

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

Transportation planning in any community is a complicated process. Regardless of the size of a jurisdiction, a considerable amount of data research and analysis is required. It is not enough to simply inventory the facilities; one must also examine the factors that contribute to the success and failure of the vehicular and non-vehicular transportation systems. The City of Decatur is no exception. Geographically a small community, 4.2 square miles, it is one of the densest cities in the region, with roughly 28 residents per acre. It contains an extensive transportation facility inventory, including three (3) heavy rail transit stations, three (3) state routes, a vast network of sidewalks, multi-use paths, and an historic industrial rail corridor.

The City differs from many of its regional neighbors in that it has been nearly built-out for decades. In contrast to many other jurisdictions suffering with the growing pains of an explosive population boom, the City instead faces unique challenges related more to redevelopment and the maximization of existing resources. The success of the central business district's commercial, entertainment and high-density residential developments present challenges to the downtown street network. The success has also brought to light the need for balance between providing facilities for the pedestrian as well as the vehicular needs of the retail customer, i.e. parking. In addition, single occupancy vehicle use is still a major form of transportation despite the availability of transit. Strategies are needed to decrease automobile use by increasing the use of alternative forms of transportation.

This section serves to satisfy the requirements of the transportation element as outlined by the Georgia DCA. It is intended to serve as an overview providing an inventory of the facilities, an initial assessment of the conditions in Decatur, and a preliminary discussion of the issues and opportunities. The City recognizes the need for a more intensive research and study outside of the comprehensive planning process. To that end, in FY 2005/2006 the City will retain the services of a consultant to prepare a Community Transportation Plan.

The Community Transportation Plan's first objective is to inventory, to a greater degree, much of the same conditions listed in this comprehensive plan. Through this inventory, the plan then will meet a number of goals including the most primary: *design a multi-modal transportation network that provides safe and efficient mobility to all users through identification of pedestrian, bicyclist, public transit, and vehicle mobility improvements.* The plan will build upon the objectives set forth by the "Active Living by Design" philosophy. It will design standards, facilities, and programs that emphasize "complete streets," encouraging residents, commuters, and visitors to use alternative forms of transportation. In addition, a number of specific issues will be addressed

including parking, connectivity impediments of the rail corridor, intersection improvements and funding.

Inventory of Existing Conditions

Functional Classification of Roadways

In 1974, the Federal Highway Administration published the manual Highway Functional Classification - Concepts, Criteria and Procedures. The manual was revised in 1989 and forms the basis of this roadway classification inventory.

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service that they are intended to provide. In general, there are three functional classifications: arterial, collector, and local roads. All streets and highways are grouped into one of these classes, depending on the character of the traffic (i.e., local or long distance) and the degree of land access that they allow. These classifications are further described in the following table.

Table 9.1 – Street and Highway Classification

Functional System	Definition
Arterial	Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. Arterials can be further classified as principal or minor. Principal arterials generally move higher volumes of traffic at higher speeds over longer distances than minor arterials.
Collector	Provides a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials.
Local	Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

Roadway Classification in Decatur

Information on functional classification for the Decatur street network was collected from the Georgia Department of Transportation DeKalb County database. Since Decatur is included within the Atlanta Urbanized Area, roads have been classified under the urban classification system. The following provides highlights of the findings and the Functional Classification Map graphically illustrates the inventory.

Urban Principal Arterials

The City of Decatur has one principal arterial, Scott Boulevard (SR 8 & US29). It traverses the northwest corner of the City connecting downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain and points further east.

Urban Minor Arterials

Decatur has good east-west and north-south connectivity provided for by a number of minor arterials. The City's minor arterials that generally run in an east-west direction include:

- East/West College Avenue (SR 10 & US 278)
- East/West Howard Avenue
- East/West Ponce de Leon Avenue
- North Decatur Road

Those arterials that run in a general north-south direction include:

- South Candler Street (Kirk Road south to City limits)
- South Columbia Drive
- Commerce Drive
- Clairemont Avenue
- East Lake Road

Urban Collectors

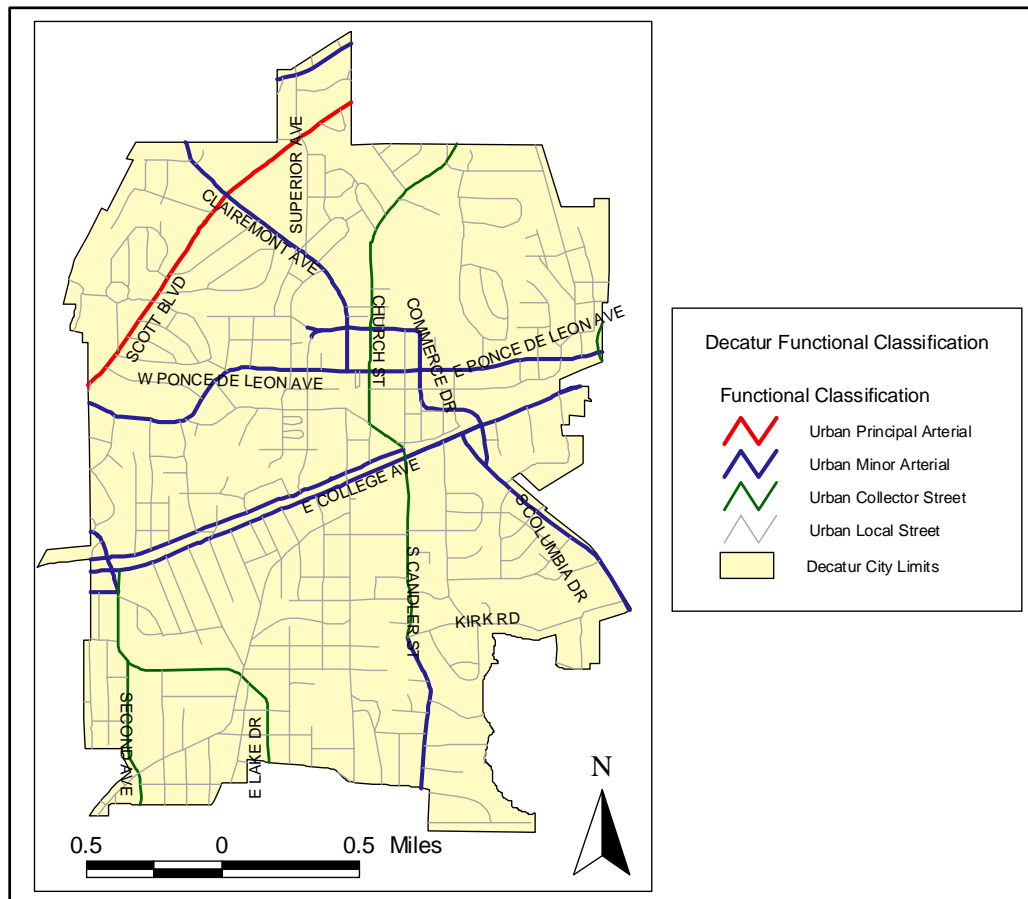
There are several collectors with the City limits. These roads generally run in north-south direction and include:

- Second Avenue
- East Lake Drive
- South Candler Street (E. College south to Kirk Road)
- East Trinity Place
- Church Street
- North Arcadia Avenue

Local Roads

The remaining streets in Decatur are considered local roads. The vast majority is located within the City's numerous single-family residential neighborhoods, as depicted on the accompanying Functional Classification Map.

