



# CITY OF DECATUR, GA 2012



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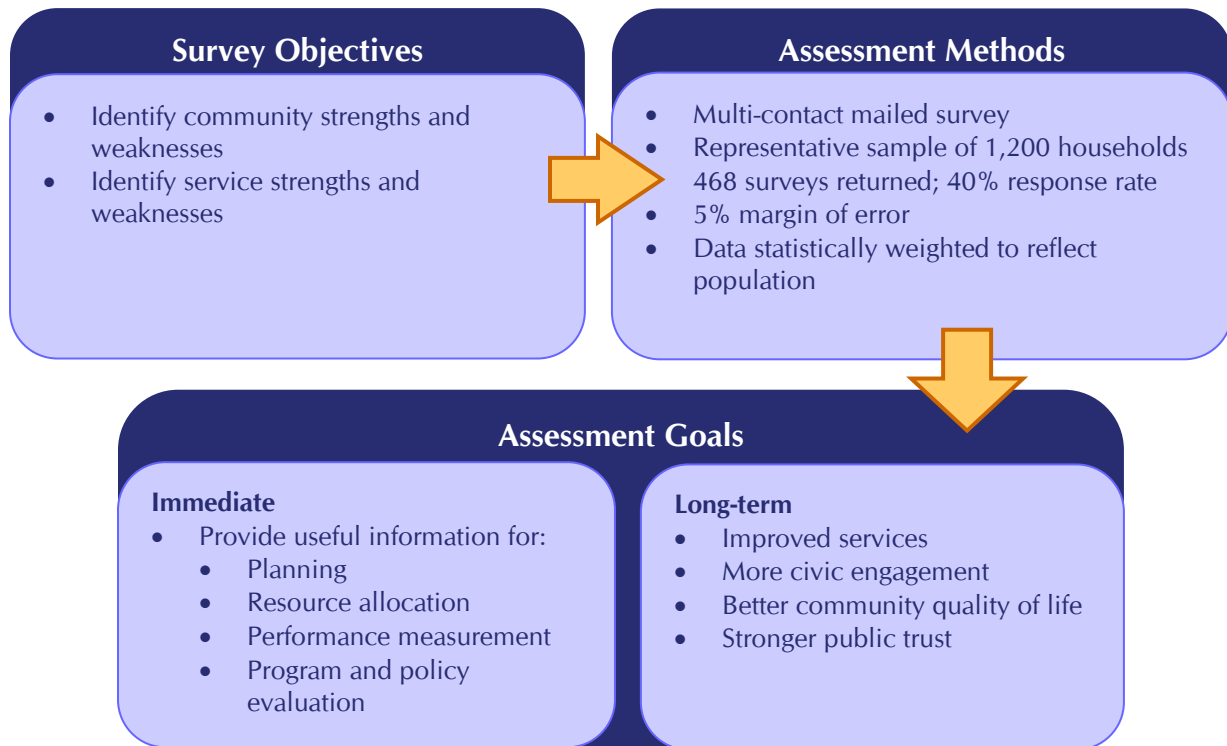
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## SURVEY BACKGROUND

### 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 the 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. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community. A total of 468 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 40%. 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 a custom set of benchmark comparisons and several custom questions.

## UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' opinions about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each report 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

The margin of error around results for the City of Decatur Survey (468 completed surveys) is plus or minus five percentage points. This is a measure of the precision of your results; a larger number of completed surveys gives a smaller (more precise) margin of error, while a smaller number of surveys yields a larger margin of error. With your margin of error, you may conclude that when 60% of survey respondents report that a particular service is "excellent" or "good," somewhere between 55–65% of all residents are likely to feel that way.

### 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 comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant.

The City of Decatur chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database (jurisdictions with populations from 15,000 to 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 for quality ratings were available, the City of Decatur results were generally noted as being “above” the benchmark, “below” the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark. For some questions – those related to resident behavior, circumstance or to a local problem – the comparison to the benchmark is designated as “more,” “similar” or “less” (for example, the percent of crime victims, residents visiting a park or residents identifying code enforcement as a problem.) In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of “much,” (for example, “much less” or “much above”). These labels come 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 experienced a good quality of life in the City of Decatur and believed the City was a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Decatur was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 96% of respondents. Almost all reported 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 sense of community, the overall image or reputation of Decatur, the overall appearance, and ease of walking in Decatur. The three characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were employment opportunities, traffic flow on major streets and the amount of public parking.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 31 characteristics for which comparisons were available, 28 were above the national benchmark comparison, two were similar to the national benchmark comparison and one was below.

Residents in the City of Decatur were civically engaged. While 36% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 93% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. A majority had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the City of Decatur, which was much higher than the benchmark.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated strong trust in local government. A majority rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Decatur as “good” or “excellent.” This was much 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. Nearly all rated their overall impression of employees as “excellent” or “good.”

On average, residents gave highly favorable ratings to almost all local government services. City services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 31 services for which comparisons were available, 26 were above the benchmark comparison, four were similar to the benchmark comparison and one was below.

Most ratings tended to be stable or show an upward trend over time.

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:

- Economic development
- Police services
- Preservation of natural areas
- Public information services
- Recycling

For all key driver services, the City of Decatur was above the benchmark and should continue to ensure high quality performance.



## 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.

Most of the City of Decatur’s residents gave high ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, most reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years. These ratings were mostly similar to past survey years.

FIGURE 3: RATINGS OF OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEAR

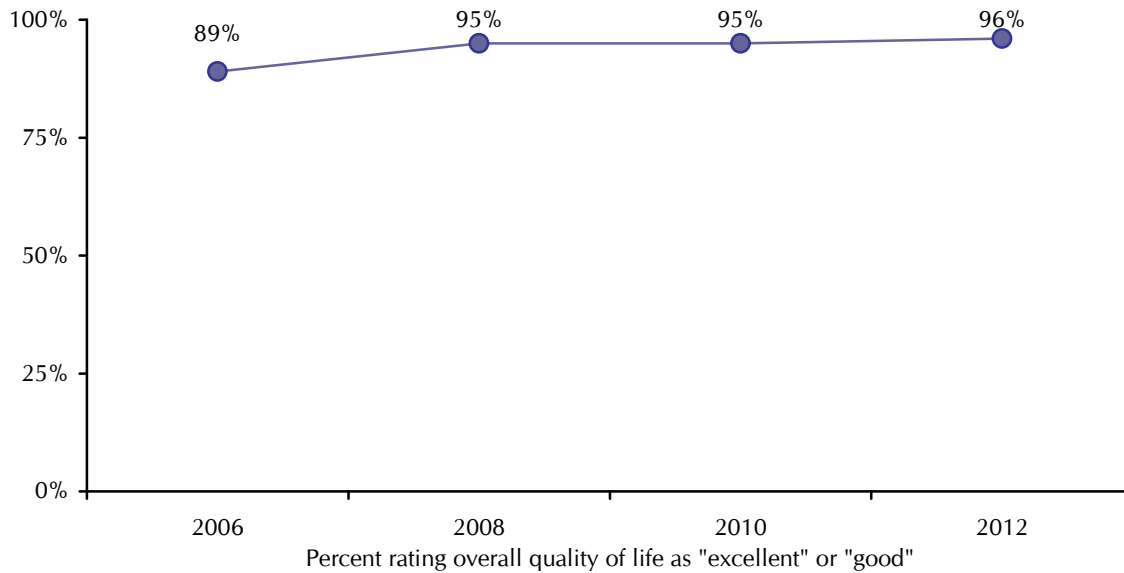


FIGURE 4: RATINGS OF OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
The overall quality of life in Decatur	96%	95%	95%	89%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	93%	93%	93%	88%
Decatur as a place to live	96%	97%	97%	93%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 5: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks	96%	97%	97%	NA
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	90%	92%	88%	NA
Percent "somewhat" or "very" likely				

FIGURE 6: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Overall quality of life in Decatur	Much above	Much above
Your neighborhood as place to live	Much above	Much above
Decatur as a place to live	Much above	Much above
Recommend living in Decatur to someone who asks	Much above	Much above
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	Much above	Much 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 or higher compared to years past.

FIGURE 7: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Ease of car travel in Decatur	64%	61%	58%	60%
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	62%	65%	68%	60%
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur	86%	82%	86%	80%
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	70%	63%	66%	61%
Ease of walking in Decatur	91%	86%	87%	78%
Availability of paths and walking trails	69%	63%	66%	NA
Traffic flow on major streets	41%	40%	42%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 8: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARKS

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

Seven transportation services were rated in Decatur. As compared to most communities across America, ratings tended to be a mix of positive and negative. Most of these ratings had increased over time.

FIGURE 9: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Street repair	50%	44%	51%	37%
Street cleaning	71%	66%	71%	54%
Street lighting	72%	69%	69%	62%
Sidewalk maintenance	55%	53%	58%	44%
Traffic signal timing	44%	37%	34%	38%
Bus or transit services	72%	72%	76%	70%
Amount of public parking	39%	32%	39%	30%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 10: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Street repair	Above	Similar
Street cleaning	Much above	Much above
Street lighting	Much above	Much above
Sidewalk maintenance	Similar	Similar
Traffic signal timing	Below	Below
Bus or transit services	Much above	Much above
Amount of public parking	Below	Similar

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, 10% of work commute trips were made by transit, 1% by bicycle and 5% by foot.

FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

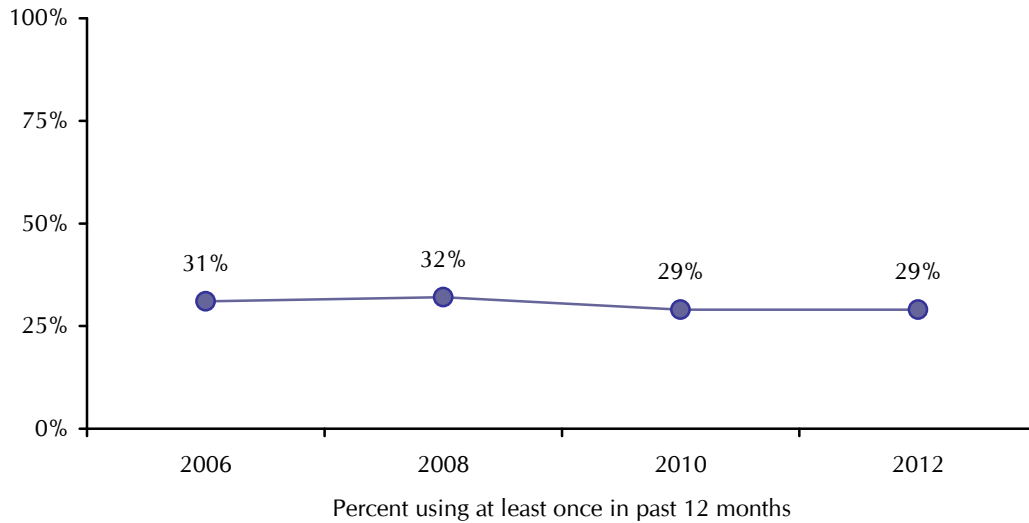


FIGURE 12: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE BENCHMARKS

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

FIGURE 13: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) by myself	66%	65%	65%	NA
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) with other children or adults	5%	8%	6%	NA
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	10%	6%	8%	NA
Walk	5%	6%	5%	NA
Bicycle	1%	2%	1%	NA
Work at home	12%	12%	13%	NA
Other	0%	0%	1%	NA

FIGURE 14: DRIVE ALONE BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Average percent of work commute trips made by driving alone	Much less	Much less

## 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 45% of respondents while the variety of housing options was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 71% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was much better in the City of Decatur than the ratings, on average, in national comparison jurisdictions and had increased over the past six years.

FIGURE 15: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Availability of affordable quality housing	45%	43%	48%	34%
Variety of housing options	71%	65%	69%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 16: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Availability of affordable quality housing	Much above	Similar
Variety of housing options	Much above	Much 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 29% of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 17: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING HOUSING COST STRESS BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Housing costs 30% or more of income	29%	32%	NA	NA
Percent of respondents				

FIGURE 18: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Experiencing housing costs stress (housing costs 30% or MORE of income)	Much less	Much 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 81% of respondents. The overall appearance of Decatur was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 92% of respondents and was much higher than the benchmarks. 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” problem. The services of animal control and land use, planning and zoning were rated above both benchmarks, code enforcement was rated above the national benchmark and similar to the custom comparison.

FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT" BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Overall quality of new development in Decatur	81%	77%	77%	70%
Overall appearance of Decatur	92%	90%	89%	86%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 20: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Quality of new development in Decatur	Much above	Much above
Overall appearance of Decatur	Much above	Much above



FIGURE 21: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

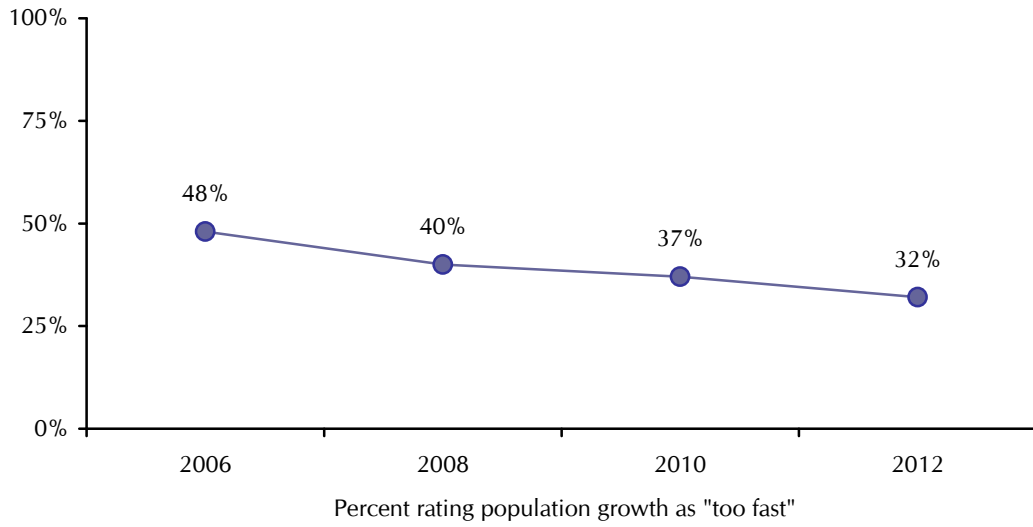


FIGURE 22: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Population growth seen as too fast	Much less	Much less

FIGURE 23: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS BY YEAR

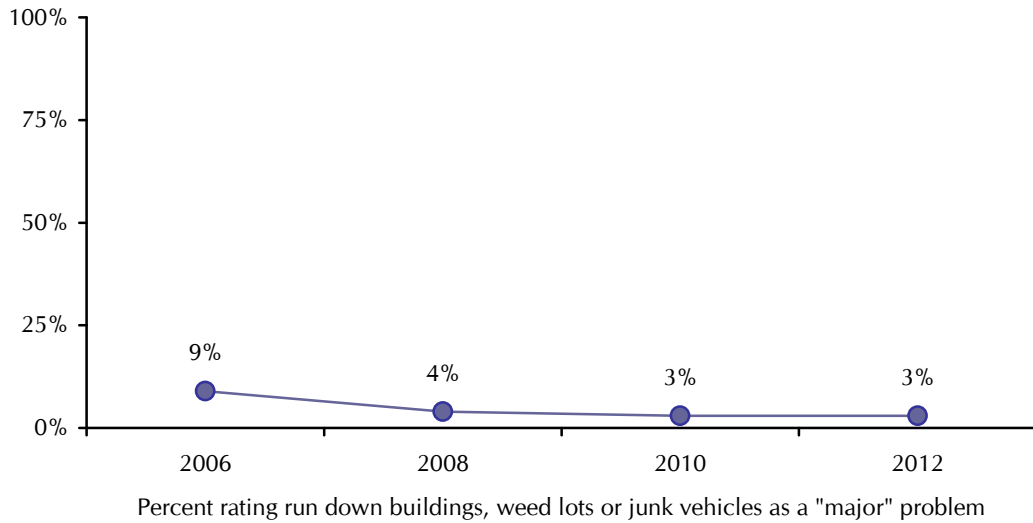


FIGURE 24: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Run down buildings, weed lots and junk vehicles seen as a "major" problem	Much less	Much less

FIGURE 25: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Land use, planning and zoning	63%	59%	62%	51%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	51%	55%	58%	48%
Animal control	70%	65%	76%	68%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 26: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

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

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The United States has been in recession since late 2007 with an accelerated downturn occurring in the fourth quarter of 2008. Officially we emerged from recession in the third quarter of 2009, but high unemployment lingers, keeping a lid on a strong recovery. Many readers worry that the ill health of the economy will color how residents perceive their environment and the services that local government delivers. NRC researchers have found that the economic downturn has chastened Americans' view of their own economic futures but has not colored their perspectives about community services or quality of life.

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 and Decatur as a place to work. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities (however it was rated above both benchmarks). The rating for shopping opportunities had increased over time.

FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Employment opportunities	41%	44%	48%	40%
Shopping opportunities	70%	63%	74%	61%
Decatur as a place to work	81%	81%	83%	78%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	91%	83%	88%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 28: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Employment opportunities	Much above	Much above
Shopping opportunities	Much above	Much above
Decatur as a place to work	Much above	Much above
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	Much above	Much 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 jobs growth in Decatur, 76% responded that it was “too slow,” while 22% reported retail growth as “too slow.” A much smaller proportion of residents in Decatur compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow and about the same number of residents believed that jobs growth was too slow.

FIGURE 29: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOBS GROWTH BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Retail growth seen as too slow	22%	34%	19%	21%
Jobs growth seen as too slow	76%	78%	67%	61%
Percent of respondents				

FIGURE 30: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Retail growth seen as too slow	Much less	Much less
Jobs growth seen as too slow	Similar	Similar

FIGURE 31: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

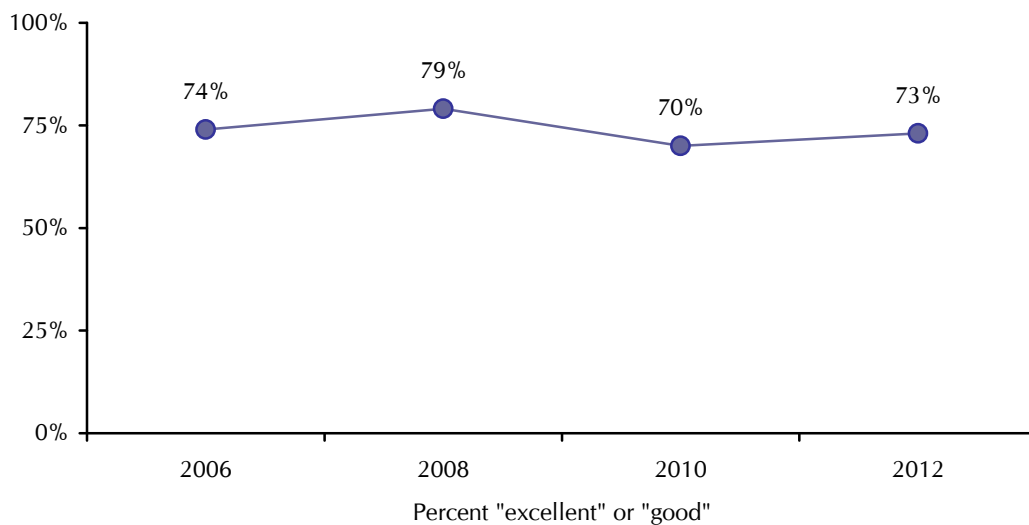


FIGURE 32: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Economic development	Much above	Much above

Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Twenty-four percent of the 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 much higher than the national benchmark and similar to custom comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 33: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BY YEAR

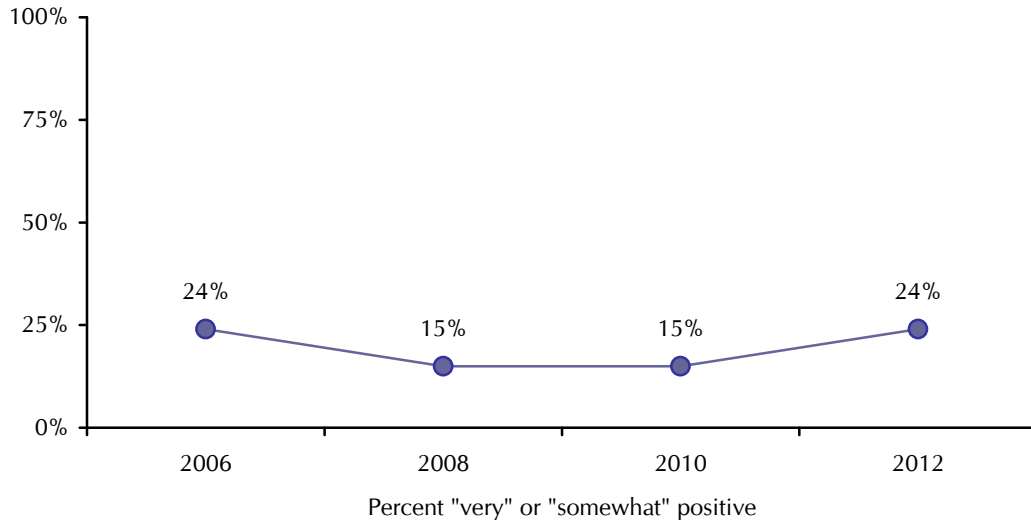


FIGURE 34: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Positive impact of economy on household income	Much above	Similar

## 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 of Decatur. About 89% of those completing the questionnaire said they felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from violent crimes and 87% felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from environmental hazards. Daytime sense of safety was better than nighttime safety. These ratings had generally remained stable over time.

FIGURE 35: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	98%	97%	96%	97%
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	83%	80%	80%	78%
Safety in Decatur's downtown area during the day	98%	97%	96%	96%
Safety in Decatur's downtown area after dark	80%	77%	77%	79%
Safety from violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	89%	83%	86%	81%
Safety from property crimes (e.g, burglary, theft)	72%	65%	72%	63%
Safety from environmental hazards	87%	83%	83%	NA
Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe				

FIGURE 36: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
In your neighborhood during the day	Much above	Much above
In your neighborhood after dark	Above	Much above
In Decatur's downtown area during the day	Much above	Much above
In Decatur's downtown area after dark	Much above	Much above
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Much above	Much above
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Much above	Much above
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	Much above	Much above

As assessed by the survey, 8% 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, 67% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions fewer Decatur residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and a much smaller proportion of Decatur residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police.

FIGURE 37: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
During the past 12 months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	8%	13%	13%	10%
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	67%	87%	71%	74%
Percent "yes"				

FIGURE 38: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Victim of crime	Less	Less
Reported crimes	Much less	Much less

Residents rated seven City public safety services; of these, five were rated much above the benchmark comparisons, one was rated similar to the benchmark comparisons and one was above the national benchmark and similar to the custom benchmark comparison. Police services and fire services received the highest ratings, while traffic enforcement and municipal courts received the lowest ratings. These ratings were similar or higher when compared to previous years.

FIGURE 39: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Police services	89%	90%	91%	84%
Fire services	97%	96%	97%	93%
Crime prevention	86%	79%	78%	73%
Fire prevention and education	88%	83%	87%	75%
Municipal courts	74%	76%	78%	67%
Traffic enforcement	65%	71%	66%	63%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency services)	84%	81%	68%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 40: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Police services	Much above	Much above
Fire services	Much above	Much above
Crime prevention	Much above	Much above
Fire prevention and education	Much above	Much above
Traffic enforcement	Similar	Similar
Courts	Above	Similar
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	Much above	Much 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 increasing 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 81% of survey respondents. Cleanliness of Decatur received the highest rating, and it was much above the benchmarks. The ratings for preservation of natural areas and air quality had increased over time.

FIGURE 41: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Cleanliness of Decatur	91%	88%	90%	NA
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	81%	76%	78%	NA
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	69%	61%	55%	NA
Air quality	71%	64%	62%	59%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 42: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

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

Resident recycling was much greater than recycling reported in comparison communities and had increased since 2006.

FIGURE 43: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

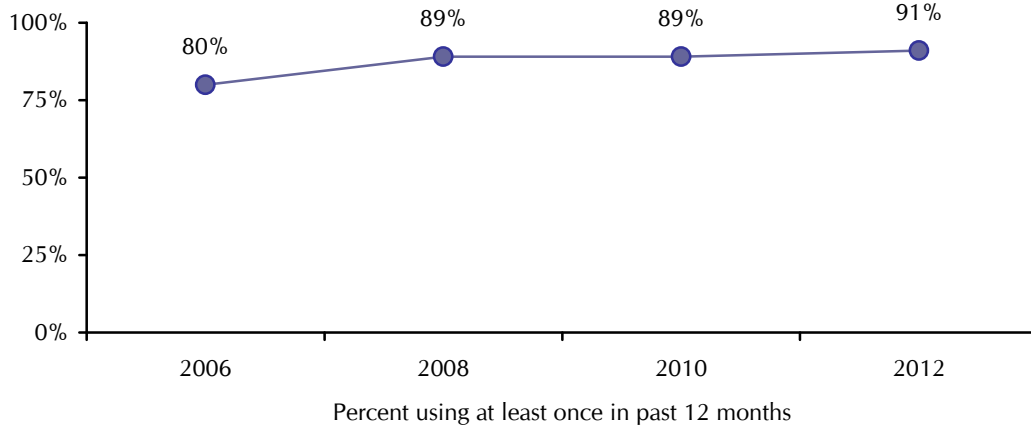


FIGURE 44: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

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

Of the four utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire, three were much higher than the benchmark comparisons and one was similar to the benchmark comparisons. These ratings tended to trend up over time.

FIGURE 45: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Storm drainage	59%	56%	61%	40%
Yard waste pick-up	87%	82%	83%	72%
Recycling	92%	89%	87%	80%
Garbage collection	91%	88%	90%	85%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 46: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

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

## RECREATION AND WELLNESS

### Parks and Recreation

Quality parks and recreation opportunities help to define a community as more than the routine of its business, traffic and hard work. Leisure activities vastly can 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 much higher than the benchmarks and recreation centers or facilities were similar to the benchmarks.

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 much smaller than the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions. Similarly, recreation program use in Decatur was less than use in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 47: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

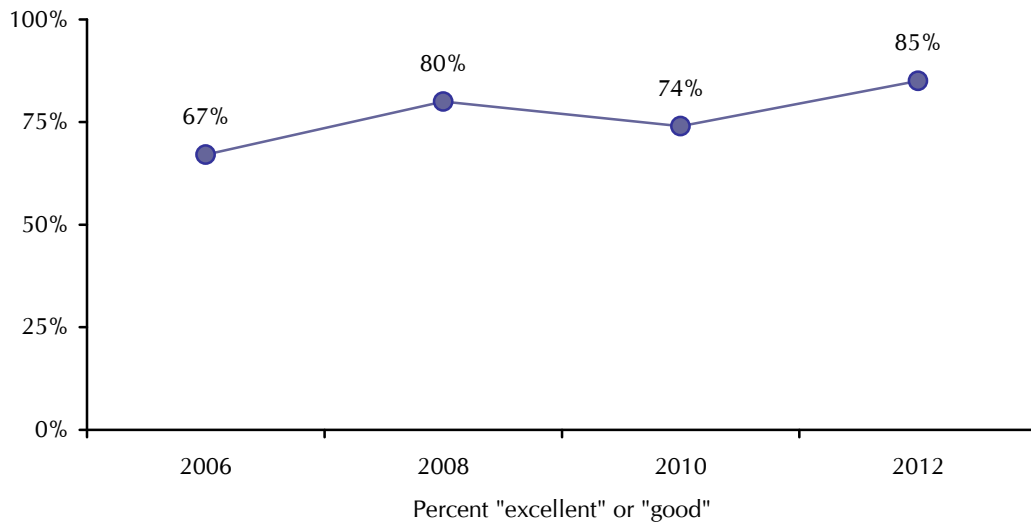


FIGURE 48: COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Recreation opportunities	Much above	Much above

FIGURE 49: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Used Decatur recreation centers	46%	49%	45%	44%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	45%	48%	42%	38%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	90%	88%	87%	82%
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 50: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

FIGURE 51: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
City parks	90%	85%	88%	78%
Recreation programs or classes	84%	83%	87%	77%
Recreation centers or facilities	72%	72%	76%	66%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 52: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
City parks	Much above	Much above
Recreation programs or classes	Much above	Much 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 individuals who simply go to the office and return home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring. 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 80% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 86% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were much above the average of comparison jurisdictions, as were cultural activity opportunities.

About 78% of Decatur residents used the library located in Downtown Decatur at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This participation rate for library use was much above comparison jurisdictions. Library use had remained steady over time.

