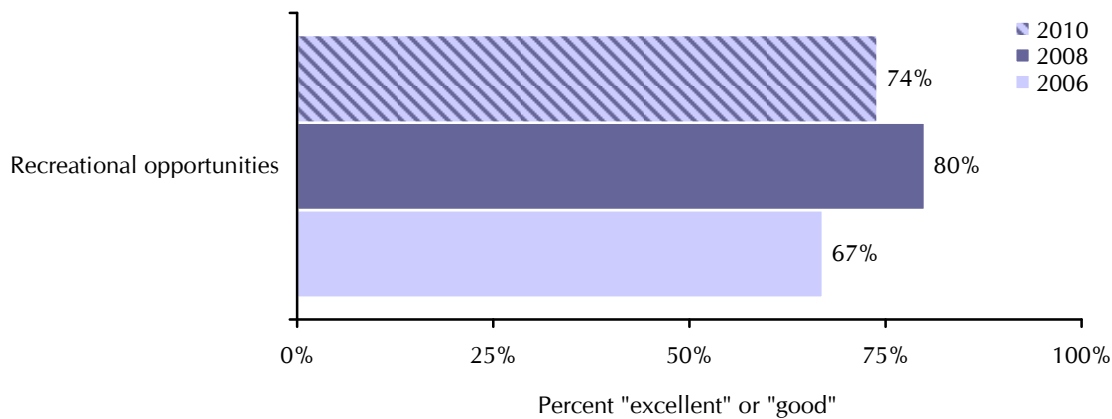


FIGURE 46: COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Recreation opportunities	Above	Above



FIGURE 47: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

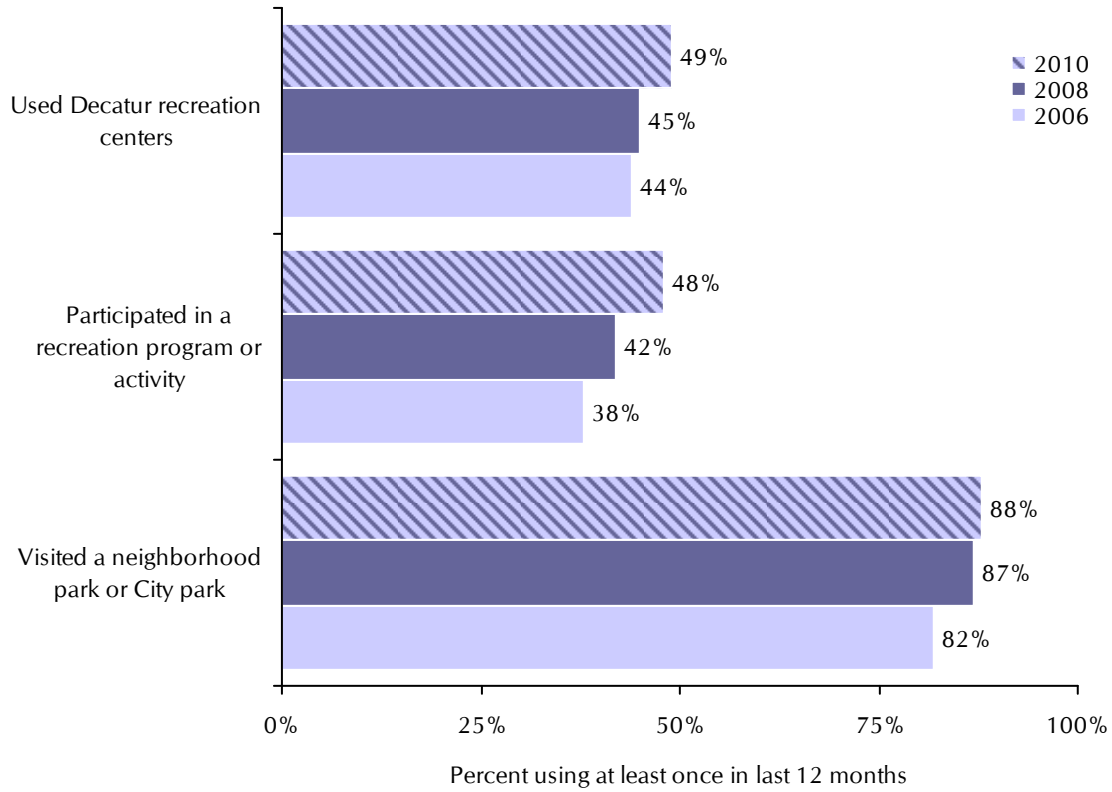


FIGURE 48: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Used Decatur recreation centers	Less	Less
Participated in a recreation program or activity	Similar	More
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	Similar	More

FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BY YEAR

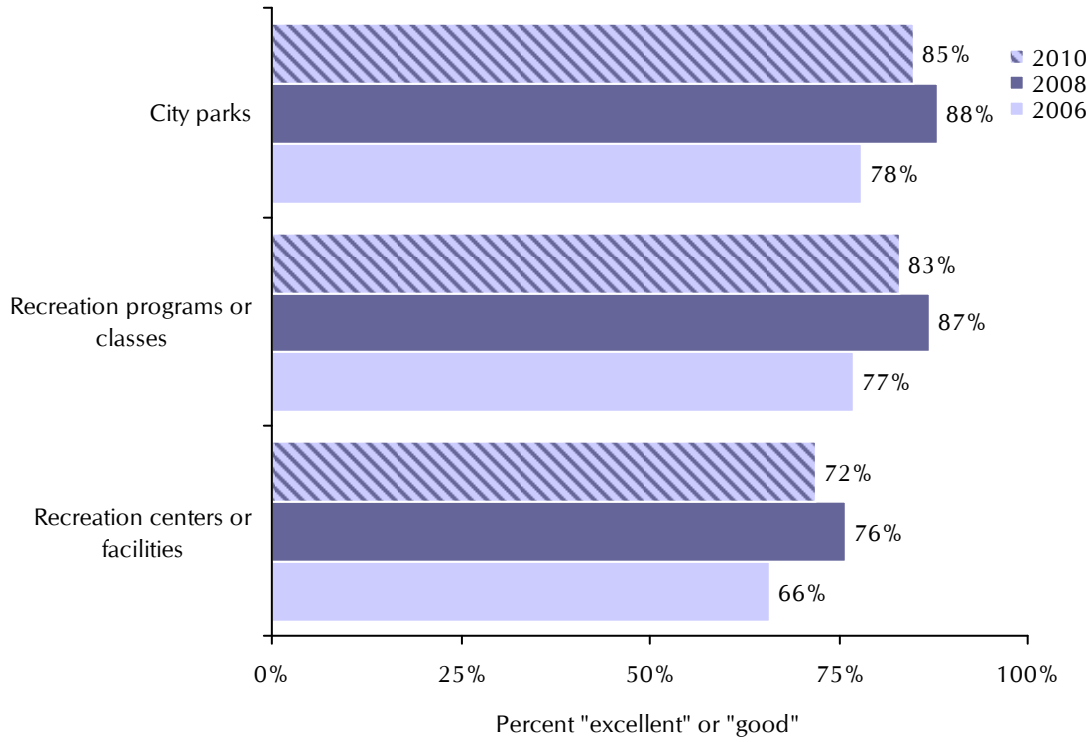


FIGURE 50: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
City parks	Above	Above
Recreation programs or classes	Above	Above
Recreation centers or facilities	Similar	Similar

## Culture, Arts and Education

A full service community does not address only the life and safety of its residents. Like an individual who simply goes to the office and returns home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring to business and individuals. In the case of communities without thriving culture, arts and education opportunities, the magnet that attracts those who might consider relocating there is vastly weakened. Cultural, artistic, social and educational services elevate the opportunities for personal growth among residents. In the survey, residents were asked about the quality of opportunities to participate in cultural and educational activities.

Opportunities to attend cultural activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 77% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 82% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were above the average of comparison jurisdictions, as were cultural activity opportunities.

About 75% of Decatur residents used the library in the City at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This participation rate for library use was above comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 51: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

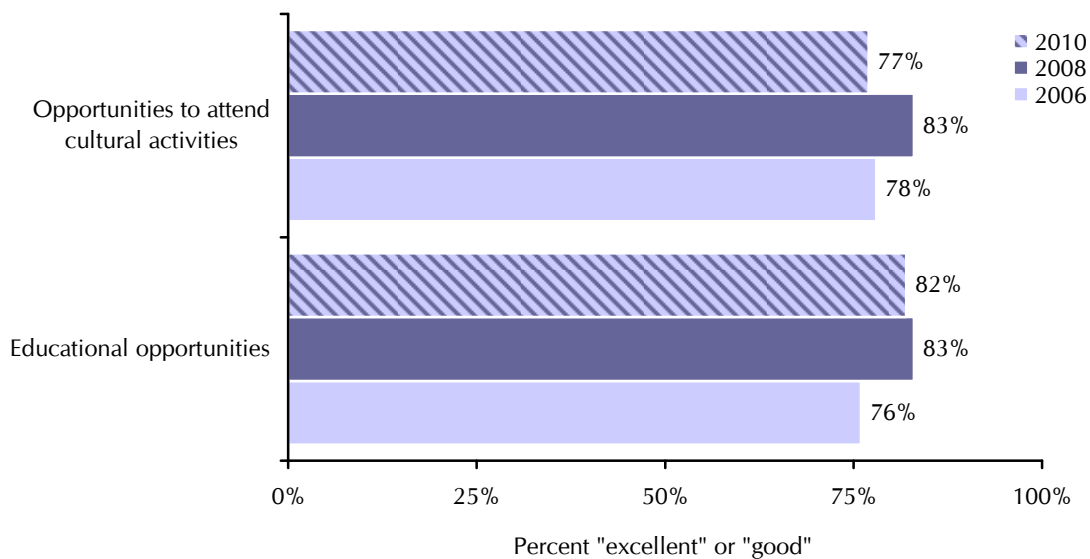


FIGURE 52: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	Above	Above
Educational opportunities	Above	Above

FIGURE 53: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

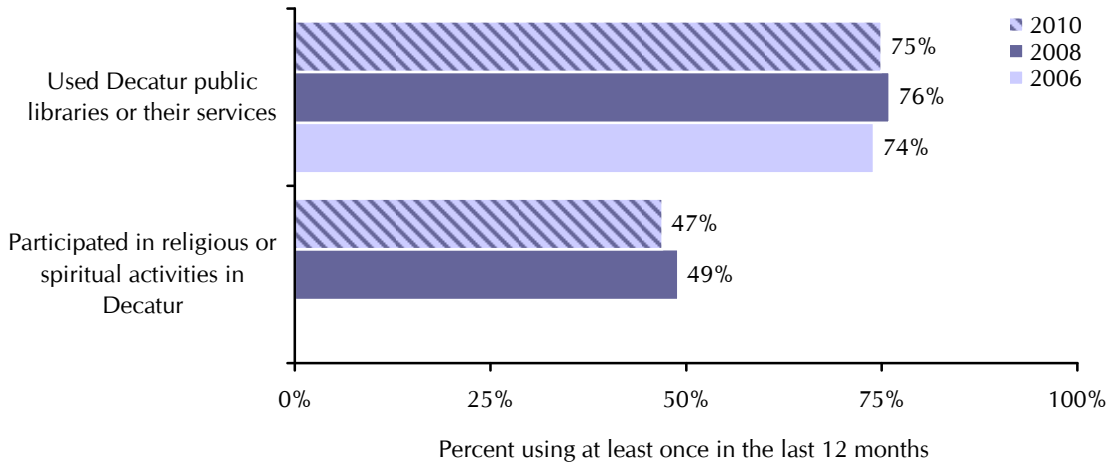


FIGURE 54: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Used Decatur public libraries or their services	More	More
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	Less	Less

FIGURE 55: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BY YEAR

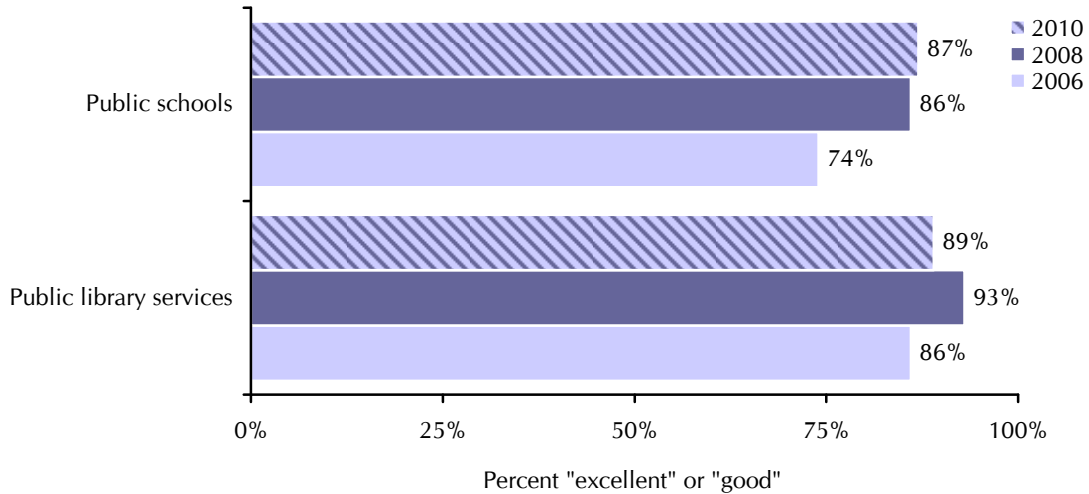


FIGURE 56: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Public schools	Above	Above
Public library services	Above	Above

## Health and Wellness

Healthy residents have the wherewithal to contribute to the economy as volunteers or employees and they do not present a burden in cost and time to others. Although residents bear the primary responsibility for their good health, local government provides services that can foster well being and that provide care when residents are ill.

