



THE BETTER TOGETHER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

APPENDICES B-H

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CITY OF DECATUR: FINDINGS ON THE STATE OF DIVERSITY

APPENDIX B



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Findings on the state of diversity in the City of Decatur



By Christian Perry and Casie Yoder

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decatur is changing. This is obvious to the most casual observer. The streets, the buildings and the people who live here have all changed over the past two decades. Community concerns about the changing demographics are real, and have been discussed time and again at meetings and other public forums. Out of this anecdotal evidence came the recognition of a need to gather baseline data in order to accurately assess what Decatur looks like today compared to in the past, and predict what a diverse Decatur might look like in the future. A full understanding of the changing demographics will enable city leaders to continue to plan effectively moving forward.

This is the first time the City of Decatur has compiled demographic data into a single baseline document. The purpose of this study is to assess the state of diversity in the city in the past and today so the community and city officials can better plan for the future. Fifty years ago Decatur, like the areas around it, and most of the American South, experienced seismic shifts in population and community with the realization of full racial civil rights (see Appendix B). Today as the city transitions into the 21st century it is time to consider what Decatur's community and neighborhoods could look like fifty years from now.

The Decatur community has stated that diversity is a shared value and has incorporated a commitment to diversity into the city's 10 year strategic plans. In the 2000 Strategic Plan it was included as Goal #4: Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural and other types of diversity, with three supporting tasks. It was also mentioned in that plan's executive summary. The 2010 Strategic Plan went into more detail with Principle B: Encourage a diverse and engaged community with Goal 5 listing Tasks 5A-5F. This principle and tasks came from round table sessions where participants stated they value a diverse community but expressed concern that economic forces may diminish the city's diversity over time.

The topline findings of this report show that the community's concern was not misplaced. Oakhurst, once one of the poorest parts of the city, now has the highest median household income in the city. Income by race was not possible to examine because the samples are too small in Decatur, especially for groups other than black and white, to draw any meaningful inferences. It does appear that people of all different races moved to South Decatur in the past fifteen years as long as they had high incomes. Home values also rose greatest in South Decatur during this time period.

While nearby cities and the metro Atlanta region as a whole have seen a decline in the white population, Decatur has seen the reverse: a decline in the black population and a growth in the white population. However, Decatur in 1990 was divided almost entirely into two distinct races (black and white), and Decatur in 2010 is beginning to look more like the rest of the region, state and country with a growing non-black minority population, especially in the primary school ages. The African-American population in Decatur as of 2010 is disproportionately concentrated

in the older age brackets. From 2000 to 2010 the share of the population aged 25-34 years old decreased significantly, while the 55-64 years demographic increased greatly.

Households in Decatur, like households across the U.S., have gotten smaller in the past 30 years. Decatur also has a greater percentage of same sex households than the U.S., the Atlanta area, or DeKalb County. And while Decatur is historically better educated than the rest of metro Atlanta and the country on average, it has grown increasingly well-educated in the past few decades. Almost two thirds of adult residents now hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

METHODOLOGY

Sources

Demographic source data for the quantitative analysis in this report comes from public U.S Census Bureau products including the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. The U.S. Constitution requires a population count every ten years to determine congressional apportionment, which has occurred since 1790. Between 1940 and 2000, the Census Bureau surveyed the population (via a sample) while taking a complete count. As a result, most households received a “short form” while about one in seven received a “long form” that included specific questions of income, occupation, education, etc. However in 2010, the Census Bureau switched to only the “short form” basic questions of race, sex, age, etc. Since the data collected in the “long form” is vital to public agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations at every level, the Census Bureau rolled out a continuous sample survey in 2005 known as the American Community Survey (ACS). This survey samples approximately 1 in 480 addresses every month, which results in a much smaller sample size than the “long form” of the Decennial Census.

Qualitative data is derived from a convenience sample of 21 community members varying in age, race, sex/gender, occupation, City of Decatur residency status, and length of time in the community. Convenience sampling is a statistical method that uses volunteers or other easily accessible units to represent a greater population. The major benefit of this strategy centers on ease of access and is suited for research with limited resources. However, a convenience sample may be biased and not represent the true population. Efforts were made to interview a diverse group of people that were contacted by referral from city staff or residents.

Geographic Scope

Decatur is a physically small, urban, and densely populated city within Georgia's DeKalb County that is divided into four census tracts. A census tract is a small contiguous subdivision of a county based on population and is between 1,200 and 8,000 (ideally about 4,000) persons depending on population density. These relatively permanent subareas are usually drawn with boundaries that follow visible or easily distinguishable features, and vary in spatial size. Occasionally census tracts are split to reflect population growth or are merged to reflect



substantial population decline in an area. The City of Decatur, whose boundaries have remained virtually unchanged over the years, is more or less evenly divided among four census tracts. These four census tracts (Figure 1) make up the base study area for demographic data in Decatur and match up well with established neighborhoods.

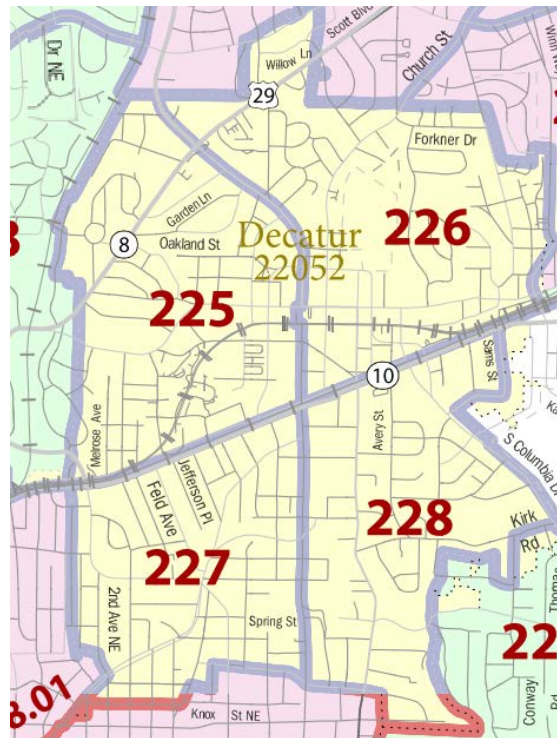


Figure 1: Decatur Census Tract Map. Adapted from 2010 DeKalb County Census Tract Map, U.S Census Bureau.

In this report, neighborhood names are used to replace the official code or the name of census tracts. For example the northwestern quadrant of the city (DeKalb County Census Tract 225) is referred to as Clairemont for simplicity and to keep disparities among areas in a community context. Census Tract 226 (northeastern quadrant) represents both the Sycamore and Great Lakes neighborhood, Census Tract 227 (southwestern quadrant) represents the Oakhurst district, and Census Tract 228 (southeastern quadrant) represents Winnona Park. North Decatur in this report refers to Clairemont and Sycamore/Great Lakes together (the area north of the railroad tracks) and South Decatur refers to Oakhurst and Winnona Park together (the area south of the railroad tracks).

Aggregated data of the four census tracts are used to represent the entire City of Decatur but this method does not include city parcels that have been annexed over time that may fall outside of the census tracts. Another geographical designation used in this report, when appropriate, is a census designated place. This classification does follow changes in legal borders

over time and offers a greater sample size from which to draw inferences. For example, analyzing the presence of a foreign language spoken is more accurate at the city level than the individual neighborhood level where there may only be a handful of cases.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas encompass large populations (at least 100,000) in a core city and surrounding communities that exhibit a high degree of economic and social integration. They are made up of counties and, unlike census tracts, these geographical units change boundaries to reflect increasing intra-regional activity. The present day Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties surrounding Atlanta, Georgia. The Atlanta MSA is frequently referenced as a benchmark in this report as it is a good representation of regional trends.

Variables and Design

A cross-sectional research design, characterized by examining specific variables over a determined period of time, guides this analysis. Some cross-sections include values for variables as far back as 1990 due to availability and comparability of data over time. In other instances a beginning date of 1980 is used, coinciding with the city's 1982 Town Center Plan.

Variables using three levels of measurement are used in this report: nominal scale (also called categorical), ordinal scale (ranked), and interval scale (specifically ratio variables, or values with a true zero such as income or age). Nominal scale variables include race and household type. The only ordinal scale variables used are education level and diversity definition. Interval scale variables include household income, age, average household size and home value.

This report uses three primary race categories based on Census Bureau definitions: white/Caucasian (alone), black/African-American (alone), and non-black minority (including Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, multiracial and undefined races). These mutually exclusive categories were chosen due to the limited quantity of data on racial groups other than black and white in the area of study. As more robust data emerges for other ethnic and racial groups, these groups may be expanded in future reports to better reflect demographic trends.

Household type is examined by three separate nominal variables that act as proxies for the types of families found in Decatur and the extent of their presence. The first of these variables is the presence of children (dependents and legal minors under 18 years of age) in the household. The number of households that meet this criterion is divided by the total number of households to get the share of households with children. The second variable looks at whether or not the individuals in the household are a family (related by blood or marriage). The same division by total number of households is used to determine the share of family households in an area. The final household type variable is used as a proxy for the LGBT community and is determined by the sex of the householder (or head of the household) and the sex of the partner. Same-sex households are then grouped by female householders with female partners and male householders with male partners. These are taken as a share of total households as well. It is

important to remember that this question is not a direct substitute for self-identified sexual orientation (the Census Bureau does ask this question on its surveys).

Educational attainment is separated into seven categories, ranked from lowest to highest level of completion: less than ninth grade (primary) education, some high school (ninth to twelfth grade) with no diploma, high school graduate or equivalent, some college with no degree, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate or professional degree. These levels are determined for the population 18 years and older.

Medians, rather than means, are used to describe the central tendency in monetary variables (household income and home value). Averages are more susceptible to extreme highs and lows and therefore more likely to overstate or understate true "average." Medians represent the middle value in a distribution, with half of the values above and half of the values below.

RESULTS

Defining Diversity

The noun "diversity" is defined as the state of being diverse, or a state of unlikeness, variety, or multiformity. Its root means "to turn aside," and is the same root for the word "divert." In a historical context, "diversity" was not used in reference to people but rather to describe something that was simply dissimilar. Without context, the word "diversity" is somewhat useless, a fact commonly referred to in interviews with community members. In today's language "diversity" has a positive connotation and almost always refers to qualities and characteristics of people. In order to properly understand diversity in Decatur, it is essential to gauge both the context in which it is used here and the types of people to which it refers. Community member responses were typified into five levels: 1) lack of definition, 2) literal definition, 3) race alone (black and white), 4) race and other characteristics, and 5) an idealistic definition.

Two of the 21 interviewees could not answer the question, "How do you define diversity?" The term proved to be too abstract or comprehensive for them to respond with a concrete definition even using their own words. Many community members, however, gave technical definitions of "diversity" in a number of different ways:

- Inda: "Having a lot of choices; a variety of people."
- Mike: "A place where everyone doesn't look, sound, talk, and think the same..."
- November: "A variation in the type of person that lives here."
- Romeo: "Various peoples, races, and cultures; a melting pot [so that we can learn different things from each other]."
- Uniform: "A legitimate cross section in the community."

A single resident defined diversity in the third classification as "Black and white coming together."



The most common response type falls under the fourth category, which acknowledges that race is an important factor but includes other characteristics in the definition:

- *Alpha: “Any number of differences that an individual brings to the table or to the community... Obviously the most visible indicator of diversity is racial diversity, but it’s so much broader than that... sometimes you can see a difference that that person is bringing to the table... and then you hear it in terms of background and environment... difference in culture, in thought, in ideas, in experience. It’s important to have an environment that can foster diversity instead of oppress it.
- Bravo: “... race, sexuality, socioeconomic status, education, [and] age.”
- *Charlie: “Income and race.”
- Delta: “Different experiences and perspectives, whether ethnicities, economic experiences, educational experiences, or religious experiences.”
- Foxtrot: “It’s multifaceted; a big range of types and usually falls under gender, race, and economics.”
- Oscar: “Race is the tip of the iceberg. [Diversity is] a mixture of income, talent, experiences, [and] nationalities.”
- Papa: “Much larger than what the media makes it, not just black and white. Diversity of age, income, cultures... everyone brings a unique piece.
- Quebec: “More than just white and black.”
- Sierra: “Race is [seen] first, [then diversity of] income, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation, thought, outlook, and opinion.”

The final level of response builds upon the previous level, and takes it a step further by adding the element of valuing and encouraging diversity within its definition. Two of the twenty one participants fall into this category.

- Golf: “[Diversity is] more than being accepting and tolerant than people different than you, it’s embracing that as a positive part of your life. Experiences, backgrounds, interests. . .it’s not racially based, age based, gender based, family status based, it’s having all of that stuff. There’s no quota to it, no magic number. We all value the same things.”
- Hotel: “[A diverse place is] a place where we all can live, and work, and play, and worship and do all those things together. And it’s not like I want to be your buddy, your pal, or your friend. I just want to be in a place where I can be just what you want to be – comfortable.”

Untypified – Echo: “Diversity is one of those terms that has to be defined. People get very hesitant when talking about it, and people dance around what they really mean. Context has to be determined.”

Age

Figure 2.1 shows Decatur’s population split among 12 age groups for each decennial census since 1980. The rising share of persons 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 years of age is reflective of the national trend of an aging population. Decatur’s population has historically skewed older.



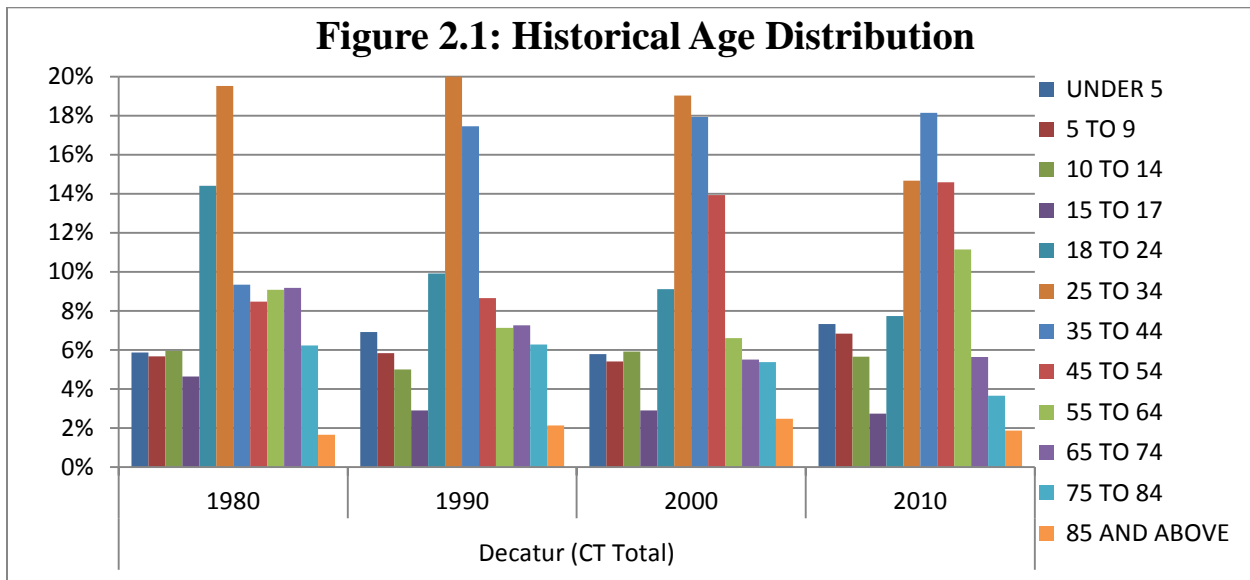
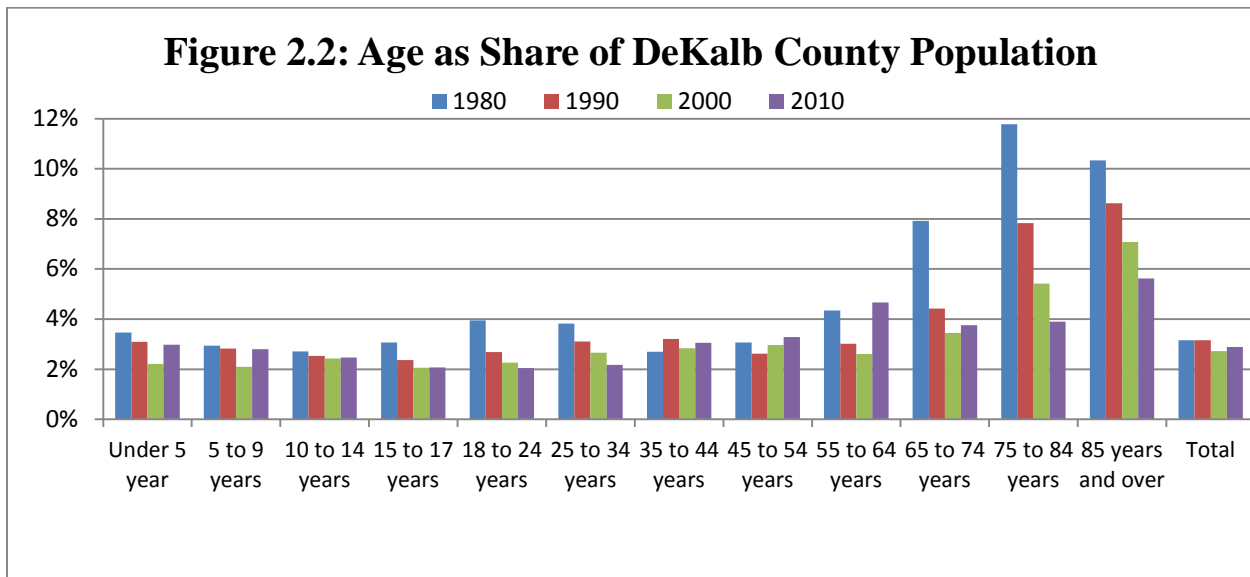
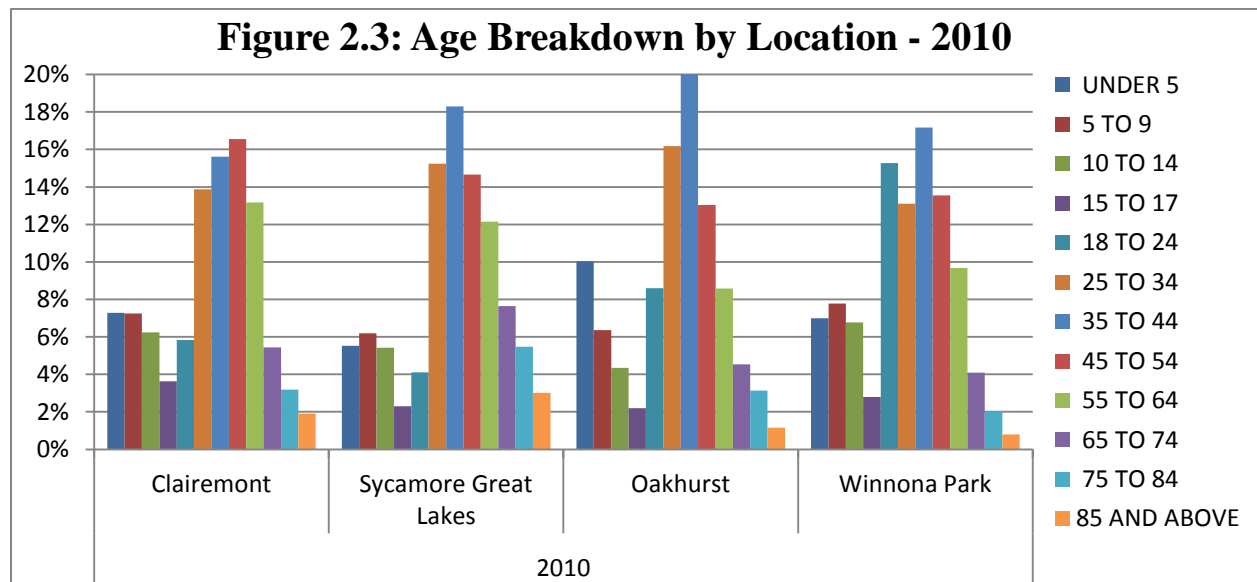


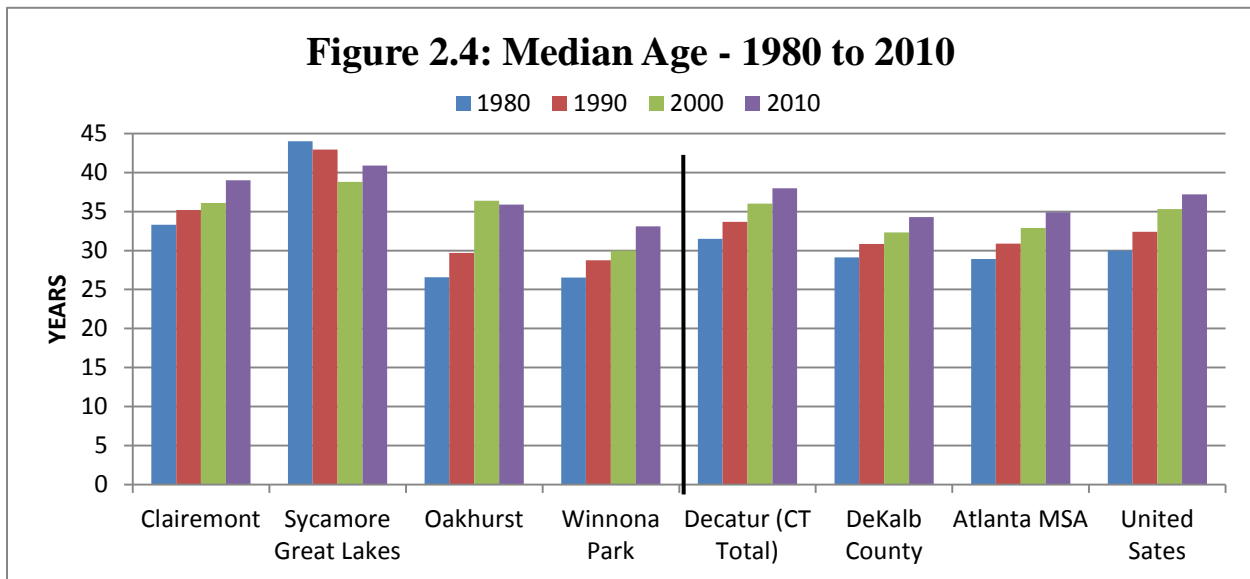
Figure 2.2 shows each age group in Decatur as a share of the county’s population for that age group. For example, while Decatur overall has historically held about 3% of DeKalb County’s population, it held almost 5% of the 55 to 64 year olds in the county in 2010. In 1980 this contrast was even higher, especially for the oldest age groups; 12% of the 75 to 84 year olds in DeKalb County lived in Decatur in 1980. While differences have diminished as the population in general ages, there remains a clear relative concentration. For the most recent data point (2010), Decatur’s highest concentration lies within the 85 and over age group.



Each neighborhood in Decatur seems to have its own relative concentrations in particular age groups. Out of the four neighborhoods, for example, Clairemont held the highest share of 45 to 54 year olds in 2010, higher even than the share of 35 to 44 year olds. Across Clairemont Road to the east, Sycamore/Great Lakes held the largest share of each of the oldest age groups: 65 to 74, 75 to 84, and 85 and above. Younger residents were more abundant in South Decatur. Children aged 5 and younger accounted for 10% of Oakhurst’s population. Oakhurst also held the largest share of 25 to 34 year olds as well as 35 to 44 year olds. Winnona Park had a very high amount of 18 to 24 year olds (over 15% of the population) due to the presence of Agnes Scott College. A number of factors can account for the different age distributions across Decatur neighborhoods, including local amenities, housing options, and transportation choices.



Another angle with which to examine age in Decatur is by the median. Figure 2.4 shows that not only has Decatur historically been a little older than the benchmarks but that there has been a large gap in age between North and South Decatur.

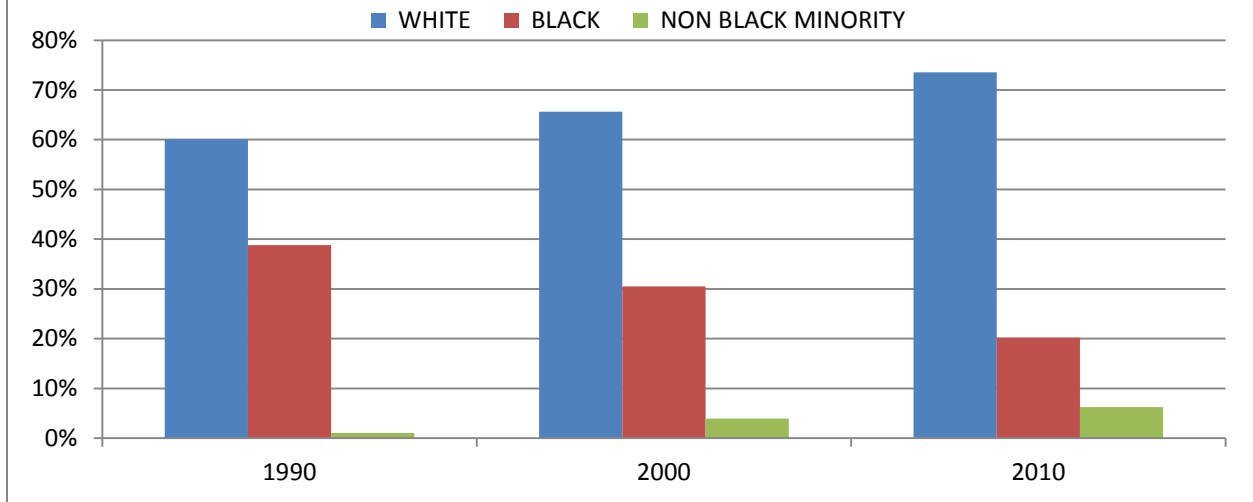


In 2010, half of the residents in Clairemont were more than 39 years old (up from 33 years in 1980), and this value was about 41 years in Sycamore/Great Lakes (down from 44). For comparison, the national median age in 1980 was 30 years old and 37 years old in 2010. South Decatur has historically been younger than North Decatur and the United States. Oakhurst’s median age actually increased from less than 27 years in 1980 to 36 years in 2010, while Winnona Park’s median age increased from between 26 and 27 years old to 33 years old in 2010. Decatur is, by several metrics, an older community inside an otherwise young region and county.

Race

Age is not the only variable by which Decatur resists larger trends. Decatur also stands out for its racial composition. Since 1990, the white share of the population in the City of Decatur has grown from 60% to 73.5%. This is the opposite of the national trend, where the share of the white population has declined from 80% to 72%. The black share of the population in Decatur decreased from 39% to just 20%, but nationally has remained more or less 12% since 1990. In fact, non-black minorities actually outnumber blacks in the United States, making up 15% of the population in 2010 (up from 7.7% in 1990). The non-black minority share of the population in Decatur has grown from just 1% in 1990 to over 6% in 2010. Decatur is coming from a common position in the American South characterized by a legacy of tense black-white relations, which plays an important role in the context of these demographics.

Figure 3: Share of Decatur Population by Race - 1990 to 2010



The following four charts (3.1 through 3.4) show how location has played a role in racial diversity in Decatur. Clairemont’s racial composition has remained relatively unchanged for the last 20 years, though the number of non-black minorities has grown. Sycamore/Great Lakes has actually grown in both black and non-black minorities, and holds the largest population of the latter. Oakhurst has seen the most change in that the black population fell from almost 4,000 persons in 1990 to 1,400 in 2010 and the white population rose from about 900 to 2900. Winnona Park experienced a much more modest rate of decline in the black population which dropped from 1,200 to 700 by 2010.

Figure 3.1: Clairemont Population by Race

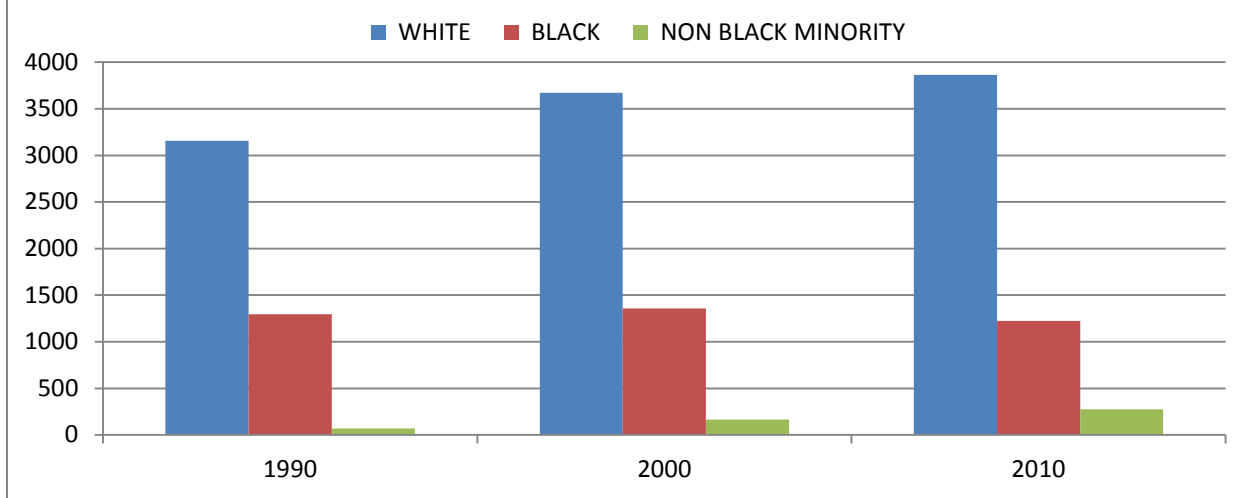


Figure 3.2: Sycamore/Great Lakes Population by Race

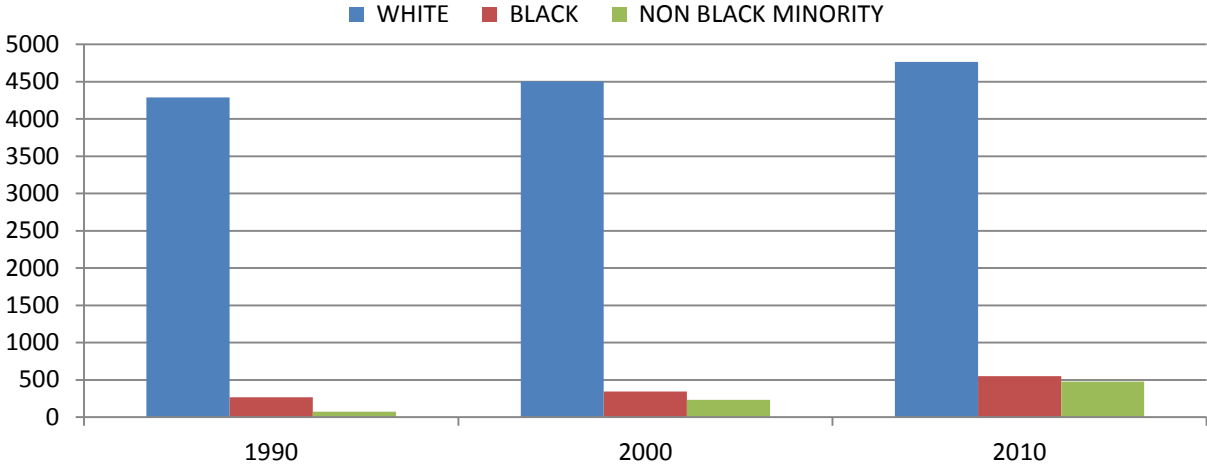
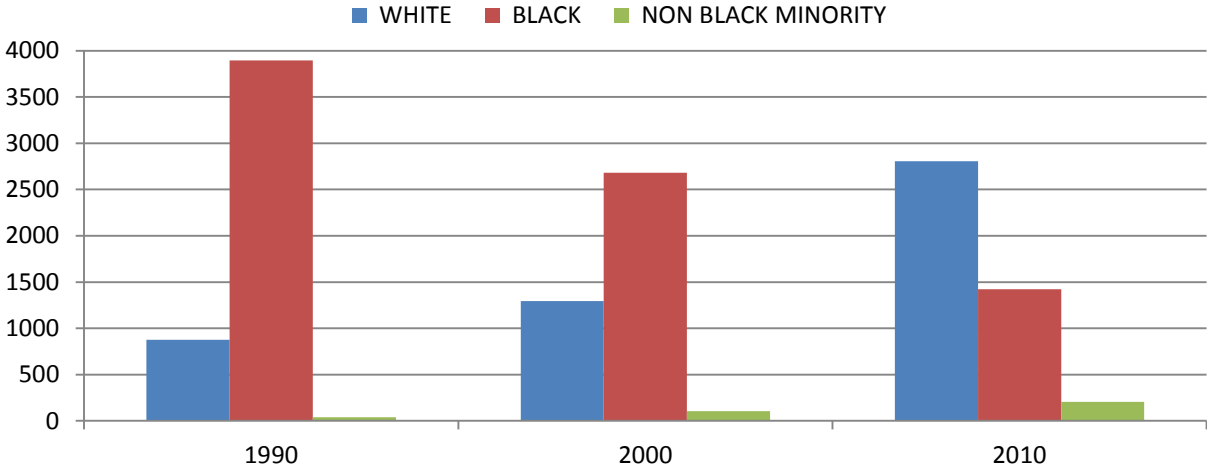
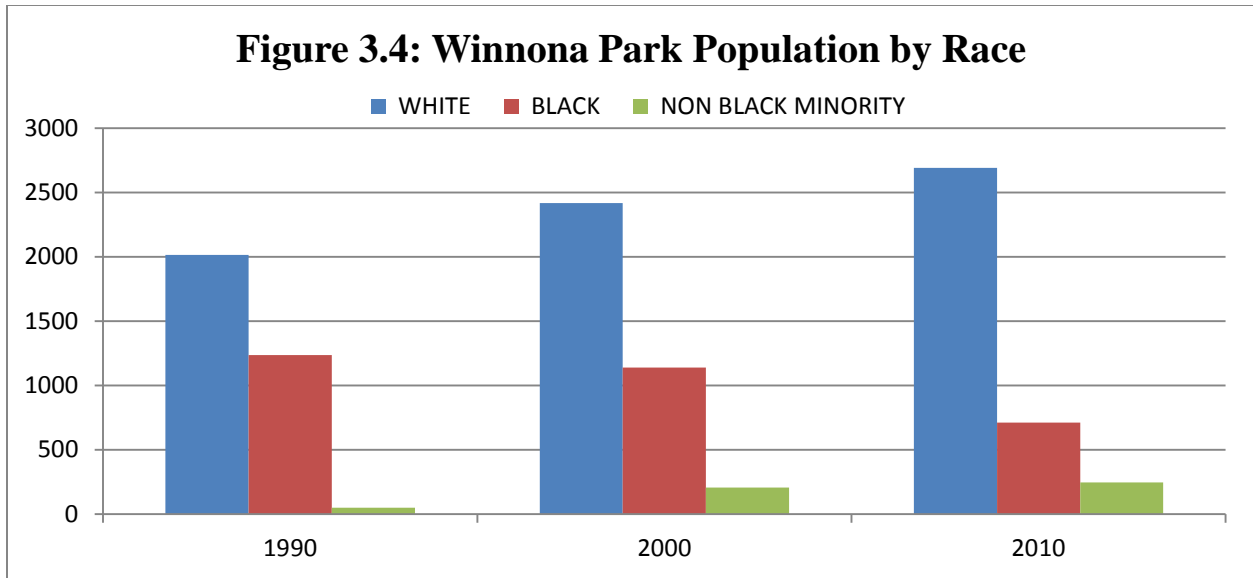


Figure 3.3: Oakhurst Population by Race





Age and Race Together

As shown, there has been noticeable change in both the racial and generational make up of Decatur. Throughout this research it was apparent that a connection exists between race and age in the community. For example, in the literature review of the city’s strategic plans, efforts to support and encourage diversity (Principle B) directly reference programs to assist the elderly (Task 5E, 2010 Strategic Plan). In fact, “promoting Decatur as a lifelong community” (Task 5A) is a large focus of Goal 5’s aim to encourage diversity (p. 56) as evident in the full-time position of Lifelong Community Coordinator and the volunteer-based Lifelong Community Advisory Board. It therefore seems appropriate to examine these two variables, age and race, together to determine if there is such a connection.

Figure 3.5 shows the racial composition for two age groups in Decatur, age 17 and younger and age 65 and older. The “Total” column on the right is the total population by racial share as a comparison. While one in five Decatur residents was black in 2010, about one in three residents aged 65 and older was black. This suggests that the elderly population in Decatur is disproportionately black. Outside of Decatur, the share of the black population is higher in the younger age groups rather than in the older age groups, as seen in Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.5: Share of Selected Age Groups for Decatur

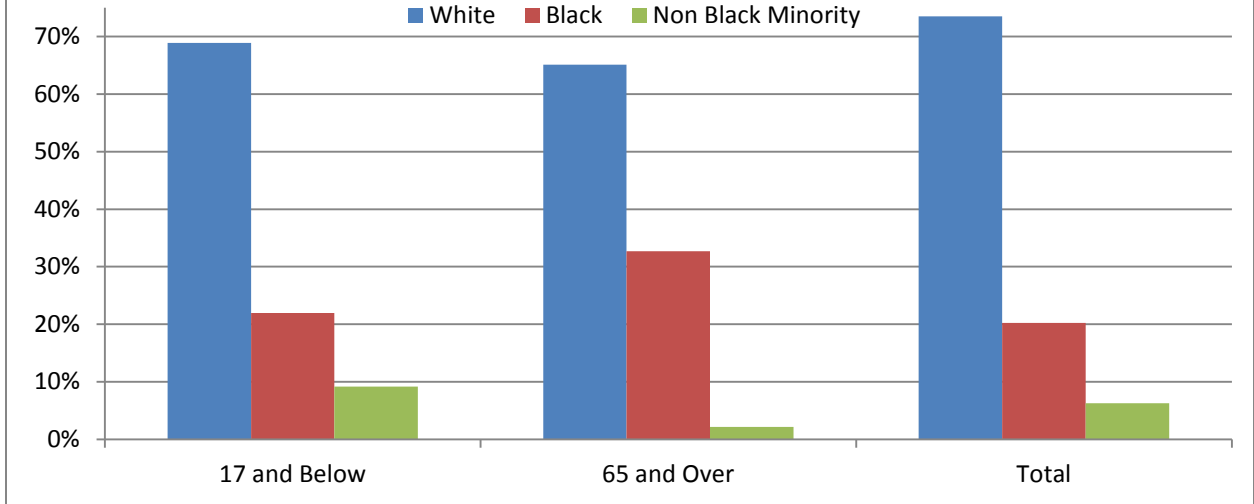


Figure 3.6: Share of Selected Age Groups for DeKalb County

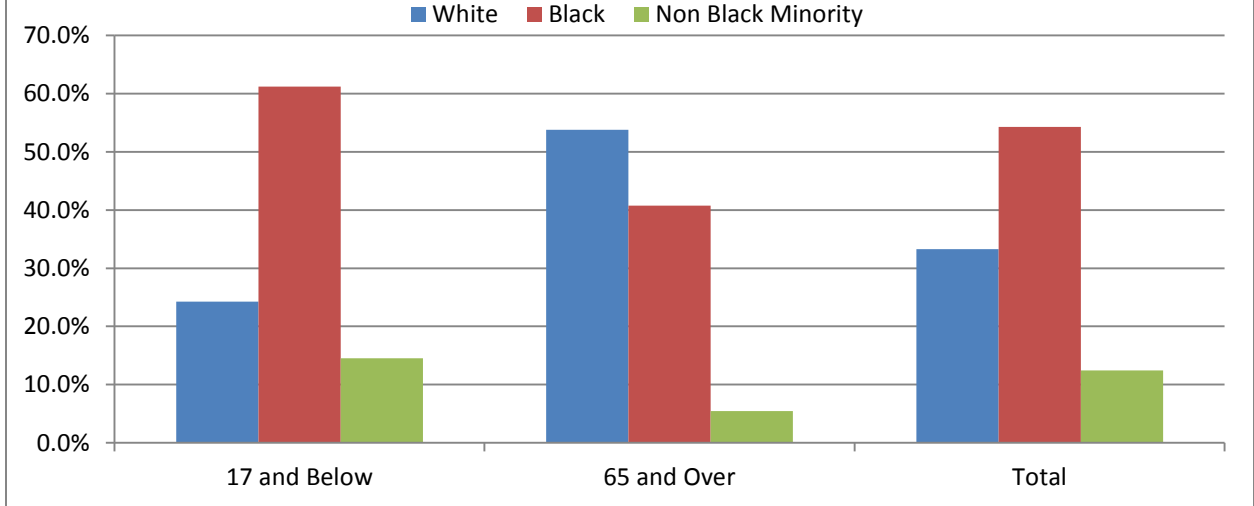
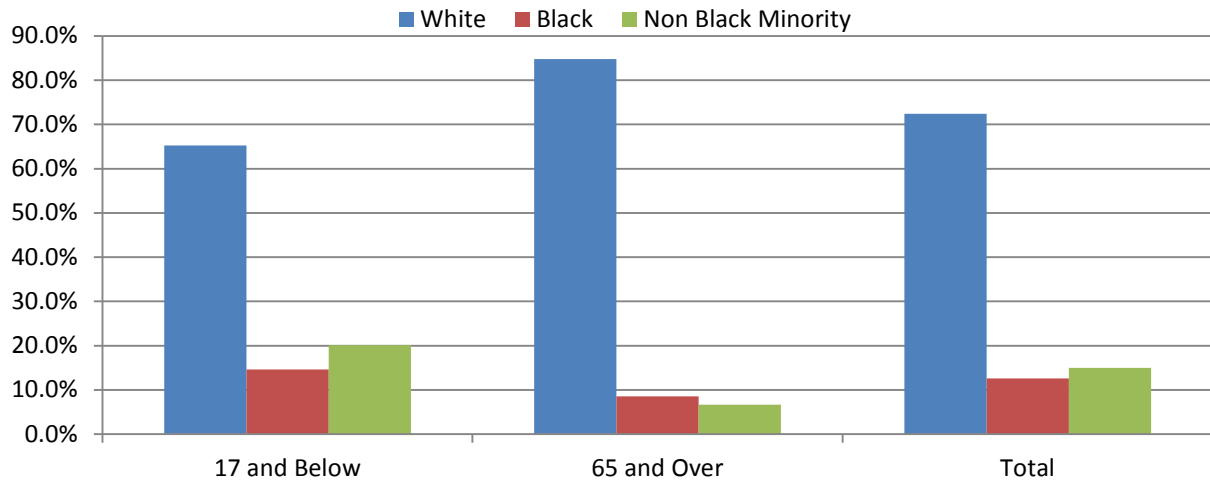
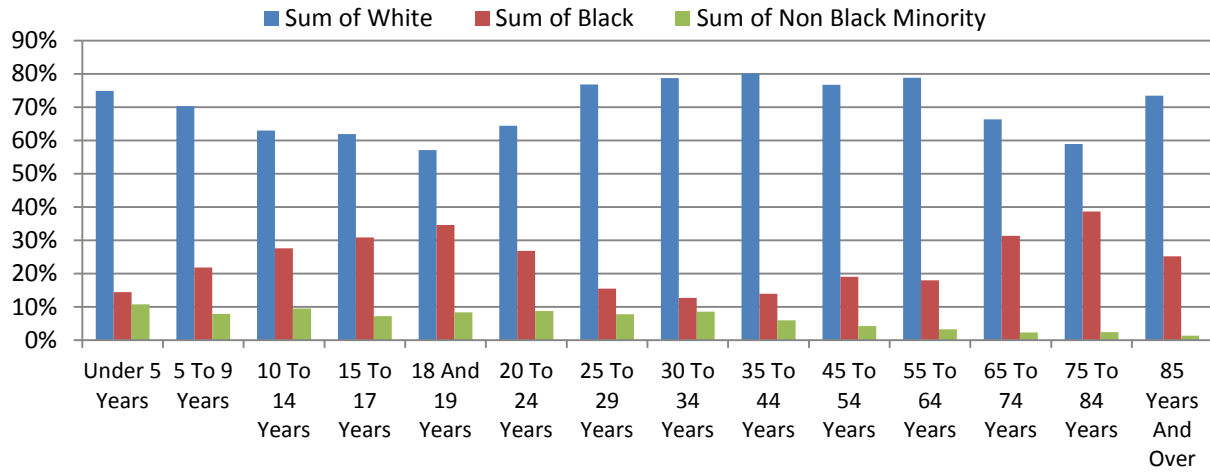


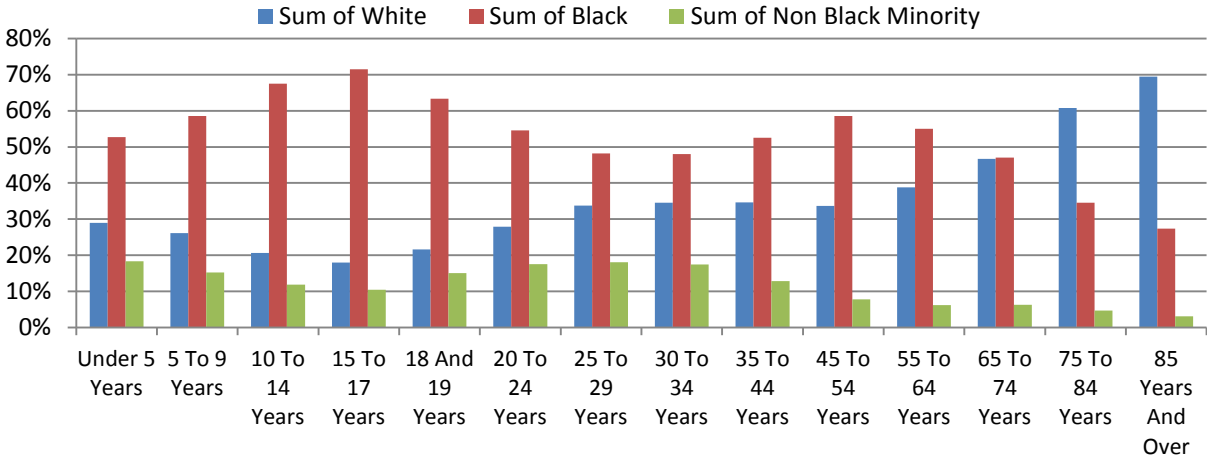
Figure 3.7: Share of Selected Age Groups for the U.S.



