

# HELLO

WELCOME TO DECATUR!



## A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS NEW TO DECATUR 2020



# WELCOME HOME!

On behalf of the Decatur City Commission, I want to welcome you to Decatur. We are glad you are here! Decatur is a vibrant, special place where we value community engagement and encourage participation in all of the opportunities the city has to offer – from our year-round calendar of festivals and events to our award-winning restaurants and local shops and services. We count on your input and involvement and invite you to give your feedback on your experience with our city services. We take pride in Decatur, and I hope you will find this new resident packet useful as you settle in to our community.

— Mayor Patti Garrett



## STOP IN AND SAY HELLO!

As you get to know Decatur, stop by the Visitors Center at 113 Clairemont Ave., Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A friendly volunteer will provide you with whatever information you need, or steer you in the right direction. There's also a Decatur information center in the lobby of Decatur Police headquarters in the Beacon Municipal Complex at 420 W. Trinity Pl.

# CITY COMMISSION

Five residents serve on the commission.

The Decatur City Commission determines the policies of the city and enacts the local laws necessary for the protection of public health, safety and welfare. The commission oversees the delivery of services to citizens and is responsible for the adoption of an annual budget and the levying of taxes necessary to finance local government operations.

The City Commission meets on the first and third Mondays of each month in the commission meeting room at City Hall. In the event of a Monday holiday, the meeting is moved to the first or third Tuesday.

Agendas are posted to the website and on the front of City Hall on the Friday before the meeting.

See page 7 for information about commission elections.

## LOCAL FACT

City Commission meetings are open to the public. While the meetings start promptly at 7:30 pm, you can walk in at any time after the meeting has started.

### George Dusenbury

District 1 Commissioner

Elected November 2019, current term expires 2023  
george.dusenbury@decaturga.com

### Kelly Walsh

District 1 Commissioner

Elected November 2017, current term expires 2021  
kelly.walsh@decaturga.com

### Lesa Mayer

District 2 Commissioner

Elected November 2019, current term expires 2023  
lesa.mayer@decaturga.com



### Tony Powers

Mayor Pro Tem,  
Commissioner-at-large

Elected November 2015, current term expires 2023  
tony.powers@decaturga.com

### Patti Garrett

Mayor, District 2 Commissioner

First elected November 2009, current term expires 2021  
patti.garrett@decaturga.com

# WHO DO I CONTACT?

Connect with City of Decatur, City Schools of Decatur, and DeKalb County.



## City Manager Andrea Arnold

The Decatur City Commission appoints a city manager to oversee Decatur's day-to-day operations. Decatur's current city manager is Andrea Arnold who has worked for the city since 1997. She began as an assistant to the city manager, became the director of Administrative Services in 1999, and served as assistant city manager for 15 years before being promoted to city manager. If you have questions about city services for which you can't find a satisfactory answer, call her at 404-370-4102 or email [andrea.arnold@decaturga.com](mailto:andrea.arnold@decaturga.com).



## City Communication

The primary ways in which the city communicates with residents are:

**The Decatur Focus** is the city's official newsletter, published 10 times a year and mailed to every household, business and professional license-holder within the city limits. January/February and July/August are combined issues. The *Decatur Focus* publishes announcements and information about Decatur including city services, downtown development, school news, business news, and news about individual residents and neighborhood associations. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote the city and encourage the exchange of information among residents, business owners, and the school system.

**decaturga.com:** The official website for Decatur provides resources for learning about the city's history, its various departments and services, and its governance. You can also find links to current and past issues of the *Decatur Focus* and the *Decatur Playbook*, and links to learn more about upcoming special events, festivals, and meetings.

**thedecaturminute.com:** The official blog for the city is a good resource for what's happening right now in the city. Look here for information about road closings, water-service issues, and to learn how weather conditions are affecting city operations.

**decaturmakeover.com:** Wondering how to navigate through and around Decatur when infrastructure and development projects interfere with your preferred routes? Decaturmakeover.com will give you a heads-up on what to expect, and how to avoid traffic entanglements.

**Beactivedecatur.com** is the Decatur Active Living blog, and a good resource for opportunities to engage in physical and mental activities and make new friends around the city.

**Nextdoor** is utilized extensively by the city and the police department for sharing information. Join up at [nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com), select your neighborhood, and look for alerts in your email.

**Facebook: City of Decatur GA-Government** is another good source for news about the city, and a place to find links to Decatur-based nonprofits and festivals. Most city departments have a Facebook presence. The police, Active Living, Children and Youth Services, and fire departments use their pages extensively.

**Instagram: cityofdecaturga** provides This Week and This Weekend posts to help you plan ahead. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, so take a look.

**See Click Fix:** Download the app, and use it to alert the city to problems or issues you discover while out and about, and then track the progress of your report.

**Text alerts:** Text CODAlerts to 313131 to receive news alerts and important updates from the City of Decatur.

**Twitter: downtowndecatur** will keep you updated on city news and emergency alerts.

## CITY SCHOOLS OF DECATUR

For questions about City Schools of Decatur, such as academic calendars, bus routes, menus, school zoning, and school events, visit [cs-decatur.net](http://cs-decatur.net) or call 404-371-3601.

Some infrastructure in the city is owned and operated by other entities, including the city's street lights, traffic signals, potable waterlines, and sanitary sewers.

## GEORGIA POWER

Power outages, street light outages, and damaged utility poles can be reported on the Georgia Power website at [georgiapower.com](http://georgiapower.com).

## DEKALB COUNTY

Traffic signals, water and sewer services, and property assessments, are provided by DeKalb County:

### DeKalb County Traffic Operation Center

404-297-3947

(weekdays, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)

678-406-7929

(after hours, holidays, weekends)

### DeKalb County Water & Sewer

404-378-4475

770-270-6243

(after hours, holidays, weekends)

### DeKalb County Tax Assessor's Office

404-371-0841

# GET INVOLVED

Be a part of your new hometown.

Decatur hosts concerts, festivals, special events and community projects all year long with the help of an army of residents who volunteer in myriad ways. For event details and official dates, check out [visitdecaturgeorgia.com](http://visitdecaturgeorgia.com). Annual events and volunteer opportunities include the Decatur Arts Festival, Jazz Nights at Scottish Rite, Decatur Beach Party, Concerts on the Square, Decatur Beer Festival, Decatur Wine Festival, AJC Decatur Book Festival, and Terrific Thursdays.

