

City of Decatur

Comprehensive Plan Update 2005

Prepared for:



by Sycamore Consulting, Inc.



October 2005



City of Decatur

Comprehensive Plan Update 2005



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Special thanks to the members of Decatur's Resident Boards and Commissions, City of Decatur staff and the citizens who participated in this effort to help shape the City's future vision.

October 2005

**CITY OF DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. INTRODUCTION	1-1
History of Decatur.....	1-1
History of Planning in Decatur	1-2
Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 Overview	1-3
Public Involvement Plan.....	1-4
Decatur’s Vision for the Future	1-7
Quality Community Objectives	1-9
2. POPULATION	2-1
Inventory.....	2-1
Total Population	2-1
Households	2-2
Age Distribution.....	2-3
Racial Composition	2-4
Educational Attainment	2-6
Income	2-8
Assessment of Current and Future Conditions.....	2-9
3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	3-1
Inventory.....	3-1
Economic Base	3-1
Labor Force Characteristics	3-7
Local Economic Development Opportunities and Resources .	3-10
Assessment of Economic Development Issues, Trends and Opportunities	3-16
Economic Development Community Vision and Goals.....	3-19
4. HOUSING	4-1
Inventory of Existing Conditions	4-1
Types of Housing Units	4-1
Age and Condition of Housing	4-3
Owner and Renter Units.....	4-4
Cost of Housing	4-5
Cost Burden Analysis.....	4-8
Housing and Community Characteristics	4-9
Assessment of Current and Future Housing Needs	4-10
Housing Community Vision and Goals	4-11
5. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	5-1
Natural Resources.....	5-1
Natural Features	5-1
Sensitive and Ecologically Significant Areas.....	5-2
Assessment of Current and Future Needs	5-7
Historic Resources	5-8
Overview	5-8
Historic Preservation Commission	5-8
Decatur’s Landmark Properties.....	5-9

	Decatur’s Preservation Alliance	5-12
	Assessment of Current and Future Needs	5-12
	Natural and Cultural Resources Vision and Goals	5-12
6 .	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	6-1
	Public Safety Inventory and Assessment	6-1
	Police	6-1
	Fire Protection.....	6-1
	Emergency Medical Service.....	6-2
	Library Facilities Inventory and Assessment	6-2
	Educational Facilities Inventory and Assessment.....	6-2
	Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment	6-6
	Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Inventory and Assessment.....	6-12
	Water Treatment and Distribution	6-12
	Sewer and Wastewater Facilities	6-13
	Future Water and Sewage Capacity	6-13
	Storm Water Management Inventory and Assessment	6-14
	Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Inventory and Assessment.....	6-15
	General Government Inventory and Assessment.....	6-16
	Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities	
	Inventory and Assessment.....	6-17
	Community Facilities Community Vision and Goals	6-17
7.	INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	7-1
	Inventory.....	7-1
	Entities	7-1
	Adjacent Local Governments	7-1
	School Boards.....	7-2
	Development Authorities	7-2
	Other Units of Local Government and Utility Companies.....	7-3
	Other Organizations (Regional and State)	7-3
	State Programs and Activities	7-5
	Assessment of Current and Future Needs	7-8
	Intergovernmental Coordination Community Vision and Goals	7-9
8.	LAND USE	8-1
	Introduction.....	8-1
	Inventory of Existing Land Uses	8-1
	Existing Land Use Assessment	8-5
	Historic Factors	8-5
	Land Use Patterns and Denisities	8-5
	Redevelopment Areas.....	8-5
	Environmentally Sensitive Areas.....	8-6
	Other Land Use Issues	8-7
	Future Land Use Demand	8-7
	Future Land Use Narrative	8-8
	Land Use Community Vision and Goals	8-11
9.	TRANSPORTATION	9-1
	Introduction.....	9-1

Inventory of Existing Conditions	9-2
Functional Classifications of Roadways	9-2
Number of Lanes, Volume and Capacity.....	9-4
State Routes	9-5
Evacuation Routes	9-5
Bridge Inventory	9-5
Signalized Intersection Inventory	9-6
Bike and Pedestrian Trails	9-8
Sidewalk Inventory	9-8
Parking Inventory	9-9
Public Transportation	9-10
Railroad Inventory	9-14
Programmed STIP Improvements.....	9-15
Accident Frequency Data.....	9-15
Assessment of Current and Future Needs	9-16
Assessment of the Road Network.....	9-16
Assessment of Public Transit Facilities	9-18
Projected Overall System Levels of Service (LOS) and System Needs.....	9-20
Means of Optimizing Existing Facilities	9-20
Transportation Requirements for Non-Attainment Areas	9-21
Transportation Community Vision and Goals	9-27
10. IMPLEMENTATION	10-1
2005-2009 Short-Term Work Program	10-2
Report of Accomplishments.....	10-4
11. APPENDIX OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES	

**CITY OF DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005
TABLE OF MAPS**

1. INTRODUCTION	1-1
Map 1.1 – Decatur and the Atlanta Region	1-1
2. POPULATION	2-1
3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	3-1
4. HOUSING	4-1
5. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	5-1
Map 5.1 – Decatur Floodplain and FEMA Drainage Map.....	5-6
Map 5.2 – Decatur Historic Districts and Properties Map.....	5-11
6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES	6-1
Map 6.1 – Decatur Educational Facilities Map	6-5
Map 6.2 – Decatur City Parks	6-10
7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	7-1
8. LAND USE	8-1
Map 8.1 – Existing Land Use Map	8-4
Map 8.2 – Future Land Use Map.....	8-10
9. TRANSPORTATION	9-1
Map 9.1 – Decatur Roadway Functional Classification Map	9-4
Map 9.2 – Decatur Signalized intersections Map	9-7
Map 9.3 – Decatur Sidewalk Map	9-8
Map 9.4 – MARTA Stations and Bus Routes	9-10
Map 9.5 – Decatur Railroad Map	9-14
Map 9.6 – Atlanta Region Non-Attainment Boundaries	9-24
Map 9.7 - Georgia PM2 Non-Attainment Areas	9-25
10. IMPLEMENTATION	10-1

CITY OF DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2005

TABLE OF TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
2. POPULATION.....	2-1
Table 2.1 – Decatur Total Population.....	2-1
Table 2.2 – Historic Population Trends	2-1
Table 2.3 – Forecasted Population Trends	2-2
Table 2.4 – Historic Household Trends	2-2
Table 2.5 – Forecasted Households.	2-2
Table 2.6 – Historic Population Trends by Age	2-3
Table 2.7 – Forecast of Age Distribution	2-4
Table 2.8 – Total population by Race.....	2-5
Table 2.9 – Percent of Population by Race.....	2-5
Table 2.10 – Population by Educational Attainment.....	2-6
Table 2.11 – Years of School Completed.....	2-7
Table 2.12 – Decatur Student Performance Characteristics	2-7
Table 2.13 – Income Comparison	2-8
Table 2.14 – Distribution of Households by Income Grouping	2-9
3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	3-1
Table 3.1 – Employment by Sector	3-3
Table 3.2 – Employment by Sector Comparison.....	3-4
Table 3.3 – Average Weekly Wages for Selected Industry Sectors	3-5
Table 3.4 – Personal Income by Type.....	3-6
Table 3.5 – Personal Income by Type in Dollars.....	3-7
Table 3.6 – Employment by Occupation	3-8
Table 3.7 – Employment Status by Percentage	3-8
Table 3.8 – Unemployment Rates in Neighboring Areas	3-9
Table 3.9 – Labor Force by Place of Work.....	3-10
Table 3.10 – Decatur Employment by Sector.....	3-16
Table 3.11 – Increase or Decrease in Employment by Sector.	3-17
4. HOUSING.....	4-1
Table 4.1 – Types of Housing Units	4-2
Table 4.2 – Types of Housing Units by Percentage	4-3
Table 4.3 – Housing Construction by Era.....	4-4
Table 4.4 – Owned Units and Rented Units	4-5
Table 4.5 – Housing Value.....	4-6
Table 4.6 – Median Housing Value and Rents.....	4-6
Table 4.7 – Cost Burdened Residents by Tenure	4-9
Table 4.8 – Forecasted Population Trends	4-9
Table 4.9 – Forecasted Households	4-9

5. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	5-1
6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES	6-1
Table 6.1 – Park Amenities	6-8
7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION	7-1
Table 7.1 – Services Provided by DeKalb County.....	7-5
8. LAND USE	8-1
Table 8.1 – Existing Land Use	8-3
Table 8.2 – Future Land Use	8-9
9. TRANSPORTATION	9-1
Table 9.1 – Street and Highway Classification	9-2
Table 9.2 – Number of Lanes, Volume and Capacity.....	9-5
Table 9.3 - Signalized Intersections	9-6
Table 9.4 – Heavy Rail Stations.....	9-10
Table 9.5 – Age Distribution of MARTA Patrons	9-13
Table 9.6 – Income Distribution of MARTA Patrons.....	9-13
Table 9.7 – Gender Distribution of MARTA Patrons.....	9-13
Table 9.8 – Ethnic Distribution of MARTA Patrons.....	9-14
Table 9.9 – Residency Distribution of MARTA Patrons.....	9-14
Table 9.10 – Roadways with the Highest Accident Frequency	9-16
Table 9.11 – Level of Service Definitions	9-17
Table 9.12 – Most Congested Roadways.	9-17
Table 9.13 – Means of Transportation to Work	9-18
Table 9.14 – Vehicles Available by Tenure	9-20
10. IMPLEMENTATION	10-1

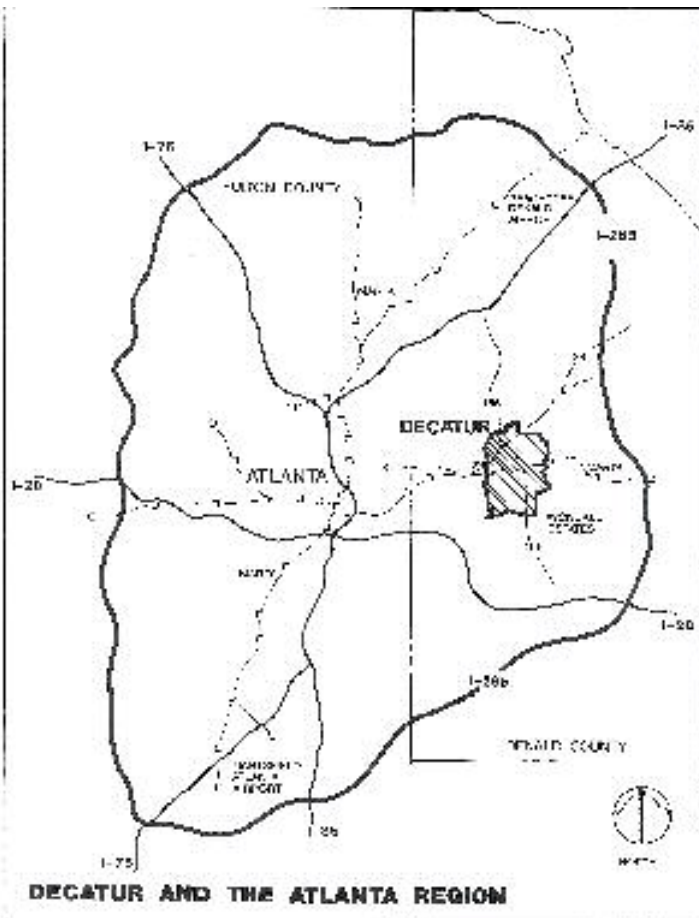
INTRODUCTION

History of Decatur

The City of Decatur is located in the central portion of the Atlanta Region, six miles from the City of Atlanta's central business core. It was incorporated in 1823, as the county seat of a newly formed DeKalb County. It is the second oldest municipality in metropolitan Atlanta and was named for Stephen Decatur, the popular American naval hero of the early 1800's.

Map 1.1 – Decatur and the Atlanta Region

The construction of the Georgia Railroad in 1845 played a strong role in the development of the City. Anecdotally, it is said that residents rejected a proposal by the Western and Atlantic Railroad to make Decatur a major stop on its new line because citizens did not want the noise, smoke, dirt, and confusion. The railroad thus moved seven miles west to a small settlement named Terminus, which became Marthasville, and then Atlanta.



Decatur was content to remain a small courthouse town. In contrast with its larger neighbor to the west, Decatur's population had only grown to 1,418 by 1900, its first 77 years of existence. The City's

greatest growth occurred during the period between 1900 and 1940, when the city limits were extended and the population grew eleven-fold to 16,561. Over the next five decades, Decatur's population reached a high of 22,026 in 1960, remained stable at 21,943 in 1970, and then slowly declined to 17,336 in 1990. The decade ending in 2000 showed the first net gain of population since 1960, with the City having a population of 18,147. Net population growth during the last 55 years has been less than 1,000 persons.

Presently, the City of Decatur covers 4.2 square miles or about 2,700 acres. Its historic pattern of development began with a small town center for government and commerce that has gradually been surrounded by residential

neighborhoods. Heavy rail public transit facilities (MARTA) were added in the 1970's. In more recent years, the downtown area has evolved into a vibrant, family-oriented entertainment and commercial district with a high-density residential component.

Widely known as the "City of Homes, Schools and Places of Worship," as graphically depicted in the City's colorful logo, Decatur's best-known features are its historic single-family neighborhoods, thriving town center, and exceptional neighborhood-based school system. It has been the goal of the City Commission throughout Decatur's history of planning to retain the character and integrity of these resources, while encouraging managed growth.

History of Planning in Decatur

As early as 1925, City ordinances were approved which enacted limited zoning restrictions. Decatur's first general zoning plan was established in April 1937. Comprehensive development plans of 1958 and 1972 describe the City's early efforts to manage growth. Accompanying these efforts are special plans related to development of the MARTA transit system, revitalization of downtown Decatur and the Oakhurst business district, neighborhood traffic control, rehabilitation of parks and recreational facilities and similar studies. The Town Center Plan has served as the vision for the central business district since its adoption in 1982.

In 1988, the City Commission approved a recommendation by the Decatur Planning Commission to adopt a comprehensive land use and zoning plan. This plan zoned most properties in the City to reflect their current use, encouraging preservation of City's established neighborhoods and revitalization of its commercial districts.

In 1990, minimum planning standards and procedures for the development of comprehensive plans were established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and ratified by the General Assembly. The City created its first Comprehensive Plan in 1995 according to those standards and procedures.

Since the development of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, the City has embarked on several important planning efforts including the Decatur Preservation Corridor Master Plan, the Storm Water Master Plan, Athletic Facility Master Plan, Avondale MARTA Livable Centers Initiative, and the Downtown Decatur MARTA Plaza Redevelopment Plan. The most profound and extensive effort was the 2000 Decatur Strategic Plan. The vision and policies for Decatur's growth and continued vitality set forth in the Strategic Plan have created a foundation for the community vision and goals section of this comprehensive plan.

The State of Georgia mandates that comprehensive plans must be updated every ten years in order for a local jurisdiction to retain its local qualified government status (QLG). This status allows the City to collect state and federal assistance funds. In January 2004, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs adopted a revised set of minimum standards for the development of the local comprehensive plan. In this same year, the City began the ten-year update

of the 1995 plan. The City of Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 has been prepared according to these revised standards and procedures.

Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 Overview

At its heart, the Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 is a long-range planning document guiding the growth and development of the City for the next twenty years. To the City's staff and elected officials, it provides a framework for decision and policy making. To the citizens of Decatur, it symbolizes a unified vision. For the City as a whole, it is a blueprint for success.

The preparation of a comprehensive plan requires a great deal of data collection to provide an inventory of current conditions. This inventory forms a basis of analysis that assesses how well these conditions meet the need of citizens now and in the future. To complement the technical track associated with the inventory and assessment portions of the comprehensive planning process, a public involvement program was designed to solicit input. An annotated outline of the City of Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 is included below. Details of the public input program are included under separate heading in subsequent pages.

The plan consists of ten chapters, each addressing a specific element of the plan:

- **Introduction** – This chapter provides a history of Decatur, an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and details of the Community Vision.
- **Population** – This element identifies and examines trends in population growth and in the demographic characteristics of the City.
- **Economic Development** – In this chapter, the economic base, labor force characteristics and local economic development opportunities and resources are inventoried and assessed.
- **Housing** – The inventory in this element details the existing housing stock and its condition, occupancy and affordability characteristics. An assessment follows that analyzes the City's ability to serve current and future populations.
- **Natural and Cultural Resources** – Natural and environmentally sensitive, and historic and cultural resources are included in this element. The element also includes an assessment of whether current protection measures for these resources are adequate.
- **Community Facilities** – In this element, public facilities and services are inventoried and their adequacy for serving present and future needs is assessed.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination** – This element examines the mechanisms and processes Decatur shares with other local governments and the City's level of satisfaction with each.

- **Land Use** – The land use element examines existing land use patterns and trends and includes a Future Land Use map and narrative designed to guide future patterns of growth.
- **Transportation** – This element inventories aspects of the transportation network in Decatur and provides an assessment on how well the system meets current and future needs.
- **Implementation** – This chapter includes the “2005-2009 Short Term Work Program” detailing the projects the City will undertake over the next five years to carry out the vision and goals of this plan. Also included is a status report, “The Report of Accomplishments,” for the previous 5-year “2000-2004 Short-Term Work Program.”

In addition to the inventory and assessment portions of each element, the Community Vision and specific goals relevant to each element are included in each chapter.

Public Involvement Plan

The basic strategy of the Comprehensive Plan Update’s public involvement process was to involve elected and appointed leaders, City staff, community stakeholders, residents, and business leaders of Decatur in the comprehensive planning process. The plan called for two types of involvement: regular meetings of a Steering Committee, including a Joint Commission Session of resident boards and commissions, and a series of public meetings designed to elicit feedback from the general public.

Steering Committee: City and project staff considered several options for the development of a Steering Committee, and determined that the City’s Planning Commission would be the appropriate group to help guide the project process. The Planning Commission, established by local ordinance, meets monthly to conduct public hearings on land use and zoning changes, proposed subdivisions of property and proposed planned unit developments, and to recommend actions for consideration by the City Commissioners. It also reviews and recommends changes in zoning regulations and future land-use plans.

Project Team staff met with the Planning Commission five times during the development of the draft Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005. Meeting dates and the general presentation items are described below:

- **January 6, 2005:** Present project overview.
- **March 10, 2005:** Present update on plan, results of public meeting and comments received to date.
- **April 7, 2005:** Present March 28 Joint Planning Commission and Planning Forum results and other comments received to date.
- **May 5, 2005:** Present draft Comprehensive Plan.

- **June 9, 2005:** Present findings of May 31, 2005 public hearing and receive final comments on draft Comprehensive Plan.

Joint Commission Session: In addition to feedback from the formal Steering Committee, the project team also desired meaningful input from various other appointed commissions and elected officials. To facilitate a concise and efficient means of gathering insight from a number of different groups, the Project Team held a Joint Commission Work Session. Members of the following groups participated: Decatur City Commission, Greenspace Commission, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Decatur Housing Authority, Zoning Board of Appeals, Waste Management Advisory Board, and the Board of Education. The joint session was a landmark opportunity, the first in City history, bringing together different perspectives from Decatur's various resident commissions and boards to work collaboratively on planning for the future.

Meeting participants were divided into four groups, dispersing members of the various commissions as equally as possible. Following a short presentation on the current conditions in Decatur, participants were asked to participate in a facilitated session where they responded to the question, "As we look towards the next 20 years, what areas or issues does Decatur need to focus on to remain on top?". Through a consensus-building process, the top five issues were selected from each group. Process results closely mirrored the comments heard from the general public, and are included in the Community Vision and Goals section.