FIGURE 53: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	80%	77%	83%	78%
Educational opportunities	86%	82%	83%	76%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 54: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

FIGURE 55: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Used DeKalb County Public Library (in downtown Decatur) or its services	78%	75%	76%	74%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	44%	47%	49%	NA
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 56: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Used DeKalb County Public Library (in downtown Decatur) or its services	Much more	Much more
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	Much less	Much less

FIGURE 57: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Public schools	93%	87%	86%	74%
Public library services	90%	89%	93%	86%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 58: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Public schools	Much above	Much above
Public library services	Much above	Much 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 that well being and that provide care when residents are ill.

Among Decatur residents, 73% rated affordable quality health care as “excellent” or “good.” Those ratings were much above the ratings of comparison communities.

FIGURE 59: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Availability of affordable quality health care	73%	68%	60%	63%
Availability of affordable quality food	83%	78%	81%	84%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 60: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Availability of affordable quality health care	Much above	Much above
Availability of affordable quality food	Much above	Much 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.

Almost all 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. Almost all felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.” Most survey respondents felt the City of Decatur was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. The availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents but was much higher than the benchmarks. Ratings for sense of community, openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds and Decatur as a place to retire had increased over time.

FIGURE 61: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Sense of community	92%	87%	90%	84%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	90%	88%	87%	82%
Availability of affordable quality child care	55%	50%	52%	51%
Decatur as a place to raise children	95%	90%	93%	90%
Decatur as a place to retire	78%	75%	76%	65%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 62: COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BENCHMARKS

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



Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 73% to 87% with ratings of “excellent” or “good.” These services were all much above the benchmarks. The ratings for services to youth and services to low-income people had increased over time.

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

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Services to seniors	79%	73%	77%	73%
Services to youth	87%	80%	84%	68%
Services to low-income people	73%	58%	64%	48%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 64: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Services to seniors	Much above	Much above
Services to youth	Much above	Much above
Services to low income people	Much above	Much above

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Community leaders 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 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. This survey information is essential for public communication and for helping local government staff to conceive strategies for reaching reluctant voters whose confidence in government may need boosting prior to important referenda.

### 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 and opportunities to attend or participate in community matters in the City of Decatur favorably.

Ratings of civic engagement opportunities were much above ratings from comparison jurisdictions where these questions were asked.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Opportunities to volunteer	90%	89%	87%	NA
Opportunities to participate in community matters	88%	82%	81%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 66: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Much above	Much above
Opportunities to volunteer	Much above	Much above

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting, watched a meeting of local elected officials, or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions. These rates of participation varied compared to the national and custom benchmarks. Reported volunteerism had increased over the past six years.

FIGURE 67: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR<sup>1</sup>

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	36%	32%	39%	32%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	24%	31%	29%	27%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	57%	49%	55%	43%
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	30%	30%	33%	NA
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	93%	94%	96%	NA
Percent participating at least once in the last 12 months				

FIGURE 68: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

<sup>1</sup> Over the past few years, local governments have adopted communication strategies that embrace the Internet and new media. In 2010, the question, “Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television” was revised to include “the Internet or other media” to better reflect this trend.

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 85% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was much higher than that of comparison communities.

FIGURE 69: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR BY YEAR<sup>2</sup>

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Registered to vote	91%	91%	88%	88%
Voted in the last general election	85%	86%	88%	77%
Percent "yes"				

FIGURE 70: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 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, 82% 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

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	98%	95%	96%	86%
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decaturga.com)	82%	79%	80%	50%
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 72: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	Much more	Much more
Visited the City of Decatur Web site	Much more	Much more

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

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Public information services	85%	82%	82%	69%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 74: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Public information services	Much above	Much above

## Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 91% of respondents and 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

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	91%	85%	88%	NA
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	88%	87%	89%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 76: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

Residents in Decatur reported a strong amount of neighborliness. About two-thirds indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors at least several times a week. This amount of contact with neighbors was much more than the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 77: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
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)?	63%	62%	58%	NA
Percent "at least several times per week"				

FIGURE 78: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Has contact with neighbors at least several times per week	Much more	Much 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 welcoming citizen involvement, 87% rated it as “excellent” or “good.” Of these four ratings, all were much above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 79: PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
The value of services for the taxes paid to Decatur*	72%	65%	64%	63%
The overall direction that Decatur is taking*	85%	80%	80%	75%
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement*	87%	82%	77%	75%
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	93%	91%	94%	88%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

\* For jurisdictions that have conducted The NCS prior to 2008, a change in the wording of response options may cause a decline in the percent of residents who offer a positive perspective on public trust. It is well to factor in the possible change due to question wording this way: if you show an increase, you may have found even more improvement with the same question wording; if you show no change, you may have shown a slight increase with the same question wording; if you show a decrease, community sentiment is probably about stable.

FIGURE 80: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

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

On average, residents of the City of Decatur gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to the State Government. The overall quality of services delivered by the City of Decatur was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 94% of survey participants. The City of Decatur’s rating was much above the benchmark when compared to other communities. Ratings of overall City services have improved over time.

FIGURE 81: RATING OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF DECATUR BY YEAR

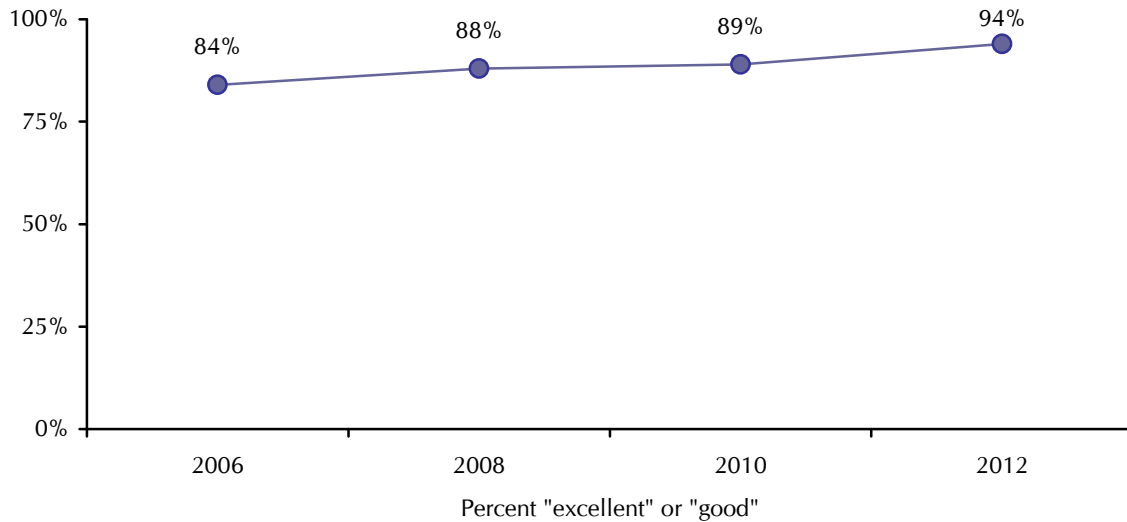


FIGURE 82: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BY YEAR

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Services provided by City of Decatur	94%	89%	88%	84%
Services provided by the Federal Government	45%	42%	37%	30%
Services provided by the State Government	29%	26%	33%	30%
Services provided by DeKalb County Government	37%	36%	39%	NA
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 83: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Services provided by the City of Decatur	Much above	Much above
Services provided by the Federal Government	Above	Above
Services provided by the State Government	Below	Much below
Services provided by DeKalb County Government	Much below	Much 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, over the phone or via email in the last 12 months; the 54% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is similar to the benchmark comparisons) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. City employees were rated highly; 85% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good." Employees' ratings were higher than the benchmarks.

FIGURE 84: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

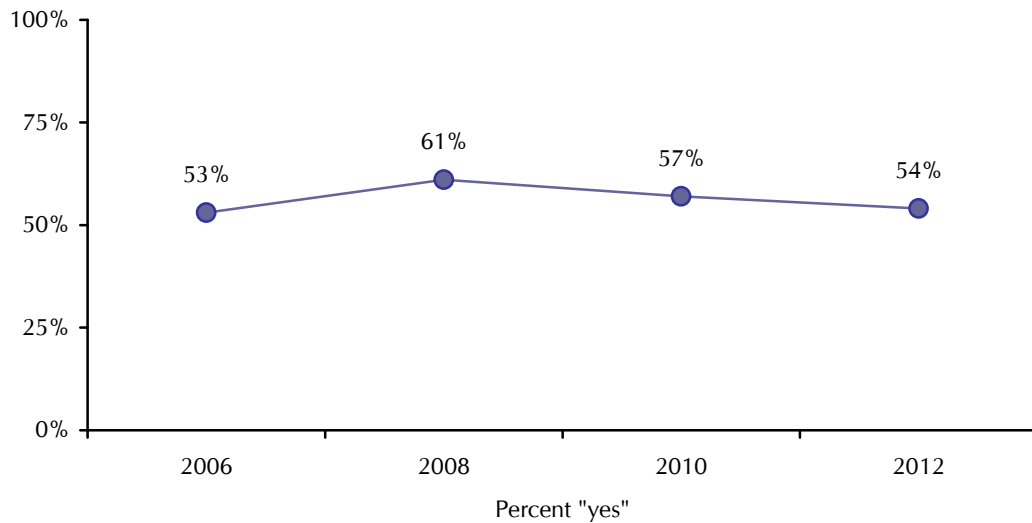


FIGURE 85: CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

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

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

	2012	2010	2008	2006
Knowledge	86%	86%	84%	83%
Responsiveness	86%	79%	80%	75%
Courtesy	86%	80%	81%	81%
Overall impression	85%	78%	77%	79%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 87: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Populations 15,000 to 40,000 in the Southern region comparison
Knowledge	Much above	Above
Responsiveness	Much above	Much above
Courteousness	Much above	Much above
Overall impression	Much above	Much 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 (KDA). 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 KDA, 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 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. Because a strong correlation is not the same as a cause, there is no guarantee that improving ratings on key drivers necessarily will improve ratings. What is certain from these analyses is that key drivers are good predictors of overall resident opinion and that the key drivers presented may be useful focus areas to consider for enhancement of overall service ratings.