## Volunteer Decatur!

Interested in rolling up your sleeves and pitching in to help make Decatur a better and more interesting place for residents and visitors alike? Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year. Learn how you can help and sign up at [volunteerdecatur.com](http://volunteerdecatur.com).

## Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project

The MLK Service Project helps make necessary repairs so that seniors on fixed or low incomes can remain safely in their homes. Each year volunteers work on more than 30 homes, making repairs with an average value of \$2,000. Residents ages 12 and over are welcome to volunteer for one or more four-hour shifts during the MLK weekend. Jobs include repair work, weatherization, yard work, and material expeditors and runners. To learn more or to sign up to volunteer, visit [mlkserviceproject.com](http://mlkserviceproject.com).

## A Season of Giving / Christmas Decatur

Each holiday season, residents can sign up to buy gifts or volunteer so that low-income children and seniors are able to enjoy the holidays. Wish lists are available beginning in October. For more information (or to donate), email [aseasonofgiving@decaturga.com](mailto:aseasonofgiving@decaturga.com).

## Citizens Police Academy

This 10-week course explains to residents and business owners the inner workings of the Decatur Police Department. CPA members participate in a ride-along with an officer and take field trips to the DeKalb County Jail and Medical Examiner's Office. CPA members must be at least 21 years old and pass a limited background check. Go to [decaturga.com/police](http://decaturga.com/police) and click on community programs.

## CAPS

In this volunteer program, citizens provide aid to the Police and Fire departments during special events, help administer exams, assist with disaster response, and patrol the business district. CAPS members serve as additional "eyes and ears," enhancing the safety and quality of life in the city. Learn more at [decaturga.com/police](http://decaturga.com/police).

## RAD

The Decatur Police Department offers this basic 12-hour self-defense course for women free of charge. Classes are scheduled at various times throughout the year. Participants between 13- and 17-years-old can attend the course with their mothers or female guardian. After completion of the course, participants will be more aware, confident, and prepared for instances when they need to defend themselves and get out of danger. Learn more at [decaturga.com/police](http://decaturga.com/police).



Some of the volunteers who serve on the city's Volunteer Boards and Commissions



MLK Service Project



Decatur PD's R.A.D. class



Decatur CAPS volunteers

# GET INVOLVED SOME MORE!

## Decatur 101

A seven-week program held February-April, Decatur 101 is designed to develop informed and involved citizens. Members learn how city government works, who does what, and how they can make a difference. Members also learn about the functions of City Schools of Decatur and take a smart growth walking tour. Learn more at [decaturga.com/decatur101](http://decaturga.com/decatur101).

## Advisory Boards and Commissions

Many Decatur residents serve on volunteer boards, commissions, and task forces. They are appointed to these volunteer groups by the City Commission. If you are a Decatur resident interested in serving on a board or commission, submit a statement of interest form (you can find it at [decaturga.com](http://decaturga.com)). The City Commission conducts interviews on a rolling basis for open positions before their meetings on the first or third Monday of the month. There are currently nine resident boards:

- Active Living Board
- Better Together Advisory Board
- Environmental Sustainability Board
- Lifelong Community Advisory Board
- Decatur Youth Council
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Public Facilities Authority

City staff are appointed to support each board. Learn more about the functions and projects of each board at [decaturga.com/citizenboards](http://decaturga.com/citizenboards).

## Be a Hero

Decatur is a better place to live due to the efforts of its Hometown Heroes – individuals who go above and beyond to engage with the community by volunteering their time and resources. The Hometown Hero program began when Decatur hosted athletes from Ireland and Burkina Faso for the 1996

Olympic Games, and the city recognized the key volunteers who worked to organize street parties and receptions for the guests.

Since then, more than 300 Hometown Heroes have been recognized by the city. Nominations are solicited in the Decatur Focus each fall, so keep that in mind as you notice volunteers working hard on behalf of the city.

The Better Together Advisory Board named its first "Welcoming Business" awards to Little Shop of Stories and Capoiera Maculele in December 2019.



Decatur 101 is so popular that the city conducts separate daytime and evening classes. About 115 residents take the class each year.



City of Decatur

About 80 percent of the city's revenue comes from property taxes.

## Tax Installments

Bills for real estate property taxes and fees are sent out in two installments. The first is mailed on April 1, and must be paid by June 2. The second is mailed on October 20, and must be paid by December 20,

Seven years of tax information is available online at [decaturgatax.com](http://decaturgatax.com). You can also view tax information for all City of Decatur properties, make an online credit card payment, print bills and receipts, and request mailing address changes.

## Payments

Checks should be made payable to the City of Decatur and mailed to the following address postmarked no later than the payment deadline. Please include your property ID, tax year, and phone number on the check. The fee for a returned check is \$50.

## City of Decatur Lockbox

PO Box 945650  
Atlanta, GA 30394-5650

If your taxes are paid by a mortgage company, forward a copy of your bill to the mortgage company for payment and retain a copy for your records. If you receive a statement and you are not the current property owner, forward the bill to the new property owner.

## Sanitation Fee

Sanitation service fees are billed annually and are payable for the full year in the first installment billing. The sanitation service fee includes garbage collection, yard waste disposal, street sweeping, and bulky item pickup.

## Stormwater Utility Fee

Stormwater utility fees are billed annually and are payable for the full year in the first installment billing. Properties are assessed a storm water utility fee based on the amount of paved and covered areas on the property. Income from the fees is used to make storm drainage improvements. Utilities are charged to all property owners, including tax-exempt properties.

## Homestead Exemptions

A homestead exemption reduces the taxable value of your home. The city offers several homestead exemptions to qualified homeowners, including general exemptions based on ownership and occupancy as well as exemptions based on age, income, and disability.

