

# Missing Middle Worksession

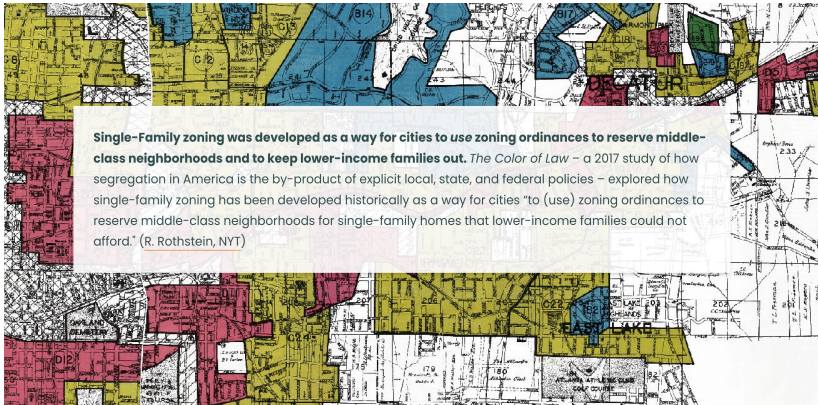
City of Decatur | 2022

Presented by  
Kristin Allin, Affordable Housing Fellow



# Housing Policies

Trajectory of zoning policy  
(Over the past several decades)



Dollar Homes Program  
1976 - 1982



Disallowance of Missing Middle 1988



# Why Missing Middle “Disallowed” 1988

- ❖ Not Decatur-specific
- ❖ Some theories:
  - ❖ Reaganomics (“The 1980s: (TOO) EASY MONEY FUELS A NEW building boom!” (Freeman, 1999) *wealthmanagement.com*
  - ❖ Real estate as tax shelter, then overbuilding, then bust
  - ❖ Reduced “depreciation acceleration” for multifamily 1986
  - ❖ The Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA) of 1988
  - ❖ Reduction in number of new federal housing units, move to vouchers (zero authorized 1984, *Cato Institute*)



# Housing Policy and Trajectory

What are home and rental prices today?

Average Home Price over \$700k (2021)  
(IntownMarket Report)

Rents average \$1,800+

*April 2014: "It's an important issue because those types, what planners call the 'missing middle,' are often the means by which downsizing seniors, service workers, and rising young professionals can enter or remain within the city's neighborhoods."*

DECATUR DIARY | APRIL 24, 2014



### Missing Middle Found: Participants consider tools for more diverse housing types

**FILED UNDER:** Unified Development Ordinance    **TAGS:** housing, missing middle, R-50

**GET THE MATERIALS:** [Presentation](#) (PDF-1C 1.8mb) | [Wall Displays](#) (PDF-1C 3.5mb)

One thing that emerged during 2010's **Strategic Planning process** was the need for more housing types. In short, market demand for single family homes here in Decatur is well served, as is the desire for downtown condos, but what about the types that tend to fall in between?

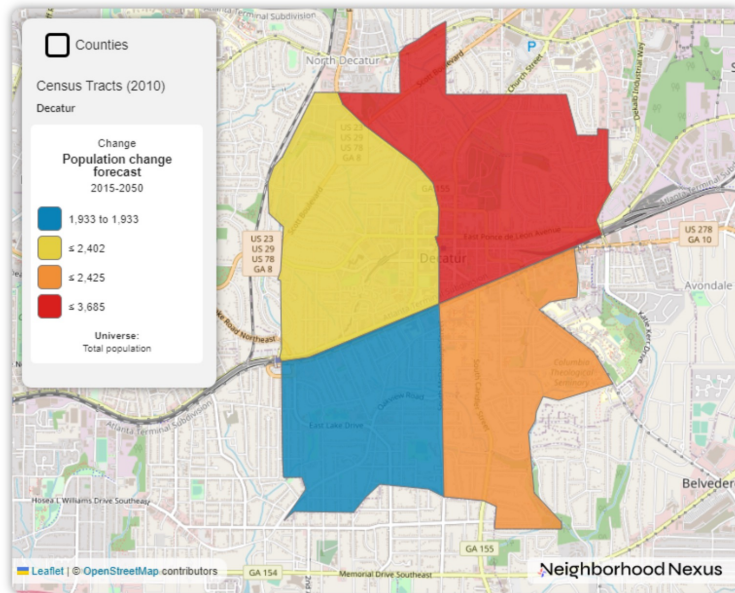
It's an important issue because those types, what planners call the "missing middle," are often the means by which downsizing seniors, service workers, and rising young professionals can enter or remain within the city's neighborhoods.

During last Fall's Phase 01 of the UDO, that Strategic Plan's policy directive — to diversify the city's housing types and encourage more mixed-use — **was affirmed**, together with a community request: Let's explore the possibilities further. The result was last night's drill-down meeting.

Speaking to a crowd of roughly 40 residents, consultant Susan Henderson presented a variety of zoning tools — many of which had a certain "Back to the Future" familiarity to them — that could be leveraged in service of the community's housing goals, and repeatedly reminded everyone that they were presented solely for consideration and discussion. No rezoning of any land was being suggested or proposed. Among them:



# Housing and Population Estimates

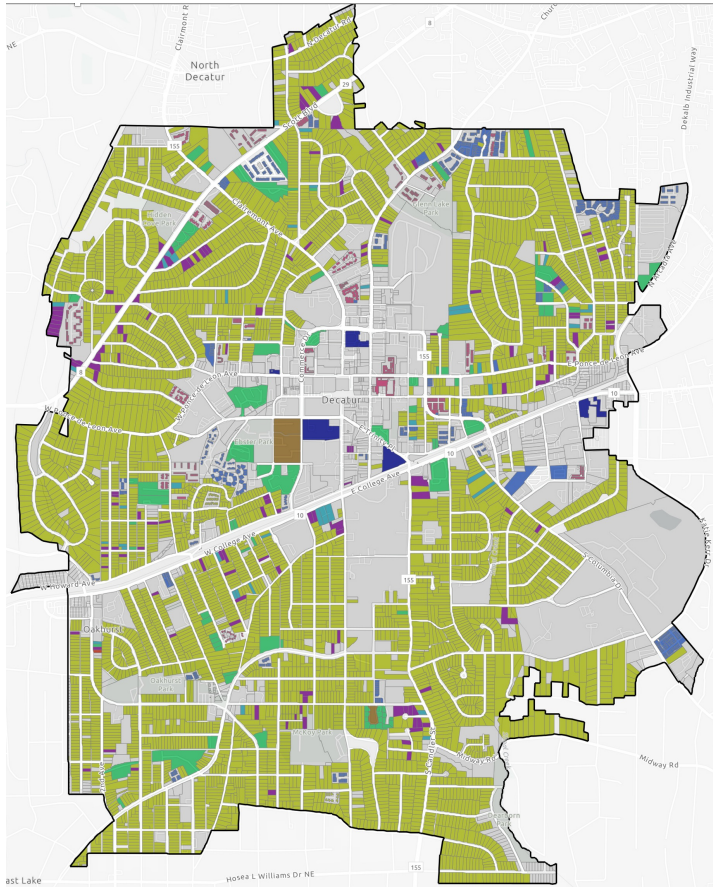


Projections from the Atlanta Regional Commission: Decatur's population projected to grow by almost 10,500 by 2050.