Public Meetings: The Project Team also worked actively to inform, involve, and elicit input from the general public on the comprehensive plan update. In that regard, the project team held three public meetings: a kick-off meeting, a planning forum highlighting recent past planning efforts, and a public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan update. Additionally, the City web site was updated regularly with project information and an e-mail box was set up to receive comments from the public throughout the project process. Details of these efforts are outlined below:

- **January 26, 2005 – Comprehensive Plan Update Kick-Off Meeting:** This meeting served to kick off the Comprehensive Plan Update and included a brief presentation on the Comprehensive Plan requirements, elements and schedule. It also included an overview of Decatur with specific emphasis on trends in population, development, transportation, and historic & natural resources. Following the presentation, the meeting was opened to the public for comments and questions.

This meeting, held at the Maud Burrus-Decatur Library on Sycamore Street, was advertised by various methods, including flyers distributed through the school system, a front page article in the Decatur Focus, e-

mails to the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance – an umbrella organization for 40 neighborhood groups - and a legal advertisement run in The Champion, DeKalb County's legal organ, on January 6th and 13th.

Fifty-four people attended the meeting, 30 oral comments were made, with 10 written and 4 e-mailed comments received.

- **March 28, 2005 – Planning Forum:** The Planning Forum presented an opportunity for the public to review planning projects that led up to the Comprehensive Plan update. The City's significant planning projects included the Storm Water Master Plan, Preservation Corridor Master Plan, 2000 Strategic Plan and others. City and consultant staff were on hand to answer questions and take comments. The purpose of the open house format was to allow the public to familiarize themselves with City planning initiatives and policies and speak one on one about their concerns.

In addition, there were several avenues available during the Forum for the public to express comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Decatur 2005 Existing Land Use map was prepared and presented at the meeting. Participants were invited to post comments concerning any community planning issue or concern. The vision, principles and goals adopted through the 2000 Decatur Strategic Plan process were also used as the basis for an interactive visioning exercise. The statements were presented on a 4' x 8' banner. Participants were asked to comment on how valid and applicable the 2000 vision and goals were to the 2005 comprehensive planning process by posting their comments and additional goals directly on the banner. A comment card was also provided.

This meeting, held in the Decatur Recreation Center on Sycamore Street, was advertised by various methods, including: flyers posted throughout Decatur, an article in the Decatur Focus distributed to 10,000 residents and businesses, the City's website, and e-mails to various groups and the project mailing list.

Forty-five people attended the planning forum, with 13 participating in the land-use exercise and 28 participating in the visioning exercise. Three written comments were received and seven people submitted e-mail comments.

- **May 31, 2005 – Public Hearing:** The public hearing presented an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the Draft Update Plan. The plan itself was summarized in a PowerPoint presentation with special attention to the Community Vision and Goals section. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to ask questions and make

comments. The comments received were incorporated into the preparation of the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The meeting was held at the Maud Burrus-Decatur Library on Sycamore Street and was advertised by various methods, including citywide flyer distribution, e-mails to neighborhood associations and the project mailing list, and a legal advertisement run in *The Champion*, DeKalb County's legal organ, on May 12th and May 19th.

Twelve people attended the meeting. Approximately twelve oral questions and comments were voiced at the meeting and two written comments were received.

Summaries of the public meetings, copies of advertising materials, and submitted written comments are located in the Appendix section of this document.

Decatur's Vision for the Future

The Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005's "Community Vision for the Future" builds upon the existing vision and principles statements adopted by the City through the development of its 2000 Strategic Plan. In accordance with the Georgia DCA's standards, it is also based on additional public input, the inventory and assessment portions of this plan, and consideration of the regional and state planning goals as expressed through the Georgia DCA's Quality Community Objectives.

The City chose to utilize the efforts of the 2000 Strategic Plan as a basis for the Community Vision for several reasons. Primarily, the process by which the Strategic Plan was developed closely mirrored the comprehensive planning process, utilizing much of the same research and analysis of Decatur's physical, economic and social aspects. Secondly, the public involvement process was extensive and broad reaching, encompassing an inclusive collaboration of residents, governments, business and institutional leaders. Finally, many of the projects listed within the Strategic Plan to support the stated vision and goals have already been put in place. For these reasons, the City remains committed to the vision and goals set forth by the plan.

The process by which the Strategic Plan Goals and Principles were incorporated into the Decatur Comprehensive Plan Update 2005 included a two-part validation process. First, the data used to formulate the goals was compared with recently available data to ensure that it still reflected an accurate picture of Decatur in 2005. Secondly, a "check in" with the public at the March 28th Planning Forum was held to make sure the goals were still applicable and to receive input on additions of any new issues or concerns.

The validation process revealed two conclusions: 1) the conditions in Decatur had not changed considerably since the 2000 Strategic Plan; and 2) the public was still very much committed to the goals adopted by the plan. Based upon these findings, it was concluded that the Strategic Plan's vision and goals were valid and could be utilized for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Once validated, the vision and goals were compared to the inventory and assessment portions of this plan and also the State's planning objectives to ensure consistency. A discussion of the how the vision addresses the objectives follows this section. Input from the public was added appropriately. The following outlines the resulting City of Decatur's Community Vision for the Future.

VISION

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

The principles and goals identified by the community to support this vision are:

Principle A: Manage Growth While Retaining Character – Accommodate commercial and residential growth while retaining a small town character within an urban environment.

Goals:

- Retain and enhance the existing character of commercial districts.
- Encourage a diversity of business types with particular focus on local businesses.
- Protect existing neighborhoods while identifying the potential for selected growth and adopting standards to guide future growth.
- Develop residential design guidelines to ensure the compatibility of infill and redevelopment with existing resources.

Principle B: Encourage Community Interaction – Determine methods to maximize communication and connections between residents, businesses, institutions and government.

Goals:

- Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural and other types of diversity.
- Reinforce neighborhoods and develop connections between neighborhoods.
- Strengthen communication and connections throughout the community.

Principle C: Provide Quality Services Within Fiscal Limits – Provide housing, transportation, environmental quality and public services to Decatur's residents and workers.

Goals:

- Increase opportunities for economically diverse housing for persons who live or work in Decatur.
- Enhance vehicular and non-vehicular mobility in and throughout Decatur.
- Continue the commitment to environmental quality, especially the preservation of green space and storm water management.
- Continue to provide quality City and education services within fiscal limits acceptable to the community.

This Community Vision and associated goals will be met through current and envisioned City initiatives. These initiatives demonstrate the City's strong commitment to:

- Affordable and life-cycle housing options
- High-density residential and mixed-use developments in central business core
- Promotion of transit oriented development around MARTA stations
- Marketing strategies to encourage and support local and diverse businesses
- Preservation and enhancement of existing green space and historic resources through the 2004 Preservation Corridor Plan
- Maintenance and creation of bike and pedestrian pathways
- Implementation of the 2005 Storm Water Master Plan
- Continued coordination with City Schools of Decatur, DeKalb County and regional and state agencies

More detail on these initiatives along with additional strategies and more specific goals identified through the public involvement process and Joint Commission Session are included under each of the related elements.

Quality Community Objectives

As part of the Community Vision and Comprehensive Plan development process, the DCA's Quality Community Objectives must be incorporated and reflected. The following objectives are supported by this Decatur Community Vision and 2005-2025 Comprehensive Plan document.

Economic Development Objectives

Decatur has achieved a successful downtown central business core of government, office, service and professional, specialty retail and restaurant related businesses, as well as a high-density residential community. The City will continue to support these types of opportunities while exploring other avenues of appropriate growth. Decatur has a strong history of growth preparedness and proactive planning, specifically identifying those areas to be protected and those suitable for redevelopment. The City coordinates closely with DeKalb County,

MARTA, and City Schools of Decatur to ensure infrastructure is in place to support its growth goals. Decatur will continue to work with its business associations and the County to offer professional development and training opportunities to support the needs of employees.

Natural and Cultural Resources Objectives

The City of Decatur has considerable natural and historic resources and is committed to protection of its open spaces and significant historic resources through its Greenspace and Historic Preservation Commissions. The City is also committed to protecting air quality and its environmentally sensitive areas. Non-vehicular methods of transportation will be encouraged wherever possible.

Community Facilities and Services Objectives

Decatur is committed to providing quality and fiscally practical services to maintain a high quality of life standard for its citizens. Decatur will continue to work with adjacent and regional governmental bodies to formulate creative solutions to service delivery to increase efficiency and reduce taxpayer costs. Wherever possible, the City will seek to provide and improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and encourage transit services as an alternative to automobiles.

Housing Objectives

The City of Decatur is dedicated to providing a diverse range of housing types. Of primary interest is the creation of workforce housing to allow people that work in the city to also live in the city. The City is committed to providing lifecycle housing for individuals of all ages and families of all sizes.

Land Use Objectives

As the City nears 100% build-out, land use policies focus on the encouragement of redevelopment and infill. Through the City's redevelopment efforts, the City supports mixed-use development in its central business core and commercial nodes along College Avenue. The City will focus on creating design guidelines to support appropriate single-family residential infill in its existing neighborhoods. The City has a strong presence in the Atlanta Region and is well known for its successful downtown retail and entertainment district. The City is committed to preserving this urban village sense of place.

POPULATION

Inventory

Total Population

According to the U.S. Census, the City of Decatur's total population in 2000 was 18,147 persons. This represented 2.7 percent of the total 2000 population of DeKalb County. Forecasts published by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) estimate the 2005 population of Decatur to be 18,693.

Table 2.1 – Decatur Total Population 1980-2005

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Persons	18,404	17,870	17,336	17,742	18,147	18,693

Source: U.S. Census

During the period between 1990 and 2000, Decatur's total population increased by 811 persons, an increase of 4.7 percent. Comparatively, for the same period (1990-2000), the total population in DeKalb County increased by 18 percent and for the State of Georgia by 20 percent (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 – Historic Population Trends of Decatur, DeKalb County and Georgia

	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-1990	% Change 1990-2000
City of Decatur	18,404	17,336	18,147	-5.8	4.7%
DeKalb County	483,024	545,837	665,865	13.0	18.0%
State of Georgia	5,484,527	6,522,645	8,186,453	18.9	20.3%

Source: U.S. Census

Decatur's increase in population during the last decade ended a trend of population decline that began in the 1970's. From 1970-1990, the City's population decreased by 21%. This decrease was largely a reflection of Decatur as a mature community with little vacant area available for growth. In addition, household size was decreasing across the nation. This played a significant role in the City's population shrinkage as family size became smaller.

The population increase of the 1990's can be attributed to the City's emphasis on higher density residential redevelopment. According to forecasts by the ARC detailed in Table 2.3, over the next 20 years the population is anticipated to increase by 5356 persons, or 29%. As almost 100% of Decatur's land area is developed, opportunities for growth during the next two decades will be limited to

these increases in residential densities, with high-density developments planned for downtown Decatur and medium density developments in specified corridors.

Table 2.3 – City of Decatur Forecasted Population Trends

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025
Persons	18,802	18,911	19,020	19,129	19,238	20,586	21,934	24,049

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

Households

While Decatur’s population has increased, household size has continued to diminish, dropping 7% percent between 1980 and 2000. However, the total number of households increased by over 500, or 7% during the same period. The decrease in household size is consistent with national trends and reflects a number of factors, including: a trend toward smaller families; an increase in single parent households which reflects the increasing divorce rate; and an increase in independent living by the elderly. Comparatively, while DeKalb County had a household size of 2.62 the State had an average of 2.65.

Table 2.4 – Historic Household Trends, City of Decatur 1980-2000

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Households	7,529	7,573	7,617	7,834	8,051
Avg. HH Size	2.37	2.29	2.21	2.17	2.13

Source: Georgia DCA

Forecasts provided by the ARC call for an increase of households by 32%, reflecting the anticipated increases in total population. Household size is anticipated to continue declining by 4%. This size is consistent with the type of residential housing policy encouraged by the City, as high and medium density dwellings are more compatible with smaller family sizes.

Table 2.5 – Forecast Households, City of Decatur 2005-2025

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Households	8,330	8,542	9,271	10,000	11,004
Avg. HH Size	2.11	2.09	2.07	2.04	2.03

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission
City of Decatur

Age Distribution

In general, Decatur is shifting towards a distinctly middle-aged population. Over the last twenty years, the number of persons in age groups 0-34 has decreased, while the number of persons aged 35-54 have increased (see Table 2.6). The median age in Decatur for 2000 was 36, compared to 32.5 for DeKalb County and 33.4 for the State of Georgia.

Decatur also has a larger share of seniors than the County or the State. Persons aged 65 and older accounted for 13.3% of the population in the City compared to 8% in DeKalb and 9.6% in Georgia.

These figures, along with average household size, support the conclusion that families in Decatur tend to consist of older parents aged 35-44 with few children. This mimics national trends of people in general waiting longer to start families and subsequently having fewer children. The high property values and lack of starter homes in Decatur tend to discourage younger and larger families as well.

Table 2.6 – Historic Population Trends by Age, City of Decatur 1980-2000

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Ages 0 - 4	1,079	1,144	1,196	1,125	1,053
Ages 5 - 14	2,136	2,019	1,879	1,965	2,051
Ages 15 - 24	3,506	2,859	2,243	2,210	2,177
Ages 25 - 34	3,594	3,574	3,552	3,505	3,457
Ages 35 - 44	1,721	2,395	3,020	3,140	3,260
Ages 45 - 54	1,559	1,519	1,495	2,013	2,530
Ages 55 - 64	1,671	1,447	1,238	1,218	1,198
Ages 65 +	3,138	2,913	2,713	2,567	2,421
Totals	18,404	17,870	17,336	17,742	18,147

Source: U.S. Census
 Atlanta Regional Commission
 Georgia DCA
 City of Decatur

Forecasts for the City project a continued decrease in children and young adults aged 0-24, with a significant increase in adults aged 34-54. These trends are

consistent with the decrease in household and family size forecast by the ARC and the residential policies encouraged by the City. The senior population aged 65 and older is anticipated to remain fairly stable.

Table 2.7 – Forecast of Age Distribution, City of Decatur 2005-2025

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Ages 0 - 4	1,050	1,047	1,044	1,041	1,038
Ages 5 - 14	2,036	2,021	2,007	1,992	1,978
Ages 15 - 24	1,965	1,753	1,582	1,411	1,274
Ages 25 - 34	3,424	3,391	3,358	3,325	3,293
Ages 35 - 44	3,940	4,620	5,583	6,547	7,912
Ages 45 - 54	2,942	3,354	3,900	4,446	5,170
Ages 55 - 64	1,111	1,023	949	874	811
Ages 65 +	2,274	2,127	1,998	1,868	1,755

Source: Georgia DCA
City of Decatur

Racial Composition

Decatur's population is fairly diverse. Almost two-thirds of the population is white with about one-third African-American. Hispanics account for approximately 2% of the City's population, as do Asian Americans. Compared with the 2000 U.S. Census figures for Decatur, DeKalb County and Georgia, the County has a considerably larger share of African-American and Hispanic populations. The City's racial composition closely matches that of the State, with the exception of the Hispanic population.

Looking towards future trends, it is anticipated that racial composition will remain fairly stable throughout the twenty-year planning period. It was identified through the public involvement process that diversity is a priority for Decatur residents. The City intends to continue, to enhance, and to adopt policies that encourage a mix of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds.

Table 2.8 – Total Population by Race, City of Decatur

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
White	10,527	10,457	10,386	11,146	11,906	12,626
African-American	7,666	7,191	6,716	6,124	5,532	5,388
Hispanic	196	191	186	245	304	350
Asian/Pacific Islander	82	119	155	230	304	445
Other Races	117	83	48	82	115	138
Total*	18,588	18,040	17,491	17,826	18,161	18,947

Source: U.S. Census
Georgia DCA
City of Decatur

*The total may add up to more than the total population for that year because individuals may report more than one race.

Table 2.9 – Percent of Population by Race 2000,
Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia

Area	Decatur	DeKalb County	Georgia
White	66%	36%	65%
African-American	31%	54%	29%
Hispanic	2%	8%	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	4%	2%
Total*	101%	102%	101%

Source: U.S. Census

* The total may add up to more than 100% of the population because individuals may report more than one race.

Educational Attainment

As illustrated by Table 2.10, approximately 56% of Decatur's population in 2000 had a Bachelor's degree or higher. This figure is considerably higher than that of the County, the Atlanta MSA or the State for the same year. Decatur also had the lowest percentage of high-school dropouts.

Table 2.10 – Population by Educational Attainment, 2000,
All Persons, Age 25 and Older –
Decatur, DeKalb County, Atlanta MSA, and Georgia Comparison

Area	Decatur		DeKalb County		Atlanta MSA		Georgia	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
No H.S. Diploma	1,584	12.2	64,260	14.9	421,317	16	1,111,349	21.4
High School Diploma	1,660	12.8	87,359	20.3	641,817	24.4	1,486,006	28.7
Some College	1,979	15.2	96,268	22.4	574,165	21.8	1,058,692	20.4
Associate Degree	491	3.8	26,005	6	150,338	5.7	269,740	5.2
Bachelor's Degree	3,757	28.9	97,769	22.7	568,478	21.6	829,873	16
Graduate Degree	3,509	27.0	58,320	13.6	274,683	10.4	430,305	8.3
Total	12,980		429,981		2,630,798		5,185,965	

Source: U.S. Census

Considering the figures listed in Table 2.11, there has been a significant shift towards a more educated population. The percentage of those individuals with less than a 9th grade education has decreased considerably since 1980. The percentage of the population holding Bachelor's or graduate degree has doubled.

Table 2.11 – Years of School Completed All Persons, Age 25 and Older, City of Decatur

Year	1980		1990		2000	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Less than 9th Grade	1,832	15.7	957	8.0	559	4.3
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	2,038	17.4	1,510	12.6	1,025	7.9
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	2,510	21.5	2,279	19.0	1,660	12.8
Some College (No Degree)	2,069	17.7	1,964	16.4	1,979	15.2
Associate Degree	NA	NA	429	3.6	491	3.8
Bachelor's Degree	1,467	12.6	2,660	22.2	3,757	28.9
Graduate or Professional Degree	1,767	15.1	2,201	18.3	3,509	27.0
Total	11,683		12,000		12,980	

Source: U.S. Census
Georgia DCA

Table 2.12 details the performance characteristics for Decatur High School students for the years 2000-2004. Decatur High School students have outperformed the State's average for SAT scores by at least 80 points for the last three years. The school consistently has a high percentage of seniors continuing onto post-secondary education.

Table 2.12 – Decatur Student Performance Characteristics

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Dropout Rate	4.8	3.2	5.9	1.4	****
Average SAT Score	1041	1047	1066	1084	1069
% Continuing Post-Secondary Education	86%	89%	85%	73%	86%

Source: Governor's Office of Student Achievement
Georgia Department of Education
City Schools of Decatur

****not available at the time of publication

Income

In 2000, Decatur’s average household income was higher than the State’s by almost 20%. Per capita income was approximately 29% higher. Looking at other economic indicators, Decatur had a lower percentage of families below the poverty level (7%) compared with the State (10%). It is expected that the higher levels of income and lower percentage of families living in poverty are related to the higher levels of educational attainment in the City.

Table 2.13 – Income Comparison, City of Decatur & State of Georgia

Area	City of Decatur		State of Georgia	
	Per Capita Income	Avg. HH Income	Per Capita Income	Avg. HH Income
1980	7,087	N/A	N/A	N/A
1985	11,581	N/A	N/A	N/A
1990	16,075	35,558	13,631	36,810
1995	22,719	50,332	17,393	46,718
2000	29,363	67,678	21,154	56,625

Source: Georgia DCA

Table 2.14 details the distribution of households by income group for the year 2000. From this detail, the median household income can be calculated. Median household income is often more representative than average household income due to a mean’s sensitivity to extremes. Median household income for the City in 2000 was \$47,395. While the City had a high percentage of households earning \$75,000-\$99,000, it also had a large percentage of households in the income groups “Less than \$10,000” and “\$20,000-\$29,000.” This may be attributable to household size, the number of elderly residents in Decatur, and the percentage of the population in the City’s public housing community.

