

In this Annual Report we take a look at how far we have come since the last strategic planning process, which began in 1998 with the Round Tables and resulted in the 2000 Strategic Plan. As we plan for the next 10 years, here is a snapshot view of where we have been and the roadmap we used to get here.



City of Decatur

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Ten years ago, nearly 500 Decatur residents came together to set the course for 2000's first decade, and the resulting Strategic Plan laid out the roadmap for some of our greatest success stories. It influenced our priorities, our infrastructure decisions, our approach to growth, the services and programs offered by city government, and the ease with which we are able to come together in the comfortable exercise of community.

The Strategic Plan has guided the decisions that affect all of us on a daily basis. Now, 10 years later, we are asking the question, "Where to next?" We met more than 80 percent of the goals in our last Strategic Plan – an amazing accomplishment. Mayor Bill Floyd calls it "a testament to the aggressive – yet realistic – directives provided by our citizens 10 years ago."

The 2000 Strategic Planning process used as a starting point the successful 1982 Town Center Plan. The 1982 Plan combined sound planning principles based on maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment with the simplicity of summarizing recommendations in 10 key goals. The city's leadership used those goals effectively to focus its efforts, resulting in the current success of downtown Decatur.

(Photo from 1982 Planning Process)



A Look Back at the 2000 Strategic Plan

"Decatur in 2000 was the type of community many people were trying to find, and a community that the residents wanted to protect. It has historical character; there is a strong sense of community with a very diverse population; and residents have access to a high level of both public and private services.

"The decision to create a 10-year Strategic Plan for the City of Decatur came from a growing concern among residents and community leaders that with Decatur again "on the map" for developers, and with changes in demographics resulting from the sharp escalation in property values, Decatur was in danger of losing the qualities that are so valued by its residents, businesses and visitors." — *from the 2000 Strategic Plan*

The Vision: The City of Decatur will assure a high quality of life for its residents, businesses and visitors both today and in the future.

The 2000 Strategic Plan centered on three principles:

Principle I:
Manage growth while retaining character.

Principle II:
Encourage community interaction.

Principle III:
Provide quality services within fiscal limits.

Principle I: Manage Growth While Retaining Character

Decatur has accommodated commercial and residential growth while retaining a small-town character within an urban environment.

- Retained the existing character of commercial districts.
- Encouraged a diversity of business types with particular focus on small business.
- Protected existing neighborhoods while identifying the potential for selected growth and adopting standards that guide further growth.

Restaurant Growth – Restaurants are the economic driver for our commercial districts. They create destination traffic that has benefited our retail businesses and sparked growth in our retail/service sector.

RESTAURANT GROWTH	
1996	38 restaurants
2001	64 restaurants
2009	82 restaurants

Retail Growth – Emphasis is on locally owned, one-of-a-kind businesses. Since 1999, we have added more than 100,000 square feet of new retail space in downtown Decatur. All new construction in our downtown district, whether it is a parking deck, a condominium or an office building, must have retail space on the ground floor. The current economic downturn has resulted in some businesses closing but leasing interest remains high and we are slowly filling spaces. Most downtown retailers reported a stronger 2009 year with sales exceeding 2008.

RETAIL GROWTH	
1996	54 retail businesses
2001	78 retail businesses
2009	99 retail businesses

RETAIL SPACE	
2000	220,000 sf
2008	352,000 sf

Downtown Residential – A major component of our downtown development strategy has been the construction of residential projects in the central business district. Total numbers include public housing units adjacent to the downtown district.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING	
1996	1,050 units
2006	1,628 units

Since 2000, the following units have been added in the central business district:

Townhouses

- Maple Street Townhouses 13 units
- Commerce Drive Townhouses 15 units

Condominiums

- Historic Decatur Condominiums 20 units
- Town Square Condominiums . . . 105 units/13,000 sf retail
- Decatur Renaissance 170 units/10,000 sf retail
- The Clairemont 68 units
- 335 Ponce de Leon 70 units
- Artisan Phase I 75 units/12,000 sf retail
- Artisan Phase II 56 units (currently selling)
- Talley Street Lofts 90 units (currently selling)
- 527 N. McDonough 4 units (approved)
- 432 E. Howard Ave. 52 units (approved)

Apartments

- Ice House 101 units
- 233 E. Trinity Place . 210 units/25,000 sf retail (approved)
- 315 W. Ponce de Leon 160 units (approved)



Parking – More than 300 metered parking spaces and 8,000 deck and surface parking spaces exist in downtown Decatur. New directional signs throughout the downtown area indicate public parking. The Artisan Project (above) includes 113 public parking spaces to provide additional retail/restaurant parking for the downtown district.

Public Sector Improvements

The city has grants in place to fund the following projects:

- Complete streetscape improvements along Trinity Place from City Hall to the railroad tracks.
- Construct streetscape improvements in the Oakhurst business district.
- Construct bicycle lanes along W. Ponce de Leon Avenue from the city limits to W. Trinity Place and along W. Trinity Place to N. McDonough Street.
- Improve the intersections at College Avenue and S. Candler Street and College Avenue and S. McDonough Street.

The streetscape projects and bicycle lanes are awaiting approval of final plans by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The intersection improvements are currently being designed. The city just received a grant to fund streetscape improvements along N. McDonough Street from the railroad tracks to City Hall.

Principle I: Manage Growth While Retaining Character



Talley Street Lofts

Building Permits –

Decatur continues to enjoy unprecedented development. Agnes Scott College is completing a \$75 million development program. In addition to construction downtown, homeowners are expanding and renovating in record numbers.