Residents of the City of Decatur were asked to rate the community’s health services as well as the availability of health care, high quality affordable food and preventive health care services. The availability of affordable quality food was rated most positively for the City of Decatur, while the availability for affordable quality health care and preventive health services were rated less favorably by residents.

Among Decatur residents, 68% rated affordable quality health care as “excellent” or “good.” Those ratings were above the ratings of comparison communities.

FIGURE 57: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

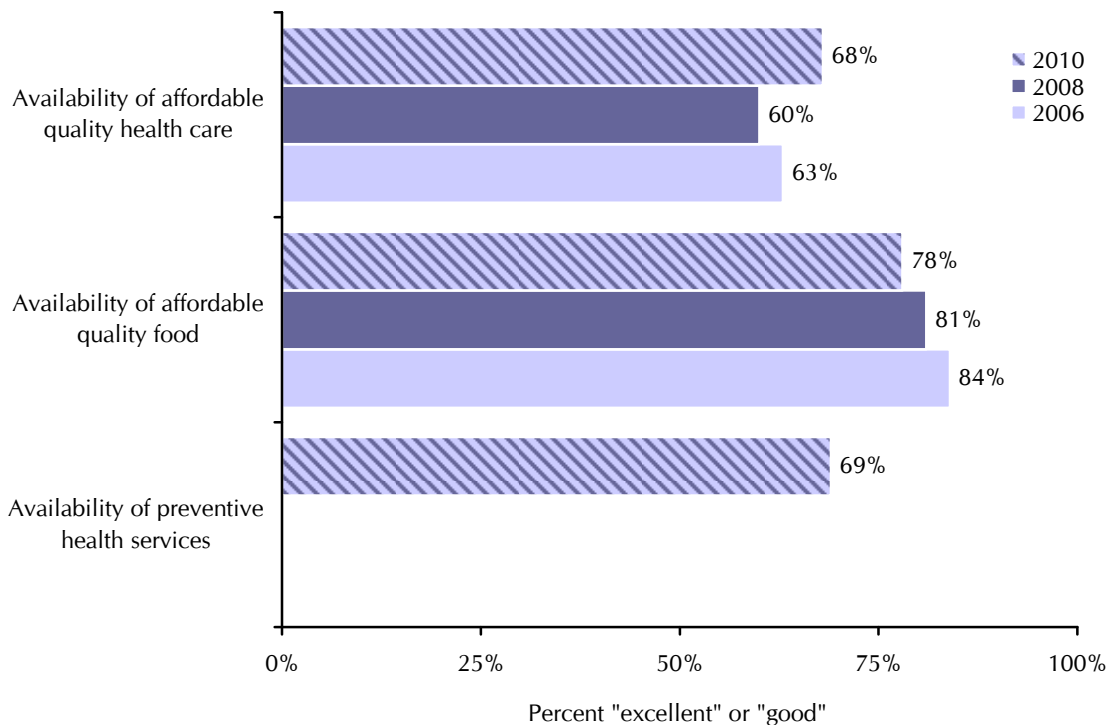


FIGURE 58: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Availability of affordable quality health care	Above	Above
Availability of affordable quality food	Above	Above
Availability of preventive health services	Above	Above

Health services offered in the City of Decatur were rated “excellent” or “good” by 76% of respondents and were above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 59: RATINGS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BY YEAR

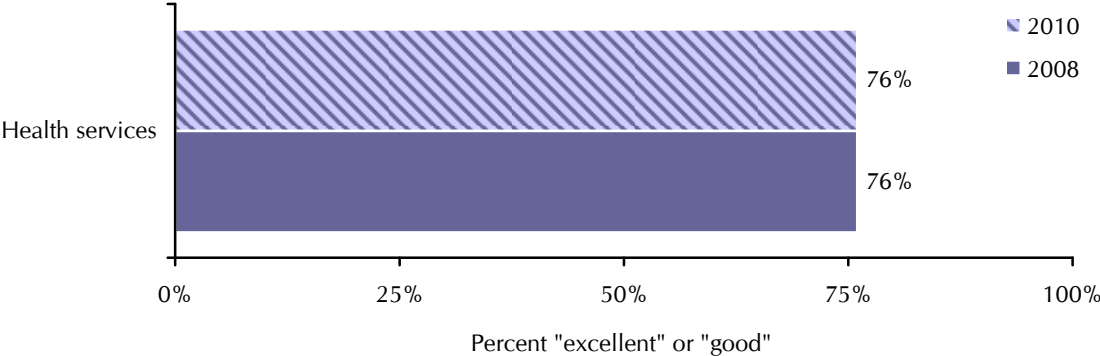


FIGURE 60: HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Health services	Above	Above

## COMMUNITY INCLUSIVENESS

Diverse communities that include among their residents a mix of races, ages, wealth, ideas and beliefs have the raw material for the most vibrant and creative society. However, the presence of these features alone does not ensure a high quality or desirable space. Surveyed residents were asked about the success of the mix: the sense of community, the openness of residents to people of diverse backgrounds and the attractiveness of the City of Decatur as a place to raise children or to retire. They were also questioned about the quality of services delivered to various population subgroups, including older adults, youth and residents with few resources. A community that succeeds in creating an inclusive environment for a variety of residents is a community that offers more to many.

A high percentage of residents rated the City of Decatur as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and a high percentage rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Most residents felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.” Additionally, most survey respondents felt the City of Decatur was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. Availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents but was higher than the benchmarks.

FIGURE 61: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BY YEAR

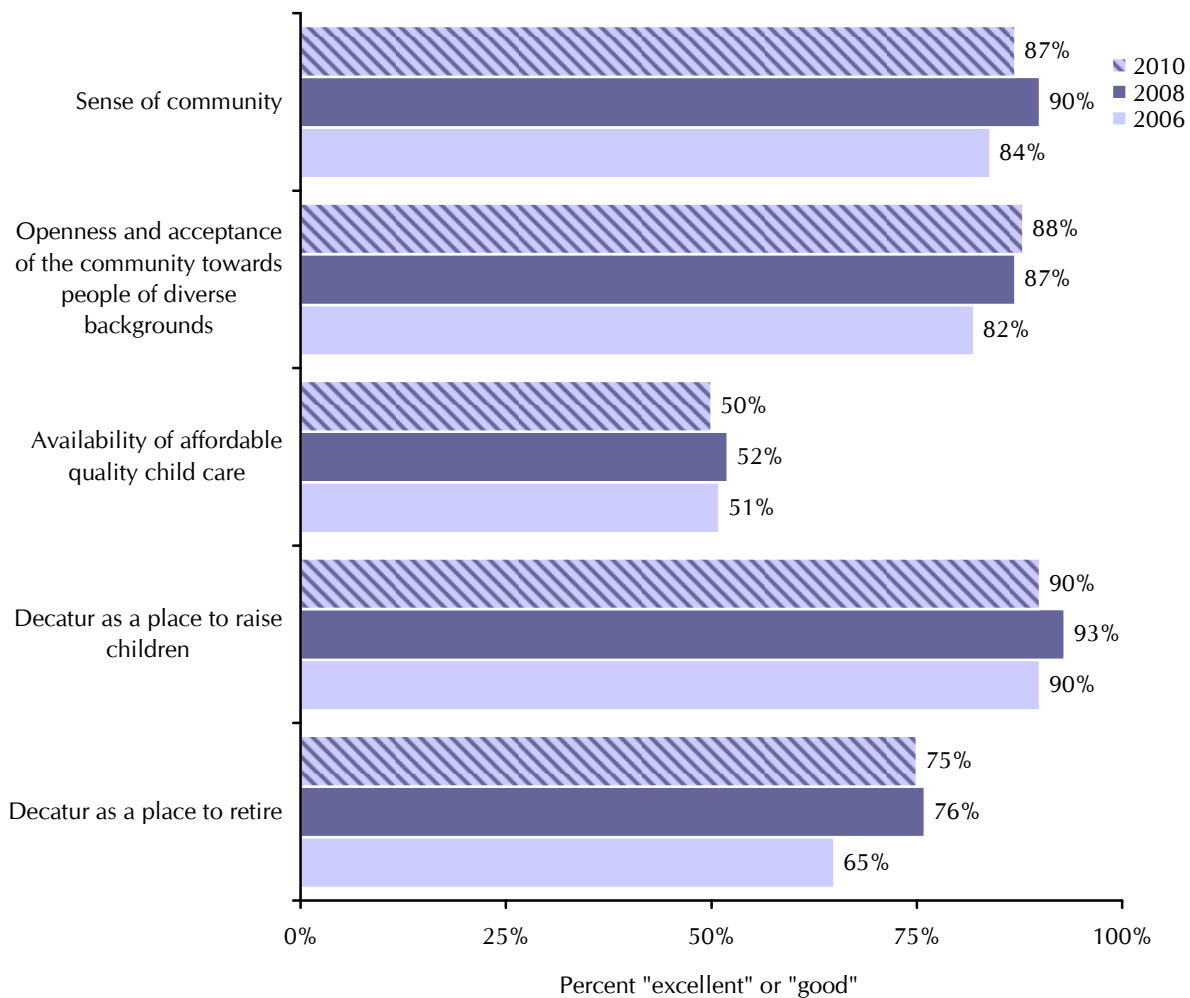


FIGURE 62: COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Sense of community	Above	Above
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	Above	Above
Availability of affordable quality child care	Above	Above
Decatur as a place to raise kids	Above	Above
Decatur as a place to retire	Above	Above



Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 58% to 80% with ratings of “excellent” or “good.” Services to seniors, youth and low-income people were above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 63: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BY YEAR

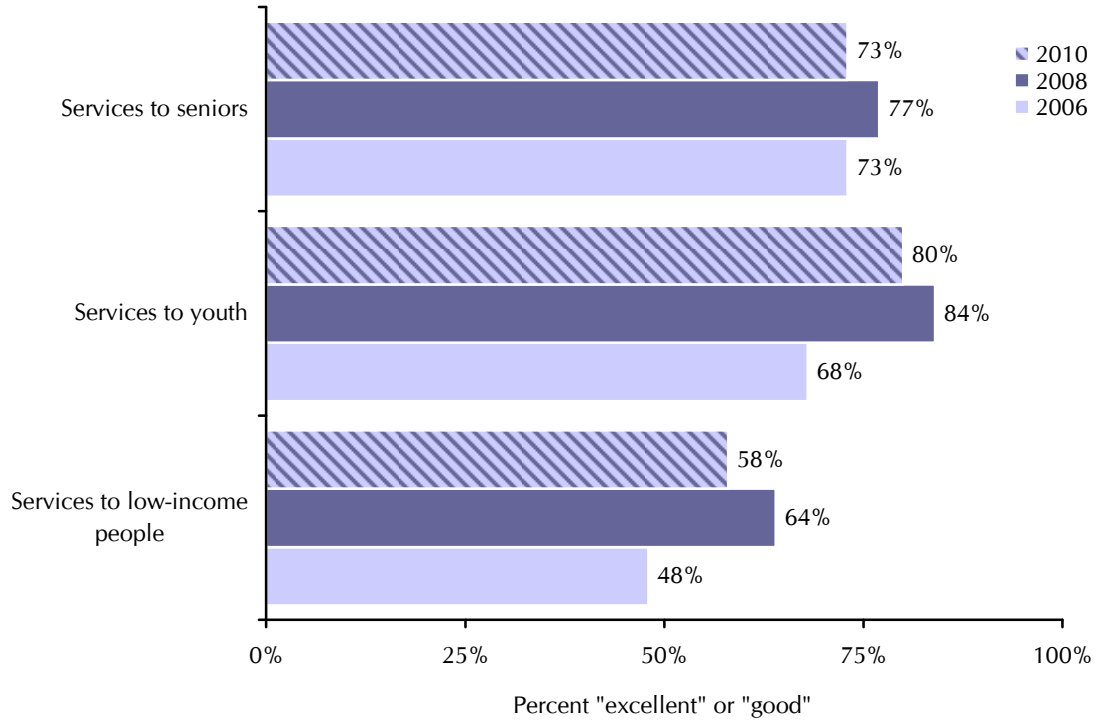


FIGURE 64: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Services to seniors	Above	Above
Services to youth	Above	Above
Services to low income residents	Above	Above

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Government leaders, elected or hired, cannot run a jurisdiction alone and a jurisdiction cannot run effectively if residents remain strangers with little to connect them. Elected officials and staff require the assistance of local residents whether that assistance comes in tacit approval or eager help; and commonality of purpose among the electorate facilitates policies and programs that appeal to most and causes discord among few. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and participation in local government, the City can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. Communities with strong civic engagement may be more likely to see the benefits of programs intended to improve the quality of life of all residents and therefore would be more likely to support those new policies or programs.