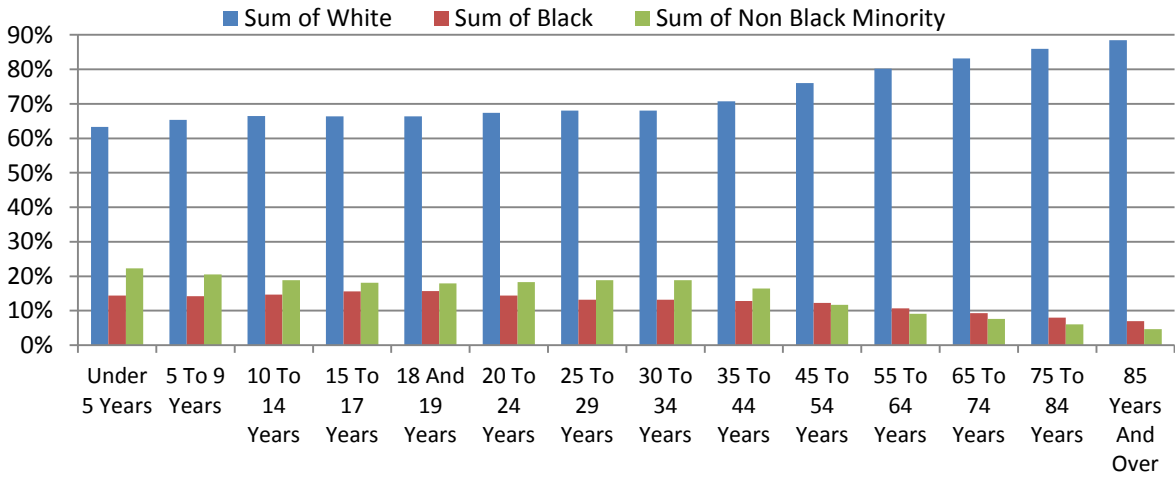
Age Group by Race in Decatur - 2010



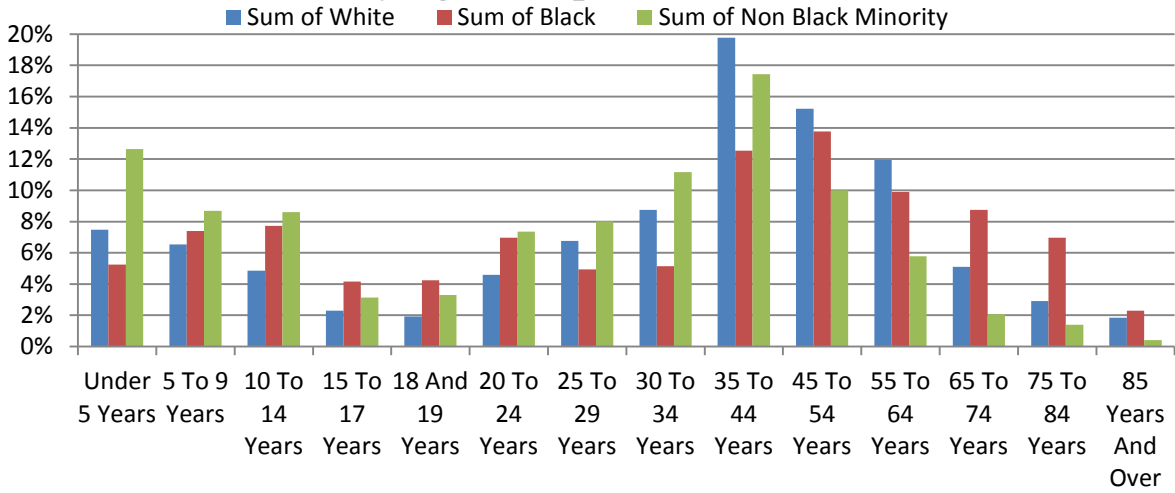
Age Group by Race in DeKalb County - 2010



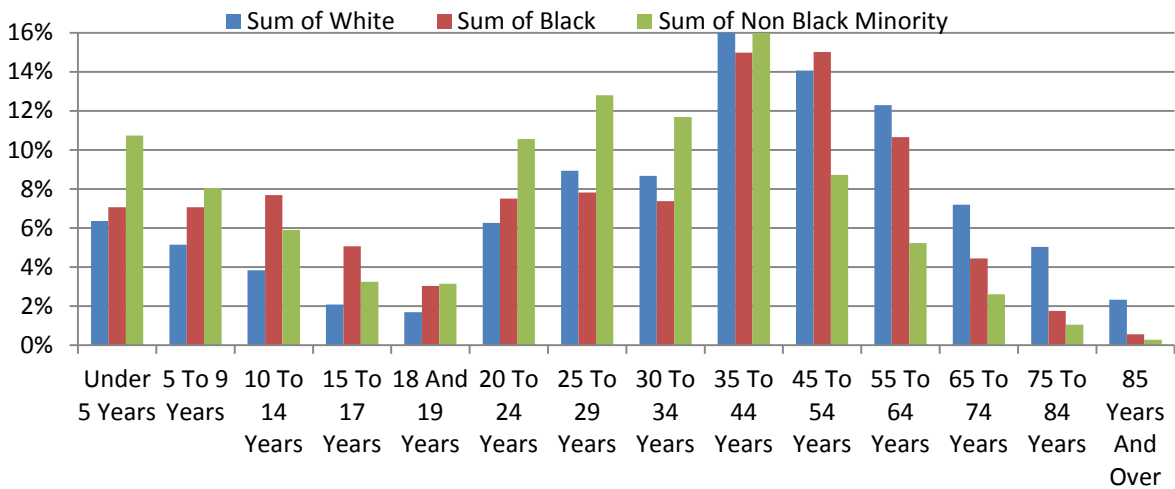
Age Group by Race in U.S. - 2010

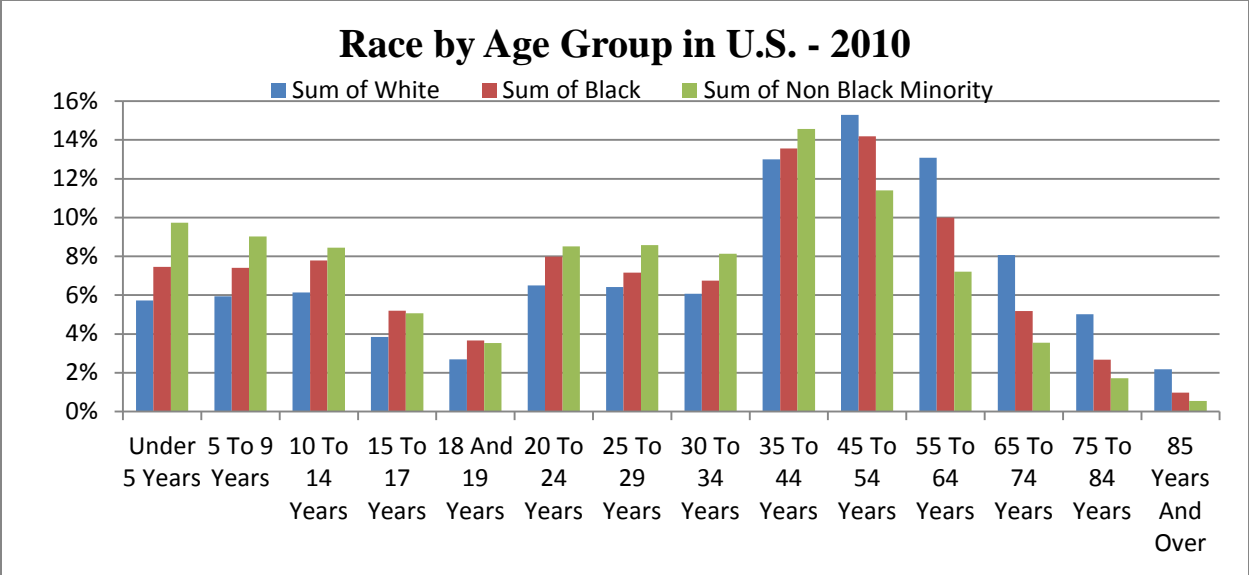


Race by Age Group in Decatur - 2010



Race by Age Group in Dekalb County - 2010





Household Type

Decatur traditionally has had smaller households by number of people than DeKalb County, the Atlanta region, and the nation. Average household size has dropped nationally because of changes in living preferences, including a larger number of people living alone and parents having fewer kids. Figure 4.1 shows North Decatur had substantially smaller households in 1980 and 1990 than South Decatur. In 2010 the average household size in Decatur was 2.2 persons, lower than the county figure of 2.5 and the regional figure of 2.7. Average household size in Clairemont was about 2.2 and 1.9 in Sycamore/Great Lakes. Both Winnona Park and Oakhurst had 2.5 persons per household in 2010, down from 3.3 persons in 1980. Only in Decatur is there an overall average household size increase from 2000 to 2010.

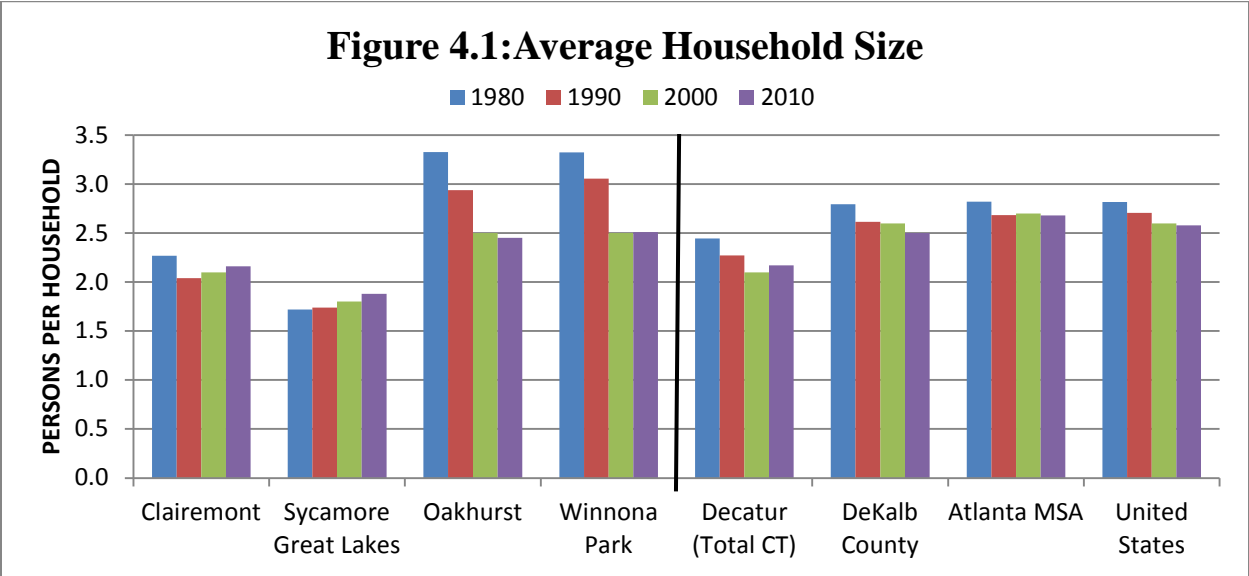
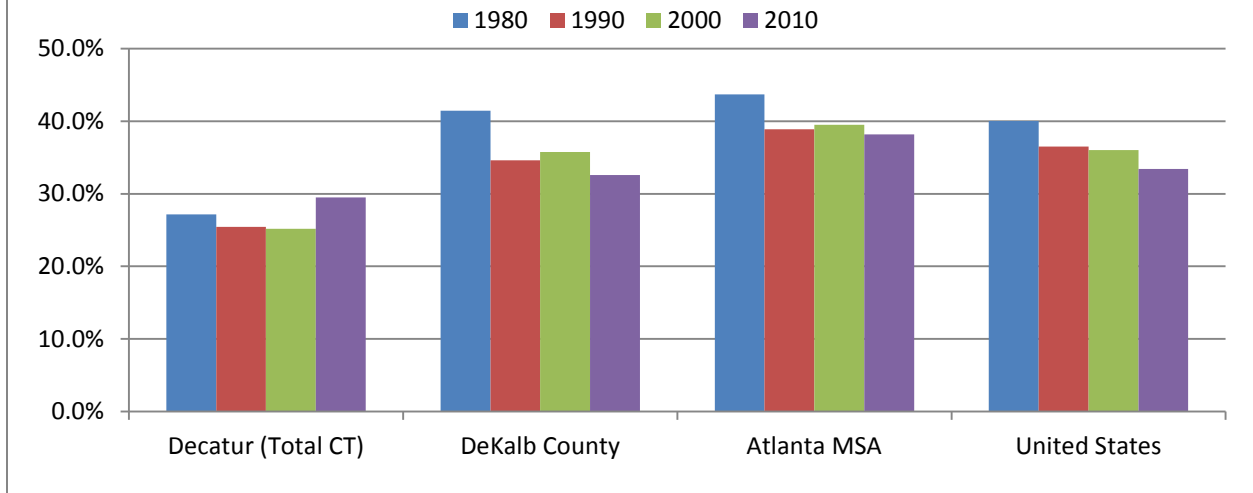
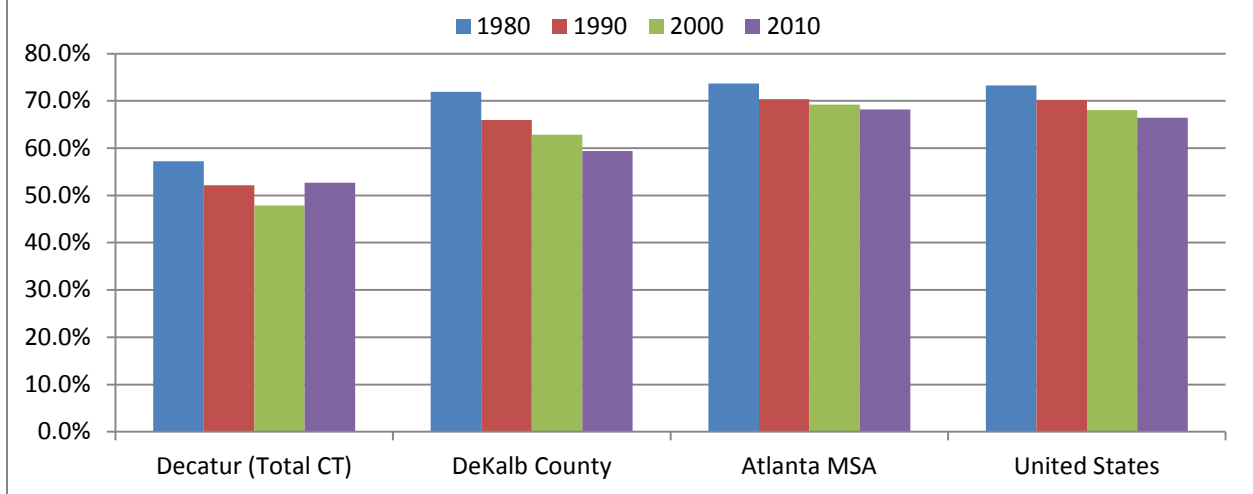


Figure 4.2: Share of Households with Children

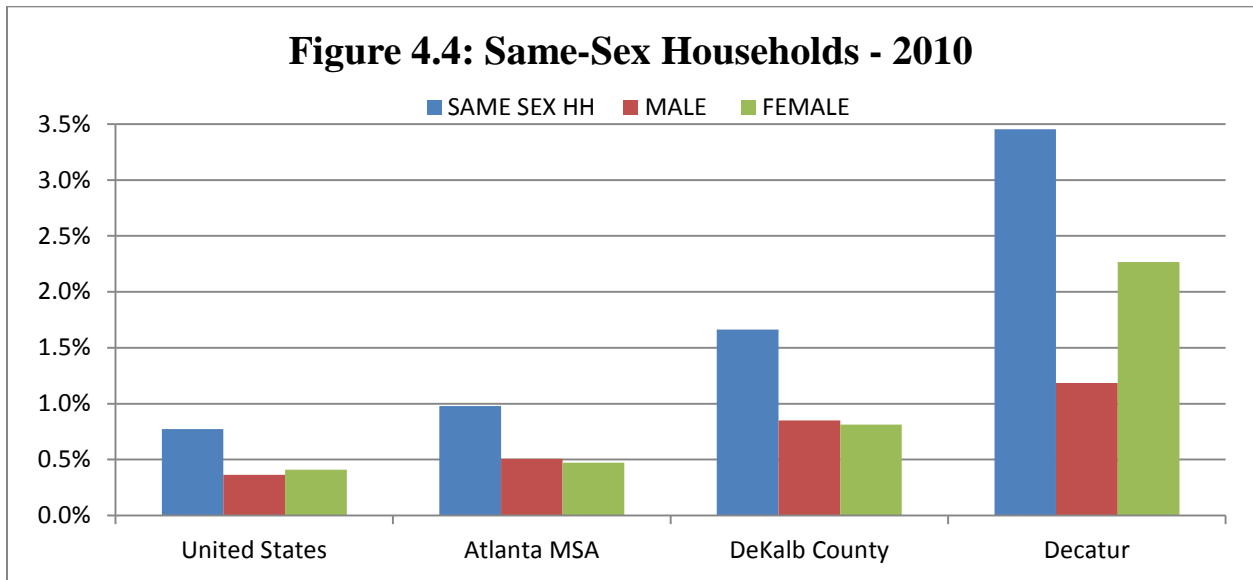


Decatur has had a relatively smaller share of households with persons less than 18 years of age than both the regional and national share (Figure 4.2). In 2010 the share of households with children in Decatur was 29.5% (almost three in ten households), the highest at any point since 1980. Despite this, the Atlanta metropolitan region held closer to four in ten households with children in 2010. This underscores the distinct age anomaly in Decatur, which favors older individuals who are less likely to have children under 18 years old. Like household size, however, Decatur’s share of households with children is on the rise.

Figure 4.3: Share of Family Households

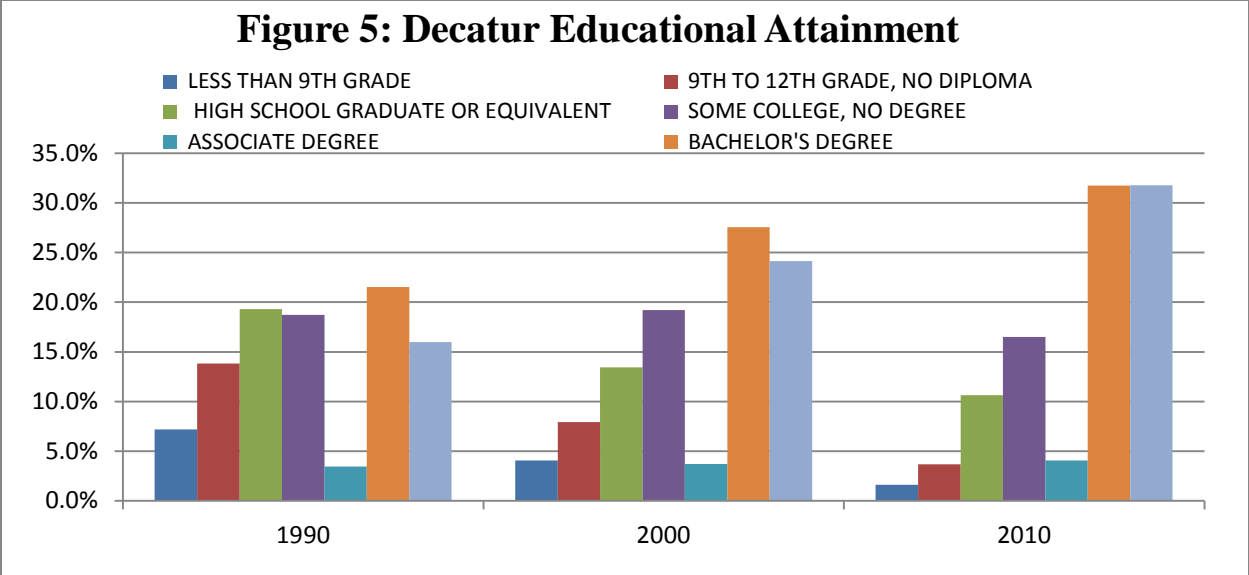


Decatur has a reputation for being LGBT friendly. Figure 4.4 shows the share of the population where a same-sex couple is recorded. In general, about 3.5% of Decatur’s households were led by same-sex partners in 2010, compared to 1.7% in DeKalb County and 0.8% nationwide. The larger benchmarks have roughly an equal number of gay and lesbian households, yet Decatur heavily favors lesbian households (2.7%). In fact, same-sex male households actually saw a net decrease of almost 5% from 2000 to 2010. Only Winnona Park, which previously held the lowest number, saw an increase in same-sex male households in this period.



Education

Historically, Decatur has held proportionally more educated residents than DeKalb County, the Atlanta MSA, and the nation. Levels of educational attainment in the City of Decatur have grown significantly and rapidly over the last 20 years. Figure 5 displays how the educational composition has changed in Decatur from 1990 to 2010. The share of those earning a bachelor’s degree or higher (the orange and sky blue columns) has almost doubled from 37.5% of the population 18 years and older to 63.5%. This means that in 1990 about one in three Decatur residents held a college degree or higher while in 2010 about two in three did. The United States as a whole saw its share of bachelor’s and graduate degree earners increase from 18.5% (half that of Decatur) to about 26%. In 1990, 30% of DeKalb County residents had earned a college degree, compared to 35% in 2010. Regional share gains were also comparatively small, from 24.4% college degree holders in 1990 to 31.7% in 2010.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

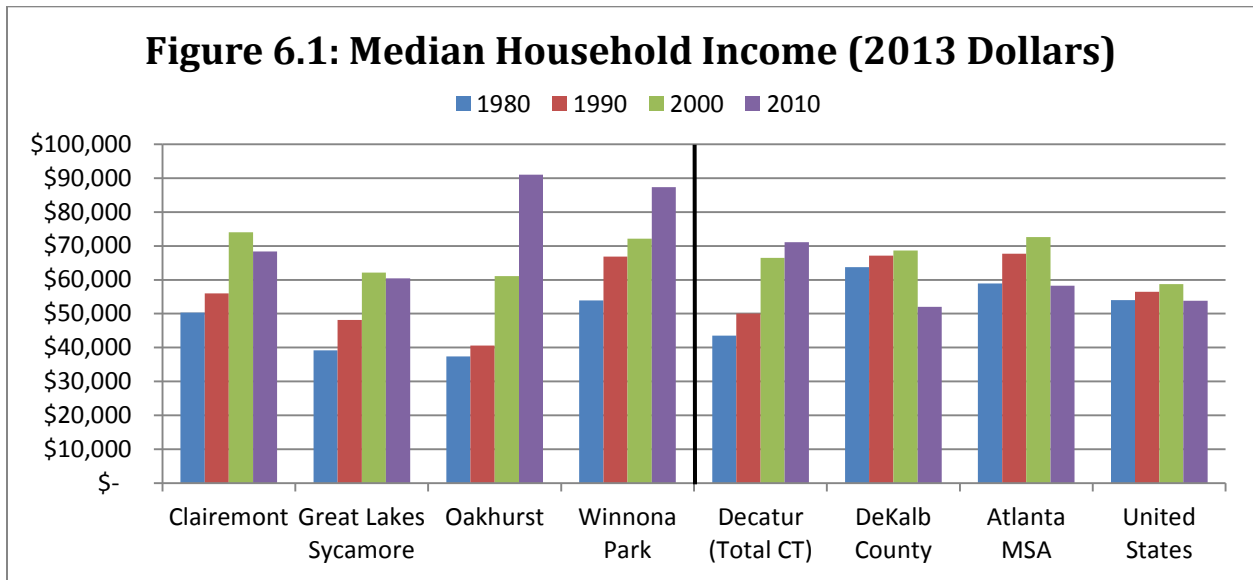
The degree of change in Decatur’s educational mix is most evident at the highest level. Residents holding a graduate or professional degree constituted about 16% of the city’s population over 18 years old in 1990, or about one in six residents, more than double the national rate of 6.3%. By 2010 this share grew to 31.8%, more than triple the national rate of 9.3%. In other words, one in three Decatur residents held a professional or graduate degree in 2010. However this rate varied among Decatur’s neighborhoods. Some areas of the city held a large share of highly educated in 1990. In Clairemont (22.3%) and Winnona Park (20.8%) the rate was about one in five residents. In contrast, about one in six residents in Sycamore/Great Lakes (15.9%) held high level degrees while only one in twenty had advanced degrees in Oakhurst (5.2%). In 2010, Oakhurst remained the Decatur neighborhood with the lowest share of professional or graduate degree holders, but it grew significantly to almost one in four (23.6%). Sycamore/Great Lakes became the city’s neighborhood with the largest share at 40%, or two in five residents. Clairemont’s share increased to 31.7%, while that of Winnona Park grew to 27.2%. Since education is highly correlated to income, the next section examines how income levels in Decatur follow a similar trend as education levels.

Income

Household income in Decatur is higher than any other point in the last 30 years and is markedly higher than the surrounding areas. Figure 6.1 shows the income level changes for areas in and around Decatur across four points in time. In 1980 Decatur’s median household income level was \$43,500 (half of the households in Decatur earned more than this figure), around 19% lower than the national level of \$54,000. In 2010 the median household income in Decatur was



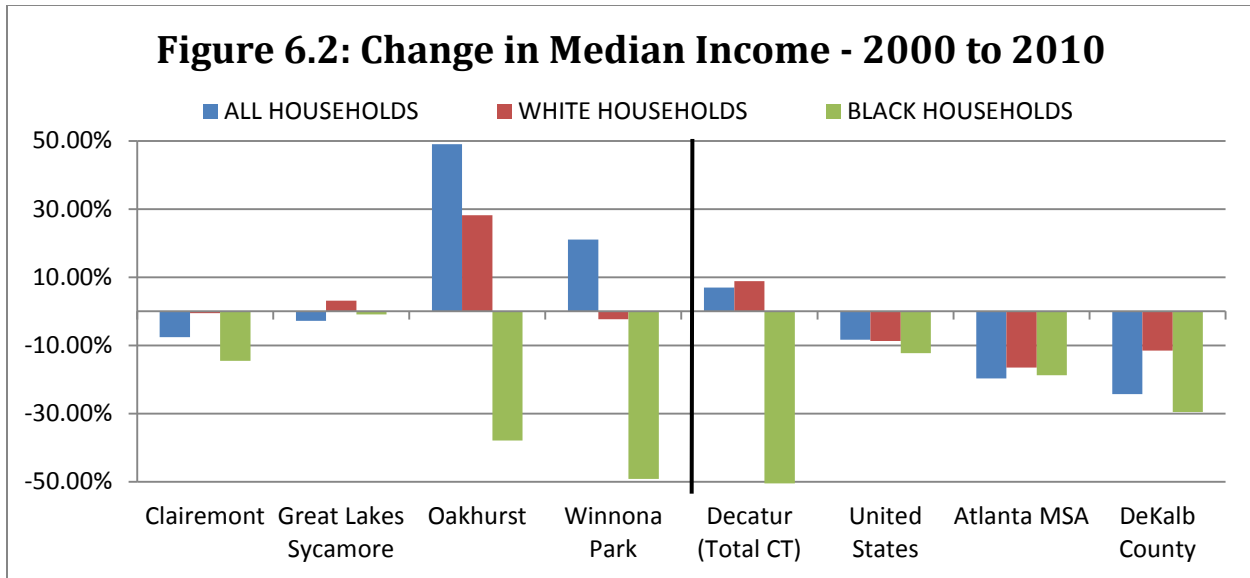
approximately \$70,000, about 30% higher than national level of \$53,800. As another perspective, in 1980 Decatur’s income level was about 46% lower than DeKalb County’s median income at the time (\$63,700), and in 2010 city income level was nearly 37% more than the 2010 county level (\$52,000). It is important to note this prosperity is a fairly new phenomenon and median Decatur income lagged until 2000. In addition, only the City of Decatur’s median income continued to rise from 2000 to 2010, a period marked by an economic recession. Despite the apparent economic success of Decatur residents, this progress was not shared evenly among the city’s neighborhoods.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

The largest increases in income levels occurred in South Decatur. Oakhurst saw its median income increase from \$37,300 in 1990 (the lowest in Decatur) to \$91,000 in 2010 (the highest in Decatur). Winnona Park also enjoyed a substantial rise in income levels, from \$53,900 (the highest in the city) to \$87,300 (the second highest in the city) during the same time period. While North Decatur also realized healthy growth in income levels from 1980 to 2010, Clairemont and Sycamore/Great Lakes more closely mirrored the economic realities of the nation, region, and county from 2000 to 2010 (Figure 6.2).





Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

From 2000 to 2010 the overall median income level (the blue bar) for the United States decreased about 8%. Meanwhile Decatur still saw an overall increase in its median income level, from \$66,500 to \$71,100 (up about 7%). White households in Decatur experienced a slightly higher increase in income of almost 9% (from \$81,500 to \$88,700) while black household income levels decreased 51% (from \$34,600 to \$16,800). This significant disparity was not observed at the national or regional level, or even equally across Decatur.

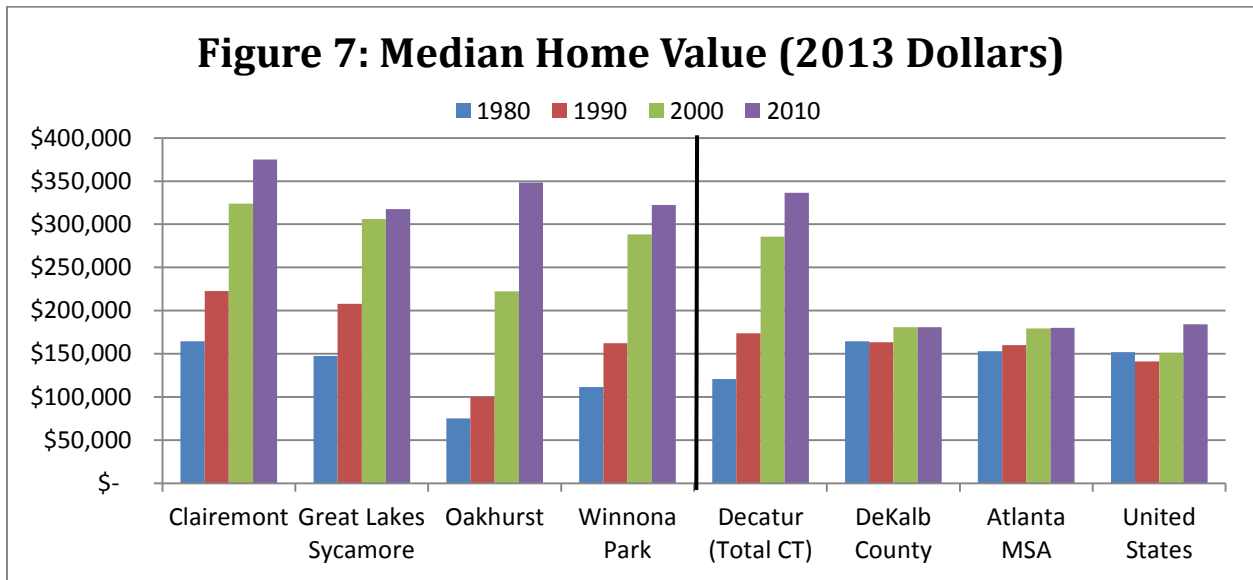
Clairemont’s median income level declined from \$73,000 to \$68,400 (almost 8%) overall, yet the area’s black households saw a decrease from \$10,400 to \$8,900 (more than 16%) while white households had a less than one percent drop from \$91,900. Overall income level in Great Lakes/Sycamore dropped less than 3% from \$62,200, declined 1% for black households from \$23,600, and rose 3% for white households from \$67,200. Oakhurst’s median income level grew significantly (49%) from \$61,000 in 2000 to \$91,100 in 2010. White households in Oakhurst saw an income level increase from \$87,400 to \$112,000 (28%), while black households dropped from \$44,200 to \$27,400 (38%). In Winnona Park, the medium income increased from \$72,200 to \$87,400 (21%). Both white and black households in this neighborhood saw their income levels decrease although at different rates (white households down 2% from \$106,500 and black households down 49% from \$44,200). Non-black minorities were intentionally left out of figure 6.2 because of the small sample sizes in the four areas.

Home Value

Figure 7 displays median home values for Decatur and benchmarks from 1980 to 2010. Like median income, the median home value in the City of Decatur is higher than that in



DeKalb County, the Atlanta MSA, and the United States. In 2010, 50% of the homes in Decatur were worth more than \$336,400, compared to just \$180,600 in DeKalb County. Unlike income levels among Decatur neighborhoods, there is relatively little variation in median home values. The lowest value of \$317,700 was found in Sycamore/Great Lakes and the highest value of \$375,100 (about 18% higher) was found in Clairemont. Oakhurst's median home value of \$348,400 was approximately 8% higher than that of Winnona Park at \$322,300.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

In 1980 Decatur's median home value was \$120,800, significantly lower (by 36%) than the county level of \$164,600. An increase of 65% in Decatur median home value took place between 1990 and 2000, from \$173,500 to \$285,800. South Decatur experienced the largest increases. Median home value increased about 78% in Winnona Park (from \$162,200 to \$288,300) and 122% in Oakhurst (more than doubling from (\$100,000 to \$222,100). Income levels also experienced the most growth between 1990 and 2000.

NEXT STEPS

The data presented in this report represent a good beginning but further research opportunities exist, especially for more in-depth qualitative research, such as focus groups. A line item of \$25,000 was written in the FY 2014-2015 budget for this type of work.

City staff demographics and data such as the National Employee Survey results, which asks questions about diversity and inclusion, would offer insight into if and how those who serve the community are representative of Decatur. Further study could also compare the number of



city employees who live in the city limits to those who do not and why employees live where they live.

It has been at least several years since the city last hired an outside firm to track the demographics of event attendees, and the city should consider updated attendance tracking for larger festivals to see if event attendance demographics are in line with resident demographics.

Tracking resident migration patterns would be useful but it is challenging. While the city can gather data on new residents and where they moved from, tracking where residents go when they move outside the city is difficult, if not impossible. Figuring out how to do this would be beneficial and worth studying.

Other data points that could provide further insight on Decatur's diversity include:

- Residents' occupation and location of employment
- Updated transportation patterns, including pedestrian counts at key intersections, as well as car traffic counts and residents' commuting patterns
- Political affiliation of residents
- Religious affiliation of residents
- Housing trends, which could include gathering housing sales data and layering with reconstruction and tear-down data as well as updating the Affordable Housing Study from May 2008
- Demographics of the city's small business owners

Maintaining diversity has been a major part of the city's efforts to date, specifically with programs like the Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project. The conversation now expands to how to attract new diversity, especially young professionals of color.

Since a diverse community is the intersection of many things and not a single data point, Decatur could consider exploring options to encourage diversity through economic incentives, housing choice, increased transit accessibility and annexation. Because of Decatur's small size, economic incentives such as a creating a city-wide minimum wage are impractical and would have little to no effect since most residents work outside the city's less than five square miles.

At a time when most other municipalities, including the City of Atlanta, have removed dedicated affordable housing and moved increasingly to Section 8 vouchers, the Decatur Housing Authority remains committed to preserving every single affordable unit in the city. The challenge is how to make market rate apartments affordable in Decatur.

Three major apartment complexes are currently under construction. Once complete, they will add hundreds of new housing options aimed at the 25-34 year old age demographic. Planned redevelopment around the Avondale MARTA station will include apartments and senior housing, further diversifying the city's housing stock. The Unified Development Ordinance, to be completed by the end of 2014, is expected to add new zoning options for residential housing, such as cottage courts, that would give those who want to buy options at lower price points.

An annexation master plan will be completed by the end of 2014. It is expected to include commercial areas such as the Patel Plaza shopping center which would add businesses that serve the Indian-American community to the city.

City government has the least amount of control over the community's cultural values, but it can create forums and opportunities for responsible, civil discourse about how best to foster a diverse community that is open and welcoming to all. The Decatur City Commission has approved a proposed timeline and budget for Phase I of a process to create a Community Action Plan for a Compassionate Decatur. In order to draw on the experiences and knowledge of the community, the city's efforts are intended to be comprehensive, intentional and take a holistic approach to developing a community action plan that appreciates diversity and supports a community of inclusion and compassion based on justice and equity.

Earlier in 2014, the Decatur City Commission passed Resolution R-14-08 supporting the principles contained in the International Campaign for Compassionate Cities whose purpose is to encourage community leadership to create and bring together efforts toward increasing compassion through local initiatives, policy and projects. The Compassionate Cities process provides a framework and umbrella for developing the Community Action Plan. Phase I is currently underway and is expected to be done by the end of the year. Phase II will most likely consist of large scale community conversations and development of the action plan over a 12-month period beginning in January 2015.

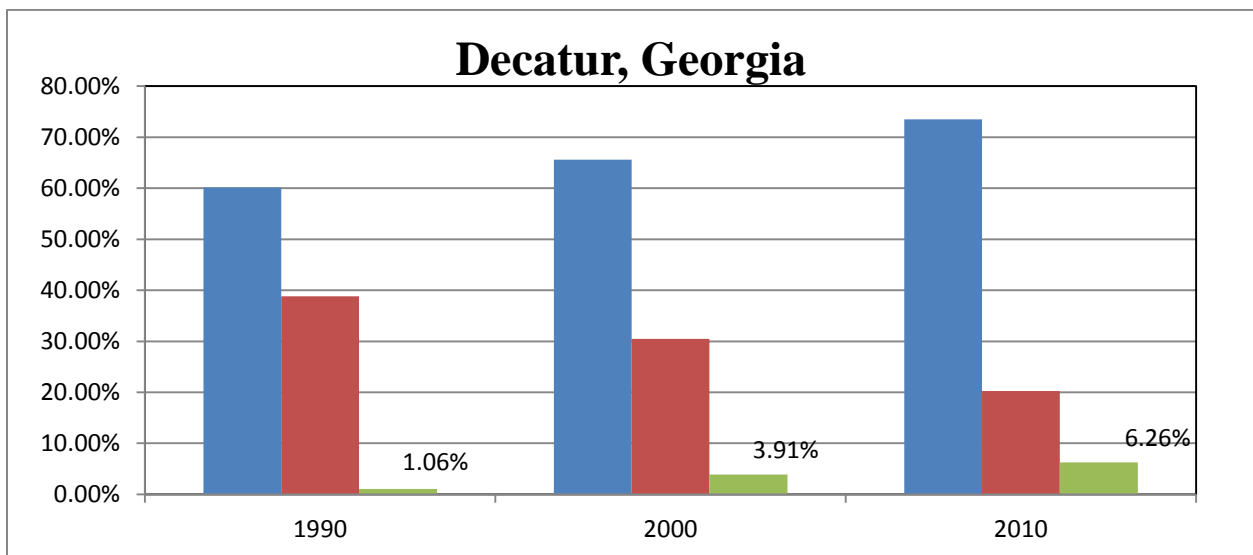


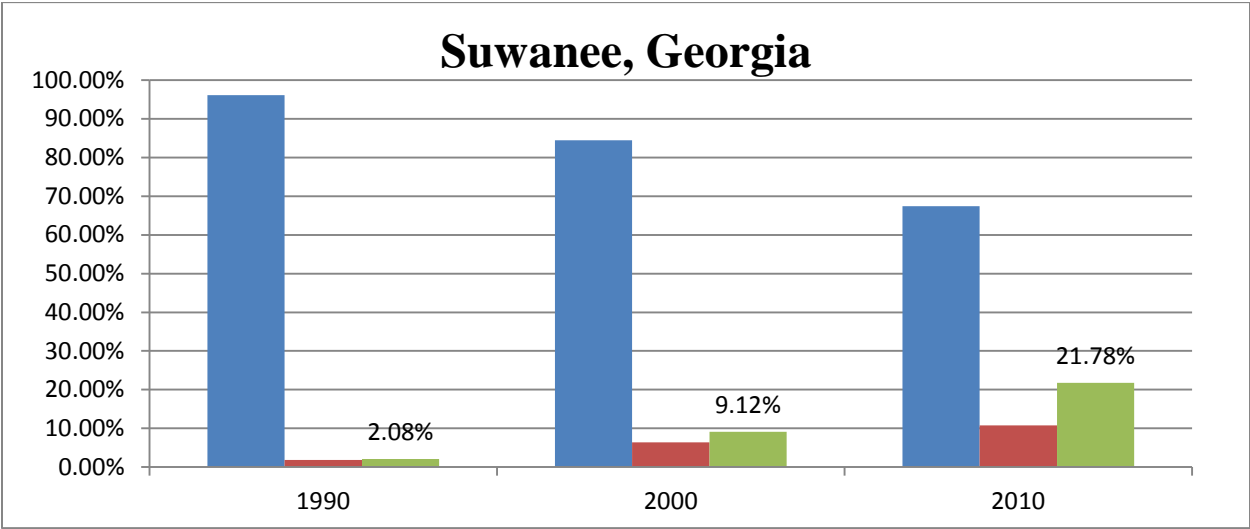
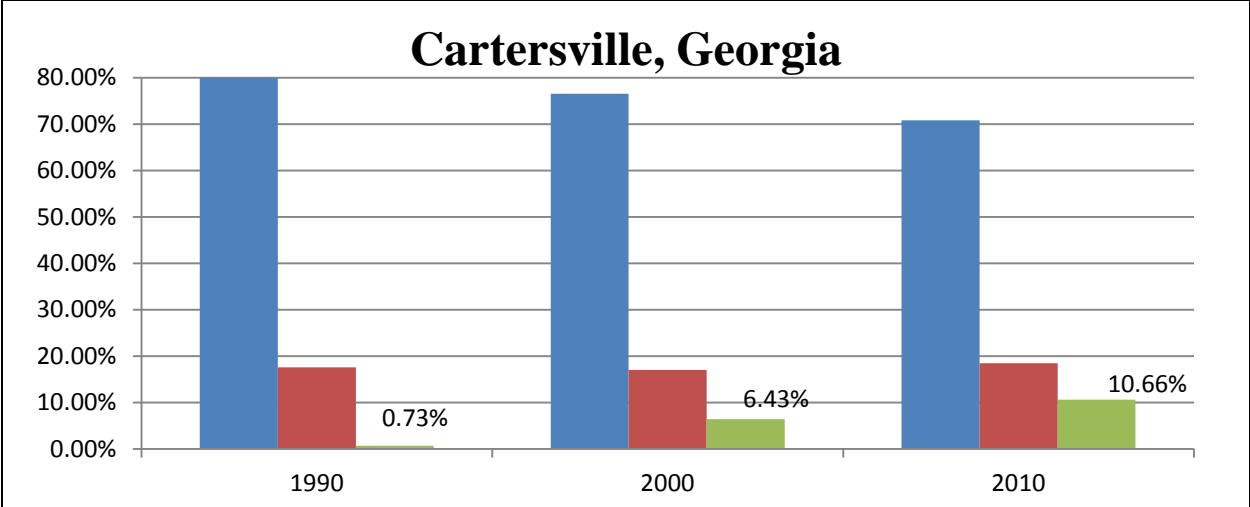
Appendix A: Benchmark Cities

In the fall of 2013, the City of Decatur’s Performance Measurement Team embarked on a project to identify communities around the United States that were similar to the City of Decatur in order to make comparisons and learn best practices. As a starting point, comparable places were drawn from a list of jurisdictions that participate in the National Research Center’s citizen survey program and are members of the ICMA Center for Performance Measurement Program. Nine cities were selected based on criteria that included population, proximity to a large city in a metropolitan region and a council-manager form of government. They are:

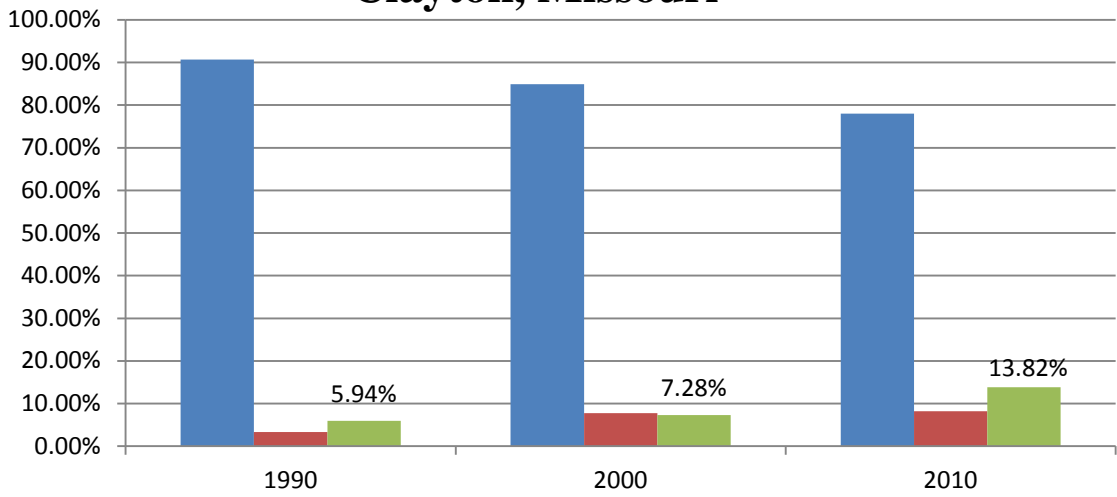
1. Cartersville, Georgia
2. Clayton, Missouri
3. Dover, New Hampshire
4. Greer, South Carolina
5. Needham, Massachusetts
6. Piqua, Ohio
7. Queen Creek, Arizona
8. Saco, Maine
9. Suwanee, Georgia

City staff and the City Commission use metrics about these nine cities as a way to benchmark Decatur’s community engagement, transparency and people. The following graphs show the nine benchmark cities’ and Decatur’s racial composition from 1990 to 2010. In keeping with the other graphs in this report, the blue bar represents white, the red bar represents black and the green bar represents non-black minority.