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

- Economic development
- Police services
- Preservation of natural areas
- Public information
- Recycling

## CITY OF DECATUR ACTION CHART™

The 2012 City of Decatur Action Chart™ on the following page combines three dimensions of performance:

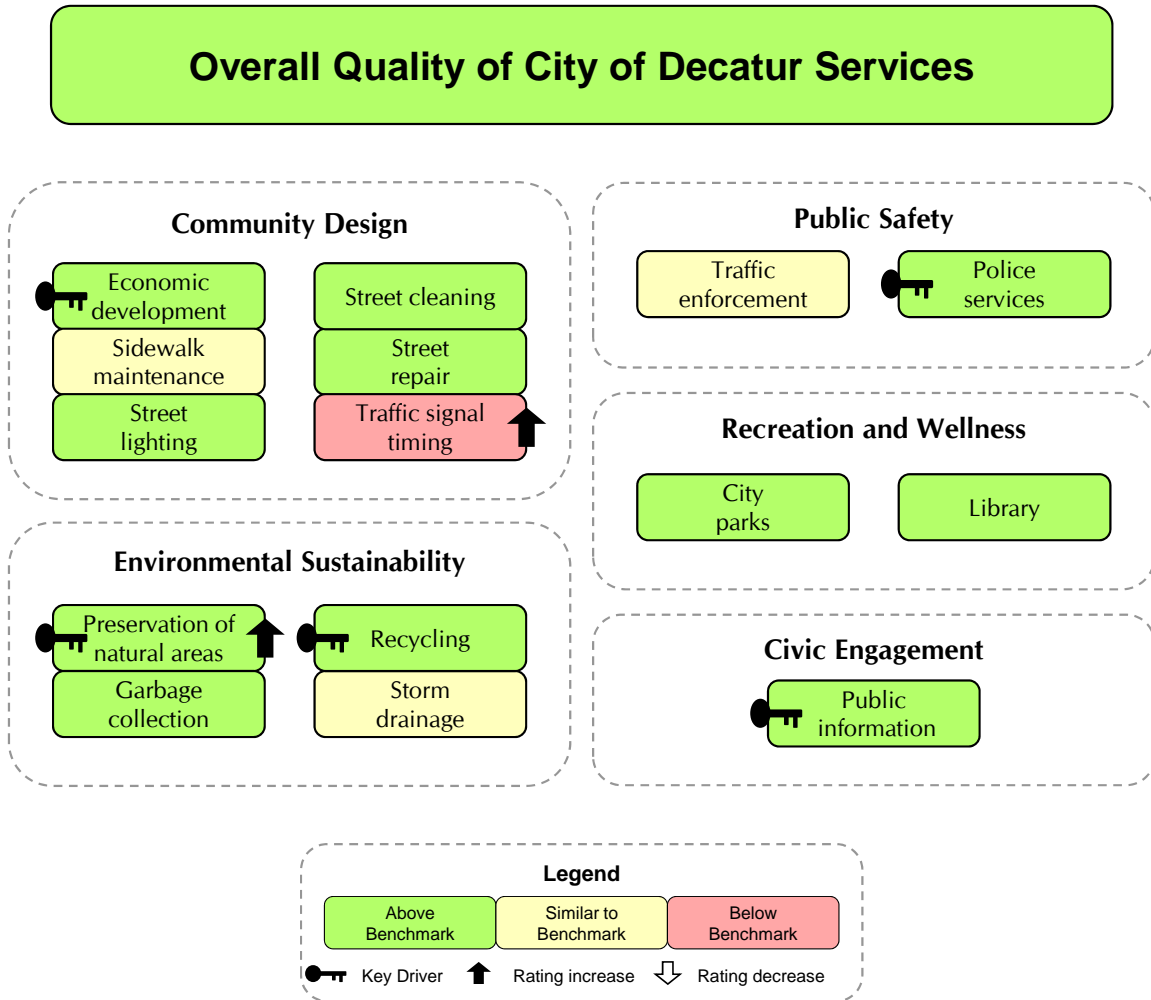
- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the national benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon (🔑) next to a service box indicates it as a key driver for the City.
- 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, 12 were above the benchmark, one was below the benchmark and three were similar to the benchmark.

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 or trending lower in the current 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 88: CITY OF DECATUR ACTION CHART™



## 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 dataset. 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.

As staff review key drivers, not all drivers may resonate as likely links to residents' perspectives about overall service quality. For example, in Decatur, planning and zoning and police services may be obvious links to overall service delivery (and each is a key driver from our national database), since it could be easy for staff to see how residents' view of overall service delivery could be colored by how well they perceive police and land use planning to be delivered. But animal control could be a surprise. Before rejecting a key driver that does not pass the first test of conventional wisdom, consider whether residents' opinions about overall service quality could reasonably be influenced by this unexpected driver. For example, in the case of animal control, was there a visible case of violation prior to the survey data collection? Do Decatur residents have different expectations for animal control than what current policy provides? Are the rare instances of violation serious enough to cause a word of mouth campaign about service delivery?

If, after deeper review, the "suspect" driver still does not square with your understanding of the services that could influence residents' perspectives about overall service quality (and if that driver is not a core service or a key driver from NRC's national research), put action in that area on hold and wait to see if it appears as a key driver the next time the survey is conducted.

In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated (in **bold** typeface and with the symbol "•"), the City of Decatur key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys. In general, key drivers below the benchmark may be targeted for improvement. Additionally, we have indicated (with the symbol "◦") those services that neither are local nor national key drivers nor are they core services. It is these services that could be considered first for resource reductions.

FIGURE 89: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	City of Decatur Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
• Police services	✓	✓	✓
Fire services			✓
◦ Traffic enforcement			
Street repair			✓
◦ Street cleaning			
◦ Street lighting			
◦ Sidewalk maintenance			
◦ Traffic signal timing			
Garbage collection	✓		✓
◦ Recycling	✓		
Storm drainage			✓
◦ City parks			
• Economic development	✓	✓	
◦ Public library			
• Public information services	✓	✓	
Preservation of natural areas	✓		

- Key driver overlaps with national and or core services
- Service may be targeted for reductions it is not a key driver or core service

## CUSTOM QUESTIONS

“Don’t know” responses have been removed from the following questions, when applicable.

Custom Question 1	
Currently, healthy trees can be removed from single family residences without a permit or a tree replacement plan. To what extent do you support or oppose amending the City's tree ordinance to require a city-issued permit to remove trees from private property?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	23%
Somewhat support	32%
Somewhat oppose	22%
Strongly oppose	23%
Total	100%

Custom Question 2	
Do you think that the current level of traffic enforcement by the Decatur Police Department is too little, too much or about right?	Percent of respondents
Too much	8%
About right	75%
Too little	17%
Total	100%

Custom Question 3	
Please indicate the extent you would support or oppose financing that would use tax funds for the renovation of the old Beacon School complex, including construction of a new Decatur Police Department headquarters on West Trinity Place.	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	26%
Somewhat support	51%
Somewhat oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	8%
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	72%	24%	4%	0%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	63%	30%	5%	2%	100%
Decatur as a place to raise children	69%	27%	4%	1%	100%
Decatur as a place to work	46%	35%	16%	3%	100%
Decatur as a place to retire	38%	40%	15%	7%	100%
The overall quality of life in Decatur	58%	38%	3%	1%	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	49%	43%	7%	1%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	49%	40%	8%	2%	100%
Overall appearance of Decatur	38%	55%	7%	1%	100%
Cleanliness of Decatur	36%	55%	8%	1%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Decatur	26%	55%	18%	1%	100%
Variety of housing options	17%	54%	26%	3%	100%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	38%	53%	8%	1%	100%
Shopping opportunities	21%	49%	26%	4%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	34%	47%	18%	2%	100%
Recreational opportunities	34%	52%	13%	2%	100%
Employment opportunities	9%	32%	45%	14%	100%
Educational opportunities	44%	42%	12%	2%	100%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	43%	48%	9%	0%	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	42%	46%	11%	1%	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	48%	43%	8%	1%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	46%	42%	11%	1%	100%
Ease of car travel in Decatur	17%	46%	30%	6%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	21%	42%	27%	11%	100%
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur	43%	43%	10%	4%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	22%	47%	23%	8%	100%
Ease of walking in Decatur	50%	42%	7%	2%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	26%	43%	25%	6%	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
Traffic flow on major streets	6%	36%	45%	14%	100%
Amount of public parking	10%	28%	43%	19%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	9%	36%	44%	11%	100%
Availability of affordable quality child care	9%	46%	33%	12%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	20%	53%	23%	4%	100%
Availability of affordable quality food	38%	45%	15%	2%	100%
Air quality	20%	52%	26%	3%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	25%	56%	17%	1%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	54%	40%	5%	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%	6%	61%	29%	3%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	1%	21%	72%	6%	0%	100%
Jobs growth	21%	55%	23%	0%	1%	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	17%
Minor problem	54%
Moderate problem	26%
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)	46%	43%	7%	3%	1%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	23%	49%	14%	13%	1%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	48%	39%	9%	3%	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	78%	20%	1%	1%	0%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	34%	49%	7%	8%	1%	100%
In Decatur's downtown area during the day	78%	20%	1%	1%	0%	100%
In Decatur's downtown area after dark	30%	50%	11%	8%	1%	100%