Homestead exemption applications are accepted year-round; however applications must be submitted no later than April 1 to be granted an exemption for the current tax year. The city encourages all eligible homeowners to apply for any new exemptions prior to March 15 to ensure the exemption appears on the first installment bill. Applications received after April 1 will be processed for the following tax year. If you reside at the property you own, you may apply for the general homestead exemption online. Applicants for all other exemptions based on age and/or income must apply in person at Decatur City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St., Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

### Exemption Qualifications

**General Exemption** The property must be the legal residence as of January 1 of the taxable year.

**GS-1** Must be at least 62 years of age as of January 1. Total household income must not exceed \$25,000.

**S-1** Must be at least 62 years of age as of January 1. Total household income must not exceed \$10,000 (excluding retirement income).

**GH-2** Must be at least 65 years of age as of January 1. No income restrictions.

**GH-3** Must be at least 65 years of age as of January 1 and reside at the property. Total taxable income must not exceed \$50,000.

**S-2** City school tax exemption: Must be at least 80 years of age and reside at the property. Total household income must not exceed \$40,000.

**S-3** Must be at least 70 years of age and reside at the property. No income restrictions.

**S-4** City school tax exemption: Must be at least 65 years of age and reside at the property.

**TAX PAYMENT ASSISTANCE** The city offers a tax deferral program for homeowners 62 years of age or older with a household income not exceeding \$20,000. The taxes on the first \$100,000 of assessed value may be deferred, payable with interest upon the sale or transfer of the property. Applications for tax deferral must be filed annually on or before March 1 of the year for which the deferral is sought.

**DISABLED VETERANS** Veterans who have 100 percent disability documented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and who reside at the property are eligible for an exemption.

**YEAR SUPPORT** The surviving spouse of a deceased individual may file a petition for year's support within 24 months of the death of the individual at the DeKalb County Probate Court. If approved, the surviving spouse qualifies for an exemption from City of Decatur property taxes for that year.

**UN-REARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSES** of U.S. service members, peace officers, or firefighters killed in the line of duty may qualify for additional exemptions.

**REHABILITATED HISTORIC PROPERTIES** may qualify for preferential tax assessments.

## Facility Rentals

Have your event right here in Decatur

Rent a pool, pavilion, athletic field, or a room at a Recreation Center for your next meeting, event, or birthday party. Call 404-377-0494 for details.

## Job Opportunities

Decatur is a great place to live *and* to work. Employment opportunities with City of Decatur can be found at [decaturga.com](http://decaturga.com).

# CITY BUDGET

The 2010 Strategic Plan guides city spending.

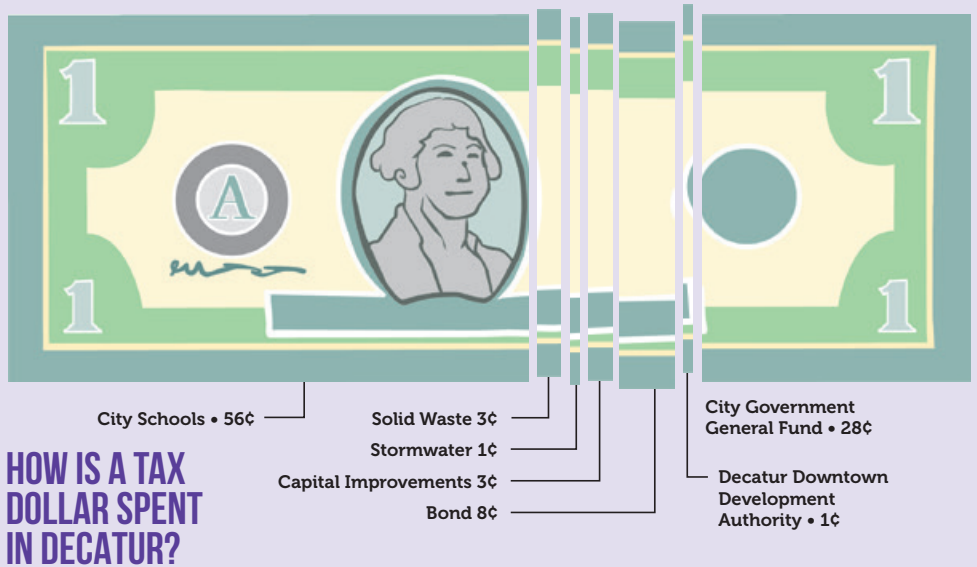
The budget allocates the city's limited financial resources to provide services based on community and organizational priorities. The city's budget preparation process begins in February and culminates with budget adoption by the City Commission on the third Monday in June. The budget period is the city's fiscal year, which begins July 1 and ends on June 30. Learn more at [decaturga.com/budget](http://decaturga.com/budget).

## Budget Expo

Each March the city holds a public Budget Expo on the square from 5 to 7 p.m., encouraging residents to get an up-close and personal look at the city's budgeting process. Residents can find out about the "pending spending" planned for the city budget and how it supports the 2010 Strategic Plan principles developed by Decatur citizens.

## Vision-Based Budgeting

The annual budget is the primary implementation tool to make the community's vision



in the 2010 Strategic Plan come to life. The annual budget highlights the four principles outlined in the 2010 Strategic Plan plus an additional principle that aims to capture the internal work of the city government. Under

each principle is a description of how the city implements the goals and tasks of that principle, past accomplishments, proposed projects for this fiscal year, performance measures and unique partnerships.



# VOTING

Commission elections occur every two years.

Decatur City Commission elections are held in odd-numbered years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Polls are open 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

City Commissioners are chosen in nonpartisan elections for overlapping four-year terms – two from District 1 (roughly north of the railroad), two from District 2 (south of the railroad, plus downtown), and an at-large commissioner elected citywide. Each January, commissioners elect two of their fellow members to serve as Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem.

**See the map on page 16 for Decatur voting districts, or visit [onemap.decaturga.com/cityofdecatur](http://onemap.decaturga.com/cityofdecatur) (see page 9) and enter your address.**

## Voting Districts & Polling Places

### District 1 / Clairemont East

First Baptist Church of Decatur, 308 Clairemont Ave.

### District 1 / Clairemont West

The Church at Decatur Heights, 735 Sycamore Dr.

### District 1 and 2 / Glenwood

Holy Trinity Parish, 515 E. Ponce de Leon Ave.

### District 1 and 2 / Ponce de Leon

First Christian Church of Decatur, 601 W. Ponce de Leon Ave.