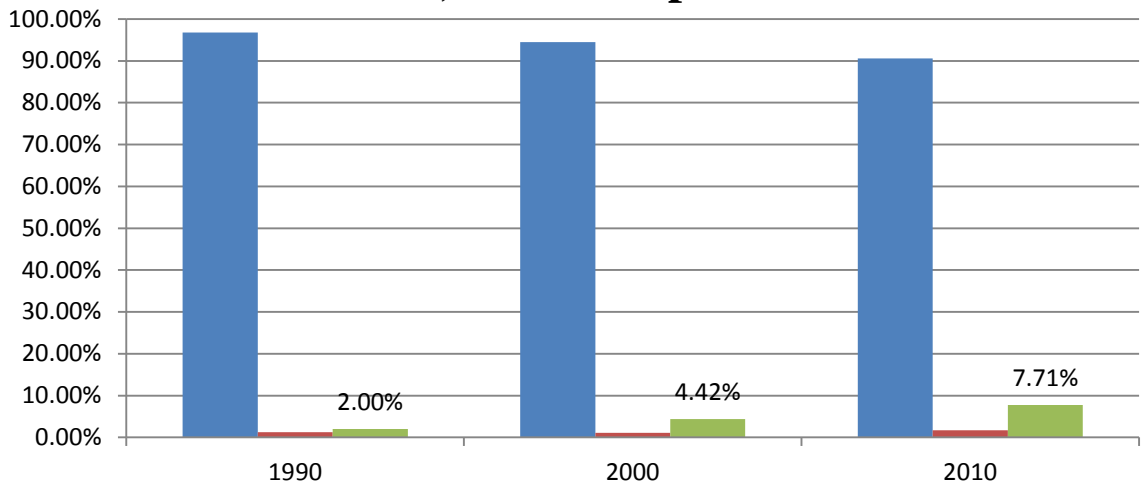


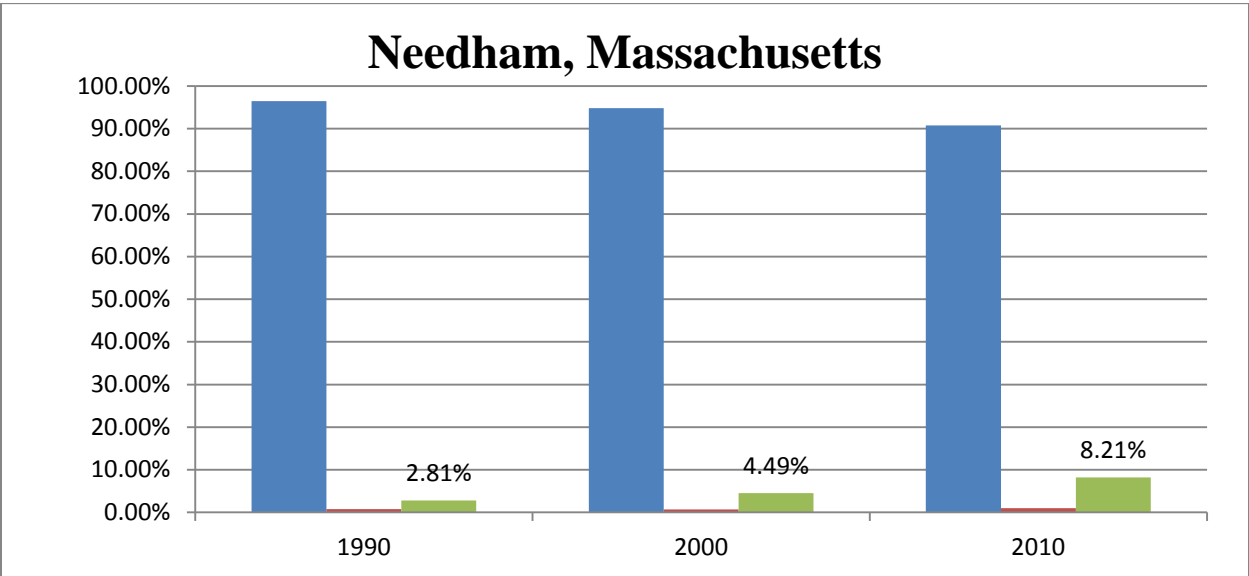
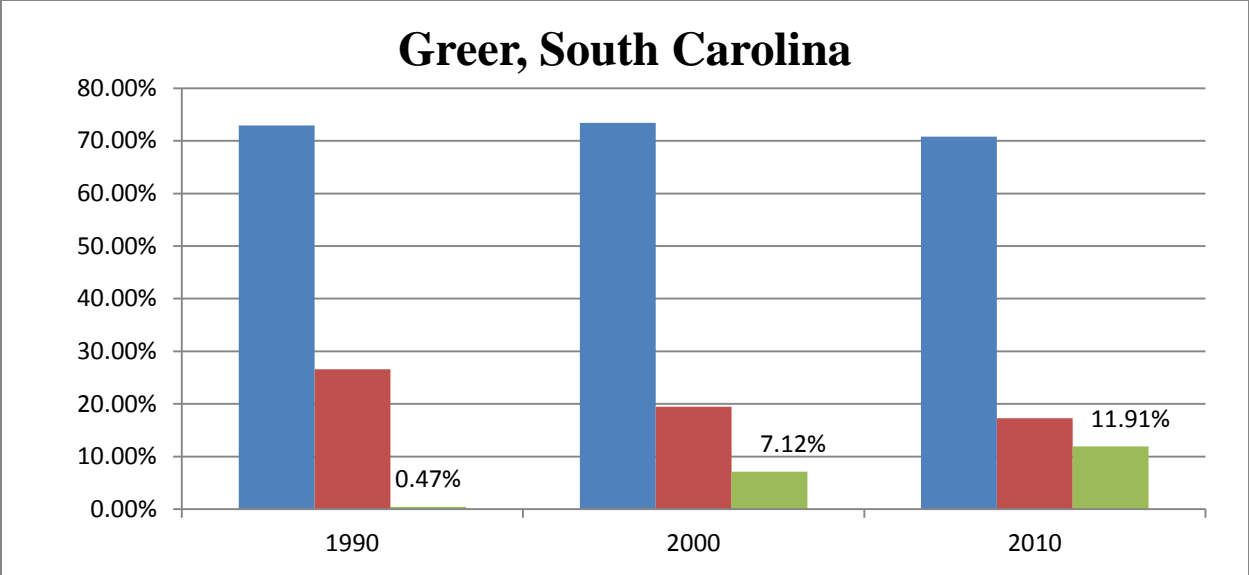


Clayton, Missouri

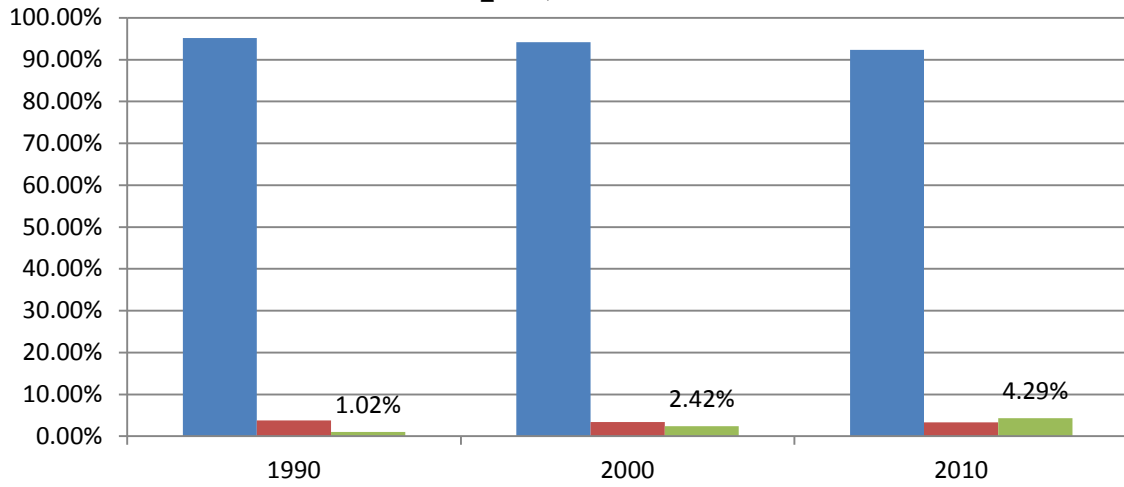


Dover, New Hampshire

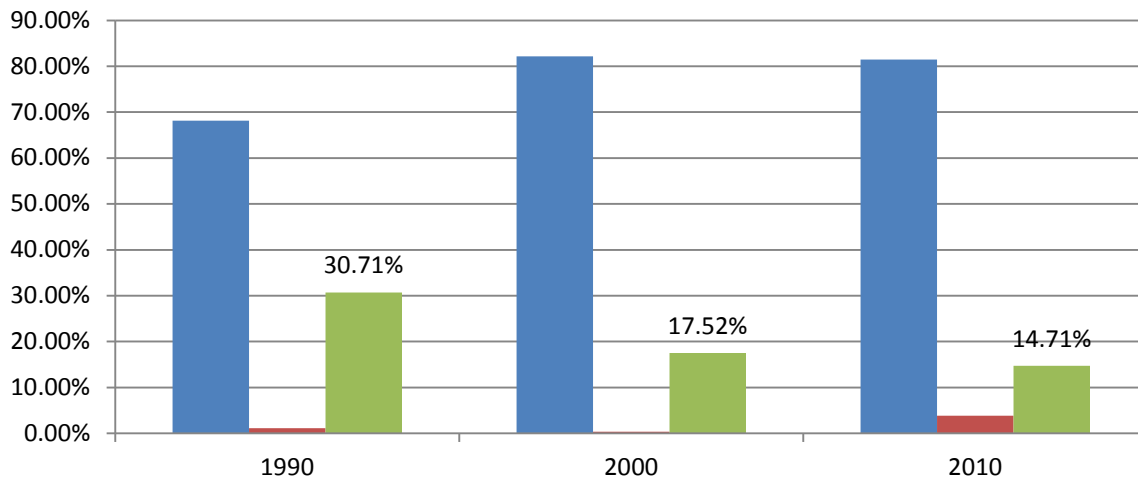




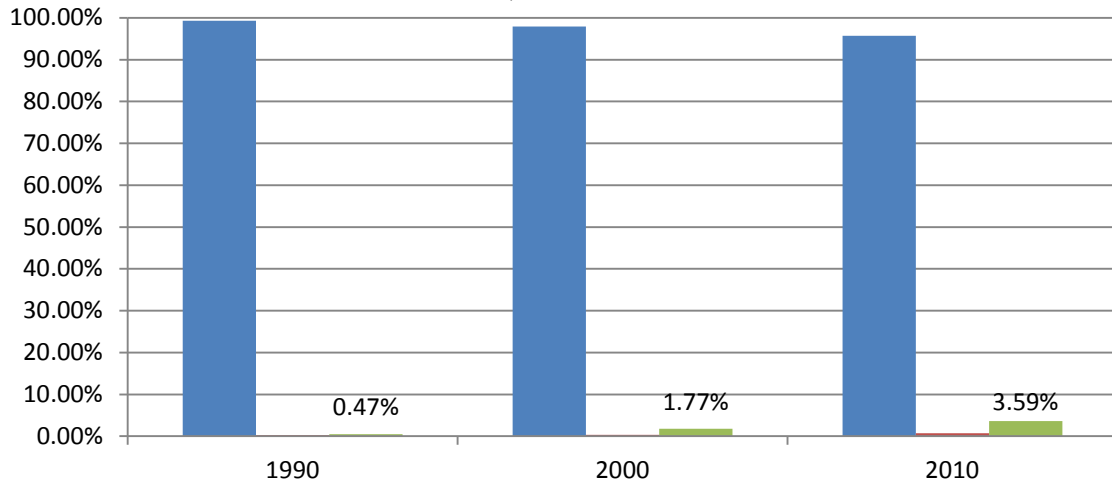
Piqua, Ohio



Queen Creek, Arizona



Saco, Maine



Appendix B: Resources

Christian Perry and Casie Yoder presented a summary of the findings of this report to the Decatur City Commission on August 4, 2014. A downloadable copy of the PowerPoint and a link to archived streaming video of the presentation is available on the Decatur Minute blog: <http://thedecaturminute.com/2014/08/05/diversity-project-results-presented-last-night>

The memo outlining the details of the proposed process to create a Community Action Plan for a Compassionate Decatur:

<https://decatur.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=943>

Two City of Decatur staff members participated in the YWCA of Atlanta's first *It's Time to Talk: Forums on Race* discussion. The program was modeled on one created by the YWCA of Minneapolis more than a decade ago.

YWCA of Minneapolis:

https://www.ywcampls.org/events/its_time_to_talk_forums_on_race/

YWCA of Greater Atlanta: <http://www.ywcaatlanta.org/its-time-talk>

October is National [Diversity Awareness Month](#), and the first Friday of the month (October 7th) is National Diversity Day.

Brown University study about most and least diverse cities:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/07/most-least-diverse-cities-brown-university-study_n_1865715.html

Community Dialogue Guide: Conducting a Discussion on Race - This [sample document](#) provides a guide for effectively starting a community dialogue on race issues.

Culture Connects All: Rethinking Audiences in Times of Demographic Change - This [report](#) by the Partners for Livable Communities describes events that are inclusive and accessible to everyone in your community.

Diversity resources from ICMA: http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/topics/topic/51/Advancing_Social_Equity_Goals_to_Achieve_Sustainability:_Local_Governments,_Social_Equity,_and_Sustainable_Communities

Links to other cities' diversity initiatives and efforts:

- City of Beaverton, Oregon: <http://www.beavertonoregon.gov/index.aspx?NID=1318>



- City of Boulder, Colorado initiative:
<http://icma.org/Documents/QuestionAnswer/Document/11131>
- City of Burlington, Vermont:
[https://www.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/9LELGZ567D5D/\\$file/Communication%20City%20of%20Burlington%20Diversity%20%20Equity%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/9LELGZ567D5D/$file/Communication%20City%20of%20Burlington%20Diversity%20%20Equity%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf)
- City of Cincinnati, Ohio: <http://www.cincyusa.com/multicultural/diversity>
- Colorado Springs, Colorado, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Gainesville, Florida, and Fort Worth, Texas were all recognized by the National League of Cities for their effective cultural diversity programs.
- City of Dubuque, Iowa initiatives:
<http://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/16041>
<http://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/3623>
- Fort Collins, Colorado established a Multicultural Book Series to prompt discussions on local diversity through great books that help give people new perspectives.
- City of Edina, Minnesota Human Rights & Relations Commission:
http://edinamn.gov/index.php?section=boards_humanrights
- City of Little Rock, Arkansas: <http://www.littlerock.org/citycommissions/?ID=26>
- City of Longview, Texas: <http://administration.longviewtexas.gov/city-managers-diversity-advisory-council>
- Longview, Texas sponsored a month's worth of events promoting diversity during Diversity Awareness Month (October).
- "We're all on the Same Team" Cultural Diversity Program- This document is an overview of Phoenix's diversity program.
- Redwood City, California developed Downtown WOW! program primarily to help promote main street businesses, but many of its events center on the cultural diversity of the city.
- City of Seattle, Washington has several citizen boards that focus on various aspects of diversity: <http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/boardsportal.asp>
- Communication & Service in Sugar Land: Multi-Cultural Outreach & Education Program-The City of Sugar Land, Tex. has recently created their own multi-cultural inclusion program.
- Texas Diversity Council (different councils in various cities):
<http://texasdiversitycouncil.org/joinus.php>
- City of Toronto, Canada: <http://diversecitytoronto.ca/get-involved/onboard/join-board/>

About the Authors

Christian Perry currently works as a fellow in the City Manager's office. He started working for the city as a summer intern hired to prepare this report. Perry has a background in research, statistics and data analysis, studies planning and economic development policy at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and will graduate with a Master's of Public Administration degree in 2015. A Decatur High School alumnus, Perry graduated with dual B.B.A. degrees in economics and regional economic development from Georgia Southern University in 2013.

Casie Yoder is the city's Public Information Officer. In this role she is the first point of contact for the news media, edits the Decatur Focus newsletter, oversees the city's blogs, coordinates the city's social media properties and works on special projects, including the writing and preparation of this report. She is also guiding the process of updating and improving the city's public and internal communication plans and procedures. Yoder has a B.A. in journalism from Georgia State University.



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

APPENDIX C



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Better Together Community Survey

Q1 On a scale from 1 to 5, how familiar are you with:

Answered: 725 Skipped: -1

	Not at All Familiar (1)	2	3	4	Very Familiar (5)	Total	Weighted Average
The City of Decatur 2010 Strategic Plan	37.24% 270	24.14% 175	20.55% 149	10.90% 79	7.17% 52	725	2.27
The Welcoming Cities initiative	69.10% 501	15.86% 115	8.97% 65	3.31% 24	2.76% 20	725	1.55
DecaturNext.com	62.34% 452	16.83% 122	10.90% 79	5.38% 39	4.55% 33	725	1.73
The Better Together initiative	56.14% 407	19.59% 142	12.97% 94	7.45% 54	3.86% 28	725	1.83

Better Together Community Survey

Q2 How did you first become aware of Better Together and/or this survey?

Answered: 725 Skipped: -1

Answer Choices	Responses	
The Decatur Focus	5.38%	39
Better Together Leadership Circle member	4.41%	32
City of Decatur website	1.93%	14
Decatur Next website	1.52%	11
Social media	17.52%	127
Email	28.97%	210
The Decatur Minute Blog	2.34%	17
Local blog or news outlet	12.14%	88
Poster or flyer	1.38%	10
Postcard	4.00%	29
Friend or neighbor (word of mouth)	18.34%	133
Other	2.07%	15
Total		725

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Decaturish "newspaper" I believe.	8/28/2015 4:38 PM
2	Decaturish.com	8/28/2015 2:46 PM
3	decatur metro	8/28/2015 2:00 PM
4	Decatur Coworks	8/26/2015 3:53 PM
5	bbq blues festival	8/25/2015 12:44 PM
6	Renfroe Website	8/24/2015 4:26 PM
7	Info through CSD	8/23/2015 8:50 PM
8	rms e blast	8/23/2015 5:02 PM
9	Friend emailed me information	8/22/2015 8:12 PM
10	City employee	8/20/2015 8:43 PM
11	Neighborhood email group	8/20/2015 4:14 PM
12	I work at Oxford College --that was a year-long emphasis of the chaplain's office.... some good programming	8/20/2015 12:54 PM
13	AJC	8/20/2015 11:27 AM
14	DBA	8/20/2015 9:30 AM
15	LEAD Home school group	8/19/2015 9:35 AM
16	NewspaperAJC	8/17/2015 11:13 PM
17	Create Community 4 Decatur mailing list	8/17/2015 10:07 PM
18	Christy Amador	8/17/2015 2:03 PM

Better Together Community Survey

19	Decatur city commission meeting	8/16/2015 12:29 PM
20	nextdoor.com	8/14/2015 9:32 AM
21	Nextdoor App	8/13/2015 9:20 PM
22	East Lake List Serve	8/13/2015 12:24 PM
23	internet search to consider transitional move	8/13/2015 9:45 AM
24	Neighborhood email group	8/12/2015 12:59 PM
25	My HOA email	8/12/2015 11:51 AM
26	Nextdoor Website	8/12/2015 10:12 AM
27	Decaturish	8/12/2015 6:37 AM
28	City of Decatur Schools Email	8/11/2015 10:17 PM
29	Facebook	8/11/2015 8:43 PM
30	bing news	8/11/2015 8:34 PM
31	not applicable	8/11/2015 6:11 PM
32	Not familiar	8/11/2015 5:31 PM
33	NextDoor Eastlake webpage	8/11/2015 5:04 PM
34	none	8/11/2015 4:41 PM
35	Not familiar	8/11/2015 4:34 PM
36	Decaturish Blog	8/11/2015 3:04 PM
37	Regina Kay	8/11/2015 1:22 PM
38	Decaturish	8/11/2015 1:21 PM
39	Decaturish website/blog	8/11/2015 1:02 PM
40	Decaturish	8/11/2015 12:53 PM
41	Decaturish	8/11/2015 12:09 PM
42	decatuish.com	8/11/2015 11:30 AM
43	Decaturish	8/11/2015 10:24 AM
44	Decaturish	8/11/2015 10:06 AM
45	Decaturish	8/11/2015 8:17 AM
46	Decaturish	8/11/2015 6:23 AM
47	Decaturish	8/11/2015 1:09 AM
48	Facebook post	8/10/2015 10:31 PM
49	Link on Facebook	8/10/2015 10:14 PM
50	Decaturish	8/10/2015 10:10 PM
51	Decaturish.com	8/10/2015 8:35 PM
52	Decaturish	8/10/2015 8:04 PM
53	Decaturish	8/10/2015 7:18 PM
54	Decaturish	8/10/2015 6:36 PM
55	Decaturish	8/10/2015 5:25 PM
56	Oakhurst neighborhood association Facebook page	8/10/2015 5:10 PM
57	Decaturish	8/10/2015 5:02 PM
58	Mention on the City Schools of Decatur Newsletter	8/10/2015 4:30 PM
59	Nextdoor message for Oakhurst	8/9/2015 4:40 PM

Better Together Community Survey

60	post on NextDoor	8/8/2015 7:22 AM
61	NextDoor Lenox Place	8/8/2015 12:04 AM
62	City Commission Meeting	8/7/2015 10:32 PM
63	I'm actively involved in the process.	8/6/2015 1:58 PM
64	also from friend or neighbor, Decatur Focus, and e-mail.	8/5/2015 11:01 AM
65	Lenox Place FaceBook page communication from Better Together	8/3/2015 5:17 PM
66	Compassionate Atlanta	8/3/2015 8:43 AM

Better Together Community Survey

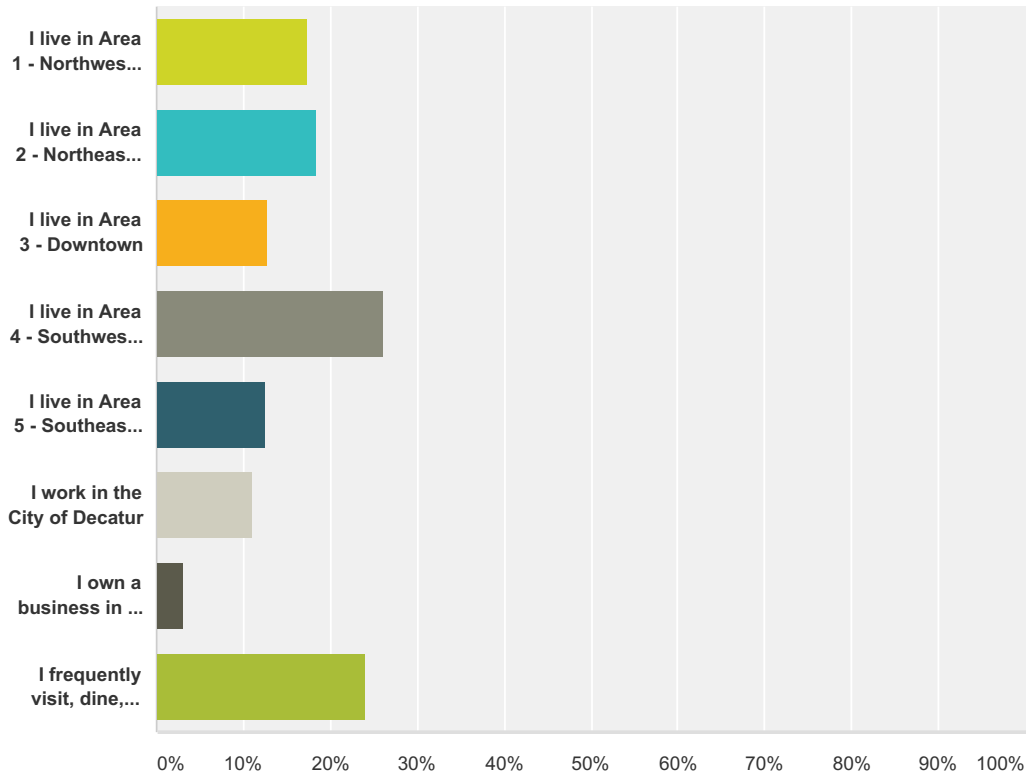
Q3 Community Involvement

Answered: 725 Skipped: -1

	Not at All Involved	Somewhat Involved	Very Involved	Total	Weighted Average
How would you rate your current level of involvement in your neighborhood?	19.03% 138	64.55% 468	16.41% 119	725	1.97
How would you rate your current level of involvement in the city as a whole?	28.55% 207	59.17% 429	12.28% 89	725	1.84

Q4 What is your connection to the City of Decatur?

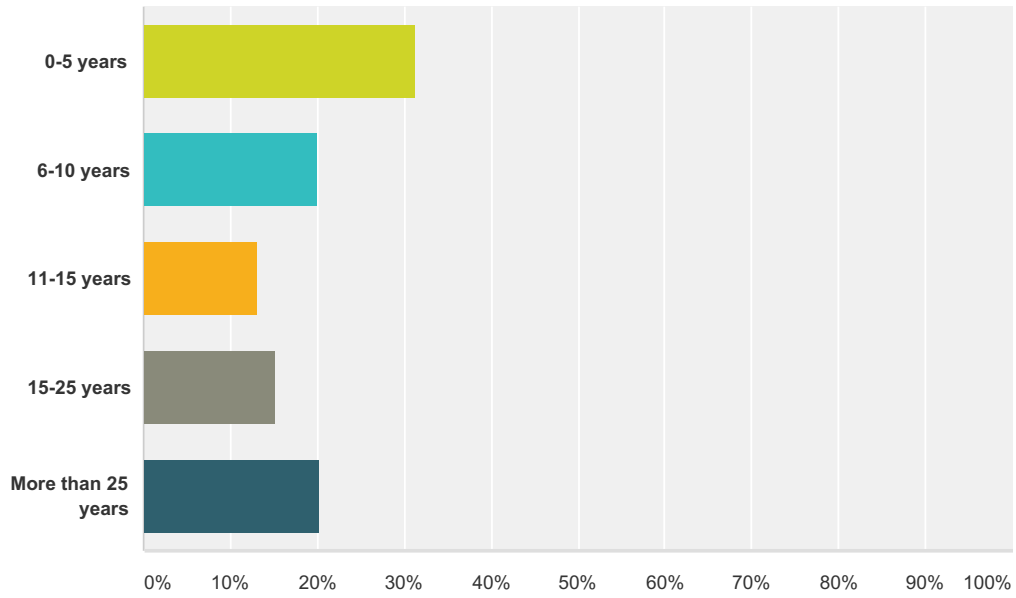
Answered: 707 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I live in Area 1 - Northwest Decatur - Clairemont	17.40%	123
I live in Area 2 - Northeast Decatur - Sycamore/Great Lakes	18.39%	130
I live in Area 3 - Downtown	12.73%	90
I live in Area 4 - Southwest Decatur - Oakhurst	26.03%	184
I live in Area 5 - Southeast Decatur - Winnona Park	12.59%	89
I work in the City of Decatur	11.03%	78
I own a business in the City of Decatur	3.11%	22
I frequently visit, dine, worship or shop in the City of Decatur	24.05%	170
Total Respondents: 707		

Q5 If you are a resident, how long have you lived in the City of Decatur?

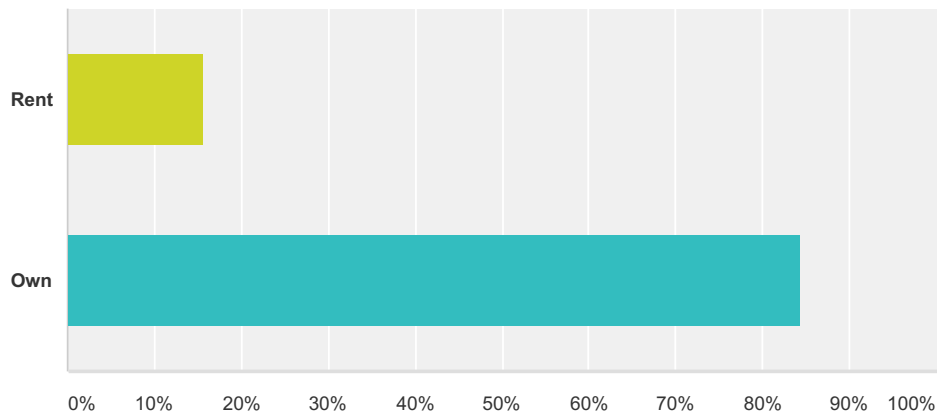
Answered: 625 Skipped: 99



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
0-5 years	31.36%	196
6-10 years	20.00%	125
11-15 years	13.12%	82
15-25 years	15.20%	95
More than 25 years	20.32%	127
Total		625

Q6 If you are a resident, do you rent or own?

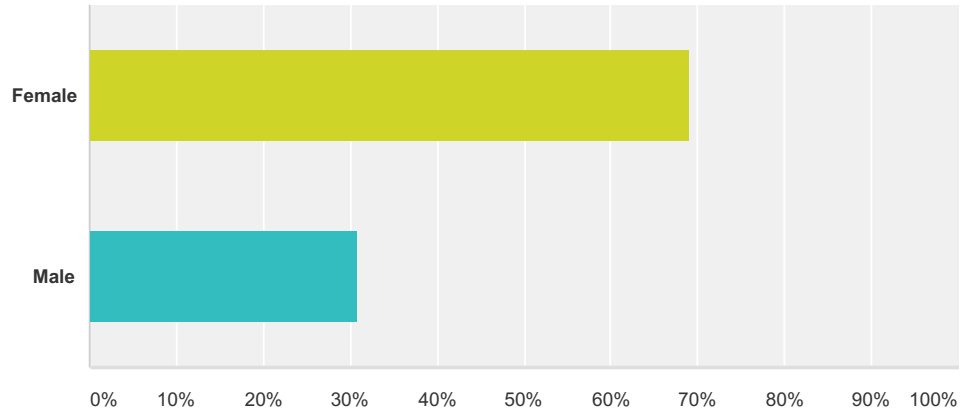
Answered: 620 Skipped: 104



Answer Choices	Responses
Rent	15.65% 97
Own	84.35% 523
Total	620

Q7 What is your sex?

Answered: 707 Skipped: 17

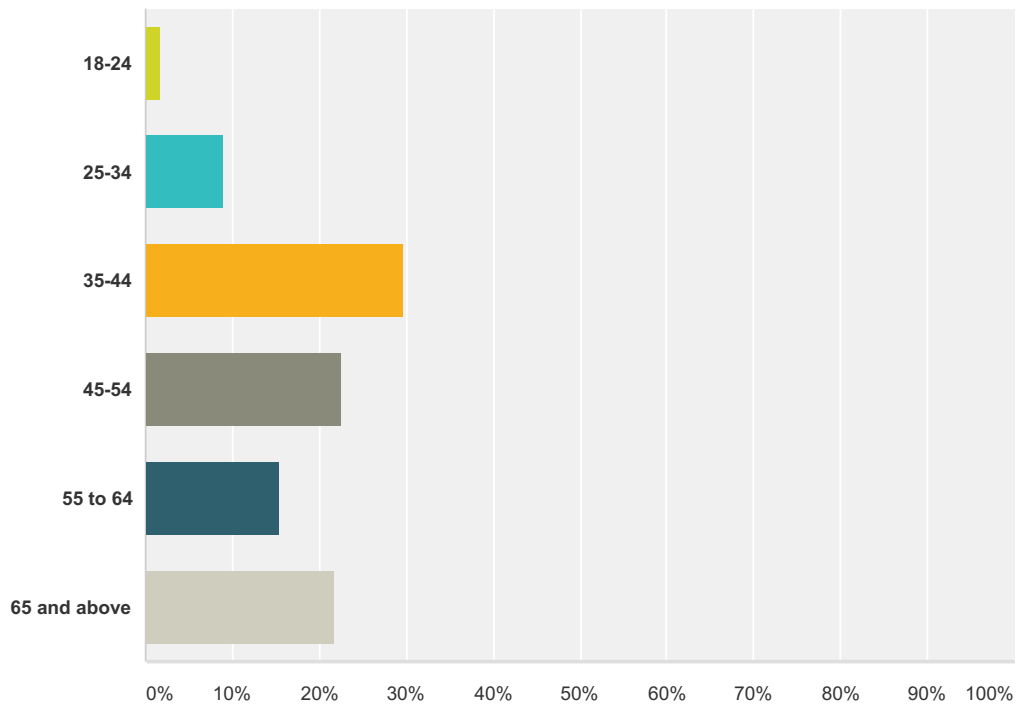


Answer Choices	Responses
Female	69.17% 489
Male	30.83% 218
Total	707

#	Other identity (please specify)	Date
1	xxx	8/24/2015 4:35 PM
2	I love that you added this!	8/17/2015 2:37 PM
3	N/A	8/11/2015 5:51 PM
4	fyi sex = gender. my sex is female. my gender is woman.	8/7/2015 3:51 PM

Q8 Which category below includes your age?

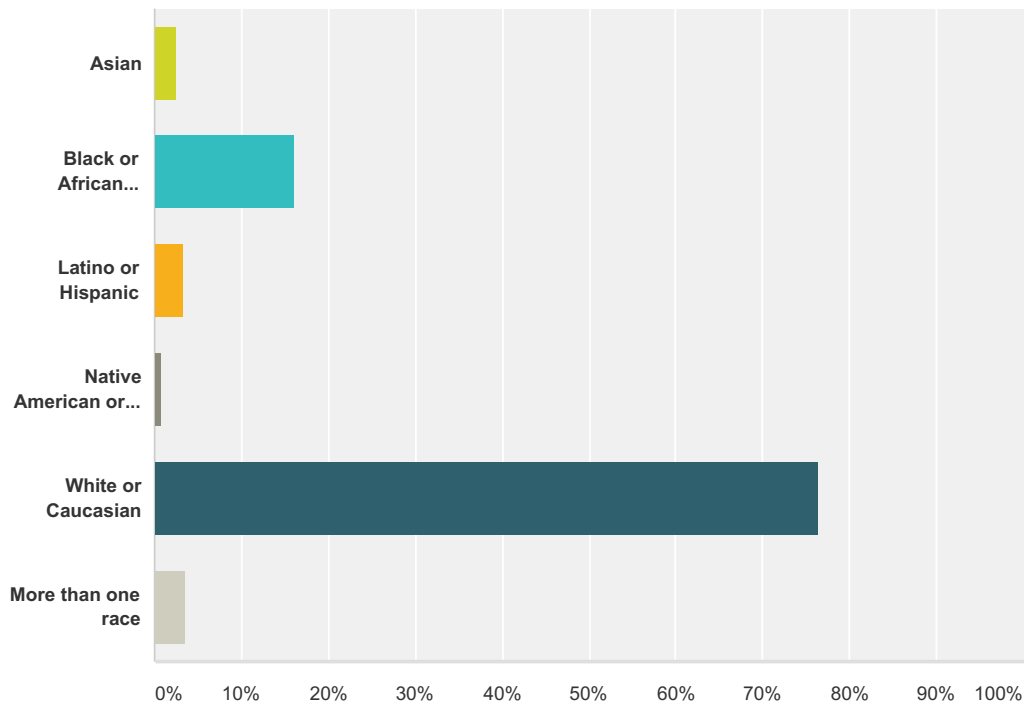
Answered: 707 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses	
18-24	1.70%	12
25-34	9.05%	64
35-44	29.70%	210
45-54	22.49%	159
55 to 64	15.42%	109
65 and above	21.64%	153
Total		707

Q9 How do you identify racially and ethnically?

Answered: 707 Skipped: 17

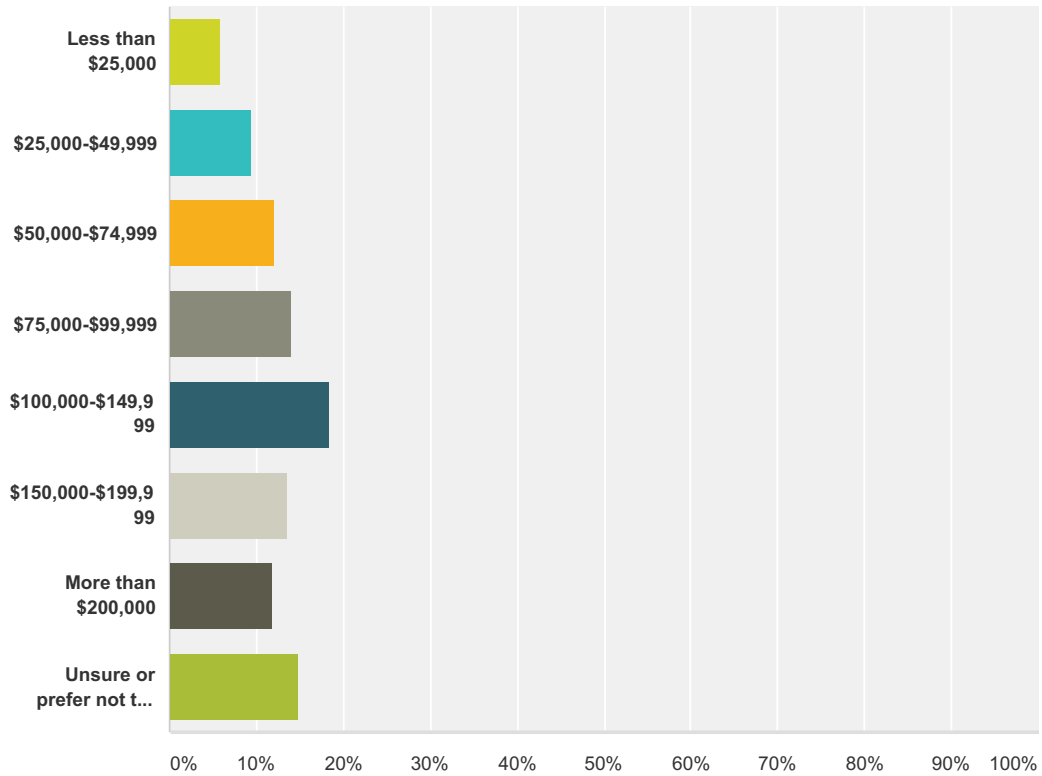


Answer Choices	Responses
Asian	2.40% 17
Black or African American	15.98% 113
Latino or Hispanic	3.39% 24
Native American or American Indian	0.85% 6
White or Caucasian	76.38% 540
More than one race	3.54% 25
Total Respondents: 707	

#	Some other race (please specify)	Date
1	West Indian of British Origins	8/25/2015 10:43 AM
2	iranian	8/25/2015 8:49 AM
3	West Indian	8/13/2015 10:05 AM
4	Arab American	8/12/2015 1:59 PM
5	Human	8/11/2015 10:18 PM
6	Cuban American	8/11/2015 1:24 PM

Q10 What is your household income?

Answered: 707 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than \$25,000	5.80%	41
\$25,000-\$49,999	9.34%	66
\$50,000-\$74,999	12.16%	86
\$75,000-\$99,999	14.00%	99
\$100,000-\$149,999	18.39%	130
\$150,000-\$199,999	13.58%	96
More than \$200,000	11.88%	84
Unsure or prefer not to answer	14.85%	105
Total		707

Better Together Community Survey

Q11 Please share anything else that's important to know about who you are.

