



City of Decatur®

Budget Narrative

Budget FY 2023-2024

Budget Narrative

First chartered as a municipality by the State of Georgia in 1823, the City of Decatur serves as the county seat of DeKalb County, a large, urban county in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Decatur's population has steadily increased since 1990 and with almost 25,000 residents as of the 2020 Census, it now exceeds the previous high of 22,000 persons in 1960. The City currently occupies a land area of approximately 4.7 square miles, making it one of the most densely populated cities in the State of Georgia. The City's sustained commitment to a long-range vision with balanced growth and development has resulted in a community well known for its high quality of life, vibrant commercial districts and a model of Smart Growth in the region.

The City of Decatur's central location in DeKalb County and proximity to the City of Atlanta and Emory University make it an attractive location for a wide range of professional services, legal, financial, medical and technology businesses. Decatur is home to educational institutions such as Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary, as well as the headquarters for a number of non-profit organizations including the Task Force for Global Health. A number of locally owned restaurants and retail businesses also make the City of Decatur a destination shopping and dining district in metro-Atlanta. The essential nature of these services and the stability of health and education-related businesses provide a solid basis for the City's economic wellbeing.

The City of Decatur centers on a thriving downtown business district that is surrounded by beautiful, historic neighborhoods reflecting a variety of architectural styles. Downtown Decatur offers a healthy mix of office, retail, restaurant and residential uses designed to encourage walking and an active lifestyle for persons of all ages. New buildings blend with historic commercial buildings and surround a traditional courthouse square. Downtown residents in mid-rise, mixed-use condominiums and apartments have created a new type of neighborhood providing a desirable housing option for empty nesters and young professionals seeking an urban lifestyle. These residents contribute to the economic vitality of the downtown commercial district. Smaller neighborhood commercial centers scattered throughout the City also contribute to the sense of community and vibrancy of surrounding neighborhoods by providing opportunities for residents to walk to a variety of shopping and dining options.

The City's well-regarded local public school system attracts families to the City's neighborhoods. The City Schools of Decatur provide one citywide early childhood education center, five neighborhood K-2 elementary schools, two system-wide 3-5 upper elementary schools, one middle school and one high school.

The City of Decatur is authorized to levy a property tax on both real and personal properties located within its boundaries, and the City provides a full range of municipal services

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



to support its residents, businesses and visitors. These services include public safety, public works, planning and zoning, sanitation, engineering, municipal court, parks and recreation, a municipal cemetery and community and economic development. The City also owns a 280-space parking facility and a 25,000 square foot conference center. In addition to these traditional municipal services, the City of Decatur is committed to providing a high quality of life for its residents and supports a volunteer program, an award-winning afterschool program and a wide variety of special events and civic engagement activities.

The City has three MARTA transit stations and multiple bus routes within its 4.7 square miles, providing direct transit access to downtown Atlanta, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and many of the region's colleges and universities. In addition to public transit, the City supports and encourages a wide variety of alternative transportation options including walking, bicycling, the Clifton Corridor shuttle to Emory University and the GoDecatur Circulator Shuttle connecting Decatur residents to goods and services in its commercial districts.

Decatur's tree-lined streets, strong sense of community, high quality services and nationally recognized public school system continue to draw residents to the City. The City of Decatur has evolved into a livable, small urban city with all the benefits of living in a major metropolitan area. This balance of urban amenities and small town character has made the City of Decatur an attractive option for business owners, entrepreneurs and individuals seeking an opportunity to reside and work in the same community.

History

The City of Decatur was incorporated on December 10, 1823 and is named in honor of Commodore Stephen Decatur, a U.S. Naval hero. Commodore Decatur died in 1820 and Congress decreed that his name be honored throughout the nation. As a result, more than 40 cities and counties around the United States bear his name. The City of Decatur, Georgia is the second oldest municipality in the Atlanta metropolitan area and the seat of DeKalb County. Decatur adjoins Atlanta's city limits and is six miles east of downtown Atlanta.



This painting of Captain Stephen Decatur, USN, by John Wesley Jarvis, is part of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum Collection.

The courthouse square in downtown Decatur is located on a rise of land where two Native American trails once crossed. The Old Courthouse on the Square is the fourth courthouse building to occupy the Square. Historically, the courthouse square served as the community-gathering place. Today, it continues as the heart of the community, hosting festivals, special events, providing greenspace and an open space to meet and relax with family and friends. The historic commercial district is connected to the City's surrounding residential neighborhoods by an expanding network of sidewalks, bicycle lanes and a regional trail system.

Decatur will celebrate its 200th birthday in 2023 with a variety of bicentennial events and activities designed to leave a legacy for generations to come. Activities include collecting 200 stories about past and present Decatur, planting 200 trees throughout the community, and a contributing fundraiser for the

Decatur Land Trust, among others. The celebration culminates with a community celebration in December 2023 when Decatur was officially incorporated.

Government

The City of Decatur operates under the commission-manager form of government. The City Commission determines the policies of the local government and enacts local laws necessary for the protection of public health, safety and welfare. The City Commission provides leadership in identifying community needs and developing programs to meet community objectives. There are five City Commissioners, elected in nonpartisan elections, for overlap-

ping four-year terms. Two commissioners are elected from the north district, two from the south district and one commissioner is elected at-large, giving every voter in the City the opportunity to elect three of the five commissioners. Every year at its organizational meeting in January, the City Commission elects one of its members to serve as Mayor/Chair of the City Commission. Patricia Garrett was elected Mayor in 2016. She has been a member of the City Commission since 2009. Tony Powers was elected by his fellow commissioners to serve as Mayor pro tem in 2018 and has served on the City Commission since 2016. The other Commissioners are George Dusenbury, who has served since 2020; Lesa Mayer, who has served since 2020; and, Kelly Walsh, who has served since 2018. It is the responsibility of the Mayor to preside over all meetings of the City Commission. While the Mayor has no veto power, the position retains the right to vote on all matters brought before the City Commission. The Mayor's vote carries the same weight as any other Commissioner.

The City Commission appoints the members of a number of volunteer boards and commissions who carry out responsibilities specified by State law, the City Charter, and local ordinances. These boards and commissions include the Decatur Housing Authority, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission. Special advisory committees and task forces are also appointed by the City Commission to provide community input on issues and projects as needed. Currently, these boards include the Active Living Board, the Better Together Advisory Board, the Lifelong Community Advisory Board, the Decatur Youth Council and the Environmental Sustainability Board.

