

38 Powers 05/12/2010 7-9pm

A. How do we sustain this city:

Planning Dept and Economic Development are important in the process

Encourage younger talent to get involved

Safety

Maintain stable tax rates

Spend wisely

Have credible leadership

Maintain transparency of government

B: How do we preserve the things we appreciate:

More strict guidelines for redevelopment

Maintain diversity thru more affordable housing

Affordable housing does not equal low income

Maybe we stop paying taxes at a certain age

Age 65 and no children and stop paying school taxes

2. A: How do we preserve and improve our natural environment:

Collaboration with Trees Atlanta

Public transportation

Add multi-use trails

Condemn/re-appropriate more greenspace

Have co-operative agreements between neighbors(foottrails and greenspace)

B: How do we protect our air, water, greenspace

Performance/protection bonds on construction sites for trees, etc

Ways to conserve water and capture with rain barrel capture systems

Save gray water

Revise/develop regulations for erosion control

Incentives for impervious surfaces

Take traffic off roads by adding more free bike exchange

Plant more trees

Regulate idling car engines

Have infiltration systems to capture more water

Rigorous enforcement of industrial parking lots

2b:

Shuttle services ie cliff valley

Joint development with other municipalities and institutions

Recommendation from appropriate professionals for use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides

Acquire greenspace thru stormwater utility fund

3a: how dowe get from place to place in Decatur:

Drive

Bike

Walk

Marta/ public transportation

Shuttle

3b: what might change in how we travel over next ten years:

Super impose maps for cliff shuttle/marta

Better and wider bike lanes

Better pedestrian paths to connect north and south Decatur

Meet to park/carpool for folks that live in Decatur and work elsewhere

Rideshare website

3b:

Meet neighbors because of carpooling

Could spend less time traveling with better traffic signal timing

Alternative vehicles(electric)

Golf carts

Scooters

4. When you think about.....

More diverse

A variety of things to do(r/b and gospel concerts)

Artwalks

Music/concerts

Local feel(local food and music)

Restaurants and amenities are within easy reach

More neighborhoods getting involvement

Arts festivals

Share best practices between neighborhoods (invite public officials)

Keep accessible financially

5A: who will need housing:

Seniors

Young people

Workforce

Next generation of children

Students

Teachers

5B: what type of housing:

Active senior developments

Student housing

Mother-in-law suites

Smaller townhomes/brownstones

Appropriate sized for user group

Youth hostels

Garage apartments

6:
Farmers markets
More community gardens
]more swimming pools and well maintained
Awareness with community supported agriculture(CSA)
More bike paths
Recreation facilities
Gyms
Solar panels on school bldg rooftops
More LEED certified bldgs
Indoor performance facilities

Finch 05-12-2010 2 p.m.

Decatur Strategic Plans Session 2

In the first session, what did someone say or do that moved you or stimulated new ideas?

(Note: not on flip chart)

- Good social involvement: Lots of community activity: Book fair, beer/wine, arts events
- “Decatur needs a face lift”
- Sustainability
- Diversity

How do we get from place to place in Decatur now? What might change in how we travel in the next 10 years?

- We need transportation options in and out of Decatur
- Currently can only run limited number of errands on foot
- It takes from 7 to 15 minutes to get from Oakhurst to here (downtown Decatur)
- “I live downtown” and walk a lot
- We can ride Marta to the airport, arts etc
- Growth in pop. Density will create parking issues
- City Ordinances need to have “vision”
- We need lots of options downtown: Zip, bus, taxi, Cliff Bus, bikes
- Support the Beltline
- Trolley
- Expand the Cliff Service
- How can we encourage people to walk (or drive less)
- You can now download an app that tells you where Cliff and buses are in real time

- Incentivize walking or using mass transit
- Educate, advertise and promote options
- Offer more options than driving
- Healthier
- Make it physically safe to ride bikes with bike lanes
- Create protected bike paths (designated like in Paris)
- Make it safe to ride all the way to five points
- How about no cars in downtown Decatur (i.e. Quincy Market in Boston)
- Light rail line down Clairmont

Who are the people who will need housing in Decatur in twenty years? What kind of housing do you think they will need?