Answered: 152 Skipped: 572

#	Responses	Date
1	Will move b/c high taxes	9/23/2015 7:29 PM
2	Two things: I'm gay, and we have one child (19 months).	9/18/2015 10:57 AM
3	Lesbian Parent - one child very environmentally concerned	9/7/2015 1:51 PM
4	Gay	9/2/2015 11:15 AM
5	My husband and I started first grade in Decatur City Schools, taught in the school system, and are still here in Decatur. Love it!	9/2/2015 10:32 AM
6	I am a naturalized US citizen (immigrated to the US in 2001).	8/31/2015 10:50 AM
7	I have Multiple Sclerosis.	8/29/2015 10:19 PM
8	I was very involved in City Schools of Decatur. My boys attended College Heights pre-k because of the charisma of Gayle Gellerstedt, and we completely bought in to the idea of our neighborhood schools. My eldest son was the guinea pig class that endured the first 5th grade class at Glennwood Academy, the 9th grade Academy, the disastrous new math curriculum, etc. I experienced first hand (I substitute taught many years in CSD), the upheaval and the very hard work it took to make the school system what it is today.	8/28/2015 10:04 AM
9	I attend Oakhurst Baptist Church.	8/26/2015 7:59 PM
10	Retired, present home was a 1978 HUD lottery house.	8/26/2015 4:03 PM
11	I am a Decatur Police Caps volunteer, a childless dog owner, and a property manager. I've lived in Decatur most of my adult life.	8/26/2015 10:35 AM
12	I am a third generation Decatur resident and an Agnes Scott graduate.	8/25/2015 7:02 PM
13	Attended CSD as a child (through Renfro) and now a Parent with children in CSD.	8/25/2015 6:44 PM
14	I've been a resident for 5 years. 2 of my 3 children attend COD schools. I have been very happy with the city and the schools but want to see some improvements as well. Looking forward to this weekend!	8/25/2015 3:09 PM
15	Interested in volunteering sometimes. Interested in most activities in the Oliver House. I have only lived in Decatur 3 years, my home is in Michigan.	8/25/2015 12:32 PM
16	I am 67 years old, have traveled around the world, native Washingtonian, African-American woman who lives and believes in man-moh-renq-kyo. I have worked all my life and am now retired!	8/25/2015 12:23 PM
17	Been in Jamaica, divorced, live alone, have no friends to interact with on a regular basis. Was homeless, sometimes have no food to eat. Families do not care about me (they are uppity) some Americans do not like foreigners in their building.	8/25/2015 10:43 AM
18	I am very friendly.	8/25/2015 10:39 AM
19	Lived in Decatur nearly 25 years, enjoys reading, the Bible, and her senior meetings.	8/25/2015 10:27 AM
20	I have a child with Down Syndrome. I am an educator.	8/25/2015 9:11 AM
21	I teach in City Schools of Decatur and my kids attend school here.	8/25/2015 8:50 AM
22	I am a retiree who is being taxed out of Decatur. We need senior tax exemptions for all retirees, not just low income. You have to be either really poor or upper middle class income to afford Decatur now.	8/25/2015 12:08 AM
23	I am a church goer who tries to help others because I love my neighbors. I like my community and feel that I am very intelligent.	8/24/2015 4:21 PM
24	I am 80 years old in fairly good health. I still live in my house for over 50 years. I love Decatur.	8/24/2015 3:42 PM
25	retired on fixed income sharing a house with partner also retired,	8/24/2015 2:34 PM
26	I am a member of the Baha'i Faith.	8/24/2015 1:59 PM

Better Together Community Survey

27	new to the area as a resident, been visiting for years	8/23/2015 5:03 PM
28	A white person who is VERY concerned about the tearing down of the apt homes of so many poor people of all ages, and shifting them out of the city and its schools, while rebuilding eventually MAY bring them back in a few YEARS....Good-bye young families and teenagers and elderly whose communities have been broken up. I know that I am privileged to walk all around, stare,usually just in interest, at homes, cars, whatever without anyone being afraid of me and my next move and "interest". Another topic: teardowns and removal of trees GRRRRR.	8/23/2015 9:22 AM
29	I answered the questions as if I still lived in Decatur. I actually moved 3 years ago in 2012 but wanted to give feedback on how to improve Decatur	8/21/2015 11:00 AM
30	I am the parent of one teen and one young adult with disabilities. I am concerned that they stay in Decatur to live and work independently, even if I move away or die, and that the community becomes more inclusive of them.	8/20/2015 1:44 PM
31	I have two children in the City Schools	8/20/2015 12:07 PM
32	We are a family of four. One of our children is African American, so it is important to us that we always live in a diverse and inclusive place, not just racially/ethnically but also economically.	8/20/2015 11:19 AM
33	I am person with a disability	8/20/2015 7:27 AM
34	A dedicated volunteer of Decatur and the DEF. A secular humanist.	8/19/2015 8:12 PM
35	i use a manual wheelchair and i am culturally defined and labelled as "disabled".	8/19/2015 7:39 AM
36	I'm a recently-graduated college student	8/18/2015 3:18 PM
37	I am a lesbian. I am a little dismayed that, considering the great diversity of Decatur, this is not one of the demographic facts considered.	8/18/2015 1:03 PM
38	I do not own a car and so walk everywhere in Decatur. I also have mobility impairments that mean I have to be extra careful around sharp inclines, declines, and steps. Access to curb cuts, ramps, handrails, and functional sidewalks is vital to me as I move around Decatur and conduct my affairs there.	8/18/2015 12:09 PM
39	Lifelong DeKalb Co. resident	8/17/2015 11:14 PM
40	I am a stay-at-home mom and a member of the middle class that seems to be disappearing from Decatur.	8/17/2015 7:54 PM
41	I run a N-P , I CARE, that transports seniors of DeKalb County (many of the seniors live in Decatur) FREE to their medical appointments, using Volunteer Drivers who use their own vehicles for the transportation. I CARE staff, Board members and volunteer drivers are involved in various Decatur events throughout the year. Some of our Volunteer Drivers live in Decatur and are involved in other aspects of Decatur life.	8/17/2015 2:09 PM
42	Retired husband and wife. Former CSD Teacher	8/16/2015 2:09 PM
43	Child in school system	8/16/2015 12:31 PM
44	I am a retired teacher. I taught in the City for 18 years. My partner and I were able to buy a home in the City 13 years ago because we participated in a special project that the city offered. In the last 5 years the City has exploded. Our taxes are so high, we are thinking of selling. I continue to work and so does my partner. We love Decatur, but we do not recognize the City we began to teach in years ago. There is almost zero diversity. Economically, racially. The homes in Oakhurst can sell for almost a million dollars. In our development, the one set up for city workers with middle class incomes, we are one of the few original owners left. Folks were bound, by contract for 12 years. Some people are renting out their homes, but most are selling. This has become a City of extremely wealthy folks. I am afraid we have lost our soul.	8/16/2015 10:47 AM
45	Retired with no school children in DCS. Feel my wife and I should be exempt from school taxes.	8/16/2015 10:29 AM
46	I am a teacher in City Schools of Decatur and live outside of Decatur	8/15/2015 4:52 PM
47	college grad	8/14/2015 8:46 PM
48	i lived in Decatur for 28 years before moving a year ago to a smaller house outside the city limits.	8/14/2015 2:59 PM
49	I'm a board member of the Oakhurst Recovery Program and an active member of Oakhurst Baptist Church since 1982. In addition to my home off Scott Blvd., I own a condo in downtown Decatur and lived there for six years.	8/14/2015 10:10 AM
50	empty nesters	8/14/2015 9:34 AM
51	I live in Decatur mailing address (East Lake)	8/14/2015 9:33 AM
52	I am an honors degree holder from NYU.	8/14/2015 9:28 AM
53	Member, Oakhurst Baptist Church	8/14/2015 7:02 AM

Better Together Community Survey

54	Retiree	8/13/2015 9:24 PM
55	I identify as: gay; atheist.	8/13/2015 8:12 PM
56	I own the home in which I live but I also own other homes in the city which I rent out.	8/13/2015 3:36 PM
57	sometimes I argue for the opposing side just to bring out the opposing view on things...but city of decatur is a great place to live work and shop/dine....	8/13/2015 2:30 PM
58	I have lived in Decatur my entire life and my family has lived in Decatur for four generations	8/13/2015 2:29 PM
59	Board Chair, Slow Food Atlanta Curator, Lexicon of Sustainability	8/13/2015 2:24 PM
60	Low/no-car household.	8/13/2015 11:03 AM
61	Moved to Georgia 1977 from U.S. Virgin Islands Worked 23yrs at fortune 500 company 1977-2000 Early retirement + additional 5ys as exec admin Divorced1976/mother to 3 & grandmother to 5	8/13/2015 10:05 AM
62	i live in a condo, which is a neighborhood in itself, within the city.	8/13/2015 8:08 AM
63	I'm moving out of Decatur, to Grant Park, next month.	8/12/2015 6:26 PM
64	Kids went to Decatur schools. Practiced law in Decatur for over 50 years. Served on committee(s) to intergrate schools.Served on DDA for over 30 years.Co-president of Westchester PTA. Helped organize and attorney for DBA.	8/12/2015 4:59 PM
65	I own a math tutoring center that caters to children in the Decatur area. My business is located just outside of city limits on Clairmont near n decatur road.	8/12/2015 1:59 PM
66	wheelchair user requiring handicap access	8/12/2015 1:36 PM
67	I am basically retired.	8/12/2015 1:26 PM
68	I'm a veteran, voter	8/12/2015 12:23 PM
69	I am disabled	8/12/2015 9:59 AM
70	Grew up in Decatur on Lockwood Terrace and Willow Lane	8/12/2015 9:25 AM
71	I am very proud to say that I live in the City of Decatur.	8/12/2015 8:55 AM
72	I live in Forrest Hills	8/12/2015 8:48 AM
73	More involved in the past than currently, as a condo board member; less than open response to many board issues during that time was VERY discouraging. We felt our issues/ opinions/needs did not count.	8/12/2015 8:36 AM
74	The above map is not clear and I could not properly identify my street. Next time, pls use an interactive map that one can enlarge or can at least see street names clearly	8/12/2015 7:12 AM
75	Professor at GSU. Bi-cultural/bi-lingual family, Latino and white. Children identify as latino in school district. We are aware that the divides in our neighborhood are class divides that result in the unfortunate patterns of the color divides of our past and present. As a family, we are trying to do our part of connecting to our neighbors-all our neighbors-like us or not like us.	8/12/2015 4:21 AM
76	My family owned property in Oakhurst for over 30 years. I grew up there. I have rented my current apartment for 8 years.	8/12/2015 2:01 AM
77	Sad to see the whitening and gentrification of Decatur along with the obliteration of landmarks of historic Black areas in Decatur on both sides of the tracks	8/12/2015 12:31 AM
78	I lived in Decatur from age for until age 15,in which my family and I became homeless.	8/11/2015 11:54 PM
79	Single mom	8/11/2015 10:19 PM
80	I am a gay male with children	8/11/2015 10:16 PM
81	We are a Jewish family	8/11/2015 9:57 PM
82	I am a married graduate student. My husband is also a graduate student.	8/11/2015 9:38 PM
83	Gay female couple	8/11/2015 9:30 PM
84	I live and work in Decatur and find that as I near retirement I can't afford to make improvements on my property and continue to live here. I am contemplating selling my home and moving to a more affordable neighborhood.	8/11/2015 9:17 PM
85	Student has just moved in to Decatur from California	8/11/2015 8:36 PM
86	Retired from 30 years in education; active in organizing neighborhood (Pinetree) activities	8/11/2015 8:13 PM

Better Together Community Survey

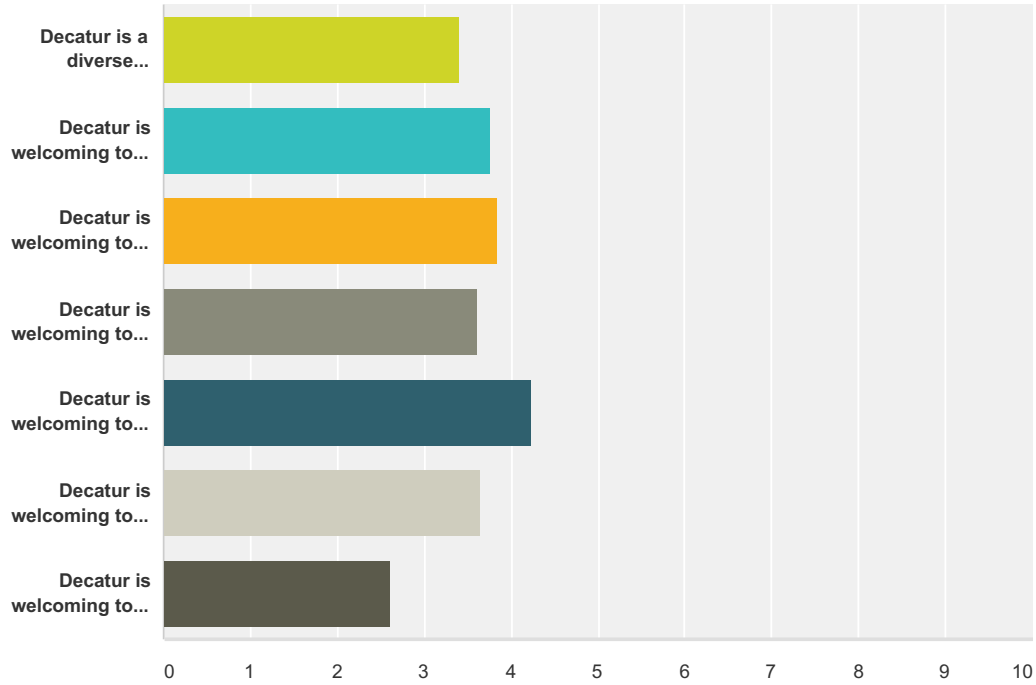
87	I am a Navy Veteran.	8/11/2015 6:24 PM
88	Our neighborhood was annexed last year.	8/11/2015 6:16 PM
89	2 children who have never attended city schools, currently private and Catholic High School.	8/11/2015 5:42 PM
90	I grew up in Decatur.	8/11/2015 5:24 PM
91	I live in the East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta, but I routinely visit Decatur, especially the Oakhurst neighborhood.	8/11/2015 5:05 PM
92	I served on the Downtown Development Authority Board for 13 years, have volunteered for numerous events and activities throughout my 40+ years in the City.	8/11/2015 4:39 PM
93	I rented in Oakhurst for several years before moving to buy a house about a mile away.	8/11/2015 3:08 PM
94	LGBT	8/11/2015 1:24 PM
95	I lived in the city of Decatur for approximately 5 years as a renter from 2004-2009.	8/11/2015 12:52 PM
96	We moved in to College Heights in 2002 at 22 years old. We have watched the neighborhood change dramatically over the past 13 years. While we love that we are now surrounded by other young families, we miss the diversity that caused us to choose this as our neighborhood.	8/11/2015 11:56 AM
97	Born and raised in city of Decatur. Taught 19 years in CSD schools.	8/11/2015 10:35 AM
98	The school system is a big part of why we moved to Decatur.	8/11/2015 10:26 AM
99	We are a blended family, in that our child is adopted from Africa.	8/11/2015 7:58 AM
100	Single mom with preschool and elementary age kids	8/10/2015 11:05 PM
101	I am married to an African American and have two mixed race children.	8/10/2015 10:46 PM
102	Housing needs to be more affordable	8/10/2015 10:32 PM
103	Mother, involved parent in the school system	8/10/2015 10:17 PM
104	Started and still moderate the Lamont-Vidal newsgroup.	8/10/2015 9:58 PM
105	Na	8/10/2015 9:31 PM
106	My address is Decatur but I live in unincorporated Dekalb in East Lake Terrace	8/10/2015 9:07 PM
107	I have seen the rapid decline in diversity over the last 9 years. Gentrification, in my view, is the number one cause.	8/10/2015 9:06 PM
108	I grew up in Decatur, moved away for high school and college, and moved back after college.	8/10/2015 9:04 PM
109	We have two kids in Elementary school	8/10/2015 8:52 PM
110	nonprofit employee; desired homeowner who is being shut out by rapidly escalating prices and taxes	8/10/2015 8:52 PM
111	CSD parent, Oakhurst Presbyterian member, Venetian Pools member	8/10/2015 8:48 PM
112	I rent because I can't afford to buy. We plan on moving in the next year	8/10/2015 8:45 PM
113	My wife and I live in Kirkwood, but on the line with Oakhurst.	8/10/2015 8:45 PM
114	I am a lesbian and I have a mixed race child with special needs.	8/10/2015 7:29 PM
115	I'm tall.	8/10/2015 7:23 PM
116	We have had strong Agnes Scott connections and my grandfather was centrally involved in Decatur civic and business communities.	8/10/2015 6:57 PM
117	Parent of 3 children. 1 is at Renfroe and 1 is at DHS	8/10/2015 6:50 PM
118	This is a vital conversation, and I'm pleased it's being taken seriously. Thank you.	8/10/2015 6:23 PM
119	Married gay male couple here...	8/10/2015 6:06 PM
120	I am not defined purely by my race and income.	8/10/2015 5:57 PM
121	Diversity is one of the best things about Decatur. The special needs community here is amazing and supportive.	8/10/2015 5:41 PM
122	Live in the area called Medlock Park and part of our property is city of Decatur	8/10/2015 5:27 PM
123	www.warpraptor.com	8/10/2015 5:11 PM
124	Parent of a child with a disability who attends CSD.	8/10/2015 5:10 PM

Better Together Community Survey

125	Though I recently moved to Decatur, I have lived in the City of Atlanta, walking distance to Oakhurst, for 12 years.	8/9/2015 4:41 PM
126	Social Worker at Philips Tower	8/8/2015 4:38 PM
127	I'm on the Steering Committee for Create Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter. I'm a member of Oakhurst Baptist Church.	8/8/2015 4:20 PM
128	I've lived in the area all my life (e.g. Medlock, Inman Park, etc.)	8/8/2015 7:23 AM
129	I am a single woman who always thought I'd have a partner to share expenses, but that hasn't happened, thus Decatur might not be affordable to stay here much longer with the recent tax hikes, etc. I would hate to lose my home. I want the old Decatur back with nothing but the library and Mick's if this is what progress looks like.	8/8/2015 12:10 AM
130	I am taking music composition lessons and have been accepted @GSU62 and plan to enroll in MUS theory and composition courses this Fall 2015.	8/7/2015 9:35 PM
131	I am really interested in becoming very active in this project	8/7/2015 4:42 PM
132	Recently retired. Would really like the opportunity to use my past business skills as a facilitator to help make my community "Better Together"	8/7/2015 4:10 PM
133	I live with three roommates (one of whom is my partner — we're unmarried).	8/7/2015 3:51 PM
134	I'm not sure if I checked the right place I live. I couldn't read the street names on the small map. I live on E. Hancock St. right behind Agnes Scott. I actually grew up on W. Parkwood Road and the address was Decatur but it was not actually in the city of Decatur.	8/7/2015 2:28 PM
135	I am a professional in real estate. I do not like to have solutions in search of a problem. When things work, leave them alone!	8/7/2015 11:18 AM
136	Moved from Kirkwood for the schools; have 3 girls aged 8, 5 and 1 with the older girls attending Westchester elementary.	8/6/2015 3:40 PM
137	I lived in Decatur for four years as a graduate student at the seminary. I've worked in Decatur professionally since 2008.	8/6/2015 3:40 PM
138	I am a member of a mixed race family.	8/6/2015 11:08 AM
139	I'm part of Atlanta Friends Meeting (Quakers), which is located in Decatur. I'm part of Create Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter.	8/5/2015 11:04 AM
140	Board Member, Decatur Cooperative Ministry	8/4/2015 11:47 PM
141	Married with no kids yet	8/4/2015 8:37 PM
142	member of a transracial family	8/4/2015 12:49 PM
143	children in CSD	8/4/2015 12:25 PM
144	I've worked or lived in Decatur area since 1969.	8/4/2015 11:07 AM
145	I have lived here for a long time and have seen our city become a vibrant community. I am concerned, however, that Decatur is very quickly becoming a place that is becoming unaffordable to those of us who have helped make it the great place to live that it has become. If I was not committed to sending my children to CSD, I would have to move out of Decatur.	8/3/2015 5:33 PM
146	Gay	8/3/2015 5:24 PM
147	Very involved in community affairs as it relates to housing and economic development, senior issues and taxes.	8/3/2015 3:46 PM
148	Gay, married, child free household	8/3/2015 3:25 PM
149	A work with a regional non-profit that provides services throughout the City of Decatur to multiple "partner agencies" Am also connected with the CompassionateAtlanta org. that encouraged the City Council to adopt the international Charter for Compa	8/3/2015 12:20 PM
150	My husband, daughter, mother-in-law and I all graduated from DHS.	8/3/2015 10:55 AM
151	I am also self-employed.	8/3/2015 9:21 AM
152	Have a child with special needs and feel that diversity needs to go beyond race and ethnicity.	8/2/2015 9:51 PM

Q12 In this section, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the city as a whole.

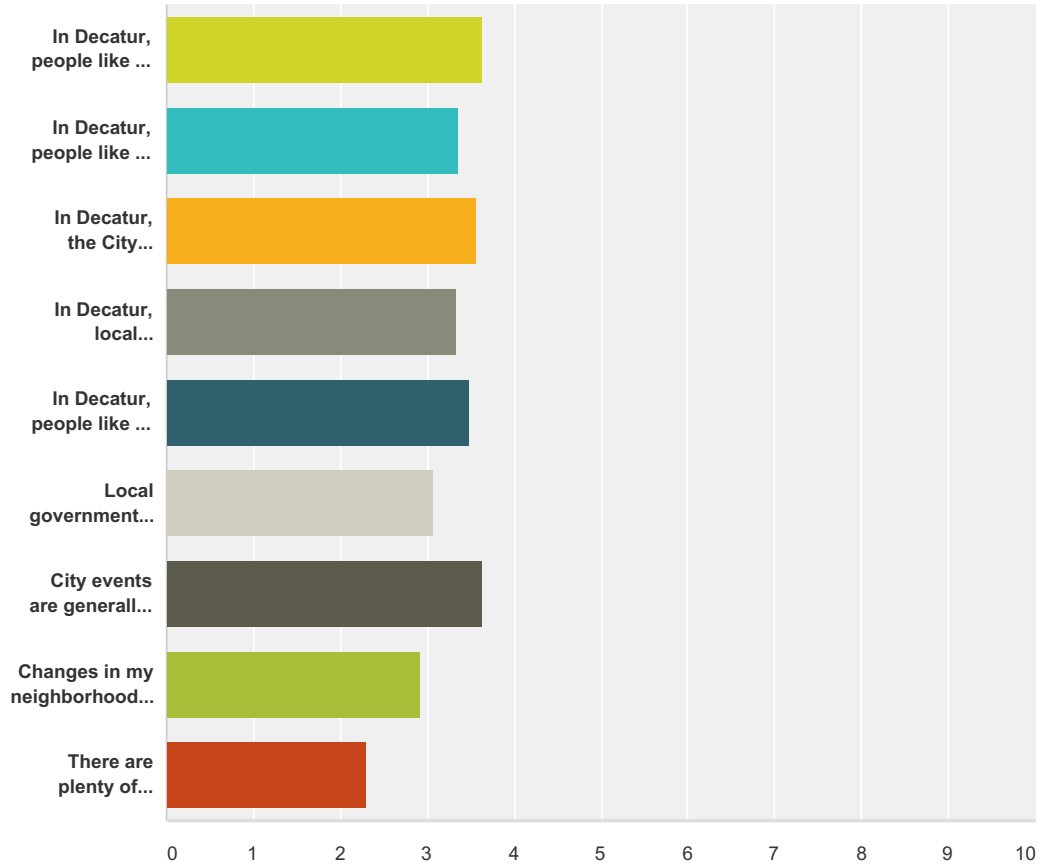
Answered: 699 Skipped: 25



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral: Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
Decatur is a diverse community.	5.44% 38	20.03% 140	19.89% 139	38.05% 266	16.60% 116	699	3.40
Decatur is welcoming to people of all ages.	2.72% 19	10.87% 76	17.45% 122	45.92% 321	23.03% 161	699	3.76
Decatur is welcoming to people of all beliefs.	2.29% 16	5.87% 41	21.89% 153	45.78% 320	24.18% 169	699	3.84
Decatur is welcoming to people of all races.	4.15% 29	12.30% 86	21.75% 152	40.77% 285	21.03% 147	699	3.62
Decatur is welcoming to people of all sexual orientations.	1.14% 8	1.43% 10	10.30% 72	46.07% 322	41.06% 287	699	4.24
Decatur is welcoming to people of all abilities.	1.86% 13	8.01% 56	29.90% 209	42.49% 297	17.74% 124	699	3.66
Decatur is welcoming to people of all income levels.	18.88% 132	36.19% 253	18.60% 130	18.88% 132	7.44% 52	699	2.60

Q13 In this section, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the city as a whole.

Answered: 684 Skipped: 40



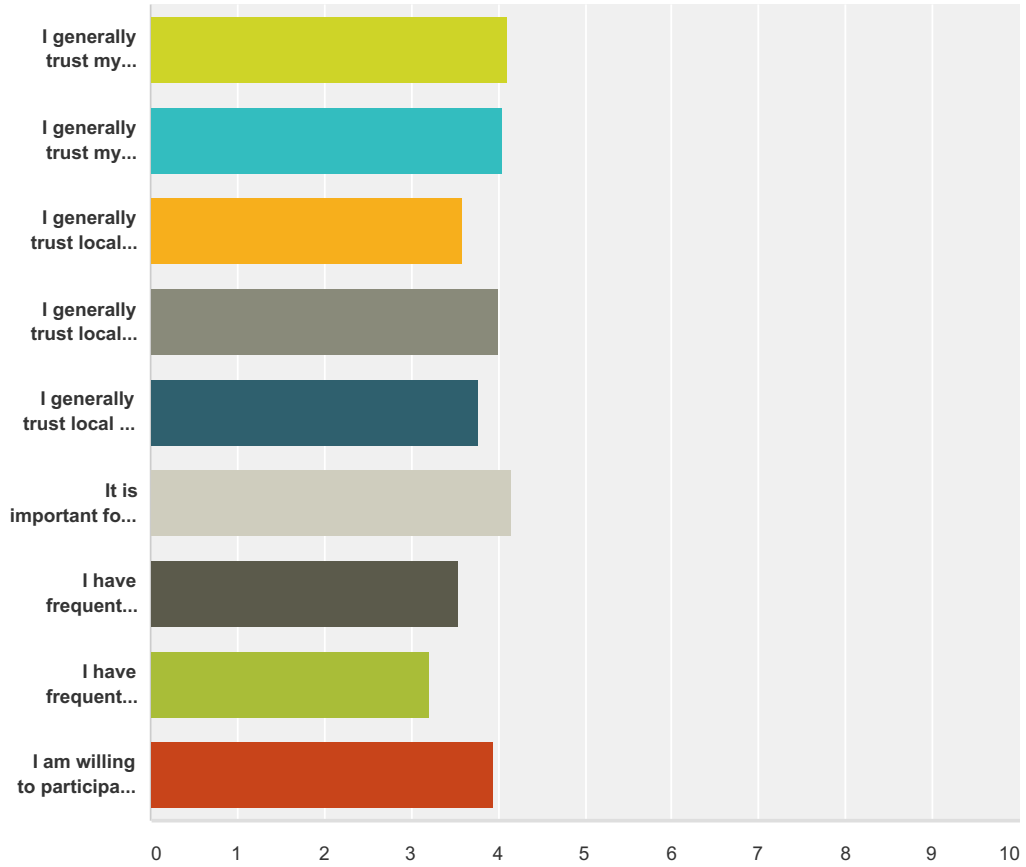
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral: Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
In Decatur, people like me are often involved as community volunteers and organizers.	2.92% 20	9.80% 67	22.51% 154	50.29% 344	14.47% 99	684	3.64
In Decatur, people like me are seen as community and neighborhood leaders.	5.85% 40	12.87% 88	29.97% 205	42.11% 288	9.21% 63	684	3.36
In Decatur, the City employs a diverse staff.	2.05% 14	7.31% 50	34.94% 239	43.57% 298	12.13% 83	684	3.56
In Decatur, local businesses are owned by people like me.	6.73% 46	12.72% 87	29.24% 200	43.42% 297	7.89% 54	684	3.33
In Decatur, people like me are often represented in arts, culture and entertainment.	4.53% 31	11.40% 78	26.46% 181	46.05% 315	11.55% 79	684	3.49
Local government generally makes decisions based on input from people like me.	9.06% 62	19.74% 135	33.92% 232	30.70% 210	6.58% 45	684	3.06
City events are generally attended by people like me.	3.51% 24	10.09% 69	20.76% 142	50.29% 344	15.35% 105	684	3.64

Better Together Community Survey

Changes in my neighborhood reflect the preferences of people like me.	10.96% 75	23.68% 162	33.04% 226	25.58% 175	6.73% 46	684	2.93
There are plenty of affordable housing options available in Decatur for people like me.	30.26% 207	32.02% 219	19.15% 131	14.18% 97	4.39% 30	684	2.30

Q14 In this section, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the city as a whole.

Answered: 675 Skipped: 49



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral: Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
I generally trust my neighbors including those different from me.	1.63% 11	2.22% 15	9.33% 63	56.59% 382	30.22% 204	675	4.12
I generally trust my neighbors to treat me and people like me fairly.	1.48% 10	4.59% 31	8.74% 59	57.48% 388	27.70% 187	675	4.05
I generally trust local government to treat me and people like me fairly.	4.44% 30	10.81% 73	21.63% 146	47.11% 318	16.00% 108	675	3.59
I generally trust local businesses to treat me and people like me fairly.	2.37% 16	3.26% 22	11.41% 77	56.89% 384	26.07% 176	675	4.01
I generally trust local law enforcement to treat me and people like me fairly.	4.30% 29	9.19% 62	14.07% 95	48.89% 330	23.56% 159	675	3.78
It is important for the people of Decatur and local government to focus on creating a diverse, inclusive and fair city.	4.59% 31	3.85% 26	9.93% 67	34.81% 235	46.81% 316	675	4.15
I have frequent conversations about diversity and fairness with people like me.	3.85% 26	14.07% 95	23.56% 159	40.89% 276	17.63% 119	675	3.54

Better Together Community Survey

I have frequent conversations about diversity and fairness with people different from me.	4.15% 28	24.89% 168	28.30% 191	30.67% 207	12.00% 81	675	3.21
I am willing to participate in community conversations and activities focused on diversity and fairness.	2.22% 15	4.30% 29	16.74% 113	49.93% 337	26.81% 181	675	3.95

Better Together Community Survey

Q15 Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding what does or does not make the City of Decatur a welcoming, inclusive and fair city for all.

Answered: 241 Skipped: 483

#	Responses	Date
1	City officials are dismissive of residents who do not support them 100%	9/16/2015 11:16 PM
2	Income disparities are an increasing issue for this city. The lack of affordability of housing, the trend toward building oversized houses on small lots, and the pricing out of lower, middle and upper middle-class residents is concerning. As are the uncertainties with the city school system - we chose to purchase a house in the city of Decatur largely because of the reputation of the school system, but with the changes in housing (more rentals, etc.) and system leadership, we're nervous about the future. The municipal services - fire-fighters, recycling, etc. are phenomenal and accessible to residents.	9/7/2015 1:59 PM
3	The City of Decatur appears to value young families more than the aging population. In fact, there is little focus on the elderly and their needs in strategic planning including taxation. The City is, by default, obsessed with the demands of young families and their children's education. Needs to be a better balance and a total review of taxes required of the elderly if, in fact, the City values them.	9/3/2015 4:23 PM
4	Housing! We wanted in CoD for the great community and schools, yet housing is so expensive that the cheapest house we could find to live inside the district was at the top tier of our budget.	9/2/2015 10:47 AM
5	Housing prices are making the city affordable to a few. Constant approval of permits to tear down mid size homes to build 3,400+SF homes are making the city significantly less socioeconomically diverse.	8/31/2015 10:54 AM
6	Losing affordable housing to \$700,000 new builds. I could not buy in Decatur today.	8/30/2015 11:00 PM
7	Cultural events, concerts, etc. :)	8/29/2015 10:22 PM
8	I am very concerned about long-time residents, primarily African-Americans, losing their homes because they can't afford increasing tax, utility, etc. rates. Not fair.	8/29/2015 3:41 PM
9	I am finding that the city is making and approving changes that are having adverse effects on the quality of life of its tax-paying residents. Schools, roads, sewers- the entire infrastructure WILL crumb under the weight of the 1000s of apartments recently built or being built in Decatur. A moratorium on apartment complexes is called for and FAST. What is a curing is UNFAIR to a very diverse, once liveable community.	8/28/2015 4:58 PM
10	Cost of housing is likely the major factor in the declining diversity in the City of Decatur. This is both a positive and a negative for the city. To have diversity outside of just racial diversity, there has to be diversity in housing prices. With home prices in the City >500,000 in many areas, this limits the many types of diversity (age, education, profession, etc)	8/28/2015 2:51 PM
11	CoD is very welcoming and tolerant of most people based on conversations I have had with people who live in Atlanta area and even from out of state. I think one of the driving forces in being a resident of Decatur is the school system and the city should insure they do everything they can to promote and continue the high level of education. Part of that education is being in a city that values individuals of all races, beliefs, socioeconomics.	8/28/2015 2:07 PM
12	Instead of trying to mandate some idea of diversity, let the authentic experience play out. Diversity is more than a black or white issue. There was almost no representation of Asian or Hispanic people in Decatur until recently. I say welcome people from all cultures by presenting ourselves as educated, decent, hardworking folk who love their children, and love our community, THEN we will attract like-minded citizens regardless of race. I definitely have concerns regarding elderly citizens aging in place, I have lived it with my own parents. However, the personal choices, circumstances, consequences of many are difficult to assign a set solution. Many of our elderly may have difficulty paying Decatur's notorious high taxes, (but it has always been! Our own police and fire dept! Our own school system- what we achieved there IS because we were independent!!! Decatur Rec, etc.). Many of the same who struggle against the taxes, have also seen an almost unbelievable rise in property values. My parents were forced to take out a reverse mortgage on their home to extract some of the value they had acquired on their home for financial responsibilities. I think more personal responsibility is warranted than another orchestrated "social solution".	8/28/2015 10:37 AM

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13	-Look into having better buttons for crosswalks. The current buttons hurt to press, they are too small. -Look into crosswalks talking to let hard of seeing people hear when it is safe to walk along with giving the name of the street. This also helps tourists find their way around the city.	8/27/2015 7:24 PM
14	Housing prices affects diversity in income. The lack of smaller, affordable Housing options also affects retired folks like me, as there's no place to downsize and stay in Decatur.	8/27/2015 6:22 PM
15	There needs to be fairer treatment of people of color by the police. There needs to be more inclusion of parents of color in school organizations and decision making. There needs to be affordable housing and efforts to maintain diverse neighborhoods so that elderly African American residents are not forced out by high taxes. There needs to be more community discussion about how race and class affect people in Decatur and positive actions we can all take toward the city being more welcoming and equitable. We need to look at the negative sides of gentrification, not just the fancier neighborhoods and restaurants and appealing to "people like me- i. e. white middle & upper middle class".	8/27/2015 1:33 PM
16	My family is white with a good income so I find Decatur to be a welcoming city. I do not think that Decatur is so welcoming to people with limited incomes that are not senior citizens.	8/26/2015 4:36 PM
17	Gentrification, because of housing and other policies has often worked against diversity and fairness.	8/26/2015 4:21 PM
18	As a parent of a child with special needs, I would like to see people of all abilities be included more under the umbrella of diversity. There tends to be a focus on ethnic, economic and age diversity in our city and in the CSD school system.	8/26/2015 2:13 PM
19	Neighborhood list serves often reflect "self-righteous" opinions of participants responding to others--- lacks tolerance and respect for people that may not be as aware, knowledgeable, green, etc. as they are.	8/26/2015 11:23 AM
20	Having lived here for some time, i see our community becoming less diverse and it becomes more expensive to live here. There is very little affordable housing and there will be less as taxes continue to go up. You cannot have a diverse community if the only way to live here is to be able to afford to pay thousands a month in rent or a mortgage. Seniors are being pushed out, single parents are being pushed out, out own teachers and police officers can't afford to live here.	8/26/2015 10:44 AM
21	this is a weird survey. Does "people like me" mean people of my same race, age, income level? Or does it mean people who share my values? How can you evaluate the responses when the questions will have such different meanings to different people? I will be very dubious about the results of this survey. I hope it isn't used as "proof" of our attitudes and beliefs.	8/26/2015 8:17 AM
22	The home values (and therefore taxes) are pushing out people of middle to lower and fixed incomes. This does not make for an inclusive and fair city.	8/25/2015 11:11 PM
23	Fear of crime, fear of difference. Association of criminality with racial identity. These things happen daily in my neighborhood, and it is racist and divisive. The real estate market, the tearing down of older, smaller homes to be replaced by bungalows on steroids. I could write a book about all the things that do not make Decatur welcoming, inclusive, or fair these days.	8/25/2015 10:37 PM
24	affordable housing is limited. High real estate taxes & sales prices are limiting access to Decatur homes	8/25/2015 3:01 PM
25	People like me are low income and therefore cannot afford housing throughout Decatur. We are all cornered off in one location. Unless home buying is available for all income in all areas.	8/25/2015 12:35 PM
26	I think the city is very diverse by most standards EXCEPT for economic diversity. So, regardless of race, religion, orientation, ability, etc, if you have enough money you can live here and be surrounded by kind, inclusive people. Unfortunately, economics and race tend to be intertwined (don't know why, but the data shows it clearly) so that means blacks are leaving the city for economic reasons not active lack of diversity or inclusion. With respect the City employee diversity, it seems city employees are largely black, police and fire are white. Is that observation supported with data? If so, is that really diverse?	8/25/2015 12:33 PM
27	I see it as a city of people of all walk of life. The first time I ever seen my tax dollar work to my advantage.	8/25/2015 12:29 PM
28	Most people I live with still have old school ideas!!! White vs. Black.	8/25/2015 12:24 PM
29	Decatur all way help everybody any way they can.	8/25/2015 12:21 PM
30	I would like there to be lots of recreational coaching for seniors to transition to lower impact sports.	8/25/2015 11:41 AM
31	I have no idea at present.	8/25/2015 10:46 AM
32	I do not understand why the city believes their is a need to spend significant tax dollars on this project and what specific items the city will implement as a result of this initiative	8/25/2015 10:33 AM
33	none at this time	8/25/2015 10:29 AM
34	I think Decatur is very fair city.	8/25/2015 10:00 AM

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35	It seems that people with lower incomes are slowly being pushed out of the city due to rising home taxes and lack of affordable housing. New housing development seems to be geared towards those with high incomes.	8/25/2015 9:15 AM
36	I work as a teacher and can not afford to live in the City of Decatur.	8/25/2015 8:52 AM
37	Decatur is very inclusive. We are the most liberal voting district in the state. Decatur targets families for most events. It could be more LBGT focused.	8/25/2015 12:12 AM
38	NOT enough affordable housing	8/24/2015 8:19 PM
39	We have to come together and treat each other equally. Love one another . We should not blame only one side of the problems.	8/24/2015 4:34 PM
40	If I had black skin instead of white skin, my answers would be different. I take for granted the privileges I did nothing to earn. I am aware that 90% of the people in my neighborhood are just like me - privileged and white. I see this disparity as socio-economic-based, stemming from intrinsic, systemic racial biases.Decatur is not 'immune' to these biases and will have to work diligently to overcome them.	8/24/2015 2:45 PM
41	Decatur is becoming an enclave for wealthy families. Gentrification negatively affects families of color and elderly residents living on a fixed incomes. It is difficult from families of color to relocate to Decatur as the property values are so high.	8/24/2015 2:04 PM
42	I witness occasions where black people are treated with more suspicion than those of their white counterparts for the same action.	8/24/2015 12:15 AM
43	Lack of affordable housing; economic segregation creates racial segregation	8/23/2015 8:54 PM
44	Decatur is a very sanitized city -- sanitized of its diversity intentionally. Nearly 20 years ago, when gentrification began, along with the process of pushing out its black citizens, this effort was not a concern. Why is it now? Why is "diversity" valued now? The destruction of public housing at the corner of Commerce and Trinity was part of Decatur's 10 or 20 year plan back then, and its demolition decreased the city's diversity. Are the people behind this movement, the same people who organized that change? If so, I wonder what their idea of diversity looks like. "We should be able to live wherever we can afford to live, but we don't get to choose our neighbors." Maryann Russ, Dallas Housing Authority	8/23/2015 6:54 PM
45	The City of Decatur is too welcoming to developers and to their infill building. My home has become less valuable but more highly taxed because of this. For a while the development had been beneficial but that point has been past and it is time to put the brakes on the McMansion building. Neighbors like me are becoming marginalized. I couldn't afford to move into my neighborhood today and if I knew the current tearing down trend was continuing I wouldn't want move in.	8/23/2015 6:35 PM
46	Can you imagine in the past the City of Decatur giving licenses for beer, wine, etc. festivals to people of color??? Now, to tie up the city.. Kecia cunningham, I feel very bad for her. I do not know Tony Powers or the other two running for the comm. seat, but I hope that T. Powers wins.	8/23/2015 9:27 AM
47	Please stop allowing all these historic homes to be torn down . It is ridiculous how unaffordable our neighborhood is becoming. The new apartments which are going to fill our schools even more are a bad idea too. We moved here for the small town feel. We are quickly going to lose that charm with all the new developments.	8/22/2015 5:02 PM
48	Housing is becoming very expensive. We could not afford to move into Decatur today. This over time will threaten the diversity of our community, which is one of the primary reasons why Decatur is a great place to live and raise a family.	8/22/2015 4:59 PM
49	Plan to become more involved in City activities.	8/22/2015 9:15 AM
50	Decatur's current property taxes and values are making it challenging for some long-time residents to stay in their homes. This concerns me.	8/21/2015 11:13 PM
51	I love the City of Decatur; I was glad to be able to buy in the city and set down roots. I think Decatur is amazingly welcoming. I wanted to have a community my family could take ownership of. I'm very happy to be here! What makes the city "work" is that its citizens are actively involved in growing it.	8/21/2015 3:14 PM
52	City's issue with losing diversity has to do with cost of taxes and increasing value of property. Decatur places a great value on diversity and I've spoken about the great ideas that Decatur has used to help minority or lower income children in the Decatur school system. It's a great model and one other school systems should emulate.	8/21/2015 11:07 AM
53	I have concerns about what I perceive as a change in the demographic (i.e., income and race/ethnicity) make-up of Decatur. I fear that increasing home prices leave little room for affordable housing and the diversity that once existed here.	8/20/2015 7:58 PM

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54	<p>The City of Decatur is fast becoming a residence of affluence and privilege, largely based on the housing market and the drive to be part of the school system. The city has marginal services for people with disabilities and the schools and the schools are trying to keep up with the demand to accommodate more students including those with disabilities. The city does not feel welcoming of people with intellectual disabilities or mental illness. There are few city employees who look like this. Businesses do not seem to employ people with disabilities, though there have been a few internship opportunities through the high school that are within the City of Decatur. None have been lasting that I know of with the exception of Ace Hardware. Even the rec center, though open to having my girls in their program as campers for many years, declined to work with me to help one of them become a counselor-in-training. There is no real affordable housing for people with low income, including those with disabilities. In fact, a group meeting place in our neighborhood was disparaged and the neighbors fought to allow it to operate. L'Arche is the only exception that I am aware of. The police Department does seem accepting of persons with disabilities. Both my girls have taken the self-defense training they offer and the staff was very accommodating. We see them in the community along with the Dec Rec staff and their is genuine connection. I am single mom and have been so swamped raising these girls, I have not been involved as much as I would like to be in the City Planning and activities. This issue of creating inclusiveness in Decatur is, however, an issue I would like to be part of.</p>	8/20/2015 1:58 PM
55	<p>I think Decatur' trajectory has been determined by the demand for the schools. Currently I believe builders and developers are causing gentrification that extends beyond the traditional boundaries. As an older person without kids I feel the taxes are excessive-- that I am being "gentrified" by my age (retiring next year). I hope to stay in Decatur-- but let's see what happens to my property appeal!</p>	8/20/2015 1:01 PM
56	<p>The income shift in Decatur is really shocking. If my husband and I were trying to buy a home today starting out the way we did 14 years ago, we would not be buying in Decatur because we could not afford it.</p>	8/20/2015 12:10 PM
57	<p>I am wholeheartedly supporting this initiative for diversity and fairness, but it seems impossible to me to have this discussion without also addressing the economic connections, especially the construction of new mansions, and the environmental aspect of using more and more green space/trees for these new buildings that benefit, people who can afford huge houses, which again affects diversity issues. My vote goes for addressing all of these intersecting issues together before Decatur has changed into a typical, clearly non-diverse suburb in the country.</p>	8/20/2015 11:37 AM
58	<p>Beyond racial and ethnic diversity, I think Decatur could be more forward thinking about keeping our city, its schools and all its benefits accessible to individuals and families of lower economic status. Often in gentrification, this gets lost and poorer people get pushed out of communities.</p>	8/20/2015 11:23 AM
59	<p>Sullivan Homes are changing the fabric of our neighborhoods. Tearing down affordable homes in place of mcmansions. Where are the limits??</p>	8/20/2015 11:20 AM
60	<p>I have never seen "sign language interpreters available on request." And almost no signs indicating wheelchair access.</p>	8/20/2015 7:31 AM
61	<p>Offer more affordable housing, stop allowing mega mansions to be built. Make Eddie's put in an elevator for accessibility. Take "churches/houses of worship" out of the motto and logo. It is way past time to do that with all of the religions and nonbelievers represented in Decatur.</p>	8/19/2015 8:19 PM
62	<p>Being from Decatur, I have always viewed the city of Decatur as being somewhat of a city that excludes lower to middle class people if you will. Housing is not affordable to those like me and taxes are ridiculous. If you are not of the top tier income, you would either rent or live right outside the city of Decatur. Parking is a nightmare and the fact that you have to pay for parking is another way to keep people like me away. I love the city of Decatur and what it has to offer but only have felt like a visitor rather than someone that could potentially be a resident.</p>	8/19/2015 9:52 AM
63	<p>One of the things I have noticed is the inconsistent quality or total lack of curb cuts and sidewalks in areas outside the town center of Decatur. I do not feel particularly safe trying to be a pedestrian and use public transportation. One specific example of a physical aspect is: The intersection of South Candler Rd and College Street, - where the train track crosses Candler Rd and there is now a large construction project - is a very dangerous crossing for a walking person, and even more so for me in my wheelchair. There is no sidewalk of any kind, and a steep hill, as well as the railroad tracks and the construction zone. Regarding non-physical aspects: In the past i have struggled with trying to participate in such endeavors. I find that while many people are well-meaning, the myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities are still very prevalent. So many people are covertly condescending and patronizing, or even downright rude. From my perspective, this kind of behavior belies any claims made concerning acceptance, inclusion, tolerance and respect being the values and principles at the heart of the work.</p>	8/19/2015 7:54 AM
64	<p>People here are friendly, welcoming, and willing to discuss important issues: culture, politics, sexual preferences, sports, theater, art, religion, etc. It's easy to make friends and make network connections here, to share with and learn from strangers in all walks of life. My concerns about Decatur are these: the sporadic pedestrian traffic signals, the cracked sidewalks, and the propensity of Decatur construction projects and repairs to block access to curb cuts and ramps without forewarning. As a pedestrian, it is disconcerting to receive right-of-way from traffic signals and yet be nearly hit by drivers who are overly anxious to turn right or else are overconfident that we will not collide. Efforts to speak to city officials about the need for level sidewalks, access to curb cuts, and more consistent traffic signals and communication in general about repairs have gone unanswered by city officials.</p>	8/18/2015 12:12 PM