Map 9.1 – Decatur Roadway Functional Classification Map



Number of Lanes, Volume, and Capacity

Data from the Atlanta Regional Commission's travel demand model utilized in the development of the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan was used for the compilation of this inventory. The accompanying table (Table 9-2) presents the number of lanes, volume and design capacity for arterials and collectors located within the city limits of Decatur. The figures for the estimated daily volume and capacity represent averages for the entire day and length of roadway (within City limits). Actual volumes and capacities will vary by specific time of day, (peak vs. non-peak) and individual roadway segment (cross street to cross street).

Table 9.2 – Number of Lanes, Volume, and Capacity

Functional Class	Street	No of Lanes	Estimated Daily Volume	Estimated Daily Capacity
Principal Arterials	Scott Boulevard/SR8	4	19845	23000
Minor Arterials	East/West College	2-4	6778	11000
	East/West Howard	2	4885	8800
	South Candler (Kirk Rd. south to City limits)	2	10561	9300
	South Columbia	2	3840	6500
	Commerce Drive	4	2116	11000
	East/West Ponce de Leon	4	4150	7900
	North Decatur Road	4	8490	12000
	Clairemont Avenue	4	13221	19250
	East Lake Road	2	6375	7500
	Park Place	2	1085	7500
	Second Avenue	2	5030	6750
Collector Streets	South Candler Street (E. College south to Kirk Rd.)	2	9341	8100
	East Trinity Place	2	510	6000
	Church Street	4	6375	15000
	North Arcadia Avenue	2-4	7600	12300

State Routes

The state highway system is operated and maintained by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Portions of the following state and federal highways run through the City of Decatur:

- State Route 8 - US 78 - US 29 (Scott Boulevard)
- State Route 155 - US 23 (Clairemont Avenue/Commerce Drive/South Candler Street)
- State Route 10 (East Lake Drive/East and West College Avenue)

The primary purpose of the state route is regional mobility. It is important to note that any traffic calming or addition of pedestrian facilities that could potentially interfere with the flow of traffic must be coordinated and approved by GDOT.

Evacuation Routes

According to the DeKalb County Emergency Service Department, there is not an official evacuation route for the County, and subsequently the City of Decatur. In the event of an emergency, the County will work with the Georgia Department of Transportation in directing residents to the most efficient route out of the area.

Bridge Inventory

The Georgia Department of Transportation maintains an inventory and inspection report of all bridges and conditions on public roads. According to the inventory, there are seven bridges located within the City limits as listed below. Three are pertinent to the roadway network and are considered in overall good condition

(noted with *). The other four bridges are non-roadway structures carrying MARTA facilities.

- Arcadia Avenue over MARTA and CSX Railroad*
- Howard Avenue over SR 10 East Lake Drive*
- West College over SR 10 East Lake Drive*
- West Trinity Place under MARTA Rail
- DeKalb Avenue under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass
- SR 10 East Lake Drive under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass
- College Avenue under MARTA Pedestrian Overpass

Signalized Intersection Inventory

DeKalb County operates the traffic signal system in Decatur. DeKalb County Public Works database files were utilized in the compiling the inventory of signals for the City. According to the database, a total of 44 signalized intersections were identified. The signals are listed in the accompanying table and depicted in the Signal Location Map.

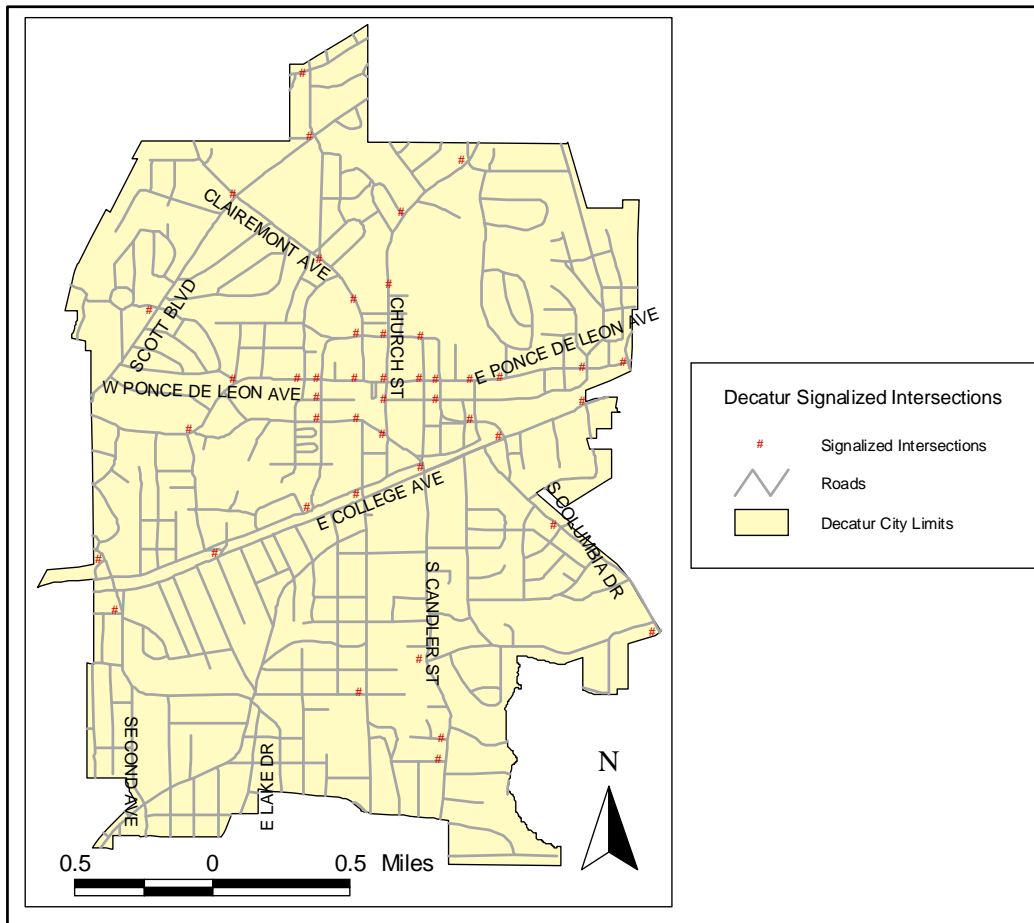
Table 9.3 – Signalized Intersections

City of Decatur's Signalized Intersections
Atlanta Avenue / Olympic Place / West College Avenue / West Howard Avenue
Brower Street / South Candler Street
Church Street / Clairemont Oaks
Church Street / Commerce Drive*
Church Street / East Ponce De Leon Avenue*
Church Street / East Trinity Place*
Church Street / Forkner Drive / Medlock Road
Church Street / Glenlake Park / Lucerne Street
Church Street / Sycamore Street*
Clairemont Avenue / Clairemont Oaks
Clairemont Avenue / Commerce Drive*
Clairemont Avenue / East Ponce De Leon Avenue / West Ponce De Leon Avenue*
Clairemont Avenue / Scott Boulevard*
Clairemont Avenue / Superior Avenue / Wilton Drive*
Columbia Drive / Katie Kerr Drive
Commerce Drive / East College Avenue / South Columbia Drive
Commerce Drive / East Ponce De Leon Avenue*
Commerce Drive / North Candler Street*
Commerce Drive / Swanton Way*
Commerce Drive / Sycamore Place*
Commerce Drive / Sycamore Street
Commerce Drive / West Howard Avenue
Commerce Drive / West Ponce De Leon Avenue*