YEAR	BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED	TOTAL CONSTRUCTION VALUE
1995	349	\$19 million
2000	688	\$41 million
2001	433	\$51 million
2005	728	\$92.5 million
2006	753	\$56.5 million
2007	822	\$100 million
2008	1290	\$83 million
2009	1292	\$38 million

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND THE TAX DIGEST

Year	Reassessment Value	New Value*	Total	% New Value
2004	\$21,630,388	\$23,713,455	\$45,343,843	52%
2006	\$63,812,136	\$47,369,459	\$11,181,595	43%
2008	-\$4,138,000	\$32,263,000	\$28,125,000	115%

*Represents increase in the city's tax digest as a result of assessed value of new developments built in the city of Decatur.



The Clairemont Condominiums

Traffic – In spite of increased development, traffic counts in Decatur have remained relatively unchanged. We discourage through traffic and encourage alternatives to driving. Our efforts to increase downtown residential and develop more local retail and restaurant businesses have helped reduce the number of necessary car trips and encouraged a “park once” opportunity within the downtown commercial district. The addition of the free shuttle system between downtown Decatur, Emory and Clifton Corridor employee centers has also helped reduce the number of automobile trips.

TRAFFIC COUNTS AT KEY INTERSECTIONS

YEAR	Clairemont at Michigan	WPDL at Water St.	Scott at Coventry	Church at Norris	E. Trinity at Church
2002	20,200	11,270	35,900	17,800	14,960
2007	18,080	10,800	30,160	14,700	11,400

Source – Georgia Department of Transportation website

Making Decatur a safe community for cycling helps to reduce the number of cars on the streets.



Principle II: Encourage Community Interaction

Decatur has determined methods to maximize communication and connections between residents, businesses, institutions and government. Our goals are to:

- Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural and other types of diversity.
- Reinforce neighborhoods and develop connections between neighborhoods.
- Strengthen communication and connections throughout the community.

Volunteer! Decatur

The Volunteer! Decatur program began as a result of the 2000 Strategic Plan. Volunteer! Decatur coordinator Lee Ann Harvey organizes volunteers for special events and service projects, and maintains a list of volunteer opportunities available in local nonprofit organizations. Volunteers are the heart of our festivals, events, and service projects and their value is immeasurable!

2009 VOLUNTEER REPORT

Events	Number	Hours	
Decatur Arts Festival	228	744	<i>*Independent Sector calculates the hourly value of volunteer time (\$20.85 for 2009) based on the average hourly wage for all nonmanagement, nonagricultural workers as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, with a 12 percent increase to estimate for fringe benefits.</i>
Decatur Beach Party	328	836	
Decatur Book Festival	392	1,529	
Decatur Beer Tasting Festival	433	1,682	
Decatur Wine Tasting Festival	141	374	
Decatur Tour of Homes	248	914	
Service Projects			
Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project	1,026	5,398	
A Season of Giving/Christmas Decatur	135	814	
Total volunteer hours – all events	12,291		
*Value of volunteer time – all events	\$256,267		

Decatur Neighborhood Alliance

The Volunteer! Decatur coordinator also convenes the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance twice a year in March and September. Representatives from all Decatur neighborhood associations are invited to come together to learn about upcoming city initiatives, share neighborhood news and ask questions, talk about issues facing individual neighborhoods and share potential solutions.

Neighborhood association representatives go back and share the information with their association members.

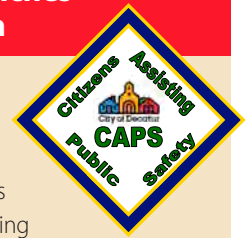
Recent discussions have centered on the Strategic Plan process, Environmental Sustainability Board initiatives, Cultural Arts Master Plan results, communication “best practices” initiatives used by different neighborhood associations, and a tour of Fire Station No. 2.



Homeowners Nights

The Planning Department launched its Homeowners Nights series in 2009 with more than 30 attendees. The series continues with quarterly meetings in 2010. Homeowners Nights give residents an opportunity to meet with all the planning, zoning, and inspections staff and ask questions related to their properties. The building code inspector, planning director, permit and zoning technician, preservation planner and other city representatives are on hand to answer questions and provide information on renovating or constructing a home in Decatur.

Citizens Public Safety Academy Launches CAPS Program



Decatur's Citizens Public Safety Academy (CPSA)

is an eight-week class that focuses on policing and fire safety and includes a police ride-along and tour of the DeKalb County jail. The program is in its 13th year and has graduated 18 classes. The 19th class begins in September 2010.

One outcome of the Citizens Public Safety Academy is the CAPS (Citizens Assisting Public Safety) program, launched in 2008 and consisting of CPSA graduates. CAPS members work at least one four-hour shift monthly and attend in-service training sessions presented by the police and fire departments. To date, 26 CAPS have completed training.

Their duties include special events (with a focus on public safety functions); business district patrol, providing a presence on the downtown square, in the Oakhurst business district and in other commercial districts; and disaster response (assisting public safety personnel).



The first group of CAPS grads after their swearing-in ceremony.

Principle II: Encourage Community Interaction

Decatur 101 – More Than 500 Graduates



Above: Students at the inaugural Decatur 101 meeting for 2010. Below: Mayor Floyd presents each graduate with a certificate at graduation.



The Decatur 101 program is designed to inform and involve citizens and put a “face” on government. The program launched in 2000 as one result of the Strategic Plan and now has more than 500 graduates.

During each five-week session participants learn about Decatur’s history, form of government, budget process, economic development strategy, volunteer boards and commissions, bond projects, emergency management, and more. Participants tour various city buildings and meet the department heads in each area. The class features interactive activities such as the community scavenger hunt, 100 pennies exercise, and public works jeopardy.