Question 7: Crime Victim	
During the past 12 months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents
No	92%
Yes	8%
Total	100%

Question 8: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	33%
Yes	67%
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 DeKalb County Public Library (in downtown Decatur) or its services	22%	25%	28%	13%	12%	100%
Used Decatur recreation centers	54%	22%	15%	6%	4%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	55%	23%	14%	4%	4%	100%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	10%	20%	31%	16%	24%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Decatur	71%	11%	8%	3%	8%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	64%	29%	6%	1%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other City-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	76%	17%	5%	1%	2%	100%
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	2%	10%	62%	17%	9%	100%
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decalbga.com)	18%	23%	42%	13%	5%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	9%	4%	6%	9%	72%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	43%	27%	20%	4%	6%	100%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	56%	13%	8%	6%	16%	100%
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	70%	14%	10%	2%	5%	100%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	7%	20%	41%	15%	16%	100%
Visited the Open City Hall online forum	91%	6%	2%	1%	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	34%
Several times a month	17%
Less than several times a month	19%
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%	2%	100%
Fire services	57%	39%	3%	0%	100%
Crime prevention	28%	58%	13%	1%	100%
Fire prevention and education	35%	52%	11%	2%	100%
Municipal courts	11%	63%	19%	6%	100%
Traffic enforcement	18%	47%	29%	6%	100%
Street repair	9%	41%	35%	15%	100%
Street cleaning	20%	51%	25%	4%	100%
Street lighting	17%	55%	22%	6%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	15%	41%	32%	13%	100%
Traffic signal timing	7%	37%	34%	22%	100%
Bus or transit services	16%	56%	22%	6%	100%
Garbage collection	50%	41%	8%	1%	100%
Recycling	58%	34%	7%	1%	100%
Yard waste pick-up	48%	39%	11%	2%	100%
Storm drainage	12%	48%	30%	11%	100%
City parks	40%	50%	8%	1%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	27%	57%	14%	2%	100%
Recreation centers or facilities	19%	53%	25%	3%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	14%	49%	29%	8%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	9%	42%	33%	15%	100%
Animal control	15%	55%	20%	10%	100%
Economic development	17%	56%	25%	2%	100%
Services to seniors	27%	52%	15%	6%	100%
Services to youth	37%	50%	12%	1%	100%
Services to low-income people	19%	54%	22%	6%	100%
Public library services	42%	47%	9%	1%	100%
Public information services	28%	57%	13%	1%	100%
Public schools	58%	36%	6%	1%	100%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	29%	55%	13%	3%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	19%	50%	27%	5%	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	42%	52%	5%	1%	100%
The Federal Government	6%	39%	40%	14%	100%
The State Government	3%	26%	50%	20%	100%
DeKalb County Government	6%	31%	41%	22%	100%

Question 13: Contact with City Employees	
Have you had any in-person, phone or email 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	46%
Yes	54%
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	43%	43%	11%	3%	100%
Responsiveness	46%	41%	6%	8%	100%
Courtesy	54%	31%	9%	6%	100%
Overall impression	45%	41%	8%	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	24%	49%	21%	7%	100%
The overall direction that Decatur is taking	30%	55%	13%	2%	100%
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement	42%	45%	10%	3%	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	78%	18%	2%	2%	100%
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	70%	20%	4%	6%	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	19%
Neutral	53%
Somewhat negative	19%
Very negative	5%
Total	100%

Question 18a: Custom Question 1	
Currently, healthy trees can be removed from single family residences without a permit or a tree replacement plan. To what extent do you support or oppose amending the City's tree ordinance to require a city-issued permit to remove trees from private property?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	23%
Somewhat support	32%
Somewhat oppose	22%
Strongly oppose	23%
Total	100%

Question 18b: Custom Question 2	
Do you think that the current level of traffic enforcement by the Decatur Police Department is too little, too much or about right?	Percent of respondents
Too much	8%
About right	75%
Too little	17%
Total	100%

Question 18c: Custom Question 3	
Please indicate the extent you would support or oppose financing that would use tax funds for the renovation of the old Beacon School complex, including construction of a new Decatur Police Department headquarters on West Trinity Place.	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	26%
Somewhat support	51%
Somewhat oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	8%
Total	100%

Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	29%
Yes, full-time	60%
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	66%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) with other children or adults	5%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	10%
Walk	5%
Bicycle	1%
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	18%
2 to 5 years	26%
6 to 10 years	21%
11 to 20 years	19%
More than 20 years	16%
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	52%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	11%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	34%
Mobile home	0%
Other	3%
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	36%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	64%
Total	100%

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost	
About how much is the 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	5%
\$300 to \$599 per month	8%
\$600 to \$999 per month	24%
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	21%
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	25%
\$2,500 or more per month	17%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	65%
Yes	35%
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	82%
Yes	18%
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	17%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	14%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	27%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	19%
\$150,000 or more	22%
Total	100%

Question D10: Ethnicity	
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	96%
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	4%
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	4%
Black or African American	19%
White	77%
Other	4%
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	25%
35 to 44 years	24%
45 to 54 years	19%
55 to 64 years	13%
65 to 74 years	11%
75 years or older	6%
Total	100%

Question D13: Gender	
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents
Female	59%
Male	41%
Total	100%

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	9%
Yes	88%
Ineligible to vote	3%
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	14%
Yes	81%
Ineligible to vote	5%
Total	100%

Question D16: Has Cell Phone	
Do you have a cell phone?	Percent of respondents
No	4%
Yes	96%
Total	100%

Question D17: Has Land Line	
Do you have a land line at home?	Percent of respondents
No	46%
Yes	54%
Total	100%

Question D18: Primary Phone	
If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?	Percent of respondents
Cell	37%
Land line	43%
Both	20%
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	72%	335	24%	113	3%	16	0%	2	0%	2	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	63%	295	30%	141	5%	23	2%	9	0%	0	100%	467
Decatur as a place to raise children	57%	266	22%	103	3%	15	1%	3	17%	81	100%	468
Decatur as a place to work	29%	137	22%	103	10%	48	2%	9	36%	170	100%	466
Decatur as a place to retire	26%	120	27%	125	10%	48	5%	22	32%	149	100%	464
The overall quality of life in Decatur	58%	270	38%	175	3%	14	1%	4	1%	4	100%	467

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	48%	220	42%	195	7%	33	1%	3	2%	9	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	48%	223	39%	183	8%	38	2%	10	2%	12	100%	464
Overall appearance of Decatur	38%	174	55%	253	7%	32	1%	4	0%	1	100%	463
Cleanliness of Decatur	36%	167	55%	253	8%	37	1%	4	0%	1	100%	461
Overall quality of new development in Decatur	23%	108	49%	225	16%	73	1%	6	10%	48	100%	461
Variety of housing options	16%	74	50%	233	24%	110	3%	15	7%	32	100%	464
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Decatur	38%	175	52%	242	8%	38	1%	3	1%	5	100%	462
Shopping opportunities	21%	97	49%	228	26%	121	4%	17	0%	2	100%	465
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	32%	148	44%	205	17%	80	2%	7	5%	24	100%	464
Recreational opportunities	32%	149	49%	227	12%	57	2%	8	5%	23	100%	464
Employment opportunities	6%	26	19%	88	27%	122	8%	38	40%	186	100%	459
Educational opportunities	36%	169	34%	159	10%	45	1%	6	18%	83	100%	463

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 social events and activities	41%	188	46%	213	9%	40	0%	1	4%	21	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	33%	153	36%	166	8%	39	1%	5	22%	102	100%	465
Opportunities to volunteer	41%	188	37%	170	7%	32	1%	5	14%	66	100%	463
Opportunities to participate in community matters	42%	191	39%	177	10%	46	1%	4	8%	39	100%	457
Ease of car travel in Decatur	17%	78	45%	209	29%	134	6%	29	3%	15	100%	464
Ease of bus travel in Decatur	12%	54	24%	110	16%	72	6%	29	42%	191	100%	456
Ease of rail or subway travel in Decatur	40%	183	39%	182	9%	40	4%	19	8%	38	100%	462
Ease of bicycle travel in Decatur	18%	81	38%	171	18%	83	6%	27	20%	93	100%	456
Ease of walking in Decatur	49%	229	41%	192	7%	31	2%	9	1%	4	100%	464
Availability of paths and walking trails	24%	112	40%	186	23%	107	5%	25	7%	30	100%	460
Traffic flow on major streets	6%	27	35%	163	45%	206	14%	63	0%	2	100%	460
Amount of public parking	10%	45	27%	125	41%	188	18%	83	5%	22	100%	463
Availability of affordable quality housing	8%	36	30%	140	37%	171	9%	41	16%	74	100%	462
Availability of affordable quality child care	3%	15	17%	78	12%	56	4%	20	63%	289	100%	458
Availability of affordable quality health care	14%	63	36%	167	16%	74	3%	13	31%	144	100%	460
Availability of affordable quality food	36%	168	44%	203	15%	68	2%	9	3%	16	100%	465
Air quality	18%	83	48%	222	24%	109	3%	13	7%	32	100%	459
Quality of overall natural environment in Decatur	25%	115	56%	258	17%	79	1%	6	1%	6	100%	464
Overall image or reputation of Decatur	53%	245	39%	182	5%	24	1%	6	2%	8	100%	465

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	4%	20	43%	200	21%	95	2%	10	29%	136	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	1%	6	18%	82	62%	286	5%	23	0%	1	14%	64	100%	463
Jobs growth	9%	39	23%	103	9%	42	0%	0	0%	2	59%	272	100%	458

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%	69
Minor problem	49%	221
Moderate problem	24%	106
Major problem	3%	11
Don't know	10%	44
Total	100%	451