Table 2.14 –2000 Distribution of Households by Income Grouping,
City of Decatur

Income Group	Households	
	Count	%
Less than \$10,000	838	10.5
\$10,000 - \$14,999	366	4.6
\$15,000 - \$19,999	448	5.6
\$20,000 - \$29,999	835	10.4
\$30,000 - \$34,999	456	5.7
\$35,000 - \$39,999	445	5.6
\$40,000 - \$49,999	743	9.3
\$50,000 - \$59,999	724	9.0
\$60,000 - \$74,999	688	8.6
\$75,000 - \$99,999	957	12.0
\$100,000 - \$124,999	549	6.9
\$125,000 - \$149,999	402	5.0
\$150,000 and above	554	6.9
Total	8005	100

Source: Georgia DCA

Assessment of Current and Future Conditions

Unlike its surrounding neighbors, the City has not had to struggle with the pains of managing explosive growth. Its 20% decline in population throughout the 70's and 80's allowed the City the unique opportunity to step back and redefine its future with some careful and thoughtful planning. Its recent renaissance as an urban community with a highly successful mixed-use downtown is not a random happening. It is a direct result of proactive planning set forth decades ago. The increase in population seen during the 1990's is the start of these plans coming into fruition. The City will continue to grow at a faster rate, but growth is

anticipated to be well managed within clearly defined areas and corridors.

With any successful city, as property values and the quality of services increase, so does the risk of losing the diversity of population. Decatur is no exception. The City has been very successful in attracting older, more professional and wealthier residents in recent years. Heard throughout the public meetings was the desire by the community to increase diversity within the City's neighborhoods. Looking at the distribution of incomes, it is apparent that strategies must be put in place to ensure housing options for those who earn less than \$30,000. Located throughout the elements of this plan are strategies to encourage a diversity of ethnic and economic backgrounds including those to provide a variety of housing options, promote a mix of businesses, and encourage more diversity at community events.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Decatur has been very successful at economic development over the past decade. The importance of municipally supported economic development is to maintain an employment base and minimize poverty so that local revenues can adequately fund services and schools. The City Commission and the Downtown Development Authority, working with long-standing goals, a widely supported town center plan, and a growing market demand, has created a vibrant downtown shopping and entertainment district where ten years ago there was a plethora of vacancies. Successful commercial revitalization has also occurred in Oakhurst Village and the College Avenue Corridor.

The purpose of the economic development element is to provide a snapshot of Decatur's economy today through the use of standard statistical inventory tools, to offer an assessment of the current economy in Decatur, and to provide a vision and goals that will successfully propel the City of Decatur's economy into the next decade.

Inventory

Economic Base

In general, the City of Decatur is characterized by relatively low unemployment and relatively high household income. In 2000, the median household income for Decatur was \$47,935. This amount is higher than both state (\$42,433) and national (\$41,994) median household income for 2000. Nearly 20% of households earned \$100,000 or more (18.9%). As of 2000, 7% of families lived at or below the poverty level in Decatur. For Georgia overall, 9.9% of families lived at or below the poverty level in 2000.

Since its creation, Decatur has been the county seat for DeKalb County, Georgia. As such, it is not surprising that DeKalb County Government activities lead the list of major employers in Decatur. Major employers include:

- DeKalb County Government
- Emory University (satellite offices)
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (satellite offices)
- Agnes Scott College (education)
- The City Schools of Decatur (education)
- Allied Systems (automotive distributor and transporter)

Most of these employers contribute to Decatur's share of management, professional, and related occupations. The strength of the employers listed above has contributed to a commercial vacancy rate that was less than 10% in early 2005. The reduction in vacancy is approximately 10% since 1995.

The inventory of the economic base continues with information on the employment, personal income, and average wages.

Employment by Economic Sector

A key element of community evaluation for economic development is industry mix. Determining what types of employment exist helps to determine the strength of the overall tax base. For this reason, industry sectors are evaluated over time in order to identify trends.

From 1970 to 2000, Decatur increased its employment by over 3,900 jobs. Significant factors in employment history during this period include an increase in government employment of nearly 10% and an increase of over 1,400 services sector jobs between 1990 and 2000. These increases reflect a strong employment presence of DeKalb County government offices in downtown Decatur and satellite offices from both Emory University and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

During this same period, the finance, insurance, real estate employment (FIRE) sector rose by 64% from 1980 to 1990 and then dropped 62% from 1990 to 2000. Employment losses in Decatur for FIRE are significant because increases in this high wage employment sector took place at both the state and national levels during the same period. Between 1990 and 2000, Georgia experienced a 24.7% increase. Between 1995 and 2004, the average annual employment for this sector increased by nearly 18%.

There was also a large percentage reduction in wholesale trade employment from 1990 to 2000 (49%), but the decline in employment is consistent with county (2%) and state (5.6%) percentage declines as well. The Georgia Department of Labor reported that contributing factors for the decline in this sector include technological advances, office automation, and foreign competition.

A pattern of fluctuation for employment in transportation, communications, and utilities as well as the construction sector is also apparent during the 1970 to 2000 period. However, these combined employment sectors accounted for about 18% of jobs in 1970 and only about 7% of jobs in 2000, demonstrating a reduction in goods producing employment to service producing employment.

Retail trade employment remained stable over the period despite an overall increase in employment. The number of jobs in retail from 1980 to 1990 mirrors population loss in the City overall. Despite population increases between 1990 and 2000, retail employment did not rebound with the population increase, but remained stable. It is important to note that the increases in retail employment from successful downtown revitalization are not reflected in 2000 census

information.

The following table provides Decatur employment history since 1970.

Table 3.1 – City of Decatur Employment by Sector 1970-2000

Employment Sector	1970	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture	28	15	22	0
Construction	556	362	554	292
Manufacturing	462	303	394	366
Transportation, Communications, and Utilities	938	349	282	539
Wholesale Trade	242	305	306	118
Retail Trade	1,110	936	946	973
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	865	884	1,418	538
Services	2,163	3,532	4,267	5,674
Sub-Total - Private	6,364	6,686	8,119	8,500
Government	1,784	2,700	3,278	3,579
Total	8,148	9,386	11,467	12,079

Source: City of Decatur
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

The review of industries can also be evaluated in comparison with the entire state. For 2000, comparisons between the City of Decatur and the State of Georgia regarding employment by sector demonstrate five (5) significant differences. Most importantly, Decatur held 8% more professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management service jobs than the overall state percentage in 2000. In addition, Decatur held 11% more educational, health, and social services jobs than the overall state percentage in 2000.

Decatur had few jobs in others areas. In 2000, the city contained 5% less construction jobs than the overall state percentage. Decatur also contained 10% less manufacturing jobs and 5% less retail trade jobs than the overall state percentage.

These and all employment sector comparisons between Decatur and the State of Georgia are provided below.

Table 3.2 –Decatur Employment by Sector as Compared with the State of Georgia

Employment Sector	Decatur in 2000	Georgia in 2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	0.01%	1.4%
Construction	2.4%	7.9%
Manufacturing	4.8%	14.8%
Wholesale Trade	2.6%	3.9%
Retail Trade	6.9%	12%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	3%	6%
Information	5.9%	3.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	5.6%	6.5%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	17.8%	9.4%
Educational, Health, and Social Services	28.7%	17.6%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services	8.5%	7.1%
Other Services	6.1%	4.7%
Public Administration	7.5%	5%

Source: US. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Average Wages

Average weekly wages provide an overview of the quality of jobs in a community. The Georgia Department of Labor provides wage data at the county level. County level data from 2003 showed that DeKalb County average weekly wages of \$801 were higher than the state average of \$704, comparable to the Cobb County average of \$805 and the Gwinnett County average of \$786, but were lower than the Fulton County average of \$960.

Table 3.3 – Average Weekly Wages for
Selected Industry Sectors in 2003
DeKalb County

Industry	2003 Average Weekly Wages
Agriculture	\$313
Construction	\$827
Manufacturing	\$924
Transportation and Warehousing	\$695
Wholesale Trade	\$1,124
Retail Trade	\$491
Finance and Insurance	\$1,129
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$689
Services (general)	\$770
Sub-Total - Private	\$786
Government	\$883

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Since Decatur has a greater share of management, professional, and related occupations, average weekly wages would most likely be higher for Decatur than for DeKalb County as a whole. However, the average weekly wage level for Fulton County indicates that some high wage jobs which Decatur residents might occupy are located in the employment centers of Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Buckhead Atlanta in Fulton County.

Personal Income by Type

For 2000, the predominate income type for Decatur residents was aggregate wage or salary income (78%). This income type refers to total money earnings received for work performed as an employee during the past 12-month period. It includes wages, salary, Armed Forces pay, commissions, tips, piece rate

payments, and cash bonuses earned before deductions were made for taxes, bonds, pensions, and union dues. While the share of income in the category of aggregate wage or salary income for households increased by 7.3% since 1990, the share of income coming from wages or salaries was the same as the state in 2000. The share of income from interest, dividends, or net rental income decreased from 11.2% to 6.8% during the same period. The reduction means that Decatur residents obtained less of their income from interest on savings or bonds, dividends from stock holdings or memberships in associations, net income from rental property to others and receipts from boarders or lodgers, net royalties, or periodic payments from estates or trust funds than they did in 1990. To a lesser degree, the share of income from social security also decreased. These findings and all comparisons between 1990 and 2000 are provided below in tables showing income type by percentage and income type by dollars.

Table 3.4 – City of Decatur Personal Income by Type

Category	1990	2000
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	70.5%	77.8%
Aggregate other types of income for households	1.1%	1.2%
Aggregate self employment income for households	6.4%	6.0%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	11.2%	6.8%
Aggregate social security income for households	6.1%	3.5%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	0.8%	0.5%
Aggregate retirement income for households	3.9%	4.1%
Total Income	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Georgia DCA

Personal income is also provided by dollars. The increase in total income for Decatur is consistent with the increase in total income for the State at 94% and 95% respectively.

Table 3.5 – City of Decatur Personal Income by Type in Dollars

Category	1990	2000
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	190,887,549	408,033,200
Aggregate other types of income for households	3,095,089	6,263,000
Aggregate self employment income for households	17,239,454	31,332,800
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	30,360,824	35,821,700
Aggregate social security income for households	16,510,095	18,412,800
Aggregate public assistance income for households	2,216,466	2,596,200
Aggregate retirement income for households	10,532,321	21,707,600
Total Income	270,841,798	524,167,300

Source: Georgia DCA

Since Decatur has a greater share of management, professional, and related occupations, average weekly wages would most likely be higher for Decatur than for DeKalb County in general. However, the average for Fulton County indicates that some high wage jobs that Decatur residents might occupy are located in the Downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, and Buckhead Atlanta employment centers.

Labor Force Characteristics

Labor force characteristics explain the economic condition of the community's residents. The comprehensive plan explores this topic by reviewing employment by occupation, unemployment, and commuting patterns. Each topic contributes to a picture of the Decatur labor force.

Employment by Occupation

The review of labor force characteristics begins with a review of the occupations or types of jobs that are held by residents. The Census Bureau states that employment occupation is the set of activities or tasks that employees are paid to perform. Employees that perform essentially the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they are in the same industry.

When compared with state and national figures, 2000 census information for

Decatur indicates that the City's residents hold a larger share of management, professional, and related occupations (59.5%) than state (32.7%) and national percentages (33.6%). The other major difference is in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations. At 3.5%, Decatur had much less employment in this sector than state and national levels. For service occupations and sales and office occupations, Decatur had a very similar share as compared to state and national figures.

Table 3.6 – Employment by Occupation in 2000
Decatur, State of Georgia, and the United States

Employment by Occupation	Decatur	Georgia	U.S.
Management, Professional, and Related Occupations	59.5%	32.7%	33.6%
Service Occupations	11.7%	13.4%	14.9%
Sales and Office Occupations	21.7%	26.8%	26.7%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0%	0.6%	0.7%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations	3.6%	10.8%	9.4%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	3.5%	15.7%	14.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

Employment Status

The following section provides employment status information beginning with a comparison with state and national percentages.

Table 3.7 – Employment Status by Percentage in 1980-2000
Decatur, State of Georgia, and the United States

Government	Unemployment Rate in 1980	Unemployment Rate in 1990	Unemployment Rate in 2000
Decatur	5.1%*	5.8%	4.1%
Georgia	6.4%	5.4%	3.6%
U.S.	7.1%	5.5%	3.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

City of Decatur

* (overall DeKalb County unemployment rate)

Table 3.8 illustrates that Decatur unemployment declined from 5.8% in 1990 to 4.1% in 2000. In 2005, the Georgia Department of Labor estimated that the Decatur unemployment rate reduced further to 3%. The estimated rate of unemployment in Decatur is slightly less than the current State estimated rate of unemployment of 5%.

The following table provides past unemployment rates compared to surrounding counties, the state, and the U.S.

Table 3.8 – Unemployment Rates in Neighboring Areas 1985-2000

Neighboring Areas	1990	2000	2005*
Decatur	5.8%	4.1%	3%
Clayton	n/a	3.9%	5.8%
DeKalb County	5.0%	3.9%	5.5%
Fulton County	5.9%	6.0%	5.6%
Gwinnett County	4.3%	2.4%	4.2%
Henry County	n/a	1.9%	4.5%
Rockdale County	n/a	2.8%	5.3%
Georgia	5.4%	3.7%	5%
U.S.	5.5%	3.7%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census
Georgia DCA

*Georgia Department of Labor, 2005 estimate only

Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns describe where and how residents get to their place of employment. The implications for commuting include residents' time, congestion, and overall economic conditions of the community. In Decatur, the implications for commuting also concern the balance between jobs and housing for residents and the utilization of transit resources.

As of 2000, roughly 80% of the Decatur workforce commuted outside the City for employment. Residents spent an average of 26.2 minutes commuting to work. The amount of time was slightly less than the state average of 27.7 minutes.

As provided in the table below, only about 21% of Decatur’s workforce held work in Decatur. In comparison, census information in 2000 indicated that 44% of the DeKalb County workforce held work within DeKalb County. Recently, Decatur residents have expressed interest in more employment opportunities within the City. If appropriate jobs for Decatur’s workforce are not added to the City, then existing commuting patters will continue. These patterns are generally derived from census information showing that roughly 36% of the DeKalb County workforce that did not work in the County commuted to jobs in Fulton County and roughly another 10% commuted to jobs in Gwinnett County.

Table 3.9 – City of Decatur Labor Force by Place of Work in 2000

Category	1990	2000
Total population	17,336	18,147
Worked in State of residence	8,487	9,740
Worked in place of residence	1,701	2,021
Worked outside of place of residence	6,786	7,719
Worked outside of state of residence	0	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF1)

Furthermore, 2000 census information indicated that the primary mode of transportation for Decatur commuters was the single occupant vehicle (driving a car, truck or van alone). More than 72% commuted in this way despite the presence of three heavy rail stations. The next highest mode of commuting was public transportation, including taxicab (10.2%). Carpooling accounted for 5.6% of the workforce. Almost 5% worked at home.

Local Economic Development Opportunities and Resources

In order to take advantage of economic development opportunities, a local government must have a firm understanding of existing and potential development issues. A local community must also harness all available resources and organizational strengths of the community. The economic development section of this plan continues by describing the unique qualities for business in Decatur and how the City has organized its resources for continued economic development in the City.

Special or Unique Economic Activities

Decatur holds an enviable position in the metropolitan region. The City has renewed its mixed-use neighborhood centers, taken advantage of major public

transportation, and remains close to critical employers in nearby counties and in DeKalb County.

Specifically, strong neighborhood centers are prized in Decatur. The City has promoted the potential of its existing centers as a cornerstone of its economic development efforts. The City actively promotes and protects its three business districts and has begun to realize the benefits of revitalization. In 2005, the City characterized these three areas as follows:

Downtown Decatur Business District

Centered around the historic DeKalb County courthouse and the courthouse lawn, the downtown business district includes over 15 blocks of commercial, office, retail and restaurant options. Located north of the railroad tracks, the downtown business district is anchored on the western edge by the Decatur Post Office and on the eastern edge by the Ice House Loft project. The downtown district includes a collection of several office buildings, housing, commercial, medical, and legal services, a small hotel, and retail and restaurant district featuring over 45 restaurant selections and over 40 retailers, as well as a growing number of high-density residential developments. From the historic square to the West Ponce de Leon Corridor to the Old Depot District to the East Howard Avenue area, these various smaller districts are linked by a network of walkable streets.

Oakhurst Business District

The Oakhurst Business District, commonly known as Oakhurst Village, is centered around the intersection of East Lake Drive and Oakview Road and is easily accessible from the downtown business district via South McDonough Street. The Oakhurst Village once served as the commercial center of the City of Oakhurst before it was annexed into the City of Decatur in the 1920s. The Oakhurst Village serves as the heart of the Oakhurst residential neighborhood and includes a collection of restaurants and retailers adjacent to the historic Scottish Rite Hospital building. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic Scottish Rite Hospital has been renovated to include an art gallery, commercial office space, and a small housing complex operated by the Shepherd Center. The Oakhurst Village is surrounded by some of the City's historic neighborhoods.

College Avenue Corridor

The College Avenue Corridor includes a collection of distinct neighborhood commercial districts that extend along College Avenue; the area offers everything from small gourmet restaurants to neighborhood pizza, corner pubs and more traditional retail. The eastern edge of the corridor is currently being developed as a new mixed-use residential neighborhood with local retail and restaurant opportunities according to

the Avondale Livable Centers Initiative plan (LCI) and the City of Decatur Strategic Plan.

Though the economic benefits of these three business districts have not been quantified by City of Decatur, a private analysis conducted for the City of Decatur in 2003 revealed that there are more than 955 businesses and 9,820 employees within a one (1) mile radius of downtown Decatur.

Secondly, the City of Decatur is home to three MARTA rail stations. Over the past ten years, the City has taken steps to promote economic development and housing opportunities at the Decatur Station and at the Avondale station. The City continues to maximize transit-oriented development opportunities.

In 2005, the City of Decatur will benefit from a major renovation to the Decatur MARTA rail station in the center of the downtown area. The goal of the renovation is to remove many of the visual and physical barriers that the current station entrance imposes on the area. The project will benefit Decatur businesses because it will improve the quality of the public space near the MARTA entrance. Improvements for pedestrians will make shopping in this area much easier and pleasant. The redevelopment was funded by a federal grant that amounted to 80% of the project cost. The City of Decatur provided the remaining amount. Depending on the start date, the project is expected to be completed in 2006.

Lastly, proximity to major education and research-oriented institutions is a special quality for Decatur. As stated previously, the City of Decatur has benefited from satellite office uses from nearby educational and research employers in the Clifton Corridor. The opportunity to continue or expand office uses from these employers is unique for Decatur.

Local Economic Development Resources

Decatur Downtown Development Authority and Decatur Development Authority

The primary business resource in Decatur is the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The Mission Statement of the Downtown Development Authority is to assure the long-term economic stability of downtown Decatur by maintaining the small town character of the district and supporting values that assure Decatur is a great place to live, work, play, invest and do business.

The DDA also includes the Citywide Development Authority. Both authorities share a board and staff. Its programs are based in the City of Decatur Community & Economic Development Department.

The Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was founded in 1982 to implement the Decatur Town Center Plan and to provide day-to-day

management of the downtown development program. The Decatur Town Center Plan was an important visionary document that set the stage for the success of the downtown that the City enjoys today.

The DDA maintains a work program for development, recruiting, and business retention. Over the past few years the DDA has been actively engaged in specific project sites. Some of the most significant recent activities include design, zoning, and marketing assistance for proposed developments at 201 West Ponce de Leon, 101 Ponce Plaza and 335 West Ponce de Leon Avenue. For the Oakhurst area, the DDA continues to pursue redevelopment options for the Big H property. Targeted advertising and special events in the Oakhurst Business District have received both financial and staff support from the DDA.