### Civic Activity

Respondents were asked about the perceived community volunteering opportunities and their participation as citizens of the City of Decatur. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the City of Decatur favorably. Opportunities to attend or participate in community matters were rated less favorably.

Ratings of civic engagement opportunities were above ratings from comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

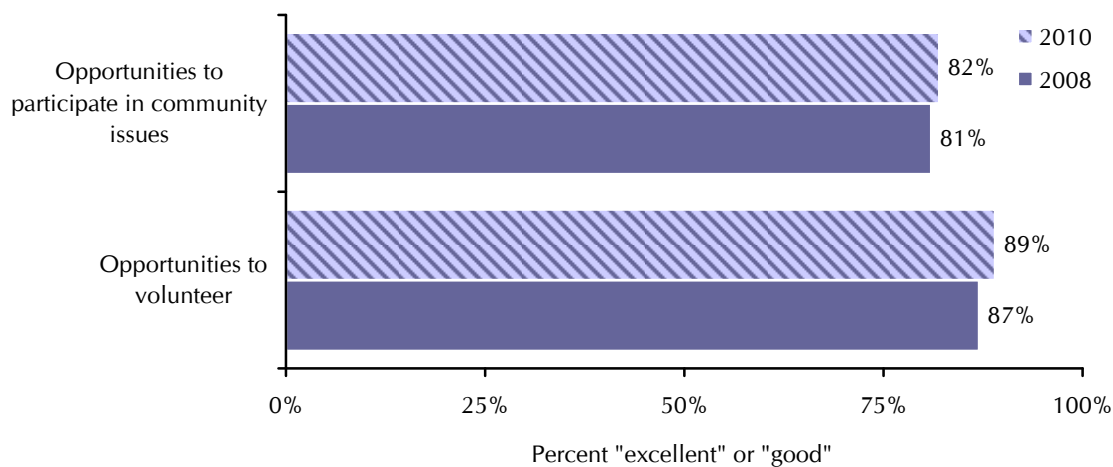


FIGURE 66: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Opportunities to participate in community issues	Above	Above
Opportunities to volunteer	Above	Above

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend or neighbor. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions. Those who had participated in a club or civic group in Decatur or provided help to a friend or neighbor showed similar rates of involvement, while volunteering and attending of a meeting or local elected official or other local public meeting showed higher rates. Those who had watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television showed lower rates of community engagement.

FIGURE 67: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

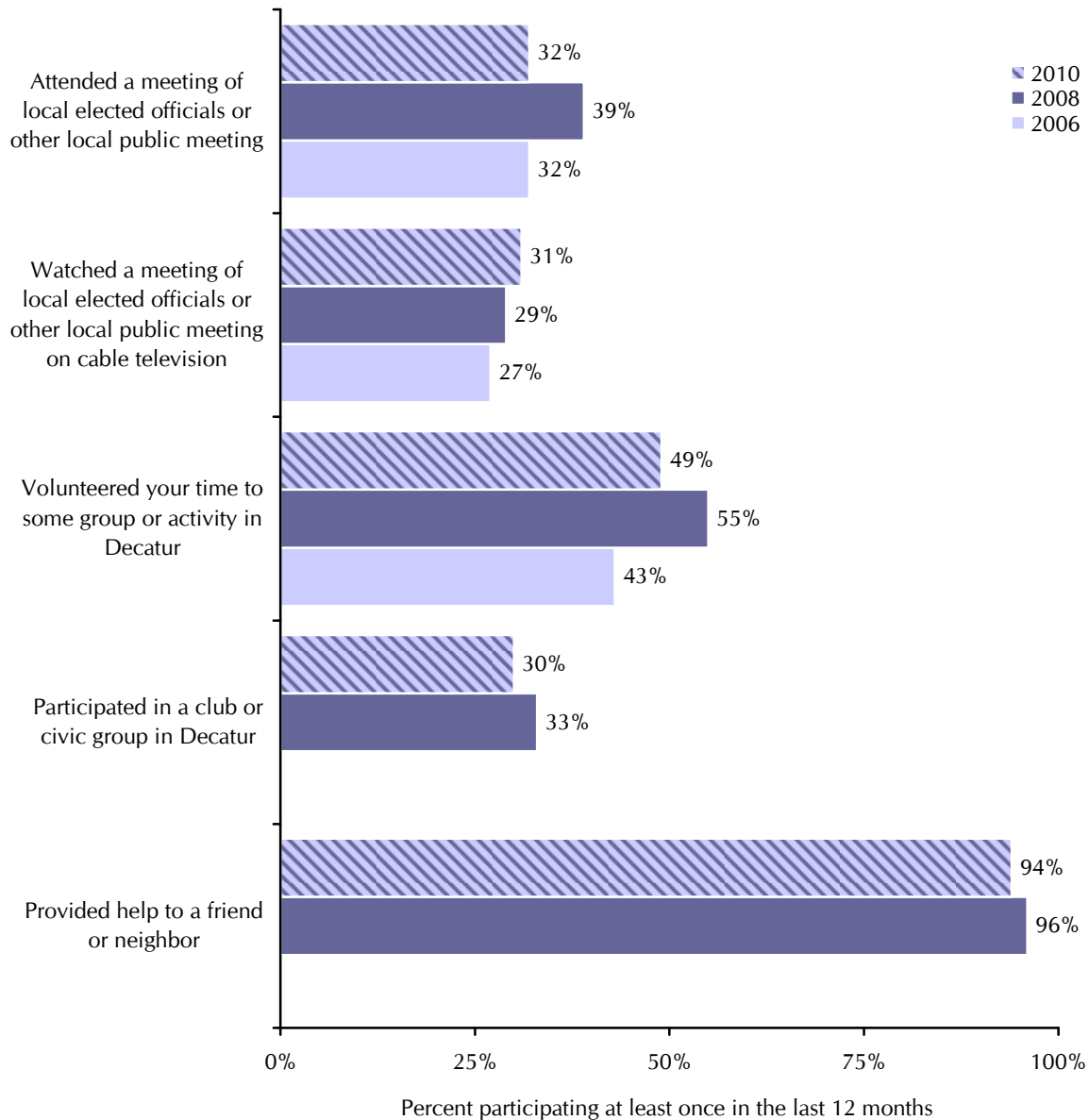
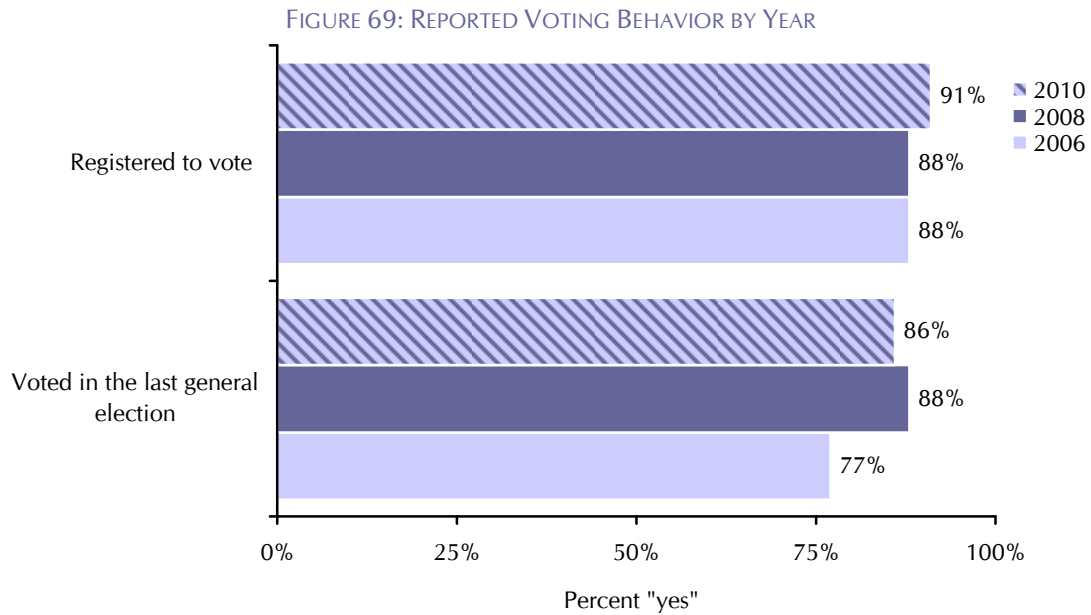


FIGURE 68: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	More	More
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	Less	Less
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	More	More
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	Similar	Similar
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	Similar	Similar

City of Decatur residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Ninety-one percent reported they were registered to vote and 86% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was higher than that of comparison communities.



Note: In addition to the removal of “don’t know” responses, those who said “ineligible to vote” also have been omitted from this calculation. The full frequencies appear in Appendix A.

FIGURE 70: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Registered to vote	More	More
Voted in last general election	More	More

## Information and Awareness

Those completing the survey were asked about their use and perceptions of various information sources and local government media services. When asked whether they had visited the City of Decatur Web site in the previous 12 months, 79% reported they had done so at least once. Public information services were rated favorably compared to benchmark data.

FIGURE 71: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY YEAR

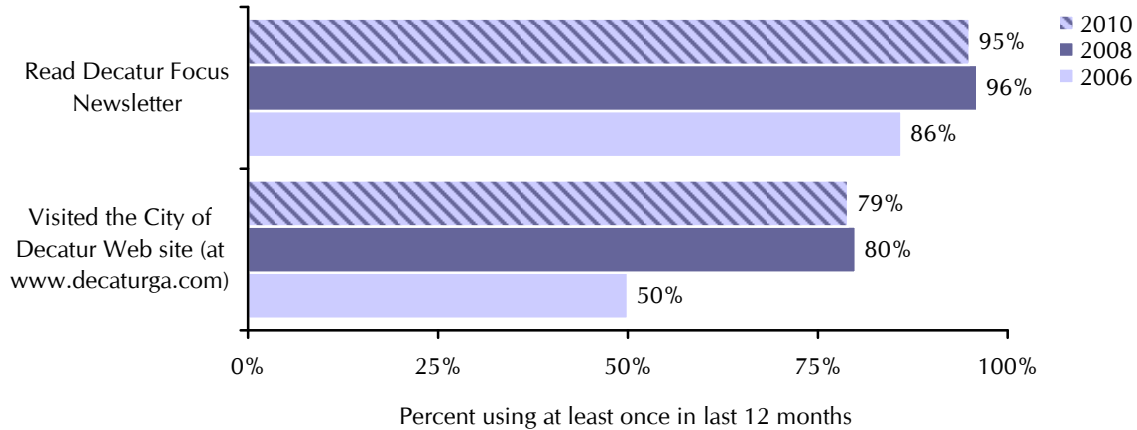


FIGURE 72: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Read Decatur Newsletter	More	More
Visited the City of Decatur Web site	More	More

FIGURE 73: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY YEAR

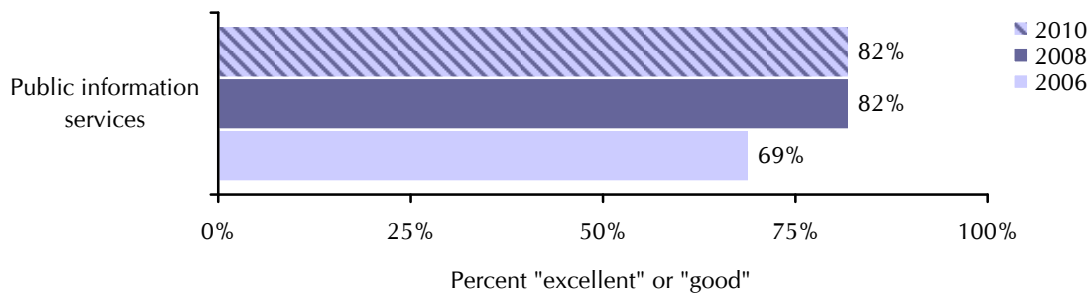


FIGURE 74: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Public information services	Above	Above

## Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 85% of respondents, while a similar proportion rated opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities as “excellent” or “good.”