The 2010 Class Brings the Total Graduates to Nearly 600

This year’s class marked the 11th annual Decatur 101 course. The morning class had 38 participants (including two city employees) and the evening class had 51, for a total of 89 graduates. This brings the program’s overall total to 592 graduates. We have a waiting list for 2011 for both the morning and evening classes. There were 55 presenters in the program:

- Twenty-nine members of the City Management Team, representing all city departments and divisions, participated in at least one class.
- Fourteen residents on boards/commissions – Housing Authority, DDA, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation, Sustainability, and Active Living – participated in one session (seven in the morning, seven in the evening).
- Two elected officials participated.
- One resident who is a Decatur historian and former mayor gave the city’s history.
- Nine representatives from Decatur nonprofit organizations participated in one session and discussed a variety of volunteer opportunities.



Morning class graduates



Evening class graduates

Comments from Participants:

“I liked meeting other Decatur 101 folks and realizing that my city government really cares to do the right, best thing for the city.”

- “I work in Atlanta and it is interesting to learn about how things work on a smaller scale. I also love that employees seem to love [their] jobs and stay for a long time.”
- “I was very surprised. I was sort of regretting my decision to take the class . . . [but] it was very different, informative and entertaining.”
- “I felt I learned a lot about city planning and looked at the downtown in a different way.”
- “I know a lot more about Decatur now – I love it even more! Thank you for the time, energy, and commitment you have for this class. I have already told 10 people about it.”
- “The work ethic of the employees of the city is wonderful. I believed Decatur was a great place to live prior to this class and my attendance has confirmed that.”
- “I feel welcomed and inspired to do more to make Decatur mine!”
- “I feel like I really belong and a part of Decatur now . . . I am more invested in what happens in city planning.”

Expanded Communications Initiatives

To carry out the Strategic Plan's directive to personalize and expand distribution of community publications and improve communication between residents, the city and schools, we have launched a combination of print and online initiatives.

Printed Material Engages Citizens

We added the following print publications to the Decatur Focus and the Playbook inserts:

2002 – Created the annual Kids Activity Book geared to elementary school-age children and designed to teach kids about city government and city services using a variety of games, puzzles, and activities.

2002 – Published the Decatur Education Foundation's annual report, Foundation Footnotes, in the Decatur Focus.

2003 – Published the City Schools of Decatur's annual report as an insert in the Decatur Focus.

2008 – Created the Decatur Green Initiatives Special Report.

2008 – Created the annual Decatur Emergency Management insert containing information about the city's emergency plans, programs, and resources.

Online Communications Expand Each Year

E-Newsletters – We've created a number of content-specific e-newsletters that are sent to a variety of users, including e-news alerts related to emergency information and important news to share; Decatur 101 graduates, the Neighborhood Alliance, and the Retail and Restaurant committee; and public safety-related e-news.

Open City Hall Launched in 2009 – Open City Hall is an online forum that offers a way for our community to weigh in on issues without having to attend a public meeting. Topics have included annexation, farm initiatives, taxes, cultural arts and intersection improvement. In 2010 Decatur received an Outstanding Achievement in Innovation award for Open City Hall from the Alliance for Innovation, an international organization committed to advancing excellence in local government.

Blogs, Facebook, Twitter – Decatur now has three blogs. **The Decatur Minute** offers the latest on shopping, development and events in Decatur. **Be Active Decatur** provides news, notes and discussion about being active in Decatur. **Decatur Tax Blog** focuses on national and local tax and housing developments, timely reminders about tax deadlines for residents, special announcements, and educational posts about your tax bill.

The Decatur Minute has had 100,000 views since its launch in 2008. The DowntownDecatur Facebook page has approximately 4,000 friends, and more than 700 people are following the DowntownDecatur tweets.

The 2010 Strategic Plan Update includes a dedicated website, www.decaturnext.com, and the opportunity for a series of online communication activities.

Citizen Request Management System

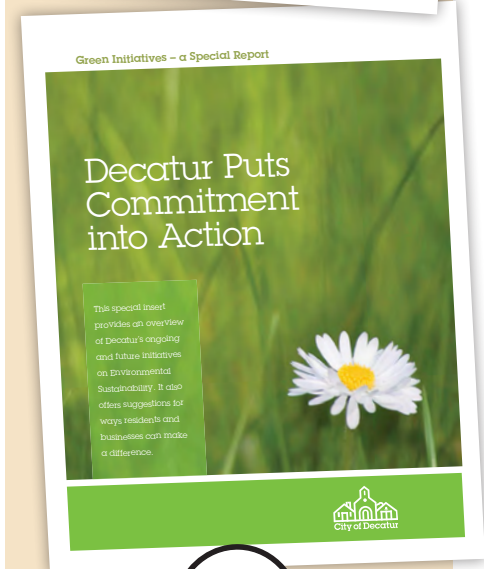
Citizens can now request services or report problems online instead of having to wait until office hours to call different departments. Use it to report potholes, code violations, tree trimming, graffiti and other items when you notice them.

CodeRed Warnings

Decatur can alert you, via automated phone calls, about severe weather and other important situations as they arise. Register online at www.decaturga.com.

Citizens Survey

Decatur conducts a citywide Citizens Survey every two years. The survey is conducted by the National Citizen Survey and results are posted online. We launched the survey in 2006 and now have results from 2006, 2008 and 2010.



Principle III: Provide Quality Services within Fiscal Limits



Decatur's model of sustainability

Top: City staffers turn out in large numbers to volunteer their time and effort for the Martin Luther King Service Project.

Below: More than 1,200 volunteers worked in the cold rain.



We are committed to providing housing, transportation, environmental and public services to Decatur's residents and workers with these specific goals in mind:

- Increase opportunities for economically diverse housing for persons who live or work in Decatur.
- Enhance mobility in and through Decatur.
- Continue our commitment to environmental quality.
- Continue to provide quality city and school system services within fiscal limits acceptable to the community.
- Identify tax relief and other programs to aid the elderly.