Commerce Drive / West Trinity Place*
Coventry Road / Scott Boulevard
Derrydown Way / South Columbia Drive
East College Avenue / East-West Howard Street / North-South McDonough Street
East College Avenue / Sam's Street
East College Avenue / South Candler Street
East Hill Street / South McDonough Street
East Lake Road / Paden Circle
East Lake Road / Park Place
East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Glendale Avenue
East Ponce De Leon Avenue / North Arcadia Avenue / Sams Crossing
East Ponce De Leon Avenue / North Candler Street*
East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Sycamore Street / Sycamore Drive
East Ponce De Leon Avenue / Sycamore Place*
Kirk Road / South Candler Street
Midway Road / South Candler Street
Nelson Ferry Road / Northern Avenue / West Ponce De Leon Ave*
North Decatur Road / North Superior Avenue
North McDonough Street / West Trinity Place*
North Superior Avenue / Scott Boulevard / Superior Avenue
Ponce De Leon Place / West Ponce De Leon Avenue*
West Ponce De Leon Avenue / West Trinity Place*

The City recognizes the need for a better coordinated and timed signal system for maximum roadway efficiency. As such, included in the Georgia Fiscal Year 2005-2007 State Transportation Improvement Program is the Downtown Decatur Signal Timing and Coordination Program. As its name suggests, the project consists of a signal timing study for 22 of the downtown Decatur intersections (denoted by *). The City is sponsoring the study, however implementation of the recommendations falls under the responsibility of DeKalb County.

Map 9.2 – Decatur Signalized Intersections Map



Bike and Pedestrian Trails

The PATH Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing a metrowide trail system for Atlanta. Within the City limits is approximately a 2-mile portion of the 18-mile Atlanta to Stone Mountain multi-use trail. The path enters the western Decatur border from Atlanta along Howard Avenue at the East Lake MARTA station. It follows Howard to Sycamore Street to East Ponce de Leon where it leaves the eastern city limits continuing onto Stone Mountain.

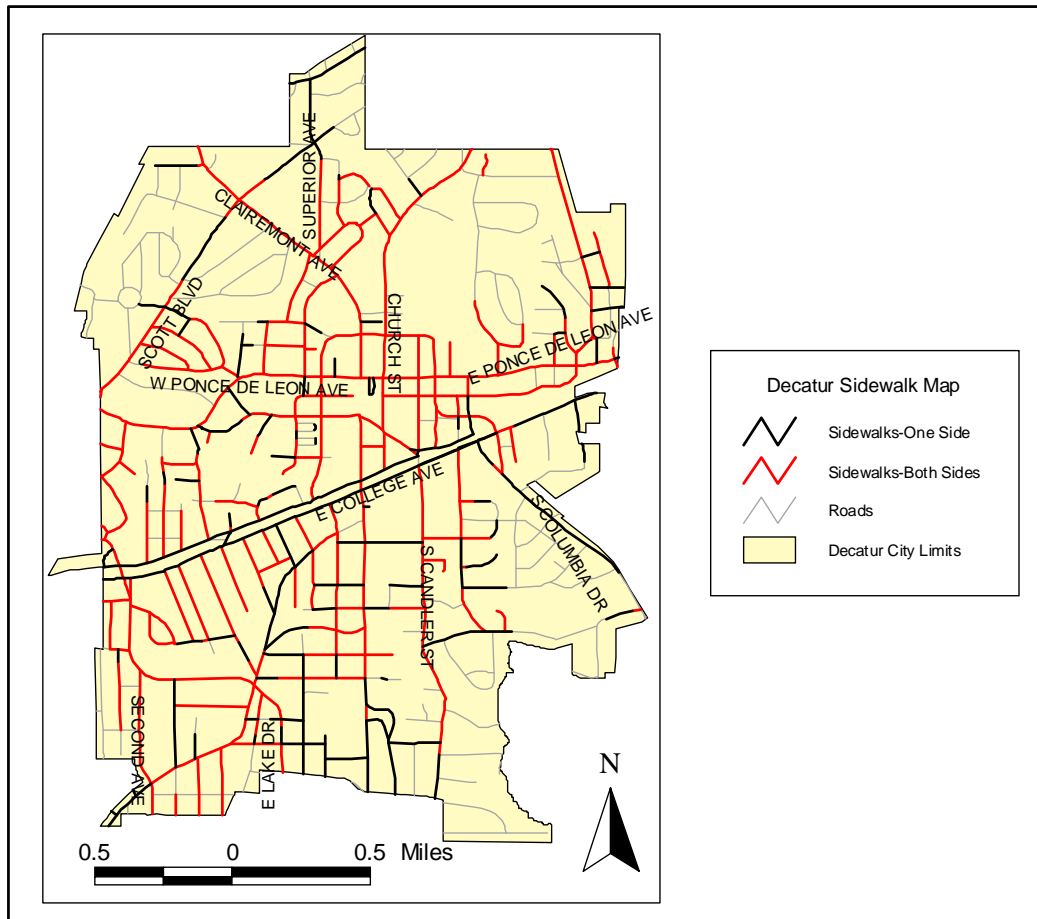
The City is also home to portions of the PATH Foundation's Trolley Line on-street bike route and greenway trail that originates in Atlanta. The on-street bicycle route enters Decatur's southwest border on Oakview Road and extends north to McDonough Street where it meets the multi-use trail. The greenway trail is a short paved multi-use trail through a woodlands area on the southern border of Agnes Scott College near East Davis Street and Green Street.

Sidewalk Inventory

A sidewalk inventory was prepared utilizing City of Decatur Public Works files. The following map illustrates where sidewalks are present on one side, both sides or on neither side. Sidewalks are found on the majority of streets in

Decatur including the major functional classifications. For fiscal year 2005-06, the City has identified 19 streets to receive a total approximately 8,450 linear feet of new or replaced sidewalk. The total cost of the improvements equal \$300,000.

Map 9.3 – Decatur Sidewalk Map



In early 2004, the Atlanta Regional Commission began an inventory of pedestrian facilities around transit. The scope of work includes inventorying areas within a half-mile radius of rail stations and within a quarter-mile radius of bus stops. Specifically, the inventory looks at land uses and the type and condition of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. The rail station portion of the inventory is complete. Results of this inventory were not available at the time of this document preparation. The data is anticipated to be released in time for the development of the Community Transportation Plan.

Parking Inventory

The most significant parking facilities are located within the Decatur downtown area. There are 300 metered spaces and 2,200 deck, lot, and private retail spaces.

For parking meters, a two-hour parking limit is enforced from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Metered parking is free after 6 p.m. and on Sundays. The cost is .05 cents for six minutes, .10 cents for 12 minutes and .25 cents for 30 minutes.

Rates in the downtown parking decks range from \$1.50 per hour to \$5.75 for all day. The First Union Deck offers a monthly parking rate of \$15.00. The DeKalb County Courthouse deck charges \$2.00 to park all day from 8:00am–6:00pm.