- I live in downtown Decatur so I can walk and enjoy the parks.
- Local shopping can enable people to only have one car
- Mow (dead) buildings down and create more parking
- Underground parking
- How about a Trader Joe's?
- Redesign Kroger
- Urban grocery: smaller footprint
- Multi level Kroger
- Need affordable housing-apartments
- Make it safer to cross tracks
- More affordable taxes
- Annexation-higher density equals more revenue
- More community gardens
- Put pressure on school board to accept and prepare for growth
- Lots of options to do mid rise developments
- Quality parks and transportation will make people want to live here
- How about a Central Park in Decatur? (Like New York)
- More assisted living options for older people (all 3 levels: independent, assisted, and nursing)
- Single families: Smaller lots, more efficient and better designed homes
- Portland and Seattle: great design
- Provide help with meals, a la carte options
- Be green and environmentally alert

Think about session 1 and about how the city has developed and grown. How do we sustain this city? How do we preserve the things we appreciate?

- Get younger people involved
- Too many rules makes Decatur seem “fuddy duddy”
- More activities for tweens and parents
- We need a skateboard park or a way to make skateboarding accessible in downtown Decatur
- More outside basketball courts
- Take care of what we have

(Sustain and preserve continued)

- Support Trees Atlanta ((Oakhurst)
- Glenwood Park-looks well cared for
- Allow unique character to stay
- More little shops/ charm
- Continue and expand involvement
- Encourage people to spend locally
- Make it a “destination location” and bring money into Decatur
- Monthly or bi-monthly street party (close traffic off)
- Maximize use of web site and internet
- Better links
- Create one central website for city and neighborhood and business organizations
- Fuller city calendar of events
- Preserve historical sites

How do we preserve and improve our natural environment? How do we protect our air, water and green space?

- More parks and community gardens

- More education (i.e. composting, rain barrels)
- Clean up and control storm water
- More trees and ‘smarter trees’
- Eliminate or reduce car transportation
- Encourage car pools
- Use web to find buddies
- Live/work units
- Local tax credit for alternative use of energy

(Preserve the environment continued)

- Tax credit for sustainable energy
- Decatur version of Cliff Bus

When you think about the overall environment of our city (our public gatherings, our festivals and cultural life) what is most important to you?

- The Book Festival
- Festivals in general
- They bring the community together and attract outsiders
- People come back
- We need huge parking signs
- We need a Decatur Arts Council with money to spend on activities and approve projects
- More ongoing support of arts
- Ongoing partnerships between businesses and events

In terms of healthy living, what would make the most positive difference for the residents of our city? What activities, programs, or changes in the things we build could make a difference?

- Make stairs more accessible
- More Corporate support of physical fitness

- Educate workplace to be healthier
- Eliminate student parking at Decatur High
- Farm to school programs
- Require restaurants to have truth in advertising (within reason)

Healthy Living continued

- Promote and expand recreation centers active living
- More place to play (fields for ad hoc games)
- Open more school spaces
- Use grass not mulch
- Better options to dispose dog litter
- Healthier kids-more recess
- More after school activities, more play grounds

Themes, ideas and topics that stood out:

- Travel and transportation
- Housing needs: affordable, diverse, very attractive
- Large, green spaces that are “multi use”
- Small green spaces, pocket parks
- Gatherings-art and music
- Created two jobs-arts council and web maintenance
- Incubate small businesses
- Disincent vacant buildings by reassessing taxes
- Incent incubator businesses with tax advantages
- Sustainability

Nilsson 05-12-2010 7 p.m.
Facilitator Notes

Comments/Review from Previous Meeting

- Resulting Vision for Decatur is for the city government to be carbon neutral.
- Civic & Institutional Buildings to be:
 - self sustaining electrically; can sell power to county?
 - gray water recycling for city greenspace
 - electric or natural gas powered city vehicles and transportation

All agree that this is a long-term investment that will benefit the city fiscally.

Sustain the City? Preserve what we appreciate?

- Maintain communication avenues open between city government and citizens, developers and planners.
- Support small businesses as citizens and through government support programs
- Continue to balance population density and business growth
- Address transition between light industrial/commercial and residential zoning.

Preserve and Improve Natural Environment? Protect Air, Water & Green?