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65	Decatur has become too expensive. I have friends who think about moving here, and when I tell them the tax implications--that it will cost \$500-\$800 per MONTH just for the privilege of living here, they change their mind. Now I am opposed to subsidized housing . Decatur is getting too expensive--like Buckhead. Nothing that can be done about it--people just want to live here for many reasons.	8/18/2015 9:32 AM
66	Becoming very expensive; changes the demographic of who can live here.	8/17/2015 4:22 PM
67	Older people like me are finding it more difficult to live here since almost everything caters to young people including business, restaurants, housing, etc.	8/17/2015 3:54 PM
68	The city does not focus on automobile traffic. It is difficult to get in and out of the city especially at rush hour. With the influx of people it's getting worse. This affects working people who PAY TAXES. While it cannot be defined as racist or sexist or ageist. It is a REAL problem.	8/17/2015 3:14 PM
69	I'm being priced out of the market. I'm genuinely concerned about this.	8/17/2015 2:38 PM
70	It has things for everyone and is inclusive of everyone. Great city.	8/17/2015 2:17 PM
71	Diverse people work to build a great community. Rich people see it and want and have the means to buy it. Byproduct= bye-bye poor people. Its the system we have and it is contrary to the goals here. Unfortunately it is too late to reverse this in a meaningful way. Economic equality and systems that don't allow people with wealth to exploit people without aren't going to get solved in time to address these concerns. You can still tinker with "identity politics," but the economic equity ship has sailed for Decatur.	8/17/2015 11:57 AM
72	We need more affordable housing and culturally diverse programs.	8/17/2015 8:06 AM
73	I moved here thinking there was diversity on all levels, religious, economic, education, race, background. I was wrong, it is becoming more monocultural and only one economic level of access. It is unaffordable and we are driving people away. It's very upsetting.	8/16/2015 8:48 PM
74	Not enough lower-priced housing accommodations- there's low income/subsidized, but not enough affordable for graduate students, newly employed, and lower paid people. The housing market is drifting toward the high income couple. The less well-off families are not able to get into Decatur's school system, making it less diverse than it should be.	8/16/2015 6:58 PM
75	Even though we've only been official COD residents for less than a decade, we've lived in the area for almost 20 years. We waited a long time to be able to buy in Decatur, and it wasn't for the schools, it was for all the walkable activities & civic events, plus the feeling of community. That feeling has been eroding for the past 5 or so years, as we've been flooded with too many families with children who couldn't care less about anything except the schools, and make this very clear. Many of these people don't care to associate with others who aren't just like them, and it's cast a pall of "us & them" feeling over the City that I didn't feel before. The City didn't do much of anything to curb the rampant over-development in Oakhurst until it was too late to save most of our lower-income families & seniors from being priced out. It further contributes to the lessened feeling of community that so many of these new upper-income families seem oblivious or uncaring about pushing long-timers out.	8/16/2015 3:46 PM
76	If we do not have special developments for middle income folks there will be no economic diversity.	8/16/2015 10:51 AM
77	Explosive growth is going to start having a negative impact on quality of life here.	8/16/2015 10:33 AM
78	I was more than willing to participate in this survey, however I felt I had to take a neutral stance because I teach in Decatur and live in Cobb county. However, I do want to become involve with the conversation about Diversity. I have noticed a change in the student population in Decatur in the years I have taught here.	8/15/2015 4:58 PM
79	Enough emphasis on fairness & diversity, its time to step it up with some self-discipline and start some nutrition & health education for citizens. Drive on Ponce during lunch and there are obese women waddling up and down the street, not very welcoming. Lets start some education & awareness towards health & nutrition.	8/15/2015 2:41 PM
80	The lack of affordable housing is the biggest issue. Sure there is "low income" housing for those in poverty and there is plenty of affluent housing for those making 80,000 plus a year, but where is the affordable housing for the middle class - working families making \$30,000-\$60,000 a year? There isn't any - not even in the apartments. Decatur is building three new apartment complexes - all of which the apartments start at a minimum of \$1300 a month for a one bedroom. That is certainly not inclusive or welcoming to anyone working as a teacher or a nurse. Sure it's ok to teach City of Decatur children or save a life at Dekalb Medical, but no, you aren't welcome to live here.	8/15/2015 2:26 PM
81	Racial profiling.	8/15/2015 8:09 AM
82	Housing prices have been strategically inflated to shut out older citizens and lower/fixed income residents.	8/14/2015 8:59 PM

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83	There is a lack of gay males represented at all levels of government. There is a smugness amongst many 20 and 30 year-olds that they don't have to go out of their ways to be inclusive with people of color, lesbians, gays, the elderly, and those of different income levels. These younger couples with children are often insensitive to the needs of anyone but themselves and those like them. If you try to engage them in serious conversation about diversity they arrogantly refuse to do so and fail to recognize their own biases.	8/14/2015 7:30 PM
84	In the last 10 years, household income has increased exponentially among many, and decreased radically among those who may have been middle class or lower class, while the businesses and services added in the city have catered mainly to the upper middle class and higher, making it difficult to live in the city for those whose means are less. Also, housing for first time home buyers of middle or lower class is almost non-existent. Many of these new and small families do not want to live in an apartment or condo. Why can't there be prohibitions against tearing down good quality small one and two story homes to build a 5-6 bedroom house? After paying high taxes for the schools for 14 years after the graduation of our youngest child from Decatur city schools, we felt we had paid enough taxes to the city when there was no housing that appealed to us as seniors, except condos or apartments with no yard. We have always been environmentally conscious, so we appreciated the interest in community gardens. Keep that up.	8/14/2015 3:15 PM
85	Lack of free parking in downtown Decatur keeps many Decatur citizens from enjoying downtown businesses. Downtown restaurants have become too expensive for many citizens. Decatur is becoming too exclusive while it tries to present itself as diverse. High property taxes are ousting older people--both black and white. Decatur favors young, upper middle-class couples with children.	8/14/2015 10:23 AM
86	As with most of Atlanta, there is no reliable public transportation from the further reaches of the City of Decatur to its heart. However, for those of us with lower incomes, we are priced out of living near what makes this city so special. Help make what is so wonderful about our city more accessible to all its residents.	8/14/2015 9:36 AM
87	need to pay attention to lower income folks - lowest classes are covered, now think about lower middle class	8/14/2015 9:36 AM
88	Gentrification by (class-ism) income inequality in affordability housing and employment opportunities which gives employees financial incentives to help them with rental and home ownership opportunities to continue to live or purchase in the community.	8/14/2015 9:32 AM
89	Decatur needs to take the word "churches" off its "A community of..." sign(s) because it gives the unfair impression that this is primarily a faith-base city. It risks alienating people of other religions and, like me, atheists. Also, although Decatur is an LGBT welcoming city by general knowledge, the city needs to officially host more LGBT-specific events, especially during Pride Month in June and in conjunction with Atlanta Pride in October. Decatur needs to promote itself more actively as a gay-welcoming city. Need more gay-owned businesses here.	8/13/2015 8:27 PM
90	For clarification, I do not think City Government treats anyone fairly regardless of race - so my answer is more reflective of poor customer service than racial commentary in that area. As for inclusivity of people of various ages - I believe that the strong uptick in home prices / taxes in the area pose a serious risk to diversity. I am not sure I would be willing to buy a home here if I was in the market now (and I represent what is considered a top 5%er when compared to other US households based on income.) Also, as a landlord, I am finding that my tenant base is becoming less diverse due to sharp increases in property tax valuations. My tenants are no longer as racially diverse as 10 years ago, not do they span as great an age range - especially with regards to seniors. To demonstrate the issue, I've had two homes "increase" in value by as much as 600% over the last 5 years (according to county assessors) - for my tenants that translates to dramatic increases in rental price which is out of my control - in both cases the increase amounted to over \$1000/month. The correlation of rising housing prices to decreasing diversity is not new. To further the point, I was out walking recently and met an older woman who was selling due to inability to afford taxes after 45 years in the community - I may be her one day. I appreciate all of the progress that Decatur has made in the last 16 years I've resided here, but I am starting to question if we are trading one of the best parts of our community (an accepting and diverse demographic) for loads of shiny new buildings and million dollar homes... I for one was okay with a little less shine and a more diverse set of neighbors. While I don't have a solution to the problem as a whole, as a landlord I offer the following. Why not implement a tax break program for landlords willing to offer affordable rents. You could limit the break to apartments with 1 bedroom or less (working off the assumption that most families with children would forgo a space that small and therefore not create a burden of loss due to school taxes). In addition, any provision could exclude developments / structures with greater than 4 units to ensure large development tax revenue was not lost - just a thought...	8/13/2015 4:11 PM
91	Decatur is a wonderful place but it's really only easy to fit in as an upper middle class to wealthy white well educated homeowner. I applaud Decatur for working toward a goal of inclusion and diversity but question whether the city can succeed based on the cost of living based on real estate prices and taxes. I regularly volunteer for big Decatur events and I see that most of the volunteers and attendees are often well educated, well off, and white. That was much less the case in the 80s and early 90s while I was growing up on the edge of Decatur in unincorporated DeKalb.	8/13/2015 4:09 PM
92	I don't want my taxes to subsidize low income housing. I work to hard to scrape by my own property taxes.	8/13/2015 2:53 PM

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93	Seniors and lower income residents are being taxed out of Decatur as home valuations increases are not offset by tax decreases, resulting in net higher taxes paid. Seniors are selling, tear downs are happening and replacement homes are two+ times larger and out of character with the houses on the street and in the neighborhoods. 1000 new apartments are targeted towards young professionals and don't have sliding scale rents based on income to attract a more diverse population. Just look at the fence around the Arlo on Trinity, not a face of color in the pictures.	8/13/2015 2:33 PM
94	Decatur has bent over backwards to provide a safe, pleasant atmosphere for almost any kind of person you can imagine. Decatur has, in fact, probably done too much to encourage "diversity." You can't change people's opinions, and some of what Decatur and the City Commission are trying to do now feels like Big Brother.	8/13/2015 2:33 PM
95	I have experienced overzealous acts by local law enforcement targeting minorities.	8/13/2015 12:16 PM
96	Housing prices are astronomical. My husband and I make more than \$200K per year and still found Decatur prices out of our range. It has led to changes in the city that mean most people are white and middle class. This is very different from the Decatur I moved into in 2002.	8/13/2015 11:48 AM
97	the "gentrification" - hate that term - is shifting the socio-economics of the population away from the "blue-collar" and less materially advantaged citizens, which I find detracts from true diversity.	8/13/2015 8:15 AM
98	Parking is expensive and it limits what I do downtown	8/13/2015 8:13 AM
99	While our household has a high income, I am concerned about housing options for those who do not. I'm also concerned about future housing options for me when I want to downsize and my income decreases. I would like to continue living in a single-family home (not condo), and I see the smaller home being replaced by large homes. I fear there will be no other choice for me when I want to downsize than to move out of the city. There needs to be diversity in sizes of single-family homes. Not everyone wants to live in a large house, Keep those of us in our 50s and 60s and older in Decatur!	8/13/2015 5:34 AM
100	I think we need more public space in Decatur. Areas where we can interact with all types of people more	8/12/2015 8:25 PM
101	The African American poor are welcomed and provided for. The older and lower income whites are not entitled to such programs and opportunities.	8/12/2015 7:05 PM
102	Many of my neighbors are new to me. The city is changing so fast, and not in a good way.	8/12/2015 6:29 PM
103	The price of housing has become that many cannot afford to live here. Restaurants and shops follow...	8/12/2015 5:14 PM
104	Way to much Confederate imagery. Makes me feel uncomfortable and that people are bigoted	8/12/2015 5:05 PM
105	Decatur exerts great effort to being a welcoming and fair city for all but it is a very difficult task but I think the citizens are willing to try.	8/12/2015 5:04 PM
106	While there are people of many different background indicator, the overarching and dominant culture seems to be white and Anglo.	8/12/2015 2:02 PM
107	.this is a great city run it like it's 1 maintenance system important	8/12/2015 1:44 PM
108	Some businesses are not handicap accessible (Eddie's Attic) and some are so crowded, they are functionally inaccessible. Sidewalks are pot-holed and cracked, forcing wheelchairs into street. Traffic goes too fast down Ponce, creating dangerous crossings, and police are not around to enforce lower speeds, stopping at crosswalks, etc. Property taxes are slowly making it too expensive for middle class people or seniors to continue living in Decatur.	8/12/2015 1:41 PM
109	I'm not sure I would have answered positively for #13 and #14 for people not like me. Decatur has become way too white and upper class for my tastes!	8/12/2015 1:32 PM
110	Capitalism and a free market will dictate the value of property, and that in turn will dictate who lives in Decatur. So, unfortunately for poor folks, the American way has spoken. Welcome to our free market economy	8/12/2015 1:03 PM
111	Lower income & people who live too far from downtown to walk it seem to be discouraged.	8/12/2015 12:45 PM
112	When I see the Decatur police pull someone over for a traffic stop, it is pretty much always a black person. When I read about a burglary report, the suspect is usually always a black male. I don't know if this is because these are the folks who are disproportionately committing traffic violations and property crimes, or if this is because of their race.	8/12/2015 12:40 PM
113	young adults who grew up in the city can't afford to buy a house.	8/12/2015 11:58 AM
114	the high property taxes! They are excluding singles and older citizens. You will soon have a very homogeneous city of young couples with children.	8/12/2015 11:11 AM
115	Decatur is for rich people who like to tear all the older, smaller houses down. I could never afford to live here, even though I work here. Parking costs also make the place unwelcoming to those with tight budgets, and I hear you're about to make that worse.	8/12/2015 10:25 AM

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116	There is an "invisible" history of racism that shapes Decatur today, that most of us understand, but few talk about openly. The city has already effectively erased the black history of Decatur, from the 1960s backward, and created an idyllic, "timeless" white village. Only the stubborn presence (and utter effectiveness) of our Housing Authority prevents a clean sweep of all signs of blackness. The dismal current housing situation--rapid replacement of affordable housing with housing for the social elite--is a gentrification from which the city may never recover. Any notion of Decatur being an "integrated" or "diverse" city was lost in the housing rush of last 10 years, when affordable housing preservation was pushed off the city's radar, and development was un-checked. Combine that with a tenuous racial climate in our city, in which race and class-based animosity hovers barely below the surface, and you have Decatur today: a city that proclaims progressive values, but is only progressive next to the blatantly racist and classist northern suburbs.	8/12/2015 9:46 AM
117	The COD doesn't care who buys those \$700,000 houses being built. They just want them sold so they can begin collecting the obscene ad valorem taxes. As far as I know, no one from the city welcomes any one who moves here. They just take your tax money and laugh all the way to the bank. You know, I love Decatur, I grew up here in the forties and fifties and then it was a nice friendly place to live. Now, it's just a PLACE where I happen to live. It's not the same. The city has become too focused on money, money, money. It's not the nice, friendly place you portray it to be.	8/12/2015 9:38 AM
118	Due to the rising tax base, not all families who wish to live here can afford to live here.	8/12/2015 8:58 AM
119	income inequality is becoming more problematic. Some people are being priced out of their neighborhoods due to housing demand and developers.	8/12/2015 8:53 AM
120	Rents, taxes, housing costs are all very high.	8/12/2015 8:41 AM
121	Planning or lack thereof has stripped away community and diverse living options. We have allowed Decatur to become Snellville	8/12/2015 8:14 AM
122	The need for more affordable housing to insure that people of all socioeconomic levels are able to live in Decatur.	8/12/2015 7:46 AM
123	I feel the city has already achieved this goal. We are very diverse and welcoming here, especially compared to other areas of Atlanta such as East Cobb or Buckhead. I am more concerned about rising crime, our horrible traffic issues, support of our schools and economic growth. I feel we are wasting city resources on a problem that doesn't exist.	8/12/2015 7:40 AM
124	City taxes are too high. Thus, people of lower incomes or fixed incomes can't afford to live here. So no Decatur is not diverse economically.	8/12/2015 7:14 AM
125	I think you need to be careful about the term 'people like me'. I am black and our family is fortunate enough to be an upper middle class family, income over \$200,000.00. When I answer the 'people like me question' sometimes I mean people like me, who are black, sometimes I mean 'people like me who, irrespective of their race are upper middle class'. It is sometimes hard to determine which of those 2 parts of who I am is informing the experiences that I am having.	8/12/2015 6:54 AM
126	As I said, I grew up in Oakhurst and I'm prettu friendly; I even have a child in school here. But walking my dog down the street, or taking my son to the park, I feel invisible to neighbors. They simply don't tend to engage with black people as much from what I've observed.	8/12/2015 2:08 AM
127	I don't think Decatur is any of these: welcoming, inclusive or fair. I hear about and have actually seen a couple of instances of police stopping persons for WWB [Walking While Black] in Decatur.	8/12/2015 12:37 AM
128	Decatur is a very diverse place compared to other places in Georgia, and even Dekalb, but it isn't a global type of diversity. Also it is hard for people with low income to visit Decatur and have a safe and good time.	8/11/2015 11:58 PM
129	It is becoming almost impossible for persons of modest means to live anywhere in the city.	8/11/2015 10:21 PM
130	Decatur's success as a desirable housing and school community is raising costs of homeownership beyond modest income families	8/11/2015 10:19 PM
131	There are not many options for middle class people to buy (or rent) homes in the city anymore. It seems that there are many housing options for affluent people, as well as some decent "low-income affordable housing" for those who need it. The options in between these two groups is getting smaller and smaller. Having rich white people and poor Black people does not make for a diverse city. In our city, where are the Hispanics? Asians? Indians? Non-Christians? Having decent representation from all of these groups is true diversity.	8/11/2015 10:02 PM
132	The have-nots do not count for much.	8/11/2015 9:40 PM
133	Decatur is being taken over by condo projects, apartment buildings and especially, very pricey houses. It is becoming unaffordable for older retiring people like me and low income families.	8/11/2015 9:25 PM
134	as the older residents pass away or move to other living arrangements, many of the older houses are being torn down or added on to. This increases the home prices making them out of the price range for some people. As a result, Decatur is becoming slightly less diverse than it has been in the past.	8/11/2015 9:12 PM

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135	City has a completely different agenda on what a successful city looks like.	8/11/2015 8:22 PM
136	My concern, like many long time residents, is the lack of affordable housing for middle income families. The city is attracting a homogeneous group of white, upper middle class families with children. I fear we have lost our economic diversity. Tear downs of smaller homes are happening on a seemingly daily basis. Why must every rebuild be a \$700,000 home?	8/11/2015 6:54 PM
137	I've never thought Decatur had a racial or discrimination problem - not now or in the last 25 years. Everyone gets along and receives equal treatment. I hate to see isolated issues get blown out of proportion. One thing that has kept us as residents of Decatur is the small but efficient police and fire departments. I love that the police respond so quickly to any and everyone. They are concerned about all crime from vandalism and petty theft to more serious events. They don't choose the crimes or the criminals, but they have to respond to the facts. I would much rather see time, effort and resources spent on preventing and solving crimes rather than worrying about one person's overreaction to being questioned due to fitting a description of a suspect. No harm was done just like the older white man who was suspected of following a young girl walking home. An incorrect assumption by a young girl, but no harm and no outrage by the innocent man, only an attitude of better safe than sorry. Like your questions earlier, we do trust our neighbors in the city to do the right thing.	8/11/2015 6:13 PM
138	The city commission seems to have a near hatred of families with school age children. Activities are not scheduled with working parents in mind. How am I supposed to get my child to something at 3:30? How am I supposed to participate in something that is at 10am in Thursdays?!?!? If you work outside the city of decatur to afford to live in the city, you are S.O.L in terms of many activities.	8/11/2015 5:10 PM
139	Probably the most obvious problem is that housing costs are getting so high that lower income folks and retired folks are having a hard time living and/or staying in their homes.	8/11/2015 5:07 PM
140	Very concerned about continued housing costs increase in City of Decatur. There is not enough low-mid income housing for families that are not on public assistance. Smaller homes are being torn down at an alarming rate with huge new construction homes replacing them. This is making it difficult to downsize since it is such a competitive market with developers. Older Long time residents are moving outside the city limits because the new demographic with higher income are causing property value to soar resulting in higher assessments and taxes with the new construction large homes being built in existing neighborhoods.	8/11/2015 4:57 PM
141	The increase in families and expensive homes is hurting the older generations and single dwellers.	8/11/2015 4:49 PM
142	Affordable housing is a very large void in the City. Even with all the new apartments being built, our teachers, policemen, firemen, service workers typically cannot afford to live here.	8/11/2015 4:43 PM
143	It is becoming a city of have or have nots - nothing in between	8/11/2015 4:43 PM
144	I think Decatur, and just Georgia and the South as a whole is just less diverse and less inclusive than the NE. There are physical lines of segregation (south of Memorial, etc.). It is very strange and I wish it weren't the case.	8/11/2015 2:43 PM
145	To me, the city of Decatur has become another representation of what is happening all over this country: gentrification in its purist form. The only blacks I ever see on the city sidewalks are those pushing the baby carriages of white children or living in the lower income housing (the only one tolerated and highly monitored by your police) near Decatur High School. Many residents say they want diversity, but are not willing to do the heavy lifting to make that happen and honestly, they don't seem to mind not having it. This is a main reason why I moved. I feel since the people of Decatur have the income to make it the way they want it look, they have forgotten what it really means to make an entire city inclusive.	8/11/2015 1:05 PM
146	I fear we are not focused on "Income Diversity". We are driving away young people, older people on fixed incomes, and those just not as well off because of high taxes and a lack of affordable housing. We will soon become another Alpharetta if we are not careful.	8/11/2015 1:04 PM
147	Spending over \$100,000 on The Art of Community is a shameful waste of tax dollars.	8/11/2015 12:57 PM

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148	<p>All of the reasons we love living in Decatur are the same ones that make it such a popular place to live for young families. This has driven up property values to a point where access is limited to those with hefty budgets (full disclaimer we would not be able to afford our house now- what a difference 13 years makes.) It has also caused many long term, elderly residents (or their families) to sell their homes to make way for another new home or renovation for a young family. While I certainly cannot blame them one bit (\$350,000 covers a lot of long term care and expenses) it has really changed the fabric of our neighborhood. We are lucky that our immediate neighbors are still in their homes but I fear it won't stay that way for long. Moving into their neighborhood, and having them welcome us as the new kids on the block made our life so rich. My toddler daughter loves her surrogate grandparents, but so few kids in the neighborhood have that. Conversely, we also love that our daughter has five friends within walking distance of our front door, so it is hard to complain, but the richness and complexity of the neighborhood is waning. We are "all the same," mid to late 30's, white, 1.5 kids, professional jobs. I understand that nature is taking its course and the folks that have been in the neighborhood since the early 60's are leaving (or passing away) but how do we attract more diversity among the young families that find Decatur so appealing? How do we stay unique and diverse and not become Ashford Park, or Brookhaven? I have spoken to friends who have said that Oakhurst is too homogeneous, that while they love the neighborhood and can afford the houses, they don't want their child to be the only child of color in their classes, at church, etc. That is an issue that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, I don't think we can rewind the clock and go back to the day where we had vast socioeconomic diversity, that train seems to have left the station. There will be some leveling out of home values of course, but the strength of the schools, the activities, the proximity to the city, etc. are a reality that make this a popular place to live. Therefore, working within the current reality, what can be done to attract more racial and ethnic diversity among those that can afford to move here?</p>	8/11/2015 12:28 PM
149	<p>Decatur has a very welcoming, considerate overall culture. However, the high cost of living because of house prices and city taxes will sabotage efforts for a truly diverse community. I hope the city leadership will push for an annexation plan that will relieve the tax burden on residents, push for generous homestead exemptions for the elderly and low-income residents and work with developers and realtors to promote diverse housing options that come in various price points. I hope that the city leadership will consider working with a lobbyist in the state legislature so that the loud voices of those forming new cities and those opposed to Decatur's annexation plan will not have control of the conversation and thus the direction of Decatur's future.</p>	8/11/2015 10:35 AM
150	<p>For me the issue is primarily an economic one. Poor and working class people are being priced out of the city. That then reflects in the racial/ethnic makeup of the city. Gentrification needs to be managed in order for the city to remain a welcoming, inclusive and fair city.</p>	8/11/2015 10:31 AM
151	<p>You cannot engineer a diverse community. Most city employees seem to be non-white. This is a waste of money and the ultimate example of political correctness gone out of control.</p>	8/11/2015 10:31 AM
152	<p>People make their own choices of where and how they live. It is none of City of Decatur's business to decide who should live here.</p>	8/11/2015 10:04 AM
153	<p>I have lived in the COD since I was a child and so did both of my parents. My grandparents moved to Oakhurst in the 50s. I remember COD being a much kinder city that represented people my same complexion, but that has all changed. The city caters strictly to investors and developers who ALL clearly want to keep the city majority one race. The city allows the developers to build houses that minorities cannot afford but turn right around and on paper label the city diverse and progressive. It is NO coincidence that there are not many if at all any minority-owned businesses. Racism is blatant in the schools and is never addressed but condoned. It is amazing how this city is continuously placed on pedestal that they clearly are not worthy of. This city is not as progressive or diverse or even welcoming to diversity as it says that is. The property taxes alone, testifies to this.</p>	8/11/2015 9:44 AM
154	<p>Diversity is more than black and white. Please consider other races and ethnicities when you are putting together your "plan." Asians and Latinos deserve a voice too.</p>	8/11/2015 9:00 AM
155	<p>lack of housing, programs and supports for older low-income adults</p>	8/11/2015 8:40 AM
156	<p>Decatur has become a financially gated community. It used to be diverse, both racially and socioeconomically. Not today. The rampant teardowns and skyrocketing property assessments are driving out older residents at an alarming rate. Those houses then get filled with three kids from an upper-middle-class family making \$250K/year. There is no more room in Decatur for working class families. It's gone, and meeting are not going to bring it back. Developers have had their way, and the damage is done. The people that helped make this a great place to live are no longer welcome because they can't afford the taxes, and don't have a voice because they don't have kids.</p>	8/11/2015 8:24 AM
157	<p>The city staff could use more whites. The staff has a disproportional number of non-whites. Also religious individuals and gun owners feel out of place in Decatur.</p>	8/11/2015 8:14 AM
158	<p>The obstacle to inclusion that is most evident in my neighborhood is the disappearance of affordable housing options. This is an urgent issue for CoD.</p>	8/11/2015 8:01 AM
159	<p>Not enough affordable housing. Longtime residents are being pushed out.</p>	8/11/2015 7:47 AM

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160	The simple fact is that the current development in the city has pushed housing prices through the roof, and this seems to come at the expense of our minority communities.	8/11/2015 7:44 AM
161	On a teacher's salary it has been hard to afford to live here. I've been here since college (ASC c/o '95). Decatur is losing its quiriness and diversity. It used to be a city of little houses and big ideas. I loved that people drove old cars and intentionally chose smaller houses in exchange for living in Decatur. Are we losing the heart of who we are? As a veteran teacher, I left the classroom in large part due to huge enrollment increases. I worry that Decatur's successes will lead to Decatur's failure. My students and their families began to look more and more homogenous. What are we doing to keep our economic and racial diversity? Do the new Decaturites value these things, too? How do we make sure the people who work in Decatur (teachers, firefighters, city workers) can afford to live in Decatur? How can we make sure our elderly citizens don't get pushed out? Thanks!!!!	8/11/2015 1:24 AM
162	my biggest concern is the housing market. Young, lower income people soon will not have any choices for affordable living	8/10/2015 11:09 PM
163	It is too expensive to live here. Unfortunately lower incomes follow a color line here in GA, and thus people of color cannot afford to live in such a well educated and highly desirable area like Decatur.	8/10/2015 10:51 PM
164	We bought the house when this was a much more diverse and inclusive community. Black/white gay/straight middle class/low income all coexisted with certain harmony. It has changed drastically and my family and I are beginning to feel that the city, if not the community per se, will tax us out of the neighborhood. I don't think even middle class people of any race or age are feeling comfortable. People who have recently moved in see that the easy answer is just for us to sell and move away - to take advantage of how much our houses have increased in value. They think that Decatur is following a natural evolution that comes with higher property value and good schools. There is little empathy for the people who have spent over a decade or two making this city their home. I feel sad and excluded.	8/10/2015 10:22 PM
165	Lack of planning to maintain and support socioeconomic and racial/ethnic diversity has made Decatur more homogenous and less welcoming.	8/10/2015 10:19 PM
166	The city needs more affordable low income housing.	8/10/2015 10:10 PM
167	seniors and those of low to moderate income have been priced out of housing.	8/10/2015 9:47 PM
168	Na	8/10/2015 9:33 PM
169	Mainly the house prices. We are renters, and could not afford to buy at this point, even though we have lived in Decatur City for 7 years. I gravitated to Decatur as an adult because I grew up here, but the Decatur of now is not like the Decatur of my youth -- not that it should be, but the trend toward near-million dollar houses and tear down/build big is edging out people like me, who have modest-paying jobs. I am so grateful that we have a great school system to send our kids to here, but I worry that something important is being lost in the mad rush to fill up every inch with condos or two-story new build. I don't want to leave Decatur, but I don't want it to continue down this path toward overpopulation and gentrification, either. I'd like to help be a part of the solution to this, however I can, and plan to keep my eyes and ears open for opportunities to do so. We have a 5th and 1st grader, and a 3 year old, so we'll be part of this system and this city for a long time yet. I have great hope that things will find an even keel, but it's not happening yet.	8/10/2015 9:16 PM
170	My husband and I have been trying to buy a house for a while and there is absolutely nothing we can buy within our price range. We both have master's degrees and jobs. Still cannot afford houses in the city we love so much.	8/10/2015 9:10 PM
171	I think the general attitudes and beliefs of people who live here would make a welcoming and inclusive city, but housing has become more and more expensive. I feel like Decatur used to be a nice, liberal, diverse middle class neighborhood and now it's becoming more and more affluent. I have seen several instances in my neighborhood where a family of color has moved out, their house is torn down and a \$750k house is built in its place. This concerns me b/c I want my children to go to school with other races, income levels, family structures, religious beliefs, etc. I'm concerned that Decatur is becoming a bubble of privilege.	8/10/2015 8:58 PM
172	Cost of living; negative attitude of many towards renters (responsible, single professional who was hammered by the housing crisis) I am UNWILLING to own yet and be tied down And if I wanted to cant afford it anymore.	8/10/2015 8:55 PM
173	The school reconfiguration made some people who cared about diversity bitter and less likely to stay involved	8/10/2015 8:51 PM
174	My greatest concern is for affordable housing in the area along with gentrification. With the high cost of housing, community organizers, writers, teachers, activists or artists are no longer going to be able to live in the city, taking away a creative and diverse group of people. For an interesting case study see: http://www.citylab.com/housing/2015/07/whats-the-matter-with-san-francisco/399506/?utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_medium=tweet	8/10/2015 8:49 PM
175	Housing prices are out of control	8/10/2015 8:48 PM
176	I'm new. This is my first step at getting involved. Diversity in the workplace is part of my professional expertise.	8/10/2015 8:47 PM

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177	There is nothing that the City of Decatur does that discourages people of different races from living in the city. This whole effort is a waste of my tax dollars.	8/10/2015 8:46 PM
178	The city is fine. Stop trying to impose your white guilt on everyone!	8/10/2015 8:45 PM
179	The astronomical property prices and by extension taxes are the first thing that keeps out economically diverse people out. The general elitist and racist attitudes of the neighborhood keeps out racially diverse populations.	8/10/2015 8:38 PM
180	We need to treat older people without children better & be more inclusive. Not just about CSD.	8/10/2015 7:33 PM
181	I'm in a new home in Decatur. Neighbors are either really nice or completely don't speak. Our neighborhood list serve is often critical of new home owners. Folks here are VERY change resistant.	8/10/2015 7:32 PM
182	We have good bars.	8/10/2015 7:26 PM
183	We have racial diversity, though not ethnic. Racially, though we are pretty darn segregated. And our African-American neighbors get stopped by police in our neighborhood. The segregation can be seen at Decatur high as well. Kids are friendly with each other, a real strength, but the classes can be generally racially segregated. We have some economic diversity, but middle-income earners like us are leaving within the 5 years after our kids finish Decatur High (that is worth looking at - surely the city can see that only high-income earners can afford to move here (except for a percentage of people in subsidized housing), and others of us are leaving after we no longer need the schools and are being replaced by families who do). We cannot afford Decatur anymore. Finally, there is a cultural cliquishness of "Old Decatur" that holds the power structure, politically and socially, and even ecclesiastically. People are expected to conform to a white norm. And finally, our sidewalks and street crossings can be pretty scary for people with disabilities. Having said all that, Decatur still is one of the best places to live to be around people who care about and value the many forms of diversity, including sexual orientation and gender identification. We may not live up to our ideals, but at least we talk about it and try. That is our biggest strength. Thank you for doing this study.	8/10/2015 7:18 PM
184	Housing is unaffordable except for the very well off. Developers run rampant making money. The city is not confer AT ALL about long time citizens being forced out due to taxes and uncontrolled development	8/10/2015 7:10 PM
185	As we have lived here we have observed a shift in housing to meet the needs of the very rich or the very poor. The middle class is stuck. I don't have a good solution but only very wealthy and very poor does not seem to be a healthy mix.	8/10/2015 6:56 PM
186	Taxes are too high for middle class and working class families to own and rentals seem to be diminishing.	8/10/2015 6:40 PM
187	Rising property taxes are an issue for some people. We must find ways to not lose what little true diversity we have remaining.	8/10/2015 6:26 PM
188	As a white business owner with what is considered a higher income, I feel like my opinion is last one wanted in these forums- we are considered the problem and the enemy.	8/10/2015 6:08 PM
189	Decatur allows for those that want safety and security to be able to have it through their income. That is the reason they come. They can have nice homes and be safe without the nuisance of general crime they see in the lower economic areas.	8/10/2015 6:08 PM
190	The city government is too beholden to the economic interests of real estate developers.	8/10/2015 5:46 PM
191	You can only live in the city if you can afford a 500k home or want to live in a condo. Not enough options for middle class, creating a huge socioeconomic and racial divide. We no longer feel welcome and choose to spend our money elsewhere.	8/10/2015 5:31 PM
192	Decatur is all about people with children. Events, new businesses, dining are all geared toward people with families. My money often goes elsewhere when I'm not up for a kid friendly activity.	8/10/2015 5:30 PM
193	The lack of affordable housing and the rapidly decreasing diversity make me want to leave Decatur.	8/10/2015 5:24 PM
194	The housing prices (or maybe it's the size of these new construction homes) have gotten out of control, directly affecting increase in property values which is effecting property taxes and making it difficult for older residents (and those on fixed income) to afford to continue to live here. I know that if I needed to move to a bigger home to accommodate my growing family, I would not be able to afford a home in my own neighborhood. And after 8 years as a Decatur resident I would have to move. I think that is the opposite of welcoming, inclusive and fair.	8/10/2015 5:22 PM
195	Decatur is a great place to live if you earn more than \$100K a year. Otherwise, it's not affordable.	8/10/2015 5:19 PM
196	The important phrase is "people like me." Yes, I can afford any housing unit in Decatur, but people who aren't like me cannot.	8/10/2015 5:16 PM
197	My husband and I are Veterans. We have had multiple negative interactions with people who live and work in Decatur due to our service to our country. We were yelled outside of our house in front of our children by a 'neighbor' and were told that we were unfit parents because we had served in the military. I am not comfortable wearing my military shirts etc in downtown Decatur.	8/10/2015 5:14 PM

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198	Housing. There are very few housing options for families that are affordable - some attached condos, some apartments, but hardly any (if any?) 2+ bedroom single family homes that are under \$300,000. Also more could be done to increase accessibility for people with disabilities in public buildings, with parking availability, and at playgrounds.	8/10/2015 5:13 PM
199	I am concerned about gentrification driving long-term residents of the city to leave the city, and I am concerned that gentrifying whites are contributing to an atmosphere of intimidation towards long-time residents of color, such as by constantly calling police because a person of color looks "suspicious." I would like to see initiatives which regularly bring people into contact with their neighbors of all kinds.	8/10/2015 5:02 PM
200	Rising cost of housing is a legitimate concern. We are probably in one of the higher income levels and have trouble affording a 3 br house for our family of 5. There is also somewhat of a negative reaction from some residents to 1- new residents with children and 2 - new residents who purchase the big new construction homes. If anything, we have noticed bias against rich white conservatives. (We seem to be perceived as middle class white liberals). I have perceived those in our neighborhood to be very open minded and welcoming of everyone (except as mentioned above).	8/10/2015 4:05 PM
201	I worry that discussions of housing "affordability" lead to all sorts of misguided policies (i.e., rent control, low income set-asides) that benefit long-time tenants but make it more expensive for younger people and new residents to buy and interfere with the property rights of owners. The best the city can do on this front is to encourage new development to moderate price increases. There is not much harm in having "conversations" about diversity and fairness, just so long as organizers realize that the people who show up to these kinds of things do not necessarily represent the community as a whole.	8/10/2015 2:11 PM
202	I think Decatur is getting too expensive to stay diverse.	8/10/2015 10:43 AM
203	I have to work more hours to make more money, I do not get raises. Unfair, unequal appraisals and rising property values will probably force me out of the city soon.	8/10/2015 9:10 AM
204	Is anyone unwelcome? Let's say I want to live in Malibu, CA. Should Malibu accomodate me? I am not very comfortable with the City government attempting to influence who should and shouldn't be present in the City - but these questions lead me to believe that they are. If you exclude one group to accomodate another, that is what you are doing. Perhaps the City should just let individual citizens make choices on whether or not they want to be part of Decatur. Is it even legal for the City to be conducting such exercises? Is City of Atlanta doing something similar?	8/9/2015 10:26 PM
205	I think that more education of Decatur City employees (teachers, police, and other public facing employees) about unconscious racial bias would be helpful.	8/9/2015 4:47 PM
206	The City of Decatur touts being a diverse community, but diversity is not a true value. For instance, the makeup of the leadership of the City's administration is a prime example. There is no desire at the City Manager's level to have people of color in those positions, although there are token appointments of one or two people at the director level. In a city where there are at least five Assistant City Managers, not one of them is a person of color. Additionally, the city does not care about creating a diverse community because its housing policies and building requirements are not friendly to anyone who is not at a certain income level. The city says it wants racial, economic, and social diversity, but they do nothing to encourage it; as a matter of fact, they do everything to discourage it.	8/9/2015 12:49 PM
207	Tremendous economic divide and blighted areas of DE facto segregation and crime.	8/8/2015 4:43 PM
208	This city is increasingly inaccessible to people with medium to low incomes. From housing to dining options, and bad parking options in downtown, it is getting worse. Public services are slow to respond to concerns from less affluent residents.	8/8/2015 4:42 PM
209	high property values and taxes are making it hard for low-income and retired people to live here. The city is becoming wealthier and less diverse -- not a positive value for me.	8/8/2015 4:24 PM
210	The demographic pressures resulting from an increased lack of faith in City of Atlanta schools and DeKalb County schools has created a large influx of upper middle class families with school aged children. While not bad on its face (in fact there are certainly good things about this type of "gentrification"), there seems to be a different and less inclusive focus from many of these "newcomers" and it's bigger than just race. But then again, I'm speaking a bit too broadly. Many who move here do so because they do feel it's socially progressive.	8/8/2015 7:32 AM
211	It seems like Decatur is turning into a place for rich people with children. I understand that we all need to pay taxes to support the school system, however, I feel there is a disproportionate burden on people who have never had children and never will have them. Why don't people with more children pay more taxes since it's THEIR children who are going to the great Decatur schools? I know many people who hold this opinion, including people who have children.	8/8/2015 12:16 AM

Better Together Community Survey

212	For the past couple of years, City of Decatur has come across as insincere in many of its efforts-- more "check it off the list" sessions than truly interested in gathering community input. More and more, the City has prioritized the demands of small special interest groups over allowing for full community say in determining policy and direction. The City also tends to focus its energies on residents in the same two or three areas, making little effort to engage residents in the other areas.	8/7/2015 11:42 PM
213	You know this is a small thing, but it affects my quality of life. When I am a pedestrian, I must cross Commerce Ave @Church or Clairemont Ave. to walk into the city to get a coffee or an ice cream or walk to the library. These two crossing spots are so threatening that my natural impulse to walk is stanchued. I DRIVE to the library to avoid the discomfort of crossing Commerce. I often do walk into the city by cutting through the Baptist Church parking lot to Ponce Place to avoid those spots and am I'm grateful for having found this alternate route. Commerce does just what it is intended to do...yet unintentionally stifles pedestrian access from the north side. To get to the airport, I took a cab to get to the MARTA station to avoid crossing Commerce Ave. I deeply appreciate all that this community provides. I feel privileged and joyful living in Decatur. (I am 72 years old; physically fit. I work out with a trainer; run and swim regularly.)	8/7/2015 10:14 PM
214	There are numerous opportunities to get involved and meet people.	8/7/2015 4:46 PM
215	I think many of the people who live in or run the city of Decatur *want* to be sensitive and accommodating to people who are not just white rich people. However, intentions don't mean much when our system is set up to benefit rich developers and the continued success and growth of the community means inadvertently pushing out lower income folks and people of color.	8/7/2015 3:57 PM
216	The property taxes have skyrocketed, which makes the area much less affordable and less diverse.	8/7/2015 3:49 PM
217	I feel the real estate market is getting to a point where lower income individuals and families will have a difficult time finding affordable housing in Decatur. Even the new apartments going up all over town appear to have rents that will be so high as to not truly provide "low-income housing". I also worry about the city being so "child and family" focused that we don't treat our elderly residents very well.	8/6/2015 3:48 PM
218	Like any other government, Decatur should focus on performing its functions in a fair and efficient manner. I believe that government oversteps its role and purpose if it focuses on creating what its elected officials perceive to be fairness, inclusiveness, and diversity. Then government becomes more involved in social engineering than administration.	8/6/2015 3:47 PM
219	Housing prices have sky-rocketed, leaving middle-income and low-income families out of the mix. Middle-income in Decatur now means \$100K+ it seems.	8/6/2015 3:43 PM
220	High property taxes are a disincentive to persons who do not have children in CSD and/or lower income persons. Streets and intersections that are unfriendly to pedestrians are more hazardous to older and younger residents and in general those who do not spend all of their time in cars.	8/6/2015 3:38 PM
221	Decatur is a racist and elitist enclave. This exercise like applying a bandaid to a shotgun wound. Too little, too late.	8/5/2015 4:38 PM
222	I am on the Decatur Housing Authority and we recieve strong support from City Government. We have also had the support of the citizenry in city-wide planning events.	8/5/2015 2:33 PM
223	There is not enough affordable housing in the city limits and the set-asides are impossible to find out about.	8/4/2015 11:50 PM
224	I love living here. I can see the demographics changing and shifting towards more diversity, but not a shift on institutionally. The city may have diverse staff in general but not on a higher executive of leadership level, for example.	8/4/2015 8:56 PM
225	The recent boom in the destruction of reasonably sized and priced homes in favor of large expensive infills has me and my neighbors concerned. There is much talk about the changing face of Decatur as our elementary school becomes less diverse. Discussions with African American residents about racial profiling by both neighbors and police are also troubling. As a parent of an African American child, I have hopes that Decatur retains its diversity but am concerned about the future.	8/4/2015 1:04 PM
226	Thanks for this survey!	8/4/2015 10:08 AM
227	I do agree with many of the above statements as a white woman since they specifically add the "people like me" phrase. While I recognize that "people like me" are a big part of the problem, the lack of diversity in my community saddens me. We moved here because we were drawn by the school statistics highlighting over 20% minority populations. Today's kindergarteners at Oakhurst paint a very different picture.	8/3/2015 9:40 PM
228	First, housing has become too expensive. Second, the schools are getting too big. It's difficult to offer solid education to a diverse student body when the system is growing so quickly and so much.	8/3/2015 3:05 PM
229	The schools are very welcoming and inclusive, which is a huge positive. The housing price point I think could limit this though as people will be priced out of the district.	8/3/2015 12:22 PM
230	Housing and rental prices exclude many lower and middle class families	8/3/2015 12:08 PM

Better Together Community Survey

231	The City of Decatur is becoming more exclusive. Average rental rates of the new apartments are prohibitive for anyone but upper middle class. The traffic is ridiculous with the narrowing of the streets. The people I know who live outside Decatur are very frustrated. There is little parking. It not a handicapped friendly city at all.	8/3/2015 11:06 AM
232	Housing prices are insane. There is no way I could move here now, only here b/c I could afford it 12 years ago. But I feel very left out by all the high income people moving here. Has changed a lot! All the artists and interesting people are cashing out and moving. I would too except my daughter is in school.	8/3/2015 7:21 AM
233	Many older homes are being torn down almost all to build bigger newer homes this inflating real estate prices and raising our taxes. How do you expect families who have been here fo 40 years to stay in their homes when their taxes are so high. Of course they will have to sell move to (I don't know where) so that they don't foreclose on their homes. The polices re wonderful and respond so quickly to anything, but have treated my African American neighbors differently than they would treat me for the same thing. I want to see my street stay diverse I just fear that the older couples with no kids and the less fortunate will be forced to move out making our neighborhood sterile and white. Already I have seen a change in the schools in the 1990s Oakhurst elementary classrooms were 100% African American now there is one African American child in my sons class. Where is the diversity? We are not living in the suburbs nor do we want to. Let's stop forcing people out of their homes.	8/3/2015 2:09 AM
234	We need more affordable housing. I want our teachers to be able to live here	8/2/2015 9:57 PM
235	There is just not enough affordable housing for those that could bring diversity to Decatur. Apartments aren't sufficient. Lower income people want to own their own houses too but the property values and associated taxes have increased to the point that they nearly equal our mortgage payments. It's pushing many of my neighbors, especially those without children, to consider moving. Many of them bought years ago because the property was affordable. I myself stay because the taxes are cheaper than private school but I won't hesitate to sell when they graduate because I'm not sure that very many "people like me" will be around by then.	8/2/2015 9:56 PM
236	The housing options in Decatur are quickly becoming either super expensive or government subsidized housing. There will soon be very little middle class or working class poor in the city. The older African Americans who worked hard to form the neighborhood of Oakhurst feel unwelcome due to regular unsolicited offers to buy their homes and skyrocketing taxes. I desperately want them to be able to stay and feel honored and welcome.	8/2/2015 8:56 PM
237	You mention a lot of topics but ignore political affiliation which makes me feel that there are not a lot of people like me. However, that is ok. I'm a believer in free market and I don't think the cit should interfere too much in diversity.	8/2/2015 8:22 PM
238	I feel safe and trust my local government because I'm a white female. If was a black male I would be afraid for my life and the lives of my family. Racism is strong in Decatur and the rest of the nation...	8/2/2015 8:21 PM
239	It would be nice to see other religious holidays represented more throughout Decatur in December. Red/green wreaths, Christmas trees & lights are all over but the only Hanukkah activity is the menorah lighting on the square. No where else is it decorated for or represented that I know of.	8/2/2015 7:49 PM
240	lower taxes for seniors	8/2/2015 7:41 PM
241	The City spends a lot of money talking about issues and collecting input but often makes decisions based on what Peggy Merris wants. She guides the City Commission and her staff. She has too much power and our city leaders are too weak.	8/2/2015 6:26 PM

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ELECTRONIC POLLING RESULTS

APPENDIX D



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Appendix D. Electronic Polling Results from the Better Together Community Conversation, 8/29/15

Age	Count	Percent
13-17	25	10.6%
18-24	4	1.7%
25-34	12	5.1%
35-44	34	14.4%
45-54	37	15.7%
55-64	49	20.8%
65 and above	75	31.8%
TOTAL	236	100.0%

Race	Count	Percent
Asian	5	2.1%
Black or African American	74	31.6%
Latino or Hispanic	2	0.9%
Native American or American Indian	0	0.0%
White or Caucasian	142	60.7%
More than one race	9	3.8%
Some other racial identify	2	0.9%
TOTAL	234	100.0%

Connection to Decatur	Count	Percent
I live in Clairemont (Area 1)	36	16.0%
I live in Sycamore/Great Lakes (Area 2)	38	16.9%
I live Downtown (Area 3)	44	19.6%
I live in Oakhurst (Area 4)	36	16.0%
I live in Winnona Park (Area 5)	30	13.3%
I work in the City of Decatur	20	8.9%
I own a business in the City of Decatur	0	0.0%
I often visit, dine, worship or shop in Decatur	21	9.3%
TOTAL	225	100.0%

Tenure in City	Count	Percent
0-5 years	59	25.7%
6-10 years	33	14.3%
11-15 years	25	10.9%
16-25 years	26	11.3%
More than 25 years	49	21.3%
I don't live here	38	16.5%

TOTAL	230	100.0%
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"I feel fully welcomed and included in Decatur"	Count	Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	5.6%
Disagree	14	6.0%
Neutral	34	14.7%
Agree	85	36.6%
Strongly Agree	86	37.1%
TOTAL	232	100.0%

How optimistic are you in our collective ability to create a more welcoming, inclusive and fair city for all? FIRST	Count	Percent
Not Optimistic	25	10.8%
Somewhat Optimistic	129	55.8%
Very Optimistic	77	33.3%
TOTAL	231	100.0%

How important is it that everyone be treated in an equitable and impartial manner by fellow citizens and law enforcement in City of Decatur?	Count	Percent
Not important	3	1.4%
Somewhat important	5	2.4%
Very important	203	96.2%
TOTAL	211	100.0%

Have you ever felt like you were treated differently in the City based on the fact that you were different from the majority of residents?	Count	Percent
Yes	70	34.1%
No	106	51.7%
Unsure	29	14.1%
TOTAL	205	100.0%

Have you ever felt that you were approached differently by City of Decatur law enforcement because you were different from the majority of residents?	Count	Percent
Yes	26	14.4%
No	139	77.2%
Unsure	15	8.3%
TOTAL	180	100.0%

"I support a balance of housing options to appeal to a broad range of people of all ages and incomes in my neighborhood."	Count	Percent
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Yes	182	84.7%
No	10	4.7%
Unsure	23	10.7%
TOTAL	215	100.0%

"I believe the City should invest public funds to create pilot projects that support work force housing options."