Public Transportation

MARTA

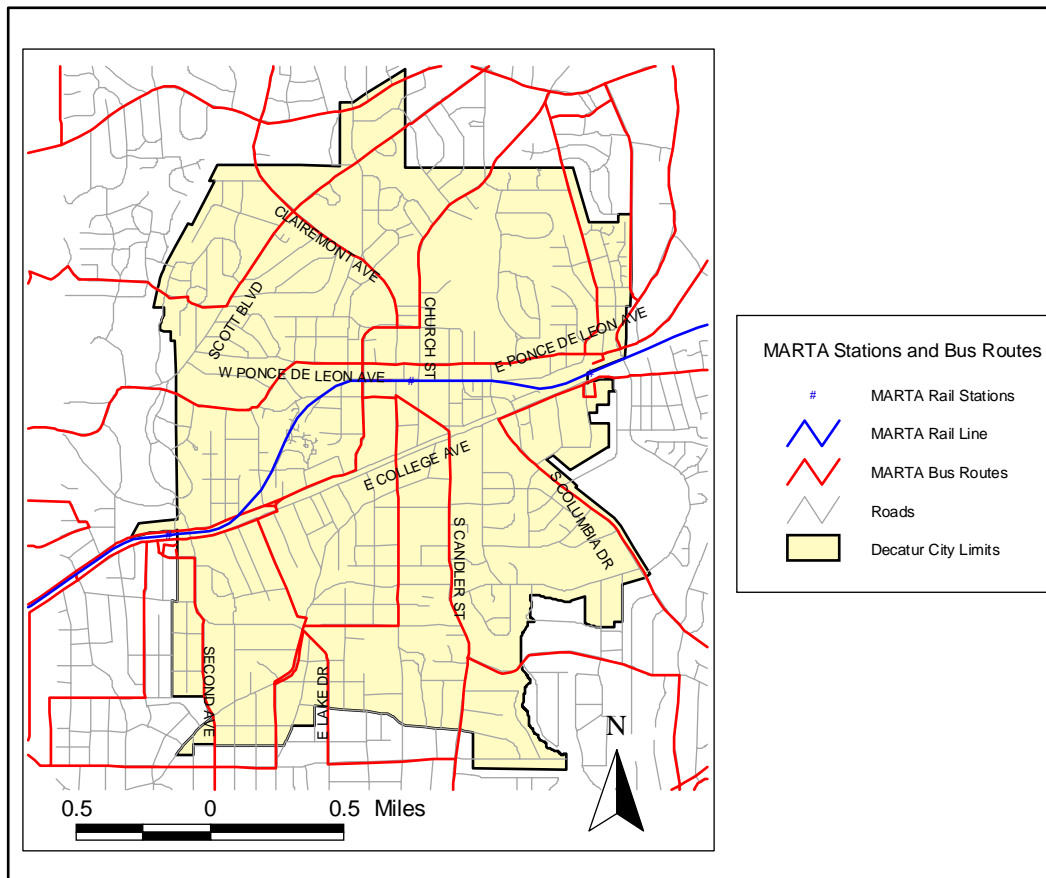
The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) operates three heavy rail stations located within the city limits along its East-West Line: East Lake Station, Decatur Station and the Avondale Station. In addition, sixteen bus routes serve the stations and the Decatur area. The following table provides details on station specifics. The MARTA Decatur Facility Map depicts station locations and bus routes.

Table 9.4 – Heavy Rail Stations within the City of Decatur

Rail Station	Location	Parking Spaces	FY04 Average Weekday Rail Entries	FY05* Average Weekday Rail Entries	Station Bus Routes	Estimated Daily Ridership
East Lake	2260 College Avenue	611	993	883	123	622
					22	644
					24	417
Avondale	915 E. Ponce de Leon Avenue	823	4377	5165	120	3132
					121	2380
					122	476
					125	2527
					2	1591
					36	929
					75	1772
					8	1823
					96	1332
Decatur	400 Church Street	0	2986	3328	123	622
					15	4194
					18	2054
					19	2383
					2	1591

Source: MARTA (*To date: July 04 – March 05)

Map 9.4 – MARTA Stations and Bus Routes



Service Frequency, Facility Capacity, and Fare

MARTA train service runs generally from 5:00am to 1:00am on Monday through Friday and from 5:00am to 12:30am on weekends and holidays. For MARTA bus service, times vary on individual routes. In general, buses run from 5:00am to 1:30am Monday through Friday and from 5:30am to 12:30am weekends and holidays. Schedules are published online at the agency's website: www.itsmarta.com.

A headway is defined as the interval of time between a train or bus traveling in any given direction of travel. According to the published 2003 MARTA Service Standards, rail headways for weekday travel are within five (5) and ten (10) minutes, while weekday evening and weekend headway are between five (5) and fifteen (15) minutes. Bus headway for weekday morning and evening peak period is thirty (30) minutes or less. Weekday off-peak and weekend service maintain a headway of no more than sixty (60) minutes.

Load factors are defined as the ratio of passengers on a facility to the number of seats available. The maximum allowable load factor for train is 1.7 or

approximately 109 passengers on a rail car with a seating capacity of 64. For buses, the maximum allowable load factor is 1.25 during peak service or 1.00 in the off-peak or weekend service. Buses have a seating capacity average of 47.

Single one-way fares are currently \$1.75 each way. There are a variety of special fare programs that exist for students, visitors and seniors. These programs are listed in detail on the MARTA website.

Clifton Corridor TMA

The Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA) offers free shuttle service from the Emory University campus on Clifton Road to downtown Decatur MARTA station. Known as the CCTMA-Decatur Shuttle, the shuttle operates from 5:30am to 7:00pm, Monday-Friday. Headways are generally 30-45 minutes. A schedule is published online at the organization's website: www.cctma.com.

Major Transit Trip Generators and Attractors

Major transit trip generators and attractors located in Decatur include the Downtown Decatur area with a 15-block commercial, specialty retail, and restaurant district, the DeKalb County Courthouse and administrative offices and over 500 units of high and medium-density residential. The first phase of the MARTA Avondale Livable Centers Initiative, permitted this year, will redevelop an existing MARTA parking lot adding over 250 residential units and 22,000 square feet of commercial and retail space. Major employers and destinations outside the downtown area that provide connections to MARTA include Emory University, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agnes Scott College.

Riders originating at any of the three Decatur MARTA stations can gain access to other stops along the East-West line such as Georgia State University, downtown Atlanta, CNN, Centennial Park and Phillips Arena. Riders can transfer to the North-South line at Five Point Station for such destinations as Underground Atlanta, World of Coca-Cola, historic West End, Fort McPherson, Lakewood Amphitheatre, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and major regional employment and retail centers in midtown Atlanta, Buckhead area, the Medical Center area north of Buckhead, and the Perimeter area. Shuttle access is also available from the Five Points Station to Turner Field.

Transit Ridership Profile

MARTA's Transit Research branch annually conducts a Quality of Service Survey. Quality of Service measures customer perception of how MARTA performs each aspect of the total transit experience. The Quality of Service data is also used to produce a demographic and usage profile of the customers. Demographic variables consist of age, household income, gender, ethnicity, and residency.

The following series of tables show the demographic profiles of the patrons that utilized MARTA in 2004.