Nationally, birth rates lower and household size smaller now than in the past. This is also true in metro Atlanta (ARC).



# 2020 Housing Unit Mix



Total Households 2020		8,876
1-Unit	5,821	65.6%
2-Unit	184	2.1%
3-4 Unit	540	6.1%
5-9 Unit	329	3.7%
10+	1,994	22.5%

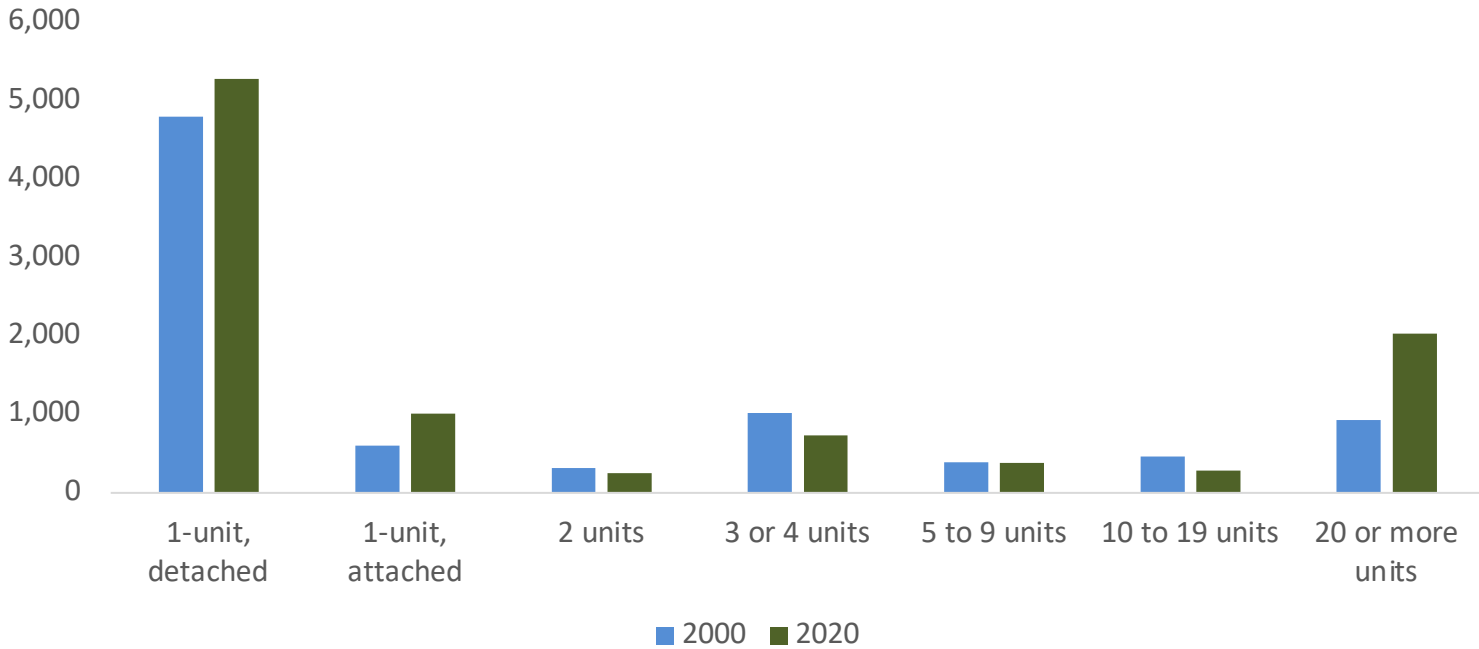


# Decatur's Housing Trajectory 2010 to 2020

Housing Tupe	# HH 2010	# HHs 2020	% Increase	# Increase
	8,143	8,876	2010 to 2020	2010 to 2020
1-Unit	5,179	5,821	12%	642
2-Unit	269	184	-32%	(85)
3-4 Unit	619	540	-13%	(79)
5-9 Unit	505	329	-35%	(176)
10+	1,523	1,994	31%	471
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>8,094</b>	<b>8,868</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>774</b>