The DDA works to assist businesses in a variety of ways. In order to offset disruption by the MARTA Plaza Redevelopment Project, the DDA implemented a marketing and public relations strategy for businesses that will be affected by the project. The DDA has also developed a plan for the East College Avenue district including an inventory of property ownership, consideration of redevelopment alternatives, and assessment of funding needs. The DDA has also attempted to identify grant funding for North McDonough, East Trinity, and East Howard streetscape improvements, as well as streetscape improvements in Oakhurst Village. In order to sustain small businesses, the DDA has developed a strategy to encourage diversified and local owner occupied retail uses.

For redevelopment opportunities, the DDA has pursued projects at 315 West Ponce de Leon, the 233 East Trinity block, the 500 block of Church Street and the Bank of America site. The DDA has also worked with DeKalb County to identify the best opportunities for the Calloway Building block so that demolition of the existing structure might result in a new mixed-use redevelopment of the five-acre site.

For the Avondale/Decatur Livable Centers Initiative Area, the DDA has supported activities to get the project started and directed tenant prospects to the East Decatur Station project area. In addition, the DDA has focused on annexation issues related to redevelopment opportunities east of the project area.

For business recruitment, the DDA generally markets Decatur as an active “Live, Work, Play” community in an urban setting with small town roots. The organization maintains regular communication with commercial property owners and leasing agents to stay current on available space and route business prospects effectively. The DDA has also concentrated efforts to recruit retail/restaurants and other desirable businesses based on marketing studies.

For business retention, the DDA regularly updates marketing materials for restaurants and retailers including materials for special events such as the July 4th Sidewalk Sale and the Terrific Thursday Holiday events. The organization

also supports existing retailers on parking issues, public safety, signage and similar program areas to assure a healthy business environment. Technical and financial support is provided to a variety of festivals and special events sponsored by other Decatur community groups to market Decatur.

Other current and future activities of the DDA are included in the Short Term Work Program of this plan.

An important aspect of the DDA and its achievements is its guiding principles. In addition to the mission statement and ongoing work program, the Downtown Development Authority utilizes the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Approach to revitalization. The Main Street Approach is based on four main principals: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Ongoing organizational activities help to build long-term stability. Promotion enables the business district to advertise its strengths collectively. Implementing visual improvements and promoting quality design enhances the physical environment of the business district. Economic restructuring enables the business district to increase competitiveness, identify opportunities, and attempt recruiting.

Since 1980, the success of the Main Street Approach nationwide has resulted in more than \$18.3 billion in total public and private reinvestment in physical improvements, a net gain of 60,577 businesses, and a net gain in jobs of over 244,000. Since Decatur utilized the Main Street Approach, downtown revitalization in Decatur is part of this overall success.

Decatur Business Association

The purpose of the Decatur Business Association (DBA) is to advocate for business interests in the City and to promote the City of Decatur as a "unique thriving, small-town experience in metro Atlanta." The DBA is a membership organization that includes businesses, professionals, financial institutions, arts groups, associated agencies and organizations and private individuals.

Young Professionals of Decatur

The Young Professionals of Decatur is a civic organization created to strengthen the careers, business and volunteer opportunities for young professionals in and around the City of Decatur. The organization works to promote networking among members, educate members on current business topics and political initiatives, and encourage civic involvement.

Oakhurst Business Association

The Oakhurst Business Association advocates for businesses including restaurants, art galleries, hair salons and barbershops, dry cleaners and a wide variety of other retailers in the Oakhurst Village, promoting them as "part of what makes the Oakhurst neighborhood a vibrant and charming place, and what

others far and wide have discovered ... a small town atmosphere with big city service.”

South Decatur Community Development Corporation (SDCDC)

The South Decatur Community Development Corporation (SDCDC) was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1994 to address some specific concerns of South Decatur residents. The organization received a major boost when the City of Decatur donated the commercial building at 350 Mead Road to the SDCDC in 1998. The organization sold the building, which is now occupied by several businesses. Sales proceeds are now invested with the income available to reinvest for the betterment of the South Decatur community. The SDCDC mission is to have a positive, measurable impact on the economic and cultural development of the South Decatur Community.

Economic Development Programs and Tools

The Decatur Development Authority (DDA) staff provides assistance to the Decatur Business Association (DBA) through a contract for services. The relationship between the DDA and the DBA was established in order to bridge the interests of the City and the business community.

With the exception of limited density bonuses for affordable housing, the City does not provide economic development incentives to developers, property owners, or zoning applicants. In past years, the Downtown Development Authority had been involved in some financing activities for economic development. However, the City of Decatur, through the DDA, attempts to make the development process work more smoothly for developers, property owners, and zoning applicants whose projects reflect adopted community goals.

Georgia Power Company

Through the Community & Economic Development Department, the City of Decatur receives occasional economic development assistance from Georgia Power. The company's Community and Economic Development organization provides assistance to communities in order to build their economic development attractiveness. Assistance includes leadership, strategy building, infrastructure, and marketing consultation services. In addition, Georgia Power also helps new and existing companies expand in Georgia through leadership, technology, targeted research and data management tools.

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provides economic development assistance primarily in the form of its Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant program along with project implementation funding for qualifying study areas. The purpose of the program is to encourage livability in the region's activity and employment centers by providing grants to communities that are working to enhance livability and mobility for their residents. Decatur's Avondale MARTA Station received an LCI grant in 2002 and created a master plan to guide the

area's future development.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of community Affairs (DCA) offers many programs to encourage economic development in the State's municipalities. DCA provides community development block grants which can be used for a variety of uses. In addition, DCA also has programs that provide loans for cities in order to foster economic development as well as tax breaks for corporations and low-income housing.

Education and Training Opportunities

Since the City of Decatur does not provide job training, the residents and businesses in the City may utilize the DeKalb Workforce Center, Inc. (DWC). Located on Church Street in Decatur, the DWC administers employment and workforce development for DeKalb County.

The Decatur Focus is a monthly newsletter in the City of Decatur. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote the city and encourage the exchange of information among residents, business owners, and the school system. The Decatur Focus is a joint publication of the City of Decatur, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, and the Decatur Business Association. The circulation of the Decatur Focus is approximately 10,000. The newsletter is mailed to all households in the City of Decatur, all of the city's business and professional license holders, and all members of the Decatur Business Association. Other copies of the newsletter are provided through the City's marketing packets as handouts available on the City's website and mailed upon request.

Assessment of Economic Development Issues, Trends and Opportunities

The assessment of economic development issues, trends, and opportunities begins with a review of the future of employment in Decatur.

Table 3.10 – Decatur Employment by Sector 2000 to 2030

Year	2000	2010	2020	2030
Construction	292	227	292	362
Manufacturing	366	402	490	575
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	539	778	1,021	1,234
Wholesale Trade	118	41	27	27
Retail	973	1,279	1,859	2,571
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	538	189	107	91
Services	5,674	6,406	6,913	7,313
Government	3,579	3,590	3,777	4,031
Totals:	12,079	12,912	14,486	16,204

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

Table 3.11 – Increase or Decrease in Employment by Sector 2000-2030

Year	2000-2010	2010-2020	2000-2030
Construction	-65	65	70
Manufacturing	36	88	85
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	239	243	213
Wholesale Trade	-77	-14	0
Retail	306	580	712
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	-349	-82	-16
Services	732	507	400
Government	11	187	254

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

The future of employment in Decatur over the next 25 years is marked by forecasts for large increases in services employment. The result will be an increase of 1,639 jobs from 5,674 jobs to 7,313 jobs by 2030. Growth in office needs for two major service employers, Emory University and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is expected during the 20 year planning period of the comprehensive plan.

For retail trade employment, the result will be an increase of 1,598 jobs from 973 jobs to 2,571 jobs by 2030. The 30-year forecast also calls for large decreases in the total number for wholesale trade jobs resulting in a loss of 91 jobs by 2030. For finance, insurance, and real estate employment, the City of Decatur is expected to lose 447 jobs by 2030. It is important to note that in 2030, forecasts indicate that 70% of all jobs (11,344) will be in the government or services sectors.

For the 13-county Atlanta Region, 2030 employment forecasts are roughly similar to forecasts for Decatur. The largest employment increases will be in the trade employment (basic wholesale trade, local wholesale trade, retail trade) and services employment (health, legal, educational, etc). As stated previously, these increases are also expected in Decatur with the exception of employment losses in wholesale trade. A second difference between the 2030 regional forecast and the 2030 Decatur forecast concerns employment in the area of finance, insurance and real estate employment (FIRE). Where the regional

forecast indicates modest increases, the forecast for Decatur indicates employment losses.

Points of Assessment

The City of Decatur recognizes that major employment growth will be in services and retail trade. The City should continue to accommodate these employers in order to maintain strength in these areas.

The City of Decatur recognizes the potential for employment losses in the area of wholesale trade and finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE). Unless recruiting addresses these forecasted losses, other communities will likely benefit from having more of these types of jobs than Decatur.

The City of Decatur has had considerable success in building a live-work-play environment across the city. In order to build on this goal, the City of Decatur recognizes that many residents would like to work in the City. To increase the availability of desirable employment for Decatur residents, the City of Decatur should tailor economic development activities and recruiting for specific employment areas.

Since the City of Decatur has had success in satellite offices in the downtown area, efforts should be maintained to capture future employment growth areas in the services sector. Some of this employment includes the type of work that is prevalent in the Clifton Road/Haygood Drive intersection of DeKalb County. Some of the most significant employers in the corridor include the American Cancer Society National Headquarters, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, Emory University Hospital, Emory Clinic, Veterans Administration Medical Center and Regional Office, and the Wesley Woods Center. Though Decatur already has a large share (60%) of management, professional, and related occupations, regional employment growth forecasts for 2030 show that health services, legal services, educational services, social services and membership organizations, and business and personal services employment areas are expected to be particularly strong. Continued recruiting and business development for employers in these areas could represent the type of employment that Decatur residents desire. Economic activities should focus on the current and anticipated needs of these employers as well as the locational advantages that Decatur might provide.

Economic Development Community Vision and Goals

Economic Development Community Vision

The economic development community vision is to promote business activity that reflects the diversity of the people, the "Live-Work-Play" environment of the City, and a strong desire for balance between large and small-scale business.

Economic Development Community Goals

Economic development community goals for Decatur reflect new desires for economic development and ongoing efforts that the community would like to continue.

- Continue marketing and public relations strategy designed to position Decatur as an active “Live, Work, Play” community in an urban setting with small town roots.
- To encourage the City and the Downtown Development Authority to continuously update an annual work program of activities.
- Promote existing small businesses throughout the City.
- Encourage mid-rise residential development on commercially-zoned properties in downtown Decatur.
- Cultivate a wide variety of retail in the downtown area by encouraging and recruiting both small locally owned businesses and larger nationally recognized businesses.
- Continue to market downtown Decatur as an ideal office location especially for satellite office needs from the Clifton Corridor.
- Sustain the Downtown Development Authority and its work program in the following areas: general development, the Oakhurst area activities, the Avondale LCI area activities, business retention, and business recruiting.

HOUSING

The City of Decatur has a vibrant residential life and a diverse stock of available housing opportunities. Since its first housing boom when the trolley car system connected Decatur to downtown Atlanta, the City of Decatur has first and foremost been a residential community. As such, much has been invested in housing.

The purpose of this section is to inventory existing housing and to provide an assessment of housing conditions, occupancy, and affordability. The housing element also provides an opportunity to assess the adequacy and suitability of housing for the current and future population. The housing element consists of three main sections: inventory of existing conditions, assessment of current and future housing needs, and a housing community vision and associated goals.

Inventory of Existing Conditions

The inventory of existing conditions consists of several different housing unit criteria including housing types, composition, condition, age, ownership/rental status, seasonal housing, and cost. The inventory also includes an assessment of how housing costs affect households.

Types of Housing Units

In the years between 1980 and 2000, Decatur added 8% more housing or 632 housing units. The amount of housing by units and percentage were lower than surrounding communities. For example, DeKalb County added 13% more housing units and Gwinnett County added 52%, which is not surprising given DeKalb County's earlier build-out history.

During the 20 years from 1980 to 2000, Decatur experienced a decrease in the share of multifamily housing units as compared to single-family units. In 1980, 45% of housing was multifamily and 55% of the housing was single family. Over the 20-year period, the balance shifted to 37% multifamily housing and 63% single-family housing. A contributing factor to the increase includes marginal infill opportunities, which were exploited between 1995 and 1999. During this time, the City of Decatur reported 219 new single-family dwellings. A second contributing factor was a decrease in demand for rental housing; occupied rental housing decreased by 285 units between 1990 and 2000.

Since the 2000 census, the balance of multifamily housing and single-family housing has shifted again. Due to the City's development and land use policies for downtown development, significant increases in development of townhouse and multifamily dwelling units have taken place since 2000. The City of Decatur reported that 93 townhouse developments and 417 multifamily housing units have been added. As the City continues to encourage and attract downtown residential development, the share of non-single family dwelling units is likely to

increase. The City of Decatur estimates an increase in 523 units by the end of 2005 and up to 410 additional units in the near future from possible mid-rise developments (Clairmont Avenue and East College Avenue) and several townhouse developments (Church Street, Scott Boulevard, South McDonough, and Lenore Street).

The following tables present housing units in Decatur by type between 1980 and 2000 by number of units and percentage of the total.

Table 4.1 – Types of Housing Units
City of Decatur 1980 to 2000

Year	1980	1990	2000
Single Units (detached)	4,003	4,284	4,794
Single Units (attached)	294	554	603
Double Units	613	476	313
3 to 9 Units	1,289	1,449	1,403
10 to 19 Units	651	513	461
20 to 49 Units	300	198	200
50 or more Units	731	661	731
Mobile Home or Trailer	0	1	8
All Other	0	94	0
Total Housing Units	7,881	8,230	8,513

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Table 4.2 – Types of Housing Units by Percentage
City of Decatur 1980 to 2000

Year	1980	1990	2000
Single Units (detached)	50.8%	52.1%	56.3%
Single Units (attached)	3.7%	6.7%	7.1%
Double Units	7.8%	5.8%	3.7%
3 to 9 Units	16.4%	17.6%	16.5%
10 to 19 Units	8.3%	6.2%	5.4%
20 to 49 Units	3.8%	2.4%	2.3%
50 or more Units	9.3%	8.0%	8.6%
Mobile Home or Trailer	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
All Other	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Age and Condition of Housing

As a well-established community, it is not surprising that Decatur has a large number of older dwelling units. As Table 4.3 indicates, nearly 1/3 of the housing stock was constructed in 1939 or earlier. A 2000 comparison between the City of Decatur, the metropolitan area, and the State of Georgia demonstrated that the share of houses in the 45-65 age range is much greater in Decatur at 32% than the metropolitan area and the state at 10% and 13% respectively.

Table 4.3 – Housing Construction by Era for Decatur Compared with the State of Georgia and the Metropolitan Area (as of 2000)

Jurisdiction	Decatur		Metro Atlanta		Georgia	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
1999-March 2000	73	0.90	72,090	4.50	130,695	4.00
1995-1998	129	1.50	221,325	13.90	413,557	12.60
1990-1994	174	2.00	196,675	12.40	370,878	11.30
1980-1989	726	8.50	391,440	24.60	721,174	22.00
1970-1979	1,203	14.10	286,397	18.00	608,926	18.60
1960-1969	1,027	12.10	190,805	12.00	416,047	12.70
1940-1959	2,779	32.60	163,899	10.30	427,488	13.00
1939 or earlier	2,402	28.20	66,937	4.20	192,972	5.90

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another consideration of the comprehensive plan is age and condition of housing. Despite the age of housing in Decatur, more than 99% of all housing units in Decatur had complete plumbing and kitchen facilities in 2000.

Finally, as population and median housing costs increased, vacancy in all types of housing units decreased. In 1990, 8% of all units were vacant and the vacancy rate decreased to 5% by 2000. The vacancy rate was comparable in 2000 to the metropolitan area (5.3%), but much lower than the State of Georgia as a whole (8.4%). In addition, it is interesting to note that 89% of all renter-occupied housing units were built prior to 1979, making the rental housing stock relatively old.

Owner and Renter Units

Consideration of the amount of housing that is owned versus rented is also part of the housing inventory because it provides a snapshot of housing options and affordability. As in other aspects of Decatur housing, stability is a primary characteristic of the owner and renter balance. In 2000, 58% of housing units were owner-occupied in Decatur. In the twenty (20) years from 1980 to 2000, the prevalence of owner-occupied housing has increased only slightly from 54% to 58%.

Table 4.4 – Owned Units and Rented Units in Decatur 1980 to 2000

Year	1980	1990	2000
Ownership (units)	3,869	4,011	4,706
Renting (units)	3,294	3,606	3,345

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
City of Decatur

Decatur housing occupancy by tenure can also be compared through an owner to renter ratio. The ratio is determined by dividing the number of owners by the number of renters. The higher the resulting number (ratio), the more owners there are in a community as compared to renters. Decatur has consistently held a lower ratio of owners to renters than the State of Georgia. Census information from 2000 indicated a slight increase in the ratio from 1.1 in 1990 to 1.4. In 2000, the DeKalb County ratio was 1.4, the metropolitan area ratio was 2.0, and the State of Georgia ratio was 2.1.

In addition to other issues, seasonal units are not a significant factor in the inventory of housing in Decatur; only 24 units or 0.3% of all housing were reported to be seasonal units in the 2000 census. Metropolitan area seasonal housing (0.4%) is roughly the same as Decatur.

Cost of Housing

In 1990, Decatur median housing costs were slightly higher than DeKalb County and comparable to other communities in the area. Since then, housing costs in the City have increased dramatically. By 2000, the median housing cost in Decatur increased to \$220,400. This amount is more than double than the median amount in 1990 (\$95,300) and \$85,300 more than the DeKalb County median housing cost.

In 2000, housing costs ranged from \$35,000 to \$749,999. Despite the wide range of housing, 58% of housing had reached a level of \$200,000 or more by 2000. Just 10 years prior, only 6% had values in excess of \$200,000. Specifically, over 20% (880 housing units) were in the range of \$200,000 to \$249,999. Another 18% of the housing units (758) were in the range of \$250,000 to \$299,000. At the highest housing levels, 14% were greater than \$300,000 in value. For those who owned housing property in 2000, the median monthly mortgage was \$1,325.

Table 4.5 – Housing Value in 2000
City of Decatur

	Housing Units	Percentage of Housing Stock
Less than \$100,000	331	8%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	549	13%
\$150,000 to \$200,000	870	21%
\$200,000 or greater	2,468	58.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

For those who rented housing in 2000, the median rent was \$597. Though the median monthly rent rose 36% from \$439 in 1990, the amount was slightly less than the median monthly rent at the metropolitan area level of \$613, and considerably less than the State of Georgia median level of \$746.

Table 4.6 – Median Housing Value and Rents 1990 to 2000
City of Decatur

Year	1980	1990	2000
Single Family Median	\$37,800	\$95,300	\$220,400
Contract Rents	\$167	\$439	\$597

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
City of Decatur

Regarding affordability, the median household income for Decatur was \$47,395 and average per capita income was \$29,363. Even though these incomes increased 77% and 83% respectively since 1990, the median housing cost increase of 131% has greatly exceeded these income increases. In addition, the 2000 census demonstrated that 7% of families lived below the poverty level and 11.7% of individuals lived below the poverty level. For these reasons, affordability has become a critical issue especially as residents have expressed a desire for increasing diversity and affordability for all income levels across Decatur.

In order to address these needs, the City administers a limited program of housing assistance and the Decatur Housing Authority provides public housing and programs for the residents with the most need.

City of Decatur Activities

Housing is addressed through the City directly and through the Decatur Housing Authority. The City of Decatur addresses affordability challenges through programs for property tax reduction for senior citizens and benefits for qualified residents living in their homes including: a \$10,000 standard homestead exemption, an additional \$1,000 homestead exemption for those aged 65, an additional \$5,000 homestead exemption for those aged 62 with no more than \$8,000 year income, an additional \$8,000 homestead exemption for those aged 65 with no more than \$12,000 per year income, no school tax due for those 80 years old with no more than \$40,000 per year income, and tax abatement provisions allow qualified property owners to defer annual property taxes until their home is sold.