	Count	Percent
Yes	175	81.4%
No	14	6.5%
Unsure	26	12.1%
TOTAL	215	100.0%

"On my street, I would support the development of 5 or 6 smaller houses on one lot instead of one large house if they are priced for young families and empty nesters."

	Count	Percent
Yes	137	67.8%
No	24	11.9%
Unsure	41	20.3%
TOTAL	202	100.0%

Did your experience today help you better understand the complex challenges facing our City?

	Count	Percent
Not at all	7	3.4%
Somewhat	96	47.3%
Very Much	100	49.3%
TOTAL	203	100.0%

To what degree has your perspective on these challenges shifted today?

	Count	Percent
Not at all	40	22.3%
Somewhat	120	67.0%
Very much	19	10.6%
TOTAL	179	100.0%

What is your level of satisfaction with today's community conversation event?

	Count	Percent
Very low	1	0.5%
Low	11	5.6%
Medium	45	22.8%
High	94	47.7%
Very High	46	23.4%
TOTAL	197	100.0%

What was your favorite part of the day?	Count	Percent
Table Discussions	146	73.7%
Single Story Video	23	11.6%
Participant Guide	11	5.6%
Lunch	12	6.1%
Other	4	2.0%
None	2	1.0%
TOTAL	198	100.0%

How committed are you to staying involved with Better Together?	Count	Percent
Very Committed	114	55.1%
Somewhat Committed	85	41.1%
Not Committed	8	3.9%
TOTAL	207	100.0%

If you plan to stay involved, which activity are you most likely to do?	Count	Percent
Host a conversation	15	7.7%
Encourage others to take the survey	19	9.7%
Commit your organization to being an implementation partner	17	8.7%
Attend follow-up community event in November	112	57.1%
All of the above	33	16.8%
TOTAL	196	100.0%

How optimistic are you about our collective ability to create a more welcoming, inclusive and fair city for all?	Count	Percent
Very optimistic	81	38.6%
Somewhat optimistic	119	56.7%
Not optimistic	10	4.8%
TOTAL	210	100.0%

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PARTICIPANT GUIDE

APPENDIX E



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**WE MIGHT EACH BE
BRIGHT OR STRONG OR
BOLD. BUT TOGETHER,
WE CAN BE BRILLIANT.**

**Community Action Planning
Cafe' Conversation**
Saturday, August 29, 2015
10am-3pm



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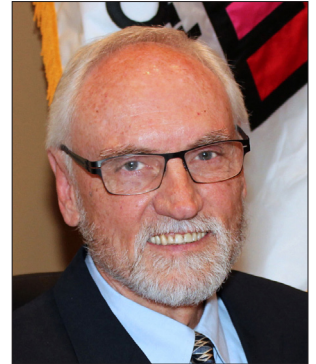


A LETTER FROM MAYOR JIM BASKETT

August 29, 2015

Dear Friends,

The City of Decatur has a long history of working with citizens to identify and achieve shared goals. Today we expand on that foundation with the formal launch of the citywide, citizen-led initiative, Better Together. Better Together seeks to engage a broader group of voices than ever before to help us move toward something as essential to great cities as smart growth and economic sustainability: a culture of mutual respect, inclusion and equity.



This initiative originated from the hundreds of individuals, including many of you, who participated in Decatur's 2010 Strategic Plan and said repeatedly that diversity and equity were assets that should receive the same care and attention as infrastructure and the tax base. The city commission agrees and we are committed to supporting this principle.

Today we are especially grateful to the 19 members of the Better Together Leadership Circle who have spent nine months shaping a process for engaging the broader community in developing a solid and achievable Community Action Plan by the end of the year. They are identified individually on the back cover of this guide and on decaturnext.com. Please make a point to thank them, as Better Together could not have achieved lift-off without their guidance and commitment.

We are also extremely grateful to each of you for the time and thought you are investing in the future of the City of Decatur. Each of you has something important to contribute to this effort, and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Sincerely,

Jim Baskett, Mayor

THE BETTER TOGETHER INITIATIVE

Better Together is an outgrowth of the largest public involvement initiative in Decatur's history: the 2010 Strategic Plan. More than 1,500 individuals weighed in through surveys, town hall meetings and facilitated conversations over a 12-month timeframe. The resulting plan is based on their shared vision for the City and four guiding principles:

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

Principle A: Manage growth while retaining character

Principle B: Encourage a diverse & engaged community

Principle C: Serve as good stewards of the environment and community resources

Principle D: Support a safe, healthy, lifelong community

While it touches on each of the four principles, Better Together was established to respond specifically to Principle B – to encourage a diverse and engaged community. Principle B includes the following goals:

- » Maintain and encourage diversity of race, ethnicity, income, culture, age, family type, and other kinds of diversity
- » Strengthen communication and involvement in and among neighborhoods, city government, volunteer boards and commissions, institutions, community organizations, local businesses, and Decatur as a whole
- » Support, expand, and develop programs, services, events, and opportunities that respond to diverse interests, encourage community interaction, and promote a stronger sense of community
- » Promote a culture of creative innovation and expression

Since the completion of the plan in 2010, the City has accomplished the following tasks related to the goals of Principle B:

- » Established Lifelong Community Advisory Board and created the Lifelong Community Coordinator position
- » Partnered with the Decatur Arts Alliance to host the Sidewalk Saturdays program to provide free street entertainment with a focus on international performers

- » Expanded the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Service Project
- » Launched the Go60+ Shuttle for residents aged 60 and older
- » Expanded Homestead Exemption
- » Began tracking diversity of Decatur 101 participants
- » Incorporated Historic Beacon community exhibits into the new Beacon Municipal Center

The current community action planning process will help the City implement many of the remaining tasks before the next strategic plan in 2020.

The Better Together initiative kicked off in December 2014 when a group of 19 residents, business owners and civic leaders began meeting monthly to envision a process for creating a community action plan. Called the Leadership Circle, this diverse group of women and men had the daunting task of identifying focus areas for a broader community conversation that would ultimately lead to a Community Action Plan.

In addition to Principle B, the Leadership Circle's work was also influenced by several recent trends and events that are directly related to diversity and community engagement:

- » Decatur's population has changed dramatically over a short period of time, becoming significantly less racially and economically diverse.
- » The desirability of City services, the excellent city school system, and outstanding location has caused a surge in housing values, making the City increasingly unaffordable for older residents, young people, and low and middle-income families.
- » Community policing has moved to the forefront as several Decatur residents have reported being targets of racial profiling in their neighborhoods.

Through a series of thoughtful and sometimes difficult discussions, the Leadership Circle ultimately identified three focus areas that addressed both the Strategic Plan's broad directive and the pressing issues the community is currently facing:

- » An Equitable and Inclusive City: Cultivating relationships across differences and creating conditions for all community members to thrive and participate fully in city life. This includes applying an equity lens in matters of leadership and decision-making and conducting community outreach in culturally relevant ways.
- » Racially Just Community Policing: Improving relationships between community members and law enforcement by addressing racism, bias, and privilege to ensure all community members, especially people of color, are treated in a just way with equity and respect.
- » Diverse and Affordable Housing: Preventing displacement of existing residents and supporting the development of a variety of housing types and prices.

In July 2015, the Leadership Circle shifted its focus outward, with an eye toward engaging the larger community in a discussion around these focus areas for the purpose of developing a Community Action Plan for achieving a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable Decatur.

Timeline

October 6, 2014

Decatur City Commission approves initial phase of Better Together initiative

December 16, 2014

Leadership Circle begins monthly meetings

May 15, 2015

Leadership Circle identifies three focus areas

July 21, 2015

City Commission approves second phase of Better Together

July 31, 2015

Release of the Better Together Community Survey

August 22, 2015

Working Across Differences training session

August 29, 2015

Better Together Community Action Planning Café Conversation

September 1-30, 2015

Independently-hosted community conversations

December 2015 or January 2016

Community Action Plan presented to City Commission



PREPARING FOR A PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION

Community conversations bring together old friends and total strangers, people who have many shared interests and people who have absolutely nothing in common. Participants should feel comfortable sharing different perspectives and differences of opinion so long as they do so in a way that enhances the conversation. To help ensure a productive session, please review the Guidelines and Assumptions below.

GUIDELINES

Speak from your experience

- » Be honest and willing to share.
- » Speak only for yourself and avoid speaking for others or for an entire group. Use “I” statements.
- » Avoid critiquing others’ experiences; focus on your own experiences.

Respect the group

- » What you share in the Better Together conversations is honored and respected.
- » Be mindful of the time.
- » If you tend to share a lot, challenge yourself to listen more today.
- » If you tend to remain quiet in group discussions, challenge yourself to speak a little more today.

Listen to learn

- » Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn from others and change your mind.
- » Lean into discomfort. Allow yourself to stretch beyond your comfort zone.

Be aware of your impact

- » Resist the temptation to interrupt.
- » Suspend judgment. Be open to the wisdom in each person’s story.

Be in good conversation

- » Use the skills that you have to help the whole group have a good conversation. Be courageous.

ASSUMPTIONS

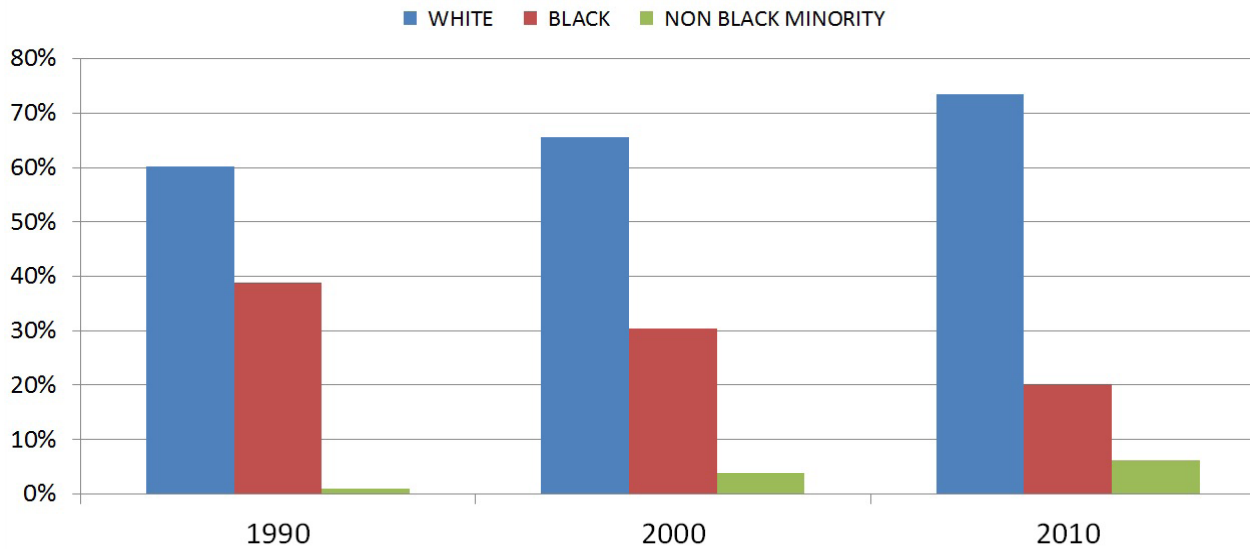
- » Diversity is a valuable community asset.
- » Diversity of input and strategy is essential to yield results that will serve a diverse population.
- » Taking time for people to genuinely connect, learn together and develop relationships can grow trust and generate more effective collaborative action.
- » If people are passionate about something and involved in the creation of the plan, they are more likely to be invested in the implementation of actions.
- » Local government is responsible for representing the interests of citizens from all backgrounds and all walks of life.
- » Trust and cooperation are necessary for positive and productive relationships between citizens and local government.

DECATUR: YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

The City of Decatur covers an area of 4.2 square miles and is home to 20,148 people (2013 estimate), up from 18,147 in 2000. In addition to overall growth, the City has experienced dramatic shifts in the make-up of its population, especially in terms of race and income. The charts below illustrate several notable changes over the last several decades.

First, the percentage of African-Americans has decreased from approximately 40 percent of Decatur’s population to approximately 20 percent. The share of white residents has increased by more than 13 percent, and there has been a slight uptick in the percentage of non-black minority residents.

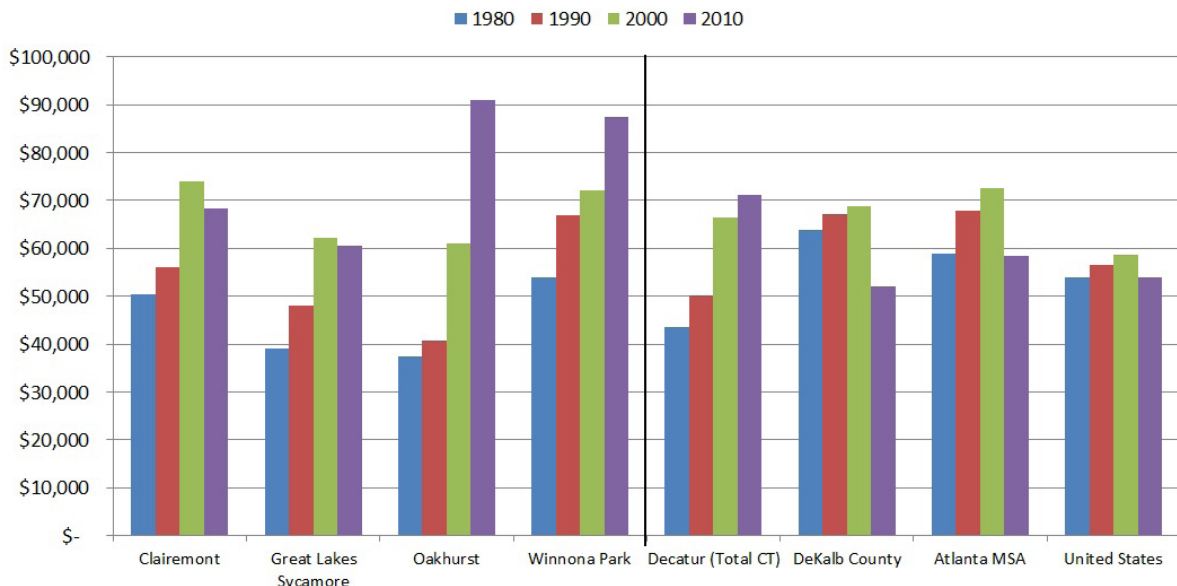
Share of Population by Race - 1990 to 2010



SOURCE: FINDINGS ON THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN DECATUR. 2014

Second, household incomes have risen substantially. The median household income for the City in 1980 was \$44,000. By 2010 it had grown to \$71,000. (Note: Incomes are reported in 2013 dollars.) The most significant increase in household income was seen in Oakhurst, where the median jumped from \$37,000 to \$91,000 over this 40-year period, with the most substantial increase from 2000 to 2010.

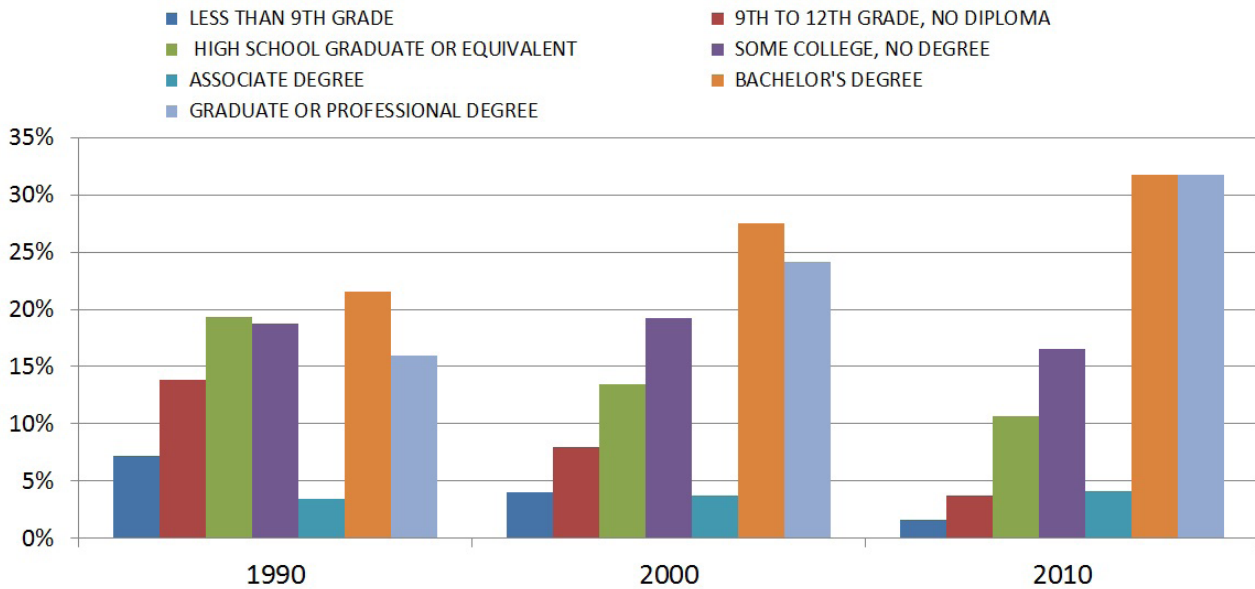
Median Household Income (2013 Dollars) - 1980 to 2010



SOURCE: FINDINGS ON THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN DECATUR. 2014

Related to household income is educational attainment, which also has shifted significantly. In 1990, residents with graduate degrees accounted for just 16 percent of the City's population; in 2010, 32 percent. The percentage of residents who did not pursue education beyond a high school diploma fell from 19 percent to 11 percent.

Decatur Educational Attainment - 1990 to 2010



SOURCE: FINDINGS ON THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN DECATUR, 2014

Beyond these changes within the existing City of Decatur, additional growth and change may be possible if potential annexation occurs. If all current plans are adopted, within the next three to four years Decatur will add approximately 1.6 square miles of primarily undeveloped land and about 12,000 residents.

In terms of leadership and paid staff, the City employs 306 individuals, about one-fourth of whom are part-time employees. One hundred and seventy-two (56 percent) of the City's employees are male and 134 (44 percent) female. Sixty-seven percent of City employees are black and 30 percent are white.

The City has 56 available volunteer board and commission positions, seven of which are currently vacant. Of the 49 filled positions, 27 (55 percent) are white males; 18 (37 percent) are white females; three (6 percent) are black males; and one (2 percent) is an Asian male. Vacancies for these positions are announced in The Focus and the City takes statements of interest on a voluntary basis. Based on these statements of interest, the City Commission conducts interviews and then makes appointments.

THREE ACTION AREAS FOR A DIVERSE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

1. *An Equitable and Inclusive City: Cultivating relationships across differences and creating conditions for all community members to thrive and participate fully in city life. This includes applying an equity lens in matters of leadership and decision-making and conducting community outreach in culturally relevant ways.*

Background

Through the hundreds of community meetings, surveys, focus groups, and other opportunities for citizen participation that helped shape the City of Decatur's 2010 Strategic Plan, residents made it clear that encouraging and sustaining a diverse and engaged community was as much a priority as ensuring a strong local economy. They made it equally clear that the scope of diversity should encompass race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, beliefs, ability, and income level. What the citizens who participated in the strategic planning process were aiming for through diversity and engagement was an equitable community, which first requires a discussion about equity.

What is equity?

(Adapted by The Art of Community from *Radical Welcome* by Stephanie Spellers)

Equity is just and fair inclusion. An equitable society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goals of equity must be to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential.

Moving towards equity and inclusion in a community requires commitment, practice, and investment. Often it demands that people and organizations unlearn patterns of behavior that have historically kept some people from participating and prospering. Focusing on equity and inclusion fortifies efforts to be welcoming and hospitable while also demonstrating a commitment to doing the personal, interpersonal, institutional, cultural, and systemic work to eliminate historic, systemic barriers that limit the genuine embrace of groups generally marginalized in dominant culture.

What is an equitable community?

An equitable community is a harmonious, thriving, and resilient community for all of its members. These communities understand that each person brings gifts and perspectives that help the whole community to thrive. In these communities, racial, cultural, and other differences are seen as assets and efforts are made to embrace everyone's voices, presence, and power, with a special commitment to embracing groups who have been marginalized and defined as The Other.

COMMUNITY VOICES (SOME QUOTES HAVE BEEN EDITED FOR LENGTH)

"I worry that Decatur's successes will lead to Decatur's failure. My students and their families began to look more and more homogenous. What are we doing to keep our economic and racial diversity? Do the new Decaturites value these things, too? How do we make sure the people who work in Decatur (teachers, firefighters, city workers) can afford to live in Decatur? How can we make sure our elderly citizens don't get pushed out?"

"Decatur exerts great effort to being a welcoming and fair city for all. It is a very difficult task, but I think the citizens are willing to try."

"Gentrification—hate that term—is shifting the socio-economics of the population away from the "blue-collar" and less materially advantaged citizens, which I find detracts from true diversity."

"This concerns me because I want my children to go to school with other races, income levels, family structures, religious beliefs, etc. I'm concerned that Decatur is becoming a bubble of privilege."

"You cannot engineer a diverse community."

"Unfortunately, I don't think we can rewind the clock and go back to the day where we had vast socioeconomic diversity, that train seems to have left the station. There will be some leveling out of home values of course, but the strength of the schools, the activities, the proximity to the city, etc. are a reality that make this a popular place to live. Therefore, working within the current reality, what can be done to attract more racial and ethnic diversity among those that can afford to move here?"

The Other is any group that is likely (or would reasonably expect) to experience patterns of historic, systemic oppression and marginalization in the community, especially given the community’s dominant race, culture, language, generation, socioeconomic class, education level, birth country, sexual orientation, and physical ability.

To assess your community and determine the community’s dominant culture, determine which groups of people hold power—that is, the ability to have authority or influence over others, and to have their story, culture, and voice shape the community. These groups are your power center. Which groups do not hold this power? Whose story does not yet shape the history, culture, and identity of the community? These groups are The Other for your community.



	Inviting	Inclusive	Equitable
The Message	“Come, join our community and share our cultural values and heritage.”	“Help us to be diverse.”	“Bring your culture, voice, worldview, lifestyle - your whole self; we want to engage in truly mutual relationship.”
The Goal	Assimilation: community invites new people to enter and adopt dominant identity	Incorporation: community welcomes marginalized groups, but no true shift in community’s cultural identity and practices	Justice: community embodies and expresses the full range of voices and gifts present, including The Other
The Effort	Systems and programs in place to invite and incorporate newcomers into existing structures and identity; rejection or marginalization of those who do not assimilate	Stated commitment to inclusivity, but less attention to ongoing programs, systemic analysis or power; emphasis on individual efforts	Systems and programs in place to invite and welcome people, including those from the margins; to ensure their presence, gifts, and perspective will be visible and valued; and to ensure that these communities, gifts, and values influence the community’s identity, policies, and structures
The Result	Healthy numbers (perhaps with some members who claim marginal identity) but community and its membership is overwhelmingly monocultural	Revolving door, with people coming from margins only to stay on the fringe or leave; community remains monocultural, with some pockets of difference	Transformed and transforming community with open doors and open hearts; different groups share power and shape identity, values, culture, leadership, structures, and policies

2. **Racially Just Community Policing: Improving relationships between community members and law enforcement by addressing racism, bias, and privilege to ensure all community members, especially people of color, are treated in a just way with equity and respect.**

Background

Reports of community racial profiling and race-related police stops have received significantly more notice nationwide since 2009 when Harvard University professor and television personality Henry Louis Gates was arrested by Cambridge, Massachusetts police officers for breaking into his own home after he had locked himself outside. Since that time other arrests and police stops that appeared to have been racially motivated have been widely reported, further raising awareness of the issue and generating strong demands for racially just policing practices.

Metro Atlanta has had its share of alleged racial profiling incidents, including events in Decatur where African-American men and women were reported by community members or stopped by police officers who thought the men and women seemed out of place or appeared suspicious.

In the wake of these incidents, the Decatur Community Coalition was established to pursue a collaborative relationship with law enforcement in order to “preserve the dignity and rights of citizens and residents of Decatur, visitors, and commuters who are black.” The organization maintains a dialogue with the Decatur Police, and both entities are represented in the Better Together Leadership Circle.

The Decatur Police Department provides information to the community on the importance of avoiding biased perceptions about people when calling the police and encourages residents to rely on accurate and complete descriptions of suspicious behavior, not suspicious people. The department also now collects demographic information on Vehicle and Suspicious Person Stops. The information is published every quarter and, thus far, indicates the department stops are consistent with the demographics of the area.

The department is currently creating a three-year strategic plan, a process that has included a series of focus groups with a broad range of citizens from ages 13 to 90 who represent ethnic, gender, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity, as well as persons who have positive and negative perceptions of law enforcement. The final plan should be available to the community in November 2015.

COMMUNITY VOICES

“I grew up in Oakhurst and I’m pretty friendly. I even have a child in school here. But walking my dog down the street or taking my son to the park, I feel invisible to my neighbors. They simply don’t tend to engage with black people as much from what I’ve observed.”

“I am concerned about gentrification driving long-term residents to leave the city, and I am concerned that gentrifying whites are contributing to an atmosphere of intimidation towards long-time residents of color, such as by constantly calling police because a person of color looks ‘suspicious.’ I would like to see initiatives which regularly bring people into contact with their neighbors of all kinds.”

“I have experienced overzealous acts by local law enforcement targeting minorities.”

“I love that the police respond so quickly to any and everyone. They are concerned about all crime from vandalism and petty theft to more serious events. They don’t choose the crimes or the criminals, but they have to respond to the facts.”

3. Diverse and Affordable Housing: Preventing displacement of existing residents and supporting the development of a variety of housing types and prices.

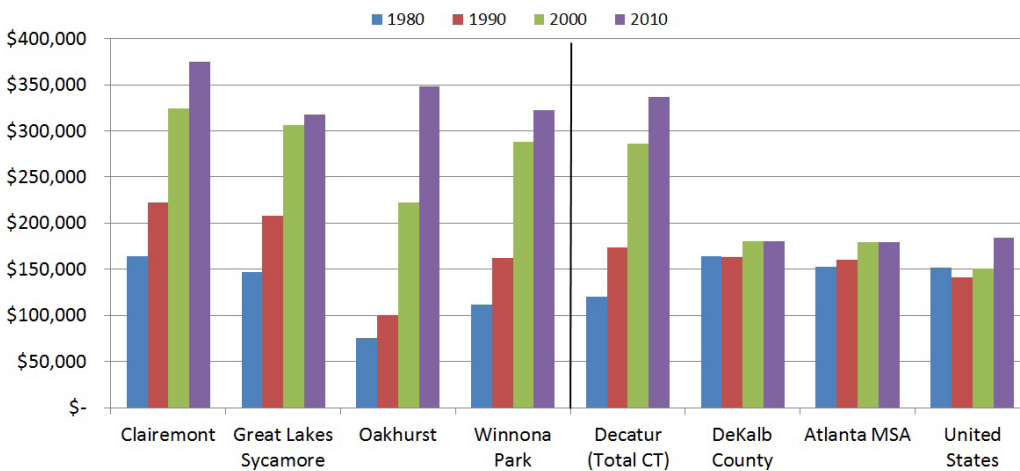
Background

From a residential real estate perspective, the City of Decatur has great schools, proximity to major employment centers, and a charming and vibrant downtown. The one thing Decatur lacks is a lot of available land for new homes. It's the classic story of supply and demand, and the result has been a surge in home values and rents. In all areas of the City, home values more than doubled between 1980 and 2010. The 2010 median home value for Decatur was \$336,375. By contrast, the median home values for DeKalb County and for the Atlanta MSA were about \$180,000.

COMMUNITY VOICES

"We are renters, and could not afford to buy at this point, even though we have lived in Decatur City for seven years. I gravitated to Decatur as an adult because I grew up here, but Decatur now is not like the Decatur of my youth—not that it should be, but the trend toward near-million dollar houses and tear down/build big is edging out people like me, who have modest paying jobs."

Median Home Value (2013 Dollars) - 1980 to 2010



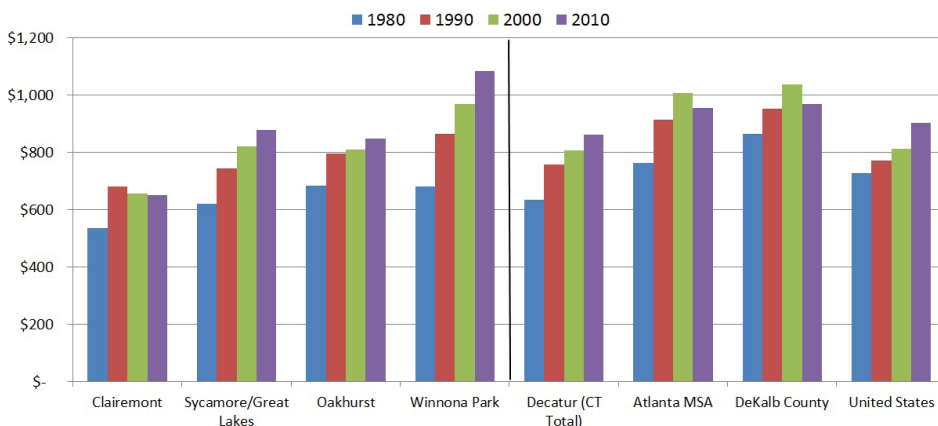
SOURCE: FINDINGS ON THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN DECATUR. 2014

"I know that if I needed to move to a bigger home to accommodate my growing family, I would not be able to afford a home in my own neighborhood. After eight years as a Decatur resident I would have to move."

"While our household has a high income, I am concerned about housing options for those who do not. I'm also concerned about future housing options for me when I want to downsize and my income decreases. I would like to continue living in a single-family home (not condo), and I see the smaller homes being replaced by large homes. I fear there will be no other choice for me when I want to downsize than to move out of the city."

Some neighborhoods, particularly Winona Park, have seen a dramatic increase in rents as well.

Median Rent (2013 Dollars) - 1980 to 2010



While some Decatur homeowners have made substantial returns on their investments, others who live on fixed incomes, work in lower-wage industries, or are stretched financially for any number of reasons, are finding that they can no longer afford their property taxes. Affordable rentals and starter homes are scarce. Some longtime residents feel like their communities are rapidly disappearing as modest, older homes are razed to make way for larger, far more expensive ones.

In this market, a one long-time safety net for lower-income households is stretched far beyond its limits. The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) was established in 1938 to build housing for low income households and, over the years, has expanded its focus to include the revitalization of the Decatur community as a whole through the renewal and redevelopment of sub-standard housing. DHA is currently assisting 1,664 families by providing 475 housing units and 1,189 housing vouchers. An additional 3,000 people are on its waiting list, and the agency estimates the wait time for new clients at five to 10 years. Due to the backlog, DHA has stopped accepting new applications for certain vital services, including Section 8, public housing, and elderly housing.

In terms of housing, the City of Decatur is facing three basic challenges:

- » A dwindling inventory of affordable homes for low- and moderate-income families
- » Sharp increases in home values and property taxes that have created a severe financial strain for many existing homeowners
- » Lack of available undeveloped land that would allow for construction of additional housing

To reduce the property tax burden for seniors, the City of Decatur established a \$1,000 homestead exemption from City taxes for resident owners who are 65 years of age or older; a \$50,000 exemption from city and school taxes for resident owners who are at least 62 years of age with income less than \$25,000; a \$10,000 exemption from school taxes for resident owners at least 62 years of age and income less than \$10,000 (excluding retirement income); a \$50,000 homestead exemption from school taxes for residents age 70 or older; and a complete exemption from school taxes for residents age 80 or older with less than \$40,000 in income.

City officials have identified several ways to further address the tax issue, each of which will require action from the state legislature and voters.

- » Annexation – As mentioned earlier, there are currently plans to expand the City’s geographical limits by annexing areas primarily to the north and northwest of the city. One of the goals of annexing these areas is to expand the property tax base, which should stabilize or reduce the City and City Schools’ property tax rate. Annexation requires approval from the state legislature, and in 2015, a bill that would have allowed Decatur to proceed with its plans passed the House but did not progress in the Senate, largely due to lack of clarity about possible annexation plans by neighboring municipalities and the potential creation of several new cities in the northern part of DeKalb County. The City Commission will decide before the end of 2015 on what future actions it may support during the 2016 legislative session. If approved by the legislature and signed by the governor, voters in the areas proposed for annexation will then vote to decide whether they want to become part of the City of Decatur. The earliest the election could happen is November 2016.
- » Homestead exemptions – In 2014, the City Commission adopted a recommendation for significant increases in the City’s homestead exemptions, targeted at lower and moderate income seniors. Legislation was introduced in the 2015 General Assembly session but was defeated by the House of Representatives. City Commissioners have already indicated that they will return to the General Assembly in 2016 to advocate for passage of the City’s proposal. The increase in the homestead exemption would then go before voters. The earliest it could appear on the ballot would be November 2016

- » Tax exemption for seniors – Recently the City Schools of Decatur’s School Board voted to exempt homeowners age 65 and older from the school system’s property taxes. To move forward, the Board of Education will have to make its recommendation to the Georgia General Assembly with final approval by Decatur voters. The earliest it could appear on the ballot would be November 2016.

Finding viable options for encouraging the construction of smaller, affordable houses for first time buyers and empty nesters looking to downsize is also one of the City’s primary development goals. To that end:

- » The City is working on several pilot projects to prove that a market exists for options such as cottage court developments.
- » There is an existing density bonus to encourage the construction of affordable condominium and rental units, and the City plans to improve upon it to encourage more developers to make use of it.
- » The Avondale MARTA development in East Decatur includes a phase dedicated to affordable rental housing for senior citizens.

Overall, finding the right mix of affordable housing solutions will be challenging and will require creativity and flexibility. Most likely, the City of Decatur will have to develop new approaches or identify new combinations of existing programs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the City doing this?

The Better Together initiative is a vehicle for involving a broad spectrum of Decatur residents and business people in developing specific plans to achieve and maintain a diverse and engaged community. It is also intended to identify opportunities for individuals, neighborhoods, the business community, and local government to work collaboratively to bring those plans to fruition.

How is this process being funded?

The Better Together initiative is funded by the City of Decatur and the Decatur-based national nonprofit organization Welcoming America, which received a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta for this project.

What is a Community Action Plan?

The community action plan is a road map for implementing community change by clarifying what will be done, who will do it, and how it will be done. The plan describes what the community wants to achieve, what activities are required during a specified time period, and what resources are needed to be successful.

The community action plan will support the City’s existing strategic plan by providing recommendations and suggestions for more specific actions that would help to deliver on Principle B of the 2010 strategic plan. The strategic plan set the general direction, and the community action plan will provide the details on how to get there.

What will be included in Decatur’s Community Action Plan?

The Community Action Plan will be divided into three sections:

- » An overview of key findings and recommendations, which can serve as a stand-alone summary
- » Background information to help the reader understand how the plan came about and the community it serves. This section will include overviews of the City of Decatur and the Better Together Initiative and also an explanation of how the plan was developed.



- » And finally, the plan itself. A detailed set of recommended actions, including who is responsible, specific strategies, and suggested timeline.

What types of recommendations might we expect?

- » Issue-specific ideas in such areas as community policing and affordable housing
- » Policy suggestions
- » Communication and outreach suggestions
- » Community engagement ideas
- » Relationship-building opportunities
- » Learning and education opportunities

At what level will action take place? Who will implement the action steps?

Decatur's community action plan will yield everything from simple steps that individuals can take to encourage a more diverse and engaged community to complex recommendations that will require committed funding, technical expertise, and a more detailed set of strategies that will need to be determined by relevant partners. For this reason, the plan will specify action steps that can be accomplished by a range of entities, including individuals, neighborhoods, businesses/organizations, and City Commissioners and Staff.

When will the plan be available?

The final plan will be presented to the City Commission in December 2015 or January 2016. At that time it will also be posted on decaturnext.com.

How can we monitor the progress of the community action plan?

Like all plans, there will be periodic reports to the community regarding the accomplishment of various tasks.

RESOURCES

Organizations and Web Sites

Gender Spectrum (www.genderspectrum.org)

Look Different (www.lookdifferent.org)

National Low Income Housing Coalition (www.nlihc.org)

Partnership for Southern Equity (www.partnershipforsouthernequity.org)

PolicyLink (www.policylink.org)

Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation (www.raceforward.org)

Showing Up for Racial Justice (www.showingupforracialjustice.org)

Teaching Tolerance: A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (www.tolerance.org)

Wiser Together (www.wiser-together.com)

News Articles, Web Pages and Blog Posts

“Comprehensive List of LGBTQ + Term Definitions” | It’s Pronounced Metrosexual
(www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/)

“I, Racist” | John Metta
(www.huffingtonpost.com/john-metta/i-racist_b_7770652.html)

“Microaggressions in Everyday Life” | Derald Wing Sue and David Rivera
(www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life)

“Strategies to Take Action and Build Trust Between The Community And Police” | Everyday Democracy
(www.everyday-democracy.org/news/strategies-build-trust-and-take-action-wake-ferguson)

“Summer of Racial Justice and Healing” | World Trust
(www.blog.world-trust.org/blog/clips-from-the-summer-of-justiceandracialhealing)

“Value of Home: 2015 PAHRC Report” | Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation
(www.pahrc.org/report.html)

“Why It’s So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism” | Robin DiAngelo
(www.huffingtonpost.com/good-men-project/why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism_b_7183710.html)

Movies, Videos and Podcasts

“Allegories on Race and Racism” | Camara Jones, TEDxEemory
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNhcY6fTyBM)

“American Denial”
(www.pbs.org/independentlens/american-denial/)

“Cops See It Differently” | This American Life, National Public Radio
(<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/547/cops-see-it-differently-part-one>)

“The Danger of a Single Story” | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, TED Talks
(http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

“I Got 99 Problems...Palsy Is Just One of Them” | Maysoon Zayid, TED Talks
(www.ted.com/talks/maysoon_zayid_i_got_99_problems_palsy_is_just_one?language=en)

“I’m Not a Racist, Am I?”
(www.notracistmovie.com)

"Race: The Power of an Illusion"

(www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm)

"Racism – What Will It Take to End It?" | Cynthia Silva Parker, TEDxSarasota

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnHNbmt_oR8)

"Systemic Racism: Videos + Readings" | Storify

(www.storify.com/JessieNYC/systemic-racism-video-series-with-additional-readi)

Books

"Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People" | Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald

"Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority" | Tim Wise

"Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race" | Derald Wing Sue

Comprehensive Guides and Toolkits

Cracking the Codes, World Trust

(www.crackingthecodes.org/)

Race and Equity Inclusion Action Guide

(www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide/)

Racial Equity Resource Guide

(www.racialequityresourceguide.org)

Racial Equity Tools

(www.racialequitytools.org)

Decatur Resources

City of Decatur 2010 Strategic Plan

(www.decaturnext.com/adopted-plan-downloads)

"Findings on the State of Diversity in the City of Decatur" | Christian Perry and Casie Yoder, City of Decatur

(www.decaturga.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=5426)

"Lifelong Decatur Survey" | City of Decatur

(www.decaturga.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=5790)

Decatur Housing Authority

(www.decaturohousing.org)

City-Wide Initiatives in Other Regions

Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights

(www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/)

Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative

(www.seattle.gov/rsji/)

Special thanks extended to

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Welcoming America

The Better Together Leadership Circle:

Jon Abercrombie
Christy Amador
Shan Arora
Haqqa Bolling
Mike Booker
Don Denard
Yvonne Druyeh Dodd
Eli Dodson
Linda Harris
Lyn Menne
Peggy Merriss
Jessy Molina
Julie Pennington-Russell
Christian Perry
Jamilah Rashid
Kijua Sanders-McMurtry
Rozie Slaughter
Rev. Nibs Stroupe
Casie Yoder



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ACTION IDEAS SUMMARY

APPENDIX F



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1.Affordable housing 2.end racial profiling 3. Neighbor friendly
Building relationships with residents to build trust both ways.
created opportunities (where they are not security) for citizens to get to know police officers- softball games -invite them to block parties - other
The police department and churches should cooperate to have monthly block parties sponsored by the police department and a church in the same area as the neighborhood. Police do not wear their uniforms to the block parties. It builds relationships with police and neighborhoods. This has been done in Fresno California and has been a success. Chief Jerry Dyer of Fresno Police Department loves to share about this program's success.
establish neighborhood watches and other opportunities for neighbors and Decatur police to engage. community policing=better together
Growth plan - citizen review - more communication between city and schools
Finding a way to have more integration between the white & black communities - housing - schools (social groups)
Community groups can advocate for affordable housing (public housing, subsidized housing, and workforce housing) to cut down on "not in my backyard" effect, especially on educating others on dispelling stereotypes of people living in public housing
More programs and involvement for ages 18 - 24 and housing for graduated college students
Keep generational diversity. Give more relief on taxes
Intentionally consider inclusiveness in income and intergenerational matters (Don't price people out.) Continue to have diverse (race, income, age, parts of town) gatherings to get to know each other.
Use the Habitat for Humanity model or something similar to permit a range of economic levels to afford housing in the city. Perhaps a special variance that permits relatively small/decent/affordable homes to be built in Decatur. Businesses and faith communities could provide the property and volunteers build the homes.
create business or jobs or volunteer opportunities for people, esp. young people with disabilities.
Including people with disability paid in jobs and volunteering in city government and city business
had a piece of public art that invited dialogue with one another-a giant sofa or set of chairs that was also art.
Publicize Decatur 101 dates and similar opportunities on multiple media platforms - Decatur TV stations? Provide transportation to city commission meetings, Decatur 101, etc.
Develop neighborhood barter systems to support local artists, young professionals and support seniors with needs.
Have forums about school board/city commission relationship (like this initiative)
The City of Decatur and Decatur School Board need to collaborate and communicate regularly and fully.
I love how my children are being educated around diversity issues in the Decatur School system. Can we move some of those pedagogical tools into our daily practices around the city?
community effort to reduce the learning gap between different races and cultures.
Welcome Wagon for new residents - packet of info regarding Decatur city, schools, government, business, police, fire, events, etc.
The youth of Decatur should gather together to talk about stereotypes and assumptions that they have been held to. By educating the youth of today, Decatur will become a richer, more accepting community.
More activities for teens in Decatur to bring them together
One Best Idea - The simulations for students to see how it feels to be on the other end of the spectrum
Creating a program like this but for teenagers so they can share their stories to their peers in a safe environment
More information and attention to our youth
Intergenerational Interaction: tweens/teens and senior citizens
More diversity in city of Decatur neighborhoods and schools
Disability inclusion: promote volunteering - city - schools - government - recreation - jobs and job preparation programs
Make a Decatur 101 targeted to schools in Decatur. How you as a citizen can make a change.
Create more social opportunities and settings for teenagers.
Programs and functions for high school aged students to help with counseling (ex. young life)
Decatur High School students should lunch with a "senior".
Just like community policing there should be community learning around education issues.
Create and publish opportunities for citizens to volunteer and work with the schools even if their children are grown or if they don't have children. This would provide the opportunity to form intergenerational / interracial relationships.
Find ways to require or strongly encourage parents of elementary school students to engage in community action conversations.
Get Youth more active in Community. School performance arts presentations to Seniors, volunteer to baby sit, tutor older/younger people with various skill sets, etc.....
establish a young adult volunteer group to increase community engagement beyond required volunteer high school hours
Enhance services to kids at the high school to do ride-alongs, etc.
Develop diverse citizen review committees to review building and zoning plans.
Interfaith advisory council for city leadership
Mayor getting to know all people in the community not just officials.