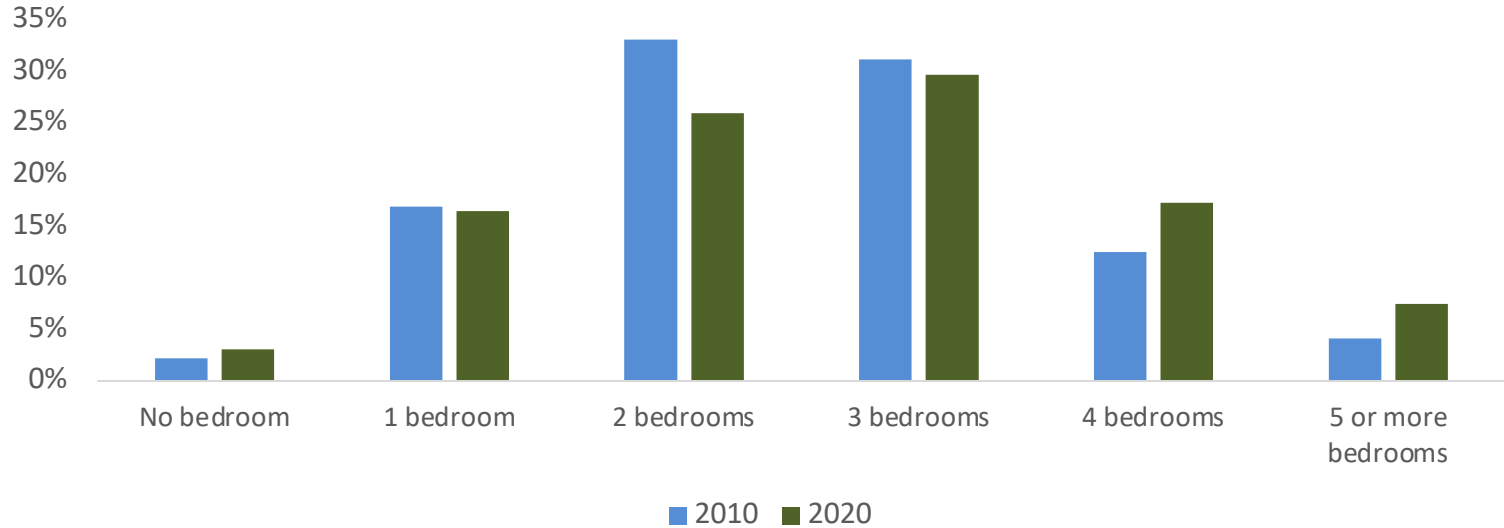


### # Homes by Housing Type, Decatur

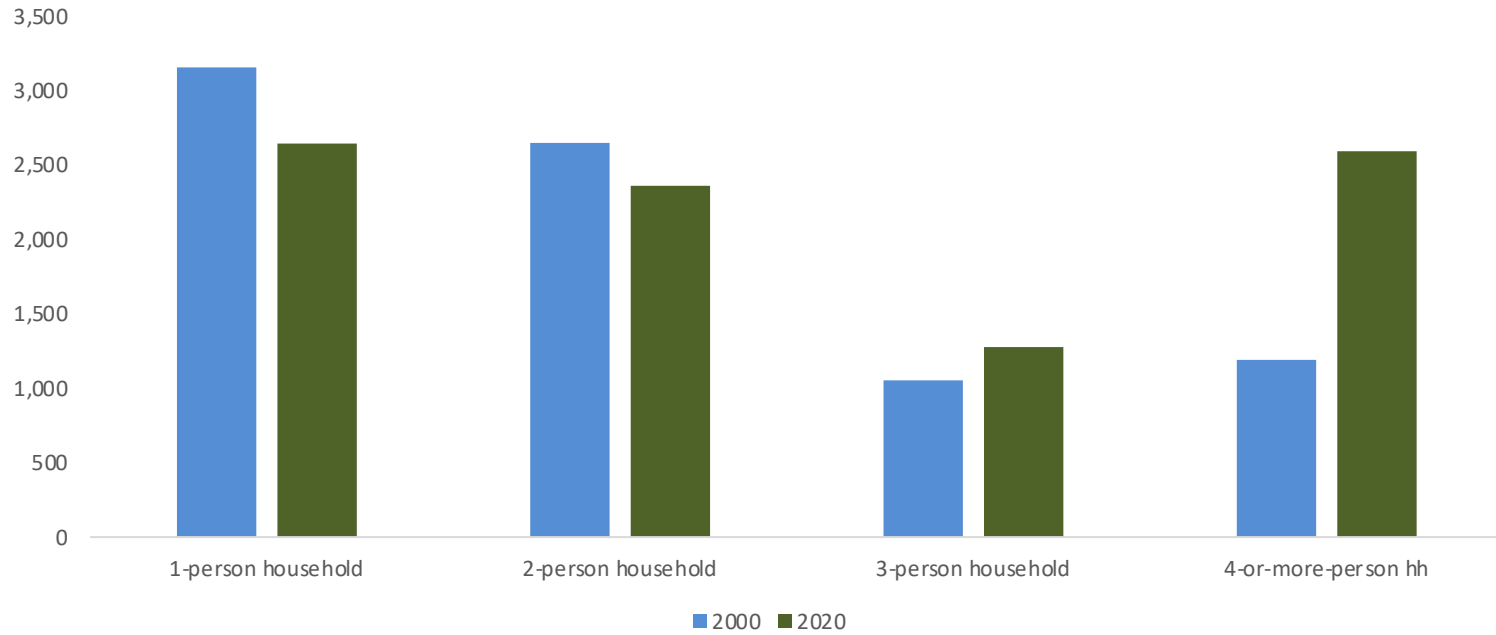




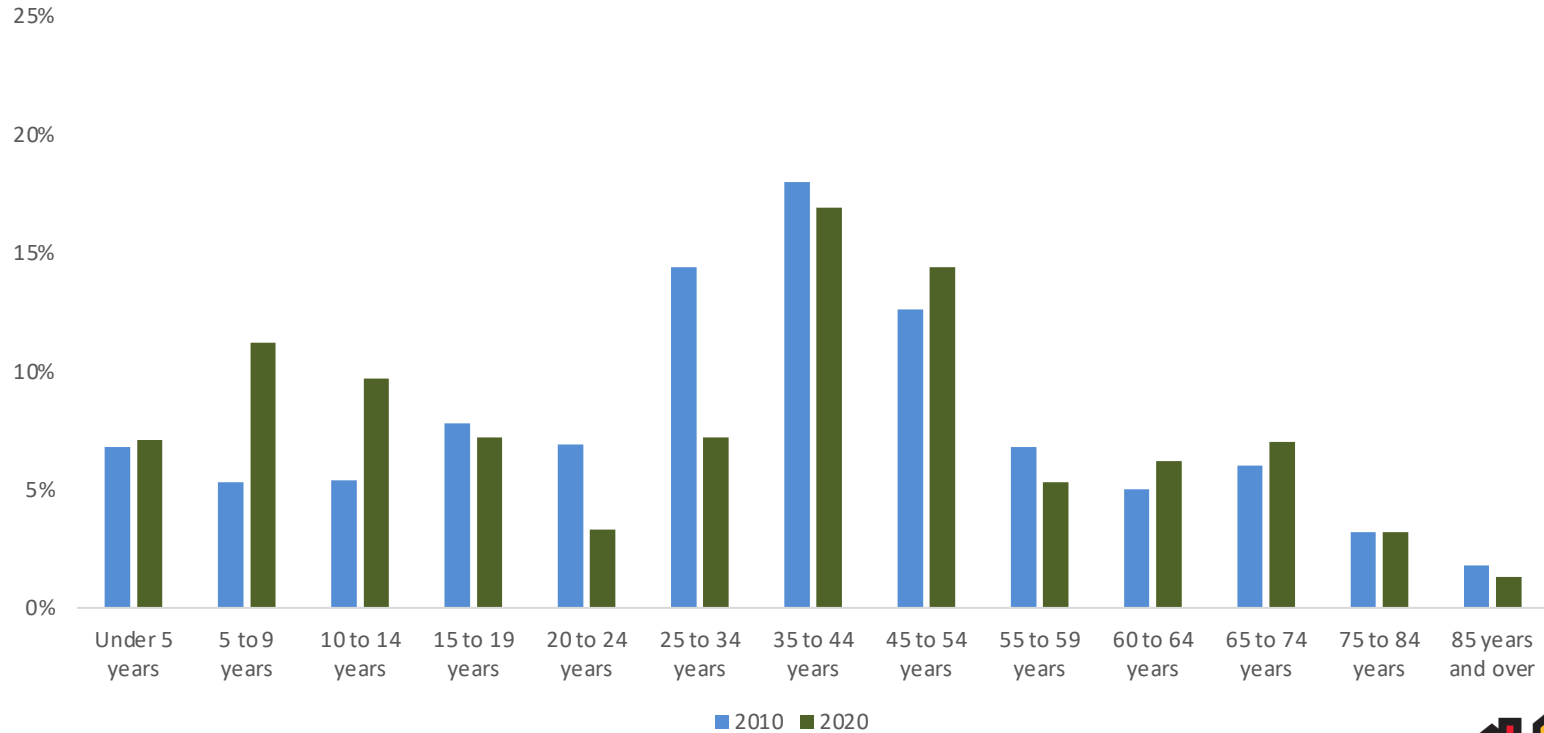
### # of Bedrooms, Decatur 2010 & 2020



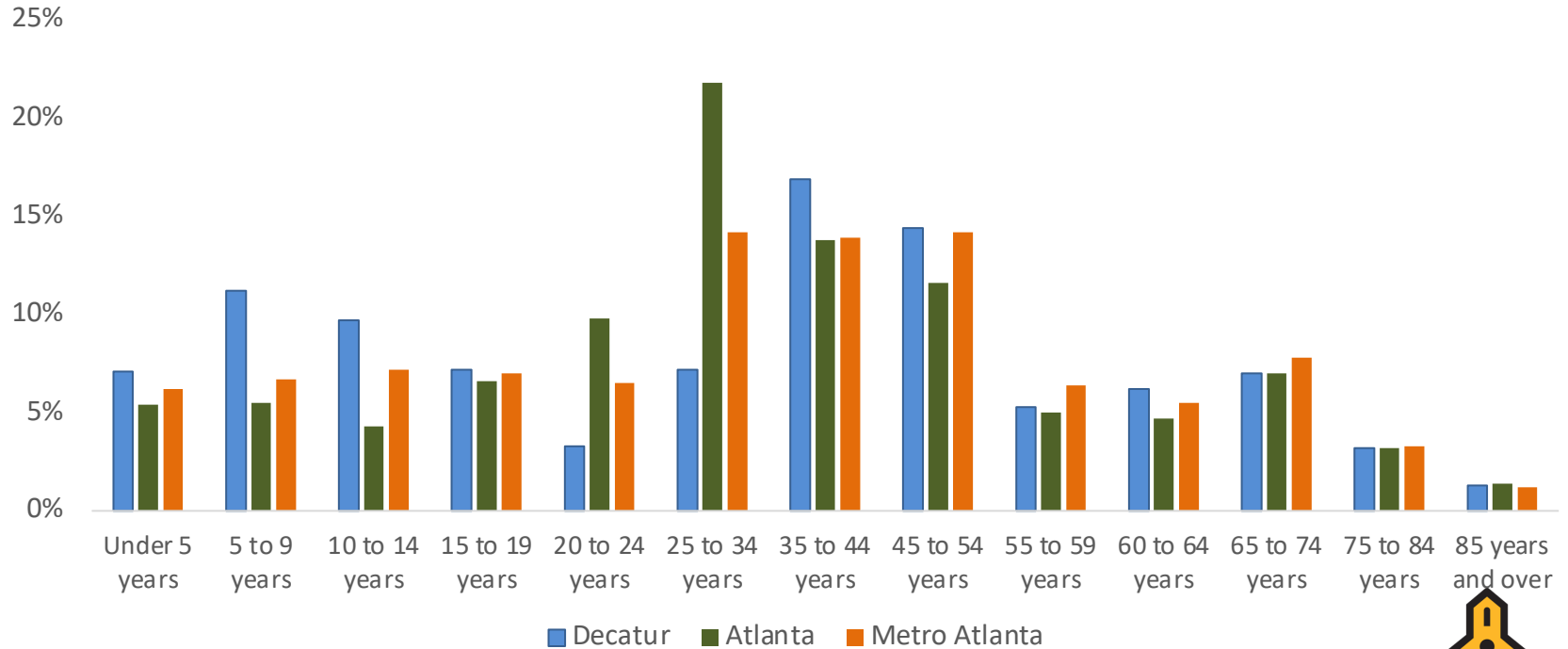