FIGURE 75: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

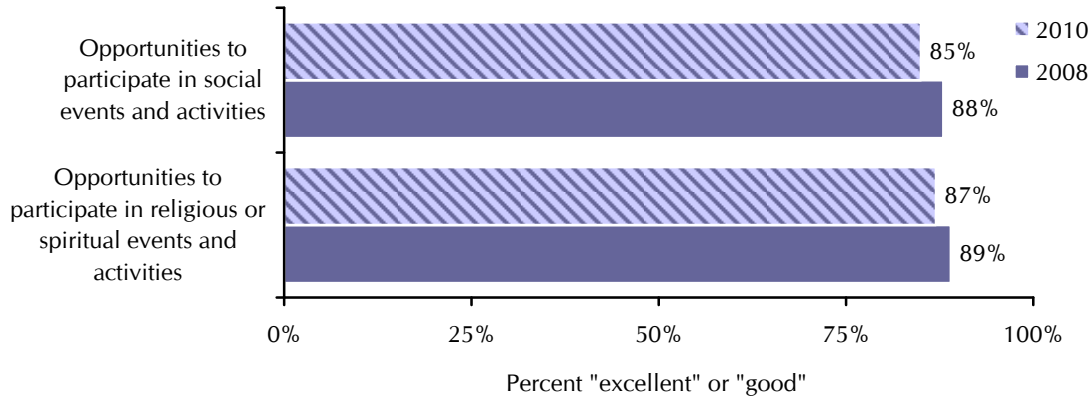


FIGURE 76: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	Above	Above
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events	Above	Above

Residents in Decatur reported a strong amount of neighborliness. More than 84% indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors once a month or more frequently. This amount of contact with neighbors was more than the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 77: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS

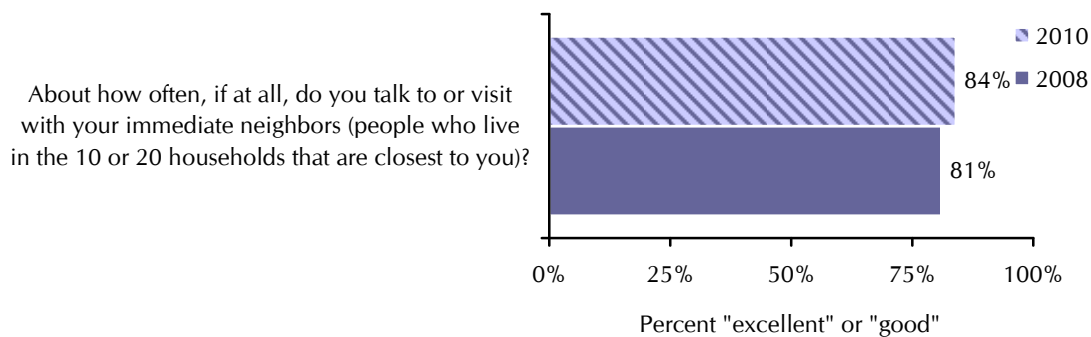


FIGURE 78: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

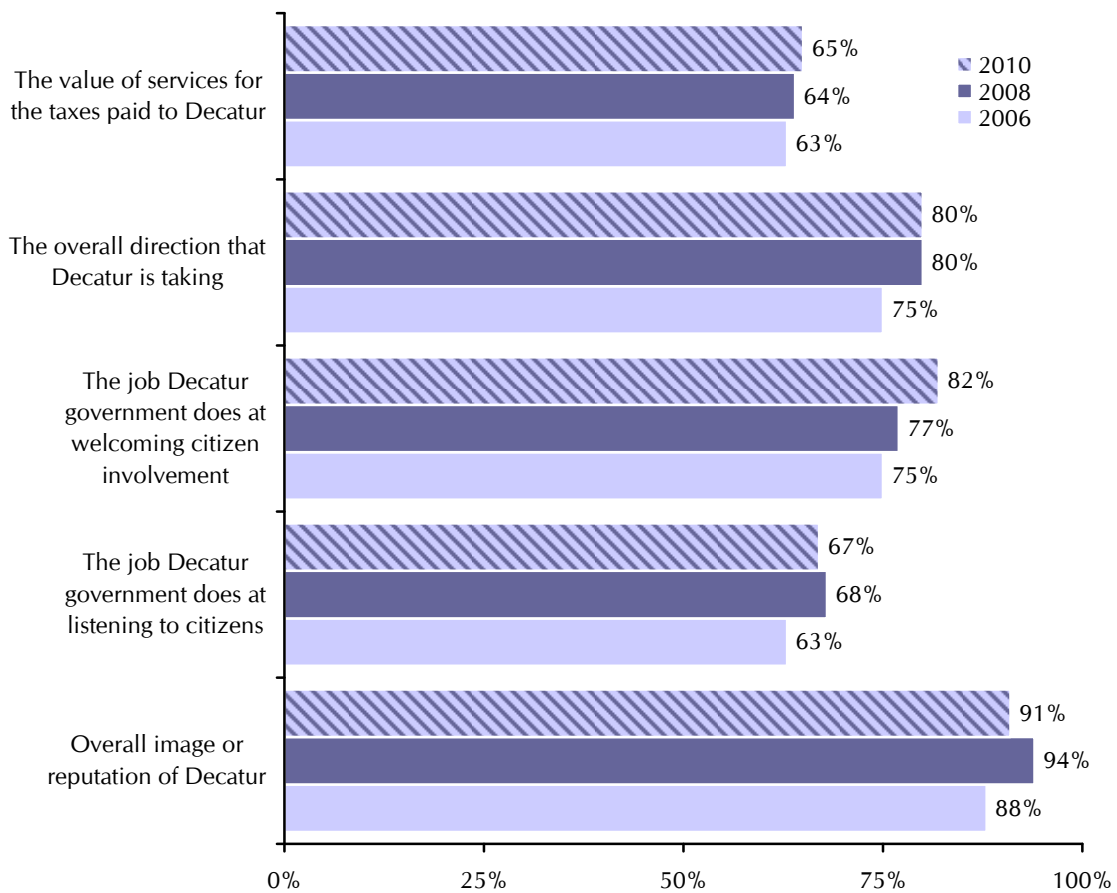
	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Has contact with neighbors at least once per month	More	More

## PUBLIC TRUST

When local government leaders are trusted, an environment of cooperation is more likely to surround all decisions they make. Cooperation leads to easier communication between leaders and residents and increases the likelihood that high value policies and programs will be implemented to improve the quality of life of the entire community. Trust can be measured in residents' opinions about the overall direction the City of Decatur is taking, their perspectives about the service value their taxes purchase and the openness of government to citizen participation. In addition, resident opinion about services provided by the City of Decatur could be compared to their opinion about services provided by the state and federal governments. If residents find nothing to admire in the services delivered by any level of government, their opinions about the City of Decatur may be colored by their dislike of what all levels of government provide.

A majority of respondents felt that the value of services for taxes paid was "excellent" or "good." When asked to rate the job the City of Decatur does at listening to citizens, 67% rated it as "excellent" or "good." Of these five ratings, all five were above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 79: PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS BY YEAR



Note: In 2006, these questions were asked on an "agree/disagree" scale.

Percent "excellent" or "good"



FIGURE 80: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Value of services for the taxes paid to Decatur	Above	Above
The overall direction that Decatur is taking	Above	Above
Job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement	Above	Above
Job Decatur government does at listening to citizens	Above	Above
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	Above	Above

On average, residents of the City of Decatur gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to state government. The overall quality of services delivered by the City of Decatur was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 89% of survey participants. The City of Decatur’s rating was above the benchmarks when compared to other communities.

FIGURE 81: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BY YEAR

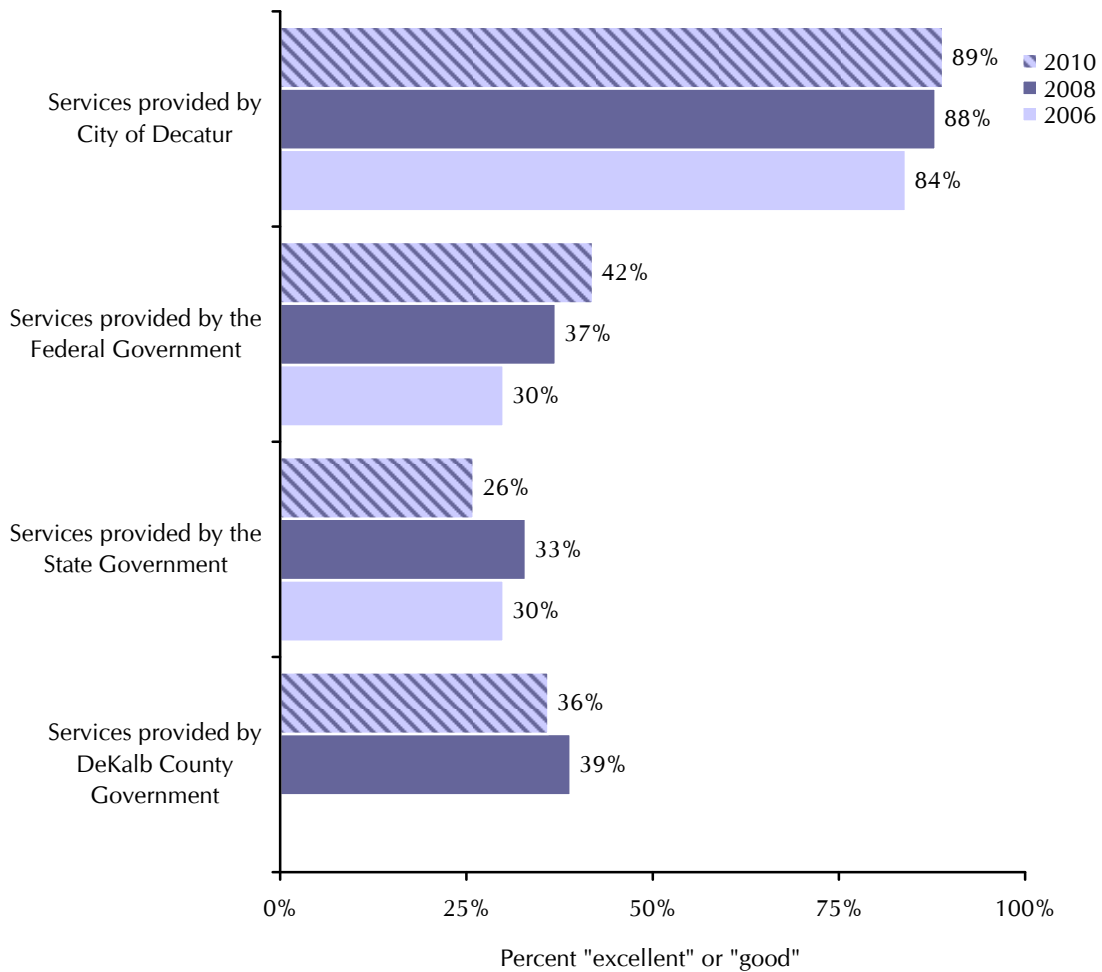


FIGURE 82: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Services provided by the City of Decatur	Above	Above
Services provided by the Federal Government	Similar	Similar
Services provided by the State Government	Below	Below
Services provided by DeKalb County Government	Below	Below

## City of Decatur Employees

The employees of the City of Decatur who interact with the public create the first impression that most residents have of the City of Decatur. Front line staff who provide information, assist with bill paying, collect trash, create service schedules, fight fires and crime and even give traffic tickets are the collective face of the City of Decatur. As such, it is important to know about residents' experience talking with that "face." When employees appear to be knowledgeable, responsive and courteous, residents are more likely to feel that any needs or problems may be solved through positive and productive interactions with the City of Decatur staff.

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a City employee either in-person or over the phone in the last 12 months; the 57% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is similar to the benchmark comparison) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. City employees were rated highly; 78% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good." Employee ratings were higher than the benchmarks and were similar to past survey years.