- Stronger tree ordinance should be approved and implemented
- Continue with dog parks
- Continue city “flood plane” purchase
- Consider educational arm to encourage personal conservation efforts
- Broaden existing programs and knowledge base to make citizens aware
- Provide incentives to developers for creatively balancing density and greenspace
- Approach institutions with ample land to “double-duty their property for resident use (as city green space). –i.e. Agnes Scott / Columbia Seminary
- No idling zones
- Charging stations for electric cars
- Promote light-duty transportation vehicles
- All gov’t cars should be natural gas/electric powered, including garbage and recycling trucks
- Schools should compost
- Recycling program for businesses

How do we get around now? What can change?

- Gas car (daily)
- Bike/Scooter (medium frequency)
- CCTAM/Marta BUS (only for work and rarely)
- Walk (daily)
- Cad/pedi-cab (rarely/ some not aware of pedi-cab)

Changes proposed:

- In future, more likely to use electric cars (or other electric vehicles)
- Use (implement) small group (scale) city transportation that has frequent stops at regular schedules
- Implement late-night solution for business-to-home transportation
- Increase bike and scooter lanes
- Consider that destination is not always downtown Decatur, public transport to and from Oakhurst and other perimeter satellite centers will be needed
- DeVry property will be a nodule (satellite center) for activity and residential
- More motorcycles and scooters
- Provide incentives for development that has none or limited (or deeded) parking in order to encourage pedestrian/bike/scooter/public transport

Overall Environment? What's Important?

- Want to feel safe
- Want to have fun
- Important to connect with others
- Cultural activities need quality improvement and growth
- Take advantage of existing new facilities for community/cultural events (i.e. DHS auditorium)
- Create event-specific outdoor venues (i.e. ampitheatre)
- Evaluate available facilities at private/public institution for city use
- "keenager" programs
- Athletic programs at REC center, that are very successful
- Community gardens
- More public art
- Tap into/create Dekalb County/City of Decatur foundation for the arts (for grants/scholarships and research)

Who will need housing in 20 years? What kind of housing?

- More families with school-age children
- Consider that the above may be "squeezing" out the young professionals, the aging population and the public servants
- Current families that want to age-in-place
- The young, child-free families that will be drawn to the walkable benefits of Decatur's city center.

Housing type:

- Higher density
- Rental (single and multi- family)
- Garage apartments
- Workforce housing (mid-range in cost)
- Public housing with market-rate housing mix

- Special –needs, group-homes (i.e. elderly)
- Single-level residences

How do we build for healthy living?

- Encourage eating locally grown
- Allow for urban “farms”
- Maintain the sidewalks
- Sidewalks and curbs should be handicap accessible (also provide for visually/audibly impaired)
- Update existing facilities without editing architectural value
- Close part of Ponce for pedestrian-only activity (certain times only)
- Involve the schools and educate early on the topic of healthy living and food choices

Group 34. Alandete 05-12-2010 Wed 7pm

1. Think about Session 1 and about how the city has developed and grown. How do we sustain this city? How do we preserve the things we appreciate?

The city works hard to develop a plan (zoning, land-use, arts, recreation, strategy) and sticks to it; we might want to revisit planning more often but not to re-invent a strategic session but perhaps to tweak it; Be trend setters for others communities. Be more Green; Keep an eye on Taxes – lets **keep the city affordable**; how do we do this though when 20% of the citizens are over 60 years old?; Look carefully at increasing commercial tax base; continue to engage community via activities – an increase in festivals; city leadership must continue to be great., i.e. Decatur 101, volunteerism, informed citizenry; Foster business growth – don’t rely entirely on DBA (while it is good it often becomes a lazy way to pitch services to the business community); Encourage local shopping; see economic development continue; are there holes in our community infrastructure in terms of the types of businesses – why no liquor stores?; better grocery options; gas stations; boutique hotel; independent art-house movie theater; performance space; civic center; we question the population statistics....; explore New Urbanism ideals for development; city leadership needs to prepare for leadership transitions for those in non-political roles; resolve city/county issues

2. *How* do we preserve and improve our natural environment? How do we protect our air, water and green space?