### Household Size Decatur 2000 & 2020

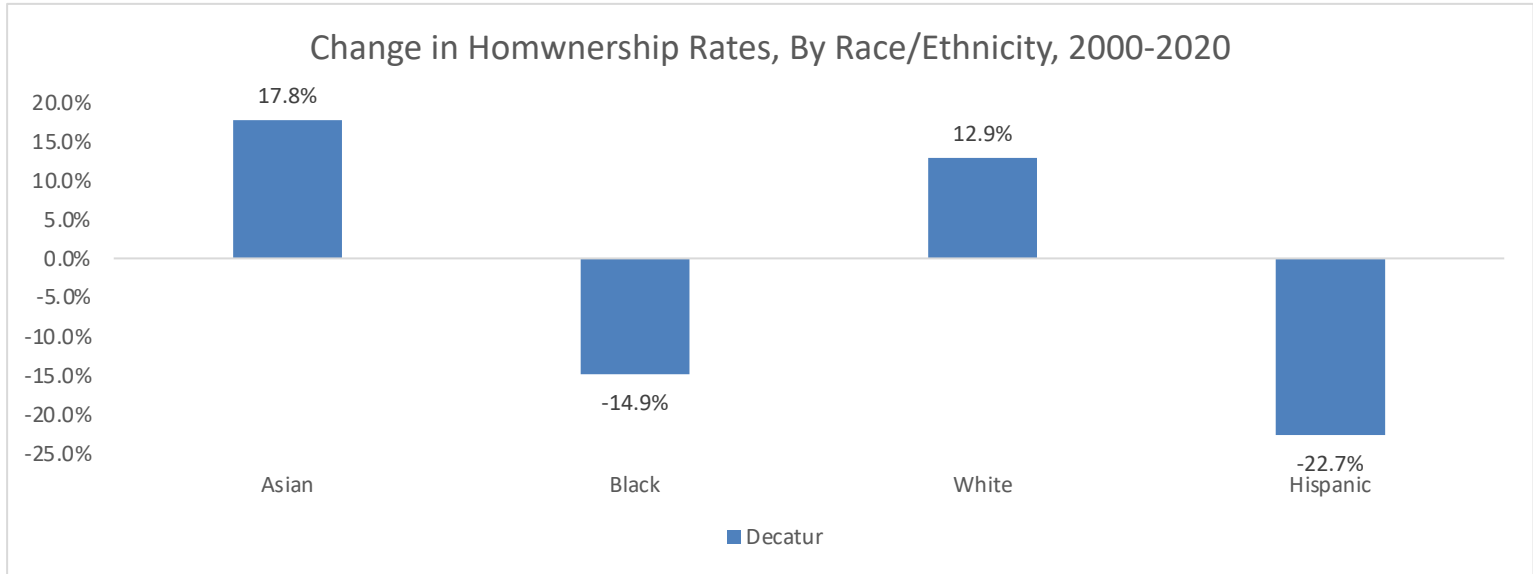


### AGE: DECATUR 2010 & 2020

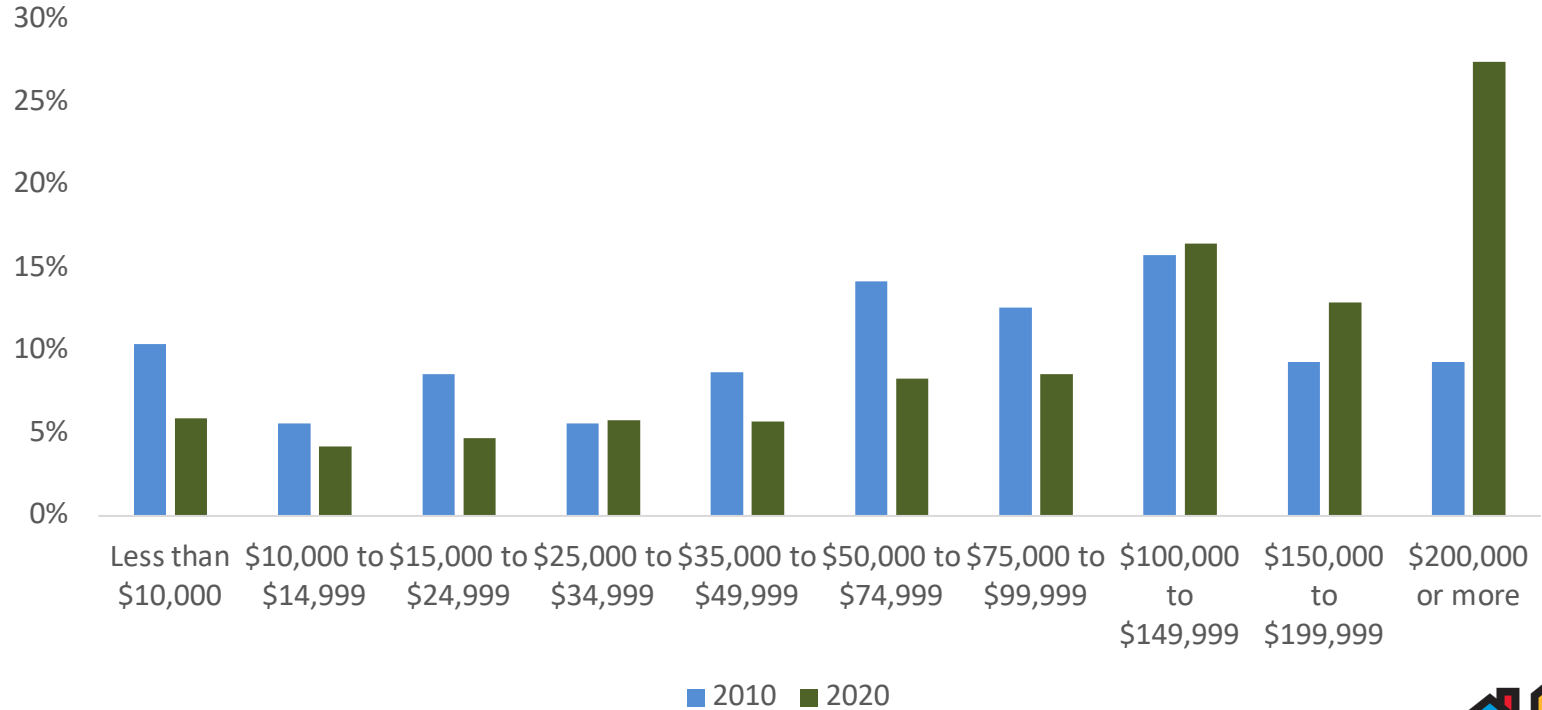


## Age 2020

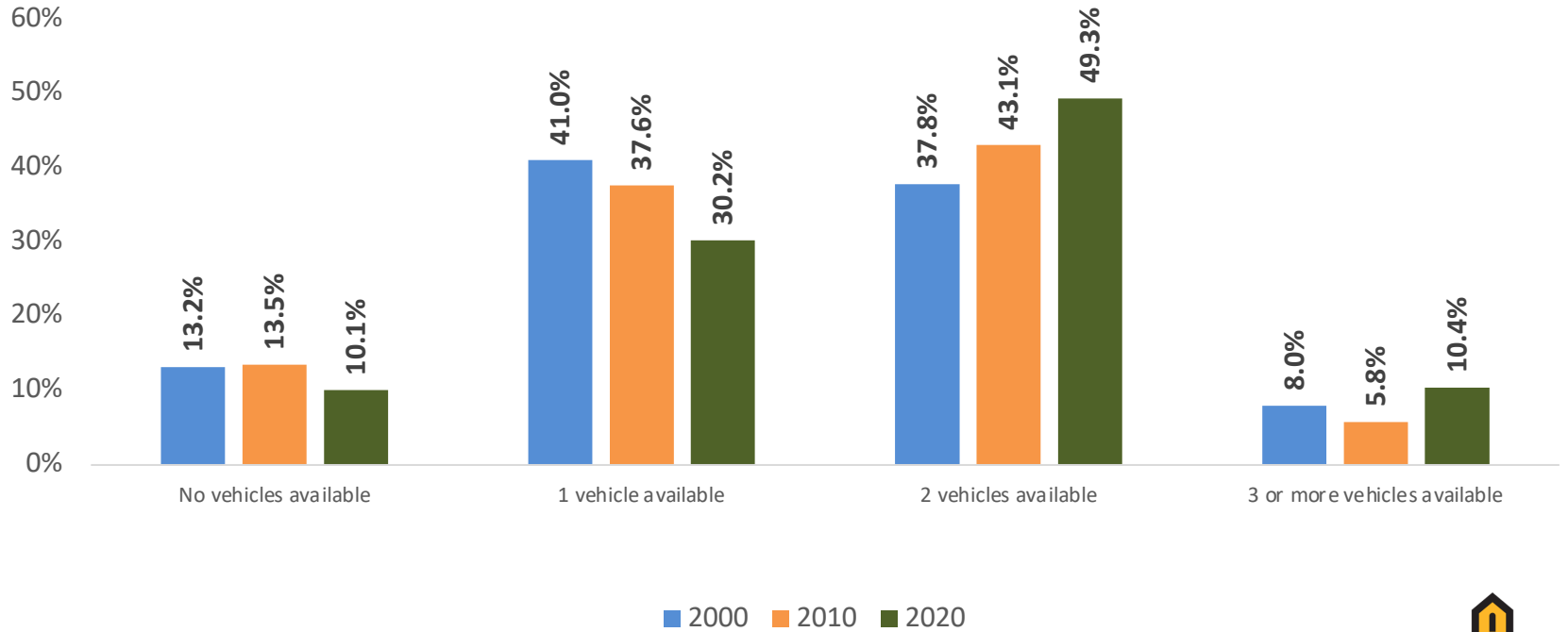