Since the last update of the comprehensive plan, the City has recognized that affordability must be addressed through the development process as well. For this reason, the City of Decatur also utilizes a development incentive for affordable housing. In 2004, the City of Decatur Commission approved a life cycle ordinance which enables the City to negotiate with developers in order to deliver guaranteed affordable units in exchange for density bonuses. Through the use of this ordinance, the City has been successful in guaranteeing some affordable housing units through the development process. Since the ordinance was approved in 2004, the City has been able to secure affordable housing through two (2) developments. The developer of the Talley Street Lofts received a 20% density bonus from 75 to 90 dwellings with a minimum of 11 units guaranteed as "lifecycle dwelling" units. The developer of 201 West Ponce received a 20% density bonus from 135 to 162 dwellings with a minimum of 20 units guaranteed as affordable "lifecycle dwelling" units.

Decatur Housing Authority

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) administers programs in four main areas: assisted rental, affordable rental, homeownership, and compliance monitoring. The DHA assisted rental program involves housing subsidies for low-income residents. The program consists of the following: 293 public housing units (293 units), Public Housing Section 8 Vouchers (524 families), Section 8 Owned units (112 units), Contract Administration for privately owned subsidized housing (169 units), and Section 8 Portability services for families that have come from other Section 8 locations.

The DHA also administers an affordable, multiple family rental program for units at Spring Pointe in South Decatur (66 units) and for the Columbia Park development (approximately 266 units expected in 2005). The Columbia Park development will consist of both rental units and condominium units. The rental units will consist of 45% affordable units and 55% market rate units. The condominium units will be 15% affordable units and 85% market rate units.

The DHA homeownership program involves housing development. The program consists of the following: Commerce Place Townhouses (13 units), Commodore Square Townhouses (7 units) and Village at Oakhurst (10 single family units) in 2000. Additionally, the Talley Street Condominiums (90 units) are expected in 2005 and will include 11 affordable (life cycle) units.

The DHA also conducts compliance monitoring for U.S. Housing and Urban Development regulations for approximately 100 units in Decatur. The DHA provides this service on a contract basis as part of a statewide organization.

The DHA has experienced recent funding reductions from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Authority reported that funding for the subsidized assistance program by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has provided only 89% of the total Authority funding request for the subsidized assistance program in 2005. In 2003 and 2004 the HUD funding percentages were also lower than the requested funding amounts at 96% and 97% respectively.

Cost Burden Analysis

In the analysis of housing affordability, one benchmark that is routinely utilized is cost burden. Under the definition of cost burden, it is understood that owner and renter households are cost burdened if the owner or renter pays 30% or more of their income on housing. A second benchmark is severe cost burden where an owner or renter pays 50% or more of their income on housing. The background for this type of analysis is income and housing cost.

A recent analysis of cost burden for Decatur was provided by the Georgia Institute of Technology, City and Regional Planning Program in the fall of 2004. The analysis was conducted by the program using 2001 housing data for the City of Decatur.

The 2001 cost burden analysis demonstrated that a number of Decatur residents are cost burdened and severely cost burdened. The results of the analysis revealed that 1,706 owners and/or renters were cost burdened in 2001. Of those residents who were cost burdened, 61% or 1,038 were renters.

For those who were severely cost burdened, the results of the analysis revealed that 731 owners and/or renters were severely cost burdened in 2001. Of those residents who were cost burdened, 65% or 477 residents were renters. The following table provides cost burden and severe cost burden information for both renters and owners.

Table 4.7 – 2001 Cost Burdened Residents by Tenure

Tenant Type	2000 Owners	2000 Renters
Cost Burdened Residents (30% of income for housing)	668	1,038
Severely Cost Burdened Residents (50% of income for housing)	254	477

Source: Georgia Institute of Technology, 2004

The location of the City and its excellent transportation facilities may offset some of the burdens of housing costs.

Housing and Community Characteristics

Currently, housing in Decatur is generally characterized by older stable single-family residential areas and a growing multifamily and townhouse housing stock in downtown and surrounding areas. As stated in the Population chapter, the City of Decatur will need to address increases in both population and households over the 20-year planning period. As the tables indicate below, forecasts anticipate an increase of 5,356 persons or 29% by 2025. Regional forecasts also indicate that Decatur will likely experience an increase of 2,674 households or 32% by 2025.

Table 4.8 – City of Decatur Forecasted Population Trends

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025
Persons	18,802	18,911	19,020	19,129	19,238	20,586	21,934	24,049

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

Table 4.9 – Forecasted Households, City of Decatur 2005-2025

Year	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Households	8,330	8,542	9,271	10,000	11,004
Avg. HH Size	2.11	2.09	2.07	2.04	2.03

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, City of Decatur

It is interesting to note that by 2025, average household size is anticipated to decline 4% and the population is expected to be generally older. The household and age demographic forecast is based on expected decreases in the number of

residents between the ages of 0-24 and increases in number of residents between the ages of 34-54. The population of residents 65 years and older is expected to be stable.

The City of Decatur has considered these forecasts and has prepared a strategy for accommodating future growth. Demographic forecasts are compatible with the City's goals and policies for housing development because decreasing household size is consistent with high and medium density dwellings. Current and future special housing needs in Decatur are expected for lower income residents, retail industry residents who wish to work and live in Decatur, and senior citizens who wish to remain in Decatur for their retirement.

Note that other housing related community characteristics such as age, income, and commuting patterns are included in the population element section and the economic development element section. The housing element continues with the assessment portion of the section.

Assessment of Current and Future Housing Needs

The following assessment responds to the inventory of existing conditions and community preferences. Though housing is generally adequate and suitable for current and future needs, the inventory presents several issues which may be critical for long term housing adequacy. These issues involve housing affordability, housing stock, public housing funding, and housing availability.

Housing Affordability

The community has recognized the increasing challenge of affordability in Decatur. As stated previously, more than 2,400 residents experience some level of cost burden in meeting their housing needs. Since the community has expressed concern for affordability for all income levels and all stages of life, the City will continue to fund housing assistance programs, support the Decatur Housing Authority, and attempt to achieve affordable housing through density bonuses. Additional efforts in this area may include new tax relief specifically for the lower and middle income residents, particularly senior citizens and lower income service industry employees, and education about options for those who would like to sell their home but remain in the City.

Housing Stock

Though Decatur has an older housing stock relative to other area communities, the housing stock in the City is generally excellent. The City of Decatur has witnessed extensive renovation by individual homeowners since the last comprehensive plan. Individual renovation, expansion, and infill development have been assets to the community as well as issues of concern to the City. While renovation maintains the quality of the single-family neighborhoods, the City also recognizes that regulations and/or guidelines are necessary to maintain the character of the City's neighborhoods. Specifically, such regulations would

address issues related to scale, quality, and style of complete redevelopment of single-family properties, i.e. tear downs, new infill development on vacant parcels, and expansions of existing homes.

In addition, the Decatur Housing Authority reported that the housing stock under the Authority is generally in good condition. However, the oldest units among public housing stock dates to 1941. For this reason, general maintenance is a significant factor. The older housing stock also presents challenges due to outdated design. These challenges are apparent in the lack of closet space or size of rooms.

Public Housing Funding

The Housing Authority is faced with greater maintenance challenges due to the age of housing and the ongoing need to provide for severely cost burdened residents. For this reason, reduction in HUD funding is a critical issue for the Authority and additional funding sources to maintain current and future level of service may be necessary.

Housing Availability

By 2025, the population of Decatur is expected to grow by approximately 5,000 people. As depicted on the Future Land Use map, high-density residential and commercial development is slated for the downtown central business core. Medium density residential corridors have been identified along Clairmont Avenue, Church Street, Scott Boulevard, and East College Avenue. In addition, the community has underscored a strong preference to maintain existing single-family neighborhoods at current density levels (6.57 people per acre across the City). Most importantly, developable land is nearly 100% built-out throughout the City. If land use policies change, then anticipated residential growth may occur in areas outside of the downtown area. Otherwise, the possibility of accommodating 29% population growth and 32% household growth by 2025 will depend on planned redevelopment of existing underutilized properties predominantly located in downtown Decatur and nearby areas.

These priority issues, including other topics included in the assessment of current and future needs, form the basis for the housing community vision and goals in the following section.

Housing Community Vision and Goals

Housing Community Vision

In 2005, the Housing Community Vision reflects desires and concerns in three (3) main areas. First, the City envisions affordable housing for all levels of the Decatur workforce and affordable housing for residents in all stages of life with emphasis on options for senior citizens. Secondly, the City envisions maintenance and renovation of single family housing which is consistent with the character and scale of existing stable single-family neighborhoods. Third, the

City envisions additional well-planned multifamily and townhouse development in an active downtown.

Goals for Housing

Affordability

- Identify additional property tax relief for senior citizens, particularly those with low incomes.
- Develop housing programs tailored to senior citizens including information resources about options and enhanced life cycle housing options.
- Create affordable housing opportunities to insure that all those who work in the community have a viable choice or option to live in the community.
- Consider accessory housing units by revising the zoning ordinance.
- Consider incentives to property owners for providing rent to own lease options.
- Consider the implications for the mix of available housing options when existing rental units are converted to condominiums.
- Support the activities of the Decatur Housing Authority in meeting the housing needs of Decatur's lower income residents and organize support for a restoration of full Department of Housing and Urban Development funding of the Decatur Housing Authority.

Community Character

- Revise the zoning ordinance in order to ensure additions, renovations, and rebuilding activities are consistent with the existing stable single-family neighborhoods.
- Promote new housing types through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Encourage the preservation and/or the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

Supply of Housing

- Encourage higher density residential development at select locations in downtown Decatur.

- Enhance the City's existing supply of housing by promoting conservation practices, supporting rehabilitation programs, and encouraging the replacement of dilapidated structures.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources

The natural environment places certain opportunities and constraints on the way land is used. Factors such as soil characteristics, topography and flooding frequency affect where development can safely and feasibly occur. Other areas, such as stream buffers, are particularly vulnerable to developmental impact and must receive appropriate measures of protection. In this section, Decatur's natural features and environmentally sensitive areas are described and discussed.

Natural Features

Topography, Physiography and Drainage

The City of Decatur lies entirely within Georgia's Piedmont Province. Topography in the City consists mostly of very gently sloping and gently sloping soils on broad to narrow ridgetops, and some small areas of steeper sloping soils on hillsides adjacent to small drainageways. The ridgetops commonly are smooth and convex and the hillsides commonly are irregular. Nearly level land is found along the various tributaries of Peachtree Creek and the South River. The flood plains are generally narrow.

Decatur is bisected by a major east-west ridgeline that generally follows the CSX Railroad corridor. This ridgeline forms the boundary between the Chattahoochee River Basin and the South River Basin. Peavine Creek and the South Fork of Peachtree Creek drain the northern half of the City and Shoal Creek and Sugar Creek drain the southern half. Rain that falls in the northern half of Decatur eventually flows into the Gulf of Mexico and rain that falls south of the Georgia Railroad eventually enters the Atlantic Ocean.

Soils

In general, most of the land within Decatur falls within one of the three soil groupings described below.

- Cecil: Urban land – These are deep, well-drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and clay subsoil. These soils are very gently sloping or gently sloping and are typically found along ridgetops. Slope ranges from 2 to 10 percent.
- Pacolet: Urban land – These are deep, well drained soils that also have a loamy surface layer and clayey subsoil. These soils have steeper slopes than do Cecil soils and are typically found on hillsides. Slope ranges from 10 to 25 percent.
- Urban land – These very gently sloping to strongly sloping urban land

areas are found on both ridgetops and hillsides associated with drainageways and flood plains. Slope ranges from 1 to 25 percent.

The soils in the urban land areas have typically been modified by cutting, filling, shaping, and smoothing. Most soil areas designated as urban land areas contain higher density uses such as commercial centers, schools, parking lots, and housing developments.

Generally, the soils found within the City of Decatur are very suitable for the type of development that Decatur has experienced in the past and the limited amount of development expected to occur during the planning period. While there are some isolated areas of steep slopes within the City, such areas are already developed and no special needs are required at this time.

Environmentally Sensitive and Ecologically Significant Areas

The natural environment includes areas and resources which are vulnerable to the impacts of development and which require protection by the community. The conservation of environmentally sensitive and ecologically significant resources is becoming increasingly important, as their values to communities become better understood. In recognizing the importance of land and water resources, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has developed minimum standards for local governments to follow for the protection of water supply watersheds, wetlands and groundwater recharge areas. Additionally, Decatur must address the value and protection of other vital and fragile resources such as floodplains. These are discussed in the sections which follow. Other major categories of naturally or ecologically significant areas, including prime agricultural and forest land, major plant and animal habitats, protected mountain and river corridors, major parks and recreation areas, and significant scenic views and sites, are not found within the City of Decatur and are consequently not addressed in this plan.

Water Supply Watersheds

Water supply watersheds are defined by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as the areas of land upstream of a public drinking water intake.

In the case of the City of Decatur, the area north of the CSX Railroad drains into the Chattahoochee River via Peachtree Creek at a point below both the DeKalb County and City of Atlanta water intakes, and the area south of the CSX Railroad drains to the South River which is not used as a water supply source. Thus, the City is not required to develop water supply watershed protection regulations.

Wetlands

Federal law defines freshwater wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands

generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Under natural conditions, wetlands help to maintain and enhance water quality by filtering out sediments and associated non-point source pollutants from adjacent land uses. They also store water, thereby stabilizing dry weather stream flows and flood hazards. In addition, wetlands serve important functions as fish, wildlife and plant habitats.

The U.S. Department of the Interior, as part of its National Wetlands Inventory, has published a Wetlands Map for Northeast Atlanta (1990) which includes the City of Decatur. The Wetlands Map identifies only one wetland area located within the City of Decatur – a small pond located in the middle of Decatur Cemetery.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 prohibits the discharge of dredge or fill materials into the water bodies or wetlands of the United States unless a permit is granted. Because Decatur's only wetland is located in the center of a cemetery, the use of which is not likely to change, it is very unlikely that the City will ever become involved in wetland development and permitting issues, and no specific regulatory actions are being recommended at this time.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Recharge is the process by which precipitation infiltrates soil and rock to add to the volume of water stored in pores and other openings within them. Aquifers are soils or rocks that yield water to wells. While recharge takes place throughout practically all of Georgia's land area, the rate or amount of recharge reaching underwater aquifers varies from place to place depending on geologic conditions.

The Georgia DNR has mapped all of the recharge areas in the State which are likely to have the greatest vulnerability to pollution of groundwater from surface and near surface activities of man. Because groundwater systems and the factors controlling recharge vary with geology, different approaches to identification are required for different areas of the State. Significant recharge areas in the crystalline rock terrain of northern Georgia are found in areas that have thick soils or *saprolite*--deposits of clay and disintegrating rock--and relatively low (less than eight percent) slopes. These conditions are present in the City of Decatur and the entire City has been identified by DNR as a possible significant recharge area in a map titled "Most Significant Ground-Water Recharge Areas of Georgia." In an accompanying map titled the "Georgia Pollution Susceptibility Map," the possible Decatur recharge area has been identified as having low pollution susceptibility.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs Criteria for Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas mandates a regulatory program for possible groundwater recharge areas with low pollution susceptibility that includes regulating: 1) waste disposal sites; 2) the handling of hazardous materials; and 3)

the installation of septic tanks. Decatur does not contain any sanitary landfills or any hazardous waste disposal sites, therefore is no need to develop regulations for the control of such facilities. However, there is a need to control the handling and storage of hazardous materials.

The Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is responsible for issuing permits for all new facilities that treat, store or dispose of hazardous wastes. Hazardous waste handling and storage operations must be conducted on an impermeable pad having a spill and leak collection system. The City of Decatur has a role to play in this permitting process. A possible local process for consideration by City of Decatur officials is described below.

- 1) Establish a mechanism for identifying new facilities that typically handle or store hazardous materials. This could be done by simply adding a question to the respective applications for building permits and new business licenses to determine if the new facility will handle or store hazardous wastes.

Types of facilities that typically handle or store hazardous wastes include:

- Building Cleaning and Maintenance Companies
 - Chemical Manufacturing
 - Cleaning Agent and Cosmetics Manufacturing
 - Construction Companies
 - Equipment Repair Shops
 - Freight Terminals/Railroads
 - Funeral Service Companies
 - Furniture Manufacturing
 - Laboratories
 - Laundries and Dry Cleaners
 - Metal Manufacturing
 - Printing Industries
 - Pesticide Application Companies
 - Plastics Manufacturing
 - Textiles and Leather Manufacturing
 - Vehicle Maintenance Facilities
 - Vocational School Shops
 - Wood Preserving and Refinishing
- 2) The City could then refer all prospective hazardous waste handlers to Georgia EPD for permitting.
 - 3) The issuance of City building permits or new business licenses for prospective hazardous waste storage and handling facilities could be withheld until either evidence of having obtained required EPD permits is provided, or a determination is made by the City that the proposed facility will not handle

or store hazardous wastes necessitating an EPD permit.

In addition to the process for the control of hazardous materials described above, the City of Decatur needs to also develop a program for requiring secondary containment for above ground chemical and petroleum storage tanks that have a capacity of at least 660 gallons. To satisfy State requirements, Decatur, as part of its development regulations, must require that all such new tanks have secondary containment for 110 percent of tank volume, or 110 percent of the volume of the largest tank in a cluster of tanks.

Finally, the City of Decatur must regulate the size of new single-family lots where septic tanks are utilized. Because sewer service is available throughout the City, it is a rare occurrence for a septic tank disposal system to be utilized for a new residence. However, when the use of a septic system is proposed, the City of Decatur can meet DNR's regulatory criteria by requiring the minimum lot size to be 49,500 square feet, which is 110 percent of the single-family minimum lot size for septic tank use contained in the DNR Manual for On-Site Sewerage Management Systems. The DeKalb County Health Department is presently responsible for permitting the use of septic tanks in the City of Decatur.