Tax Payment Assistance

In addition to the homestead exemptions, the City of Decatur 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. Application for tax deferral must be filed annually with the city clerk on or before March 1 of the year for which the deferral is sought. For more information, contact the city clerk, Karen desIslets, 404-370-4100; karen.desislets@decaturga.com.

Homestead Exemptions

The City of Decatur offers eight homestead exemptions for which resident homeowners may qualify. These include general exemptions based on ownership and occupancy as well as exemptions based on age, income and disability. A complete list of exemptions and qualifications can be found at www.decaturga.com.

A homestead exemption reduces the taxable value of your home. For example, if your home is appraised at \$200,000, then the assessed value is 50 percent of that amount, or \$100,000. With a \$20,000 homestead exemption, you only pay taxes on \$80,000.

If you qualify for the general homestead exemption, then you automatically qualify for the Governor's Homeowner's Tax Relief Grant (HTRG) Credit, which is equal to an \$8,000 homestead exemption. The amount of the credit appears on the face of your tax bill.

Homestead exemption applications are accepted year-round, but **current-year exemptions must be applied for between Jan. 2 and March 1**. Applications received after March 1 will be processed for the following tax year.

MLK Service Project Helps Seniors Stay in Their Homes

By making greatly needed interior repairs and doing yard work, the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project helps Decatur's senior residents remain in their homes safely, comfortably, and affordably.

Excerpts from the 2010 MLK Service Project report:

Two out of three days of rain didn't dampen the spirits of **approximately 1,180 volunteers** who came out to do home repairs and yard work for senior citizens during the eighth annual Decatur Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project. The project is sponsored by the Decatur Preservation Alliance in partnership with the City of Decatur and with the assistance of numerous nonprofit organizations, businesses, skilled tradespeople, places of worship, and other organizations.

They repaired 13 homes and did yard work at 12 of those. Thanks to the eager workforce, volunteers did yard work on 37 additional homes for **a grand total of 50 senior citizens' homes worked on in 2010**. In addition, volunteers did yard work for the people with disabilities who live in the PRI homes behind the Solarium. There was so much yard waste that approximately 2,500 yard waste bags were used and there were numerous additional piles of brush.



Sidewalk Improvement Program: Improving Sidewalks and Crosswalks

The citywide sidewalk improvement program began in 2004 with funding from annual appropriations by the City Commission and the goal of having a sidewalk on one side of every street in Decatur. About 3.5 miles of new and replacement sidewalks have been built to date.

Generally, priorities have been to:

- Provide safe walking routes to the city's schools.
- Close gaps in the existing sidewalk system.
- Provide sidewalks where there is a substantial amount of existing pedestrian traffic and in areas with high volumes of vehicular traffic.
- Respond to citizen requests.
- Repair existing sidewalks that are in poor condition.

Almost one mile of new sidewalks were built in Phase 1 of the program at a cost of \$300,000.

Construction started on Phase 2 in late fall 2009. Almost 3.5 miles of new sidewalk are included, along with enhanced crosswalks at key intersections in downtown Decatur and on streets with high volumes of pedestrian use. The total budget for Phase 2 of the sidewalk program is \$1,200,000.

Environmental Quality: Preserving and Expanding Greenspace, Wetlands and Trees

Decatur purchased and demolished four flood-prone dwellings on Westchester Drive and purchased a vacant property on N. Parkwood Road, providing about four acres of permanently reserved open space to Hidden Cove Park. The acquisitions were made using funds from the Capital Bond Fund (\$440,000) and grants from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (\$1,174,000).

Work is continuing on a master plan for Hidden Cove Park. Two new footbridges were built to provide better access to the park.

Enhancing Mobility in and Through Decatur

W. Ponce de Leon-W. Trinity Place Bicycle Lanes

Construction will begin soon on bicycle lanes that will run along W. Ponce de Leon Avenue and W. Trinity Place from the western city limits near E. Parkwood Road to N. McDonough Street in downtown Decatur.

The plan also provides traffic calming elements along W. Ponce de Leon between W. Trinity Place and the western city limits. There is a reduction from two vehicle lanes to one vehicle travel lane in each direction, with a bike lane in each direction, "bulb outs" with crosswalks at intersections, and on-street parking permitted on both sides of the street. The total project budget is \$437,000 with \$175,000 provided by the Capital Projects Bond Fund and \$262,000 from Georgia DOT's Transportation Enhancement program.

Oakhurst Streetscape Improvements

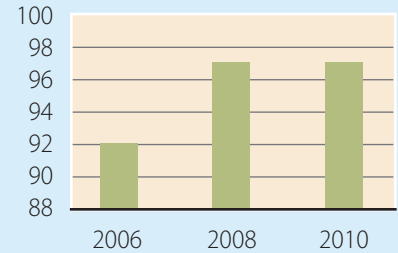
Design plans for the Oakhurst Streetscape Improvements have been completed and are under review by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Major goals of the project include improving pedestrian accessibility and safety throughout Oakhurst Village, with wider sidewalks and outdoor seating areas, improved crosswalks, additional on-street parking, new street lights and street trees, additional benches, bicycle racks and litter containers.