The City Commission appoints the Municipal Court Judges and the City Attorney, who provides legal counsel for the government. The City Commission also appoints a City Manager to provide professional management and direct the day-to-day operations of the City. The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer and is responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the City Commission, for overseeing the daily operations of the government, the recruitment of all employees and serves at the pleasure of the commission. The current City Manager, Andrea Arnold, has served in this position since January 2019, and has been employed with the City since 1997.

Vision and Mission

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

Successful organizations have a clear vision of where they are going and how they intend to achieve their mission. The City of Decatur has a long history of engaging community members in crafting a strategic vision for the City – most recently in 2000, 2010 and 2020. To support the vision, the City Commission holds an annual working retreat to reflect on past achievements, identify future goals and discuss strategies and challenges to implementing those goals. With the community vision as a guide, City Commissioners must balance the needs of a diverse population, limited financial resources, federal and state mandates and investments in aging public infrastructure, both planned and unanticipated.

Decatur's Strategic Plan guides City government at the highest level by providing direction on policies and actions to bring the community's vision for its future to life. In January



The Decatur City Commission (clockwise from bottom right); Mayor Patti Garrett, Mayor Pro Tem Tony Powers, and Commissioners George Dusenbury, Kelly Walsh, and Lesa Mayer.



MISSION STATEMENTS

We Will:

1. THINK HOLISTICALLY.

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

2. CONFRONT CLIMATE CHALLENGES.

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

3. WORK TOGETHER.

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

4. EMBRACE ACCOUNTABILITY.

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

5. PIONEER INNOVATION.

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

2020, the City kicked off the planning process to create the award-winning 2020 Strategic Plan as a guide for the next decade. An extensive effort was made to ensure broad participation by race, age, gender and geographical location in the planning process about issues facing Decatur and to identify participants' hopes and dreams for the City's future. The task list from the 2010 Strategic Plan served as a framework for budgeting and implementing projects and programs over the last decade. By the time planning began for the next decade, 93% of the tasks on that previous list had been accomplished or were underway.

Using the information collected through Citizen Roundtables, Decatur 202 sessions, and other virtual forums and pop-ups, the 2020 Strategic Plan known as *Destination: 2030* was developed and includes the following five mission statements you'll find in the sidebar.

The 2020 Strategic Plan also contains themes, tasks and action items that present a shared vision for our community. The six themes are:

Equity & Racial Justice

Climate Action

Civic Trust

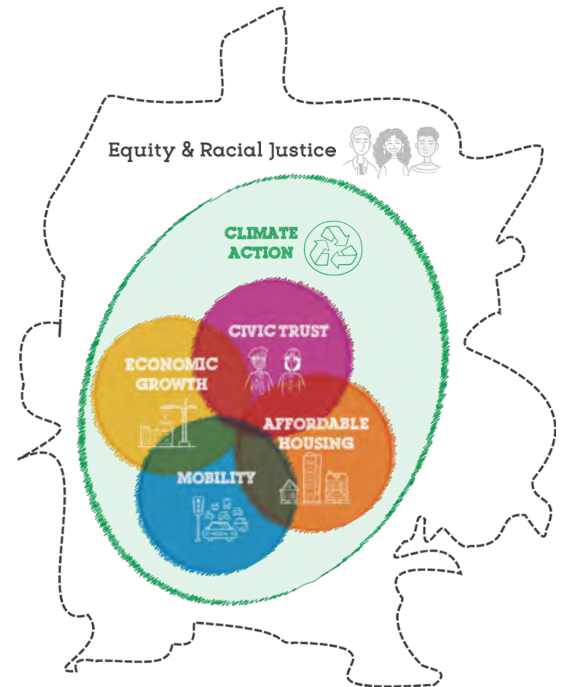
Affordable Housing

Mobility

Economic Growth

As the diagram shows, the core themes are interrelated and one theme cannot be addressed without considering the others. Emphasis is placed on Equity & Racial Justice as it must be prioritized and considered with each of the core themes.

Ultimately more than 3,200 comments were received through the three roundtable discussions; and the robust community discussion guided the development of the Strategic Plan at every stage. Each comment was recorded, analyzed and included in the final report that the City Commission adopted in October 2021. The entire plan is available at <https://www.decaturnext.com/2020-strategic-plan> and includes six themes/topics, 140 tasks and action items to be implemented over the course of 10 years, some of which are incorporated into the City's comprehensive plan five-year community work program. The Strategic Plan is also the foundation for Decatur's annual budget, each part of which is tied directly to this plan to show residents how city resources are allocated to support the community's vision and goals.



Performance Management

A progressive organization needs to know how well it is doing toward achieving its vision and goals. The City has developed quantifiable measurements to track how efficiently and effectively the organization is meeting its objectives. New measures are currently

in development for the recently adopted 2020 Strategic Plan. Selective benchmarking is undertaken during the development of departmental budget requests. Performance measures are reviewed by a cross-departmental committee on a regular basis to identify successful processes and work on areas that need improvement. Measures are included throughout the budget narrative to illustrate how the City is performing.

Between 2006 and 2016, the City participated in the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) Comparative Performance Measurement Program (CPM). CPM provided performance measures in 16 service areas that the City used to evaluate existing services, to benchmark results with other communities and to exchange best practices within a group of participating jurisdictions. In late 2016, CPM transitioned from being a subscription-based service to being a program advisor. Beginning in 2017, the City embarked on its own performance measurement program which was updated in 2022.

Budget

The annual budget serves as the foundation for the City's financial planning and control. All city work groups submit departmental budget requests to the City Manager's Office by the first week of March. Utilizing the tasks and action items described in the Strategic Plan, the departmental requests are the starting point for developing the proposed budget. Once departmental budgets are submitted, department heads and senior staff meet collectively to review all requests.

The proposed budget is formally presented to the City Commission on the third Monday in May. The operating budget includes both proposed expenditures and revenues. The City publishes a summary of the proposed budget in the official legal organ (currently The Champion Newspaper), makes copies available to the residents of the City, provides copies to the local library and posts the proposed and revised budgets on the City's website. Public hearings on the proposed budget are held in June. The budget is then legally enacted through adoption of a budget resolution by the City Commission, normally on the third Monday in June but no later than June 30, the close of the fiscal year.

The budget document is a written plan that provides the financial basis for implementing the City's vision and related goals. It represents City departments' best efforts at achieving the vision within an environment of competing goals and limited resources. More information on the budget and the budget process can be found in the Budget Guide prior to this section, beginning on page 3.

