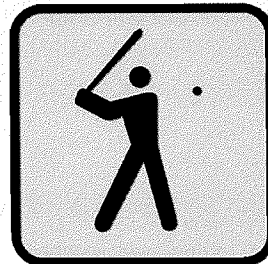
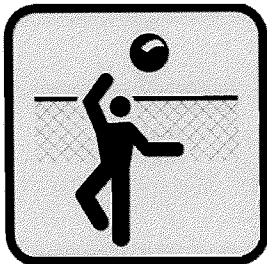




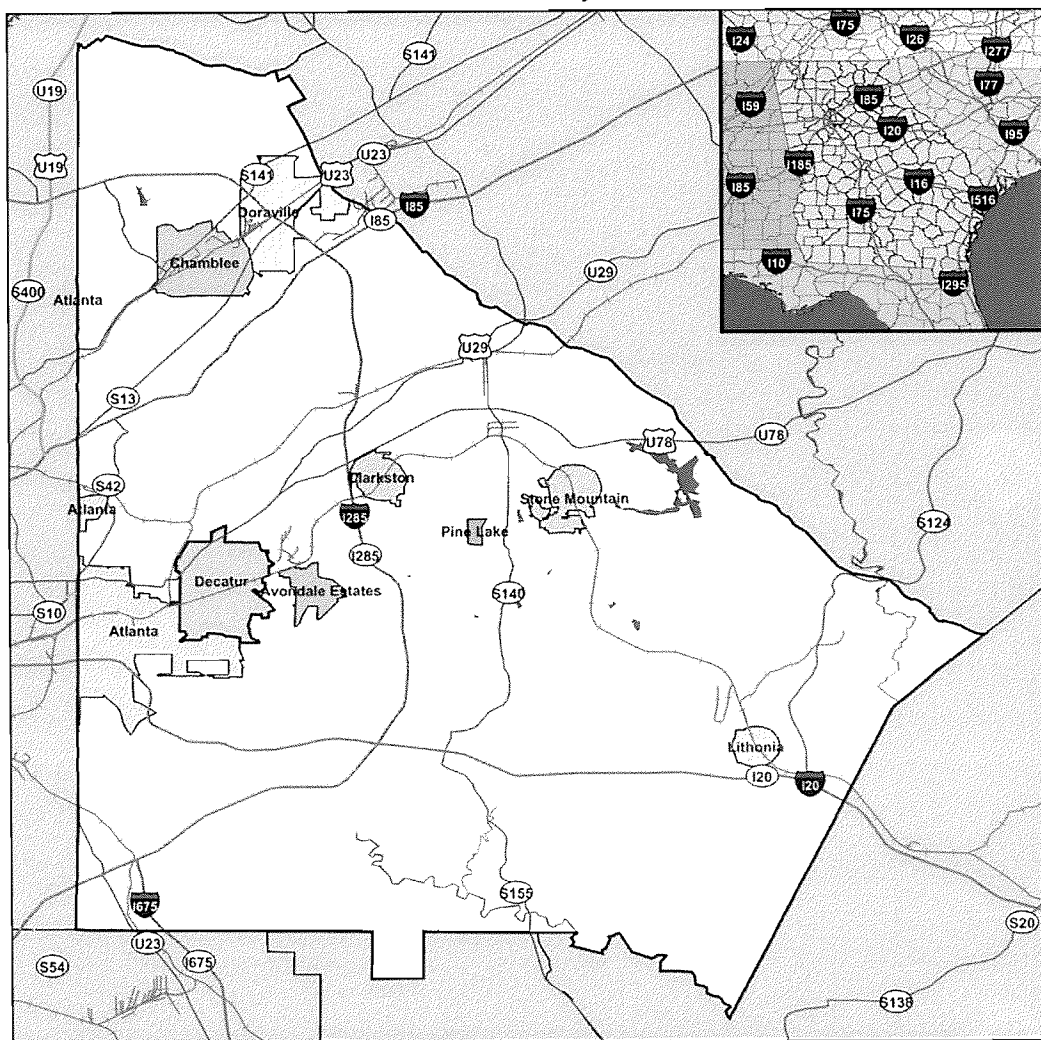
# Section 2

## Community Profile



# Community Profile

The City of Decatur is located directly east of the City of Atlanta, Georgia. Its prime location in DeKalb County is south of Interstate 85 and inside the Interstate 285 loop.



The residents of Decatur have been "forward thinkers" for many years, having completed a comprehensive urban design study in 1982 to create the Development Plan, Proposal, and Policies for the Decatur Town Center. In this document the historical development of the city is briefly explained.

Changing demographics in recent years have put increased pressure on the City of Decatur to provide well-rounded, safe and aesthetically-pleasing recreational facilities. The fundamental restriction to the development of these needed recreational facilities is that the land area of Decatur is four square miles, most of which has been developed or earmarked to meet the needs of Governor Roy Barnes'

Greenspace Initiative. These constraints are looked upon by the decision-makers of Decatur as opportunities for innovative partnerships between public, private and non-profit organizations. The citizens of Decatur are supportive of this renaissance in Decatur's history. Although the following local statistical information about the City of Decatur and DeKalb County will help identify the needs of the current and projected population, the existing strength of community interest will drive the success of the recommendations.