Harmony Park will be improved by replacing the existing drive-through parking lot at its

Citizen Satisfaction Survey Responses

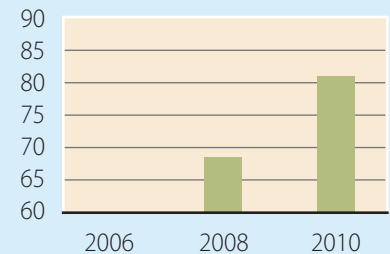
Decatur as a Place to Live

percent rated excellent/good



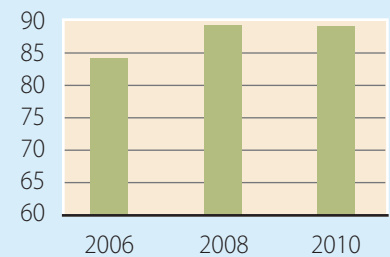
Quality of Emergency Preparedness Services

percent rated excellent/good



Overall Quality of Services Provided by the City of Decatur

percent rated excellent/good



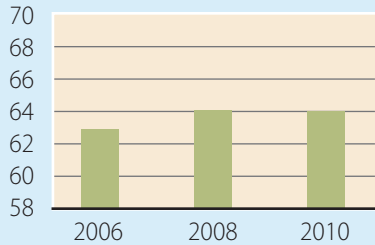
95%

of electric lights used in City of Decatur facilities are energy efficient.

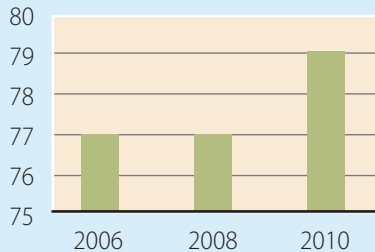
Principle III : Provide Quality Services within Fiscal Limits

Citizen Satisfaction Survey Responses *continued*

Value of Services for Taxes Paid percent rated excellent/good



Overall Impression of City Employees percent rated excellent/good



southern boundary with additional park space. These parking spaces will be relocated to off-street angled parking near the retail shops adjacent to the park. The total project budget is \$1.5 million, with \$1 million provided by the Capital Projects Bond Fund and \$500,000 from the Georgia DOT's Transportation Enhancement Program.

Downtown Decatur Streetscape Improvements, Phase V

The Phase V project area includes the south side of E. Trinity Place from Church Street to just past the fire station, and Church Street from E. Trinity Place south to E. Howard Avenue. The purpose of the project is to improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians and to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and motorists. Proposed improvements will be in the public right of way and will include new sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, street trees, pedestrian scale lights, and trash receptacles.

Improving the Quality of Buildings, Parks and Recreational Facilities

Fire Station No. 2 • Budget \$1.8 million

Fire Station No. 2 opened at 356 W. Hill St. in June 2009. The 4,500-square-foot building includes two engine bays and living and sleeping quarters for five firefighters. It was designed as a high-performance "green building" to comply with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards and includes high-efficiency plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems, solar hot water heating, and other energy saving features. After review by the U.S. Green Building Council, the building received LEED Silver certification in January 2010.

McKoy Pool • Budget \$1 million

McKoy Pool and Bathhouse opened in May 2008. The facility incorporates a zero entry (beach entry) access pool making it easier for elderly and handicapped residents to use, bubbler features to entertain younger swimmers, and dedicated lap lanes that can be scheduled for adult-only lap swimming while providing general swimming for summer campers and older children during busy summer days. The project includes a new bathhouse that is fully accessible as well as both hard-surface decking and grass lounging areas. Funding included about \$750,000 from the Capital Projects Bond Fund and \$250,000 from the DeKalb County Community Development Department.

Glenlake Park Improvements

Work on Phase 1 of the Glenlake Park improvements was completed in the spring of 2010. This was the first comprehensive improvement to Glenlake Park in the last 50 years. A new pool bathhouse, walking trails, pedestrian bridges, new multi-purpose pavilions, an improved dog park, and renovated athletic fields provide a wide variety of activities in the park and enhance active living opportunities for Decatur residents.



Glenlake Park improvements include a new family pavilion, which can seat 30, and a dual-level pavilion adjacent to the dog park and overlooking the multi-purpose playing field.

A restored stream corridor and several new storm drainage improvements will improve water quality, help reduce downstream flooding and allow the stream to become an integral part of the park experience. The total project budget is \$3,000,000 from the Capital Projects Bond Fund.

A new Premier Court surface is being installed at the Glenlake Tennis Center along with a new lighting system. The new surface should eliminate cracks in the



Fire Chief Tony Dixon is pictured with the Station 2 crews at the grand opening ceremony.

court surface while making the courts easier and cheaper to maintain. The new lighting system provides better court lighting and reduces light spillage onto adjacent properties.

Decatur Cemetery Improvements

The Decatur Cemetery is the city's largest publicly owned open space and is adjacent to Glenlake Park, our largest public park. The City Commissioners approved a master plan for the Decatur Cemetery in September 2008, after a comprehensive public planning effort.

The master plan includes a landscape improvement and tree replacement program, improvements to the storm water system, new walkways, drives and other infrastructure elements, with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities, a "pond side" park, repairs to the historic Old Cemetery and a maintenance plan to address erosion, stream restoration, and development of a more dignified and park-like entrance at Bell and Church streets.

Trees Atlanta will continue a five-year restoration program of the woodland section on the eastern side of the cemetery. Work began on a complete restoration of the cemetery office building using sustainable construction methods and systems.

The approved budget for the first phase of improvements is \$2,100,000 from a number of sources including the Capital Bond Fund, cemetery lot sales revenues, the Tree Bank Fund and the Storm Water Utility.

Wayfinding System

Phase 1 of a new citywide Wayfinding System was completed in 2008. The system is a series of sign improvements to help residents and visitors locate public and community facilities, commercial and retail centers like downtown Decatur and Oakhurst Village, parking facilities and retail establishments throughout Decatur. The total project budget was \$270,000 with \$100,000 from the Capital Bond Fund, \$125,000 from the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, \$35,000 from the Decatur Business Association, and \$10,000 from the Decatur Beer Festival.

Community Transportation Plan

In April 2008, the City Commission adopted the Community Transportation Plan after two years of intensive public involvement and innovative technical analysis. The support for funding a comprehensive plan came from residents interested in using alternative transportation and the desire to accommodate growth downtown without increased vehicular traffic.