Vision Based Budgeting

As the City implements the 2020 Strategic Plan, the annual budget will serve as the primary implementation tool to bring the community's vision to life. The Vision Based Budget is a financial planning document that allows the City to connect the community's vision with the necessary resources (personnel, equipment and funding) required for implementation. It also describes in a narrative and with numbers, the programs, policies and projects identified in the Strategic Plan and each City department's relationship to them.





National Citizen Survey 2022

Would recommend living here

to someone who asks (% reported very likely)

2008	75
2010	74
2012	78
2014	84
2016	72
2018	96
2020	94
2022	94

Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds (% rated excellent/good)

2006	82
2008	87
2010	88
2012	90
2014	82
2016	79
2018	77
2020	76
2022	75

Sense of Community

(% rated excellent/good)

2006	84
2008	90
2010	86
2012	92
2014	91
2016	83
2018	86
2020	90
2022	79

Residents' connection and engagement with their community

(% rated excellent/good)

2020	85
2022	80

Equity & Racial Justice

Integrating proactive equity ambitions into every plan

In the field of local government, racism and its systemic impacts are often minimized and relegated to the past. That exclusionary history is embedded in how we provide access to everything from jobs to housing. To remove such barriers, we must plan in ways that honor all perspectives and tell our stories in ways that incorporate the complete history of our community, including the painful lessons of the past. Learning from these lessons will require rethinking old priorities and altering status quo assumptions. While such changes are too often framed as sacrifices, they are actually accelerants for achieving the stabilizing, long-term goals of shared opportunity for all.

The following projects and action items have been identified in the 2020 Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to be completed over the next five years to support the Equity & Racial Justice theme:

- Establish a Reparations Task Force.
- Update the Decatur Police Department's Strategic Plan.
- Achieve recognition as a Child-Friendly City.
- Update the 2015 Better Together Community Action Plan.
- Acknowledge and document Decatur's entire history.
- Launch a childcare voucher pilot program.
- Designate staff to implement equity goals.
- Create a diversity, equity and inclusion certificate program.

All of the themes, projects and action items are supported through the teamwork of staff members across all city departments and various other stakeholders from the community. The Reparations Task Force will be established as a community-directed task force that will document historic and ongoing injustices committed against Black people in the City due to enslavement, segregation, incarceration, displacement and gentrification and will also address reparations.

The Police Department is committed to collaborating with community members in updating its departmentally focused strategic plan that will guide all aspects of the Police Department, including equity, quality of life, mental health and use of force policies. Additionally, popular programs such as the Junior Police Academy and Citizens Police Academy that were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic were reintroduced in fiscal year 2022-2023 in order to continue strengthening the department's bond with community members.

Organizational introspection is needed in order to meet the growing needs of the community. The creation of the 2020 Strategic Plan presented the City with an opportunity to review existing policies and programs, plan updates and create new ones. City employment at all levels should reflect the full diversity of the Atlanta region and employees should be educated on the City's commitment to equity. Every department partners with the Human Resources Division in the Administrative Services Department to ensure that the City proactively recruits, hires and retains diverse and qualified staff.

A cross-departmental Employee Equity Team was created in early 2020 to create an environment of equity and inclusion where everyone in the organization is treated fairly, has equitable opportunities and outcomes, and truly feels welcome and valued. In fiscal year 2022-2023, this team engaged with other staff members to develop a Racial Equity Action Plan that spells out specific actions for how the City can become more equitable, including the role of each department. The team also worked to develop equity-informed decision-

making tools for employees and leaders to employ to evaluate fairness of processes and outcomes, intent and impact.

The City recognizes that this work also needs dedicated staff to ensure that the goals presented in the Racial Equity Action Plan are eventually implemented. In fiscal year 2022-23 the City created and filled a new position, an Equity and Engagement Director, who coordinates efforts throughout the organization to implement equity-related goals. Some specific tasks include creating and evaluating toolkits and policies related to equity and racial justice. In partnership with the City Manager's Office, Community and Economic Development Department and the Human Resources Division, the Equity and Engagement Director will coordinate internal anti-racism training, provide guidance on conflict resolution, investigate concerns related to workplace discrimination, build relationships throughout all levels of the organization and help boost morale.

In fiscal year 2023-24 the City plans to continue its efforts to diversify events and festivals, business types, housing options and more. Events like the International Festival, first held in March 2023, Decatur Day, a long-time tradition celebrating past and present residents of the City of Decatur and the Beacon Hill Concert Series all celebrate cultural traditions that will attract new audiences and may also offer opportunities for education and learning for residents and visitors. This year the Beacon Hill Concert will appear in the form of a music festival planned for May 20, 2023 and will highlight the stories of Beacon Hill, the thriving Black community in Decatur during segregation. To diversify businesses in the City, a new Guide to Opening a Business in Decatur coupled with a retail recruitment plan will move this goal forward.

The City is looking at creative ways to expand housing options that promote diversity by examining parcels owned by the City as potential locations for additional affordable housing units. Plans to generate new housing options at Decatur Legacy Park made headway in fiscal year 2022-23 through a partnership with Decatur Housing Authority for the South Housing Village where 132 affordable housing units are planned. The Cottage Court project – which will provide workforce housing for City, City Schools of Decatur and Decatur Housing Authority employees – also made headway in fiscal year 2022-23 with six new small homes under development on Commerce Drive just north of College Avenue.

As Decatur uncovers its full history, an effort to record stories related to diverse lived experiences in Decatur is a planned feature of the bicentennial celebration. The 200 Stories Project – a partnership with Story Corps and Savannah College of Art and Design – will be unveiled to commemorate the city's 200th birthday as part of the festivities at a community celebration planned for December 8-10, 2023. Another way the City plans to address its history includes land acknowledgement signs on city-held properties to acknowledge that native people previously occupied these lands and were unjustly removed from it.



THEME 1: EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Integrating proactive equity ambitions into every plan.

DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT
Governmental Control.....	\$67,402
General Government	\$595,919
Community & Economic Development	\$381,789
Administrative Services	\$702,585
Fire	\$271,462
Police	\$1,819,720
E-911.....	\$462,029
Public Works	\$1,862,280
Solid Waste	\$805,530
Stormwater.....	\$268,510
Parks & Recreation.....	\$4,225,674
TOTAL.....	\$11,462,899



National Citizen Survey 2022

Quality of overall natural environment

(% rated excellent/good)	
2006	n/a
2008	78
2010	75
2012	81
2014	87
2016	79
2018	78
2020	84
2022	80

Overall quality of natural environment

(% feel should focus on in next two years)

2014	84
2016	86
2018	87
2020	89
2022	86

Quality of recycling services

(% rated excellent/good)	
2006	80
2008	87
2010	89
2012	92
2014	91
2016	86
2018	87
2020	82
2022	82



Climate Action

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

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

The following projects and actions items have been identified in the 2020 Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to be completed over the next five years to support the Climate Action theme:

- Establish greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy targets.
- Convert all City lighting to LED.
- Create a Climate Action and Sustainability Plan.
- Establish a green business certification.
- Create a pilot compost collection program.
- Conduct an urban heat island assessment.
- Increase the tree canopy goal.
- Require carbon footprint documentation with building permit applications.
- Implement the Storm Water Master Plan.
- Update the Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Prepare a Greenspace and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

In September 2022, the City of Decatur commission adopted Clean Energy Decatur, the City's Clean Energy Plan. City residents identified climate change as a top priority and this plan will guide the City's response to this pressing concern. The Clean Energy Plan sets goals and outlines steps to efficiently and equitably transition Decatur away from fossil fuels. The plan also established greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy targets for residents, visitors and overall city operations. Since all the themes are connected, the plan also looks at data with a lens of equity. As cities work to incorporate social equity into climate policy and programs, many of them have found that accessing equity data has been a major challenge. The Clean Energy Plan utilizes the Greenlink Equity Map, an online map designed to help cities visualize equity-related issues and how burdens are spread across neighborhoods. This platform is accessible to all city residents.

The Public Works Department is leading the City's efforts in transitioning away from fossil fuels to clean energy. Conversion of streetlights and all outdoor fixtures, in addition to indoor lighting, to energy saving LEDs was initiated in fiscal year 2022-2023 with more to come in 2023-2024. The City is also creating a grant-funded pilot compost collection program through which compostable material can be collected from local residences on a fee-supported program basis. Additionally, the City's internal sustainability policies related to purchasing, building construction and performance, events and resource usage are under review for clean energy updates. Staff is in the process of conducting an urban heat island assessment which evaluates neighborhood-level impacts of increasing temperatures, heat waves and power outages, particularly with regard to vulnerable populations. Solar panels

and battery storage has been installed on the Public Works building and additional solar installations are planned for the Decatur Recreation Center and Police Department facility.

The City revised its Tree Canopy Conservation Ordinance in January 2022, which included an increase in the citywide tree canopy goal to 65%. A second arborist position was added mid-year to the full-time staff roster to assist property owners and the City in achieving its tree-related goals. An urban naturalist position was added in fiscal year 2022-2023 to address the upkeep of the City's natural areas and greenspaces. A multi-year invasive plant removal project at Decatur Legacy Park is already underway with assistance from the experts at Trees Atlanta.

The City is committed to investing in its future by implementing the Storm Water Master Plan which was adopted in December 2020. The plan is directed toward mitigating flooding, solving drainage problems, improving water quality and quality of life in the City. In fiscal year 2022-2023, design of three projects took place: Park Drive and Candler Drive, Brower Street and McClean Street, and Derrydown Way.

In fiscal year 2022-23 the City developed a Parks and Recreation Master Plan – also known as Recreatur – which identifies and addresses community priorities including greenspace acquisition and preservation as well as upgrades to and maintenance of parks and City facilities to be sure that they continue to be attractive, efficient, sustainable and accessible. Representatives from the City, City Schools of Decatur, Decatur Youth Council, Active Living Advisory Board, Environmental Sustainability Board, Better Together Advisory Board, Decatur Housing Authority, Safe Routes to School Committee, Beacon Hill Black Alliance and Agnes Scott College were appointed to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee in March 2022. The Steering Committee served as an advisory group to the consultants and city staff throughout the project, which was adopted by the City Commission in March 2023.

In fiscal year 2023-2024, new initiatives are planned in the Community and Economic Development Department (CED). CED plans to partner with the Decatur Business Association and the Environmental Sustainability Board to develop a green business certification. CED also plans to establish incentives or requirements related to greenspace requirements to meet goals of the parks and recreation plan.



THEME 2: CLIMATE ACTION

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

DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT
Governmental Control.....	\$67,402
General Government	\$529,706
Community & Economic Development	\$763,578
Administrative Services	\$351,293
Fire	\$678,654
Police	\$145,578
E-911.....	\$27,178
Public Works	\$1,427,748
Solid Waste	\$537,020
Stormwater.....	\$1,074,040
Parks & Recreation.....	\$704,279
TOTAL.....	\$6,306,475



National Citizen Survey 2022

Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts (% rated excellent/good)

2006-2012	n/a
2014	91
2016	88
2018	87
2020	86
2022	74

Availability of affordable quality child care (% rated excellent/good)

2006	51
2008	52
2010	50
2012	55
2014	76
2016	60
2018	59
2020	62
2022	49

Quality of services provided by the City of Decatur (% rated as excellent/good)

2006	84
2008	88
2010	89
2012	94
2014	90
2016	90
2018	91
2020	88
2022	81

Quality of emergency preparedness (% rated as excellent/good)

2006	n/a
2008	68
2010	81
2012	84
2014	79
2016	79
2018	80
2020	82
2022	85

Civic Trust

Empowering bold ambitions with high trust

A community thrives when governments and citizens work together to respond to challenges. Success moves at the speed of trust—trust that comes with citizens' confidence that government is responding to their concerns with actions that solve problems and expand opportunities. The greater the trust, the more support for ambitious plans. The tools Decatur uses to build and inspire trust include constant community conversation about the alignment of goals and the strategies to achieve them; a track record of connecting listening, action and measurable outcomes; and a commitment to transparency every step of the way.

The following projects and action items have been identified in the Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to be implemented over the next five years to support the Civic Trust theme:

- Develop a formalized public information process.
- Create a one-stop app.
- Create an online permit portal.
- Launch a plan implementation dashboard.
- Expand community information kiosks.

The City Manager's Office, in partnership with every department, charts the course in clearly asserting the City's responsibility to its citizens through various means. It is critical to leverage existing citizen networks as communication partners to ensure community members are provided with public input opportunities that allow them to take ownership of and actively shape municipal affairs. Developing a formalized public information process is an important action item that will authorize the Public Information Officer to establish consistent communications protocols and build a website-centric communications strategy. The City's robust website will become the primary source of community information, but a variety of means will still be important to get the word out to the diverse members of the broader community. For example, community information kiosks will be introduced and located in major nodes to provide information about events, community meetings and commonly asked questions.