Table 9.5 – Age Distribution of MARTA Patrons

Age	Percent
Under 16	0.4
16-24	23.4
25-34	27.2
35-44	24.2
45-54	16.4
55-64	6.7
65+	1.7

Table 9.6 – Income Distribution of MARTA Patrons

Household Income	Percent
Less than \$10,000	13.8
\$10,000-14,999	11.6
\$15,000-19,999	13.1
\$20,000-24,999	14.2
\$25,000-29,999	11.9
\$30,000-34,999	10.2
\$35,000-39,999	7.1
\$40,000-49,999	6.4
\$50,000-74,999	6.6
\$75,000 or more	5.1

Table 9.7 – Gender Distribution of MARTA Patrons

Gender	Percent
Male	53.0
Female	47.0

Table 9.8 – Ethnic Distribution of MARTA Patrons

Ethnicity	Percent
Black	78.3
White	12.5
Hispanic	6.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.0
Native American	0.4
Other	0.8

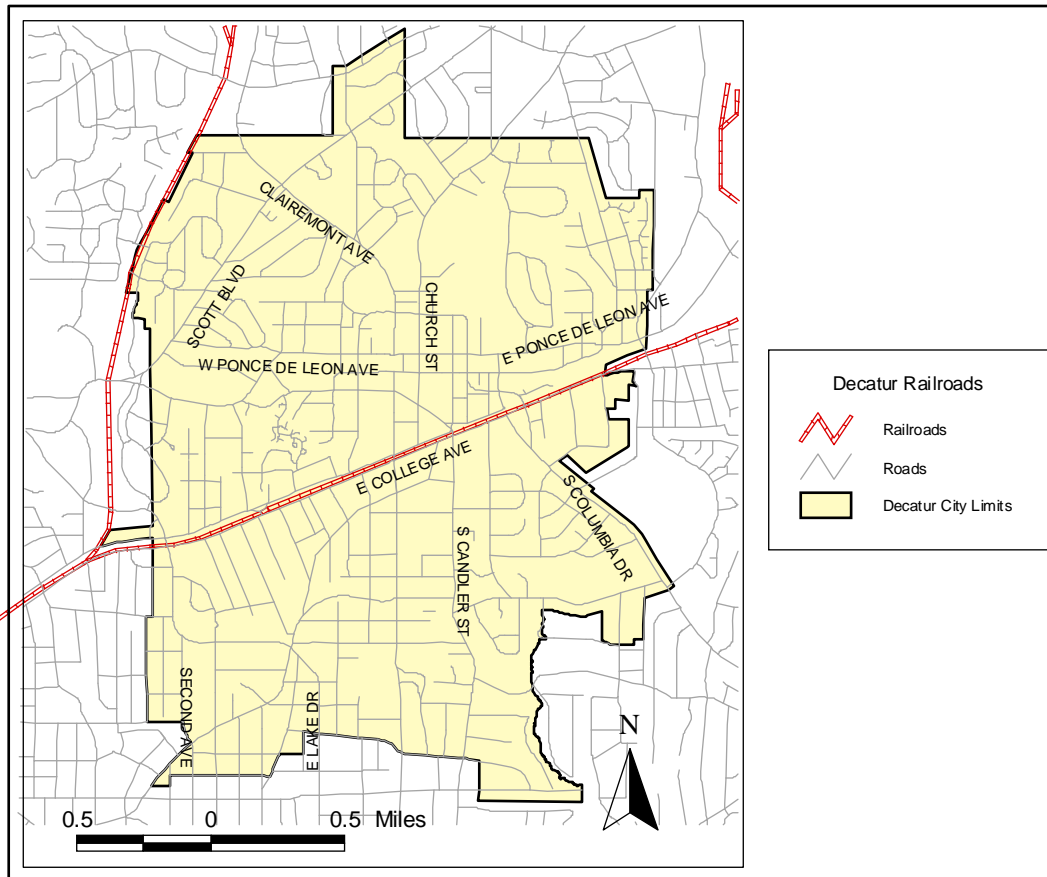
Table 9.9 – Residency Distribution of MARTA Patrons

Residency	Percent
Atlanta	42.8
Fulton	14.2
DeKalb	33.0
Outside Service Area	10.0

Railroad Inventory

One industrial railroad corridor is located within the Decatur limits. The CSX line bisects the City from east to west as part of its Atlanta to Augusta service, as depicted on the Railroad Facilities Map. With this industrial railway service, there are approximately 10-15 trains per day. There are three at-grade crossings located within the City limits at major intersections. In Fiscal Year 2005-2006, the City plans to undertake a Community Transportation Plan in which these three crossings will be examined for improvements to provide a safer environment for pedestrians and to allow implementation of a Decatur Quiet Zone.

Map 9.5 – Decatur Railroad Map



Programmed STIP Improvements

The Georgia Fiscal Year 2005-2007 State Transportation Improvement Program includes one project located within the City of Decatur, the Downtown Decatur Signal Timing and Coordination Program. As its name suggests, the project consists of a signal timing study for 22 of the downtown Decatur intersections. Although maintenance of the signal system is under the purview of DeKalb County, the City is sponsoring the project.

Accident Frequency Data

Data on accident frequency was provided by the City of Decatur Department of Public Safety. For purposes of the analysis, the period from January - December 2004 was examined for trends. There were a total of 715 accidents in 2004. Table 9.10 lists the top ten roadways by number of accidents and the intersection(s) where most incidents occurred.

Table 9.10 – Decatur Roadways with the Highest Accident Frequency

Roadway	Number of Accidents	Most Frequent Intersection
Commerce Drive (SR 155)	80	Clairemont Avenue, Church Street
Clairemont Avenue	71	Commerce, Scott
East Ponce de Leon	63	Church, Commerce
East College Avenue (SR 10)	58	South Candler Street
South Candler Street (SR 155)	55	East College Avenue
Scott Boulevard	52	Clairemont
West Ponce de Leon	47	Commerce
Church Street	47	Commerce, East Ponce de Leon
West Trinity	30	Swanton Way
West Howard	30	Atlanta Avenue

A correlation exists between Decatur's most congested streets and frequency of accidents. East Ponce de Leon, West Ponce de Leon, South Candler Street and Scott Boulevard all experience a high level of congestion on some segments and are included on this top ten list. Also contributing to the frequency of accidents is speed, turn geometries, and pedestrian facilities at intersections. In FY 2005-2006 the City intends to retain the services of a consultant to prepare a Community Transportation Plan to examine these and other issues. The majority of intersections listed above are included in the plan for specific study.

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

Assessment of the Road Network

Existing Level of Service on Roadways

To assess the adequacy of the existing roadway network for the City of Decatur, the Level of Service (LOS) was analyzed for the major classifications of roadways. For the analysis, data from the Atlanta Regional Commission's travel demand model for the network year 2005 was utilized.

LOS is calculated for individual road segments by determining the ratio of daily traffic volume to the roadway's capacity. The LOS is then coded by letter grades A-F, each grade corresponding to a certain range. For consistency, the same thresholds developed by the ARC in the Regional Transportation Plan model were utilized for this analysis, as detailed below.

Table 9.11 – Level of Service Definitions

Level of Service (LOS)	Volume/Capacity Ratio
LOS A-B	.00-.55
LOS C	.55-.77
LOS D	.77-.93
LOS E	.93-1.00
LOS F	1.00

Qualitatively, the LOS grades correspond to the degree of delay and maneuverability motorists experience, with A indicating little or no delay with adequate room to maneuver and F indicating long delays, low average speeds and little room to maneuver. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, LOS D has been adopted as the acceptable minimum standard. The following table details the roadways with an LOS of E or F, representing the most congested roadway segments in Decatur.

Table 9.12 – Most Congested Roadways within the City of Decatur

Roadway	2004 LOS
South Candler Street (SR155) (from E. Howard south to City limits)	LOS F
Scott Boulevard (SR8) (from Coventry Road to Clairemont Avenue)	LOS E
North McDonough St (from East Trinity to East Howard)	LOS F
West Ponce de Leon (Commerce to East Court Square)	LOS E-F
East Ponce de Leon (East Court Square to Glendale Avenue)	LOS F

As anticipated, the majority of segments experiencing the lowest level of services are located in the Decatur downtown area, ex. West and East Ponce de Leon and McDonough Road. This can be attributed to a heavy volume of traffic, frequency of curb cuts, traffic signals, mid-block pedestrian crosswalks and on-street parking. The Scott Boulevard (SR8) segment is characterized by residential driveways, multi-family housing, and Westchester Early Child Development Center. South Candler Street is a state route (155) that connects downtown Decatur to Interstate 20. It is a two-lane road characterized by residential driveways and traffic signals. Upon reaching DeKalb County limits, it expands to a 4-lane highway.