FIGURE 83: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

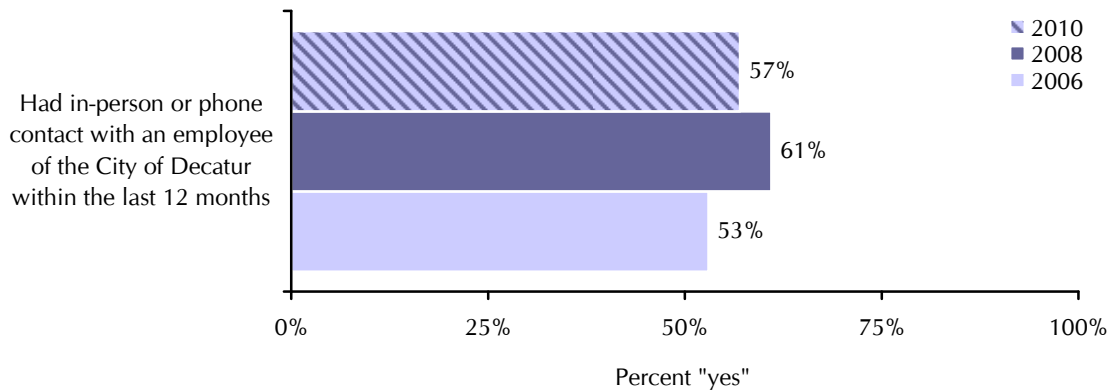


FIGURE 84: CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Had contact with City employee(s) in last 12 months	Similar	Similar

FIGURE 85: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BY YEAR

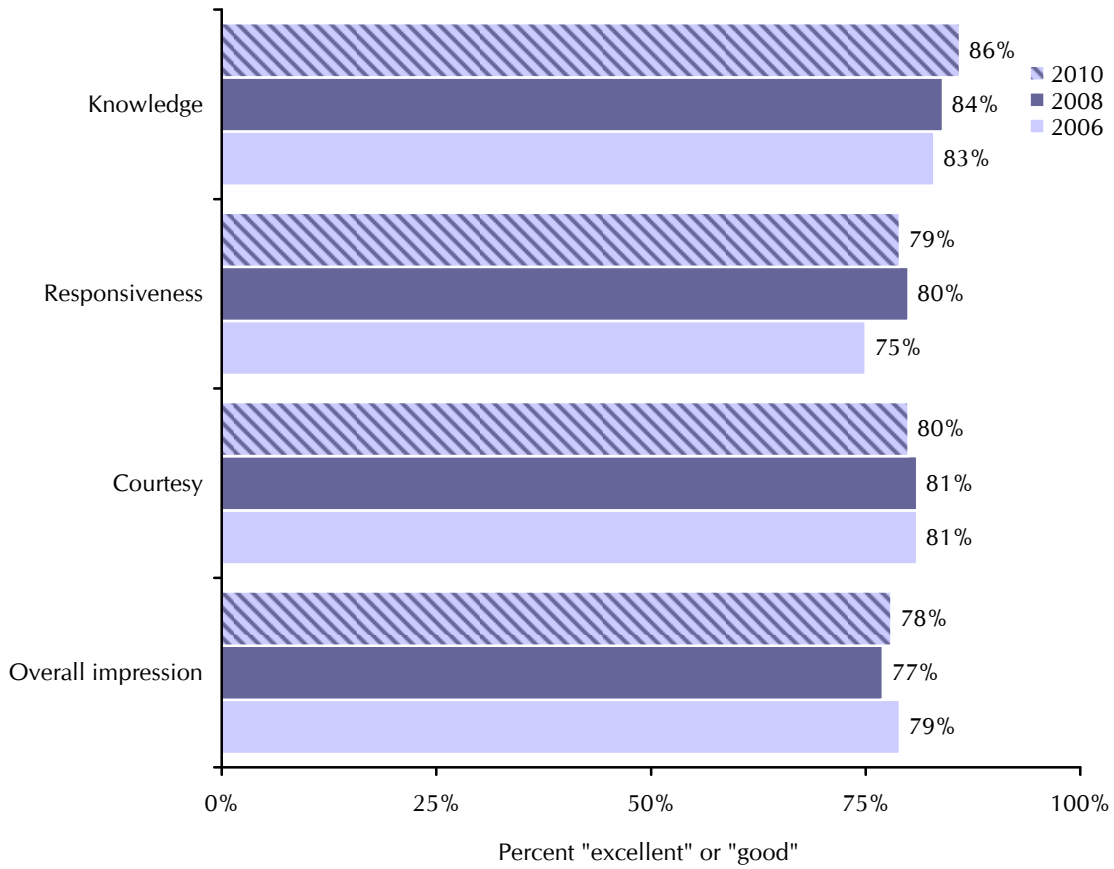


FIGURE 86: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region comparison
City employee knowledge	Above	Above
City employee responsiveness	Above	Above
City employee courteousness	Above	Above
Overall impression	Above	Above

## FROM DATA TO ACTION

### RESIDENT PRIORITIES

Knowing where to focus limited resources to improve residents' opinions of local government requires information that targets the services that are most important to residents. However, when residents are asked what services are most important, they rarely stray beyond core services – those directed to save lives and improve safety.

In market research, identifying the most important characteristics of a transaction or product is called Key Driver Analysis. The key drivers that are identified from that analysis do not come from asking customers to self-report which service or product characteristic most influenced their decision to buy or return, but rather from statistical analyses of the predictors of their behavior. When customers are asked to name the most important characteristics of a good or service, responses often are expected or misleading – just as they can be in the context of a citizen survey. For example, air travelers often claim that safety is the primary consideration in their choice of an airline, yet key driver analysis reveals that frequent flier perks or in-flight entertainment predicts their buying decisions.

In local government core services – like fire protection – invariably land at the top of the list created when residents are asked about the most important local government services. And core services are important. But by using Key Driver Analysis, our approach digs deeper to identify the less obvious, but more influential services that are most related to residents' ratings of overall quality of local government services. Because services focused directly on life and safety remain essential to quality government, it is suggested that core services should remain the focus of continuous monitoring and improvement where necessary – but monitoring core services or asking residents to identify important services is not enough.

A Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was conducted for the City of Decatur by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Decatur's overall services. Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Decatur can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality.

Services found to be most strongly correlated with ratings of overall service quality from the Decatur Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Public information services
- Economic development

## CITY OF DECATUR ACTION CHART

The 2010 City of Decatur Action Chart™ on the following page combines three dimensions of performance:

- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon (🔑) next to a service box indicates that service is key (either core or key driver)
- Trendline icons (up and down arrows), indicating whether the current ratings are higher or lower than the previous survey.

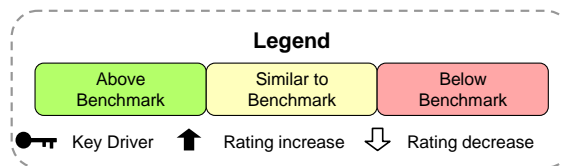
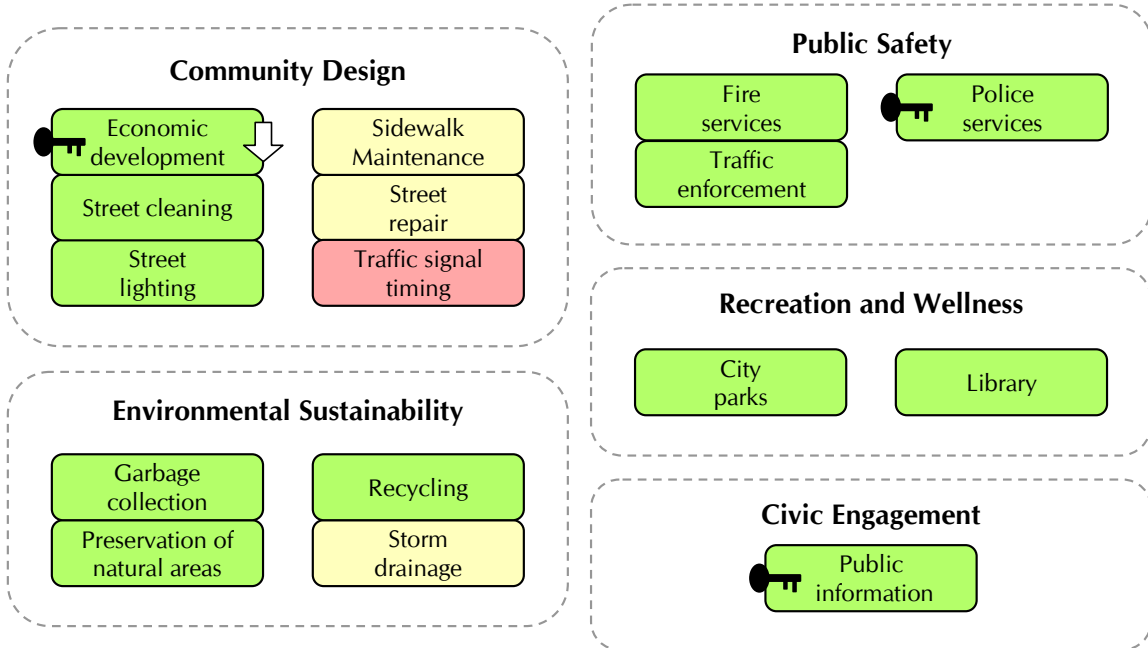
Sixteen services were included in the KDA for the City of Decatur. Of these, twelve were above the benchmark, one was below the benchmark and three were similar to the benchmark. The rating for one service was trending down, while fifteen remained similar to the previous survey. A key icon (🔑) indicates the three key drivers.

Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are trending down or that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In the case of Decatur, no key drivers were below the benchmark. Therefore, Decatur may wish to seek improvements to economic development services as this service had trended lower than the previous survey. More detail about interpreting results can be found in the next section.

Services with a high percent of respondents answering “don’t know” were excluded from the analysis and were considered services that would be less influential. See Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies, Frequencies Including “Don’t Know” Responses for the percent “don’t know” for each service.

FIGURE 87: CITY OF DECATUR ACTION CHART™

**Overall Quality of City of Decatur Services**



### Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the City of Decatur provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the City of Decatur, NRC lists the key drivers derived from tens of thousands of resident responses from across the country. This national list is updated periodically so that you can compare your key drivers to the key drivers from the entire NRC data set. Where your locally derived key drivers overlap national key drivers, it makes sense to focus even more strongly on your keys. Similarly, when your local key drivers overlap your core services, there is stronger argument to make for attending to your key drivers that overlap with core services. In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated, with shaded rows, the City of Decatur key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys.

FIGURE 88: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	City of Decatur Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
Code enforcement			✓
Economic development	✓	✓	
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Light timing			
Sidewalk maintenance			
Street cleaning			
Street lighting			
Street repair			✓
Drinking water			✓
Garbage collection			✓
Preservation of natural areas			
Recycling			
Sewer			✓
Storm drainage			✓
Water			✓
EMS			✓
Fire			✓
Police services	✓	✓	✓
Traffic enforcement			
City parks			
Public library			
Public schools		✓	
Public information services	✓	✓	



**POLICY QUESTIONS**

Policy Question 1	
In today's current economic condition, it is the City's goal to maintain the existing levels of service at current property tax rates. If that is not possible, which of the following would you prefer?	Percent of respondents
Maintain tax rate, decrease levels of service	24%
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rate up to one-half of a mill (\$100 per year on a \$400,000 property)	45%
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rates up to one mill (\$200 per year on a \$400,000 property)	14%
Decrease tax rate no matter how much it decreases levels of service	17%
Total	100%

Policy Question 2	
In the future, the City may be considering expanding the City limits by no more than one square mile, with the expectation that existing service levels for the City and the City Schools of Decatur would be maintained or improved and that annexation would be financially positive after the first two years. To what extent would you support or oppose an annexation that met the above criteria?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	22%
Somewhat support	53%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	9%
Total	100%

Policy Question 3	
Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose a bond referendum to raise funds for capital improvements to the Police Department, Fire Station No. 1 and the Decatur Recreation Center, if the bond issue resulted in a property tax increase of one mill (\$200 per year for a property worth \$400,000):	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	16%
Somewhat support	45%
Somewhat oppose	24%
Strongly oppose	15%
Total	100%

## APPENDIX A: COMPLETE SURVEY FREQUENCIES

### FREQUENCIES EXCLUDING "DON'T KNOW" RESPONSES

Question 1: Quality of Life					
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Decatur:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Decatur as a place to live	61%	36%	3%	0%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	55%	38%	6%	2%	100%
Decatur as a place to raise children	51%	39%	9%	1%	100%
Decatur as a place to work	36%	45%	16%	3%	100%
Decatur as a place to retire	33%	42%	21%	4%	100%
The overall quality of life in Decatur	47%	48%	4%	0%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Decatur as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Sense of community	39%	47%	12%	2%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	41%	46%	9%	3%	100%
Overall appearance of Decatur	31%	59%	9%	1%	100%
Cleanliness of Decatur	34%	54%	10%	1%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Decatur	21%	56%	20%	3%	100%
Variety of housing options	18%	47%	29%	6%	100%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	29%	54%	16%	1%	100%
Shopping opportunities	18%	45%	34%	3%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	29%	48%	21%	2%	100%
Recreational opportunities	23%	51%	20%	5%	100%
Employment opportunities	9%	35%	42%	14%	100%
Educational opportunities	30%	52%	14%	4%	100%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	35%	49%	13%	2%	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	40%	47%	10%	2%	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	42%	48%	10%	1%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community issues	35%	47%	17%	1%	100%
Ease of car travel in Decatur	18%	43%	31%	9%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	21%	44%	26%	9%	100%
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur	39%	43%	15%	3%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	22%	41%	24%	12%	100%
Ease of walking in Decatur	43%	44%	11%	2%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	19%	44%	30%	7%	100%
Traffic flow on major streets	7%	33%	43%	17%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Decatur as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Amount of public parking	5%	27%	45%	23%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	4%	39%	40%	17%	100%
Availability of affordable quality child care	9%	41%	31%	19%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	17%	51%	22%	10%	100%
Availability of affordable quality food	32%	46%	18%	4%	100%
Availability of preventive health services	17%	52%	23%	8%	100%
Air quality	9%	54%	31%	6%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	17%	58%	22%	2%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	42%	49%	8%	1%	100%