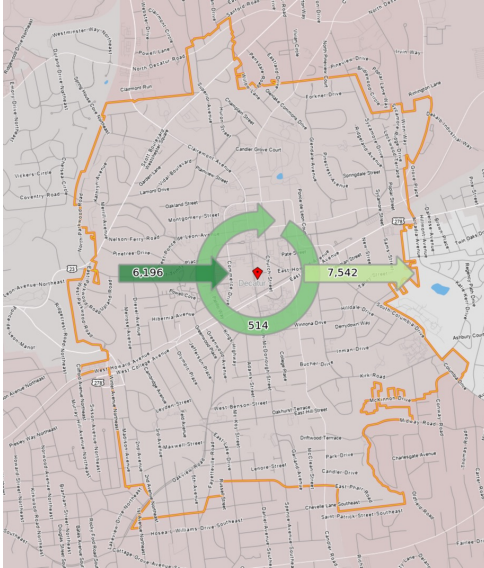
## HH Income Decatur 2010 & 2020



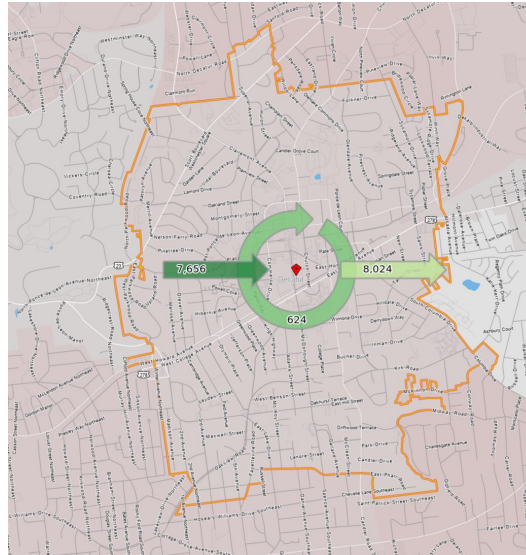
# Vehicles Per HH Decatur



2002



2019



From 2002 to 2019, approximately 1,400 more cars come