Community plans must include flexibility/ability to be augmented and updated. Processes and decisions should be accomplished with deadlines, be transparent & thoroughly discussed with members of affected neighborhood.
Change public comment back to beginning of city meeting and publicize this time and "service"
Interact with others in our neighborhood and community. Local government more outreach in all.
Create a better together commission with a continuing role in Decatur with a role in community action and budget determinations
Better Together (leadership circle) should have a line item in the City of Decatur budget to insure viability and permanency. A citizen driven effort to insure structured and organized input in community issues and development
Develop a community view of Decatur development needs and wants. Review & change current City building codes and ordinances to ensure they support development needs and goals.
Would like to see the city actually engage all areas of city in community building events and programs, rather than just downtown and Oakhurst areas
City to advertise SMART 911
City Decatur employees should set-up a rotation of city employees at each neighborhood association meeting rotating service speeches.
Create a telephone number for people to notify city staff of problems or issues. Everyone does not have computer skills, or have a smart phone or computer available to them.
Better channels of communication with city commission. Possibly have a list serve or emails to citizens on upcoming items that will be voted on by the CC.
Neighborhood Advocate to liaison with city regarding concerns in all areas - policing - taxes - housing, etc.
Continue forms of this kind to include Builders and Bankers
Transparent communication to address homogenizing of communities.
Marketing and getting information about the city out to new and long-term residents
1. Porch fest to incorporate small group 2.Neighborhoods to take on a cause to volunteer 3.Decatur only events city local government
have more community nights at coffee shops/restaurants focusing on common interests (photography, films, poetry, etc.)
There are so many new Decaturites, it's more necessary than ever to have new resident packets so they can learn how to get involved in the community.
In our community - let's have some resources & tools in the school/community so that people learn how to let people in the community circle. How to have a conversation with people that are different.
Encourage, train, and/or structure community service across sectors. People together contributing to the community [is the idea]. How do we engage those who don't easily engage?
Welcoming & Inclusive - Identify/create a plan for each neighborhood to feel safe to meet at neighborhood centers.
make ongoing invitation via email to participate with the better together initiatives.
Diversity and engaged community. Getting the neighborhood involved.
Galvanize neighborhood associations in ways that promote community: 1) Neighborhood association field day - tee shirts & slogans for each neighborhood with participation in a neighborhood competition; 2) Share best practices for making neighborhood associations work - share info, ideas, resources across neighborhood associations citywide.
Develop "small groups" of diverse groups of Decatur citizens that meet regularly to discuss issues and propose solutions related to race and economic inequality
Provide opportunities for single working moms to be able to attend community events. They need sitters for their children. they never attend events because they don't have a community to take care of their families.
Involve everyone by giving them a task to contribute
Continue to connect to our aging seniors. Allow events to connect young people to seniors in their neighborhood.
Be intentional about including everyone in the decisions and conversations. This would include low-income individuals as well. This was not a part of the polls that we took. Did we go to the housing authority residents nearby to invite and involve them?
Arts and cultural programming that is diverse (ethnically/culturally/generationally) that encourages gatherings, conversations, interaction, free expression and understanding among citizens. - FOOD as an incentive but as a way to express and share diverse cultures.
Remember that Decatur is DeKalb's front door and help people who come for county services, jury duty, etc.
Ask questions about neighbors - who you met. Meet people in city/neighborhoods ask about them. show you care.
Build a MOOC for Decatur 101 so people can access a class even if they cannot leave home.
Juneteenth at Decatur. A community-wide celebration of diversity among individuals and groups.
Create and sustain opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas.
Keep Decatur cool, diverse, friendly and community. Peace, love, Decatur.
Community talent shows by age groups
Community wide "Foyers groups" and/or "potlucks." sign up to host other residents in your home or to attend. Bring a dish and something to drink.

Have diverse gatherings of inclusivity at all moments. Preservation of Decatur for new residents moving in.
Intentionally consider inclusiveness [considering] income and intergenerational. Question: do young people want to live here? Have conversations in schools/colleges at planning stage w/ citizens that have been excluded.
Create public forums for people to share their stories.
We need more diversity: invite different races, incomes, cultures, [and] ages.
Quarterly "Block-Party" (karaoke machines!) festivals around CoD with food provided by the city, to help neighborhoods mingle & residents expand who they know.
Have a wider variety of music at concerts on the square - we need Motown
Encourage cultural festivals to celebrate our differences & come together. Possibly a Juneteenth celebration of Black History month celebration.
Revitalize the city's neighborhood association meetings to created connections across different neighborhoods through Better Together principles.
Reach out to diverse residents to specifically target those who might not know about city services & opportunities, and invite them to take Decatur 101.
Bring it up - talk to neighbors & friends about the subject of equality. Share stories from friends of color about how they would like to feel in their community.
Create educational opportunities for people to understand experiences of other races.
Make a more concerted effort to welcome international visitors. They are ambassadors to the world abroad for the City of Decatur. Welcome signs from MARTA, and other entry points for those visitors to the City.
Racial education, for every race here in Decatur.
Integrate communities(black & white); more activities for teens to come together
Because of the large influx of people coming into the city, a welcoming committee of sorts to introduce them to the city.
Oakhurst Porchfest an example of coming together
Real conversation that's genuine. That's how I feel welcomed. I love the Ted Talk quote: "stereotypes can be true but it's incomplete." Get to know people not just based on a single story.
More diverse (international) and affordable events). Ex. BBQ and Blues Festival is \$20 just to get in - NOT affordable.
Decatur "Ted Talk" or a new "storytelling" forum? Decatur library? Twains?
Address issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the community. Think more carefully about diversity.
We had an ongoing, multiyear forum(s) for having "safe" conversations about racism/classism.
Do community education on the value of having diverse incomes in the community.
I would like to see more get together like this because it makes me feel more welcome. I was sitting at table 5 and the ladies was so loving and kind by talking with them I feel more welcome.
Share stories-perhaps host initiatives thru neighborhood associations/faith communities-in "neutral" atmosphere.
Listen and respect others get to know each other
influence local media use Decaturish/Decatur Magazine to tell/share a neighbor's story
community gatherings of diverse people sharing stories
get to know each other through community meetings to clear up the prejudice against other cultures and races. more you know, less you assume.
continue the conversation about peoples' perception
Have opportunities to "share our stories" with those who are different from us. Process: historical perspectives-current issue for those involved-sharing personal stories-next steps.
Invite someone who is different from you to your personal social activity-dinner group, book club, workout group, church group etc.
ID the wall (barriers) between the community and have discussions between those.
Regular storytelling time. share about your life/who you are. on some types of structure or topic for sessions or theme. Could be in different type building and topics could be themed around that. serve food and keep publicizing.
Make Decatur more welcoming for single city dwellers
Create educational experiences about how it would be to be a different race, so that you can see how it is for someone else.
Change the tag line of the City to reflect a more welcoming, inclusive attitude. Make it inspirational and aspirational, rather than the current drab statement.
I feel like there should be more places of worship for people in religions other than Christianity. I feel that the city does not supply the means for people of other religions. The closest synagogue is rundown and I have seen no places of worship for people of the Hindu or Buddhist religions.
I think we could maybe invite more racially diverse people into Decatur. We are a predominately white city and I feel minorities need and want more representation.
In preparing a plan for being inclusive, think about not just racial stereotyping, but also age stereotyping.
Avoid assumptions when talking to someone new, especially someone of a different race, class, or age than myself. If i have previously had a stereotyped image of someone in this group, think of a positive example of someone I know or who is famous.

Show "the danger of a single story" video in faith community including Burundian refugees and connect to Clarkston to try to overcome of stereotypes of African refugees and immigrants
People shouldn't be stereotyped because of where they were born. This is America, and all should be welcome, not single me or anyone else out because of where we were born. If you come to fix appliances, don't ask, "Where are you from?"
To feel inclusive everyone should say to each other, "welcome to our neighborhood" in restaurants, apartments, stores, in our Decatur neighborhood, and we will get to know each other, look out for each other, help each other because we know who lives in our neighborhood, and not be strangers
Host city-wide events and websites to show the stories of all residents- photographic or video exhibits for residents to learn about each other
Create more opportunities for intergenerational gatherings.
More outreach to each other, knock on doors- greeting and meeting
Get to know our seniors in Decatur starting in our own facility (Oliver House) and to show how we understand our problems and each other.
more diverse musical selections (that would appeal to different kinds of people) at festivals and concerts on the square. How about: reggae, hip hop, soul, Latin music, blues, traditional (or modern) Indian music
More inter-generational community conversions.
Avoid single story interactions by personally welcoming others
Block parties so people know who is who in the neighborhood.
Create a small social group of individuals with diverse identities who meet on a regular basis as just a social group. Eat together
Coordinate Decatur community groups that are all working on similar race/inequality-related issues (i.e. Create Community 4 Decatur, Better Together, etc.)
Be bold to say hello.
Feel bold enough to approach someone else to start a conversation instead of waiting for them.
Do not see a "single story" for each other. Do not accept a "single story" for yourself.
Be good to my neighbors
make yourself approachable
To have more events that cater towards young adults.
Catering to the young adults 18 (maybe even have police out of uniform to help)
Build more places of worship for religions other than Christianity
Inter-generations getting together
Intergenerational activities
Create opportunities for intergenerational interaction
Intentionality with intergeneration connections - connecting young and old
Intergenerational dialogue sessions
Inter-generational meetings (Sr. citizens/teenager)
Downtown Decatur Ambassadors to welcome visitors, especially on West Ponce
Inclusive City
Build a better more cohesive diverse interconnected community
Building community across neighborhoods
Keeping Decatur an inclusive diverse community
Create a forum - a regular permanent forum - for diverse people to tell and hear each others' story
Decatur Multi-culture TED Talk forum at Library or Twains. Tell our stories.
More affordable arts/music events like Oakhurst's Porchfest.
Decatur Story Corps/TED Talks (Telling our stories in public format)
Decatur TED Talks/Storytelling
Best Idea - A city slogan or mantra that can be used on signs, bumper stickers, etc. that proudly shows the spirit of the Decatur we want.
Better Together as our community slogan for all to rally around (and community song)
All sectors be trained/encouraged/engaged in community service as a way to know each other by working together and contribute to our community
Bring together different groups on common project.
Using technology to engage a new generation in a movement for change
Work Harder to include more diverse voices to the conversation
Intentional process to create multi-cultural dialogue
Create a forum for Decatur TED talks/moth stories of diversity
Provide educational opportunities for people to learn about different races, cultures, etc.
Initiate compassion internationally

Sharing stories about different cultures in Decatur and experience of being stereotyped
Doing icebreakers - intentionally including others when inviting them into a group - inclusiveness - opening up & sharing POWER
Gatherings around culture (food) - to continue building community
How do we include all communities? 1. Provide opportunities for single mothers to attend - transportation & childcare 2. Provide a space young artists to express - not always having support to go to large organization 3. Youth- program for Decatur 101
Create connections between neighborhoods (like sister cities only sister neighborhoods) across differences (tracks, race, etc.)
Bring NPR's story corps talk with someone different from you
Community talent shows by age groups at the high school auditorium
Greet your neighbors - make them feel welcome
Speak on the street with the expectation of interaction not transaction
Small, diverse groups of people eating together
Build more diverse places of worship.
Bullying: - sensitivity training - accountability - repercussions
A better way to [get] news & info [out] about events
lots of community service opportunities easily accessible and frequent
Need a youth Decatur 101
Continue to provide and empower new people to our community such as Decatur 101
Create and use social media as a tool to affect change for the next generation
Have more fun activities for teens: movies on the square on the big greenspace across the street from Ebster gym?
Young Life to get the word out on the organization.
Intergenerational events; learning for elders; Decatur History 101 taught by elders to the new residents
Conduct events on hold youth groups for tens (Young Life?) to get activities for their age group, to get them involved.
Decatur 101 has a long wait. Develop a mini-class to welcome newcomers while waiting to get in Decatur 101.
Decatur cook off ris or chili & pie eating contest
Create neighbor-to-neighbor initiative to encourage individuals to reach out to others across differences.
Become part of a local group that is working towards the change you want to see.
New resident social gathering (mini Decatur 101) and introduction to city leaders and process.
Have an opportunity during public meetings for a sharing, socializing time.
Decatur pot luck/meet ups
Have a welcome committee in neighborhoods, including DHA and senior high rises. Have the committee greet new neighbors and be ambassadors to tell them what is going on in Decatur.
We should volunteer more at many places for many causes. We should have more volunteers volunteering everywhere.
pair teens and seniors for mutual learning and fun
share database of seniors w/CSD for service projects throughout the year.
Invited churches to participate in Decatur's Better together action plans.
Monthly discussions on community issues in Decatur at the Recreation Center, Public Housing (Oliver House has meeting room), churches, etc.
Institutionalize (make it permanent) a citizen-based Better Together for Decatur
Establish a political forum as a safe space for young adults to discuss political ideas (I would be willing to help make this action happen after Nov. 3)
establish continuing educational opportunities—OLLIE program (at Emory)—available in downtown Decatur!!
create intergenerational experiences—no cost, but ways for young/old to meet & mix—"pop up picnics"
more intentional gatherings to address ideas we didn't mention. story gatherings, dialogue. opportunities for experiencing multiple stories. continuing Better Together.
Opportunity for youth voice could be achieved through an open mic in Decatur Square (Fridays after school for example) like Speakers Corner in Hyde Park.
Create environment and opportunities for small groups with common interests to get together.
- Create ongoing (monthly) community dialogues; - Create opportunities/gatherings; and - Identify interests, create groups and supply space to meet
small neighborhood cookouts to grow community
have neighborhood associations in every neighborhood
More Leadership Circle involvement with the Community regarding Better Together
Develop Better Together Outreach Programs to execute Action Plans.
More neighborhood welcome groups
Talk about individual getting to know each other

dinner at Oliver House for small groups for the whole Decatur community with food provided by City of Decatur or another interested funder. or pot luck
Getting together as a small group to learn more about each other about the city or Decatur
Establish Better Together as a citizen/city group that continues to look after these issues.
Educate residents about what Decatur issues are influenced or controlled by county or state. [This is] currently not really understood by all citizens.
Need affordable wi-fi connectivity for seniors/disables/low-income residents. Being isolated is dangerous, but being connected is costly.
"Welcome Wagon" for new neighbors to find out about all that is going on.
Story Corps type idea with youth and seniors - interviews that are shared with the community.
Create events that include something geared toward the 14 to 22 age group
Continue these types of conversations. keep the leadership circle concept going
opportunities for community service and food trucks
Meet neighbors on block
Help our young people and neighbors to educate each other on allowing new people the chance to enter the Decatur Circle
Planning for reconnecting with people who have sat and talked together today.
TED Talk/Story Corps idea voiced by one table
Offering and accepting more social invitations
Community Conversations
Community Conversation - Neighborhoods 101 added to Decatur 101 - learn about what makes each neighborhood unique, known for
Community Conversation
More communication about what services are already available
Share your story and listen
Hosting Dinners or other small intimate community get-togethers
Spread of city goings on and information
More engagement between all community members and authority figures
Decatur Con - Dragon Con Decatur Style
Share my information with my neighbor - phone #, email so we know each other and can look out for each other.
Community-wide talent shows
Oakhurst Porch Fest by product of the Harmony Park construction but great way to connect neighborhoods - 80 homes signed up - they expected to get 10
Really get to know your neighbors. Introduce yourself! New Resident Packet - Welcoming Committee - Giving new neighbors everyone's contact information
Set "Neighborliness" as goal for Decatur community (i.e., get to know each other)
Increasing awareness of the city's services, resources, and opportunities.
Solidify neighborhood organizations to function as resources for its local needs
Give them food they will come!!! - Involve a fun experience
Smaller neighborhood groupings - 2)New neighbor survey (I like to be involved or I don't like to be involved) 3)Who are my neighbors info sheet (kids? cars? pets?)
Welcoming committee
Commit to sustaining these important discussions with key findings being used to inform policies
Better together needs to be made formal/permanent organization with funding to continue conversation - community discussions
Have a neighborhood welcoming process
New resident packet and welcoming committee
Welcome wagon
Come together around community service
More ways to share stories through media, neighborhood groups, faith communities
Service project including wick (?) community participation benefit
Encourage to train others how to take part in community service projects
1.Create environment and opportunity for small groups with common interests to get together 2. Welcome wagon for new neighbors in each neighborhood 3. "black boards" in the community for people to give comments and bring up ideas
Preservation of the history & culture of Decatur
Build a massively open online course (MOOC) for Decatur 101 so thirty + people can attend the class from their homes
Pay attention to the needs of your neighbors & respond to those needs personally
Accepting invitations to come together, when offered

Citizen involvement with development/construction/contractors - Citizens need input in order to keep integrity of neighborhood
Talk to neighbors
Action idea - involving/creating programs and activities to cater to young adults
Face to face interactions with others
Acknowledge each other - everyone fellow human beings
Bringing Together Children with Seniors
Inviting local leaders to visit & speak to seniors about city happenings
Need addition classes for senior (exercise, educational, etc.)
Effectively use resources to help residents. Ex. Decatur 101 - including more experienced residents to help newer ones
Ambassadors to tell what's going on in Decatur
Better marketing/communication of available programs to government/church/community
1. Publicize existing resident database systems for police & fire. 2. City minimum wage high enough for employees to live here.
Police training on demographics in neighborhoods where they police. Housing - more dedicated greenspace; add comfort outdoor areas in public housing
Developers should pay into an affordable housing plan...they can get tax incentives.
Police officers should be part of the community and actually know people of the community. So we need affordable housing and workforce projects so they can live here.
If people tear down a house to build a bigger one, developers pay 10% to the city to help pay for affordable housing
Have ambassadors to welcome newcomers, international visitors, etc. to the city.
The city of Decatur should construct a new skate park on the north side of Decatur. The police struggle to keep the juveniles off the streets and this is the outlet
Continue to have police officers go into the schools and meet with students at the high school.
Racism training for city employees and all police officers
Increase diversity in police force
Fund more on-going training for police to deal with diversity and mental health. Constant routine training.
Decatur "ambassador" force (welcome/hospitality, as well as look outs)
Educate the law enforcement community on demographics, show of authority which is culturally respectful to minority communities.
recruited black police officers had programs where the police officers met and mentored students: - community involvement - communication/understanding - familiarity
more people of color to get involved in citizen police academy
stop racial profiling by police friendly newcomers stop prejudices
Police educate neighbors and school children on avoiding stereotypes. Speak at neighborhood groups and schools, put information about avoiding stereotypes when calling police on the police section of the City of Decatur website. This is just as important as the crime prevention section.
Balance being hard on crime with treating people fairly.
More relationship building between police and teenagers and minority communities to build trust, not just policing and playing with little kids and helping senior citizens.
Create an APP for the phone to report if someone is being treated unfairly or if you see someone is being racially profiled - if you see something, say something.
Police are doing a great job but parents need to take more responsibility.
Police doing a great job
Activities with police and teens. Events and programs [to] build relationships
See and get to know the officers that serve your community as people.
Try to build the relationship with the police
More police patrols on bicycles and walking in neighborhoods. Get to know neighborhoods. Be seen in community.
Educate our police force on balance. I love the response & call to action by our law enforcement when I call them. The problem is the profiling when they are not called upon. They forget who you are.
What's working - Decatur police service in neighborhoods, the outreach program, education, etc. Jennifer Ross visiting groups neighborhoods.
Have more police officers do walking & biking beats around the city besides just driving in squad cars.
Make all of the raw demographic data being collected by the police department available online (remove ID info from people involved) for full transparency.
Police need to outreach to Decatur communities so that relationships are maximized.
Police should get out of car & join kids in basketball - say, "Hello I'm here to check in" - build relationships (especially in public housing)
Decatur "Ambassador" force (like Atlanta) - welcome/hospitality

Community Policing - more education for parents and children together about to talk about use of drugs & alcohol.
Advertise Smart911 - go to all the neighborhoods and churches to assist with sign up. Place signs in store windows
Review and evaluate how police are trained in dealing with the public, including the poor and homeless. "neighborliness" over "aggressiveness".
Community campaign to build awareness of neighborhood safety when to intervene and when not to intervene.
Police to report their data on ultimately false "suspicious person/activity" calls and stops to neighborhood associations, so that these associations can address possible racial issues/problems in their own communities.
The police and fire fighters become more active in the neighborhood and get to know their neighbors to prevent police brutality by knowing when to "Let go, and Let be
Change police policy to match "inclusive" ideal. Focus on suspicious behavior linked to a particular physical description, time, and place, not on "suspicious persons"
Training for police on implicit bias and how it affects police officers and community members
Have police take training on de-escalating situations
More police presence in high crime areas, such as the Square.
For random/general population: Give anonymous survey to individuals at faith communities, Decatur events or other groups regarding attitudes and treatment by Decatur police. Give results to Decatur police.
City of Decatur Police Department outreach website - specific to services and programs available - easy to take in buttons - click to get more info, sign up, request a call from police department, citizens police academy, park & walk, education programs, promotional video links to blog postings by police department, safety notices, updates/announcements, link to Twitter feed?
Consequences within the police department for racial profiling
Decatur Police create a system of discouragement or disincentive (consequences) for police officers that harass and racially profile. Citizens need a mechanism to submit complaints about racial profiling online or in person. Police officers who receive a certain number of complaints are punished
developed a method for police officers to apologize to those unnecessarily stopped
Acknowledgement of police profiling to the people who are profiled. Not replies that say "we were doing our job"
[More] Communication about [racial profiling and other] incidents and what's being done as a result would be helpful.
More presence of police in schools and communities to dispel perceptions of each other (get to know individuals as opposed to groups)
Police attend neighborhood meetings to meet residents. City to send/post bio's to neighborhood for police employees.
Police could greet residents more often, or explain why they can't always greet others while working.
Police should interact more and more frequently with citizens. At least wave when on patrol--or stop and roll the window down and talk. Downtown at the MARTA station, get out of car and interact with students and others. At least say "hi"--and maybe even, "Is everything OK?"
Have more bicycle, scooter, and foot patrol [by police]
Tweens/Teens Programs with the Police
Teenagers communication with Police citizens
Create a community based policing group to reduce friction between teens and police
The citizens of Decatur should have closer relationships with the police and police officers should know their citizens
Participate in the police academy.
Build and develop more relationships between police and the people in the community.
Create opportunities at many levels to allow interaction between police and the community. (True community policing not in name only.)
More visibility of the police. More forums as we had today.
Be aware of invaluable like for the policemen to be more friendly.
Honestly, all of the ideas about better connections with police officers were brilliant.
More foot patrol and bike police - situations for the police and residents to form relationships
Get to know our Decatur police officers as the people they are.
Dispel police and youth community perceptions of each other by getting to know each other
Create an interfaith/community campaign to spread ideas for community safety and police relations.
Police becoming more involved in our society, community involvement - affordable housing
Neighbor watch for safe neighborhoods
Establish neighborhood watches for all neighborhoods.
Negative needs-Seeing racial bias in DeKalb courts - More concern for the safety of young Black men in the city of Decatur due to racial profiling
Positive - Police respond quickly - meeting at local church to discuss racial profiling in that community.
Encouraging the police to get to know the youth

lower the income taxes for people who don't have jobs, who are not working, who need jobs, who are unemployed. also help people that are unemployed find jobs easily in Decatur and around Decatur, and have transportation vehicles for people without transportation.
1. Bring more businesses to city of Decatur (increases taxes) 2. Developers give back tax for affordable housing - funds for affordable housing - cluster homes for affordable housing
Action Idea - Create policies that don't disrupt the community feel. a) moratorium on new construction b) services and goods for lower incomes
city of Decatur-tree ordinance-cut down a tree, plant a tree nonprofit-developers. architects, builders donate 10% of talent to work together to build affordable housing-build a million-dollar house help build affordable housing.
Need a real plan for downtown so could address diversity in housing prices; create green space downtown; save trees or do a payback to the city if don't.
Encourage incentivize development or preservation of smaller square foot housing units while preserving green space and trees.
CoD should only support housing developments that allocate a percent of units for income diversity. We MUST have affordable housing and we MUST protect our greenspaces!
All similar ideas: * Collecting a percentage from developers of new homes to pay into a fund to aid families in purchasing affordable housing or "tithing" their time/money/expertise to assist the city in developing more affordable housing options. * The "cut down tree=build a tree" idea for supporting erodible housing. For every small and more affordable house converted into a McMansion, a tax or a tithe, or a labor donation should be required to support more affordable housing somewhere else in the city. * Require real estate developers and real estate agents to give % of their huge profit back to the city in some form to continue to improve the city for ALL (for schools, etc.)
Spend some time in community going over the relationship of the data and how to attack those deficits in education attainment-a real problem-correlates to population by race-rents and home values. All about needing money to live in Decatur and need education to make money.
The glossy booklet lists 3 basic challenges facing the CoD in terms of housing (p12). How in the world can school capacity not be on this list? Granted CoD does not oversee schools, but the items listed (increased property values) are not exactly controlled by CoD. This is a stark disconnect in viewing CoD challenges and future.
Zoning code should discourage tear-downs and high density development in neighborhoods that are predominantly free-standing single family houses (I know this is difficult, given current market prices)
Work with developers who are interested in affordable sustainable housing, use flexibility in zoning, density, etc. to work with land already in City of Decatur if possible.
Manage growth
STOP DEVELOPMENT
Size limit on construction that is enforced!
Encourage our city to really study how other successful cities have managed growth while also maintaining diversity. Look into ideas like requiring a certain percentage of affordable housing, limiting infills, require large building complexes to have a certain percentage of Section 8 housing.
affordable housing ensures that a diverse group of people can live here. and people that work in the city of Decatur can live here. also making sure that people that do come here that are different than us feel welcome by offering our open hands and finding a way to include them and get them engaged in the community.
more affordable housing for minorities, more diversity in neighborhoods.
be open to people who don't look like me or agree with me on all issues. pressure city commission and staff to set aside units in new construction.
Keep more diversity. Give seniors more tax relief. Don't push people out.
Develop a plan with transparent communication to address the homogenizing of communities due to rising home prices and taxes, which are pricing out people and forcing out longtime residents.
stricter regulation around tear-downs, new construction, development. Need "courtyard" model of affordable housing to attract residents other than families with school-children.
Determine if we want every economic class in Decatur. Does subsidized housing have a role in assuring economic diversity? If we care about diversity, we have to be willing to pay for it.
At a city level, research communities that have been successful at encouraging economic and racial diversity to get ideas regarding how city policy can increase affordable housing
Build senior housing that is also affordable for middle and low income seniors as well.
Small group. Focus groups around affordable housing, reentry of ex-felons
Create more housing for low-income residents and especially homeless
Stop granting approval to contractors who don't include a % of affordable housing within their development. Required additional taxes to ALL developments in order to provide for affordable housing in other locations as determined by the city.
We need more housing for seniors low-to-middle income individuals.

Encourage churches to donate greenspace to provide a place to build affordable housing [via] tax credits.
Convert big houses to apartments.
Brochure on accessible design for local contractors. So many new houses could be used lifelong and/or by disabled residents with just a few design changes. Even if homeowner is not currently disabled/elderly, they may need these amenities later or the next homeowner can use them.
Need annexation - room for more housing.
Section 8 Affordable homes for low-moderate income homeowners
Affordable housing.
The city needs to develop more single family homes that are not 200K to 1 million dollars.
Don't price people out.
Have the DHA work with the city (employees) and the city commission to create affordable housing. Future developments on annexation should have specific affordable housing requirements.
Affordable rental and homeownership in Decatur
Have affordable housing for people 18-35 that work in the city with rents in the \$500 range. All new stocks of apartments do not provide this (3 new apartments complexes under construction).
Exempt seniors (62+) from school taxes to encourage lifelong residence and not price people out of their homes (Cobb county)
Build another Oliver House
Build another Oliver House for seniors at market rate.
Significantly increased fines for code/ordinance violations in residential [construction] by non-resident (i.e., developer companies) in the city.
Tax exemption for (minority) elders who have lived in Decatur for a certain number of years.
Have much stronger requirements for both truly affordable & section 8 housing in all new developments, and also for renovating and expanding large-scale housing.
Require developers of multi-family housing developments to make certain percentages of apartments/condos affordable for middle & low income residents. These units should be anonymously located within the complex of the same standard.
Incorporate affordable housing into other housing.
Maybe about 15 years ago, the Decatur Housing Authority had an initiative for teachers to purchase homes on Commerce Drive and Howard Avenue. Perhaps they could revisit that plan for teachers.
Lower property taxes to keep retirees & senior citizens from moving to lower tax areas
More affordable housing options, including those for senior citizens and younger generations, such as the Millennials.
Create, either by intentional development, or at the least, neighborhood support of "pocket" communities of diversified residential opportunities which promote life-sharing situations for people with disabilities.
multi-senior resident options, i.e., reduced utility/tax rate for seniors who share housing, allow seniors to stay in family environments while healthy.
What if we mandate that developers build a range of home types at 3 different price points? medium, high, low
Had affordable housing for young people and seniors that have a lower income and can't afford what Decatur has right now. Decatur is a great place to live but isn't being put in a good light for people to live. Also, tax assessments need to be done individually and not on all of Decatur.
figure out a way to provide affordable housing based on or for seniors, moderate income, single parents, etc. Need a variety of affordable housing for diverse groups.
market forces: rewards for creating/including ranges of affordable housing
made more homes affordable to single people?
promote construction of smaller less expensive housing
Involve Emory (coursework) designed to address affordable housing. contact faculty at Emory to create a "innovations in living spaces: economic, social issues"
Limit housing size to create more areas to build more affordable housing.
have more senior living options-i.e. ability to sell house and stay in Decatur city. (mixed income housing/lower income housing for those not on some government housing list)
Ensure certain % of "workforce housing" that teachers, police, firemen, and others may be able to live and work here. zoning issues?
Community forum around affordable housing-need more background knowledge based info.
How to change tax structure to keep our seniors in Decatur. Need exemptions from the DeKalb tax.
Build affordable housing that middle class families can purchase.
We need to facilitate and preserve affordable housing.
Encourage development of smaller (number of square feet) apartments or condos for workforce housing (police, firefighters, teachers, etc.) and older adults
Rather than a moratorium on tear-downs, what about limits on house size on certain size lots?

Affordable housing for middle class and below. How are these people who can afford 500K + + houses? I dream of a house that does not touch other houses, but we can't afford to buy one.
No more McMansions! Loosen renovation restrictions but increase barriers for demolition/ new builds.
Having a conversation about developing tiny house community with 400-500sq. ft. living space. This would be idea for workforce housing and senior housing.
Limit development in some way. Homes are too expensive and the culture of the city is changing.
More involvement and monitoring of development. Balance development with quality of life. Ensure that ALL people can live in Decatur. Stop gentrification.
Affordable housing -- think outside the box.
Make a moratorium on high rise or high density buildings and increase amount of 2-3 story condos or townhouses to create housing for middle income and reduce congestion/traffic.
Promote and enable though zoning the development and construction of small (900 to 1200 square foot) homes located behind existing homes or as a cluster on available lots or properties.
Require real estate developers to either include affordable/workforce housing units in their project or pay into a fund (impact fees) that can be used to provide more affordable/workforce housing.
Identify available land and connect with developers, faith based organizations or non-profits to build affordable/workforce housing.
Crazy idea: City or other organizations buy smaller houses and make them available as affordable/workforce housing via lottery to other non-market system. The market will drive the prices up making it non-affordable. It needs to be subsidized by people/organizations who have an interest beyond the market.
Ithaca, New York, for example, has excellent "community/eco villages" that allow/encourage multiple homes - small development. May need to be incentivized, perhaps funded through something like a "teardown development fee."
more affordable housing - I don't know how to do this. so retired people can stay and young people can stay. otherwise we will only have upper middle class and wealthy people who all look the same
affordable housing – set-asides in large mixed use and townhome developments to include working class
Stop developers building \$800,000 homes. find creative and doable ways to build/renovate homes/apts folks can afford - >encourage affordable housing builders to come in
Required developers to contribute to affordable housing
Allow zoning variances or direct zoning options for "grandmother" apts in back of lots for more housing units. Also, allow congregate or manor homes with more units.
Pass and inclusive ordinance that requires 20% affordable housing in every new multifamily development
Create more inclusive Affordable Inter-generational Housing - make sure that they are integrated throughout the community - now just in certain locations or buildings.
Make increasing opportunities available for all: affordable housing. What does the city have in place to include the middle class? Taxes???
Increased # subsidized housing units-e.g. # of units in Allen Wilson, Swanton Hill, Gateway, etc.
Base city taxes on income rather than property taxes.
take away taxes for seniors
no school taxes for people who do not have children in school system. subsidies for city employees.
tax relief for seniors, low income
Reduce taxes for adults without kids or kids over school age and even less for seniors
Make property taxes such that after a person pays for a certain amount of time for the school system, they will not have to pay that portion of property taxes. Then we can afford to stay in Decatur as we age.
Continue to work toward reducing taxes for senior citizens.
Tax exemption for seniors to allow them to age in their homes and age in our community
Decrease taxes for seniors and city employees
Affordable housing options for seniors (taxes, apartment, etc.)
Look for ways to make seniors who own their homes can keep them
Better Housing for Seniors
Best Idea - Continue to connect our agency in place seniors to youth and help keep those seniors here.
Affordable Housing
Specific Affordable housing requirements on future development
Future developers to participate in tithing to Decatur Development
A price for knocking down houses like the tree law where you have to plant a new tree
The comparison to cutting down 1 tree replacing it with 3. If we tear down one house and build a huge house then a percentage going towards affordable housing
Best Idea - city government should require developers/builders to invest in affordable housing-which should be spread out through Decatur - not concentrated into projects

Spreading out affordable housing sidewalk renovation
Spread out affordable housing across neighborhoods
City require higher percentage of affordable housing (+section 8) in all new/remodel developments - and spread affordable housing throughout city not concentrated in H.A.
We need to come together as a community to work hard for affordable housing
Affordable Housing ordinance like the tree ordinance: if you tear down a small house to build a big one - you tithe 10 -15% to help build affordable/work force housing
Having builders and developers donate a % of the home sales to produce affordable housing
Builders tithe 10% to affordable housing
People (developers and others) who tear down small homes to build bigger ones contribute to a fund for sustainable, lower-cost housing
Best Idea - developers charged a percentage of profits that will go towards affordable housing
10% tithing on development to go toward affordable housing
Concentrate effort on equity and affordable housing
Develop inclusionary zoning that requires 20% of new development to have affordable housing - ie:100 units to include 20 affordable
Developers need to pay a percentage toward affordable housing
Developers, architects have to pay tithes for the land they are building on
Developers contribute 10% to affordable housing
Encourage churches to sell land to city for affordable housing or green space
Churches sell land for affordable housing
Large home builders pledging 10% back to the community to encourage more affordable housing
Preserving not just creating affordable housing options
Affordable Housing integrated into the community (ie: tree ordinance equivalent for housing)
Improve affordability thru sr. tax exemption and tiny houses
Mixed income neighborhoods/diverse kinds of housing in every neighborhood (zoning?)
Best idea - make building affordable (including subdivided) housing a priority for the city - whether that be by fee on mcmansions or in city budget, developer fees, etc.
There should continue to be subsidized housing of some sort within 4.4 sq miles of the city of Decatur
Developers tithing a portion of a house's price to a fund for affordable housing
If a speculation home is built by a developer they must pay into a bank to support low-cost housing. Their form of payment can be money, time, talent. This is not applicable to individuals building homes they will occupy
Mandated payment from developers which would be used for subsidizing affordable housing and or used for reducing property taxes for seniors.
Allow residential single family homes to build small houses in their yards to create capacity
Tithing to support affordable housing. The idea was that if someone demolishes a small house and builds something more expensive, that they pay 10% of the value of the more expensive house to the city.
Cluster homes on lots of 900 - 1200 square feet
City of Decatur working with Decatur Housing Authority to build affordable homeownership and rental homes
Housing Community Action
Affordable Housing for seniors and people without children. More transportation. Stop bullying in school.
Best Idea - 10% surcharge on new construction to go to affordable housing. Leadership circle meetings must be open to gain public trust.
Talk to contractors about affordable housing for smaller families
The house idea that was similar to the tree ordinance - cut one down but give resources to make another house
Building six homes on what is called "one normal lot" and making them affordable to middle income families
Incentives and/or subsidies for low and middle income housing
More affordable housing to promote diversity
Affordable housing - promote construction of smaller less expensive housing.
Affordable housing - require new development to supply x% for lower income
Affordable housing
Foster affordable housing - involvement
Action idea - Affordable housing for people 18 - 35
Build & preserve affordable housing to welcome middle class families
Intentional affordable housing
Improve affordability thru senior exemption and tiny houses

Influence city government and staff to focus on affordable housing!
City government restrictions on developers with regards to multiple price point options for housing. Tax relief for seniors, disabled, low income.
Create affordable housing initiative for Decatur teachers & guarantee courtesy tuition
Create pressure or incentives for Decatur businesses to be handicap accessible.
If you do not make your business handicap accessible, then you are not welcome to do business in Decatur
incubator program for continuing projects born as high school community projects. keep a great idea going past graduation!
Include people with disabilities in business and city government either as volunteers and or visible workers
To make Decatur welcoming for people of all incomes, we need to have places in downtown Decatur where people at Oliver House can buy basic items like socks or underwear at reasonable prices.
Being intentional about enable success for all - diverse business ownership in the city, diverse programming, diverse leaderships/policing/management.
Make sure to include and not forget all races and income levels (stores, restaurants, etc.).
Invite more businesses owned by people of color. Decatur is a good destination so food would be a great place to start.
Encourage restaurants and other businesses in Decatur to be more welcoming to different demographic groups
Train businesses & their employees Better Together goals and objectives. Train the importance of Diversity and how to make everyone feel important
Many small businesses do not have money and people to provide employee training such as listening skills, diversity training, conflict resolution, etc. DBA and other organizations could/should provide training periodically for small business employees. This would facilitate a common, friendly approach/face for business.
Increase opportunities for persons with disabilities volunteer and job & job training.
Decatur business owners need racism training
Create business loans/incubators. etc incentives for minority business owners
Train workers in Decatur stores & services to be aware how their questions or greeting are not interpreted as offensive or not welcoming.
To become a fair community, businesses [need] to respect their customers no matter the color of their skin or nationality.
Train workers & managers in Decatur stores & services to be aware of how their questions or greetings are not interpreted as offensive or not welcoming
Create incentives/pressure to make all businesses handicap accessible
Employment opportunities to "Hire Decatur," but with City, Housing Authority, and Business Association.
Economic development - businesses that appeal to all
better retail development-high rents are forcing out small independent stores in favor of upscale restaurants.
We need businesses that provide basic needs (not "baby Kroger"- it's not enough)
We need places to buy everyday stuff in the city of Decatur so we don't have to drive to other parts of town. Walmart is not what we want.
Diverse businesses - we need socks and underwear! maybe
Action Idea - Diverse businesses for all level of income people, without changing the safety of the neighborhood, but will be able to accommodate seniors on fixed income

I grew up in Decatur and attended Renfro Middle and Decatur high school. The year I graduated, 1991, we had a tiny class of only 65 students. Decatur in 1991 was a different place than it is today. My classmates came up through elementary schools that were segregated in a de facto manner with black schools south of the tracks and white schools north of the tracks. College Heights, Fifth Avenue and Oakhurst didn't have the same resources as Glennwood, Westchester and Clairmont and at Renfro, and DHS unequal preparation was perpetuated through "leveling", which essentially segregated the school by classroom. Despite the problems in the schools, our class was, and continues to be close. Even though many of us live far from Decatur we keep in touch through Facebook and reunions and I value that group of friends, the most diverse group of friends I have ever had in my life. After college and graduate school I returned to Decatur in 2006 to raise my family. I was excited to see big changes that were instituted by CSD to help rectify some of the inequity experienced by children in our school system. Elementary education had been reconfigured and schools were redistricted to equalize by race and socio economic status. Free pre-K and affordable preschool were being provided to city residents and the curriculum was moving toward innovative models of instruction like expeditionary learning and IB. But in the intervening decade I have seen other changes undoing some of this good work. The diversity that has enriched our city is evaporating as the city itself is becoming more rich and more white. While much of this change is out of the control of the people in this room, we must continue to strive to be a city that embraces diversity and works to fight inequity. The past two years of tragedy after tragedy, from Ferguson to Charleston to Baltimore, have reminded us that we are not living in a "post race" society. Injustice persists. To move forward, painful parts of our history are going to need to be acknowledged and addressed. For 150 years, America has systematically denied the deep scars of slavery on our country. The millions of people that were tortured and murdered on our soil are have not been mourned by the nation. Healing REQUIRES remembrance. There are shockingly few slave memorials in the US. Why is there not one on every town square? As we consider how Decatur can be "better together" I propose that we do so by being a leader in reconciliation and remembrance. Decatur could blaze a trail by being the first city in the south to have a large and impactful slave memorial on its town square. The process of selecting a design, a site, fundraising and dedicating a memorial could be a process that brings together our community in a way that has never been done before. A memorial such as this would attract visitors who in turn could be moved and affected and leave Decatur with a deeper understanding of the pain that the cruel institution of slavery left in the South in the nation at large. By remembering the victims and acknowledging our violent past, we can move in a meaningful way toward the reconciliation and healing our country and our region so desperately needs fulfill its dreams.

build a study hall/game room for the high schools and middle schoolers (have to be separate) or add on to the rec.

More green space downtown or pocket parks. Improve communication and lower crime.

Provide Public restrooms and free parking

Public restrooms

Make a large public greenspace where we can have meeting space for all downtown people.

To promote healing and racial reconciliation, construct a memorial to the victims of slavery on the Decatur Square. (I would like to host a community conversation about this idea)

Slavery Memorial on the Decatur Square

Provide a space where young artists can express themselves - instead of always having a project/funding support, etc go to large organizations.

Create greenspace downtown to encourage [the] community to talk! to get to know each other. Downtown needs greenspace! Get churches to sell land for greenspaces - pocket parks!

Add more places to sit in public places

Create more spaces for people to gather - preserve greenspace

Property at W. Trinity and Commerce - Let people use it, and raise money to purchase it.

include much more green space/ public spaces through Decatur's downtown areas and stop clear-cutting. The tree bank is disingenuous + a sham.

senior center in downtown Decatur with regular transportation to the center from various areas in Decatur area

more green space downtown

Solar town hall-the time is finally right to think of big solar community plan. Don't let Dunwoody beat you!

Build clean well-maintained public bathroom in the square.

Designate a building for a city artist coop

Build a public toilet near downtown {All Table #14 endorses!}

More public gathering spots/benches for neighbors to meet & share ideas

Make public restrooms

More green space! required of all new developments

Discourage more cars, especially at the high school because kids, by definition live within 4.4. miles of their school. creating more parking encourages more cars. what message are we sending to our young people that we took away our school garden to make a parking lot? less driving NOT MORE!

Keep sidewalks clearer. There are many strollers. Especially along W. Howard Ave from the water tower to the high school. Enforce the rules for private property and have city employees cut shrubs in public areas.