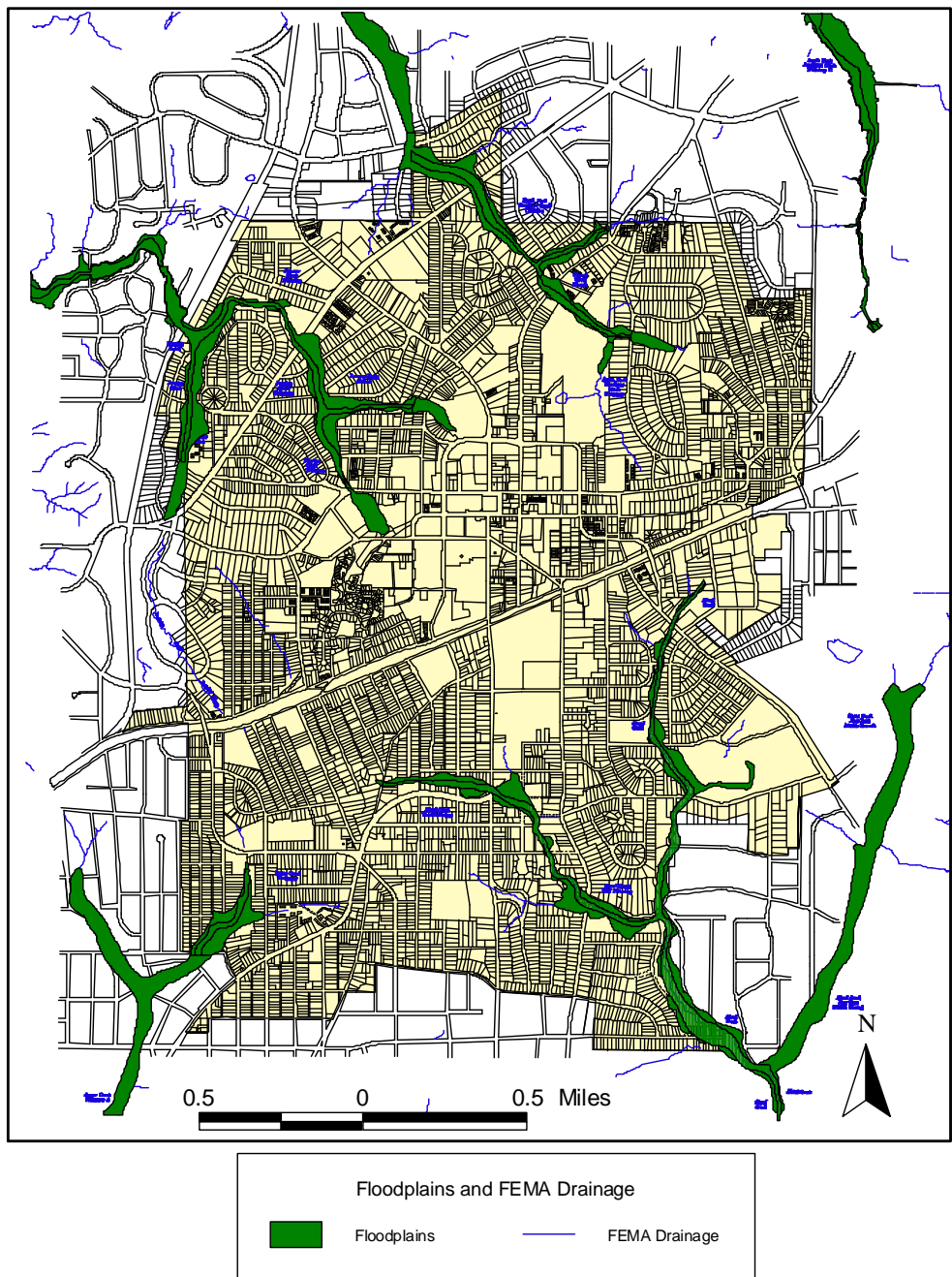
Floodplains

Flooding is the temporary covering of soil with water from overflowing streams and by runoff from adjacent slopes. Water standing for short periods after rainfalls is not considered flooding, nor is water in swamps.

Floodplains in their natural or relatively undisturbed state are important water resource areas. They serve three major purposes: natural water storage and conveyance, water quality maintenance, and groundwater recharge. Unsuitable development can destroy their value. For example, any fill material placed in the floodplain eliminates essential water storage capacity causing water elevation to rise and resulting in the flooding of previously dry land.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified and mapped areas in the City of Decatur which are prone to flooding in a Flood Insurance Rates Map (FIRM) dated May 7, 2001. This map identifies rather narrow floodplain areas located along Peavine Creek, the South Fork of Peachtree Creek, Shoal Creek, and Sugar Creek. Development in areas identified as being flood prone is already regulated by the City of Decatur by its Floodplain Management/Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Additionally, the City is an active participant in FEMA's Community Rating system which has resulted in lower flood insurance rates for property owners whose houses are located in flood hazard areas. No additional regulatory measures are recommended at this time.

Map 5.1 – Decatur Floodplains and FEMA Drainage Map



Assessment of Current and Future Needs

Information on natural features, such as topography and soils, is typically utilized in urban planning to guide development to areas where it is most suitable. In the case of the City of Decatur, which is already fully urbanized, there are no large undeveloped tracts in their natural state. Consequently, the emphasis in Decatur's planning program will be on protecting the natural environment through:

- 1) Continuing regulation of development in flood prone areas.
- 2) New regulatory controls of hazardous wastes and above ground petroleum and chemical storage tanks in order to protect seepage into possible groundwater recharge areas.

Historic Resources

Overview

As the first city in DeKalb County and one of the earliest in metro Atlanta, Decatur is home to some of the oldest buildings in the region with many of local or national significance. The old DeKalb County Courthouse serves as the focal point of the downtown with the adjoining square and bandstand used extensively for community festivals and special events. In the neighborhoods that surround the downtown, examples of notable architectural styles can be found with many homes dating from the early 1900s.

Historic Preservation Commission

Decatur recognizes its historical, cultural, and aesthetic heritage and the need to preserve its neighborhoods and commercial areas. In May of 1989 the Decatur City Commission created the Decatur Historic Preservation Task Force. Simultaneously, the City conducted a comprehensive historical and architectural survey to identify residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and rural resources, archaeological and cultural sites, as well as unique landscape features. The following section “Decatur’s Landmark Properties” details those resources currently eligible for national or local protection.

To effectively manage and protect the City’s resources, the Task Force recommended that a local program be implemented that would include enforceable regulations and a strong, on-going education program. The Decatur City Commission responded by adopting the ordinance creating the Decatur Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in May 1990. The responsibilities of the Commission include:

- **Inventory** – The HPC maintains an extensive inventory of the City’s historical and architectural resources and completes updates on a regular basis.
- **Community Awareness** – The HPC provides educational programs, publications, information and assistance about the City’s resources and how to preserve them. It also sponsors the annual Decatur Design Awards, which recognizes developments in the city that contribute to good design.
- **Local Historic Designation** – The HPC oversees the process of local designation. Local designation may be proposed by the City Commission, HPC, historical societies, neighborhood associations or property owners. The HPC is responsible for holding a public hearing. Any recommendations made by the HPC are considered by the City Commission, which enacts an ordinance designating the approved properties.

- **Project Review** – After the designation by the City Commission of an historic district or property, no material change in the exterior appearance of that property may be made unless the owner obtains a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC.

Decatur's Landmark Properties

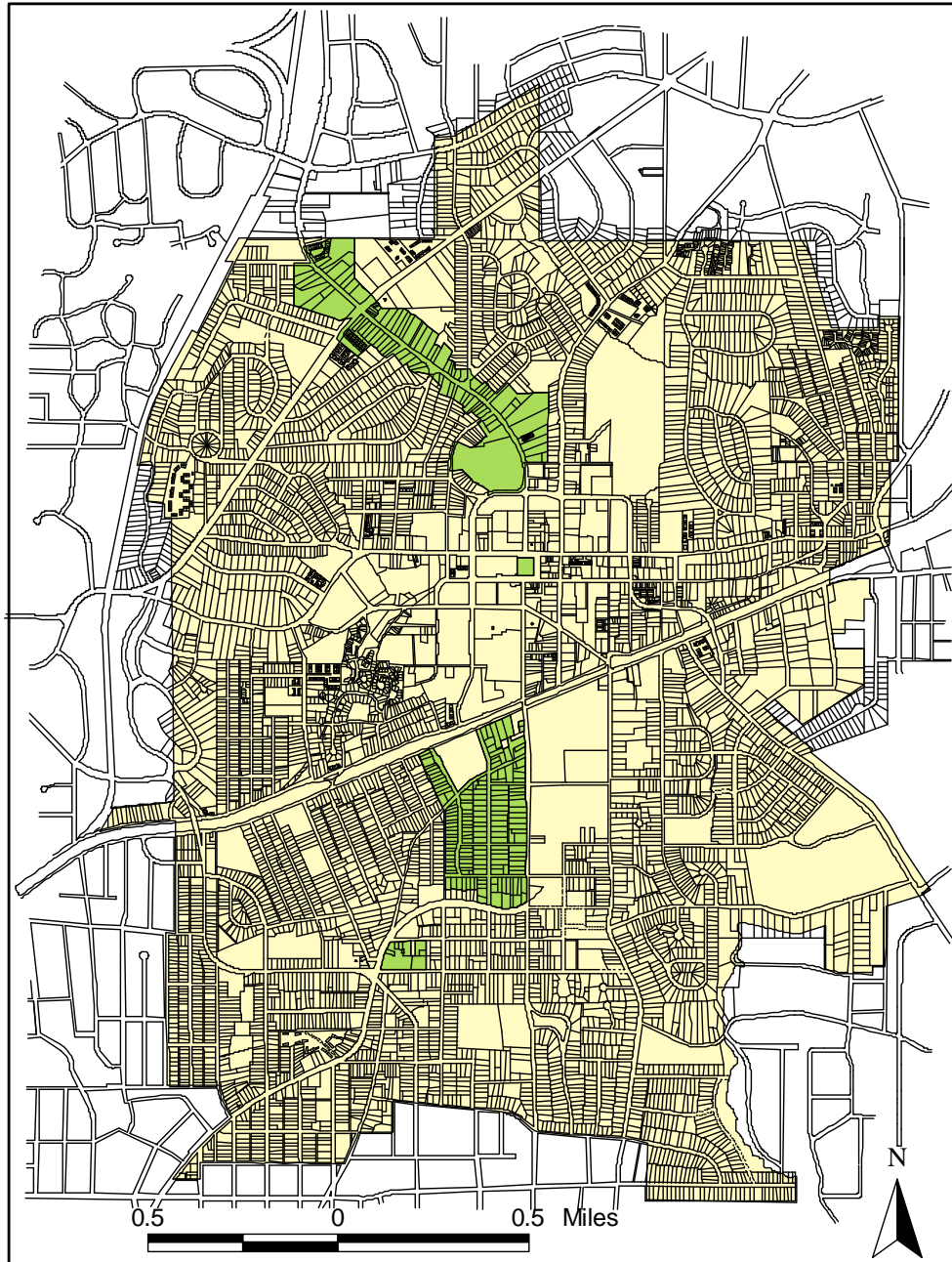
The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the National Register can include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. In evaluating properties for inclusion, such factors as age, historical, architectural, and cultural significance, and integrity of location, design and workmanship are considered. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, a division of the U.S. Department of the Interior. City of Decatur properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places include:

- Old DeKalb County Courthouse
101 E. Court Square
- Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children
321 W. Hill Street
- Pythagoras Masonic Temple
108 E. Ponce de Leon Avenue
- Swanton House
720 Swanton Way
- Mary Gay House
716 W. Trinity Place
- High House
Corner of N. Candler Street and Sycamore Street
- Decatur Cemetery
229 Bell Street
- South Candler Street/Agnes Scott College Historic District
Roughly bounded by E. College, S. McDonough, S. Candler, E. Hill and E. Davis Streets
- Agnes Lee Chapter House United Daughters of the Confederacy
120 Avery Street
- Blair-Rutland Building
215 Church Street
- Winnona Park Neighborhood
Roughly bounded by E. College Avenue, Avery Street, S. Columbia Drive, and Mimosa Drive
- Cora Beck Hampton Schoolhouse and Home
213 Hillyer Place
- United States Post Office
141 East Trinity Place
- A Lustron House
513 Drexel Avenue

A local historic district is a geographically designated area that contains buildings, structures, sites, objects, landscape features and works of art that have 1) special character, historic and/or aesthetic value or interest; 2) represent periods, styles or types of architecture typical of the history of the municipality, county, state or region; and 3) constitute a visibly perceptible section of the municipality or county. Properties in the districts must adhere to design guidelines and a design review process for changes to exterior features. Decatur has two such locally designated historic districts and two local landmarks:

- The M.A.K. Local Historic District
Named for the three main streets it encompasses (McDonough, Adams and Kings Highway), the MAK Local Historic District includes ten city blocks of varying sizes and is Decatur's first locally designated historic district.
- Clairemont Historic District
This district runs the length of Clairemont Avenue from Commerce Drive and Hunter Street in the south to Maediris Drive in the north.
- Old DeKalb County Courthouse
101 E. Court Square
- Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children
321 W. Hill Street

Map 5.2 – Decatur Historic Districts and Properties Map



Decatur Historic Districts and Properties
Historic Districts and Properties

The following properties are currently not included on either the National Register or in locally designated districts but are still considered significant for their historic and cultural relevance to the City:

- Decatur City Hall
509 N. McDonough Street
- Columbia Theological Seminary
701 Columbia Drive
- Fraser House
Corner of Church Street and Bell Street
- The Chapel at Decatur First United Methodist Church
Corner of Sycamore Street. and Commerce Drive
- Sharian, Inc.
368 W. Ponce de Leon Avenue
- Decatur Railroad Depot
301 E. Howard Street
- Avary-Fulton House
205 South Columbia Drive

Decatur Preservation Alliance

The Decatur Preservation Alliance is a nonprofit charitable organization that focuses on preserving Decatur's historic structures and green spaces. Incorporated in 2000, the DPA has over 200 members and has worked closely with the City on several projects such as the relocation and stabilization of the Decatur Depot and Fraser House, the establishment of a Preservation Corridor Committee and 2004 Preservation Corridor Master Plan (discussed under the Community Facilities Element), and the Decatur Cemetery tree-planting program.

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

The City of Decatur is considered to have a model historic preservation program. Throughout the twenty-year planning period, of this document, the City is committed to its dedication of the protection and preservation of its rich heritage.

Natural and Cultural Resources Vision and Goals

The Natural and Cultural Resources community vision is for the City of Decatur to conserve and protect the natural and historical environment that contributes to the City's unique character.

- Preserve and protect Decatur historic resources for the education and enjoyment of current and future City residents and visitors.
- Protect natural resources from development which would create significant negative environmental or economic impacts.
- Continue to plant 50 trees each year in the City.

- Preserve stream buffers and floodplains as permanent open space whenever feasible.
- Protect and improve air quality in the City of Decatur.
- Continue to promote compact land development that allows for walking and other non-vehicular transportation.
- Begin implementation of the Preservation Corridor Master Plan

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Public Safety Inventory & Assessment

Police

The Police Division currently employs 44 police officers, 8 dispatchers, 15 crossing guards, 10 communication personnel and 1 support technician providing 24 hours of complete coverage. The Department maintains a total of 22 patrol cars. The Department's headquarters is located at 420 West Trinity Place. The facility contains the Municipal Courtroom and two holding cells, but no permanent detention facilities. Suspects and prisoners are housed at the DeKalb County Jail. The Community Relations office, with one full-time specialist, is located in Oakhurst Village at 707-C East Lake Dr.

Police services in the City of Decatur are considered excellent and adequately staffed at this time. Immediate additions to the staff are not anticipated. In the future when potential additions are considered, increases will be proportional to population increases. Factors also considered when making staff changes are the number of calls for service, the type of crimes being perpetrated, and times of day service calls are received.

Fire Protection

The Decatur Fire Department has a staff of 40 and operates out of two fire stations. Station No. 1 is located at 230 East Trinity Place in downtown Decatur and Station No. 2 is located on West Hill Street in Oakhurst Village. The Department maintains four fire engines and a service truck unit.

Recently, the Fire Department received Georgia Emergency Management (GEMA) Homeland Security and Domestic Preparedness grants to fund the purchase of an Air and Light truck, a hazardous material trailer, decontamination and logistical support equipment for the trailer and a new vehicle to pull the trailer. The grant provides the city with a wealth of disaster response gear, including decontamination facilities, level B hazardous material suits, heaters, breathing apparatus, contamination monitors, stretchers, emergency lighting and more.

The Department places a strong emphasis on fire prevention and education and conducts classes for schools, high-rise residential homes, business groups, civic groups and child care providers.

The City of Decatur provides excellent fire protection service. The two stations provide excellent geographical coverage for the entire City.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) has established a system of fire protection ratings based upon a community's available fire suppression facilities. These ratings, ranging from 1 to 10, are used by insurance companies in calculating

homeowner insurance rates. The lower the ISO rating, the lower insurance rates are for homeowners. The City of Decatur has an excellent ISO rating of 2, one of the best in the State.

Emergency Medical Service

The City of Decatur does not provide emergency medical service other than emergency response, if needed, when City fire and police personnel are first on the scene of an accident. Rather, emergency medical service is provided within the City of Decatur by DeKalb County's Emergency Medical Service Division. Currently, DeKalb County EMS stations an EMS unit at Decatur Fire Station No. 1 on East Trinity Place.

Emergency medical service within the City of Decatur is considered to be excellent. The City intends to maintain its service delivery agreement with DeKalb County to provide EMS throughout the planning period.

Library Facilities Inventory and Assessment

The Decatur Library, which is located at 215 Sycamore Street in downtown Decatur, is the main branch of the DeKalb County Public Library System. The Decatur Library has approximately 53,000 square feet of usable floor area and is the largest library in the DeKalb County System. The library collection exceeds 100,000 volumes. The Decatur Library also serves as the DeKalb County Public Library's administrative headquarters and as the County's main reference library.

A major renovation of the Decatur Library was completed in 1992. Library facilities and services are considered to be excellent and far exceed minimum standards established by the American Library Association (ALA).

Educational Facilities Inventory & Assessment

Inventory

City Schools of Decatur (CSD) is the City's independent school system with a total system enrollment of about 2,400 students. The schools are staffed by more than 200 teachers, over 70% of whom have advanced degrees.

The City Schools of Decatur consists of three neighborhood elementary schools, a citywide academy for fourth and fifth graders, a middle school, and a high school. Profiles of each are listed below.

The Early Childhood Learning Center has been located on Scott Boulevard in the Westchester School building. It was completed in 1955 and newly renovated in 1999. The ECLC serves as the home of the City Schools of Decatur Pre-k and Even Start programs. Enrollment: 120

College Heights School is currently under extensive renovation. It is anticipated to open in 2006 as the new home of the citywide Pre-k and Even Start Programs. Through a partnership with the YMCA, a program for children ages 0-3 will also be available. (As of the date of this plan, the future use of the Westchester Elementary building is undetermined. However it is anticipated the facility will remain under the management of CSD.)

Clairemont Elementary School (K-3), built in 1936, is located within the Great Lakes neighborhood. The building was renovated in 2000 with classroom additions, a new media center, a technology lab and a completely refurbished 360-seat auditorium. Additional renovations are presently underway. Enrollment: 240

Oakhurst Elementary School (K-3) was built in 1915. It was renovated in 2002 with the addition of new classrooms, a new media center, and air conditioning. Enrollment: 226

Winnona Park Elementary School (K-3) is located in the Winnona Park neighborhood. The building was erected in 1923 and a renovation, completed in the fall of 2001, added new classrooms and air conditioning. Additional renovations are presently underway. Enrollment: 280

Glennwood 4/5 Academy (4-5) is the oldest school in the City of Decatur and one of the four oldest schools in DeKalb County still in operation today. It was recently renovated and opened for occupancy in August of 2003. Special care was given to preserve the historical integrity of the building while adding new classrooms, a new media center, air conditioning, and outfitting the entire building for use of technology. Enrollment: 300

Carl G. Renfroe Middle School (6-8) is the newest school building in the school district. It was built in 1972 to service students in grades 6-8. Enrollment: 589

Decatur High School (9-12) was established in 1912, but the current building was erected in 1965 and is located in the heart of the City of Decatur, walking distance from the Courthouse Square and MARTA. Enrollment: 712

No students are currently enrolled at Fifth Avenue Elementary School. As of the date of this plan, a future use for the building has not been determined. However it is anticipated the facility will remain under the management of CSD.

Decatur City Schools are well staffed. For the 2003-2004 school year, 225 teachers were employed. Of that number 76% held a Master's or higher graduate degree. The average student to teacher ratio was 10:1.

CSD recently completed its 2004 Strategic Plan. The planning process utilized an extensive stakeholder involvement effort resulting in five main goals:

- 1) Improve academic achievement by providing the highest quality instruction and ensuring consistently challenging "knowledge work" for every student in the system.
- 2) Close the achievement gap between black and white students according to state and national test criteria.
- 3) Develop a systemic approach to providing a challenging and quality educational experience for all students.
- 4) Improve fiscal responsibility while maintaining educational quality.
- 5) Strengthen the relationship with the community.

The 2004 Strategic Plan projects no significant near-term changes in school enrollment. Since 2000, enrollment has been in the 2,300-2,400 range and is predicted to remain stable for the next five years. This is consistent with population forecasts for the City discussed in the population element of this plan. Over the next 20 years forecasts for the City actually show a slight decrease in the 0-24 population by 15%.