From an economic development standpoint, congestion on downtown streets through a central business district is not necessarily negative. Slower speeds are generally supportive of businesses and a pedestrian friendly environment. Traffic should be slowed for pedestrian safety and comfort. A slower speed affords motorists the opportunity to notice streetside retail, making them more likely to stop and patronize local businesses.

Modal Split and Vehicle Occupancy

Table 9.13 – Means of Transportation to Work, Decatur 2000

Workers	Total (age 16 and older)	Percentage
Car, truck, or van:	7,620	78%
Drove alone	7,077	73%
Carpooled	543	6%
Public transportation:	993	10%
Bus or trolley bus	501	5%
Streetcar or trolley car (publico in Puerto Rico)	0	0%
Subway or elevated	479	5%
Railroad	0	0%
Ferryboat	0	0%
Taxicab	13	<1%
Motorcycle	0	0%
Bicycle	17	<1%
Walked	567	6%
Other means	63	1%
Worked at home	480	5%
Total	9,740	100%

Source: US Census 2000

Table 9.13 shows the means of travel to work for workers age 16 and older in the City of Decatur for the year 2000. Of the 9,740 workers, 78% utilized car, trucks, or vans for their commute with 6% carpooling. This compares closely with City of Atlanta, which had 76% of workers utilizing the same vehicles. Carpoolers in Atlanta accounted for 12%. DeKalb County had a higher rate of private vehicle use, 86%, with 15% of workers carpooling. In terms of vehicle occupancy, 73% of workers in Decatur drove alone in 2000. Both City of Atlanta and DeKalb County had lower percentages of 64% and 70%.

Looking at alternative forms of transportation use, 10% of the workers in Decatur utilized bus, train, or taxicab for their commute. This figure compares similarly to Atlanta at 15% and DeKalb County at 8%. Decatur had a higher percentage of workers walking and biking to work at about roughly 7% compared with the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County which had 4% and 2% respectively. About 5% of workers worked from home in Decatur, compared with 4% in Atlanta and 3% in DeKalb County.

Assessment of Public Transit Facilities

Given the availability of transit facilities in Decatur, three MARTA heavy rail stations and a wide network of sixteen MARTA bus routes, the percentage of workers utilizing public transit is expected to be higher. Travel trends in Decatur seem to mirror the larger regional trend of private automobile use as the

preferred method of transport, despite proximity to transit. This can also be seen in the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County which has similar transit facilities.

In order for transit to be attractive, it must offer both convenience and significant time savings. A frequent complaint of commuters regarding transit is that MARTA does not service the areas where commuters need to go. There is some credence to this given the development pattern of the region. MARTA is only located within two counties, Fulton and DeKalb, and employment/destination centers exist all around the region.

Another complaint of the transit system is the lack of travel time savings. The higher-income demographic in Decatur is highly sensitive to commute time. It averages approximately 25 minutes to travel from Downtown Decatur MARTA station to the Five Points station in downtown Atlanta. Factoring in a train or bus transfer, and the time rises considerably. Considering “Journey to Work” data from the 2000 U.S. Census reports an average commute time of 26.2 minutes for Decatur commuters, transit does not offer much of an incentive.

Percent of Auto Ownership

The following information on auto ownership has been provided by the 2000 U.S. Census. This information is important to factor in when considering an individual's likelihood to utilize transit. As the below table details, 96% of all homeowners and 74% of all renters in Decatur have access to at least one vehicle. It can be inferred from the data that renters in Decatur are more likely to be transit-dependent. This is useful for the City when considering the appropriate location of rental developments, e.g., apartments should be co-located with MARTA heavy rail transit stations and bus stops.

Table 9.14 – City of Decatur - Vehicles Available by Tenure

Housing Type	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Total	4,747		3,321	
No vehicle available	210	4%	853	26%
1 vehicle available	1,672	35%	1,639	49%
2 vehicles available	2,323	49%	729	22%
3 vehicles available	429	9%	100	3%
4 vehicles available	94	2%	0	0%
5 or more vehicles available	19	0%	0	0%
Total Units:	8,068			

Source: US Census 2000

Projected Overall System Levels of Service and System Needs

As the City of Decatur nears 100% build-out conditions, growth options are limited to redevelopment and infill. Current and future policies as demonstrated by the Existing and Future Land Use maps in the Land Use element of this document emphasize the preservation of existing single family residential and direction of mixed-use and medium to high-density residential development in the downtown or surrounding areas. These areas are located near, or in the case of the Avondale MARTA station on, mass transit facilities. Co-location of identified growth areas with mass transit should have a positive effect on congestion in the Decatur.

Proximity to transit does not alone facilitate use of the facility as demonstrated by the U.S. Census modal split data above. However, the type and density of development encouraged by the City is far more conducive to use of alternative forms of transportation than single-family or single-use commercial districts. In addition, the Vehicles by Tenure data showed renters in Decatur are more likely to be transit dependent. As such, the development planned for the Avondale MARTA station is comprised mostly of apartment type housing units.

Means of Optimizing Existing Facilities

Adding capacity to the road network as a means to control congestion in Decatur is not considered a feasible option. A reduction in vehicle trips may occur in areas of the city with high-density residential and mixed-use developments as

residents take advantage of the City's high quality pedestrian amenities to make more trips on foot. The City must take advantage of its existing resources in order to effect positive change for its residents.

The City has been successful in its use of land use controls as a way to maximize resources. Policies have directed growth to those areas well served by transit. While transit in Decatur is not the preferred mode of travel, as densities and awareness of air quality issues increase, transit use should rise over the twenty-year planning period.

The high percentage of commuters who bike and walk to work in Decatur is indicative of the high quality and availability of facilities. Most of the streets in Decatur have sidewalks on at least one side of the road. The City is committed to an annual expenditure for maintenance and improvement of these facilities. The public involvement process revealed a strong desire from the community for continued commitment to increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City is currently participating in a pilot "Safe Routes to Schools Program" through the Georgia Department of Transportation. At the completion of the program this year, the City will consider ways to incorporate lessons learned from the Safe Routes to Schools Program in the Community Transportation Plan.

The Community Transportation Plan is expected to identify in greater detail the methods and strategies to enhance the City's non-vehicular modes of transportation.

Transportation Requirements for Non-Attainment Areas

As a municipality within DeKalb County, the City of Decatur is subject to the same air quality standards as the Atlanta region. The Clean Air Act (CAA) is a law designed to ensure that all U.S. residents have the same basic health and environmental protections. Under the CAA, each state that does not meet one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) is charged with developing a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that outlines how air quality will be improved by a specified date. Of the six (6) pollutants that the CAA establishes standards for, two (2) are of particular concern in Atlanta, ozone and particulate matter. Atlanta is currently designated as a non-attainment area for ozone and fine particulate matter.

Local governments located within a nationally designated ambient air quality standards nonattainment area must include three elements in their comprehensive plan: a map of the area designated as a non-attainment area for ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter, a discussion of the severity of any violations contributed by transportation-related sources that are contributing to air quality non-attainment, and identification of measures, activities, programs, regulations, etc., the local government will implement consistent with the state implementation plan for air quality.