into Decatur daily and approximately 500 more leave Decatur daily.

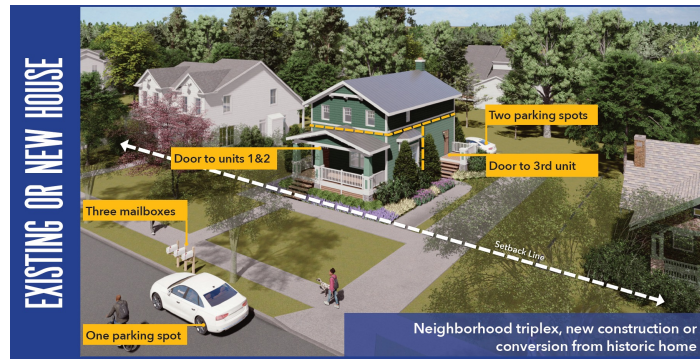
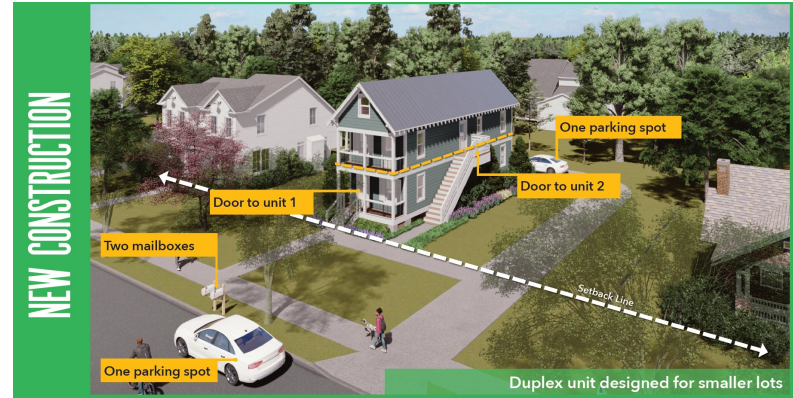
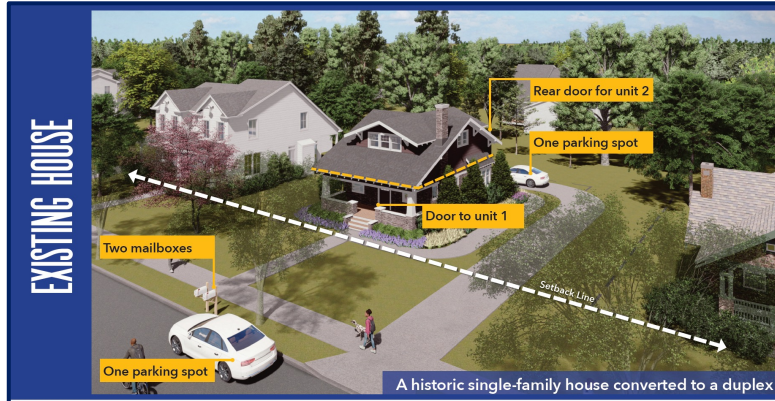
*Traffic and “commute traffic”*