The plan will serve as the guiding document for improvements to the city's streets for the next 20 years. The streets we use every day shape the character of our community. They are public spaces that can encourage interaction with others and provide safe, pleasant connections between destinations.

The creation and support of a healthy and active community is at the heart of the Decatur Community Transportation Plan. Four guiding principles shaped the recommendations in the plan, including the promotion of Health, Choice, Community, and Connectivity. These principles are illustrated in the plan's vision statement:

To create a safe and efficient transportation system that promotes the health and mobility of Decatur citizens and visitors and provides better access to businesses and neighborhoods.

Safe Routes to School

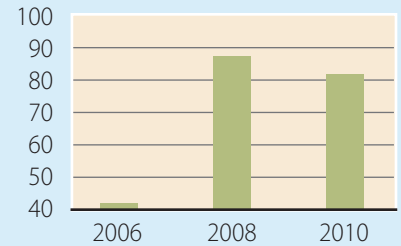
Decatur has had an active Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program for several years. Our program is managed by the Active Living Division and is federally funded. Safe Routes to School is a national program that empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. Program goals are to improve fitness levels in children and adults, reduce congestion around schools, and improve air quality around schools.



Citizen Satisfaction Survey Responses *continued*

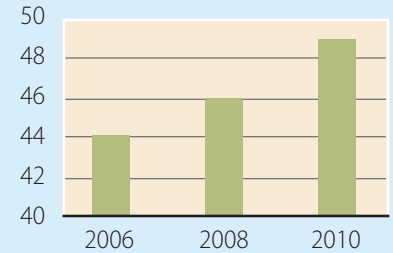
Quality of Recreation Programs and Classes

percent rated excellent/good



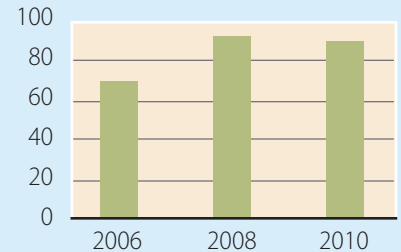
Visited a Recreation Facility Within the Last 12 Months

percent visiting



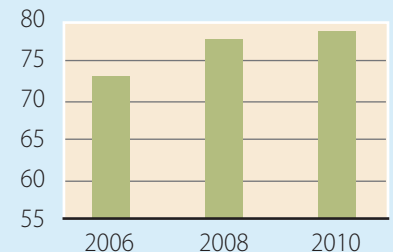
Decatur as a Place to Raise Children

percent rated excellent/good



Quality of Crime Prevention

percent rated excellent/good



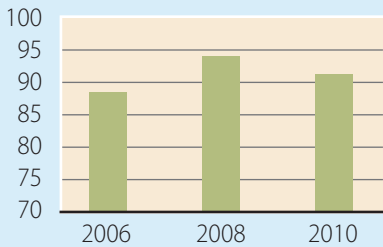


City Manager
Peggy Merriss

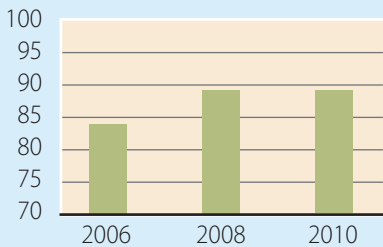
2010-2011 Budget Report from the City Manager

Citizen Satisfaction Survey Responses *continued*

Overall Image of Decatur percent rated excellent/good



Overall Quality of City Services percent rated excellent/good



The past year has generally seen continued fiscal challenges across all economic sectors – private, public and not-for-profit. All typical classes of federal, state and local government revenues are flat or continue to decline including income taxes, sales taxes and property taxes. Private industry sectors, including manufacturing, construction, finance and real estate, have not rebounded although there appears to be the beginning of a recovery as consumer spending has increased slightly over the past several months. In addition, actions taken by the Georgia General Assembly to freeze real estate property values have continuing repercussions for local government budgets.

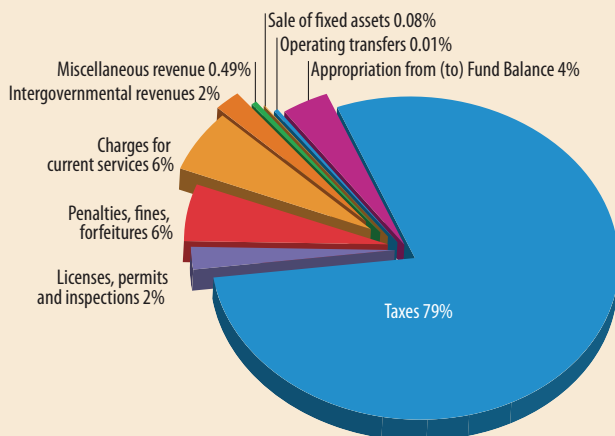
Over the years, Decatur has employed practices that have contributed toward our present ability to weather the current economic difficulties including:

- Employing conservative financial practices and policies.
- Relying on long-term plans representing the community's values and priorities for guidance and direction within a stable political environment.
- Encouraging innovation and continuous improvement.
- Using strategic approaches instead of being reactionary in the face of financial challenges.