Question 3: Growth						
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Decatur over the past 2 years:	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Total
Population growth	0%	3%	60%	32%	5%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	2%	31%	60%	5%	1%	100%
Jobs growth	18%	60%	20%	0%	2%	100%

Question 4: Code Enforcement	
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Decatur?	Percent of respondents
Not a problem	16%
Minor problem	56%
Moderate problem	25%
Major problem	3%
Total	100%

Question 5: Community Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Decatur:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	38%	45%	11%	5%	1%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	17%	48%	17%	16%	2%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	43%	40%	12%	4%	1%	100%

Question 6: Personal Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
In your neighborhood during the day	71%	26%	2%	0%	1%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	27%	53%	7%	10%	2%	100%
In Decatur's downtown area during the day	72%	25%	2%	1%	0%	100%
In Decatur's downtown area after dark	23%	53%	13%	10%	1%	100%

Question 7: Crime Victim	
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents
No	87%
Yes	13%
Total	100%

Question 8: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	13%
Yes	87%
Total	100%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors						
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Decatur?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Decatur public libraries or their services	25%	19%	31%	14%	11%	100%
Used Decatur recreation centers	51%	24%	14%	7%	5%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	52%	23%	14%	6%	4%	100%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	12%	17%	31%	18%	21%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Decatur	71%	12%	7%	4%	6%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	68%	20%	9%	2%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	69%	18%	10%	2%	1%	100%
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	5%	5%	64%	15%	11%	100%
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decaturga.com)	21%	21%	36%	13%	9%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	11%	3%	8%	10%	68%	100%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors						
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Decatur?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	51%	25%	16%	4%	5%	100%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	53%	19%	8%	6%	14%	100%
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	70%	13%	10%	4%	3%	100%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	6%	20%	46%	17%	11%	100%
Visited the Open City Hall online forum	90%	7%	2%	0%	1%	100%

Question 10: Neighborliness	
About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?	Percent of respondents
Just about everyday	30%
Several times a week	32%
Several times a month	22%
Once a month	6%
Several times a year	5%
Once a year or less	1%
Never	3%
Total	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Police services	45%	44%	9%	1%	100%
Fire services	53%	43%	4%	0%	100%
Crime prevention	23%	56%	18%	3%	100%
Fire prevention and education	28%	55%	15%	2%	100%
Municipal courts	21%	55%	21%	3%	100%
Traffic enforcement	20%	51%	22%	7%	100%
Street repair	7%	37%	42%	14%	100%
Street cleaning	18%	48%	28%	5%	100%
Street lighting	16%	53%	25%	6%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	13%	40%	34%	14%	100%
Traffic signal timing	6%	31%	36%	27%	100%
Bus or transit services	19%	54%	23%	5%	100%
Garbage collection	41%	47%	9%	3%	100%
Recycling	49%	41%	8%	2%	100%
Yard waste pick-up	38%	43%	13%	5%	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Storm drainage	12%	44%	32%	12%	100%
City parks	29%	56%	14%	2%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	23%	59%	13%	4%	100%
Recreation centers or facilities	18%	54%	25%	4%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	13%	45%	37%	4%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	13%	41%	36%	10%	100%
Animal control	17%	47%	27%	9%	100%
Economic development	14%	55%	26%	4%	100%
Health services	17%	58%	20%	5%	100%
Services to seniors	24%	49%	21%	6%	100%
Services to youth	26%	54%	17%	3%	100%
Services to low-income people	16%	42%	24%	18%	100%
Public library services	38%	51%	9%	1%	100%
Public information services	26%	56%	16%	2%	100%
Public schools	40%	47%	11%	2%	100%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	25%	56%	15%	4%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	16%	46%	32%	7%	100%

Question 12: Government Services Overall					
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The City of Decatur	34%	55%	10%	1%	100%
The Federal Government	5%	37%	41%	18%	100%
The State Government	3%	23%	48%	26%	100%
DeKalb County Government	5%	31%	43%	20%	100%

Question 13: Contact with City Employees	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Decatur within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents
No	43%
Yes	57%
Total	100%

Question 14: City Employees					
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Decatur in your most recent contact?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Knowledge	36%	50%	11%	4%	100%
Responsiveness	39%	40%	15%	6%	100%
Courtesy	45%	35%	13%	7%	100%
Overall impression	40%	39%	15%	7%	100%

Question 15: Government Performance					
Please rate the following categories of Decatur government performance:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The value of services for the taxes paid to Decatur	15%	49%	27%	8%	100%
The overall direction that Decatur is taking	22%	58%	17%	3%	100%
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement	26%	56%	14%	4%	100%
The job Decatur government does at listening to citizens	19%	48%	25%	8%	100%

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity					
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Total
Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks	74%	22%	3%	1%	100%
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	65%	26%	4%	4%	100%

Question 17: Impact of the Economy	
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	Percent of respondents
Very positive	4%
Somewhat positive	11%
Neutral	48%
Somewhat negative	28%
Very negative	9%
Total	100%

Question 18a: Policy Question 1	
In today's current economic condition, it is the City's goal to maintain the existing levels of service at current property tax rates. If that is not possible, which of the following would you prefer?	Percent of respondents
Maintain tax rate, decrease levels of service	24%
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rate up to one-half of a mill (\$100 per year on a \$400,000 property)	45%
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rates up to one mill (\$200 per year on a \$400,000 property)	14%
Decrease tax rate no matter how much it decreases levels of service	17%
Total	100%

Question 18b: Policy Question 2	
In the future, the City may be considering expanding the City limits by no more than one square mile, with the expectation that existing service levels for the City and the City Schools of Decatur would be maintained or improved and that annexation would be financially positive after the first two years. To what extent would you support or oppose an annexation that met the above criteria?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	22%
Somewhat support	53%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	9%
Total	100%

Question 18c: Policy Question 3	
Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose a bond referendum to raise funds for capital improvements to the Police Department, Fire Station No. 1 and the Decatur Recreation Center, if the bond issue resulted in a property tax increase of one mill (\$200 per year for a property worth \$400,000):	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	16%
Somewhat support	45%
Somewhat oppose	24%
Strongly oppose	15%
Total	100%

Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	27%
Yes, full-time	62%
Yes, part-time	11%
Total	100%



Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	65%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	8%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	6%
Walk	6%
Bicycle	2%
Work at home	12%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency	
How many years have you lived in Decatur?	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	17%
2 to 5 years	31%
6 to 10 years	17%
11 to 20 years	18%
More than 20 years	18%
Total	100%

Question D4: Housing Unit Type	
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents
One family house detached from any other houses	54%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	8%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	36%
Mobile home	0%
Other	2%
Total	100%

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)	
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	39%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	61%
Total	100%

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost	
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners" association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents
Less than \$300 per month	7%
\$300 to \$599 per month	8%
\$600 to \$999 per month	26%
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	17%
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	26%
\$2,500 or more per month	16%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	66%
Yes	34%
Total	100%

Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household	
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents
No	81%
Yes	19%
Total	100%

Question D9: Household Income	
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents
Less than \$24,999	18%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	16%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	31%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	14%
\$150,000 or more	20%
Total	100%

Question D10: Ethnicity	
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%
Total	100%

Question D11: Race	
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	5%
Black or African American	19%
White	73%
Other	6%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option	

Question D12: Age	
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents
18 to 24 years	3%
25 to 34 years	29%
35 to 44 years	19%
45 to 54 years	22%
55 to 64 years	11%
65 to 74 years	7%
75 years or older	9%
Total	100%

Question D13: Gender	
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents
Female	61%
Male	39%
Total	100%

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	9%
Yes	89%
Ineligible to vote	2%
Total	100%

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election	
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents
No	13%
Yes	85%
Ineligible to vote	2%
Total	100%

### FREQUENCIES INCLUDING “DON’T KNOW” RESPONSES

These tables contain the percentage of respondents for each response category as well as the “n” or total number of respondents for each category, next to the percentage.

Question 1: Quality of Life												
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Decatur:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Decatur as a place to live	60%	308	36%	183	3%	16	0%	2	0%	2	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	54%	274	38%	192	6%	29	2%	8	0%	1	100%	504
Decatur as a place to raise children	41%	206	31%	157	7%	36	1%	3	20%	98	100%	500
Decatur as a place to work	23%	112	28%	138	10%	49	2%	10	38%	189	100%	498
Decatur as a place to retire	21%	107	27%	134	13%	67	2%	12	36%	183	100%	503
The overall quality of life in Decatur	46%	234	48%	242	4%	22	0%	2	1%	4	100%	504

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Decatur as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Sense of community	39%	197	47%	237	11%	58	2%	9	1%	7	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	40%	203	44%	227	9%	46	3%	13	4%	22	100%	512
Overall appearance of Decatur	31%	158	58%	297	9%	48	1%	5	1%	3	100%	510
Cleanliness of Decatur	34%	173	54%	272	10%	52	1%	6	0%	1	100%	504
Overall quality of new development in Decatur	19%	98	51%	259	19%	95	3%	13	8%	43	100%	508
Variety of housing options	17%	84	44%	222	27%	138	6%	29	6%	31	100%	504
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	28%	147	53%	272	15%	79	1%	7	2%	11	100%	516
Shopping opportunities	18%	92	44%	224	33%	169	3%	17	1%	4	100%	507
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	28%	144	47%	238	20%	102	2%	9	3%	18	100%	510
Recreational opportunities	22%	113	49%	249	20%	100	5%	25	4%	20	100%	507
Employment opportunities	5%	27	22%	111	26%	132	9%	46	37%	186	100%	502
Educational opportunities	25%	127	43%	218	12%	60	3%	17	16%	83	100%	504
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	33%	166	47%	232	13%	62	2%	10	5%	27	100%	497

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Decatur as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	34%	171	40%	201	9%	44	2%	9	16%	83	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	37%	186	42%	213	9%	45	1%	4	11%	57	100%	505
Opportunities to participate in community issues	31%	156	42%	212	15%	78	1%	5	11%	54	100%	506
Ease of car travel in Decatur	17%	88	42%	213	30%	151	9%	43	2%	10	100%	505
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	12%	59	26%	127	15%	76	5%	24	43%	212	100%	499
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur	36%	179	39%	195	14%	69	3%	14	9%	46	100%	502
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	17%	86	33%	163	19%	96	10%	48	21%	107	100%	500
Ease of walking in Decatur	42%	215	43%	220	11%	57	2%	11	1%	6	100%	509
Availability of paths and walking trails	17%	86	41%	202	27%	135	7%	34	8%	41	100%	499
Traffic flow on major streets	7%	33	33%	166	43%	216	17%	88	1%	4	100%	507
Amount of public parking	5%	26	25%	128	43%	215	22%	110	5%	27	100%	505
Availability of affordable quality housing	4%	18	32%	161	33%	167	13%	68	18%	93	100%	506
Availability of affordable quality child care	4%	17	16%	79	12%	60	8%	37	61%	304	100%	498
Availability of affordable quality health care	13%	64	37%	185	16%	81	7%	35	28%	139	100%	503
Availability of affordable quality food	31%	158	46%	232	18%	92	4%	19	1%	6	100%	508
Availability of preventive health services	11%	53	34%	169	15%	76	5%	24	35%	177	100%	498
Air quality	9%	43	50%	251	28%	142	5%	27	7%	37	100%	500
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	17%	84	56%	287	21%	109	2%	11	4%	18	100%	509
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	41%	213	49%	249	8%	40	1%	5	1%	6	100%	512

Question 3: Growth														
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Decatur over the past 2 years:	Much too slow		Somewhat too slow		Right amount		Somewhat too fast		Much too fast		Don't know		Total	
	Population growth	0%	1	2%	11	43%	221	23%	116	3%	17	28%	142	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	2%	10	28%	139	53%	269	4%	22	1%	4	12%	60	100%	505
Jobs growth	7%	36	24%	122	8%	40	0%	1	1%	5	60%	299	100%	502

Question 4: Code Enforcement		
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Decatur?	Percent of respondents	Count
Not a problem	15%	76
Minor problem	52%	259
Moderate problem	23%	114
Major problem	3%	15
Don't know	7%	34
Total	100%	499

Question 5: Community Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Decatur:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	37%	189	44%	226	10%	53	5%	27	1%	5	2%	13	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	17%	85	46%	237	16%	84	16%	82	2%	11	3%	15	100%	512
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	37%	188	35%	175	11%	54	3%	17	0%	2	13%	67	100%	505

Question 6: Personal Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	In your neighborhood during the day	71%	363	26%	134	2%	10	0%	0	1%	5	0%	1	100%