Recognize interdependence with Atlanta; Be engaged with the larger Metro Aread; Include biking, walking in a transportation plan; actively seek greenspace opportunities; encourage tree planting; add green space around dekalb-county courthouse (pretty it up!) and same with the prisoner holding area across the street from the courthouse; explore constraints to improving our natural environment by being the county seat; Resolve relationship with the

county; investigate need for all that parking space (lots) on Church and Commerce and Dekalb Medical Center; Improve flood areas; Reduce erosion;

3. How do you get from place to place in Decatur, now? What might change in how we travel about in the next ten years?

Community Bus that transports folks from nearby neighborhoods to downtown for festivals, shopping, dining, etc.; Better sidewalks – farther from busy roadsides; Make traffic more manageable; wider sidewalks; Encourage smaller cars; Explore a trolley from East Lake to Avondale and Clairmont to VA to Agnes Scott.

4. When you think about the overall environment of our city (our public gatherings, our festivals and cultural life) what is most important to you?

The Arts Festivals we have; Art Galleries, How can we promote the arts? Make our city a mecca for the arts; Film Festival; Increase Public Art Space; Explore ho other cities (Santa Fe, Taos, Asheville) have successfully fostered the Arts; Increase working space for artists; Find a way to encourage and support our existing Arts/Crafts/Musical/Theater Community; DBA should coordinate public showings of community arts within local business establishments; Provide opportunities for artists to perform in public spaces., i.e., have an open-mike on bandstand on Friday evenings; Beer Festival and Wine Festival are GREAT; Lets keep an eye toward diverse audiences for public performances;

5. Who are the people who will need housing in Decatur in twenty years? What kind of housing do you think they will they need?

In order to maintain diversity, there needs to be affordable housing; Very diverse population (Families, singles, partners, seniors).; Universal design standards should be encouraged; encourage LEED; plan on including places for our city workers to live; no more senior high-rises; emphasize aging in home; seek tax solutions to enable this.

6. How do we maintain affordability?

Make sure school dollars (taxes) are spent efficiently; consider limiting tax-free institutions in favor of taxable commercial owners; Explore annexation with great care.

6. In terms of “healthy living,” what would make the most positive difference for the residents of our city? What activities, programs, or changes in the things we build could make a difference?

Encourage walkability; Bike/walking trails; bike/foot patrols (police); Greenspace promotes healthy activities; sponsor races/walks/biking that would touch local businesses too as a draw to Decatur; Continue Decatur Youth Rec; Expand Decatur Rec for Adults;; Focus on renovating or improving the Decatur Recreations Facility; Revisit free community bike program;

THEMES

AFFORDABILITY; DIVERSITY; ARTS; TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS;
GREENSPACE

Decatur Roundtables 2010 – Session 2: Exploring Our Stories and the Issues They Raise

Facilitator Name: Mickey Baskett

Meeting Date: 05-12-2010

Time: 9 am

Question 6 (from Discussion Guide)

In terms of healthy living, what would make the most positive difference for the residents of our city?

A. Recreation center

A good functioning center

Needs funding for improvement

Location is good, walkable

Satellite locations would be good to have in various neighborhoods

B. Parks

Need to be more accessible - perhaps via a shuttle

Need to have a variety of activities

- More casual space for just “hanging out”

- **Dancing**

- Bocce ball

Each park could have recreation center type facilities

Resource sharing - example use the Boys & Girls Club as a senior day care when it is not in use

Adair Park needs upgrade -- water, restrooms

Use facilities in parks to help keep seniors engaged - **senior activities and places for them to meet**

Have enough parks and green space - keep parks updated and vital

C. Trails and Nature Walks

Need more of these within city or within parks

D. Pocket Parks

Need more

Trails

Benches

Question 3: How do you get from place to place in Decatur, now? What might change in 10 years?

A. Intra city shuttle that has a regular route around business district

Need grants to fund it

10 minute interval schedule

Regular route

B. Bicycles

Need more bike lanes

Volunteer repair workshop to help people build and repair bikes

Program similar to yellow bikes for loan or rent (need a way to keep from getting stolen)

C. Need Improved Crossings at Intersections

- Will help improve traffic flow

- Will make it safer for walkers

- Trouble spots are Candler/College and Atlantic/Howard

D. Need a way to connect the high school with Renfroe

- tunnel

- or bridge across RR

E. Walking

- Available shopping will result in more walking

- Need essentials, i.e. place to buy underwear, office supplies

- Need a variety store (example - Richard's Variety Store)

- Keep big box stores away

- Need more than boutiques but less than big box

- Idea - use one of the large buildings for a Marketplace that houses many vendors

of essentials - not gifts -

- Need a movie theatre or show movies at an available space (in schools?)