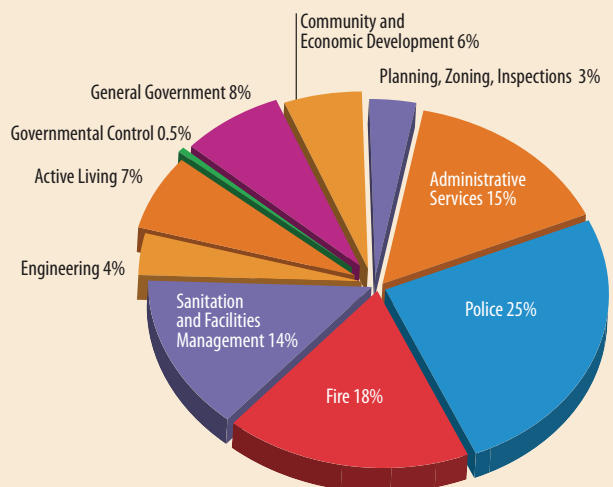
Currently the City of Decatur has been able to avoid dramatic and severe cuts in service. This is largely due to the stability and structure of the city's main revenue source: ad valorem taxes from real property, public utilities and motor vehicles. Ad valorem taxes are generally more stable and are not as subject to the fluctuations experienced by sales taxes. Because the city receives minimal sales tax revenue, we do not have to make significant cuts when sales tax revenue is reduced.

The city's real property tax digest is fairly stable compared to other communities. The city's digest is composed of approximately 86 percent residential value with the remaining 14 percent in commercial value. While it should be a long-term goal to provide more diversity within the digest, the city's managed growth policy encourages development of mixed-use projects made up of compact mid-rise commercial and multi-family developments in designated zoning districts and reduces its

REVENUES 2010-2011 Proposed Budget



EXPENDITURES 2010-2011 Proposed Budget



reliance on large “box” retail shopping centers and sizable detached single-family residential developments. This policy has helped the city maintain its overall economic vitality.

Several other financial factors have tempered the effect of the current economic downturn on the city.

First, the city’s available real estate market has not typically been financed through sub-prime loans or other marginal financing schemes so our exposure to foreclosures is limited. Therefore, while there is some limited foreclosure activity, there have not been whole developments or neighborhoods that have been abandoned.

Second, over the years, the City Commission has made strategic decisions that have positioned the city to better withstand financial stress. For the past 30 years, the city’s growth has been directed to redevelopment of undervalued and underutilized properties in the central commercial business district and in smaller neighborhood commercial areas. The reasonable scale of this type of growth has provided opportunities for residential and commercial spaces to be absorbed by the market so that there are not a significant number of vacancies.

In addition, the city has been committed to continuing to provide an exceptional level of public safety, public works and quality of life services that contribute to the maintenance of property values and have made the city a desirable place to live, have a business and/or visit as a destination for entertainment and recreation.

In the late ’90s, when it became obvious that the city was going to have to invest in its capital infrastructure, the City Commission approved a tax levy to establish a capital improvements fund. The capital improvements levy has allowed the city to make scheduled investments in vehicle and equipment replacement, playground replacement and maintenance, street and sidewalk maintenance, and provide matching funds for technology and emergency management upgrades.

Finally, the City Commission saw a need for more significant capital improvements to facilities and infrastructure and in 2006 voters approved issuance of long-term bonds to fund a variety of capital improvement projects. The bond program has made it possible to plan and implement a number of large-scale capital improvements and because the funding is currently available, we have been able to take advantage of the general slowdown in construction to more effectively use available resources.

The city’s mature economy, its overall real estate market stability, long-term growth management strategy and dedication to superior services have resulted in an opportunity for a strategic response to the financial crisis.

Ultimately, the city’s objective is to provide quality services and support community engagement while providing a reasonable return for the taxpayer’s investment. This means that we have to take a strategic approach that relies on and develops the city’s strengths and reduces programs, systems and practices that are not essential to its mission. It means making sure that financial and employee capacities are not diminished beyond a point of no return. The 2010-2011 budget estimates assure that the city will maintain its capacity to offer the high-level, high-quality services desired by our residents. The recommended 2010 property tax millage rates are below:

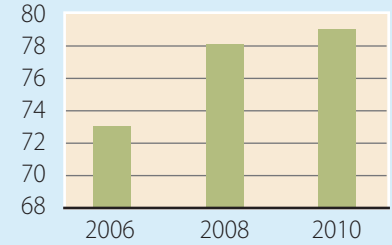
	LEVY				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
General Fund	10.115	10.215	10.215	10.215	10.215
General Fund Cap. Improv.	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Bond Fund	1.54	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44
Downtown Dev. Authority	.38	.38	.38	.38	.38
Total	13.035	13.035	13.035	13.035	13.035

BUDGET DOCUMENT

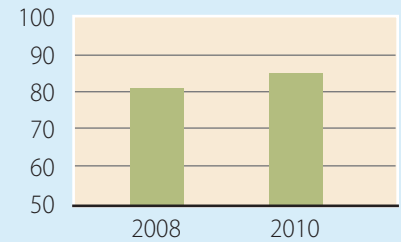
The budget document is a written plan that provides the basis for implementing our vision and related goals. It represents the best efforts of all departments toward achieving the vision within an environment of competing goals and limited resources.

Citizen Satisfaction Survey Responses *continued*

Quality of Crime Prevention percent rated excellent/good



Decatur: A City Full of Good Neighbors percent of residents speaking with neighbors at least once a month



Of 109 communities surveyed, Decatur ranked 9th in neighborliness.

PERSONNEL

Department	Full Time	Part Time
Government Control	9	3
Administrative Services	10	11
Community & Economic Dev.	8	5
Active Living	7	20
Children & Youth Services	9	135
Planning, Zoning, Inspections	4	1
Police	60	24
Fire & Rescue	39	0
Public Works	44	12
Engineering & Stormwater	15	2
Total	205	213

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 Commissioners provide leadership in identifying community needs and developing programs to meet community objectives. There are five City Commissioners, elected in nonpartisan elections, for overlapping four-year terms. At its organizational meeting in January of each year, the City Commission elects one of its members to be the mayor/chair of the City Commission. Bill Floyd has served as mayor since 1999 and has been a member of the City Commission since 1992. At that same meeting the City Commission also elects a mayor pro tem/vice chair. Jim Baskett currently serves as mayor pro tem. The other commissioners are Fred Boykin, Kecia Cunningham and Patti Garrett. It is the responsibility of the mayor to preside at all meetings of the City Commission. The mayor has no veto power but retains the right to vote on all matters brought before the City Commission.