### District 2 / Oakhurst

Oakhurst Baptist Church, 222 East Lake Dr.

### District 2 / Decatur

Evergreen Baptist Church, 303 Fourth Ave.

### District 2 / Winnona

The Richards Center at Columbia Theological Seminary, 701 S. Columbia Dr.

# SANITATION SERVICES

## Weekly pickups and single-stream recycling

Single-family residential garbage, yard waste, and recycling collection service is divided into four service days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. All garbage, trash, recyclables, yard trimmings, furniture and appliances for collection must be ready for collection by 7:30 a.m. on collection day. Arrival times will vary due to many conditions, but no collector will arrive before 7:30 a.m.

### Pay As You Throw

Residents pay an annual fee that covers garbage collection, yard waste disposal, street sweeping, and bulky item pickup. In addition, the City utilizes a Pay As You Throw (PAYT) system for its sanitation services. **All household trash must be placed in a PAYT bag to be collected.**

### Bulky Items

Bulky items like furniture and appliances are accepted free of charge as a part of regular sanitation pick-up. A \$50 service fee is required for items containing freon. Up to four tires will be picked up as a part of regular sanitation services.

### Hazardous Waste

Disposal of hazardous household material is handled by DeKalb County. For more information on hazardous waste events, visit the DeKalb County Sanitation Event Schedule at [www.dekalbcountyga.gov](http://www.dekalbcountyga.gov).

### Motor Oil

Residents may drop off their used motor oil at nearby auto part stores such as AutoZone, Advance Auto Parts, and Pep Boys.

### Yard Waste

Yard trimmings should be placed in a single-use yard waste bag, or in a container no larger than 32 gallons. Sticks, hedge clippings, and rigid brush need to be gathered into secure bundles no longer than four feet and weighing less than 50 pounds.

### Street Sweeping

Streets are swept once a month during fall and winter. Please remove vehicles and do not rake or blow leaves into the street. This is considered illegal dumping and causes a delay in the street sweeper route. Check the Sanitation Services webpage for the street sweeping schedule.

### Neighborhood Cleanup Days

Once a year residents can dispose of bulky items that do not easily fit into PAYT bags. Acceptable items include tires, furniture, trash that does not fit in the PAYT bags, appliances that do not contain freon, and building materials (not from the work of private contractors). Each street in the city is assigned to a Saturday between March and June. Check [decalbcountyga.com/neighborhoodcleanup](http://decalbcountyga.com/neighborhoodcleanup) for your street.

### Holiday Schedule

Details on the upcoming year's solid waste and recycling services holiday schedule as well as the drop off locations for Christmas tree recycling are included in the November Focus and online at [decalbcountyga.com/sanitation](http://decalbcountyga.com/sanitation). Schedule changes are posted on the city's website, the Decatur Focus, and social media. (Disregard DeKalb County notices regarding the County's solid waste and recycling holiday schedule.)



## RECYCLING

### YES! RECYCLE THESE

**PAPER** | Magazines • Catalogs • Junk mail • Tetra Pak cartons  
Newspapers and inserts • Paper (white and color) • Cardboard  
Clean Pizza boxes • Milk and juice cartons • Receipts  
Envelopes • To-go coffee lid and sleeve

**PLASTICS** | Clean bottles and containers • Plastic flower pots

**METAL** | Soda cans • Food cans

**TIRES** | Up to 4

### SEPARATE YOUR GLASS!

**Use your red Decatur glass recycling bin.**

**Don't have one? Contact Public Works.**

*All colors accepted. No ceramics, lightbulbs, mirrors, or broken glass*

### NOPE! DECATUR DOESN'T RECYCLE THESE

Straws • Batteries\* • To-go coffee cups • Clothes hangers  
Paper Towels • Shoes • Clothes • Baby food squeezey pouches  
Napkins • Tissues • Compostable plastic • Plastic utensils  
Sticky notes • Wine corks • Aerosol cans • Blister packs  
Soiled pizza boxes • Bubble-pack envelopes • Plastic toys  
Plastic bags, wrap, and film (recycle at grocery store)  
Light bulbs (recycle at home improvement stores)  
Shredded paper\* • Styrofoam\*

\* recycle these at Decatur's semi-annual recycling events

### BINS!

Residents have access to one free 18-gal. recycling bin and a red glass recycling bin from Decatur Public Works, 404-377-5571. Residents may use their own recycling bin/cart for comingled recycling.

### EVERY AUTUMN ELECTRONICS & STYROFOAM\* RECYCLING

**Get all your electronic junk out of the basement!**

Batteries • Cables • Calculators • Computers + Peripherals • Digital Cameras • LED/LCD Monitors • Printer cartridges • Printers • Radios • Remote controls • Routers • Scanners • Stereo stuff • Telephones • Typewriters • UPS units • VCRs • **Fee required to recycle cathode ray tube equipment** (exact change only): Monitors \$5; TVs \$10

**EVERY SPRING DRIVE-THRU SHREDDING & STYROFOAM\* RECYCLING**  
Securely destroy up to 10 boxes full of your sensitive household documents.

[decalbcountyga.com/electronicrecycling](http://decalbcountyga.com/electronicrecycling)



# BUILDING PERMITS Q&A

Planning to renovate your Decatur home? Let us know.

## When do I need to get a building permit for work on my home or yard?

Any routine maintenance or repairs that exceed \$1,000 in cost, reconfigure the interior spaces or exterior of a building, or alter any building systems such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, or load bearing structures will require a building permit. In addition, any work that alters the yard or building lot in the form of paving, retaining walls, decks, sheds, garages, fences, and/or landscaping will require a building permit.

## Is there anything that does not need a permit?

Yes. Several items that may exceed \$1,000 in scope do not require a permit. Finish work such as interior and exterior painting, installation of carpet, flooring, refinishing hardwoods, curtains/blinds/shutters, and wall treatments are all items that do not require any permits or building inspections.

## How long will it take to receive a building permit once I have applied?

Most of our permits are issued one to three days after applications are submitted. These permits include electrical, plumbing, HVAC permits to do replacement and repairs to ex-

isting homes. Minor construction permits such as kitchen renovations, bathroom renovations, fences, window/door replacements, roofs and ornamental landscaping permits also take one to three business days. Landscaping, driveway replacement, decks and porches, and small home additions and renovations are typically permitted in five to 10 business days. Substantial renovations, large site development projects, and new homes are typically permitted in 15 to 20 business days.