The following discussion on the severity of violations is taken from the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan's Conformity Determination Report.

Ozone

The Atlanta region is currently designated as a nonattainment area for ozone. Ozone is a primary component of smog and a powerful respiratory irritant when formed in the lower atmosphere. Ozone is not emitted directly from any source, rather it is formed when Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) combine in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. Air pollution control strategies are aimed at controlling NO_x and VOC, since they are precursors to ozone formation.

In 1990, the Atlanta metropolitan area was one of 91 areas in the United States designated as nonattainment under the one-hour ozone standard. Atlanta was classified as a serious nonattainment area based on ozone sampling measurements taken from 1987-1989. The designation identified a specific set of required regional emission control strategies that had to be implemented within the nonattainment area including, but not limited to, an enhanced Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) program, controls on fuel volatility, and implementation of a clean-fuel fleet program. The designation also defined a specific deadline of November 1999 for attaining the ozone standard.

The nonattainment area under the one-hour ozone standard consists of 13 counties – Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale. Effective January 1, 2004, the Atlanta nonattainment area was reclassified as a severe nonattainment area because the region was unable to attain the standard by the statutory deadline of 1999. Atlanta was reclassified (“bumped up”) because USEPA was delayed in its effort to control up-wind emissions from neighboring states that contribute to the ozone problem in the Atlanta area.

The Clean Air Act requires that the NAAQS be reviewed every five years to determine if they need to be updated. In 1997 the NAAQS for ozone was reviewed and revised to reflect improved scientific understanding of the health impacts of this pollutant. When the standard was revised in 1997, an eight-hour ozone standard was established. The eight-hour ozone standard is based on extensive air pollution research that indicated ozone is more harmful when a person is exposed over a longer period of time, even if the ozone concentration is lower. The eight-hour ozone standard is met when the three-year average of the annual fourth-highest daily maximum eight-hour ozone concentration within an area does not exceed 0.08 ppm².

In April 2004, 20 counties within the Atlanta metropolitan area were designated as nonattainment under the eight-hour ozone standard, with an effective date of June 15, 2004. The Atlanta eight-hour ozone nonattainment area was classified as marginal based on ozone measurements taken from 2000-2002. The

designation also defined a specific deadline of June 2007 for demonstrating attainment to the revised ozone standard. Transportation conformity under the eight-hour ozone standard is required by the Clean Air Act within one-year of the effective date of designation, i.e., by June 15, 2005. A conformity determination under the eight-hour ozone standard must be in place by June 15, 2005, or a conformity lapse will occur.

The counties within the Atlanta eight-hour ozone nonattainment area are Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale, Hall, Barrow, Walton, Newton, Spalding, Carroll, and Bartow. This is the 13-county one-hour ozone nonattainment area plus seven additional “ring” counties. The USEPA does not intend for there to be two ozone standards in place at the same time. The eight-hour ozone standard is a revised standard, not a new standard. For this reason, the less stringent, one-hour ozone standard will be revoked one year after the effective date of designations under the revised standard, i.e., the one-hour ozone standard will be revoked in full on June 15, 2005. Transportation conformity under the one-hour ozone standard will no longer apply in the 13-county one-hour ozone nonattainment area after June 15, 2005.

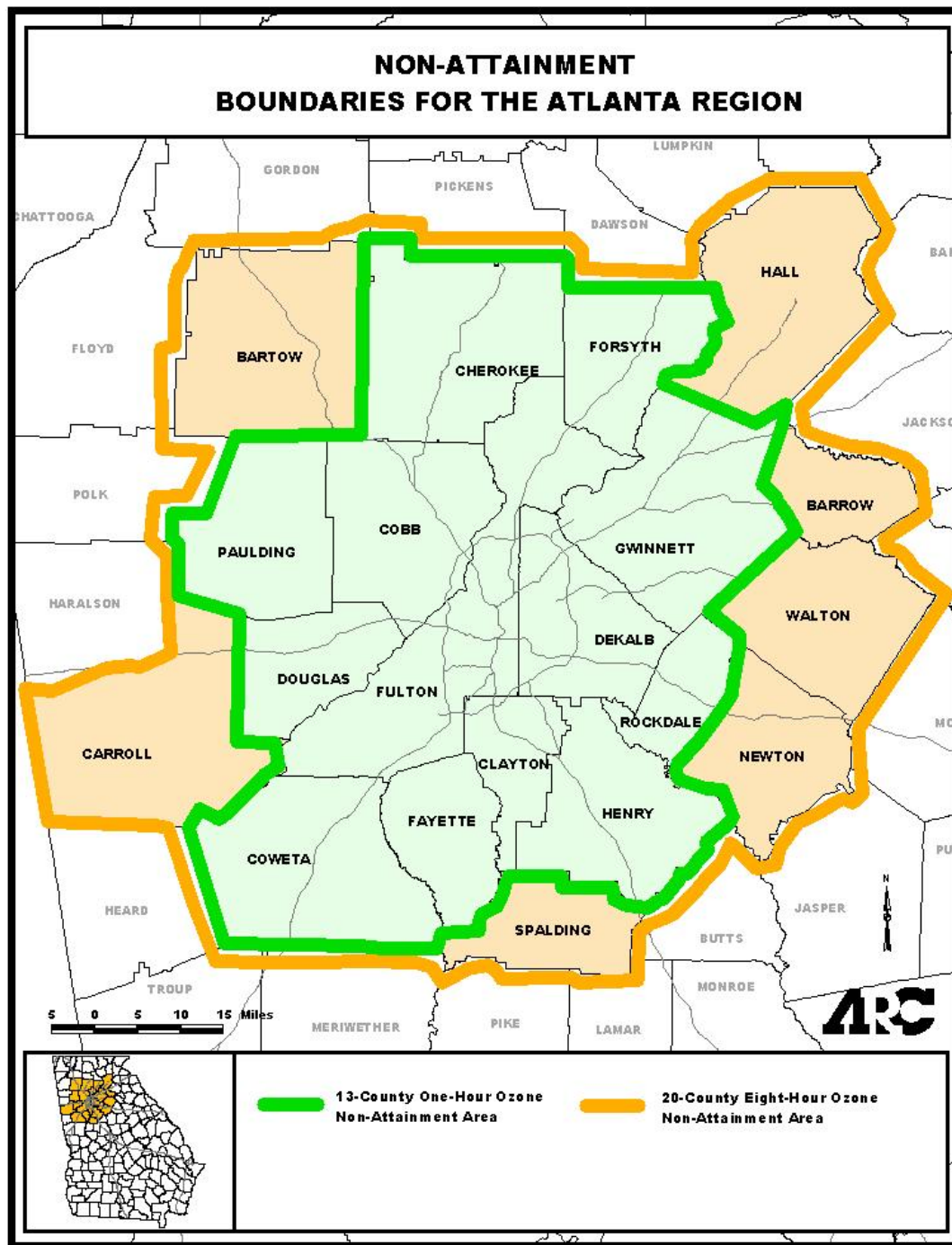
A map illustrating the one-hour and eight-hour non-attainment area boundaries appears on the following page.