This preceding information is a foundation upon which to apply the demographic, economic and other community indicators to create a clear representation of the population. In the state of Georgia, data has been collated and organized into data sets called community indicators. These indicators are devised from the following information to reveal the holistic stature of a city's population and its potential: demographic, economic, fiscal, education, health, environmental, social and civic participation. Community indicators reveal much about a community, but key demographic information is important to consider as the community profile is shaped. For example, the size,



poverty level and age of a community’s population will alter the level of need applied to the local government.

### Community Indicators

Information from the U.S. Census Bureau, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000, indicates that the City of Decatur had a total population of 18,147; 42.4% of which was male and 57.6% female. In comparison, DeKalb County and the state of Georgia both had 48.5% male and 51.5% female ratios. DeKalb County has a population of 665,865 where 2.7% represents Decatur city residents. In Decatur, 65.6% of the population is white, while in DeKalb County 35.8% of the population is white. The city and county are similar in respects to the largest population age group: 25-34 (19.0%, Decatur and 19.5%, DeKalb County) and second largest age group: 35-44 (18.0%, Decatur and 17.2%, DeKalb County). Youth age groups, broken into ages 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19, collectively account for 17.1% of the population in Decatur and 20.3% of the population in the county. The median age in Decatur is 36.0 years and 32.3 years in DeKalb County. Persons that are over the age of 62 account for 15.0% of the Decatur population and 9.6% of the county’s residents.

The 2000 Census reports that the total population of the City of Decatur is 18,147 with 17,158 (94.6%) maintaining their primary place of residence in Decatur. 3,015 (16.6%) of the population are children under the age of 18 living in those households and 487 (2.7%) are other relatives under the age of 18 living in those households. Of the 8,051 total households in Decatur, 25.2% (2,028) house people under the age of 18 and 22.2% (1,785) house individuals 65 and over in age. The average household size in Decatur is 2.13 and the average family size is 2.96.

According to the 2000 Census, there are 8,497 total housing units in the City of Decatur. As mentioned above, there are 8,051 households, leaving 446 of the total potential dwelling units in Decatur vacant. Of the 446 vacant homes, 24 of these are used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use leaving 424 homes in Decatur uninhabited. Of the occupied housing units in Decatur, 58.5% (4,706) are owner-occupied units and 41.5% (3,345) are renter-occupied units where the average household size for owner-occupied units is 2.29 and 1.91 for renter-occupied.

The City of Decatur Strategic Plan from July of 2000 recognizes that several new residential developments are being constructed in Decatur. As recommended in the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, Decatur is meeting the townhouse/multifamily housing growth rate goal of 70 new units per year through 2010. Over the remaining nine years of this planned growth, Decatur has the potential to increase its number of housing units by 630 new units (70 units per year for nine years) and by occupying the 424 vacant housing units. Supporting the anticipation of continued steady growth, the City of Decatur reports that as of December 20, 2001 there have been 655 building permits issued. Over a five year span, the number of building permits has increased by 30.38%. The total number of building permits issued per year is listed below:

1997	456
1998	530
1999	624
2000	688
2001	655 (as of 12/20/01)



The City of Decatur Comprehensive Plan dated June 1995, discusses information published from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) about population projections for Decatur, DeKalb County and the Atlanta region. The ARC projected that the population of the Atlanta region would be 3,080,000 in the year 2000 and 3,745,000 by the year 2010. In DeKalb County, the population was estimated to be 632,000 by 2000 and 701,000 by 2010. The projected population increase for the City of Decatur was 18,282 for the year 2000 and 19,051 by the year 2010. Most of the future growth in Decatur is anticipated to be generated by high-density developments in the downtown area of Decatur.

From the 1990 United States Census data, the population of Decatur was 17,336. The current population of 18,147 demonstrates a 4.47% growth rate for the City of Decatur over the period from 1990. Over the same span of time, the number of households in Decatur increased from 7,617 in 1990 to 8,051 in 2000 representing a 5.39% increase. A thirty-year look at Census material in the chart below indicates that Decatur experienced decline until the 1990 decade.

	Population Trends			
	1970	1980	1990	2000
City of Decatur	21,943	18,404	17,336	18,147
DeKalb County	415,587	483,024	553,800	665,865
Atlanta Region	1,434,676	1,896,182	2,557,800	3,429,379
State of Georgia	4,611,479	5,484,527	6,478,216	8,186,453

Economic statistics for the City of Decatur show that the 1989 median household income was \$26,803. In the City of Decatur Strategic Plan, an estimate for the 1999 Decatur resident median income was listed as \$39,613. The difference in the ten-year period represents a 32.3% increase in household income. In comparison to the state of Georgia, the median household money income based on a 1997 model estimate was \$36,372 and \$42,767 in DeKalb County.