Question 6: Personal Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	In your neighborhood after dark	26%	133	52%	268	7%	37	10%	51	2%	12	2%	12	100%
In Decatur's downtown area during the day	71%	360	25%	127	2%	10	1%	3	0%	2	1%	5	100%	507
In Decatur's downtown area after dark	22%	113	51%	261	12%	63	9%	47	1%	5	4%	20	100%	509

Question 7: Crime Victim		
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	85%	435
Yes	13%	66
Don't know	2%	9
Total	100%	510

Question 8: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	13%	9
Yes	87%	58
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	66

Question 9: Resident Behaviors													
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Decatur?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total		
	Used Decatur public libraries or their services	25%	130	19%	96	31%	159	14%	72	11%	56	100%	513
Used Decatur recreation centers	51%	261	24%	121	14%	69	7%	35	5%	23	100%	509	
Participated in a recreation program or activity	52%	263	23%	114	14%	72	6%	30	4%	22	100%	501	
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	12%	62	17%	86	31%	159	18%	92	21%	107	100%	506	

Question 9: Resident Behaviors												
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Decatur?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
	Ridden a local bus within Decatur	71%	356	12%	62	7%	36	4%	19	6%	28	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	68%	348	20%	104	9%	45	2%	10	1%	5	100%	512
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	69%	346	18%	89	10%	51	2%	12	1%	7	100%	505
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	5%	23	5%	27	64%	321	15%	76	11%	55	100%	501
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decaturga.com)	21%	104	21%	103	36%	180	13%	64	9%	45	100%	495
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	11%	53	3%	15	8%	40	10%	52	68%	341	100%	502
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	51%	254	25%	124	16%	79	4%	21	5%	23	100%	500
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	53%	266	19%	97	8%	42	6%	32	14%	69	100%	506
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	70%	346	13%	66	10%	48	4%	22	3%	16	100%	498
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	6%	31	20%	99	46%	234	17%	86	11%	56	100%	506
Visited the Open City Hall online forum	90%	457	7%	37	2%	10	0%	1	1%	5	100%	510

Question 10: Neighborliness		
About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Just about everyday	30%	152
Several times a week	32%	165
Several times a month	22%	114
Once a month	6%	30
Several times a year	5%	27
Once a year or less	1%	6
Never	3%	17
Total	100%	511



Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Police services	41%	207	40%	202	8%	43	1%	4	11%	55	100%	511
Fire services	41%	211	34%	171	3%	15	0%	1	22%	113	100%	511
Crime prevention	18%	91	44%	224	14%	73	2%	12	21%	108	100%	508
Fire prevention and education	17%	86	34%	173	9%	45	1%	7	38%	194	100%	505
Municipal courts	10%	50	27%	135	10%	51	2%	8	52%	263	100%	507
Traffic enforcement	16%	82	42%	211	18%	90	6%	30	17%	87	100%	501
Street repair	7%	35	34%	175	40%	201	13%	67	6%	30	100%	507
Street cleaning	17%	88	46%	232	27%	137	5%	25	5%	25	100%	507
Street lighting	15%	77	51%	256	24%	122	6%	28	4%	18	100%	501
Sidewalk maintenance	12%	63	38%	190	32%	163	13%	65	5%	23	100%	504
Traffic signal timing	6%	28	30%	152	34%	173	26%	132	4%	21	100%	506
Bus or transit services	11%	54	31%	155	13%	67	3%	14	42%	206	100%	495
Garbage collection	38%	195	44%	222	8%	42	2%	12	7%	36	100%	507
Recycling	45%	230	38%	192	8%	39	2%	11	7%	38	100%	510
Yard waste pick-up	28%	141	32%	159	10%	47	4%	20	26%	130	100%	497
Storm drainage	10%	49	35%	177	26%	132	10%	49	19%	94	100%	501
City parks	26%	132	51%	258	12%	64	1%	7	10%	49	100%	510
Recreation programs or classes	14%	72	36%	180	8%	40	3%	13	39%	198	100%	503
Recreation centers or facilities	11%	55	34%	168	15%	76	2%	12	38%	189	100%	500
Land use, planning and zoning	9%	45	31%	151	25%	122	3%	15	32%	155	100%	488
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	9%	44	27%	137	24%	118	6%	32	34%	169	100%	500
Animal control	11%	55	30%	151	17%	85	6%	28	36%	181	100%	501
Economic development	11%	53	41%	203	19%	96	3%	16	26%	131	100%	499
Health services	10%	48	33%	164	11%	55	3%	13	43%	209	100%	489
Services to seniors	10%	50	21%	104	9%	44	3%	14	58%	290	100%	501
Services to youth	15%	73	30%	150	9%	47	2%	9	44%	219	100%	498
Services to low-income people	6%	28	15%	73	8%	42	6%	31	65%	318	100%	492

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Public library services	33%	166	44%	219	8%	41	1%	6	14%	70	100%
Public information services	19%	97	43%	213	12%	62	1%	6	24%	120	100%	498
Public schools	28%	140	33%	166	8%	40	1%	7	30%	151	100%	503
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	17%	86	38%	191	10%	52	3%	14	31%	156	100%	499
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	12%	58	35%	171	24%	118	5%	26	24%	119	100%	491

Question 12: Government Services Overall												
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The City of Decatur	33%	167	53%	274	10%	50	1%	6	3%	18	100%
The Federal Government	4%	21	32%	161	35%	177	15%	77	14%	73	100%	509
The State Government	2%	13	20%	102	41%	210	22%	114	14%	72	100%	510
DeKalb County Government	5%	23	28%	141	38%	195	18%	91	12%	62	100%	512

Question 13: Contact with City Employees		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Decatur within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	43%	218
Yes	57%	288
Total	100%	506

Question 14: City Employees												
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Decatur in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Knowledge	35%	101	50%	143	10%	30	3%	10	1%	3	100%
Responsiveness	39%	113	40%	114	15%	44	6%	16	0%	0	100%	287
Courtesy	45%	128	35%	101	13%	37	7%	21	0%	0	100%	287
Overall impression	40%	114	39%	112	15%	43	7%	19	0%	0	100%	287

Question 15: Government Performance												
Please rate the following categories of Decatur government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The value of services for the taxes paid to Decatur	13%	66	42%	213	23%	118	7%	35	15%	76	100%
The overall direction that Decatur is taking	19%	98	52%	264	15%	78	3%	15	10%	51	100%	505
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement	19%	97	41%	205	10%	50	3%	16	27%	135	100%	504
The job Decatur government does at listening to citizens	13%	66	32%	162	17%	84	5%	27	32%	163	100%	503

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity												
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Very unlikely		Don't know		Total	
	Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks	74%	375	22%	113	3%	13	1%	4	1%	4	100%
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	63%	318	25%	128	4%	22	4%	19	4%	19	100%	506

Question 17: Impact of the Economy		
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	Percent of respondents	Count
Very positive	4%	18
Somewhat positive	11%	58
Neutral	48%	244
Somewhat negative	28%	141
Very negative	9%	47
Total	100%	508

Question 18a: Policy Question 1		
In today's current economic condition, it is the City's goal to maintain the existing levels of service at current property tax rates. If that is not possible, which of the following would you prefer?	Percent of respondents	Count
Maintain tax rate, decrease levels of service	24%	116
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rate up to one-half of a mill (\$100 per year on a \$400,000 property)	45%	214
Maintain levels of service, increase tax rates up to one mill (\$200 per year on a \$400,000 property)	14%	66
Decrease tax rate no matter how much it decreases levels of service	17%	82
Total	100%	478

Question 18b: Policy Question 2		
In the future, the City may be considering expanding the City limits by no more than one square mile, with the expectation that existing service levels for the City and the City Schools of Decatur would be maintained or improved and that annexation would be financially positive after the first two years. To what extent would you support or oppose an annexation that met the above criteria?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	22%	111
Somewhat support	53%	264
Somewhat oppose	15%	77
Strongly oppose	9%	46
Total	100%	497

Question 18c: Policy Question 3		
Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose a bond referendum to raise funds for capital improvements to the Police Department, Fire Station No. 1 and the Decatur Recreation Center, if the bond issue resulted in a property tax increase of one mill (\$200 per year for a property worth \$400,000):	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	16%	81
Somewhat support	45%	225
Somewhat oppose	24%	118
Strongly oppose	15%	77
Total	100%	501

Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	27%	140
Yes, full-time	62%	316
Yes, part-time	11%	56
Total	100%	512

Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	65%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	8%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	6%
Walk	6%
Bicycle	2%
Work at home	12%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency		
How many years have you lived in Decatur?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than 2 years	17%	87
2 to 5 years	31%	160
6 to 10 years	17%	85
11 to 20 years	18%	94
More than 20 years	18%	91
Total	100%	516

Question D4: Housing Unit Type		
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents	Count
One family house detached from any other houses	54%	278
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	8%	42
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	36%	184
Mobile home	0%	0
Other	2%	8
Total	100%	513

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)		
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents	Count
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	39%	200
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	61%	306
Total	100%	506

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost		
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$300 per month	7%	32
\$300 to \$599 per month	8%	42
\$600 to \$999 per month	26%	130
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	17%	87
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	26%	128
\$2,500 or more per month	16%	79
Total	100%	498

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	66%	340
Yes	34%	176
Total	100%	516

Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household		
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	81%	418
Yes	19%	96
Total	100%	514

Question D9: Household Income		
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$24,999	18%	88
\$25,000 to \$49,999	16%	81
\$50,000 to \$99,999	31%	155
\$100,000 to \$149,000	14%	67
\$150,000 or more	20%	100
Total	100%	492

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%	499
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%	8
Total	100%	507

Question D11: Race		
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents	Count
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	4
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	5%	28
Black or African American	19%	96
White	73%	370
Other	6%	33
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option		



Question D12: Age		
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents	Count
18 to 24 years	3%	14
25 to 34 years	29%	151
35 to 44 years	19%	98
45 to 54 years	22%	112
55 to 64 years	11%	58
65 to 74 years	7%	39
75 years or older	9%	45
Total	100%	515

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	61%	308
Male	39%	200
Total	100%	508

Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	9%	46
Yes	88%	453
Ineligible to vote	2%	9
Don't know	2%	9
Total	100%	517

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election		
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	13%	68
Yes	84%	435
Ineligible to vote	2%	10
Don't know	1%	3
Total	100%	515

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

### SURVEY VALIDITY

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can a jurisdiction be confident that the results from those who completed the questionnaire are representative of the results that would have been obtained had the survey been administered to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, the best survey research practices were used for the resources spent to ensure that the results from the survey respondents reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

- Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent. A higher response rate lessens the worry that those who did not respond are different than those who did respond.
- Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction to receive the survey. A random selection ensures that the households selected to receive the survey are similar to the entire population. A non-random sample may only include households from one geographic area, or from households of only one type.
- Over-sampling multi-family housing units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
- Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure; in this case, the "birthday method." The cover letter included an instruction requesting that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.
- Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member, thus appealing to the recipients' sense of civic responsibility.
- Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by City officials.
- Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to weight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for

service quality play a role as well as the “objective” quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record his or her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident’s report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g., reporting tolerant behaviors toward “oppressed groups,” likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), his or her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), his or her confidence that he or she can be honest without suffering any negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g., driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g., voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g., feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g., family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents’ tendency to report what they think the “correct” response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and “objective” ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC’s own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be “objectively” worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, “professional” status of firefighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether or not some research confirms the relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen “objectively” in a community, NRC has argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. NRC principals have written, “If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem.”

## SURVEY SAMPLING

“Sampling” refers to the method by which survey recipients were chosen. All households within the City of Decatur were eligible to participate in the survey; 1,200 were selected to receive the survey. These 1,200 households were randomly selected from a comprehensive list of all housing units within the City of Decatur boundaries. The basis of the list of all housing units was a United States Postal Service listing of housing units within zip codes. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Decatur households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the jurisdiction, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to jurisdiction boundaries, using the most current municipal boundary file (updated on a quarterly basis), and addresses located outside of the City of Decatur boundaries were removed from consideration.

To choose the 1,200 survey recipients, a systematic sampling method was applied to the list of households known to be within the City of Decatur. Systematic sampling is a procedure whereby a complete list of all possible items is culled, selecting every Nth one until the appropriate amount of items is selected. Multi-family housing units were over sampled as residents of this type of housing typically respond at lower rates to surveys than do those in single-family housing units.

An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method. The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the “person whose birthday has most recently passed” to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning March 5, 2010. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the mayor inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. A portion of those receiving the survey received an invitation in the letter to complete the survey online. The final mailing contained a reminder letter, another survey and a postage-paid return envelope. The second cover letter asked those who had not completed the survey to do so and those who have already done so to refrain from turning in another survey. The same households who had received an invitation to complete the survey online were again invited to do so. Eighteen surveys were completed online. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

## SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

Of the 1,200 surveys mailed, 43 were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the 1,157 households receiving the survey mailings, 533 completed the survey (515 via mail and 18 via the internet), providing a response rate of 46%. In general, response rates obtained on local government resident surveys range from 25% to 40%.