F. Trolley

G. Encourage more electric cars (example Baskett's GEM car)

- have available charging stations

- monetary incentives

H. Driving

- Discourage use of gasoline cars

- Need better signage for parking areas

- After hours agreements with offices to allow parking

Question 4: When you think about the overall environment of our city - what is most important to you?

A. Safety

- Ways/places for teens to gather
- Safe ways for teens to get home
- Policing of school after hours to make sure kids are abusing the area - i.e. smoking on grounds
- Parent involvement in schools and neighborhoods promote safety and all parents share in keeping watchful eyes on kids

B. We have a great downtown area - need to maintain the small town destination aspect.

- Keep zoning in place for building heights - 80'
- Concentrate high density building in the downtown areas
- Growth isn't always good - evaluate growth with services to achieve proper balance
- Hold the line on dis-allowing high density developments in neighborhoods

Question 5: Who are the people who need housing in 20 years? What kind of housing?

A. Who

- Elderly
- Young Professionals
- Workforce
- Teachers

B. We want to maintain diversity of home owners - elderly, racial, work force, lower income. How can owners of houses afford to pay for houses as costs rise and taxes rise?

- Need a task force to figure out creative ideas so people can afford house in order to maintain diversity
- Elderly need to be able to afford their houses. Perhaps build specific housing for elderly in pockets of areas - i.e. small cottages, or group houses

C. What kind of housing do we want?

- Condos in downtown area
- Co-Housing (Eastlake model)
- Infill housing (Balance with greenspace - for example houses could be clustered as long as there was some common greenspace)
- Annexation - this is good and bad - helps with tax burden, but could stress infrastructure, schools
- Apartments in denser areas for lower income, young workers, students

Question 1: How do we sustain our city? .. preserve what we have?

A. Keep small neighborhoods

- Need better interaction between neighborhoods
- Need ways to help people maintain their houses to keep them up.
- Need a city directory of residents
- Stamp out elitism - How? Foster attitudes

- Balance gentrification - How?
- Each citizen needs to be personally proactive to help keep diversity in city

Decatur Roundtables 2010 – Session 2: Exploring our stories and the issues they raise

Facilitator Name: Stephanie DiLorio

Meeting Date: 5-12-2010

Time: 9 am

Please record the notes from your easel pad below. The subject headings correspond with the discussion guide and facilitator support sheet. Do not use bullet points. If there was an item that you circled or starred because a lot of people were interested in the comment, please **bold** it.

1- Maintaining the city

Residents remain vocal and continue to participate in civic life

City develops creative ways outside of property taxes to find funding

Maintain and strengthen Decatur's brand (i.e. Oakhurst flags, Decatur logo)

Create Decatur Chamber of Commerce to recruit new businesses

Provide small business advisory (i.e. SCORE Atlanta)

Market Decatur to Metro Atlanta

Reach out to and convince larger retailers to find ways to serve smaller, walking cities such as Decatur

Comprehensive review of zoning codes and variance policy

Follow best practice for development, look to Boulder, CO and Naperville, IL as best practice leaders

Create buffer zone between residential and commercial properties

Ensure new development meets needs of diverse community and encourages diversity and sustained growth (diversity described as racial, age, socioeconomic)

Develop affordable housing

2- Natural Environment

Canopy replacement

3- Transportation

Run a trolley along main arteries to connect neighborhoods with downtown and other frequently visited places within or near the city (Emory, Edgewood, Dekalb Farmers Market, E. Decatur Station)

Improve parking signage

Implement bike lanes, specifically on Clairemont, Church, College

Create pedestrian zone by closing Ponce from Suntrust to Leon's

Eliminate parking on E. Court and N. McDonagh and turn into green space

4- Overall Environment

Create/support thriving arts scene

Keep residents happy (Happy residents = Happy neighbors = Happy community)

Encourage and fund block initiatives aside from block parties (i.e. block garden; block composting program, tree plantings)

Maintain festivals

Strengthen/improve communication coming from the City

Spotlight businesses, programs, people

5- Housing

Mixed use housing for aging population (i.e. necessities available in development or within walking distance)