*Traffic inflow/outflow, Atlanta Regional Commission*





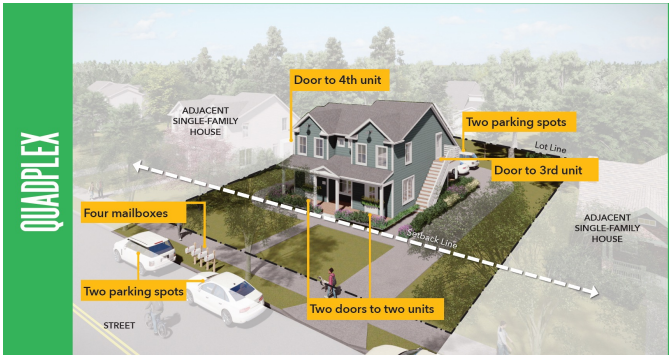
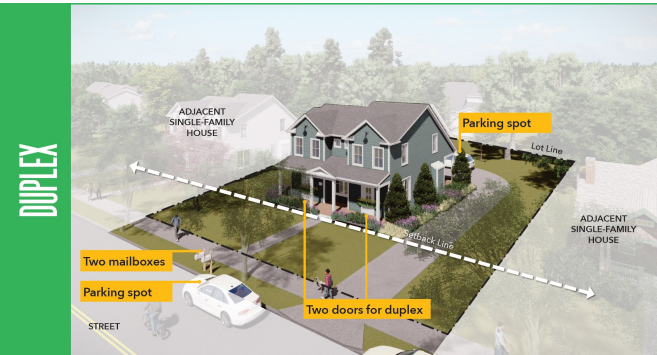
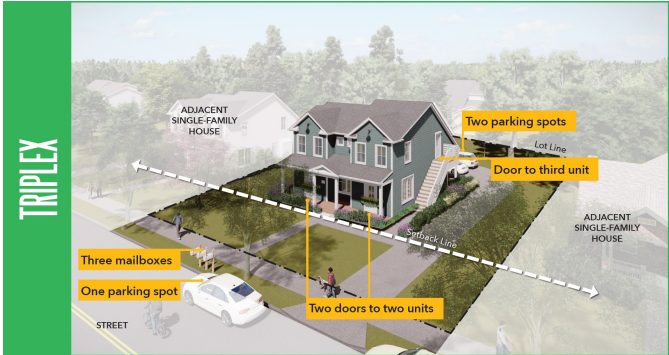
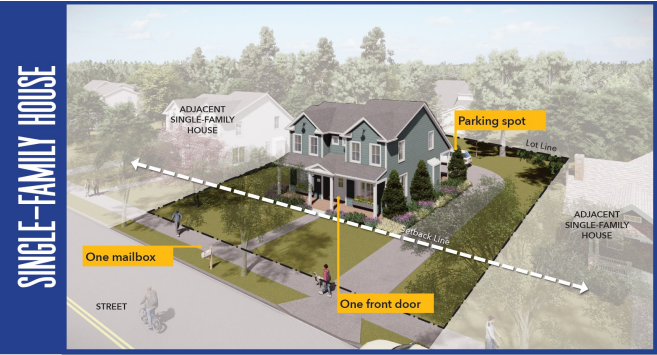
# What are the City's policy proposals?



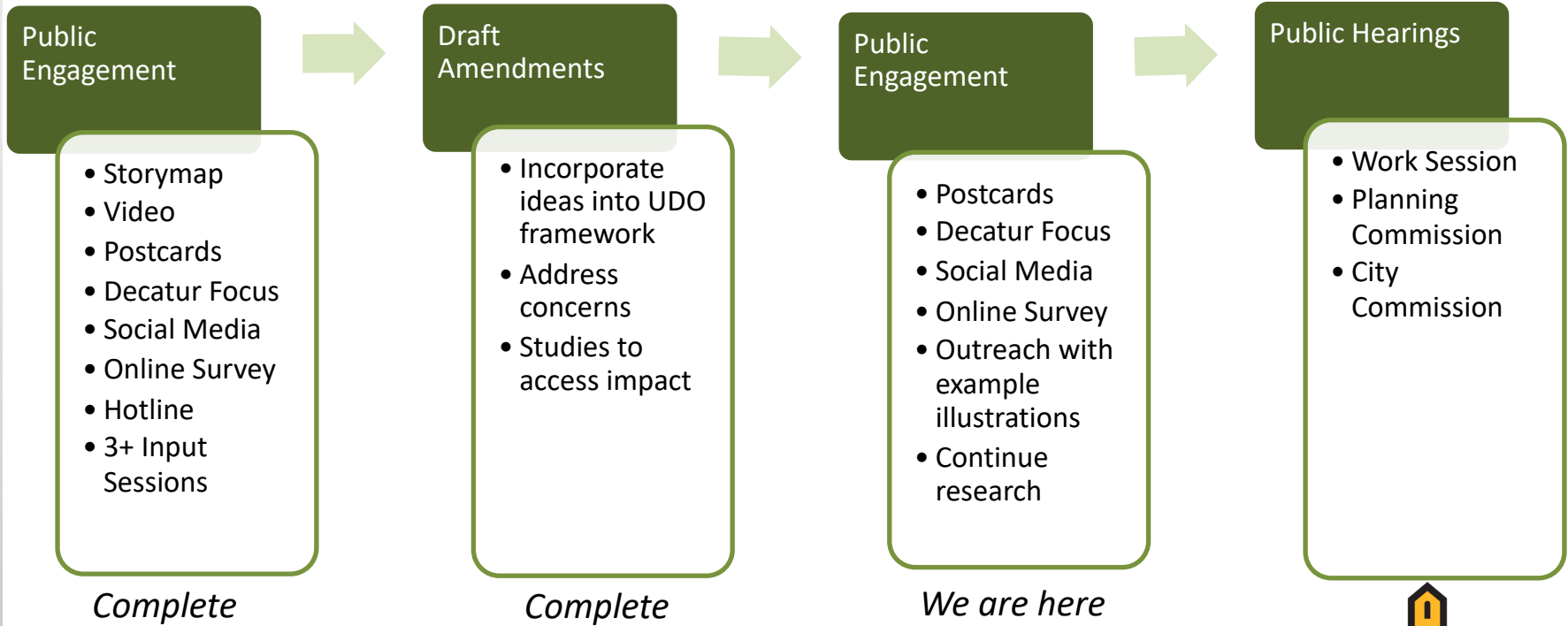
Allow up to four units (new or conversion) in R-50, R-60, R-85, RS-17 zoning districts. Require 1 parking space per unit, half of which may be satisfied by on-street parking by limited review.



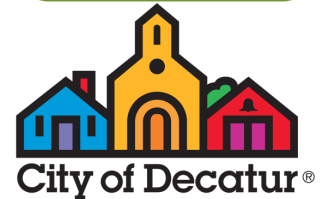
# What are the City's policy proposals?