## Do I need drawings to receive a building permit?

In most cases, you will be required to provide some drawings to communicate the scope of work you plan to do. We suggest utilizing design professionals on all major construction projects including renovations, new homes, landscaping projects, and decks. For buildings, architects, home designers, interior designers and design/build contractors will assist you in permitting your project. For site

## LOCAL FACT

The city has a High Performance Building Standard that all new buildings and substantial renovations must comply with. To learn more about this ordinance and other zoning and building requirements, check the Unified Development Ordinance at [decaturga.com](http://decaturga.com).

and landscaping work, land surveyors, landscape architects and civil engineers will provide similar services and drawings.

## Do I need to hire a contractor to do a project on my home?

Georgia state law does allow homeowners to act as contractors for their own properties as long as it is not for the intent of what is commonly known as “house flipping.”

These permits allow homeowners to self-perform or contract services without having a licensed contractor. You are only permitted to obtain permits on your own property, and if you sell the property you cannot obtain permits on other properties within the state for 24 months after the sale. The Design, Environment, and Construction Department strongly recommends hiring licensed and insured contractors, trades people, and repair technicians for work on your home. These individuals have met the education, experience and performance criteria to do work in your home safely and in a code-compliant manner.

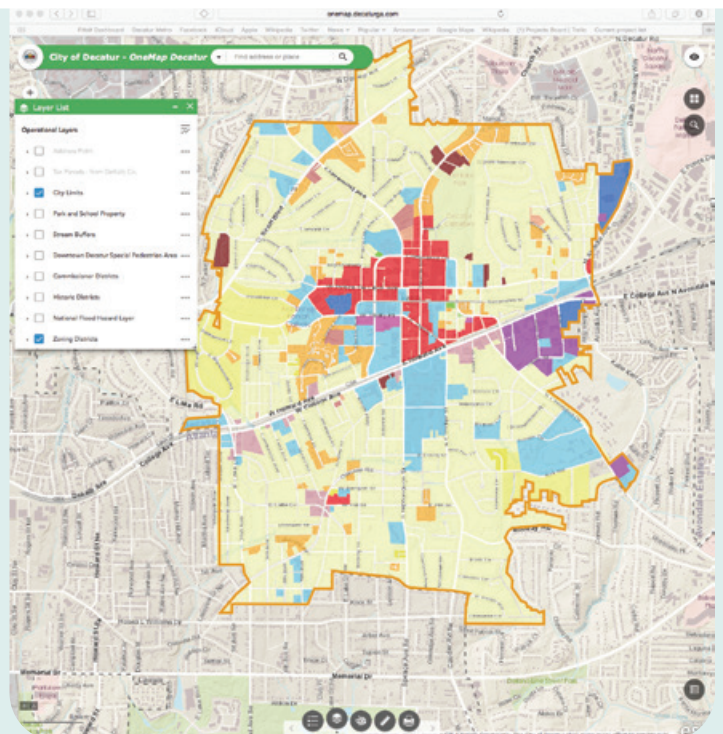
# ONE MAP

Visit [onemap.decaturga.com/cityofdecatur](http://onemap.decaturga.com/cityofdecatur) to learn more about Decatur:

- Look up parcel information and determine if the property is in the city limits
- Determine a property's zoning district
- Determine if a property is in a local historic district
- View flood hazard zones
- View sanitation, recycling, and streets sweeping schedules
- View Safe Routes to School routes
- Create, save, and print maps

## LOCAL FACT

The City of Decatur is nationally recognized as a Walk Friendly Community, Bike Friendly Community, Special Needs Community, and an Atlanta Regional Commission Green Community.



# DECATUR LOVES TREES

## Tree Canopy Ordinance

Decatur's tree canopy conservation ordinance encourages the conservation of existing tree canopy and provides minimum requirements for the protection, maintenance, and renewal of tree canopy cover across the city. Find more information at [decaturga.com/trees](http://decaturga.com/trees).

## Tree Removal

The tree canopy ordinance allows residential property owners to remove up to three healthy, protected trees during an 18-month period. A tree information permit needs to be filed with the city to track the reasons for the tree removal, the amount of tree canopy removed and a plan for replanting if applicable. No recompense or replanting is required if only three trees are removed within the 18-month period.

## Boundary Trees

Trees with 20 percent or more of the critical root zone extending across a property

boundary are considered boundary trees and require a boundary tree agreement for removal. Contact the Design, Environment and Construction Division for more information.

## Invasive Species

While some invasive plants are pretty, they can squeeze out native species, smother and kill trees, poison local fauna, and damage our local ecosystem. Consider removing invasive plants such as Chinese privet, Chinese wisteria, English ivy, nandina, Japanese hops, and kudzu.

## Native Species

While many species of trees grow in the city, there are some trees that not only thrive better, but provide a habitat to the local wildlife. Some of the best trees to plant include ash, cedar, cherry, dogwood,

hickory, magnolia, maple, oak, pecan poplar, sycamore, and weeping willow. For a more extensive list of trees, contact the city arborist or check the tree list in the Unified Development Ordinance.

## LOCAL FACT

The City of Decatur is nationally recognized as a Tree City USA, and Georgia's first-ever city to be recognized as a Bee City USA.

## Where to Plant the Right Tree?

Where you plant your tree is just as important as what type of tree you plant. Think about how your tree will affect existing property lines, utility lines, and sidewalks, and how it will look as it grows taller and wider.

## Leave the Leaves!

Using a tree's own fallen leaves for mulch helps to retain soil moisture, moderates soil temperature, suppresses weed growth, and provides a habitat for hibernating animals and insects.

# STORMWATER & FLOODING

Controlling stormwater is a priority throughout Decatur.

## Watersheds

Four watersheds are found within the city: Sugar Creek and Shoal Creek, which drain to the Atlantic Ocean, and Peavine Creek and South Fork Peachtree Creek, which drain to the Gulf of Mexico. You can do your part to protect the city's watersheds by:

- Cleaning up after your dog, even in your own backyard! Pet poo stations can be found at the parks and throughout downtown.
- Never flush medication down the toilet, instead bring it to the Police Department medicine drop-off cabinet.
- Keep hazardous chemicals and motor oil out of drains.
- Use nontoxic household products whenever possible.
- Get your car professionally washed.