Incentives for property developers/owners to encourage affordable housing, look to Charleston and Savannah on rehabbing existing buildings with incentives and tax credits

Cooperate and partner with non-profits on grant applications for affordable housing (affordable housing needed for low income earners, young professionals, young families)

Balance density with affordable housing

Convert unused commercial property to residential (affordable) property

6- Healthy Living

Teach children to walk and bike early

Implement bike lanes and trolley

Create “bike stations” (i.e. areas of racks) and offer “bike days” (clinics on using, fixing, maintaining bikes)

Create more and improve existing greenspace

Create more community gardens

Leverage existing resources, better use of public buildings and educational institutions as healthy living and multi-purpose spaces open to citizens, non-profits and businesses (i.e. Decatur H.S. and Agnes Scott)

Secure funding for Decatur Rec Center overhaul

Implement intergenerational programs such as gardening and arts at Rec Center

Engage medical community in active/healthy living programs

Make the Decatur Focus more timely (by the time the Focus arrives events are often passed)

Have active living department serve as a clearinghouse for all active events in the City (not just the ones offered by the Department of Active Living/Rec Center)

Create Decatur Active living / Healthy Living Newsletter available in hard copy and online

Communicate resident benefits to residents

Engage Decatur businesses with active living efforts (i.e. running stores, restaurants)

Implement micro environmentalism such as Decatur initiatives to: use alternative transportation; use less power; visit community gardens; eat healthy in Decatur

Create community bulletin boards and place throughout the City

Roundtable – Wed. May 13, 2010 - 7:00p.m.-9p.m. Group #36

Sustainability

business development – keep viability of being a “destination” – brings \$ in to sustain community

round out “destination” offerings : need men’s clothing, ice cream, book store, turn Blue Moon into B&B, public library is essential/don’t lose it

we’ve had good leadership – good governance – Peggy is best in state
we’re in positive financial state
capital improvements only when there are grants

need to plan well for succession of leadership to maintain the quality we have had

structured ways for citizen involvement – continuous pulse (without being overwhelmed)

Natural Environment

more pervious space – get rid of paved parking lots

each business should be required to plant green

minimize footprint of parking by building parking decks

more public / private partnership for alternative energy i.e. solar, geothermal

codes to promote energy efficiency (which costs less when new build)

reduce air pollution through less car use

green space – preserve it, get more of it

Transportation

should be able to use alternative forms of transportation

stop traffic on Ponce Commerce St. to Commerce St. (or at least Church) – pedestrian only

more bike lanes and bike parking

sidewalks on every street

open air electric bus (like Tech trolley) not just through business area but through neighborhoods too (Thursday-Sunday?)

rework dangerous pedestrian crossings

golf cart friendly

bike station: park, snacks, bike maintenance

Life of Community

Taste of Decatur outdoors

B&B on the square

free parking during festivals

farmer's markets

amphitheatre

on paved MARTA plaza: raised beds with trees, kiosks selling newspapers-candy bars-ice cream-etc., canvas canopies/umbrellas for shade, food vending truck, chess board /game tables

cultural arts master plan – include use of performance arts space at DHS

remodel/redevelop/revitalize police station, Ebster, Beacon Hill area

more revitalization in Oakhurst – make easier walking across intersection

move police to where Maud Baker on Church St. used to be

Housing

affordable for: city work force, i.e. police-fire-teachers, military, seniors, people with disabilities, young folks, transitional college faculty, racial diversity

diversity of housing prices – mixed income

question about quality of life versus what's realistic

rental and ownership

we want to know what's happening with public housing area on Trinity and Commerce?

% of affordable housing in any new builds

lots of discussion about “what is affordable” and for whom?

salary incentives to live in city for city workforce i.e. housing allowance

more housing like Benson/Oakview lottery for city workforce

Healthy Living

MARTA plaza – shade awnings with game tables, chess etc.

more community gardens, CSA

more available garden space through rooftop or convert paved surfaces

new YMCA in downtown Decatur, updated

cross reference our transportation ideas

use “healthy living” as barometer for any decision city makes

Rec center and YMCA collaborating more around sports instead of kids being stretched between

farm to school

access to locally grown food for all incomes

revitalize empty buildings with healthy living in mind

free/cheap education about healthy eating – process vs. fresh, using kitchens in schools, rec center, Cooks Warehouse for this