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)	45%	208	42%	192	7%	33	3%	14	1%	3	2%	8	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	22%	102	47%	217	13%	61	13%	60	1%	5	3%	12	100%	458
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	42%	192	34%	154	8%	35	3%	12	1%	3	13%	61	100%	457

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	78%	360	20%	91	1%	5	1%	5	0%	0	0%	1	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	34%	157	49%	226	7%	34	8%	37	1%	5	1%	3	100%	463
In Decatur's downtown area during the day	78%	360	19%	90	1%	5	1%	4	0%	0	1%	5	100%	464
In Decatur's downtown area after dark	29%	135	48%	221	10%	49	8%	36	1%	5	4%	17	100%	463

Question 7: Crime Victim		
During the past 12 months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	92%	421
Yes	8%	38
Don't know	0%	1
Total	100%	460

Question 8: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	32%	12
Yes	64%	24
Don't know	4%	1
Total	100%	36

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 DeKalb County Public Library (in downtown Decatur) or its services	22%	104	25%	116	28%	131	13%	59	12%	55	100%
Used Decatur recreation centers	54%	246	22%	100	15%	66	6%	26	4%	18	100%	456
Participated in a recreation program or activity	55%	250	23%	103	14%	66	4%	17	4%	18	100%	453
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	10%	45	20%	90	31%	141	16%	71	24%	111	100%	457
Ridden a local bus within Decatur	71%	324	11%	48	8%	34	3%	13	8%	37	100%	455
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	64%	293	29%	132	6%	26	1%	5	1%	4	100%	460
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other City-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	76%	349	17%	77	5%	22	1%	3	2%	10	100%	460
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter	2%	9	10%	46	62%	285	17%	80	9%	41	100%	460
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decalbga.com)	18%	82	23%	103	42%	189	13%	59	5%	23	100%	455
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	9%	39	4%	16	6%	28	9%	42	72%	330	100%	456
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Decatur	43%	197	27%	123	20%	90	4%	21	6%	26	100%	458
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Decatur	56%	254	13%	62	8%	38	6%	29	16%	75	100%	458
Participated in a club or civic group in Decatur	70%	320	14%	64	10%	45	2%	8	5%	23	100%	459
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	7%	32	20%	93	41%	189	15%	71	16%	72	100%	457
Visited the Open City Hall online forum	91%	419	6%	28	2%	7	1%	4	1%	5	100%	463



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%	138
Several times a week	34%	155
Several times a month	17%	80
Less than several times a month	19%	88
Total	100%	460

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Police services	42%	190	40%	184	8%	39	2%	8	8%	35	100%
Fire services	43%	198	30%	137	2%	11	0%	0	24%	110	100%	457
Crime prevention	22%	99	46%	207	10%	47	1%	2	22%	98	100%	454
Fire prevention and education	21%	94	31%	139	6%	28	1%	4	41%	188	100%	453
Municipal courts	5%	21	26%	118	8%	36	3%	12	59%	266	100%	452
Traffic enforcement	15%	66	40%	179	24%	109	5%	22	16%	69	100%	447
Street repair	9%	41	39%	176	33%	150	14%	63	5%	24	100%	454
Street cleaning	18%	83	48%	217	23%	106	4%	19	7%	31	100%	456
Street lighting	17%	76	54%	245	22%	99	5%	25	2%	10	100%	454
Sidewalk maintenance	14%	63	39%	176	31%	140	12%	55	4%	16	100%	450
Traffic signal timing	6%	29	36%	162	33%	151	21%	97	4%	16	100%	455
Bus or transit services	10%	45	36%	161	14%	62	4%	18	36%	159	100%	445
Garbage collection	47%	213	38%	173	8%	36	1%	4	7%	31	100%	457
Recycling	54%	247	31%	143	7%	30	1%	3	7%	34	100%	458
Yard waste pick-up	35%	161	28%	128	8%	37	1%	6	27%	125	100%	458
Storm drainage	10%	44	39%	176	24%	111	9%	40	19%	85	100%	456
City parks	37%	166	46%	207	8%	34	1%	5	9%	41	100%	453
Recreation programs or classes	16%	70	32%	146	8%	36	1%	4	43%	193	100%	449

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Decatur:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Recreation centers or facilities	11%	51	31%	141	15%	66	2%	9	41%	186	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	9%	40	32%	143	19%	84	5%	25	35%	160	100%	451
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	6%	26	26%	118	21%	93	9%	42	38%	173	100%	452
Animal control	9%	40	33%	152	12%	56	6%	28	39%	177	100%	452
Economic development	13%	56	42%	187	19%	83	2%	8	25%	112	100%	445
Services to seniors	11%	48	20%	90	6%	27	2%	10	61%	277	100%	453
Services to youth	19%	86	26%	116	6%	27	1%	2	48%	217	100%	449
Services to low-income people	7%	32	21%	94	8%	37	2%	10	62%	277	100%	451
Public library services	37%	166	41%	185	8%	35	1%	6	14%	62	100%	453
Public information services	21%	97	44%	197	10%	46	1%	5	24%	108	100%	452
Public schools	41%	184	25%	114	4%	19	0%	2	30%	134	100%	452
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	20%	89	38%	169	9%	41	2%	10	31%	140	100%	449
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	14%	61	36%	162	20%	87	3%	15	27%	119	100%	444

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	41%	185	51%	230	5%	24	1%	4	3%	12	100%
The Federal Government	5%	23	33%	150	34%	154	12%	55	15%	69	100%	452
The State Government	3%	12	22%	101	43%	192	17%	78	15%	68	100%	451
DeKalb County Government	5%	22	26%	119	35%	160	19%	85	15%	67	100%	452

Question 13: Contact with City Employees		
Have you had any in-person, phone or email 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	46%	208
Yes	54%	246
Total	100%	454

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	41%	101	42%	103	11%	26	3%	7	3%	8	100%
Responsiveness	46%	112	41%	99	6%	14	8%	20	0%	0	100%	245
Courtesy	54%	133	31%	77	9%	21	6%	14	0%	0	100%	245
Overall impression	45%	109	41%	100	8%	19	7%	16	0%	0	100%	245

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	20%	91	41%	187	18%	80	6%	25	16%	75	100%
The overall direction that Decatur is taking	27%	124	50%	232	11%	52	2%	10	9%	41	100%	460
The job Decatur government does at welcoming citizen involvement	34%	155	37%	168	8%	37	2%	11	19%	88	100%	459

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	77%	358	18%	84	2%	11	2%	10	0%	1	100%
Remain in Decatur for the next five years	69%	318	19%	89	4%	19	6%	27	2%	8	100%	461

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%	17
Somewhat positive	19%	88
Neutral	53%	245
Somewhat negative	19%	85
Very negative	5%	23
Total	100%	458

Question 18a: Custom Question 1		
Currently, healthy trees can be removed from single family residences without a permit or a tree replacement plan. To what extent do you support or oppose amending the City's tree ordinance to require a city-issued permit to remove trees from private property?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	23%	107
Somewhat support	32%	146
Somewhat oppose	22%	103
Strongly oppose	23%	103
Total	100%	459

Question 18b: Custom Question 2		
Do you think that the current level of traffic enforcement by the Decatur Police Department is too little, too much or about right?	Percent of respondents	Count
Too much	7%	33
About right	65%	301
Too little	15%	69
Don't know	12%	57
Total	100%	460

Question 18c: Custom Question 3		
Please indicate the extent you would support or oppose financing that would use tax funds for the renovation of the old Beacon School complex, including construction of a new Decatur Police Department headquarters on West Trinity Place.	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	26%	115
Somewhat support	51%	224
Somewhat oppose	14%	61
Strongly oppose	8%	36
Total	100%	437

Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	29%	130
Yes, full-time	60%	272
Yes, part-time	11%	49
Total	100%	451

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	66%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) with other children or adults	5%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	10%
Walk	5%
Bicycle	1%
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	18%	84
2 to 5 years	26%	120
6 to 10 years	21%	96
11 to 20 years	19%	86
More than 20 years	16%	74
Total	100%	460

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	52%	241
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	11%	50
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	34%	157
Mobile home	0%	0
Other	3%	12
Total	100%	460

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	36%	162
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	64%	283
Total	100%	445

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost		
About how much is the 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	5%	23
\$300 to \$599 per month	8%	36
\$600 to \$999 per month	24%	106
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	21%	92
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	25%	112
\$2,500 or more per month	17%	77
Total	100%	447

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	65%	297
Yes	35%	160
Total	100%	457

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	82%	372
Yes	18%	84
Total	100%	456

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	17%	75
\$25,000 to \$49,999	14%	61
\$50,000 to \$99,999	27%	120
\$100,000 to \$149,000	19%	84
\$150,000 or more	22%	98
Total	100%	437

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	96%	434
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	4%	19
Total	100%	453

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%	5
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	4%	18
Black or African American	19%	84
White	77%	349
Other	4%	16
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%	13
25 to 34 years	25%	114
35 to 44 years	24%	109
45 to 54 years	19%	85
55 to 64 years	13%	61
65 to 74 years	11%	49
75 years or older	6%	26
Total	100%	456

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	59%	266
Male	41%	183
Total	100%	449

Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	9%	40
Yes	87%	394
Ineligible to vote	3%	13
Don't know	2%	7
Total	100%	454

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	14%	62
Yes	80%	365
Ineligible to vote	5%	23
Don't know	1%	5
Total	100%	455

Question D16: Has Cell Phone		
Do you have a cell phone?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	4%	18
Yes	96%	438
Total	100%	456

Question D17: Has Land Line		
Do you have a land line at home?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	46%	207
Yes	54%	247
Total	100%	454

Question D18: Primary Phone		
If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?	Percent of respondents	Count
Cell	37%	85
Land line	43%	99
Both	20%	46
Total	100%	230

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) 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 NCS 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 NCS is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The NCS 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.”