In addition to the public school system, there are several private schools located within the City limits. The Lullwater School, St. Thomas More Parochial School, and Waldorf School, offer instruction for grades K – 8. The Friends School offers pre-K as well as K – 8. Academe of the Oaks is a private high school for 9 – 12 grades. Decatur Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church of Decatur, First Methodist Church of Decatur and the Phoenix School offer private pre-K instruction.

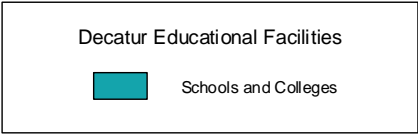
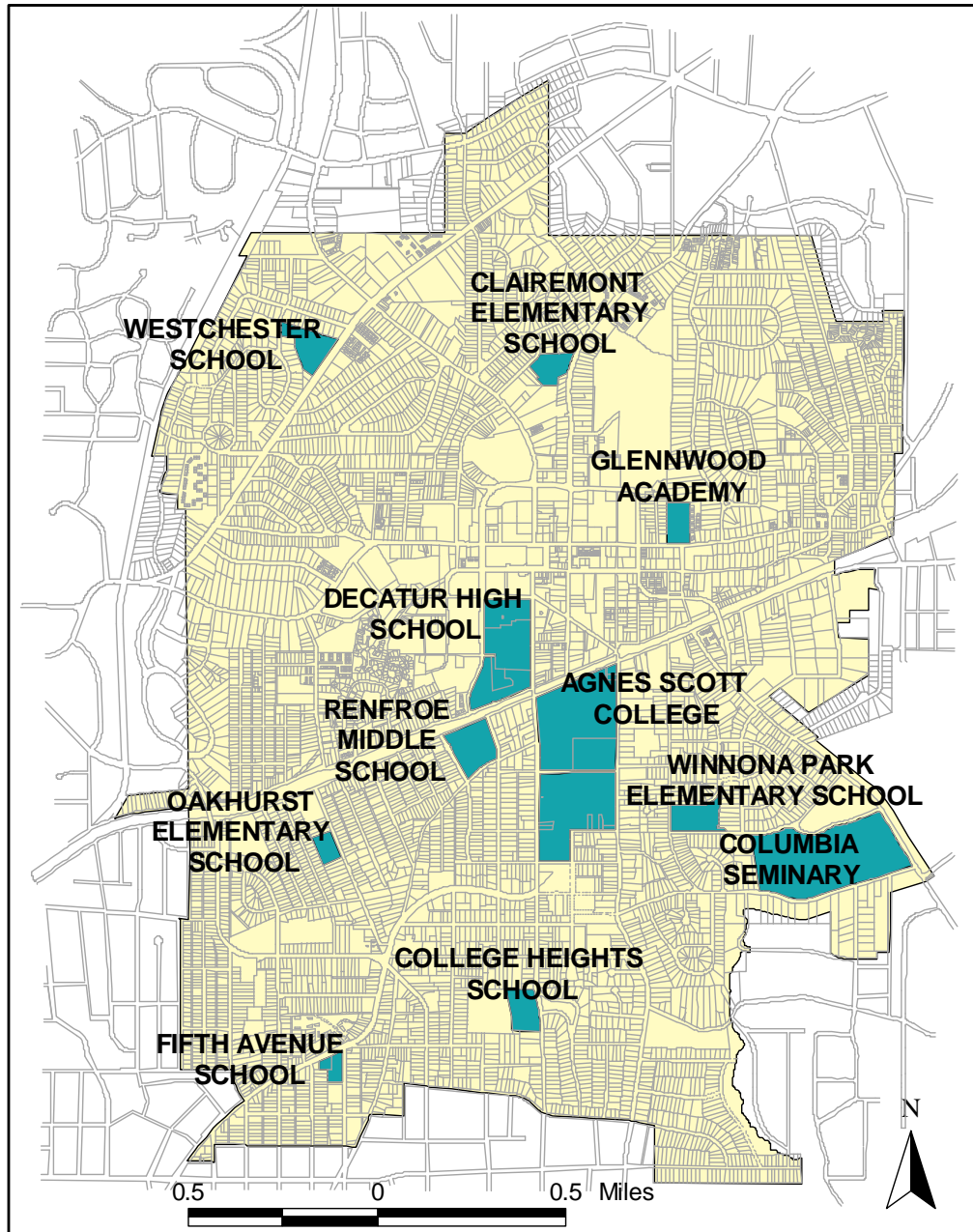
Higher Education

Decatur is home to Agnes Scott College, a private, nationally recognized liberal arts college for women. *U.S. News & World Report's* 2005 rankings place Agnes Scott among the Top 10 liberal arts colleges in the South (ranking No. 7) and 53rd overall among national liberal arts colleges. Founded in 1889, the college enrolls just over 1,000 students and employs 87 faculty members. The 100-acre campus is located along E. College Avenue and makes up portion of the South Candler/Agnes Scott College Historic District.

Columbia Theological Seminary is an educational institution of the Presbyterian Church. It was established in 1828 and offers five graduate degree programs. The seminary has an enrollment of 500 students and employs 36 faculty members. The 52-acre campus along Columbia Drive anchors the southeastern quadrant of the City.

Emory University is located a few miles west of the City, and DeVry University and Georgia Perimeter College are located to the east.

Map 6.1 – Decatur Educational Facilities Map



Assessment

Given the population projections for the City, Decatur City School system facilities are adequate for meeting local needs through the twenty year planning period. Potential issues that could arise stem from the relationship between the City and the School System over facility management.

The City of Decatur owns the facilities. CSD handles the management of the resources, including maintenance and needed improvements, hiring of teachers, etc. as long as the use of the facility remains educational. If the educational use lapses, the management of the facility reverts back to the City, which has the authority to sell the facility as surplus.

It was identified through the joint Commission planning session and public meetings that the quality of the school system is very important to the leadership and citizenry of Decatur. It was cited as one of the major reasons people choose to live in Decatur. The City is committed to working collaboratively with the CSD in maintaining a high level of quality education throughout the planning period.

Recreation Facilities Inventory & Assessment

Inventory

Within the City of Decatur, there are 14 city-owned parks equaling 56.5 acres. The parks range in size from less than half an acre up to 17 acres and offer such amenities as tennis and basketball courts, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, playgrounds, skateboard facilities, softball and soccer fields, and nature/walking trails. Table 6.1 provides a summary of these facilities.

In terms of passive open space, the City of Decatur operates the Historic Decatur Cemetery, which provides 43 acres in the heart of the City and shares the 8.5 acre Dearborn Park with DeKalb County. Also within the City limits is The Woodlands, a 7-acre nature preserve donated to the non-profit group, Decatur Preservation Alliance (DPA). In FY 2004, the City began providing a \$50,000 year/5 year grant to the DPA for master planning activities for the parcel. The City also owns a small lot adjacent to the Oakhurst Community Garden. For a nominal fee, the parcel is leased to the nonprofit group for environmental educational purposes.

The City Schools of Decatur's elementary, middle and high schools offer additional, but limited, recreational opportunities as well. The elementary schools provide playground and open space for the neighborhoods they are located in or adjacent to. The middle school and the high school are ideally situated in the City's downtown. The middle school offers open space and the high school has a football field.

Decatur's recreational programs are offered through the City's Recreation and Community Services Department. In addition to the 14 City-owned parks, the

Recreation Department operates two recreational centers located at W. Trinity Place and Sycamore Street. The Recreation Department offers year-round programs of team sports, athletics, classes and workshops for residents of all ages. The Recreation Department also works cooperatively with City Schools of Decatur in offering affordable after-school programs.

In addition to recreational facilities operated by either the City of Decatur Recreational Department or the City Schools of Decatur, there are several of privately owned and operated recreational facilities located within the City. These include facilities operated by the following entities:

- Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club
- St. Thomas More School
- Decatur-DeKalb Y.M.C.A.
- Venetian Community Pool
- Agnes Scott College
- Columbia Theological Seminary
- Decatur First Baptist Church
- First Christian Church
- First Decatur United Methodist Church

Table 6.1– City of Decatur Park Amenities

Facility	Size (Acres)	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Swimming Pool	Playground	Walking Trails	Picnic Pavilions	Special Amenity
Adair Park	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
Ebster Park	5	1	-	2	-	1	1	-	1	Community Center
Glenlake Park	17	1	1	1	5	1	1	-	1	
Hidden Cove Park	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Passive
McKoy Park	9	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	Concessions Amphitheater Skate Park
Mead Road Park	0.75	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	
Oakhurst Park	8	-	2	2	2	-	1		2	Concessions
Oakview Road Park	0.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Passive
Parkside Circle	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Passive
Roy Moss Garden	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Passive
Sycamore Park	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Passive
Scott Park	4	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	Recreation Center Community Garden
Waddell Park	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	Passive
Totals	56.5	2	4	7	11	2	7	3	8	

Source: City of Decatur

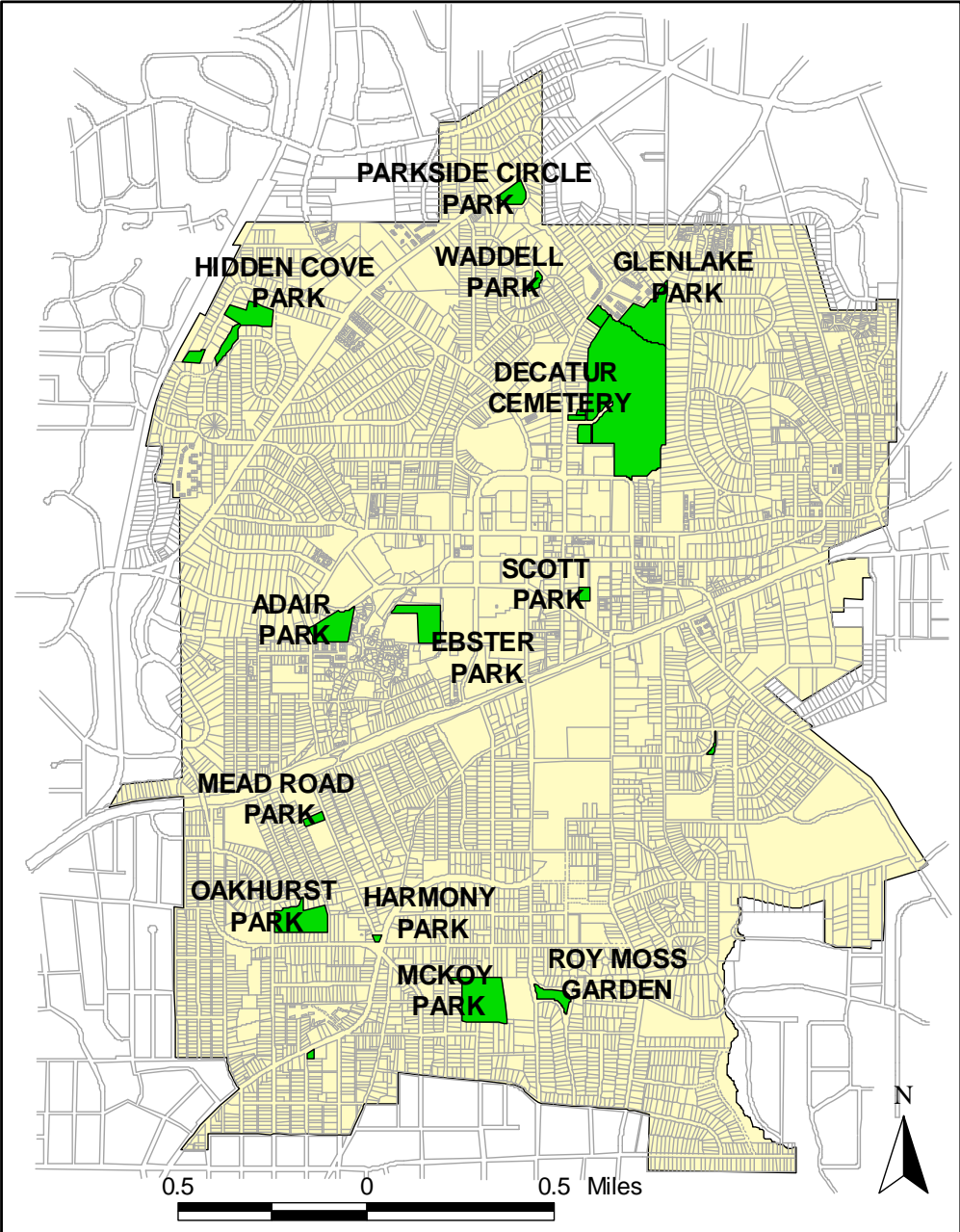
Programs, Commissions and Initiatives


From 2001-2004, the City purchased three undeveloped lots with funds from the Georgia Greenspace Program. The properties are located on Oakview Road, Glenn Circle and East Hill Street. All the lots will be used as passive open space. The Adams Street lot is currently being leased to the Oakhurst Community Garden. The lot at Glenn Circle is planned as a nature preserve.

The Decatur Greenspace Commission was established by City Ordinance in 2002. The Commission grew out of a recommendation from the Greenspace Task Force that met from 2001-2002. The Greenspace Commission is an advisory and advocacy group for greenspace protection and enhancement in the City. It is responsible for developing and implementing a greenspace preservation strategy and advising the City Commission on greenspace-related issues.

The Greenspace Task Force and Greenspace Commission were instrumental in the formation of a preservation corridor concept. This concept sought to establish a physical connection between north and south sections of the City and link the City's historical elements with areas of greenspace. In December 2004, the Decatur Preservation Corridor Master Plan was completed. The master plan process began with the original goal of the north-south corridor concept linking four major environmental resources – The Woodlands, Decatur Cemetery, Oakhurst Community Garden, and Dearborn Park. Through public input, the scope was expanded to include two more sites, Decatur Square and Oakhurst Business District, and opportunities for overall city-wide connectivity. The result is a plan that recommends a network of connectivity improvements such as neighborhood gateways, pedestrian and bicycle streetscapes, links to most major civic and park spaces and historic landmarks, and identification of potential preservation sites.

Map 6.2 – Decatur City Parks



Decatur City Parks	
	Decatur Parks

Assessment

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has been involved in developing standards for recreation, parks and open space for over 40 years. NRPA standards are the most widely used and accepted standards of their type. The standards help guide local governments design their own specific set of criteria.

The NRPA standards recommend a core system of parks with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. Based on the Census 2000 population of 18,147, the City should have a dedicated park acreage ranging from 114 to 191 acres. The existing park acreage for Decatur is 56.5 acres, a deficiency of 58 to 134 acres. The City of Decatur 2000 Strategic Master Plan identified an additional 128 acres of non-park related open space. This open space consists of land around public schools and other private recreational areas. Decatur Cemetery adds another 43 acres of passive open space.

Given the City is almost entirely built out, and considering the high cost of available land, it is highly unlikely that large tracts of land will be purchased by the City for additional dedicated park space. While communities ideally strive to meet acreage standards within public parks, the City is fortunate to have close working relationships with other public and private organizations in the community to provide additional recreational opportunities for residents.

To comprehensively address Decatur's recreational issues, the Citywide Comprehensive Athletic Facility Master Plan was completed in 2002. The master plan was initiated by an organization of seven community partners to identify critical needs of the community, opportunities for collaboration and necessary facility improvements to better meet the needs of Decatur citizens. The partners included City of Decatur, City Schools of Decatur, Decatur-DeKalb YMCA, Samuel Jones Boys and Girls Club, Columbia Theological Seminary, United Methodist Children's Home and Agnes Scott College.

Through extensive public involvement, research and assessment, the master plan resulted in a series of recommended improvements totaling \$17.7 million, to be implemented over a ten-year timeframe. The recommendations include the upgrade of park amenities, optimization of existing facilities and construction of new facilities. The plan also identifies opportunities for shared use agreements between the partners. Since the plan's completion, several projects have been initiated including the McCoy Park Skate-Park, citywide playground equipment replacement, utilization of the Boys and Girls Club pool by the YMCA and Decatur High School, and award of Community Development Block Grant for the development of a multi-purpose/soccer field at the Boys and Girls Club.

Throughout the twenty-year horizon of this plan, it will remain a challenge to significantly increase the City's dedicated park acreage through land acquisition.

However, the City remains committed to providing its residents with a variety of modern and safe recreational amenities through relationships with private and non-profit recreation sources. The City will continue to participate in the Georgia Greenspace Program and purchase appropriate properties as they and adequate funding become available. The City has also been active in pursuing funds from non-profit initiatives such as the Arthur Blank Family Foundation. The City is currently pursuing land acquisition opportunities adjacent to its portion of Dearborn Park with assistance from the Georgia State Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation grant.

Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Inventory & Assessment

Inventory

The entire City of Decatur is provided public water and sanitary sewer service by DeKalb County. The City of Decatur has no role in providing these services. All customer accounts are handled directly by the County.

The City of Decatur operates and maintains a citywide public storm drainage system comprised of over 2500 storm water sewer junction structures, 32 miles of connecting storm drain pipes, 12.6 miles of natural stream channels and approximately 4,000 linear feet of man-made open storm water channels. The City is a co-permittee with DeKalb County for a municipal storm water discharge permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.

Assessment

The following assessments regarding public water and sanitary sewer have been taken from the 2005 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan (DRAFT).

Water Treatment and Distribution

DeKalb County draws its water supply from the Chattahoochee River along with Gwinnett County, North Fulton County, and the Gainesville area. Currently DeKalb County is permitted to withdraw 140 million gallons per day (MGD) from the river at the intake point on Holcomb Bridge Road in Fulton County. There are six 35 MGD capacity pumps which remove water from the Chattahoochee River providing a maximum of 210 MGD to three raw water storage reservoirs. The newly constructed 43-acre reservoir No. 3 has a capacity of 324 MG and together with the 37.7-acre No.1 reservoir and the 28.8-acre No.2 reservoir, both under renovation, provide the County with a total capacity of one billion gallons which feed into the County's water treatment plant, the Scott Candler Filter Plant. This facility also includes 16 settling basins, 32 high rate storage filters, and a total capacity of 66.5 millions of gallons of treated water storage capacity. Approximately, 255 MGD can be delivered to the distribution system through service pumps. The County is currently in the process of constructing a new water production facility, which, when completed in 2005, will be able to process 150 MGD and has the capability of expanding to 200 MGD.

Plans are also underway to design a new raw water pump station for DeKalb County as well. In conjunction with the station improvements, the Water and Sewer Division will also install a new 96-inch pipeline from the river to the reservoirs on Peeler Road. This pipeline will parallel the other three existing water supply lines that are now in use. Within our planning window, this intake will provide water to a million customers in the metropolitan area. Anticipated cost for this project is \$45,000,000. These expansion projects should assist in providing ample water capacity for the next twenty years.

Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater Facilities

In total, there are approximately 254,000 sewer customers in DeKalb County. These customers are served by 2,000 miles of sewer pipeline. Because the county's drainage patterns rarely conform to political boundaries, the county has established a number of shared facilities and joint use agreements with adjacent municipalities and counties. There are two primary drainage basins in the County which are delineated to the north and south by the CSX Railroad.

Currently DeKalb County works in conjunction with the City of Atlanta and Fulton and Gwinnett Counties to provide wastewater treatment services to the portion of the county located north of the CSX Railroad east-west line. Sewage is sent to the R. M. Clayton Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) under a formal agreement with the City of Atlanta which has been in place since 1954. In accordance with this agreement, the County shares the cost of operation and maintenance of three Atlanta plants. The City of Atlanta's R.M. Clayton WWTP serves the areas of the Peachtree and Nancy Creek basins with a capacity of 122 MGD. Fulton County's Johns Creek Plant and Big Creek Plant serve the small portions of DeKalb County north of Mount Vernon, Tilly Mill and Peeler Roads. Gwinnett County's Jackson Creek Plants serve two small basins in the northeastern portion of DeKalb.