The Decatur Police Department is invested in broadening the means of community engagement in fiscal year 2023-2024 through various community education programs such as Revved Up Kids and R.A.D. (Rape Aggression Defense) women's self-defense course that had to be paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If the Covid-19 pandemic taught us one thing, it highlighted and reinforced the importance of taking care of each other mentally and physically. In fiscal year 2022-23 the Fire Department added a Captain position to focus on community wellness and risk reduction programming. The new Fire Captain works alongside city staff and community partners to develop and manage initiatives and programming designed to keep Decatur safer from harms such as preventable illnesses and injuries.

City staff and the consultants who were involved in the creation of the 2020 Strategic Plan launched a plan implementation dashboard in Spring 2023. The dashboard, accessible via the City website, shows the progress made on the Strategic Plan with visuals and regularly updated information. This action item, among others, will also support the City's vision to become a Plan First Community, a state designation that recognizes communities that consistently implement plans. The dashboard is located at <https://performance.envivio.com/dashboard/decaturga1794>.

Citizen empowerment is a foundational aspect of the Civic Trust theme in the Destination 2030 plan. The Decatur Youth Council (DYC) was chartered in 2017 as a resident advisory board comprised of high school students. The DYC meets monthly and provides the City's youth with the opportunity to participate in the City's decision-making process, create projects and activities for the community, and to instill a sense of civic responsibility, thereby becoming effective leaders helping to shape the future of Decatur. The Decatur Youth Council members are a voice of the adolescent population and will assist with implementing the recommendations of the various citywide plans. To date, members of the DYC have planted the orchard at Decatur Legacy Park, collected over 1,000 pounds of food and toiletries for local non-profits and cleaned up the planters on West Howard. During the most recent school year, the DYC crafted public service announcements regarding the topics of Climate Awareness and Drug and Alcohol Awareness.

In fiscal year 2022-23, citizen engagement across the City was reflected in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process which engaged over 800 citizens from across the community to develop a plan for the parks and recreation system in the next 10 years. Since the kick-off of the Decatur Town Center Plan 2.0 in December 2022, over 1,100 Decatur voices have engaged in the process. The Decatur Town Center Plan 2.0 is the first comprehensive look at downtown since the original 1982 Town Center Plan. There have been over 300 attendees among the three community meetings, over 300 participants in community pop-up events that included local elementary school students, nearly 100 stakeholders engaged in focus group conversations, and over 400 participants in online activities that included online survey responses and interactive map submissions. The input during the public participation opportunities helped the City refine the master plan goals and objectives, as well as give focus to the implementation action items of the 10-year plan.

The City initiated one of the largest zoning district changes since the 1980s to address housing affordability and housing choice. With nearly 70 percent of land within the City subject to the policy change, single-family only zoning districts were expanded to also allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes. A robust public participation process was developed for the initiative, which started in 2021. A website launch, online housing storymap, video testimonials, postcard notifications, social media posts, an online survey, a phone hotline, and three public focused conversations on missing middle housing were all completed in the first phase of public participation. Information gleaned from this first phase assisted with the initial drafts of the policy. The second phase of public participation included additional community and neighborhood meetings, tables at public pop-up events, a virtual housing forum, another online survey, and postcard and media post communications that encouraged participation. The additional participation provided the City with feedback on draft policy development and helped the City to further refine the policy. In the final phases of



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 IMPLEMENTATION DASHBOARD

[performance.envisio.com/
dashboard/decaturga1794](https://performance.envisio.com/dashboard/decaturga1794)



Treating all residents fairly (% rated excellent/good)

2014	74
2016	67
2018	72
2020	74
2022	70

Decatur as a place to raise children (% rated excellent/good)

2006	90
2008	93
2010	90
2012	95
2014	96
2016	97
2018	96
2020	96
2022	92

Overall customer service by Decatur employees (% rated as excellent/good)

2006	79
2008	77
2010	78
2012	85
2014	84
2016	87
2018	89
2020	89
2022	84

The job Decatur government does at welcoming resident involvement (% rated excellent/good)

2006	75
2008	77
2010	82
2012	87
2014	83
2016	79
2018	82
2020	79
2022	77

public participation, two public work sessions and a public hearing were held, followed by two additional public hearings prior to adoption. Over 500 public notice signs were posted throughout the affected zoning districts that communicated the final phase of the public participation process. Community priorities and concerns throughout the process were used to help shape the policy that was adopted on February 6, 2023.

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative engaged 160 middle school students, over 100 high school students and over 300 K-5th graders in surveys to determine gaps and needs for children and youth in Decatur. The City's first Teen Leadership Team met throughout the 2022-23 school year to develop a Local Action Plan for youth as part of the City's partnership with UNICEF. The Teen Leadership Team is seeking to make improvements to Decatur in five priority areas:

- All young people – regardless of background (including race, religion and gender) – are treated equally.
- Improve access to and awareness of mental health resources for youth.
- Make Decatur a more environmentally conscious city.
- Improve public spaces – especially as regards opportunities for children of all abilities.
- Increase trust with police and security guards.

In line with the Decatur Child Friendly Cities Initiative and the strategic plan goal around involving youth in decision-making, youth voices have been sought out for various City efforts. In 2022-23 improvements to McKoy Skate Park were expanded and the project design fundamentally changed in response to input from the Decatur High School Skate Club. The Legacy Park Inclusive Playground – inspired by a need identified by Oakhurst Elementary School 3rd graders – was activated in winter 2023. The Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) plans to pave the way for youth participation by exploring the possibility of adding youth members to the ESB in the 2023-24 fiscal year.

THEME 3: CIVIC TRUST

Empowering bold ambitions with high trust.

DEPARTMENT

ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT

Governmental Control.....	\$84,252
General Government	\$595,919
Community & Economic Development	\$381,789
Administrative Services	\$3,161,633
Fire	\$3,393,270
Police	\$1,310,198
E-911.....	\$135,891
Public Works	\$1,365,672
Solid Waste	\$537,020
Stormwater.....	\$537,020
Parks & Recreation.....	\$704,279
TOTAL	\$12,206,943

Affordable Housing

Ensuring housing diversity through innovative policy-making

Safe, stable housing is the foundation on which families and entire communities can build their futures. Expanding access to housing serves a range of goals, particularly equity and diversity goals, so this theme is about more than just shelter. Since Black and Brown families are largely among those displaced when cost of living soars, Decatur's racial and socioeconomic diversity is eroding. Attainable housing in the right places also makes biking, walking and use of public transit more convenient and helps reduce our carbon footprint by providing more compact neighborhoods.