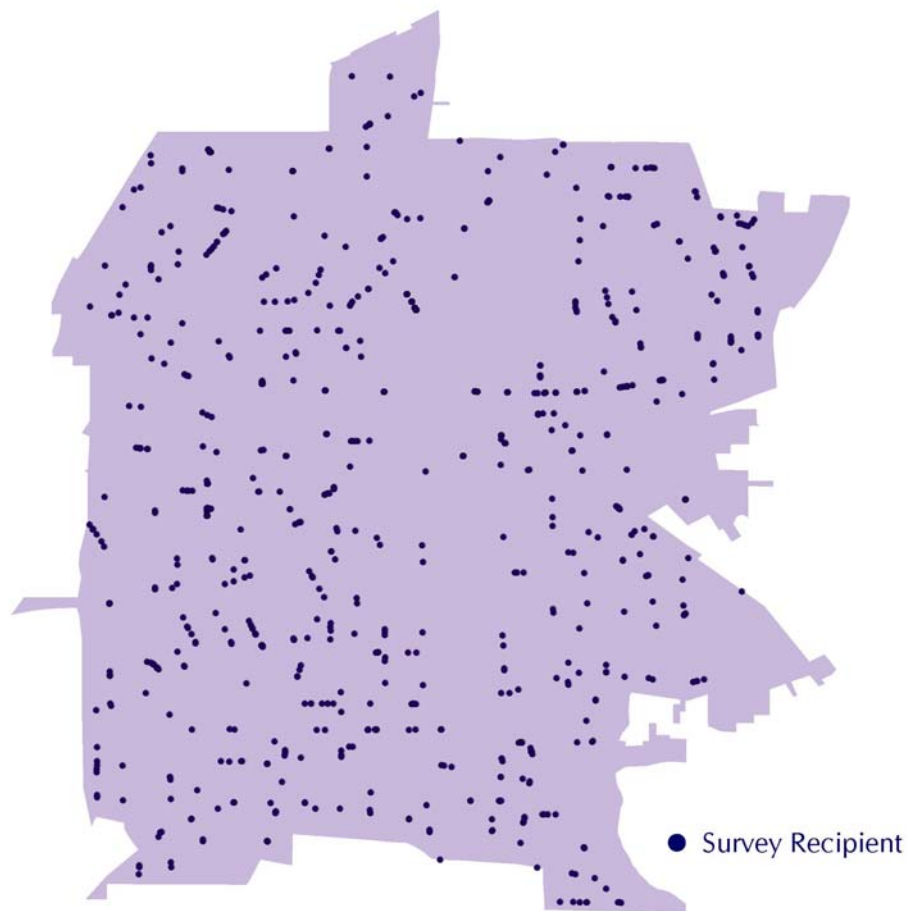
## SURVEY SAMPLING

“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.

FIGURE 90: LOCATION OF SURVEY RECIPIENTS

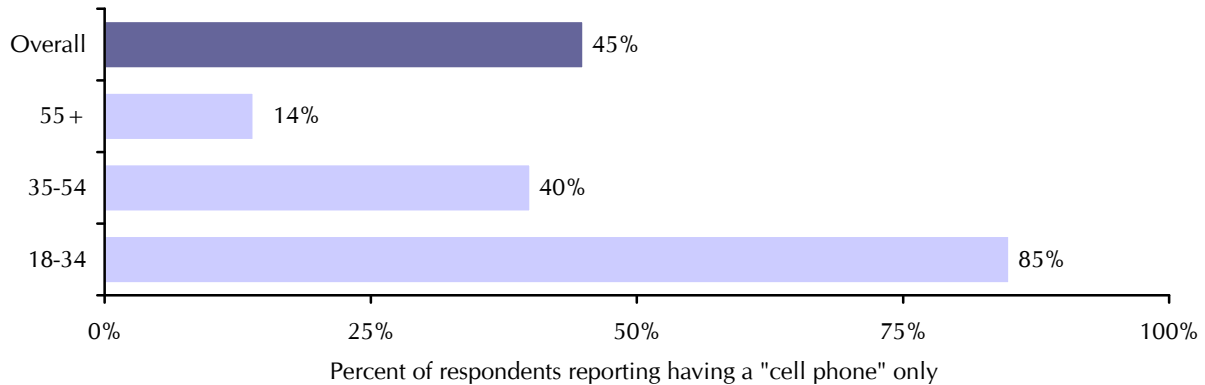
The National Citizen Survey™  
Decatur, GA 2012



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.

In response to the growing number of the cell-phone population (so-called “cord cutters”), which includes a large proportion of young adults, questions about cell phones and land lines are included on The NCS™ questionnaire. As of the middle of 2010 (the most recent estimates available as of the end of 2010), 26.6% of U.S. households had a cell phone but no landline.<sup>3</sup> Among younger adults (age 18-34), 53.7% of households were “cell-only.” Based on survey results, Decatur has a “cord cutter” population greater than the nationwide 2010 estimates.

FIGURE 91: PREVALENCE OF CELL-PHONE ONLY RESPONDENTS IN DECATUR



## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning January 27, 2012. 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. 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. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

## SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

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 level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results because some residents' opinions are relied on to estimate all residents' opinions. The confidence interval for the City of Decatur survey is no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (468 completed surveys).

A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, 95 of the confidence intervals created will include the “true” population response. This theory is applied in practice to mean that the “true” perspective of the target population lies within the confidence interval created for a single survey. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as “excellent” or “good,” then the 4% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201012.pdf>

the range of likely responses for the entire jurisdiction is between 71% and 79%. This source of error is called sampling error. 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. 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.

For subgroups of responses, the margin of error increases because the sample size for the subgroup is smaller. For subgroups of approximately 100 respondents, the margin of error is plus or minus 10 percentage points

### 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 2010 Census and 2005-2009 American Community Survey 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 and 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. Data weighting can adjust up to 5 demographic variables. Several different weighting “schemes” may be 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, GA Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm <sup>4</sup>	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
<b>Housing</b>			
Rent home	37%	27%	37%
Own home	63%	73%	63%
Detached unit	53%	47%	52%
Attached unit	47%	53%	48%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White	75%	79%	74%
Not white	25%	21%	26%
Not Hispanic	97%	98%	96%
Hispanic	3%	2%	4%
White alone, not Hispanic	73%	78%	72%
Hispanic and/or other race	27%	22%	28%
<b>Sex and Age</b>			
Female	58%	65%	59%
Male	42%	35%	41%
18-34 years of age	29%	17%	28%
35-54 years of age	42%	42%	43%
55+ years of age	29%	42%	30%
Females 18-34	18%	12%	18%
Females 35-54	23%	25%	23%
Females 55+	18%	28%	19%
Males 18-34	11%	5%	11%
Males 35-54	20%	16%	20%
Males 55+	11%	14%	11%

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2010 Census/2005-2009 ACS

## 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 are 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 comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant.

### 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 and 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 to 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 for quality ratings were available, the City of Decatur results were generally noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar" to the benchmark. For some questions – those related to resident behavior, circumstance or to a local problem – the comparison to the benchmark is designated as "more," "similar" or "less" (for example, the percent of crime victims, residents visiting a park or residents identifying code enforcement as a problem.) In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of "much," (for example, "much less" or "much above"). These labels come from a statistical comparison of the City of Decatur's rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered "similar" if it is within the margin of error; "above," "below," "more" or "less" if the difference between your jurisdiction's rating and the benchmark is greater the margin of error; and "much above," "much below," "much more" or "much less" if the difference between your jurisdiction's rating and the benchmark is more than twice the margin of error.

## **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

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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Sincerely,



William F. Floyd  
Mayor



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

509 North McDonough Street  
PO Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031



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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Presorted  
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Boulder, CO  
Permit NO. 94

509 North McDonough Street  
PO Box 220  
Decatur, Georgia 30031



**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>

February 2012

Dear City of 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 2012 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the City set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William F. Floyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

William F. Floyd  
Mayor





**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>

February 2012

Dear City of Decatur Resident:

About one week ago, you should have received a copy of the enclosed survey. **If you completed it and sent it back, we thank you for your time and ask you to recycle this survey. Please do not respond twice.** If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, we would appreciate your response. The City of Decatur wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in the City of Decatur's Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the City set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. 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.**

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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 2012 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 matters.....	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
Availability 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
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 12 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 DeKalb County Public Library (in downtown Decatur) or its 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 City-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media.....	1	2	3	4	5
Read Decatur Focus Newsletter .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the City of Decatur Web site (at www.decalbcountyga.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  
 Less than several times a month

# The City of Decatur 2012 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
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, phone or email 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

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:

- Currently, healthy trees can be removed from single family residences without a permit or a tree replacement plan. To what extent do you support or oppose amending the City's tree ordinance to require a city-issued permit to remove trees from private property?  
 Strongly support     Somewhat support     Somewhat oppose     Strongly oppose
- Do you think that the current level of traffic enforcement by the Decatur Police Department is too little, too much or about right?  
 Too much       About right       Too little       Don't know
- Please indicate the extent you would support or oppose financing that would use tax funds for the renovation of the old Beacon School complex, including construction of a new Decatur Police Department headquarters on West Trinity Place.  
 Strongly support     Somewhat support     Somewhat oppose     Strongly oppose

# The City of Decatur 2012 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                       Ineligible to vote
- Yes                      Don't know

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

- No                       Ineligible to vote
- Yes                      Don't know

**D16. Do you have a cell phone?**

- No                       Yes

**D17. Do you have a land line at home?**

- No                       Yes

**D18. If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?**

- Cell                     Land line             Both

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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