For handicapped citizens, we need more parking so people can participate

Review short + long-term effects and effects of street + sidewalk modifications. (It makes no sense to put in bike trails when traffic and sidewalks are so messed up.
Transportation for seniors, kids, and students. The bus would drop off kids in their neighborhood.
Have more handicapped parking considering how many folks are over 65.
Wide sidewalks, well-maintained & connected for all streets in Decatur for wheelchairs, strollers, etc.
Engage use of Cliff - Emory Transport welcomes all
The intersection of Church Street and Medlock/ Forker streets is dangerous and needs to be fixed. People aren't sure who has the right of way or can't see the traffic coming the other direction.
provide additional transportation options for seniors. "Go 60" shuttle is great, but could be improved by adding additional times and extended
establish "ride buddies" for seniors—classes at rec center would be more accessible for those dependent on bus, etc.
transportation needs for folks who don't have cars or don't drive—publicize & awareness of what is available
Report to city the exact places that need to be fixed for accessible sidewalks and elevators.
Addressing safety for seniors and those with disability: make a \$300 fine for driving car through crosswalk when pedestrian has the right of way crossing the street
Expand Go-Go Bus route and expand relationship with Emory Bus (Cliff) to increase local access to transportation.
There is not enough time to cross the street at Trinity and Commerce so please increase the length of the light and time to cross (add in countdown timers so elderly and others know how much time they have).
Complete the transportation plan. If we had more bicycle facilities it would alleviate traffic congestion, and leave the roads open to folks who need to drive.
Decatur transportation for everyone. Bus that loops the city every day. Lower fares for Youth & Seniors
We need some free parking areas. It's disappointing to know the county parking deck will begin charging for parking for weekends and after hours. When we travel to other cities (out of town), we like it and feel welcome when the city does not charge for parking.
Be respectful drivers that drive the speed limit and are patient. It feels unwelcoming to me as a frequent visitor when locals honk at me.
Seniors (15 and older) having more access to public transportation facilities
Better sidewalks. Less Parking (more expensive)
Incorporate better sidewalk network and having people actually use them
Bright flags at crosswalk for people to carry to make it safer to walk streets
Brochure for contractors regarding accessible design
Create incentives to make all business accessible
Free (at least sometimes) public parking
Better transportation options for seniors.
Programs for students interested in animal sciences (biology, etc.)
have effective, strict behavior plans and discipline rules in city schools of Decatur.
help teens-the younger generation at all schools in the city of Decatur lower technology. take away the technology- cellphone/headphones and privileges of teens using their cellphones/headphones and bringing them or any other kinds of technology to school. technology is not the key to success at school. too much tech is being used at school most of the time.
improve our schools by giving more funding to renovate them. ex: Decatur high the building is very old and the school is overcrowded
Need to stop the smoke & mirrors approach of handling gov/government officials and especially City Manager & staff; listen to our concerns but only 'pretend" to respond via survey & reports but not real action. Ex. New tree ordinance does not protect trees; just a replanting ordinance.
I've been taking my MBA in Savannah - there the Mayor Edna Jackson had a State of the Union address open to the public to talk and answer questions of the community
Better leadership for Decatur
luxurious but affordable ice cream trucks
Consistent accessibility to technology for public housing
Guaranteed courtesy tuition for teachers (keep our good teachers)
Have conversations within church community
A great way to meet people
correct the inaccurate history curriculum in terms of the starting point.
Create a neighborly atmosphere in Decatur when we expect individual conversations in community transactions- i.e. at places of business, with government officers, at grocery stores, coffee shops, dog parks, etc. Expect relationship interactions.
Can we hear the voices of the local business owners? Do they not live in Decatur? Why weren't they present?
More awareness for available services/resources. Maybe through mailings, handouts at churches, farmers' market, local businesses, etc. Partnering with other organizations to reach their networks.

Regarding "affordable housing," what have other counties done to keep themselves from becoming Unaffordable? I'm not sure what steps might work.
Involve the schools (esp. high school) in the welcoming plans, make them more inclusive.
Make clubs at city of Decatur Schools more inclusive! Don't just target ONE demographic
Have intergenerational activities through schools, public housing, recreation to start relationships between seniors and young people.
Enact a formal study into how equitable discipline processes & outcomes are for different races at Decatur High School.
The education system (when I graduated DHS 2002) was very segregated 60% 40% black white or vice versa with Blacks in remedial classes, Whites (and Asians) in AP classes; Whites in band, Blacks in ROTC. That was always very sad to me. I'm not sure how this has changed. I went to Decatur 101 class and heard some changes on education system but my question to this regard wasn't answered to a satisfactory degree.
everyone should get along with others/ everyone. we need to stop and we should stop bullying in city schools of Decatur-in all of the schools in the city of Decatur. we should have a positive attitude and support everyone. I get along with everyone.
more recruitment of Black male teachers (they're fun too) retention of Black male teachers would need to be addressed also.
help disabled/special children/kids/teens feel lovely and welcome. help them who have a disability in schools or around the city schools of Decatur/city of Decatur and around the community.
try to recruit and retain more black male teachers.
Black male classroom teacher recruitment in Decatur city schools.
have small groups of 8-10 at Decatur High school with 2 faculty-purpose to get to know others across academic and extracurricular and racial boundaries. many colleges are doing this now. offer mentoring support
engage the community in the issue of racial performance gaps.
Find a way to bring kids of different races together socially at an earlier age, since they are very separate in schools.
Curriculum leaders, teachers, librarians, and parents work together to ensure that children have access to reading/writing/ educational materials reflecting their own racial/ethnic/class backgrounds as well as those of other children in schools, neighborhood after-school programs, faith community children's materials, and homes. As shown in the video, this is very important for positive identity for children of color who don't see themselves reflected in positive ways in the mass media and main stream curriculum materials. White middle class children also need accurate non-stereotyped stories / educational materials portraying people of color and people from lower income groups respectfully even if/ or especially if they have few children of color or teachers of color in their classes.
In neighborhoods, community groups, and schools, educate all on cooperation, responsibility, and treating everyone with respect
Celebrate "differences". Normalize "differences" through celebrations and schools, faith communities, business /organizations, neighborhoods, through cultural events and activities, plays/ theater, foods, etc.
The need for more services to address teenagers/high school students as much of the activities are geared to young families, adults, drinking festivals not much for the teenage group.
Black male teachers - recruitment - retention - data around hiring leadership
Decatur's school diversity curriculum to be rolled out to larger community
Smiling to everyone and acknowledging the presence of everyone we meet

PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT ACTION ITEMS

APPENDIX G



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All Responses sorted chronologically

As of November 30, 2015, 6:22 PM



As with any public comment process, participation in Open City Hall is voluntary. The responses in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.

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As of November 30, 2015, 6:22 PM, this forum had:

Attendees: 224

All Responses: 45

Hours of Public Comment: 2.3

This topic started on November 17, 2015, 4:47 PM.

Responses

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

		%	Count
Yes		51.2%	21
No		48.8%	20

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Answered	22
Skipped	23

actions african american believe **community** complete decatur
 dha down downtown expand fabric from greater greenspace
 grid housing include **increase** integrate into message more
 participants **police property** recommended report
 residents sending solutions **street** support them urban very **was**
 welcome **who** work

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

		%	Count
Yes		57.5%	23
No		42.5%	17

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Answered 27

Skipped 18

- 4 **action** affordable **area** been being believe **better** c citizens
community cost **decat**ur diverse do does **effort** entire **especially**
focus g **housing items** its lower **more** permanent **police**
 problem regard residents S spaces staff **they** together too
 was what

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

	%	Count
Yes	22.0%	9
No	78.0%	32

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Answered 29

Skipped 16


- 1 2 **action** **add all** also any art b **better** c case **community**
 decatur **diversity** do **focus** from housing iii important include
initiative items its like most permanent **police** process staff such they
those together training very which **who**

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together

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survey?

		%	Count
Yes		73.8%	31
No		26.2%	11

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 30, 2015, 4:35 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

The BT kick-off on Saturday, August 29, 2015, was outstanding--with lots of enthusiasm and imaginative suggestions. Especially empowering was the process that allowed participants to write down our ideas on a small piece of paper and putting them into a bowl. Many and probably most of these ideas were informed by the thought-provoking large-group presentations and the very personal and open discussions following each talk among the eight or so participants at each round table. There were also quite a few verbal comments made to the large group by table discussion leaders and other participants which should be included among the suggestions. The five-hour session probably generated several hundred ideas. I believe that these original comments and suggestions are possibly the most valuable results of the Better Together process and should therefore be shared with the participants and the broader Decatur community by including them in the final report.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No Response

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

See my other comments

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Boiling the original comments and suggestions down to a manageable number of action items could be useful for local government and other organizations. However, if the original suggestions are not also included in the final report, it will result in a loss of clarity, specificity, and freshness. For example, there was a well-received suggestion made by another table to the large group and subsequently discussed at our table: to have open, regularly-scheduled BT talks and discussions at different venues around the city—including the Decatur library and the community room of the new Oliver House—which are not fully reflected in the distilled item IB7 and IC17. I also believe that it would be more inclusive and less divisive if the final report did not prioritize any action items or at least not suggest that this was done by the community. The process used to distill the

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original comments into 71 action items is unclear and the process to prioritize these at the recent November 12, 2015 BT meeting was very questionable at best. The wording, selection and prioritization of action items for the local government should be done by the city and its elected representatives commissioners based on all BT outputs, including but not limited to the contractor's reports. Also, those individuals and organizations who wish to take responsibility for any subsequent actions should develop their own action plans.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

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Name not available (unclaimed)

November 30, 2015, 10:34 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No Response

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No Response

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

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Sarah Duston inside Decatur (on forum)

November 30, 2015, 8:46 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Chris Billingsley inside Decatur (on forum)

November 30, 2015, 6:51 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Support the City of Decatur Police, Oppose Politically Motivated Efforts To Micro-Manage The Police And City Employees

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

All Items- The entire secretive process was rigged from the start to produce anti police outcomes

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

All items

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

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Name not available (unclaimed)

November 30, 2015, 6:42 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Support for the police

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

I oppose the entire list

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Subtract all.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 29, 2015, 9:25 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Item IA1. Residents who get the most from the Decatur experience are those who are actively involved in the community. IB2. NO, competes with existing programs (such as Colorwheel, e.g.) use public/private partnerships like the arts event/dance on howard last year; IB7. enable and encourage community converstaions through Focus advertizements, etc. IC2. include a 2 hour component in staff and commissioner training; iC13. NO to a permanent position. use existing boards and committees to make most of this happen; IC16. YES, use the Focus to include a column on Better Together; IC22. Simply add several items to current event planners checklist IIC3. yes, okay; IIC5 is already in place; IIC7 encourage diversity in citizen police academy through recruitment in neighborhood associations IIIA1. City is already working with state legislator to advocate for extended tax relief; IIIC3. IIIC4. Use the existing life long community to explore workforce housing; IIIC5. Guide to Seniors- YES staff develop this information . Comments in general: (1) Quarterly neighborhood association meeting (citywide) can help discuss and distribute information such as a consistent 'welcome package' for new members; (2)IB3. suggest a story-corp type idea for DBF; (3) Expand Decatur 101 adding a component on diversity and equity and examples such as Jazz Nights-Oakhurst, Beach Party, (4) Focus article should be developed with all materials available such as senior tax relief; (5) add 2-3 diversity/equity questions to citizen surveys; (6) focus article encouraging diversity within boards; (7) IC10- great idea- post, Focus, new neighbor packet, door hangar; (8) DHA is already actively involved in many of the suggestions of the III Affordable Housing items; (9) Include cultural points on decisions regarding public art

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

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Name not available (unclaimed)

November 29, 2015, 9:12 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

First off, there are entirely too many items listed to get an overall focused idea of what is being proposed.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 26, 2015, 11:34 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

The list of items is much too large with items overlapping. The consultant was remiss in not having the intake coded.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

For the most part my answer is yes. But found the process in arriving at them poorly executed.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 24, 2015, 5:18 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No Response

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No Response

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No Response

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No Response

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 24, 2015, 2:15 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

The list has a lot of good information but very poorly coded that would have significantly reduced the large number of down from 71.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

I found that a number of action items were the result of the responder not being informed the issue is already being done. I suggest that a community awareness initiative a major action item.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

For the most part my answer is yes. But found the process in arriving at them poorly executed.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Nancy Pegel inside Decatur (on forum)

November 24, 2015, 1:51 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

add bringing a Variety Store to town, also office supply, Costco, Trader Joe. We have to travel out of town for all of these kind of places. Also add keeping trees healthy, most of which are located on private property. Educating folks that these are important to our town.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 24, 2015, 12:22 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No Response

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No Response

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No Response

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No Response

Terri Kruzan inside Decatur (on forum)

November 24, 2015, 12:19 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Once final report received with recommended actions, it is important for City to work with the many City Boards and depts to coordinate who takes responsibility for the recommended actions.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

There are many great actions put forth by Decatur citizens. This was a worthwhile effort. The hard part is now to condense and prioritize.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Add - I. A. 2 & 4 Add I. B.1&6 Add I.C.5,7,8,9 Add II.A.1 Add II.B.2 Add III.B.1. Add III.C.5. Add IV.A.6. Add IV.B.1&2 Add V.B.2 Add VI.A.2. Add VI.B.1&2

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 24, 2015, 12:08 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Once final report received with recommended actions, it is important for City to work with the many City Boards and depts to coordinate who takes responsibility for the recommended actions.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

There are many great actions put forth by Decatur citizens. This was a worthwhile effort. The hard part is now to condense and prioritize.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Add

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown outside Decatur (on forum)

November 24, 2015, 10:26 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Fix this survey logic-I live in city of Decatur but choosing not to share my name says "Outside Decatur?"

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Almost all of them

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Subtract all but C5 (police officer training)

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 24, 2015, 7:27 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

increase visibility of special education services and opportunities both inside and outside of the schools in an effort to create a viable support network for families in decatur with children and adults with special needs.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Improve upon the City's existing density bonuses to

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

I would include - Establish the citizen-led Leadership Circle as a permanent

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 23, 2015, 4:42 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No Response

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No Response

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No Response

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No Response

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 23, 2015, 2:50 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Most of them. This consultant is unqualified and the city should admit that it blew this opportunity.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 23, 2015, 2:02 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

James Radford inside Decatur (on forum)

November 23, 2015, 1:52 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown outside Decatur (on forum)

November 23, 2015, 11:40 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

I think many of the action items are unnecessary/overstep the boundaries of what government is meant to accomplish and some are downright insulting to Decatur residents and police. For example, "Publish and distribute a flyer with guidance for citizens on when and how to report suspicious activity and/or a possible crime" is not an action Decatur needs to take. Decatur residents do not need to be told when and how to call the police. Also unneeded is the directive "Provide City department leaders with the training, professional development and coaching needed to apply an equity lens to their work." What is an equity lens? If people feel they are being treated unfairly by City department leaders, should they not voice their concerns directly to those department leaders? Has this approach not worked in the past? Has it been researched? Furthermore, Better Together's insistence through certain action items that they become a permanent presence in Decatur seems a conflict of interest to me and is particularly egregious in light of the fact that many of these action items seem to be

- unresearched (e.g., "Develop a storytelling tradition by organizing opportunities for citizens from different walks of life to share their stories in different ways, such as audio/video recordings, open-mic nights, photography exhibits." [What organizations might be willing to do this? Has Better Together considered that certain businesses, such as Java Monkey and the dance studio already do these things?])
- (e.g., "Partner with an anchor organization to support the implementation and evaluation of the Community Action Plan and the ongoing work of Better Together." [What does this mean? What organizations might be willing to do this? Have we already reached out to them?])
- already implemented (e.g., "Advocate for the General Assembly's approval of the City's proposal to increase its homestead exemptions for low and moderate income seniors.", "Advocate for the General Assembly's approval of the City Schools of Decatur property tax exemption.")
- unrelated to Decatur (e.g., "Take ownership of the community's public spaces by discarding trash in containers provided, picking up litter." [Is littering really a problem for Decatur?])

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

Better Together

Better Together

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

All those mentioned above.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 23, 2015, 9:18 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

historical study of what did not work with past two strategic plans. Acknowledgement of grievous examples of exclusivity since Decatur became city - schools, pools, walls, building destruction. Outline ways Decatur 101 and CSD 101 is open to different narratives about our city.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Excessive number of permanent positions for BT CAP.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Add at least one from Focus Area 4; Delete at least two items from Focus Area I

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 22, 2015, 8:21 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Develop a city staff person to advocate and manage Better Together, engage city residents in creating a new tagline

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Establish Better Together as a permanent City initiative,

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 22, 2015, 8:11 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Designate a City Staff to advocate for Better Together,

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Establish Better Together as a permanent City Initiative

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 21, 2015, 1:47 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Most of the proposals can be described as "warm and fuzzy". Would like to see more emphasis on concrete, measurable proposals.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

III.A.2.65 needs to be highlighted. There is a generation of citizens now retiring who, in the 1980's, basically saved the city and school system we all so much enjoy and appreciate. My current property tax bill will consume 15% of our projected retirement income.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Brian Jones inside Decatur (on forum)

November 21, 2015, 10:19 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Promote food forest/ edible landscape practices/ Also, develop free parking in downtown.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No Response

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 20, 2015, 4:10 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Supporting more local events

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Affordable Housing Initiative: I believe city funds should be used to improve/maintain infrastructure and develop new spaces (preferably green spaces) that encourage residents to come together & foster a strong sense of community. I am not supportive of city funds being put towards increasing density via additional lower cost housing initiatives. Decatur is already quite densely populated, more could be done to improve the ties of the current committee, and there are a great deal of areas that need work that would benefit the longstanding residents who have been paying taxes into the city. Once current residents are satisfied with the basic expectations of the city (adequate sidewalks, more street lamps, & improved community green spaces), then we can discuss next steps. For now though, I think the funds the city has should be supporting the many residents the city already has requesting improvements.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Do not agree with prioritizing affordable housing initiative.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 20, 2015, 3:55 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Affordable housing does not make sense - The market dictates home values & apartment values. The city can help older residents continue to afford homes but should not build 'cheap' housing just for the sake of diversity. If an inexpensive apartment complex is built it would be against federal law to only allow minorities to rent it.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

How does 'Make studio space available for adults and youth to create and display art.' impact diversity. Sounds like somebody just wants free space

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 20, 2015, 3:55 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

I do not agree with the effort to bring more affordable housing into the city. We specifically moved to Decatur, and were willing to pay the higher taxes, because we valued where those funds were being spent--safety, maintenance, & schools. It does not behoove us to lower the cost of living in the area so we are paying high taxes, while other enjoy the same benefits without paying those same premiums. Not in such a small community. Atlanta offers many areas with a lower cost of living than City of Decatur, and we specifically chose Decatur bc of what it offered. It is a middle to upper class community that is welcoming & open. I don't see how lower cost housing alternatives equates to more engaged community. Diversity definitely does not just equal income level either. It is actually degrading to many diverse groups to equate income level with diversity.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Lower Cost Housing Initiative - SUBTRACT

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 20, 2015, 11:40 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Focus area 1 item 2 about youth art is a good idea but not that relevant to overall goals.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 20, 2015, 10:15 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

I'll start by stating I am a hispanic male that grew up in a very diverse community in Central America. While I am not from either a Caucasian or African American background I do believe strongly that there is significant racial tension and bias that still exists which we should strive to reduce. That is for the good of all peoples from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, in this approach there is not enough emphasis on safety and crime reduction. You are not going to get my support or that of many members of the community to be completely racially blind and pretend that "profiling" is entirely a negative behavior. Human beings have used judgment and experience for millennia to identify threats and protect themselves. If over 90% of the crime reports that are reported every week in our small town are being perpetrated by 15-40 year old African American males we will be limiting our community's and police force's ability to be effective by pretending that we shouldn't pay more attention to a couple 20 year old African American males acting suspiciously than a couple 20 year old African American females, white kids, or latinos. You can pretend that making a judgment call based solely on appearance is morally wrong, but you know as well as I do that it is statistically more likely for one group to inflict harm or theft on their fellow human beings than another. That is simply the reality of the poverty, broken families, and poor education that exists in nearby areas of Atlanta. I personally would much rather feel safe in my community and not have to worry about my wife or children being robbed walking down the street than having a moral chip on my shoulder because I ignored reality and statistics.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Paula Collins inside Decatur (on forum)

November 19, 2015, 5:38 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Add Area V, A: Individuals, #1 it's one of the easiest things to do so publicly show you care

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 19, 2015, 1:12 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 19, 2015, 12:28 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

I will agree with those who believe this entire effort is misguided.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

This entire effort is misguided and should be abandoned.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

The Better Together initiative should be abandoned.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 18, 2015, 5:08 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

This is led by a bunch of people with a social justice solution who are looking for a problem. The police here are great. Stop calling them racists and let them do their job. If the Decatur busybodies want to make a difference, then volunteer in South Dekalb or Atlanta in an underprivileged neighborhood or work to make the family structure better. Stop haranguing fellow liberals to feed your own self-aggrandizing sanctimony. You are not making a difference to anyone. Just feeding your egos.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

all of it. Our city government needs to let people be.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Better Together needs to disband.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 18, 2015, 1:19 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

This list does nothing to address conflict between the community and police, which was the very reason this task force was convened. Mealy-mouthed language about community policing is laughably inadequate. What about independent review of complaints?

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

All action items that require behavior from the individual are inappropriate, since it is not the role of this committee to tell citizens what they should do; it's the job of the committee to offer something valuable to citizens.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Why is reporting crime, which has nothing to do with diversity, highlighted, but myriad options for improving police behavior is not? This is infuriating, and the very act of neglecting the behavior of police worsens community relations and causes me not to trust Better Together.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 18, 2015, 9:40 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

DHA property is isolated from greater community, sending message that residents are not welcome. Expand street grid and integrate DHA property into urban fabric. Include DHA in housing solutions. Increase greenspace and complete streetscapes downtown.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

A lot. 71 action items is too many. Better Together should not become a permanent program - city staff and resources already are stretched too thin with existing programs. In regard to focus area 4, is there any evidence that this is a problem? The retail clientele that I have observed have been incredibly diverse. In regard to focus area 5, the problem is physical, not programmatic. Decatur lacks sufficient parks and plazas, and too many of its roads have poor sidewalks, especially downtown.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Better Together should not be permanent. I do support the enhanced training for City Staff and the policing initiatives - those are very important.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 18, 2015, 9:39 AM

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Yes

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Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

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Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 18, 2015, 9:35 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

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Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

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Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Better Together should not be permanent. I do support the enhanced training for City Staff and the policing initiatives - those are very important.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 18, 2015, 8:55 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

The city should be using its funds on building sidewalks and adding greenspace to bring residents together naturally. Encouraging density will increase the sense of community and an increased supply of housing should bring down overall rents, promoting economic diversity.

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Yes, this entire effort is misguided. Focus area 1A is just common sense. C2.2 - if this standard is not met those employees should be terminated. I don't believe there is value to spending public resources on the entire initiative. It is very concerning that one of the action items is to hire the group as a permanent initiative, especially when Act of Community couldn't produce a draft of the report by the deadline. Focus area 3 - Decatur's community is more than the 4 square miles of the city. There is plenty of affordable housing available nearby just outside city borders to the north, south and east on the other side of Avondale - this isn't Manhattan where there is nothing affordable within an hour commute. The city should not be involved with this type of initiative, but rather providing efficient local services that residents desire.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Again, this entire initiative is misguided. It began with some residents who felt the police were biased, but the investigation of the incident did not indicate the police were profiling in that case. Individual issues should be investigated as they arise. A "community meeting" to design policy is not a gathering of 300 activists, many of whom may not be city residents. Spend city funds on adding sidewalks and additional park space to bring residents together naturally.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

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November 18, 2015, 8:21 AM

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Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

Many items are focused on new residents, more focus on inclusiveness and engagement of long-standing residents

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 18, 2015, 7:58 AM

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Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

STOP BUILDING DOWNTOWN

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Better Together

Better Together

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 18, 2015, 6:13 AM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

No Response

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

No

Name not shown inside Decatur (on forum)

November 17, 2015, 8:40 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

I believe that action points I.C.2,4,6,8-10,14,15, 17-19, 22; II.C.5 and 7; and III.C. 2-4 would not generate sufficient benefit for their cost to implement. I believe that I.C. 13 and 16 are conflicts of interests in that Better Together has advised that they should be given more city contracts. I believe that III.C.3 puts an undue burden on private citizens; people should call the police when they feel like they need the police. If the police feel that someone is abusing emergency services, they can be charged accordingly. I believe that the entirety of Focus Area IV represents the city overstepping its bounds, as I feel that private business owners should be free to run their stores as they please; this is especially true in regards to point IV.A.1.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Item I.B.2 should be totally at the discretion of local business owners, many of whom already run establishments for just these occasions. I.C.2 would be a waste of money; if any Decatur resident feels that a city employee has defective "equity lenses" that individual employee should be reprimanded. There is no reason to make everyone sit through a lecture when it is not needed. As I mentioned above, I.C. 13 seems like a conflict of interest, in that Better Together is effectively saying that in its expert opinion, the city would benefit from expanding the role of Better Together. The problem is, would Art of Community still be at the helm, in which case can any group truly be unbiased in its assessment of whether or not it merits receiving, I presume, additional paid contracts from the city? I.C. 22 sounds like it would put an unnecessary burden on city events, a burden which in my opinion would yield few tangible benefits. As mentioned above II.C.3 implies that citizens should "think twice" when in a potentially dangerous situation. I reiterate that Decatur citizens should call the police when they feel they need the police and if the police feel that someone has contacted them improperly or

Better Together

Better Together

under false pretensions that can be handled on a case by case basis. This will especially be true when summer comes around and Decatur experiences its seasonal influx of burglaries. I have no particular problems with items II.C.7 and III.C.3-5, although I personally question if they would actually raise any tangible results which would benefit the city.

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Name not available (unclaimed)

November 17, 2015, 8:05 PM

First, review the full list which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

No

If there are relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list, please identify them here:

No Response

Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

The vast majority of these items are, in my opinion, either unfeasible or beyond the purview of the function of local government.

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

No Response

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

Additional comments submitted by email and hard copy

I do not believe we should use public funds to train workers to view policies through an “equity lens” (C.2), whatever that means. The benefits are too uncertain, and it does not seem like a wise use of public funds.

The city should be very cautious when engaging in social engineering via zoning policies and other policies designed to affect the mix of residents and businesses (III.C.2 and III.C.4 and IV.B.2). Citizens are supposed to choose the government, not the other way around. Businesses are smart enough to locate near consumers who will buy their products. They do not need guidance from the city government. These types of policies, if poorly done, will limit the ability of Decatur to grow and evolve. And, as another commenter pointed out, it’s not like there isn’t low-cost housing near the city.

Best, David Howard

128 Ansley Street

Sarah E. Gentry (404) 377-2492
P. O. Box 154
Decatur, Georgia

November 30, 2015

Ms. Linda Harris
City of Decatur

Re: Community Action Plan Input

- 1 How many staff persons will have additional work added to their currently over-worked schedules to implement these issues? At some point, continually adding issues as is covered in the Community Action Plan will mandate the hiring of a staff person, just to coordinate the added programs and/or agenda.
- 2 How will the City of Decatur, implement, add to a current page or pages on the City of Decatur web site to make the name and phone number of the, "person or persons coordinating the Community Action Plan available to the public in each given area?

I had to go through Ms. Bertha to get the City of Decatur Staff Person (Linda Harris) before I could get up to date on what is happening on this program.

- 3 Taking into consideration of communication technology, are there any plans for City of Decatur, to have a stand-alone computer available for the public to access any and all of the City of Decatur web site for research of any given subject matter, or to view documents. And of course, this should be placed in a City of Decatur Office, accessible to general public based on City of Decatur office hours.

A stand-alone computer system would be helpful to many citizens who do not have internet services and are forced to go to the Library or a friend just to keep up with City of Decatur Commission Meetings and/or Agenda.

- 4 The City of Decatur should provide at least three - four parking spaces (inclusive of one Handicapped) for citizens to conduct business at the City Hall. Parking to do business at City of Decatur Office is a Zoo!
- 5 Focus Area II - I believe this category can too quickly get out of hand by a zealous individual and do more harm than good. Strong/Firm guidelines are the highest priority in outsourcing Police Department actions to community or individual group. Here again, would this be coordinated by the Police Department official? How can the few Police Department staff persons keep spreading out, rather than effectively, letting the Police Department do their job by professional guidelines?

- 6 What is the earliest date the document to be presented to the City of Decatur Commission for the Community Action Plan prepared by Mattice Haynes be available for review prior to the meeting on December 7, 2015?

I'm very interested in getting a more comprehensive understanding of this presentation for review before the meeting.

Introduction

Better Together is Decatur's effort to address Principle B from 2010's Strategic Plan, which reads, "Encourage a diverse and engaged community." Associated with this principle are multiple goals to maintain and encourage all manner of diversity, strengthen our connections, foster greater interaction, and promote a stronger sense of community.

From a variety of citizen input opportunities, especially a broad community gathering held **this past August**, a list of 71 proposed action items emerged to take the form of a Community Action Plan.

Those items were reviewed and assessed in an early November public meeting, wherein certain proposed tasks were identified as top ideas to receive the most immediate attention. That full list was then presented to the city commission in a work session on November 16.

Now it's your turn to review where we are and comment on the present content. Here's how:

First, review the **full list** which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

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Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

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If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

No

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If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Studio space art

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Yes

No

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Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

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No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

art studio

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Yes

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Better Together is Decatur's effort to address Principle B from 2010's Strategic Plan, which reads, "Encourage a diverse and engaged community." Associated with this principle are multiple goals to maintain and encourage all manner of diversity, strengthen our connections, foster greater interaction, and promote a stronger sense of community.

From a variety of citizen input opportunities, especially a broad community gathering held **this past August**, a list of 71 proposed action items emerged to take the form of a Community Action Plan.

Those items were reviewed and assessed in an early November public meeting, wherein certain proposed tasks were identified as top ideas to receive the most immediate attention. That full list was then presented to the city commission in a work session on November 16.

Now it's your turn to review where we are and comment on the present content. Here's how:

First, review the **full list** which includes 71 proposed actions across six focus areas. Then, take the survey.

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Are there relevant action items you believe are important to this effort that are not reflected on the list?

Yes

No

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Are there included action items you believe should not be included?

Yes

No

If there are included action items you believe should not be included, please elaborate here:

Do you agree with the prioritization of top ideas (highlighted in yellow) that emerged in the November 12 meeting?

Yes

No

If not, what items would you add to or subtract from the highlighted list?

Have you attended any of the Better Together community conversations or filled out the Better Together survey?

Yes

No

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EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT WORK: DECATUR AND ELSEWHERE

APPENDIX H



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Appendix H

Examples of Relevant Work from the City of Decatur and Other Communities

- i. Decatur Police Department
- ii. Decatur Community Coalition
- iii. Create Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter
- iv. City of Seattle
- v. City of Portland

The Decatur Police Department finds that the (7) priority items requested in the Community Action Plan are consistent with their beliefs for the future strategic direction of the Department and are compatible with the Strategies expressed in their newly developed 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.

April 21, 2014

Dear Commissioners Baskett, Cunningham, Boykin, Garrett, and Drake:

As promised when I appeared before you on February 18, 2014, I am here tonight to present a formal request for a more appropriate response to my complaint about being racially profiled by the Decatur City Police.

You will recall that I was not satisfied with the complaint investigation and conclusions contained in the January 30, 2014 report that I received from Police Chief J.M. Booker. Chief Booker concluded that the officer whom I claim racially profiled me, Special Investigator Hall, did nothing wrong and that she had a reasonable basis to issue to Officer Brown and her other fellow officers a suspicious person look-out to stop and detain me. In the report, Deputy Chief J.K. Lee stated that my behavior in walking from the rear of my home where no vehicles were visible, bypassing my mailbox, and proceeding to walk away from my residence drew the attention of Special Investigator Hall and caused her to go onto my private property to investigate further. Her "findings" in my backyard led to my public humiliation.

Statements have been made in the press that there is no disagreement regarding the facts that are detailed in the report. However, this is not quite the case. As an example, Deputy Chief Lee's report to Chief Booker states in item # 5 that "The duration of the entire encounter between Mr. Denard and Officer Brown was one minute and four seconds." This alleged statement of fact is directly contradicted by Officer Mack's dashboard video camera recording of the incident. The length of that recording is over 6 minutes, and it is important to point out that Officer Mack arrived late on the scene and was not present when Officer Brown called out to me "Sir, where are you going?" There are more differences, but the important issue is my disagreement with the report's conclusion and the need for us to come together in a problem-solving mode as a community to avoid racial profiling.

I stated at the February 18 meeting that I was not the only Black person in Decatur that had experienced the public humiliation and degradation of being racially profiled by Decatur City Police and that my request for further action on the part of the City Commission would be a request that will be supported by other victims of racial profiling in Decatur. A community organizing meeting was held on April 6 at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church. The meeting was attended by a broad range of citizens from throughout Decatur who decided to form the Decatur Community Coalition. The meeting included members of real estate agent associations and members of community groups such as Quakers for Racial Equality, who all came out in support of this cause. Seven Black men shared their personal stories of having done nothing wrong but yet were racially profiled by police officers on the streets of Decatur. The painful irony of these cases is the fact that the seven victims include a Decatur Hometown Hero, Terry Lecount; the grandson of former Mayor Elizabeth Wilson, Michael Turner; a former elected school board member, Don Denard; and a man who was profiled in his neighborhood twice recently, Thaddeus Nathaniel.

The Decatur Community Coalition was formed for the initial purpose of bringing the community and police onto common ground regarding the need to avoid racial profiling. The coalition agreed to form a working group that developed a set of specific recommendations that have been shared with Chief Booker. We are formally presenting these recommendations to you tonight (see the attached) with the expectation that we can embark upon a process that will ultimately produce a favorable impact in terms of avoiding allegations of racial profiling and preventing unnecessary harm.

On behalf of the Decatur Community Coalition,

Don Denard

Recommendations presented by the Decatur Community Coalition to preserve the dignity and rights of citizens and residents of Decatur, visitors, and commuters who are Black:

1. Provide additional training to ensure officers understand the rights of people and the community standards for police interactions as set by the City of Decatur working in cooperation with the Decatur Community Coalition.
2. Enact a formal policy, proclamation, or ordinance banning racial profiling.
3. Discontinue the use of “numbers of citations/arrests” as a factor in performance evaluations or promotions. Such a practice encourages officers to make suspicion-less stops because such stops serve as a pretext that can allow them to get enough information not previously known to the officer that the officer can thereupon write a ticket or make an arrest.
4. Require officers to record (a) the apparent or perceived ethnicity, gender, and age of motorists or pedestrians stopped by the police, (b) the reason for the stop, and (c) the outcome of the encounter. Whereby “stop” is meant a situation where an officer requests or directs that such person remain in the officer’s presence, including but not limited to situations where officers conduct even brief pat-downs, where officers request identification, and where officers ascertain whether or not the person stopped has any outstanding warrants.
5. Establish procedure for collecting data on stops to identify the law enforcement officer making the stop or causing the stop to be made and give individuals who are stopped a copy of the form indicating why they were stopped.
6. Collect statistical data on motorists or pedestrians who are stopped, detained, and/or searched, regardless of whether the person is cited or arrested, by law enforcement officers and enter the data into a computer database to track the racial and ethnic information collected by officers making stops. [A majority of states have passed legislation requiring law enforcement agencies to collect racial data on traffic stops – Source: Floyd Weatherspoon , “Ending Racial Profiling of African-Americans in the Selective Enforcement of Laws: in Search of Viable Remedies”, 65 *University of Pittsburgh Law Review* 72) (Texas law requires that police departments collect data pertaining to traffic stops, pedestrian stops, searches conducted and citations issued – Source: Data Collection Resource Center – Northeastern University]
7. Determine whether the respective officers have disproportionately stopped any particular racial group.
8. Develop accessible methods, on the Police Department website and on paper, for people to be able to file racial profiling complaints.

9. Create a Community Review Board, made up of the City Manager, two residents, one Black, one White, and a clergy member to monitor racial profiling complaints, which have been received by the City, and compile a summary of such complaints for presentation to the members of City Commission.
10. Provide the Decatur Community Coalition, on a quarterly basis, access to and summaries of the information obtained from the statistics compiled on stops.
11. Implement plans to determine whether the data to be collected is statistically valid, whether the data will be used to support disciplinary actions, and to evaluate the data quarterly in concert with the Decatur Community Coalition.
12. Establish sanctions for non-compliance with the anti-profiling policy, proclamation, or ordinance that result in police disciplinary action, ranging from the requirement of more training, the filing of professional misconduct charges, up to termination of employment.
13. Include on the Police website information for citizens about the importance of providing accurate, complete descriptions in reporting suspicious behavior to the Police; include this information and information on avoiding stereotypes in the effort of citizen education .



Create Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter

We are people from multiple faiths, multiple cultures, and multiple paths working for equality in the justice system, neighborhoods, housing, and education, by challenging structural supremacy, building authentic community and transforming institutional injustices in housing, education, and criminal justice--because black lives matter.

Monthly meetings are held at Oakhurst Baptist Church. For more information or to get involved, contact createcommunity4decatgur@gmail.com.

Excerpt of Minutes from November 17, 2015

TASK GROUPS

Systemic Racism

Facilitators will e-mail pictures and text of the Confederate monument on the courthouse square in Decatur to the group. They will also contact Equal Justice Initiative to invite them to a meeting. One member of the task force will speak to members of the DeKalb Historical Society about whose perspective history is told from and how to expand the narrative. The systemic racism group, including students from Emory School of Public Health, will research access to healthful food options and how to help people navigate access to health care, such as through the Affordable Care Act.

Equality in Education

Four Decatur High School students came to the group. Concerns include ways to report racial profiling/ racist incidents, training for faculty on race, discrimination against black students in relation to the dress code, achievement gap, and self-formed segregation among students. Action items: Find out if there is a system in place for reporting racist incidents- how to report, whom to report to. Schedule a meeting with the principal. Hold student forums to talk about racial incidents, how they could handle an incident with resource officer, or what students can do about self- imposed segregation. Meet with administration to discuss how dress code is enforced.

Equality in Neighborhoods/Housing

Action items: Support the Decatur Housing Authority getting a zoning variance to redevelop 1111 Oakview Rd. into more affordable housing units. Reward landlords who have affordable rental units with a tax credit or other incentive. Build a consortium of universities, faith groups, and other organizations to buy housing for use by Decatur Housing Authority. Ensure that people servicing the community (teachers, police, fire fighters, ministers, etc.) can afford to live here by getting a tax credit. Research other communities facing gentrification (New York City, etc.) for promising models.

Equality in the Criminal Justice System

General concerns: Support the work of Decatur Community Coalition & Better Together Decatur on getting Decatur Police to take Fair & Impartial Policing training, work on education in neighborhoods about calling police in regard to suspicious behavior- not basing calls on stereotypes, share stories to build common ground, use social media to better effect to raise awareness, and support the work of the End New Jim Crow Action

Group Action items: Find out who administers the Create the Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter Facebook page so that the criminal justice group or others can add items and updates. Update a brochure on "Neighborhood Safety and Stereotypes," originally developed by Atlanta Friends Meeting, so that it contains references to cases such as Tamir Rice or Trayvon Martin and current online resources. Modify the brochure content/ format so that it can be used effectively on social media. Inquire with the Decatur High School Media Program about the possibility of doing a "Humans of Decatur" multi-media project similar to "Humans of New York" to share stories and build common ground across differences.



**ADVANCE OPPORTUNITY.
ACHIEVE EQUITY.**

RSJI: Our Approach

Vision, Goals and Strategies of RSJI

A vision of Race and Social Justice: Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is a citywide effort to realize the vision of racial equity. The Initiative works within City government and with the community to get to the root cause of racial inequity: **institutional racism**. RSJI is led by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights and an interdepartmental team of City staff. All elected officials in the City of Seattle have endorsed and promote RSJI.

RSJI's initial goals: When the City of Seattle introduced the Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2005, no U.S. city had ever undertaken an effort that focused explicitly on institutional racism. RSJI began as the City's attempt to "get our own house in order" by focusing on internal programs and operations. Over the last three years, the City of Seattle has joined with other institutions and community organizations. In 2009, RSJI convened the **Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable**, a group of 25 major institutions and community-based organizations working together to achieve racial equity in the community.

RSJI's new three-year plan: In 2011 the Race and Social Justice Initiative finished implementing its first three-year plan. In 2012, RSJI will introduce a new three-year plan that advances the vision of Race and Social Justice beyond Seattle City government to achieve racial equity across Seattle. This plan calls on government, institutions, businesses and the community to work together to achieve racial equity, using **three Equity Strategies**.

Equity Strategies: Over the next three years, the Race and Social Justice Initiative will use three specific strategies:

1. Apply racial equity tools to the City of Seattle's own programs and projects.
2. Build racial equity into City policies and Citywide initiatives.
3. Partner with other institutions and the community to achieve racial equity in key areas such as housing, jobs, education, health, criminal justice, community development and the environment.

Common approaches: All three strategies will use a set of common approaches:

- Develop meaningful measures and set specific targets for eliminating racial equity. We will measure our progress with the same dedication as we measure our problems.
- Use inclusive outreach and public engagement strategies to involve the community.
- Increase the public will to achieve racial equity.

As a community we have made it to this point thanks to the work of those who came before us. We believe that Seattle residents have had enough of the current status quo, and that we are ready to end racial inequity. We must work urgently for racial equity.

How the Race and Social Justice Initiative has evolved

The movement to end racism in Seattle is not new. Since the beginning of white settlement in the region, racial inequity has been part of our reality. At the same time however, organizations and individuals have used legal, legislative and social pressures to fight racial inequity. Local efforts to achieve race and social justice have been an important part of our region's history.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Citywide diversity and cultural competency training created a relatively diverse workplace, but they did little to address the underlying systemic issue: institutional racism. In 2005, Seattle implemented the Race and Social Justice Initiative to address institutional racism throughout City government.

RSJI formulated a new approach that includes:

- Focusing explicitly on race and institutional racism.
- Beginning with ourselves – in other words, “get our own house in order” as a necessary first step before engaging the community more broadly.
- Prioritizing achieving real results in the community.
- Committing to long-term sustainability.
- Using an organizing model to move the work forward, both within City government and in the community.

The Initiative developed an organizational structure to support departments' RSJ responsibilities within their own lines of business, as well as the City's overall commitment:

- Annual RSJI work plans developed and implemented by individual departments.
- Departmental Change Teams to guide departments' work plan implementation.
- A set of issues that cut across all City departments: workforce equity, contracting equity, inclusive outreach and public engagement, immigrant and refugee access to services, and training and education. Departments incorporated these five “Central Concerns” as part of their work plans.
- A Citywide Core Team of 20-30 people representing most City departments, who work with Change Teams, departments, and interdepartmental teams to implement the Initiative.
- The RSJI Sub-cabinet, consisting of department leadership and the Mayor's Office, which develops proposals to address systemic issues, and serves as a forum for sharing RSJI best practices.
- Formal support from elected officials.
- Coordinated training for all City of Seattle employees. All employees participate in a one-day training curriculum based on the PBS series, “*Race: the Power of an Illusion.*” Change Team, Core Team and other key leaders receive additional in-depth training.

Why lead with race?

The RSJ Initiative leads with racism because race has shaped our institutions and policies in the United States in ways that have prevented us from achieving equity. Until now, government typically has responded to inequities – when it has responded at all – by developing programs and services to lessen its effects. To achieve equity, however, we must focus on root causes. Ending institutional racism involves more than simply developing programs to help people of color. RSJI is Seattle's effort to change the underlying system that perpetuates racial and social inequities.

To challenge racism, we have to look beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systematic biases that are built into our institutions and our society. We are not to blame for what happened in the past, but we are responsible – both personally and institutionally – for eliminating racism and its legacy today.



Office of Equity and Human Rights

Realizing Equity. Enhancing the City of Portland.

421 SW 6th Avenue Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

City of Portland, Oregon
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner • Dante J. James, Director

Vision

City services are administered and delivered in a way that gives all Portlanders access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential.

Mission

The Office of Equity and Human Rights provides education and technical support to City staff and elected officials, leading to recognition and removal of systemic barriers to fair and just distribution of resources, access and opportunity, starting with issues of race and disability.

What is Equity?

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individuals within a community and as communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all. - *From the Portland Plan*

Three Year Goals: Citywide Equity Initiative

- 1. Establish and enhance a cross-bureau collaborative structure to support:**
 - i. Citywide equity strategies and policies
 - ii. Compliance with federal laws, Title II (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Title VI (Civil Rights Act)
 - iii. Sharing of best practices
 - iv. Technical assistance

- 2. Develop a citywide training and professional development program to address:**
 - i. Institutionalized racism
 - ii. Able-ism and disability awareness

- 3. Establish data collection and assessment mechanisms for bureaus to identify, evaluate and report on equity impact measures for:**
 - i. Hiring
 - ii. Contracting
 - iii. Budget expenditures
 - iv. Levels of service
 - v. Infrastructure conditions

- 4. Coordinate community involvement and advisory structures to strengthen the work of the Office and engage Portlanders as valued partners:**
 - i. Bureau Advisory Committee
 - ii. Portland Commission on Disability
 - iii. New Portlander Advisory Council
 - iv. Human Rights Commission

ESSENTIAL ONE-YEAR OUTCOMES OF OEHR PROGRAMS

1. Increased understanding of institutional barriers based on race and disability, resulting in changes in the culture of the City of Portland's government.
2. All bureaus accept responsibility to reduce disparities within their scope of influence.
3. Establish baseline assessment metrics.
4. Development of equity tools to measure individual Bureau success and evaluate the reduction of disparities in the City of Portland.
5. Select bureaus are assisted in developing strategic plans to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of employees in the City of Portland.
6. Select bureaus are assisted in increasing the number of persons with disabilities as employees of the City of Portland.
7. Increased contracting opportunities for minority and women owned businesses.
8. Improved immigrant and refugee access to City services, jobs, and contracts.
9. Strengthened community outreach and public engagement of communities of color, immigrant and refuge communities, and communities with disabilities, to better inform City policies and services, including the work of the Office of Equity and Human Rights.