The Decatur City Commission (from left): Commissioner Jim Baskett, Commissioner Patti Garrett, Mayor Bill Floyd, Commissioner Fred Boykin and Commissioner Kecia Cunningham



Boards and Commissions

The City Commission appoints the members of a number of boards and commissions who carry out responsibilities specified by State law, the City Charter, and local ordinances, including the Decatur Housing Authority, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, and the Planning Commission. Special advisory committees and task forces are appointed by the City Commission as needed, including the Historic Preservation Commission, Active Living Advisory Board, and Environmental Sustainability Board.

Municipal Court

The City Commission appoints the Municipal Court judges and the City Attorney, who provides legal counsel for the government.

City Manager

The City Commission also appoints a professional administrator known as the City Manager, who serves as the chief executive officer and

At the April 2010 kickoff meeting for Decatur's strategic plan update, citizens and business owners discussed their vision for Decatur over the course of the next 10 years.



chief administrative officer. The City Manager is responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the City Commission, for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the government, and for the appointment of all employees, with department head appointments subject to confirmation by the City Commission. Current City Manager Peggy Merriss has served as manager since May 1993 and has been employed with the city since 1983.

Vision

Successful organizations must have a clear vision of where they are going and how they intend to achieve their mission.

In 2000, the City of Decatur engaged in a community-driven strategic planning process that resulted in our Strategic Plan 2000. The plan is a vision for the City from 2000 through 2010 that combines physical and economic planning with the social goals of the community. The plan continues to provide a framework for decision making and guidance to the City Commission and community.

In April 2010, we kicked off the community visioning phase of the strategic plan update that will help direct the city's goals for the next decade and outline action steps through 2020. More than 600 participants registered to take part in this important community conversation to identify what we want our community to be in 2010. Every comment is being captured and will be analyzed and included in a report that will be presented to the community in August. The city will work with a planning consultant team this fall as we work with residents to transform their visions into tangible action steps to direct our work over the next decade.

During the community input and data gathering process in 2000, Decatur's existing vision statement was developed:

The City of Decatur will assure a high quality of life for its residents, businesses and visitors both today and in the future.

Principles, goals and projects that support the vision were developed through a collaboration of residents, government, business and institutional leaders. The City Commission holds a working retreat annually to reflect on past achievements, identify future goals, discuss challenges to those goals and determine the City Commission's vision for the city in the context of the overarching strategic plan.



The City Commission welcomed and installed Commissioner Patti Garrett, who began her term of office in January 2010. Commissioner Garrett represents District 2.



Mayor Pro Tem Jim Baskett (right) congratulates Mercedes Pasqualetti for her recognition as one of Decatur's Hometown Heroes for 2009. In the background are Hometown Heroes Bill and Mary Flad. The awards are presented to individuals who, through their volunteer efforts, make Decatur a better place for all residents. The first Hometown Heroes were recognized in 1996 for their work on Decatur's Hometown to the World festival during the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

The Decatur City Commission said good-bye to Commissioner Mary Alice Kemp, who did not run for reelection in 2009. Commissioner Kemp served on the City Commission for eight years. She is pictured with Mayor Bill Floyd at the annual State of the City address.



Above: Commissioner Kecia Cunningham with Greg Barner at a recent Decatur Business Association Meeting.



Right: Commissioner Fred Boykin (center), owner of Bicycle South, Mayor Floyd and other elected officials meet with Lt. Governor Casey Cagle for "Georgia Rides to the Capitol."



The City Commission's vision is conveyed by the following statement:

Decatur – a vibrant city that is clean, green, active and attractive, safe and secure.

Goals in support of the statement include:

- Identify new forms of revenue to help relieve the property tax burden.
- Expand the streetscapes plan citywide and promote "campus style" development throughout the city, including integrated development and open spaces.
- Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles in new construction.
- Develop a plan to maintain the city's aesthetics and overall cleanliness.
- Encourage affordability in housing and retail markets.
- Support existing and future arts and cultural facilities.
- Consider the aging population in future planning efforts.
- Create opportunities for active and healthy living.

We look forward to working with our citizens to develop a new strategic plan for 2020 and identify new goals and strategies to keep our city moving forward. The City Commission envisions the Decatur of the future as a regional destination with design-oriented development within a community that is attractive, clean, environmentally sound and fiscally responsible.

Cultural opportunities including public art will abound and be enjoyed by a diverse population. Citizens will be able to travel throughout the city using a variety of transportation modes including public and private motorized and non-motorized wheeled vehicles and by foot. Travel paths, including roads and sidewalks, will be maintained for safety and cleanliness. All persons in the community will experience a sense of safety.

THE ATHENIAN OATH

We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of dishonesty or cowardice. We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive increasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus in all these ways we will transmit this City, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

This oath was recited by the citizens of Athens, Greece, more than 2,000 years ago. It continues to represent the ideals embraced by elected officials and City of Decatur employees who share the goal of making Decatur a better place for current and future citizens.

City Organization Mission

Our mission is to work with the citizens of Decatur to meet the needs of the community while serving all with respect and integrity. We strive to do so with **C**ompetence, **A**ccessibility, **R**esponsiveness, and **E**xcellence. We **Care!**

To **CARE** is to value:

- Honesty and integrity
- Competence and skill
- Dependability
- Respect for other people
- Commitment
- Teamwork and cooperation

City of Decatur Organization Chart