The following projects have been identified in the 2020 Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to be implemented over the next five years to support the Affordable Housing theme:

- a. Create an Affordable Housing Advisory Board.
- b. Hire permanent staff to advance affordable housing goals.
- c. Amend RS-17 zoning.
- d. Revise the tax payment assistance program.
- e. Create a rental assistance program.
- f. Create an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) finance program.
- g. Amend single-family zoning to allow duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes.
- h. Adopt development impact fees.
- i. Create an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.
- j. Implement the housing recommendations of the Legacy Park Master Plan.
- k. Generate a comprehensive list of City incentives and exemptions.
- l. Adopt universal building design guidelines.
- m. Establish minimum density thresholds near MARTA stations.
- n. Start an employer-assisted housing program.
- o. Expand where boardinghouses and rooming houses are allowed.



National Citizen Survey 2022

Availability of affordable quality housing (% rated excellent/good)

2006	34
2008	48
2010	43
2012	45
2014	38
2016	23
2018	17
2020	21
2022	15

Variety of housing options (% rated excellent/good)

2006	n/a
2008	69
2010	65
2012	71
2014	61
2016	45
2018	40
2020	44
2022	40

Decatur as a place to live (% rated excellent/good)

2006	93
2008	97
2010	97
2012	96
2014	98
2016	97
2018	97
2020	96
2022	95



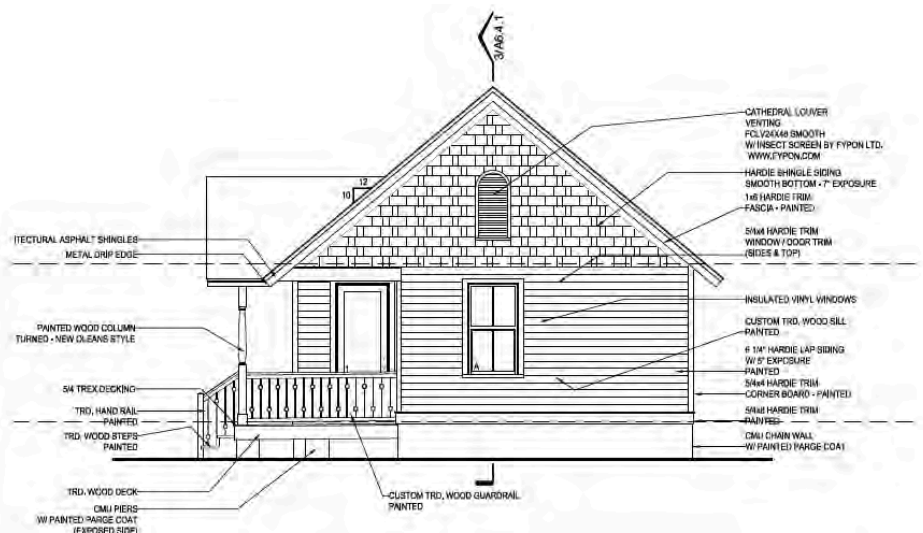
In 2018, the City of Decatur hosted an Affordable Housing Summit to focus on the critical need for affordable housing in our community. The Affordable Housing Task Force, established the following year, drew from a wealth of local experts to create a detailed analysis of needs and strategies to move forward. The City has already started to implement these strategies. The recommendations of the task force not limited by legal constraints are included in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

Community Land Trusts are non-profit organizations that hold land and sell or lease homes on that land to ensure permanently affordable housing. The Decatur Land Trust Board was established in 2019, but the organization has not been fully funded or staffed. In fiscal year 2022-2023, the Community and Economic Development Department hired a full-time staff member to provide capacity for planning and implementation of the affordable housing goals. In the 2023 legislative session, the State legislature approved the expansion of three homestead exemptions and the creation of a new exemption for owner-occupied homes on land owned by the Land Trust. The exemptions will be on a ballot referendum in the November 2023 election.

In October 2021, the City Commission approved amendments to the City's Unified Development Ordinance that will level the zoning code playing field between cottage court and townhouse developments. Similarly, amendments to the single-family zoning districts to allow duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes were approved by the City Commission in February 2023. While the City is already designated as an Age-Friendly Community by the AARP, the City will also create an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. The community engagement portion of this plan will also serve as an excellent opportunity for synergy, collaboration and youth input as it ties in to the Parks and Recreation Department-led Child Friendly Cities Initiative whose goals align with positive outcomes for all age groups.

Though cottage courts have been allowed since passage of the Unified Development Ordinance in early 2015, local builders have been reluctant to veer from the dependable single-family homes to which they have historically been accustomed. In response to extensive resident requests for action on housing affordability and more options for workforce housing, the City of Decatur and its Development Authority are pursuing a cottage court demonstration project at 230 Commerce Drive as a more affordable, neighborhood-scale alternative to single-family infill.

Working to balance city housing goals and market viability, the project named "Oak Cottage Court" is set to demonstrate unmet demand for cottage homes sized roughly 530 to 1,500 square feet, and identify and address any regulatory barriers that might be preventing



the development of similar projects by other developers. The Development Authority has partnered with a non-profit affordable housing developer to carry out the construction of six cottages surrounding shared courtyards. The City anticipates offering the cottages of this demonstration project for sale in 2023 to employees of the City of Decatur, City Schools of Decatur and the Decatur Housing Authority who meet income qualifications. The long-term affordability of the homes will be possible as the land on which the cottages reside will be held by the Decatur Land Trust.

In October 2021, an advisory board was formed to explore the application of impact fees in the City, and while impact fees cannot directly support affordable housing, they can be used to free up other resources. A decision on whether or not to adopt and implement impact fees is expected in fiscal year 2023-24.

Of the 77 acres at Decatur Legacy Park located at 500 South Columbia Drive, approximately six acres at the corner of Katie Kerr Drive and Columbia Drive will be the site upon which buildings associated with the Village at Legacy have been proposed. The Village at Legacy is a two-phase development project to be completed by the Housing Authority of the City of Decatur. Phase I will consist of the demolition of 10 vacant housing units and the construction of 66 new affordable housing family units on the site, and Phase II will consist of the construction of 66 new family units bringing the total to 132 units. Phase I housing units will have a range of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom sizes among a mix of housing types, including duplexes and garden style apartments.