In theory, in 95 cases out of 100, the results based on the number of responses obtained will differ by no more than four percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained had responses been collected from all City of Decatur adults. This difference from the presumed population finding is referred to as the sampling error (or the “margin of error” or 95% confidence interval”). For subgroups of responses, the margin of sampling error is larger. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of the public may introduce other sources of error. For example, the failure of some of the selected adults to participate in the sample or the difficulty of including all sectors of the population, such as residents of some institutions or group residences, may lead to somewhat different results.

In addition to sampling error, other sources of error may affect any survey, including the non-response of residents with opinions different from survey responders that may affect sample findings. Though standardized on The NCS, on other surveys, differences in question wording, order, translation and data entry, as examples, can lead to somewhat varying results.

## SURVEY PROCESSING (DATA ENTRY)

Completed surveys received by NRC were assigned a unique identification number. Additionally, each survey was reviewed and “cleaned” as necessary. For example, a question may have asked a

respondent to pick two items out of a list of five, but the respondent checked three; NRC staff would choose randomly two of the three selected items to be coded in the dataset.

Once all surveys were assigned a unique identification number, they were entered into an electronic dataset. This dataset was subject to a data entry protocol of “key and verify,” in which survey data were entered twice into an electronic dataset and then compared. Discrepancies were evaluated against the original survey form and corrected. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed.

## SURVEY DATA WEIGHTING

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2000 Census estimates for adults in the City of Decatur. Sample results were weighted using the population norms to reflect the appropriate percent of those residents. Other discrepancies between the whole population and the sample were also aided by the weighting due to the intercorrelation of many socioeconomic characteristics.

The variables used for weighting were housing tenure, housing unit type, race/ethnicity, and sex and age. This decision was based on:

- The disparity between the survey respondent characteristics and the population norms for these variables
- The saliency of these variables in detecting differences of opinion among subgroups
- The importance to the community of correct ethnic representation
- The historical use of the variables and the desirability of consistently representing different groups over the years

The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey sample reflective of the larger population of the community. This is done by: 1) reviewing the sample demographics and comparing them to the population norms from the most recent Census or other sources and 2) comparing the responses to different questions for demographic subgroups. The demographic characteristics that are least similar to the Census and yield the most different results are the best candidates for data weighting. A third criterion sometimes used is the importance that the community places on a specific variable. For example, if a jurisdiction feels that accurate race representation is key to staff and public acceptance of the study results, additional consideration will be given in the weighting process to adjusting the race variable.

A special software program using mathematical algorithms is used to calculate the appropriate weights. A limitation of data weighting is that only 2-3 demographic variables can be adjusted in a single study. Several different weighting “schemes” are tested to ensure the best fit for the data.

The process actually begins at the point of sampling. Knowing that residents in single family dwellings are more likely to respond to a mail survey, NRC oversamples residents of multi-family dwellings to ensure their proper representation in the sample data. Rather than giving all residents an equal chance of receiving the survey, this is systematic, stratified sampling, which gives each resident of the jurisdiction a known chance of receiving the survey (and apartment dwellers, for example, a greater chance than single family home dwellers). As a consequence, results must be weighted to recapture the proper representation of apartment dwellers.

The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the following page.

Decatur Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm <sup>1</sup>	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
<b>Housing</b>			
Rent home	41%	32%	40%
Own home	59%	68%	60%
Detached unit	56%	44%	54%
Attached unit	44%	56%	46%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White alone, not Hispanic	68%	84%	69%
Hispanic and/or other race	32%	16%	31%
<b>Sex and Age</b>			
Female	60%	65%	61%
Male	40%	35%	39%
18-34 years of age	35%	19%	32%
35-54 years of age	40%	42%	41%
55+ years of age	25%	40%	27%
Females 18-34	21%	14%	20%
Females 35-54	21%	25%	22%
Females 55+	17%	27%	19%
Males 18-34	14%	5%	12%
Males 35-54	19%	18%	19%
Males 55+	8%	12%	8%

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2000 Census

## SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The survey dataset was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions were presented in the body of the report.

### Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity was one that NRC did not want to dismiss when crafting The National Citizen Survey™ questionnaire, because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, NRC has found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

### “Don’t Know” Responses

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

### Benchmark Comparisons

NRC has been leading the strategic use of surveys for local governments since 1991, when the principals of the company wrote the first edition of what became the classic text on citizen surveying. In *Citizen Surveys: how to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, published by ICMA, not only were the principles for quality survey methods articulated, but both the idea of benchmark data for citizen opinion and the method for gathering benchmark data were pioneered. The argument for benchmarks was called “In Search of Standards.” “What has been missing from a local government’s analysis of its survey results is the context that school administrators can supply when they tell parents how an 80 percent score on the social studies test compares to test results from other school systems...”

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services. Conducted with typically no fewer than 400 residents in each jurisdiction, opinions are intended to represent over 30 million Americans. NRC has innovated a method for quantitatively integrating the results of surveys that conducted by NRC with those that others have conducted. The integration methods have been thoroughly described not only in the Citizen Surveys book, but also in *Public Administration Review, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Scholars who



specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on this work (e.g., Kelly, J. & Swindell, D. (2002). Service quality variation across urban space: First steps towards a model of citizen satisfaction. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24, 271-288.; Van Ryzin, G., Muzzio, D., Immerwahr, S., Gulick, L. & Martinez, E. (2004). Drivers and consequences of citizen satisfaction: An application of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Model to New York City, *Public Administration Review*, 64, 331- 341). The method described in those publications is refined regularly and statistically tested on a growing number of citizen surveys in NRC's proprietary databases. NRC's work on calculating national benchmarks for resident opinions about service delivery and quality of life won the Samuel C. May award for research excellence from the Western Governmental Research Association.

### The Role of Comparisons

Benchmark comparisons are used for performance measurement. Jurisdictions use the comparative information to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. When surveys of service satisfaction turn up "good" citizen evaluations, jurisdictions need to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough. Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its fire protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair. Streets always lose to fire. More important and harder questions need to be asked; for example, how do residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities?

A police department that provides the fastest and most efficient service—one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes and keeps the crime rate low—still has a problem to fix if the residents in the community it intends to protect believe services are not very good compared to ratings given by residents to their own objectively "worse" departments. The benchmark data can help that police department – or any department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. NRC recommends that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data about budget, personnel and politics to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Jurisdictions in the benchmark database are distributed geographically across the country and range from small to large in population size. Most commonly, comparisons are made to the entire database. Comparisons may also be made to subsets of jurisdictions (for example, within a given region or population category). Despite the differences in jurisdiction characteristics, all are in the business of providing local government services to residents. Though individual jurisdiction circumstances, resources and practices vary, the objective in every community is to provide services that are so timely, tailored and effective that residents conclude the services are of the highest quality. High ratings in any jurisdiction, like SAT scores in any teen household, bring pride and a sense of accomplishment.

### Comparison of Decatur to the Benchmark Database

The City of Decatur chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database (Populations 15,000-40,000 in the Southern region). A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the City of Decatur Survey was included in

NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons are available, Decatur results are noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar to" the benchmark. This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of Decatur's rating to the benchmark (the rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked).

## APPENDIX C: SURVEY MATERIALS

The following pages contain copies of the survey materials sent to randomly selected households within the City of Decatur.

Dear Decatur Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the City of Decatur. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



William F. Floyd  
Mayor

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Presorted  
First Class Mail  
US Postage  
PAID  
Boulder, CO  
Permit NO. 94

509 North McDonough Street  
PO Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031



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**City Commission**  
509 North McDonough Street  
P.O. Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031  
404/370-4102 ▪ Fax 678/553-6518  
info@decaturga.com ▪ <http://www.decaturga.com>

March 2010

Dear Decatur Resident:

The City of Decatur wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in Decatur's 2010 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your answers will help the City Commission make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

**To get a representative sample of Decatur residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.**

Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes to answer all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey, please call (404) 370-4102.

Please help us shape the future of Decatur. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

William F. Floyd  
Mayor



**City Commission**  
509 North McDonough Street  
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William F. Floyd".

William F. Floyd  
Mayor



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Please help us shape the future of Decatur. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

William F. Floyd  
Mayor

# The City of Decatur 2010 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Decatur:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Decatur as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Decatur as a place to raise children.....	1	2	3	4	5
Decatur as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Decatur as a place to retire .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Decatur as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community issues.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of public parking .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality child care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventative health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Decatur over the past 2 years:**

	<i>Much too slow</i>	<i>Somewhat too slow</i>	<i>Right amount</i>	<i>Somewhat too fast</i>	<i>Much too fast</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Population growth .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jobs growth.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Decatur?  
 Not a problem     Minor problem     Moderate problem     Major problem     Don't know

5. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Decatur:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Decatur's downtown area during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Decatur's downtown area after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?  
 No → Go to Question 9     Yes → Go to Question 8     Don't know → Go to Question 9

8. If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?  
 No     Yes     Don't know

9. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Decatur?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times
Used Decatur public libraries or their services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Used Decatur recreation centers .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park or City park.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting .....	1	2	3	4	5
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television .....	1	2	3	4	5
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decaturga.com) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home.....	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur .....	1	2	3	4	5
Provided help to a friend or neighbor .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the Open City Hall online forum.....	1	2	3	4	5

10. About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?

- Just about every day  
 Several times a week  
 Several times a month  
 Once a month  
 Several times a year  
 Once a year or less  
 Never

# The City of Decatur 2010 Citizen Survey

## 11. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education .....	1	2	3	4	5
Municipal courts .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing .....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up .....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage.....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control .....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development .....	1	2	3	4	5
Health services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public schools.....	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts .....	1	2	3	4	5

## 12. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The City of Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government .....	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government .....	1	2	3	4	5
DeKalb County Government.....	1	2	3	4	5

**13. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Decatur within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?**

- No → Go to Question 15       Yes → Go to Question 14

**14. What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Decatur in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Knowledge.....	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness.....	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression.....	1	2	3	4	5

**15. Please rate the following categories of Decatur government performance:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Decatur.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Decatur is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Decatur government does at listening to citizens.....	1	2	3	4	5

**16. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:**

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Decatur for the next five years.....	1	2	3	4	5

**17. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:**

- Very positive       Somewhat positive       Neutral       Somewhat negative       Very negative

**18. Please check the response that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:**

**a. In today's current economic condition, it is the City's goal to maintain the existing levels of service at current property tax rates. If that is not possible, which of the following options would you prefer?**

- Maintain tax rate, decrease levels of service  
 Maintain levels of service, increase tax rate up to one-half of a mill (\$100 per year on a \$400,000 property)  
 Maintain levels of service, increase tax rate up to one mill (\$200 per year on a \$400,000 property)  
 Decrease tax rate no matter how much it decreases levels of service

**b. In the future, the City may be considering expanding the City limits by no more than one square mile, with the expectation that existing service levels for the City and the City Schools of Decatur would be maintained or improved and that annexation would be financially positive after the first two years. To what extent would you support or oppose an annexation that met the above criteria?**

- Strongly support  
 Somewhat support  
 Somewhat oppose  
 Strongly oppose

**c. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose a bond referendum to raise funds for capital improvements to the Police Department, Fire Station No. 1 and the Decatur Recreation Center, if the bond issue resulted in a property tax increase of one mill (\$200 per year for a property worth \$400,000):**

- Strongly support  
 Somewhat support  
 Somewhat oppose  
 Strongly oppose

# The City of Decatur 2010 Citizen Survey

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**D1. Are you currently employed for pay?**

- No → Go to Question D3
- Yes, full time → Go to Question D2
- Yes, part time → Go to Question D2

**D2. During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below? (Enter the total number of days, using whole numbers.)**

- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself ..... days
- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults ..... days
- Bus, Rail, Subway or other public transportation ..... days
- Walk ..... days
- Bicycle ..... days
- Work at home ..... days
- Other ..... days

**D3. How many years have you lived in Decatur?**

- Less than 2 years     11-20 years
- 2-5 years             More than 20 years
- 6-10 years

**D4. Which best describes the building you live in?**

- One family house detached from any other houses
- House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
- Building with two or more apartments or condominiums
- Mobile home
- Other

**D5. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...**

- Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?
- Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear?

**D6. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?**

- Less than \$300 per month
- \$300 to \$599 per month
- \$600 to \$999 per month
- \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month
- \$1,500 to \$2,499 per month
- \$2,500 or more per month

**D7. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?**

- No     Yes

**D8. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?**

- No     Yes

**D9. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)**

- Less than \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

**Please respond to both question D10 and D11:**

**D10. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?**

- No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

**D11. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be)**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- Other

**D12. In which category is your age?**

- 18-24 years                       55-64 years
- 25-34 years                       65-74 years
- 35-44 years                       75 years or older
- 45-54 years

**D13. What is your sex?**

- Female
- Male

**D14. Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?**

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

**D15. Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?**

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope to: National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502



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