## Stormwater Drainage Maintenance

Drainage features outside the public right-of-way are typically owned and maintained by the property owner, including inlets, pipes, ditches, and creeks. Dumping waste into the city's stormwater infrastructure is illegal and should be reported. Report any storm structure blockage or illegal dumping to the Design, Environment and Construction Department at 404-377-6198.

## Neighbors' Runoff

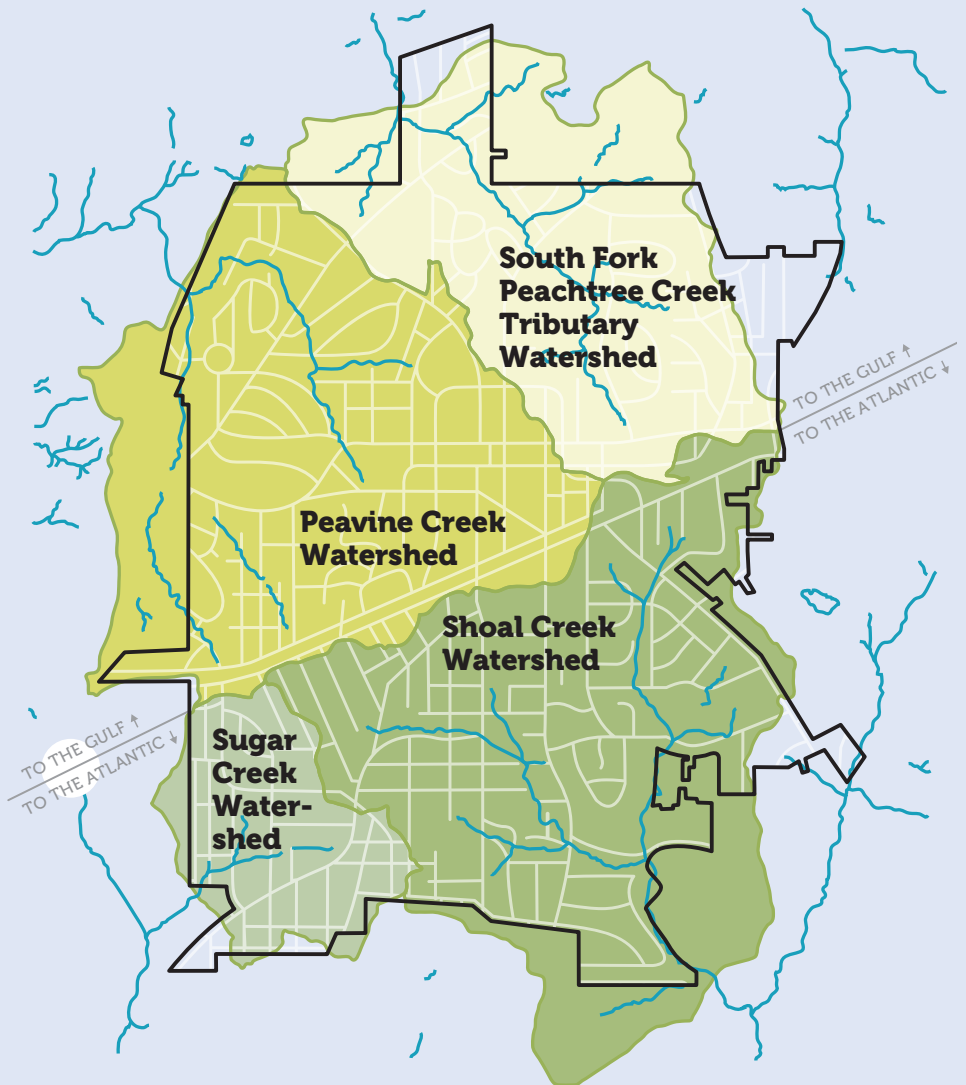
Runoff crossing property boundaries is generally considered a civil matter; exceptions include active construction sites or properties with a drainage system.

## Stream Buffers

Any land disturbance within 75 feet of a creek must be permitted by the Design, Environment and Construction Division to ensure compliance with stream buffer regulations. This also includes smaller projects such as landscaping or fencing.

## Floodplains

Properties officially identified as being in a floodplain are required by their mortgage lenders to have flood insurance. While it is not impossible to build in a floodplain, there are specific regulations that must be followed. Any interior or exterior construction is subject to these regulations. For more information and guidance, set up a pre-application meeting with the Design, Environment, and Construction Division.



## LOCAL FACT

In 2013 the city began large-scale improvements to the downtown drainage system. Underneath Ebster Field is a massive flood control vault, which reduces the flooding risk downtown and improves water quality.

# ACTIVE LIVING

Decatur makes it easy to be active.



## Parks and Dog Parks

The city has numerous large and pocket parks for you to explore including: Adair Park, Scott Park, McKoy Park, Mead Road Park, Oakhurst Park, Ebster Park, Glenlake Park, Glenn Creek Nature Preserve, and Hidden Cove Park (see the map on page 16). You'll also find fenced dog parks within Adair, Glenlake, and Oakhurst parks. Parks are open sunrise to sunset.

## Tennis

Courts are located at Glenlake Tennis Center, Scott Park, and Oakhurst Park. Courts at Oakhurst and Scott Park are free to residents before 6 p.m. on weekdays. After 6 p.m. resident fees are \$2.50/session and \$3.50/session for non-residents. Tennis courts are open Mon-Thurs, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; and weekends, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

## Pools

The city has one indoor pool at The Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club in Oakhurst, and three outdoor pools at Ebster, Glenlake, and McKoy parks. Residents must bring proof of residency to Glenlake Tennis Center after May 1 to be issued a City of Decatur residency card and receive resident rates. Annual pool passes can be purchased at Glenlake Tennis Center. For more information on rates, check out the Summer *Playbook* or contact Active Living.