Based on information in the City of Decatur Strategic Plan, the average cost of an existing single-family home in Decatur has increased by 30.6% from 1997 to 1999. The average resale price was \$142,781 in 1997 and \$186,614 in 1999, while new homes sold for \$202,367 on average in 1997 and \$242,430 in 1999. Median monthly rent in Decatur is \$375, which is 9.3% higher than that of Atlanta and the state of Georgia at \$343. The median housing property value is 37.1% higher in Decatur at \$98,000 compared to a median value of \$71,500 in Atlanta and the state of Georgia. These figures indicate that the population in the City of Decatur is becoming wealthier with a larger expendable income. Although a portion of the population is able to afford a high quality of life, there are other members of the Decatur population who need assistance to make ends meet.

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) serves the residents of Decatur by providing temporary housing to those in need. The DHA has 293 units in two public housing communities as well as 625 assisted rental units dispersed throughout the city. The DHA works closely with the City of Decatur to provide services for these residents. Many of these residents are offered financial assistance enabling them to participate in recreational programs. The Decatur Recreation Department also works closely with the

housing authority to identify residents that are in need of special attention in the Christmas season through a program titled "Christmas Decatur." This service is available only to residents of Decatur who are identified through city school social workers. Volunteers agree to sponsor an individual child, family or senior who would not otherwise receive any Christmas gifts. The sponsors are asked to spend a minimum amount on each person, then the staff at the Recreation Department coordinates the packaging and delivery to the recipients. In the year 2001, Christmas Decatur served over 400 children and 60 seniors.

The Georgia Department of Education offers a free and reduced price meal program for students in its schools. The eligibility standards for this program are determined by the size of the household and the total annual parental income. As of October 2001, to qualify for free meals, a household with one child would need to make no more than \$931 per month or \$11,167 per year. To determine eligibility for each additional child, \$328 should be added to the monthly income and \$3,926 to the annual income. The requirements for the reduced price meals for a household with one child would need to be no more than \$1,325 per month and \$15,892 per year. To determine the reduced meal price eligibility for each additional child, \$466 should be added to the monthly income and \$5,587 to the annual income.

As of October 2001, there were 2,564 students in the City Schools of Decatur system. Of these students 855 qualify for free meals and 122 are eligible for reduced meals totaling 38.10% of the student body. The highest concentration of students that are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program are at Oakhurst at Fifth Avenue Elementary School, with 73.22% of the enrollment eligible for the program. It is important to note that the Oakhurst Elementary has been closed for repairs, and students from this school have been sent to Fifth Avenue Elementary, consolidating the two schools for this year and altering this statistical information. The second highest population of eligible students for free and reduced lunches is at College Heights Elementary School with 60.7% eligibility. The smallest population of eligible students for free and reduced priced meals is at Westchester Elementary with 19.6% meeting the necessary requirements.

The population of elementary schools throughout Decatur has decreased over recent years, yet the enrollment of the Decatur High School has increased by 17%. This statistic is further enhanced by other facts revealing that many households in Decatur do not have any children under the age of 18. If this trend continues, it can be presumed that fewer households will have ties to the City of Decatur Schools and the population of students participating in competitive athletics programming may be decreased in the future.

## **Recommendations**

According to Census 2000 data, the population of Decatur is nearly split between family households at 47.9% and nonfamily households at 52.1%. These current types of households are potentially long-term residents who will have a large influence in Decatur. To meet the present and future needs of these residents, the City of Decatur needs to provide facilities that promote wellness and preventative maintenance of the body as well as facilities to meet the needs of growing and school-aged children.



Based upon the median household income figures, free and reduced lunch program participation numbers and the activity of volunteerism and charity in Decatur, there is a need for the current financial assistance program in Decatur. However, these numbers also indicate that there is a strong and involved sector of the community that does not need any form of financial assistance to be able to participate in a recreation or athletic program.

Although the majority of the population is of an adult age, the largest sector of the Decatur population is between the ages of 25 to 34. This age group represents young adults who may be interested in active recreation, organized sports, and alternative recreation sources, like basketball, intramural volleyball and yoga, respectively.

Although the Decatur Campus Plan study was originally initiated because of the need to meet school athletic facility requirements, it was evident that narrowing a focus so tightly was not responsive to the majority of the population. The initiation of the Citywide Athletic Facilities Master Plan was in response to a clear need for children's athletic and recreation facilities with 25.2% of all Decatur households containing individuals under the age of 18. Additionally, the senior population has a strong voice with 22.2% of households in Decatur having individuals that are 65 years old and over. However, the remaining 52.6% of households contains only individuals who are adults. At the steering committee workshop held in November of 2001, priorities for facility needs were listed and prioritized. Many of the 51 facility needs listed support the needs of an average adult along with the needs of an average child or senior. These priorities include, but are not limited to, aquatic facilities, a citywide sidewalk system, recreation center renovations, a fitness center and various types of sports fields and courts.

When implementation of the master plan begins, the immediate needs of children, seniors and special interest groups should be given a high priority. However, it is best to serve the needs of the majority population because their needs and interests are closely linked to the needs of the elderly and children. The demographic information collected for this report and the personal interaction with the representing citizens illustrate that Decatur is steadily growing, caring, and innovative city that is only getting better.