The Village at Legacy successfully incorporates housing into its park setting. Not only will residents in Village at Legacy have site amenities, the residents will be able to walk from their homes directly on to Decatur Legacy Park with playgrounds, hiking trails, recreational fields, arboretum, fishing and many other recreational programs and activities. Residents will have access to local jobs and the highly desirable amenities of nearby Downtown Decatur, as well as the City Schools of Decatur. Residents will also have access to a MARTA bus stop located immediately adjacent to the site. The full-service Avondale MARTA Transit Station with multiple bus routes and transfers is about a mile away via the East Decatur Greenway adjacent to Decatur Legacy Park.

THEME 4: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ensuring housing diversity through innovative policy-making.

DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT
Governmental Control.....	\$67,402
General Government	\$529,706
Community & Economic Development	\$954,473
Administrative Services	\$1,053,878
Fire	\$45,244
Police	\$2,183,664
E-911.....	\$27,178
Public Works	\$310,380
Solid Waste	\$134,255
Stormwater.....	\$134,255
Parks & Recreation.....	\$352,140
TOTAL	\$5,792,573



National Citizen Survey 2022

Ease of public parking

(% rated excellent/good)

2006	n/a
2008	n/a
2010	n/a
2012	n/a
2014	38
2016	25
2018	24
2020	27
2022	35

Ease of walking

(% rated excellent/good)

2006	78
2008	87
2010	86
2012	91
2014	89
2016	83
2018	88
2020	92
2022	70

Ease of travel by bicycle

(% rated excellent/good)

2006	61
2008	66
2010	63
2012	70
2014	66
2016	53
2018	55
2020	64
2022	63

Mobility

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

Making biking, walking, and transit more convenient has multiple community benefits. Eliminating just one vehicle per household can free up \$700 or more a month (AAA estimate) to buy or rent a home. This is a boost for equity since non-white families are more likely to experience income and cost of living imbalance. Fewer cars means lower greenhouse gas emissions and opportunities to transition pavement and parking to other uses, including trees or storm water management. Additionally there are health benefits for individuals and for a community that feels more neighborly because it is experienced on foot or bike instead of through a car window.

The following projects and action items have been identified in the 2020 Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to implement over the next five years to support the Mobility theme:

- Implement the 2018 Community Transportation Plan.
- Expand intelligent transportation systems.
- Update regulations to require alternative fuels infrastructure.
- Expand the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (TMA) serving Decatur or explore creating a new Decatur TMA.
- Install more wayfinding signs focused on walking and biking.
- Expand pedestrian amenities.
- Continue to implement the citywide sidewalk assessment.
- Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program.
- Encourage more bike parking.
- Continue implementing the Decatur PATH Plan.
- Work with MARTA to provide circulator bus service.
- Conduct a parking and curb space utilization study.
- Update regulations to prevent the construction of space exclusively for parking.

Transportation planning in the City focuses on opportunities to promote a safe, integrated transportation system that encourages bicycling and walking as viable alternatives to vehicular travel, increased connectivity between neighborhoods and destinations, and transportation equity for users of all ages and abilities. Citywide transportation initiatives are guided by the 2018 Community Transportation Plan, which provides recommended policies, programs, and projects that emphasize a healthy and active community. In fiscal year 2022-23, the City Commission approved the creation of a full-time Senior Transportation Engineer position. This position will work on the numerous mobility related projects in the City's work plan.

The installation of priority corridor improvements, intersection improvements and traffic calming improvements included in the 2018 Community Transportation Plan is an ongoing process. Other ongoing projects include: expanding pedestrian amenities such as benches, street trees and shade structures, public restrooms and drinking fountains to make walking more appealing; continuing to implement the citywide sidewalk assessment to make sure all sidewalks are in good repair and meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and, continuing to implement the Safe Routes to School program in partnership with the City Schools of Decatur. As a pioneer in the field, the City will also continue the installation of smart traffic signals and crosswalk signals to expand intelligent transportation systems.

The 2018 Community Transportation Plan proposed two circulator shuttles. Before making such a large investment, the Community and Economic Development Department, with financial support from the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA), has invested in an eight month pilot program. The launch of the new service coincides with the conclusion of the free shuttle initiative in fiscal year 22-23 that provided transportation from downtown Decatur to Publix, a 90-day pilot program commissioned through a partnership with Let's Ride Atlanta and Publix. It also revives the GO60+ shuttle the City operated prior to the pandemic for local seniors to access commercial districts and services. The combination of the GO60+ shuttle and the Let's Ride Atlanta shuttle service is another step toward fulfilling one of the core goals of the City's 2020 strategic plan. Additionally, the Community and Economic Development and Public Works Departments will work together to craft regulations to require alternative fuels infrastructure in fiscal year 2023-2024.



THEME 5: MOBILITY

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

DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT
Governmental Control.....	\$67,402
General Government	\$529,706
Community & Economic Development	\$381,789
Administrative Services	\$351,293
Fire	\$45,244
Police	\$363,944
E-911.....	\$27,178
Public Works	\$1,055,292
Solid Waste	\$268,510
Stormwater.....	\$268,510
Parks & Recreation.....	\$704,279
TOTAL.....	\$4,063,146



National Citizen Survey 2022

Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area (% rated excellent/good)

2006-2012	n/a
2014	93
2016	90
2018	94
2020	91
2022	86

Quality of Economic Development (% rated excellent/good)

2006	74
2008	78
2010	69
2012	73
2014	84
2016	73
2018	74
2020	75
2022	72

Well-planned commercial growth (% rated excellent/good)

2006-2012	n/a
2014	93
2016	90
2018	94
2020	91
2022	86

Overall Quality of business and service establishments (% rated excellent/good)

2006	n/a
2008	89
2010	83
2012	91
2014	87
2016	83
2018	87
2020	93
2022	90

Economic Growth

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

How can we leverage Decatur's unique identity and amenities to grow not just jobs, but social and economic opportunity for everyone? Every step taken toward broadening opportunity serves other goals as well, including our ambitions for expanding affordability, equity, and diversity. This effort starts with understanding what is already working, what we can do to help existing businesses thrive, and how to improve the support system for new launches. In a time when companies are thinking more about employees' quality of life, Decatur has a compelling story to tell to businesses considering relocation.