## Cemetery

Decatur Cemetery is downtown's largest greenspace – a quiet 58-acre park. While visiting the cemetery, you will recognize many names from Decatur, DeKalb, and Georgia history. The cemetery is open every day from sunrise to sunset. Stop by the office on Bell Street to pick up a cemetery map and walking tour brochure.

## Walking, Running, and Cycling

**Third Friday FUN Bike Ride** (March-October) – Beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Decatur Recreation Center, the ride is designed for newer riders who would like to learn about riding in a group, though all levels are encouraged to join.

**Silver Spokes** – This class is taught every Thursday morning in April, May, September, and October, to encourage senior citizens to get back on their bikes. Pre-registration is required.

**Decatur Running Group** – meets on Thursday at 6:30 pm at Decatur Recreation Center

**Couch to 5K** – Meets in March/April and September/October. 8 week running program that meets twice a week.

**50+ Walks**— Participants meet Wednesday at Decatur Recreation Center to walk 2.5-3 miles. Meets at 10 a.m., Oct.-April; 9 a.m. March-Sept.

**Decatur Hiking Group** – meets on the last Friday of each month. All hikes are easy to intermediate.

**Decatur Outdoor Group** – participants meet to plan their outdoor adventures

## Youth and Adult Athletics

Decatur Active Living offers a variety of youth sports – baseball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, cheerleading, football, and lacrosse – as well as adult softball and basketball leagues.

## Sport Camps

Decatur Active Living offers a variety of sport camps led by Decatur High School and Renfroe Middle School coaches. Camps cover a variety of sports from fencing, basketball, soccer, table tennis, gymnastics, baseball, football, karate, lacrosse, girls softball, cheerleading, and lacrosse.

Learn more about these opportunities at [decaturga.com/activeliving](http://decaturga.com/activeliving).



## LOCAL FACT

The Stone Mountain Path bisects the city of Decatur along Howard Avenue. The 19-mile multi-use trail connects the city to Stone Mountain to the east and to Atlanta (and the BeltLine) to the west.



# DECATUR IS GREAT FOR KIDS

Lots of opportunities for Decatur's younger residents

## After School Programs

The City offers 10 after-school programs, eight of which are accredited, for students in grades K-8. Program sites are located in schools and city facilities. For more information, contact the Children and Youth Services Division at 404-378-1082 or check out the latest issue of the Playbook newsletter at [decaturga.com/playbook](http://decaturga.com/playbook).

## Junior Police Academy

Held in June and September of each year., this weeklong interactive program educates youth 11-14 years old about the functions and duties of their police department. Sessions include 911/communications, recruitment and training, weapons and equipment, use of force, traffic safety and enforcement, drug trends and dangers, criminal investigations, personal safety and crime prevention and physical fitness. Participants will also complete a family and friends CPR course. Go to [decaturga.com/police](http://decaturga.com/police) and click on community programs.

## Decatur Youth Council

The Decatur Youth Council (DYC) is a city-sponsored, community-based leadership program for high school students who live within the city of Decatur or attend public, private, or home-based schools within the city. Members of the DYC will learn about their local city government and develop into young leaders through structured monthly educational programs and team-building activities. Learn more at [decaturga.com/cityzenboards](http://decaturga.com/cityzenboards).






## Touch a Truck

Each March the city holds a Touch a Truck event where children of all ages are invited to see, touch, and explore their favorite truck or equipment on wheels. Vehicles from the City of Decatur, Decatur City Schools, and DeKalb County are always on display. Check the calendar at [visitdecaturga.com](http://visitdecaturga.com).

## LOCAL FACT

The *Playbook* is published three times a year (in January, May, and September) as a special insert in the Decatur *Focus* newsletter. The *Playbook* lists the after school programs, camp programs, and recreational sports for kids as well as athletic classes and programs for seniors. A stand-alone summer camps issue is distributed in Decatur city schools before the winter holiday break. Learn more at [decaturga.com/playbook](http://decaturga.com/playbook).

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

	Locations	Grades
	<b>Animal Crackers</b> Clairemont Glennwood Oakhurst Westchester Winnona Park	K-3rd
	<b>Whiz Kids</b> 5th Avenue Upper Elem. Ebster Rec. Center Talley St. Upper Elem. Legacy Park	4th-5th
	<b>Project REAL</b> Renfree	6th-8th



Touch a Truck is a favorite family event.

Learning about fingerprints at the Junior Police Academy



#### Smart 911

The Smart911 emergency notification system is a multi-platform system that quickly notifies residents and business owners of emergency situations and severe weather requiring immediate action via telephone, text, and/or email, depending on individual preferences. In addition, the Smart 911 system encourages residents and business owners to create safety profiles of vital personal and household data, including household members, photos, medications or medical conditions and even pets. When 911 is dialed from a registered phone number, the vital information is immediately displayed for the 911 dispatcher, providing necessary information to first responders. Safety profiles can be created at [Smart911.com](http://Smart911.com).

#### Text 911

The City of Decatur Police Department now accepts text messaging for the hearing and speech impaired and for others in emergency situations where a voice call is not possible due to emergency circumstances or a high volume of phone activity.

#### Tornado Warning Sirens

The city has seven tornado warning sirens located at Glennwood Elementary, Winnona Park Elementary, Oakhurst Elementary, Westchester Elementary, Agnes Scott College, Beacon Municipal Complex, and Legacy Park. During an imminent tornado threat, the sirens are sounded to alert citizens outdoors to take shelter. The tornado sirens are tested at 5 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, unless there is inclement weather.



#### FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

- Child Seat Installations
- Home Inspections
- Blood Pressure Checks
- Fire Extinguisher Checks
- CPR Training
- Car Fit for Seniors
- Medicine Cabinet Clean-out
- Winter Storm Senior Welfare Checks
- Fire Station Tours
- Designated Safe Place



#### CONNECT WITH DECATUR PUBLIC SAFETY

Keep up with alerts, updates, news, events, classes and programs by following the Decatur Police Department on Nextdoor, Facebook, and Twitter. The Decatur Fire Department can be found on Facebook and Instagram.