# Status: Zoning Process



Visit [deaturga.com/affordablehousing](https://deaturga.com/affordablehousing)



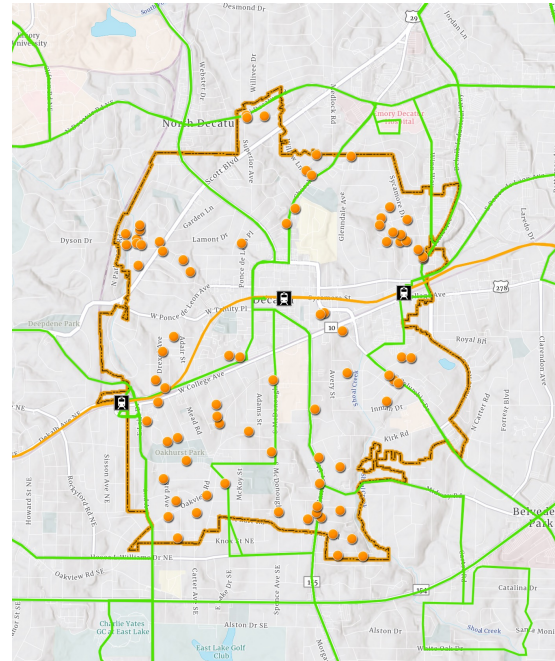
# Questions: What is the impact?

“What happens if every home in Decatur becomes a duplex?”

Urban Land Institute (ULI)

2022 mTAP project report for Decatur

- ❖ Homes valued under \$500k
- ❖ Approximately 20-25 per quadrant likely to be replaced by larger homes or multi-units in coming years
- ❖ “Gentle density”
- ❖ Preservation strategy
- ❖ Home conversions
- ❖ Allow market to determine



# Questions from Community

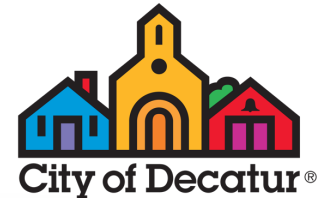
“What is the impact on my property values?”

Most studies show that affordable housing or smaller housing units have no effect or positive effects on nearby property values.

“There Doesn’t Go the Neighborhood: Low-Income Housing Has No Impact on Nearby Home Values” *Trulia/Zillow*

“‘Don’t Put it Here!’ Does Affordable Housing Cause Property Values to Decline?” *New York University Furman Center and funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation*

Demand is strong in Decatur, diversity of housing is limited.



# Questions from the Community

What are estimates for the market price for new missing middle units?

<b>New Construction</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b># Bed Overall</b>	<b># Bath Overall</b>	<b>Est Price per Unit</b>	<b>Est Rent per Unit</b>	<b>Required Parking Spaces</b>
Single Family	3,500	5	3.5	\$1,113,900	\$8,911	1
Duplex	1,750	4	4	\$556,950	\$4,456	2
Triplex	1,167	4	4	\$371,300	\$2,970	3
Quadplex	875	4	4	\$278,475	\$2,228	4



# Questions from the Community

Will housing be required to meet ADA regulations?

A market rate, privately owned quadplex (4 units) will be required to have one accessible unit.

The terms may change depending on funding and ownership (public vs. private), and standards are different for publicly funded housing.



# Questions from the Community

“How would this impact school enrollment?”

CSD is projecting a declining school enrollment by approximately 200 students.

Smaller units have fewer school age children.

Apartment enrollment has been below CSD estimates.





# Questions from the Community

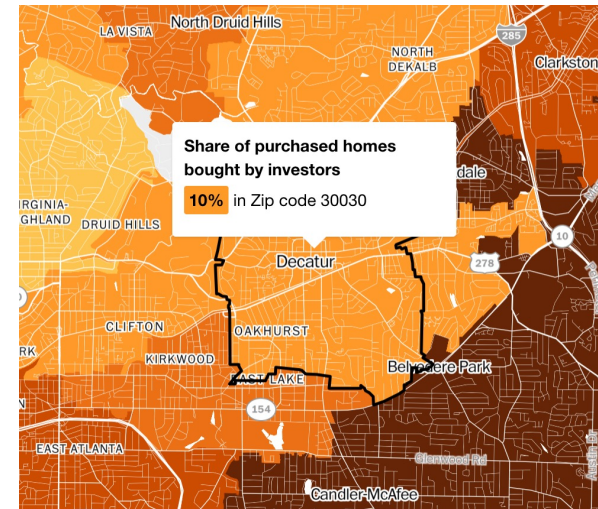
“I am concerned about investors purchasing homes or multi-units.”

Washington Post:

2021 Metro Atlanta 25% investor home purchases vs 12% in 2015

Decatur in 2021: 10% investor home purchases (includes 30030 outside city limits)

More purchases have occurred in places of lower cost



253 home sales Decatur 2020-2021



# Questions from the Community

“I am concerned about short term rentals.”

“Would this allow purchase of homes within the multi unit?”

“Would ADUs be allowed with multi-units?”

“I am concerned about the impact on my water pressure.”



# Questions from the Community

“We should not require any on-site parking.”

“I worry about more on street parking and safety.”

“Can we regulate the number of cars per home?”

“Can we change some streets to one-way?”



# Questions from the Community

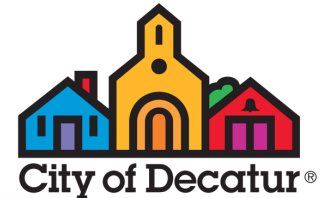
“Can the city incentivize multi-units.”

“Can we allow Cottage Courts as well?”

“How would this impact/help non-profit builders?”

“Please name another city, similar to Decatur, pursuing this zoning change.”

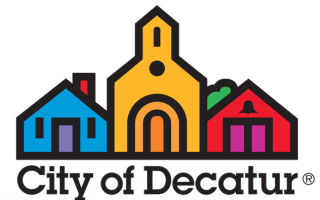
“Can we just focus on multi-units downtown?”



# Questions from the Community

## Misnomers:

- ❖ Apartment dwellers do not pay school taxes (FALSE)
- ❖ Owner-occupied housing is not subsidized (FALSE)
- ❖ Rental properties are more likely to be in disrepair (Code Violation reports show more single-family homes on this list).
- ❖ Renters don't contribute to the community (FALSE)



# Next Steps

- ❖ Continued “in person” outreach
- ❖ Pre-forum survey is still online
- ❖ Forum is August 17<sup>th</sup> via zoom
- ❖ After forum, available for additional in-person sessions as needed.
- ❖ Finalization of proposals, move towards Planning Commission and City Commission.
- ❖ Register / participate here:  
[www.decaturga.com/affordablehousing](http://www.decaturga.com/affordablehousing)