The following projects and action items have been identified in the 2020 Strategic Plan's Community Work Program to implement over the next five years to support the Economic Growth theme:

- Enhance high-speed internet access.
- Start a business incubator.
- Create a Decatur rewards program.
- Update the sign ordinance.
- Adopt healthy building design guidelines.
- Start a façade improvement program.
- Prepare a new Downtown Master Plan.

Buildings and outdoor spaces should take into account the unique needs of the people that use them. This means making sure they are based on a realistic understanding of the diversity of potential users, and their habits, desires, and behaviors. The Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) created the Decatur Retail Incubator Program in fiscal year 2021-2022 which provided online-only, homegrown businesses the opportunity to test their concepts and adapt to a brick-and-mortar shop. Three businesses were identified as part of the inaugural retail recruitment incubator in a downtown storefront leased by the DDA for one year. Upon conclusion of the inaugural incubator program, the DDA then filled another storefront with a bicycle-centric business offering custom-built bicycles and repairs, community meeting space and coffee, and community programs such as cyclist meet-ups and organized rides. This incubator is planned to last through 2024. The incubator program is expanding to include a mobile food cart program in two commercial districts. The ordinances with rules and requirements are in place, and the vendor permits for these small

businesses are scheduled to be issued in fiscal year 2023-2024. There is potential for these businesses to be given opportunities and grow into brick-and-mortar locations.



The Downtown Master Plan – Decatur Town Center Plan 2.0 – was developed in fiscal year 2022-23. The plan recommends a comprehensive vision that includes public space improvements, historic preservation, green space, economic growth strategies, shared street designations, and improving the quality of the downtown experience, among other things. Next year will see the Modera mixed-use development spring to life as the retail spaces and the apartments become occupied

in downtown. The Northwood Ravin backed development along East College Avenue will break ground and the recently opened Publix anchored mixed-use development will continue to bring new life to the east side of the City.

The Community and Economic Development Department developed a façade improvement grant program for commercial storefront business owners and property owners. Funding in the amount of \$100,000 was made possible through the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA). In Winter 2023, the DDA approved 13 requests for façade improvement grants. A second round of grant applications were received in Spring 2023. Projects eligible for grant funding include: masonry repairs, storefront reconstruction, exterior painting and stucco, awnings and canopies, window and door repairs and replacements, permanent exterior lighting, repair/replacement of gutters and down spouts, repairs to the roof (affecting the building's facade), sign design and installation, decking and stairs, or improvement to outdoor seating areas.



As evidenced by the narrative, the City is taking specific and clear actions to implement the 2020 Strategic Plan.

New and expanded resources are included in the proposed budget to support these efforts and to ensure the successful execution of the plan. The 2020 Strategic Plan builds on the solid foundation of prior plans, while identifying bold actions to carry out a transformative plan for the future.

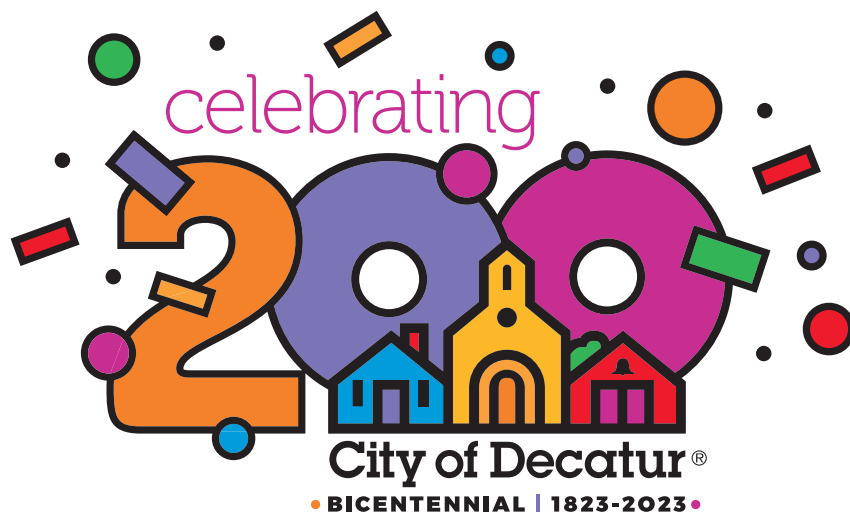
Theme 6: Economic Growth

What's good for quality of life for everyone is good for business.

DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT
Governmental Control.....	\$67,402
General Government	\$529,706
Community & Economic Development	\$954,473
Administrative Services	\$1,405,170
Fire	\$90,487
Police	\$1,455,776
E-911.....	\$679,455
Public Works	\$186,228
Solid Waste	\$402,765
Stormwater.....	\$402,765
Parks & Recreation.....	\$352,140
TOTAL	\$6,526,365

FUN FACTS

IN DECATUR HISTORY



Governmental Control

A voucher for \$267.50 was ordered drawn to Thomas L. Cooper to be used in the purchase of the lot now known as City Hall in June 1913.

General Government

P.P. Pilcher was named as the City's first City Manager on January 3, 1921 at a salary of \$3,600 annually.

Community & Economic Development

In 1996 when the Olympics came to Atlanta, Decatur staged a 2-week Hometown to the World Festival downtown with activities, concerts, and events every night. The Old Courthouse on the Square became Irish House and was home to the Irish Olympic Council and their athletes and guests. The Decatur Recreation Center became Africa House was home to the Burkina Faso athletes.

Parks & Recreation

In 1984, the City of Decatur and City Schools of Decatur started their partnership. The Recreation Department operated the first afterschool program to take place in school buildings in Decatur at two schools - Glennwood and Westchester Elementary Schools.

Administrative Services

The City has been using fund accounting since at least 1924 as shown by the 100-year-old tax receipt at left.

Public Works

The City of Decatur City Commission passed a Resolution officially naming the new Public Works Building as the Eloise T. Leveritt Building on December 19, 1977. Eloise T. Leveritt was the city's first female commissioner. The building was re-dedicated in 2015 and provides a state-of-the-art facility that helps the Public Works Department deliver more and better services, while meeting city standards for environmental sustainability.

Police

A motion was made and carried that allowed the Police Department to sell a horse and buggy at auction and buy a motorcycle in February 1917.

Fire

When the Fire Department was in early operation, around 1930s, the alarm system in the station consisted of a rattrap fitted to a light switch. In an emergency, the station number was dialed, which sprang the trap, turning the lights on, thus letting the crew know they were needed.