PM-2.5

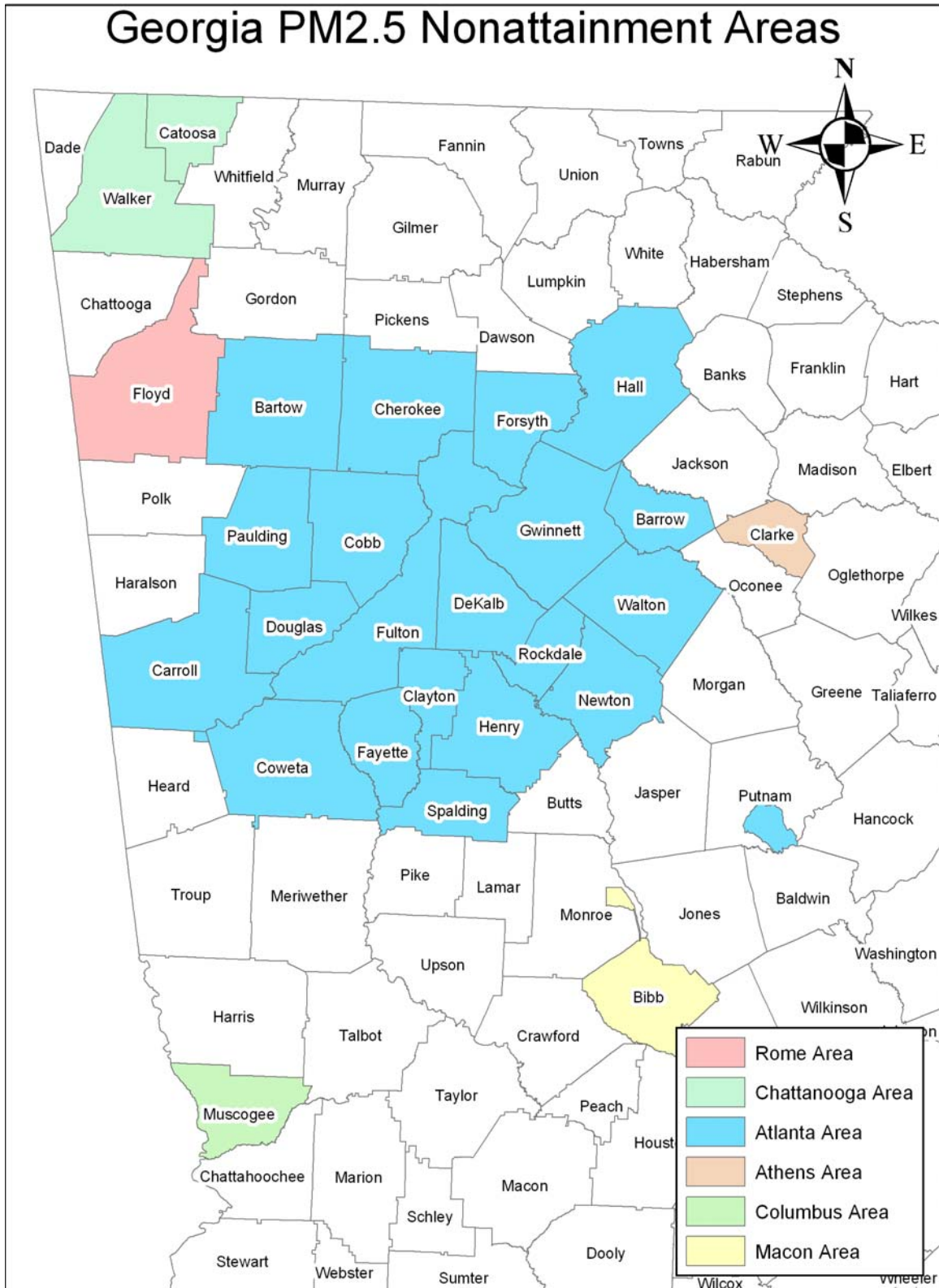
Particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Fine particulate matter, referred to as PM-2.5, are airborne materials that measure 2.5 micrometers in diameter. In 1997, a fine particulate standard was established to reflect latest research which revealed that smaller particles can more easily penetrate into the lungs and the bloodstream than coarse particles, causing increased health risks.

Effective April 5, 2005, the US EPA designated a 20+ county metro Atlanta nonattainment area for fine particulate matter (see Map 9.7). A transportation conformity determination under the standard will be required by April 5, 2006. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Atlanta region, the Atlanta Regional Commission will be working over the course of the next year to establish a PM-2.5 modeling methodology with planning partners to ensure the conformity requirements are met.

Map 9.6 – Atlanta Region Nonattainment Boundaries



Map 9.7 – Georgia PM 2.5 Nonattainment Areas



The minimum standards and procedures for comprehensive planning require local governments to inventory activities which are consistent with the state implementation plan for air quality. The City of Decatur actively promotes measures which collectively contribute to improved air quality. One of the most significant measures is a strong commitment to high-density transit oriented mixed-use development close to the Downtown Decatur and Avondale MARTA rail stations. A major component of the downtown development has been the construction of residential projects in the central business district. Since 2000, 28 townhouse units, 417 condominium units, and 105 apartment units have been added in the central business district.

The City has also identified similar transit oriented development opportunities around the Avondale MARTA rail station through a 2002 Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study. Columbia Park, a 350-unit residential development is planned on the current site of a MARTA parking facility. The project also contains about 14,000 square feet of commercial space. The development is anticipated to be permitted in 2005. Within walking distance of the station, the Talley Street Lofts, a 90-unit condominium development is also planned for permitting in 2005.

In addition, the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association provides services to employer members located within a three-mile radius from the intersection of Clifton Road and Haygood Drive in DeKalb County. Emory University, the largest employer in DeKalb County, leads the CCTMA in developing and providing member services to the various hospitals, non-profit organizations, and government agencies in the surrounding area. The CCTMA offers a free shuttle from the Emory University campus on Clifton Road to downtown Decatur MARTA station. Known as the CCTMA-Decatur Shuttle, the shuttle operates from 5:30am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday.

In regard to pedestrian and bicycle mobility, the City of Decatur identifies, on an annual basis, streets missing sidewalks or those with sidewalks in need of repairs. For 2005-2006, the City has identified 19 streets to receive a total approximately 8,450 linear feet of new or replaced sidewalk. In addition, the City has produced six walking tours for people interested in walking and seeing the sights of Decatur. The routes and key points of interest are presented in free brochures which are available at the Decatur Recreation Center, the Downtown Development Authority office, local shops, and the Decatur internet site. The PATH Foundation has also built several miles of multi-use trails through Decatur. The City of Decatur also promotes bicycle use on the Decatur internet site by offering maps of the Decatur 10 Mile Fun Ride. The maps are provided by Bike DeKalb.

Finally, the City of Decatur promotes improved air quality through organizational memberships in both the Clean Air Campaign and the International Council of

Local Environmental Initiatives. In 2005, the City of Decatur held memberships in both of these organizations.

Transportation Community Vision and Goals

The transportation community vision is to establish a safe and efficient multi-modal system that maximizes and enhances Decatur's vehicular and non-vehicular resources.

Associated Goals:

- Increase transit use with the co-location of mixed-use and higher density residential developments with transit facilities.
- Study mobility and connectivity Citywide.
- Create and maintain a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community.
- Consider improvements to the CSX Railroad to create a quiet zone in Decatur.
- Design innovative parking options for the downtown central business core.
- Increase connectivity between the Oakhurst & Downtown business districts.
- Identify improvements to pedestrian facilities at key intersections that are gateways to Downtown Decatur.
- Identify traffic calming mechanisms along Church St and W. Ponce de Leon.

This vision and goals will be the expressed focus of the Community Transportation Plan.