##### Facebook

[cityofdecaturpdga](https://www.facebook.com/cityofdecaturpdga)  
[decaturfireandrescue](https://www.facebook.com/decaturfireandrescue)

##### Nextdoor

[Decatur Police Department](https://www.nextdoor.com/decatur-police-department)

##### Twitter

[cityofdecaturpd](https://twitter.com/cityofdecaturpd)

##### Instagram

[cityofdecaturpd](https://www.instagram.com/cityofdecaturpd)  
[decaturgafire](https://www.instagram.com/decaturgafire)



# CITY OFFICES



## CITY HALL

509 N. McDonough St.

**City Manager's office**  
404-370-4102

- Budget
- Capital Bond Projects
- City Clerk

**Administrative Services**  
404-370-4102

- Finance • Insurance
- Personnel • Payroll
- Records Management
- Technology • Wellness

**Community & Economic Development**  
404-371-8386

- Economic & Business Development
- Civic Engagement, Communications & Marketing
- Special Events
- Lifelong Community
- Planning & Zoning



## PUBLIC WORKS

2635 Talley St.

**Public Works** 404-377-5571

- Solid Waste & Recycling
- Motor Maintenance
- Building & Grounds Maintenance • Cemetery

**Design, Environment & Construction** 404-377-6198

- Engineering • Streets
- Stormwater
- Permitting & Inspections
- Codes Enforcement



## DECATUR RECREATION CENTER

231 Sycamore St. • 404-377-0494

**Active Living**

- Athletics • Parks and Pools
- Safe Routes to School • Gym
- Summer Camps • Meeting Space

## DECATUR LEGACY PARK

ADMINISTRATION BLDG.  
500 S. Columbia Dr. • 404-378-1082

**Children & Youth Services**

- After school • Summer Camp



## FIRE STATION NO. 1

230 E. Trinity Pl.



## FIRE STATION NO. 2

356 W. Hill St.

**Fire Department** non-emergency 404-373-5092



## BEACON MUNICIPAL CENTER

**Police Department**  
420 W. Trinity Pl.

non-emergency number:  
404-373-6551

**E-911**

In an emergency, call or text 911

**Municipal Court**  
678-553-6655

**Ebster Recreation Center**

105 Electric Ave.  
404-377-0494

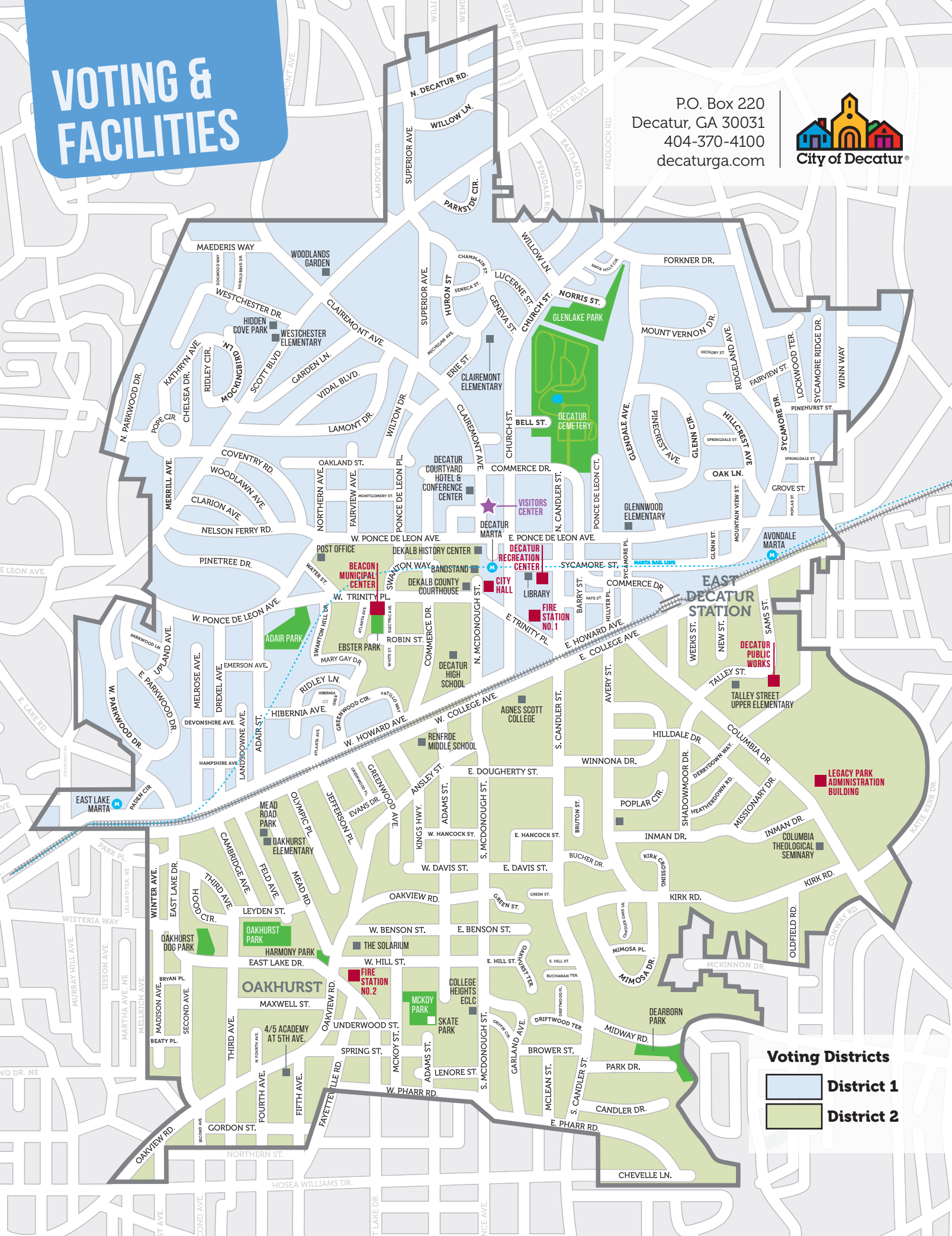
- Athletics
- Gym
- Meeting Space
- Stage
- Playground
- Field
- Pool

**City Schools of Decatur Elizabeth Wilson Schools Support Center**

125 Electric Ave.  
404-371-3601

# VOTING & FACILITIES

P.O. Box 220  
 Decatur, GA 30031  
 404-370-4100  
 decaturga.com



**Voting Districts**

- District 1
- District 2