To the south of the railroad, sewage flows to Atlanta's Entrenchment Creek Plant and to DeKalb's Snapfinger and Pole Bridge Wastewater Treatment Plants. A small portion of southeast DeKalb is served by Atlanta's South River Treatment Plant. All of these plants including DeKalb's Pole Bridge and Snapfinger plants are Advanced Secondary Waste Treatment (ASWT) plants. In 2003, the Snapfinger plant operated at 71.72% capacity and the Pole Bridge plant operated at 36.19% capacity. Between these two plants, there is a total design capacity of 56 MGD.

Future Water and Sewage Capacity

A flow study completed in the 1980's showed that the biggest problem in DeKalb County's sewer and water system is deteriorating water lines and the need to replace old pipes which are substandard or made out of high maintenance materials. As a result, ongoing projects include surveying, inventorying, identifying and replacing old and undersized pipes. Other projects include maintaining and repainting interiors and exteriors of water tanks, further

automating sewage treatment plants, and replacing existing water meters with more efficient electronic meters. Projects planned in the immediate future include the pipe maintenance, replacement and rehabilitation projects, installation of relief lines along the upper half of Nancy Creek and in other areas of the County, removal of pump stations where possible, surveying North Fork and South Fork of Peachtree Creek to reduce infiltration and expansion of sewer service to Stone Mountain Park and the remaining areas of the county.

Long term capital improvement issues include continual replacement of older water and sewer lines, the construction of an additional water storage tank and pumping station near the Mall at Stonecrest (Turner Hill), and construction of DeKalb County's portion of the wastewater tunnel from the R.M. Clayton Treatment Plant to the Utoy River as part of the City of Atlanta's Phosphorus Reduction Program. Overall, DeKalb County's sewage treatment facilities will be adequate to serve the county until 2015, with the exception of the Pole Bridge Plant which may need to be expanded towards the latter part of this twenty-year time period. By 2015, it is expected that the Pole Bridge Plant will be operating closer to capacity and consideration should be made at that time for a new facility.

Storm Water Management Inventory and Assessment

Decatur is located on the Atlanta Plateau in the north central part of the Georgia Piedmont. Topography is rolling, with elevations ranging between 900 and 1,070 feet above sea level. Decatur has four primary watersheds--Peavine Creek Tributary, South Fork Peachtree Creek Tributary, Shoal Creek and Sugar Creek Tributary--and is bisected by the sub-continental drainage divide, with water on the north side of the City draining to the Gulf of Mexico and water on the south draining into the Atlantic Ocean.

Decatur's location along the drainage divide limits the potential for flooding. Issues generally concern flooding in floodplains and other areas close to streams during heavy rains. In terms of water quality, a large part of the City is residential which limits the negative effects it has on receiving streams. Impacts to the four major watersheds intersected by the City are limited as well since Decatur occupies a very small percentage of the overall contributing area.

The City adopted its first storm drainage ordinance in 1972, with comprehensive revisions in 1977, 1990, 1997, 2001, and 2004. The City presently requires on-site storm detention systems for all new developments with its Post-development Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment ordinance. Ordinances related to storm water volumes and water quality include ordinances regulating Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Illicit Discharge and Illegal Connection, Floodplain Management/Floodplain Damage Prevention, and Stream Buffer Protection, Litter Control, and Conservation Subdivision/Open Space Development.

In 1999, the City implemented a Storm Water Utility under the City Engineering Department to provide a means of funding its storm water management plan. The Utility is responsible for the maintenance and upgrades to the storm water system including pipes, culverts, inlets, manholes, headwalls, flumes, concrete channels and related appurtenances. It is also responsible for the enforcement of environmental regulations, and for the City's compliance with Clean Water Act requirements and other environmental regulations related to storm water. It is estimated that the City's Storm Water Utility will generate approximately \$750,000 per year to fund the storm water improvements and management plan based on its current (existing) fee schedule.

To address the City's storm water needs on a long-term basis, a Storm Water Master Plan was completed in 2004 and adopted in 2005. The report included an inventory and assessment of the City's existing storm drainage system, an evaluation of system performance during storms, and recommendations for improvement. The report found that parts of the City storm drain system function adequately during moderately intense storms while other parts showed overflows during low intensity storms. Most of the significant overflow problems were associated with the densely developed core downtown area. To remedy these issues, the report recommends \$6.4 million in critical improvements and the installation of Best Management Practices during the development or redevelopment of properties within the City. The City plans to undertake the improvements over the next twenty years.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Inventory and Assessment

Inventory

Backyard and curbside collection of household garbage is carried out on a weekly basis by the City of Decatur Sanitation Department. Commercial, business, and apartment garbage collection is also offered by the City, and provided by private companies such as BFI as well.

The City of Decatur instituted a "Pay-as-You-Throw" refuse collection system in July 1998 in an effort to meet state requirements to reduce landfill deposits. Under the program, residents pay an annual fee for collection of garbage and trash and collection and disposal of yard trimmings, furniture, most appliances and recyclables, and for street sweeping. Residents purchase special plastic bags from local supermarkets, hardware stores and other local suppliers to use for disposing of garbage. The cost of disposal is included in the cost of the bag. Business operators pay fees based on the size of their commercial container and the number of service visits each week.

Once collected, solid waste is transported by the City to DeKalb County's transfer station on Memorial Drive and ultimately disposed of at the County's Seminole Road landfill. Yard trimmings are collected separately and delivered to the compost facility at the landfill.

The City also conducts a voluntary residential curbside recycling program. Recyclables include newspapers, cans, magazines, catalogs, glass bottles, telephone books, plastic, junk mail, mixed office paper, corrugated cardboard and pasteboard. Recycling services are contracted out to a private recycling contractor.

Assessment

Because of its size and the absence of landfill opportunities within the City, the City of Decatur will likely rely on DeKalb County to meet its solid waste disposal needs. The City is participating with DeKalb County in the preparation of its Solid Waste Management Plan, as required by the State Solid Waste Management Law.

The City's "Pay-as-You-Throw" and recycling programs have been successful at helping to achieve the State's required 25% per capita waste reduction goal mandated by the Solid Waste Management Act. From FY 1997-1998 to FY 2002-2003 landfill deposits have decreased by 13% and tonnage of recyclables has increased almost 100%.

General Government Inventory & Assessment

Inventory

The City of Decatur's City Commission Meeting Room and administrative offices are located at the City Hall, 509 North McDonough Street. The Downtown Development Authority is housed in the south wing of the building. Presently, City Hall has about 9,700 square feet of floor area. The current Commission meeting room provides seating for about 30 persons.

Beginning in Mid 2005, City Hall will undergo a major 12-month renovation. The proposed City Hall improvements include an addition on the second floor and a new Commission meeting room. For ADA compliance, the improvements will also include a new elevator and new wheelchair accessible rest rooms. The proposed additions will enlarge the building to about 15,600 square feet. The proposed Commission room will provide seating for about 100 persons.

The City Engineering, Sanitation, and Motor Maintenance Departments are located in the Leveritt Public Works Building, at 2635 Talley Street. The 16,900 square foot, two-story building, houses offices, central supply storage and the vehicle maintenance garage. A large exterior area is used for parking and storing of vehicles and equipment.

Assessment

In June 2002, the Capital Needs Assessment Task Force, established by the Decatur City Commission, published a report evaluating various city owned properties and recommendations for improvements.

The recommendations cited by the report for City Hall include the need for additional office space, public space, and ADA compliance. These improvements are being addressed by the planned renovations. The renovated facilities are anticipated to be fully adequate for the 20 year planning horizon of this plan.

The Task Force's report also states the need for additional exterior space at the Public Works building. This need is anticipated to increase as the amount of material and equipment associated with the Storm Water Utility operations and compliance with clean water regulations increases. The report further states the need for ADA accessibility features on the second floor as well as telephone and electrical upgrades. The City's Public Works facility may be relocated within the twenty-year planning period to accommodate future municipal needs.

Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities Inventory and Assessment

Inventory

Located within the City of Decatur's downtown is DeKalb Medical Center at Decatur. Also known as Decatur Hospital, the center is a 102-bed facility whose specialties include outpatient surgery, ophthalmology, podiatry and gynecology. It also is home to a 44-bed Long-Term, Acute-Care unit.

Adjacent to the City is the DeKalb Medical Center, a 525-bed acute care hospital which includes the former DeKalb General Hospital and a variety of clinics and service facilities. Located to the northwest of the City is the Emory University medical complex which includes the Emory Children's Center, Emory University Hospital, and Wesley Woods Center for older adults.

Grady Health System, one of the largest public hospitals in the Southeast is located a few miles away in the City of Atlanta. The complex includes the 900+ bed Grady Memorial Hospital and Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital.

Assessment

The array of medical services, both private and public, available to the City of Decatur residents are considered to be excellent and will meet the needs of the City's residents through the planning period.

Community Facilities Community Vision and Goals

The Community Facilities Community Vision is to provide high quality community facilities and services to ensure a continuing high level of service and enhanced quality of life for City residents.

- Continue to work closely with DeKalb County to support the provision of

those services that the County provides to Decatur residents.

- Conduct on-going periodic assessments that ensure that fire and other emergency services are provided in the most cost effective manner.
- Continue coordination with City Schools of Decatur in providing outstanding educational services to Decatur residents.
- Continue to upgrade, and improve neighborhood recreational facilities and programs.
- Implement the recommendations from the 2005 Storm Water Master Plan.
- Continue participation in the Georgia Greenspace Program to expand Decatur's open space resources.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

In order to provide services in the most efficient and effective ways, the City of Decatur maintains agreements with several different governmental and non-governmental entities. Effective ongoing coordination with these entities ensures maximum efficiency and quality of services for residents and businesses in Decatur. For these reasons, the comprehensive planning process includes intergovernmental coordination as an element for inventory and assessment.

This element provides local governments with the opportunity to inventory and to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination for the current and future needs of Decatur. The Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Decatur Comprehensive Plan consists of three (3) sections: the inventory of existing conditions, the assessment of current and future needs, and the intergovernmental coordination community vision and goals.

Inventory

Entities

The City of Decatur coordinates with several different local governments, governmental agencies, and private entities. In accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning, each entity that concerns the City of Decatur is included in this section. Each entity is described in terms of the existing coordination mechanisms, the parties or offices within the local government with primary responsibility for coordination, and the adequacy of the coordination mechanism.

Adjacent Local Governments

City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta abuts the City of Decatur at southwestern and southern boundaries. Since part of the City of Atlanta is located in DeKalb County, the City of Atlanta is included in the DeKalb County Service Delivery Strategy. For this reason, the City of Decatur's coordination with the City of Atlanta is formally based on a Service Delivery Strategy. The Service Delivery Strategy must be updated at the same time that the community's plan is updated. However, no services are exchanged between the two governments. In addition, no formal agreements exist between the two governments. Coordination on current issues or concerns is handled on an as needed basis through City of Decatur staff.

DeKalb County

The City of Decatur's coordination with DeKalb County is based on a Service Delivery Strategy. Current services are listed in the State Programs and Activities section of this element. The City of Decatur maintains the 1999 Service Delivery Strategy with DeKalb County and is in the process of updating the document in 2005. No other formal coordination mechanisms exist.

School Boards

City Schools of Decatur, Board of Education

Regarding the coordination mechanism for the City of Decatur and the City Schools of Decatur (CSD), the City of Decatur maintains a relationship with the School Board through mutual agreements between the City Manager and the School Superintendent as well as the City Commission and the Decatur School Board. The City Manager and the School Superintendent have agreed to meet at least every other month to discuss current issues. Starting in 2003, the School Board and the City Commission have had a policy to hold a joint meeting annually to provide structured opportunities for general coordination. There have been two (2) annual joint meetings since 2003.

Development Authorities

Downtown Decatur Development Authority/ Citywide Decatur Development Authority

The Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was established in 1982 through State legislation. The creation of the DDA board was one of the first priorities recommended by the Decatur Town Center Plan that was adopted by the Decatur City Commission in 1982. The Downtown Development Authority focuses on the historic commercial downtown central business district and works to market a positive image for the city. The mission of DDA is to assure the long-term economic stability of downtown Decatur by maintaining the small town character of the district and supporting values that assure Decatur is a great place to live, work, play, invest and do business. Coordination is conducted by the Assistant City Manager for Community & Economic Development.

The Citywide Decatur Development Authority was also established by State legislation. The Citywide Development Authority was established in order to build on the success of the Downtown Development Authority. It is empowered to work with neighborhood business districts and other commercial zoning districts in the city to promote business and identify opportunities for business. The City of Decatur provides direct staff assistance to the DDA.

Decatur Housing Authority

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) manages public housing in the City of Decatur. Activities of the DHA are summarized in the housing element of the comprehensive plan. The DHA is an independent housing agency, having separated from the DeKalb Housing Authority in 2003 so that both agencies could operate more effectively.

The Decatur Housing Authority is governed by a six (6) member board. Five (5) members are appointed to a five (5) year term each and one (1) member is appointed to a one (1) year term. The Authority does not receive funding from

the City of Decatur. Funding sources include rent from residents of public housing, grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and revenues from DHA's programs and activities.

Though the City does not provide funding for the DHA, appointments to the Board are made by the Mayor of Decatur. Coordination between the City of Decatur and the DHA is provided through the Director of the DHA and the Decatur City Commission.

Other Units of Local Government and Utility Companies

Utility Companies

The City of Decatur maintains franchise agreements with a number of utility companies including Atlanta Gas Light Company (natural gas), Bell South (telephone), Georgia Power Company (electricity), and Comcast (cable television). Coordination is conducted through the City Manager on an as needed basis.

Other Organizations (Regional and State)

Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro Atlanta area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties, as well as the City of Atlanta. Though the City of Decatur utilizes the ARC directly, the City is officially represented at the ARC by DeKalb County.

The ARC is also the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and is responsible for programming and prioritizing transportation projects. In its role as the MPO, the Atlanta Regional Commission administers a program known as the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). Established in 1999, the LCI Program provides transportation funds to local ARC communities improving mobility and enhancing livability. The fundamental concepts of the program include connecting homes, shops and offices, enhancing streetscapes and sidewalks, emphasizing pedestrian amenities, improving access to transit and other transportation options, and expanding housing options.

The City of Decatur benefited from the LCI Program in 2002 when it received a grant to develop a comprehensive development strategy and master plan around the Avondale MARTA station. The Decatur Avondale Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a plan that builds upon the success of the City's ongoing revitalization efforts. The City used this chance to further define the quality and character of its community while creating a new neighborhood centered around the Avondale MARTA station. The LCI program has provided multi-million dollar grants for capital improvements at the Decatur MARTA Station and the Avondale Station.

Georgia Department of Transportation

The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for the operation of the state and federal highway system in Georgia. Portions of the following state and federal highways run through the City of Decatur: State Route 8 (U.S. Route 78 and U.S. Route 29) Scott Boulevard, State Route 155 (U.S. Route 23) Clairemont Avenue-Commerce Drive-South Candler Street), and State Route 10 (U.S. Route 278) East Lake Drive-East and West College Avenue.

The Georgia Department of Transportation provides funding for local road improvement projects. The City of Decatur coordinates with the Georgia Department of Transportation on these routes and would be required to work closely with the Department if a future transportation planning project were initiated.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has helped the City complete several streetscapes and pedestrian improvements through Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. The City of Decatur benefits from the programs that the DCA provides to local governments including comprehensive planning guidance, dissemination of building codes, solid waste reduction efforts, and technical assistance. In addition, the DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs and serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development.

DeKalb Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber promotes businesses in DeKalb County and administers economic development initiatives of its members. There is minimal collaboration or coordination with the City of Decatur or the Decatur Development Authority.

Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA)

MARTA provides rail, bus, and paratransit service in the City of Decatur. In addition to the countywide sales tax which partially supports MARTA, the City has formal agreements regulating the use of the pedestrian mall at the Decatur Station and local roads. Coordination between the City of Decatur and MARTA is conducted on an as needed basis by the municipal staff member associated with any given issue or project. Recent examples of successful coordination between the City and its departments and MARTA include the successful relocation of the MARTA bus area from Church Street to Swanton Place and the upcoming redevelopment of the MARTA rail station entrance on Church Street.

State Programs and Activities

Service Delivery Strategy

Georgia cities maintain an agreement known as a service delivery strategy to maintain legal, administrative, and cooperative agreements with the County to which it belongs. The City of Decatur agreed to the present service delivery strategy which was authorized in August 1999. Other parties in this service deliver strategy include DeKalb County, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, City of Atlanta, City of Avondale Estates, City of Chamblee, City of Clarkston, City of Doraville, City of Lithonia, City of Pine Lake, City of Stone Mountain, Decatur-DeKalb Housing Authority, and the DeKalb Development Authority.

The City of Decatur and DeKalb County provide services to residents and businesses in Decatur. The following table provides a list of the services provided by DeKalb County in the left column and the exact language of the Service Delivery Strategy in the right column.

Table 7.1 – Services Provided by DeKalb County in Decatur

Government Service	The Agreement for Delivery of Service
Elections	Provided by Intergovernmental Agreement with DeKalb County and partially provided by Decatur
Sheriff/Jail and Evictions	Provided by DeKalb County
Emergency Medical Service	Provided by DeKalb County
Emergency Management	Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur and by DeKalb County independently
Community Development Block Grant Program	Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur
Water Treatment and Water Distribution/ Wastewater Collection and Treatment	Provided by DeKalb County as an enterprise fund paid by user fees. There are no fee differentials between customers living in incorporated cities and customers in unincorporated DeKalb County.
Libraries	Provided by Intergovernmental Agreement with DeKalb County
Storm Water Management	Provided jointly by DeKalb County and the City of Decatur
Traffic Engineering	Provided by DeKalb County

Source: Service Delivery Strategy

Like other municipalities in Georgia, the City of Decatur maintains relationships with neighbor jurisdictions and other municipalities to provide emergency services for extraordinary events. This cooperation is known as “reciprocal

emergency service.” Such agreements have been established by the City Commission and administered through the Decatur Fire and Police Departments.

In addition, a significant part of the existing service delivery strategy is the Summary of Land Use Agreements. The document includes several agreements between DeKalb County and its municipalities including the following:

- 1) A statement of understanding that there are no “incompatibilities or conflicts between the land use plans of local governments identified in the process of developing the 1999 service delivery strategy.”
- 2) For the “process that will be used to resolve disputes when a county disagrees with the proposed land use classification(s) for areas to be annexed into a city, the present Service Delivery Strategy states the following:

“Prior to initiating any formal annexation activities that would involve land use or zoning classification changes, the City of Decatur will notify the County and all contiguous property owners of the proposed annexation and of the schedule for public hearings. The County may review and provide comments and must raise any bona fide land use classification objections at this time. If the County does not object, the City may proceed with the annexation. If the County does not object, the City may proceed with the annexation. If the County does object, the City and County agree to either (a) implement the County’s conditions and remove the objection; (b) stop the annexation; or (c) initiate a 30-day negotiation period. If the City proceeds with the annexation, a vote by the County on whether or not to authorize the annexation (pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 36-36-70) constitutes final resolution, provided however that the County cannot refuse to authorize an annexation due to a bona fide land use classification objection if the objection was resolved or not already raised in accordance with these procedures.”

Due to changes in state law, this must be amended in the new Service Delivery Strategy.

- 3) For policies and/or processes established by local governments to ensure that new extraterritorial water and sewer service will be consistent with all

applicable land use plans and ordinances, the Service Delivery Strategy states the following:

“The County provides water and sewer service in the entire County and therefore ensures that all service is consistent with all applicable land use plans and ordinances.”

Service Delivery Strategy Update

The Service Delivery Strategy must be updated concurrent with the comprehensive plan update. As of October 2005, the City and the County have agreed to extend the existing Service Delivery Strategy agreement for a period of one year. By October 31, 2006 discussions and negotiations between the City and the County for the update will conclude. All parties agree that pending issues will be resolved by the established deadline.

Georgia’s Greenspace Program

The following section provides information about the City’s greenspace activities and participation in the State of Georgia’s Greenspace Program. In Decatur, the Greenspace Commission is an advisory and advocacy group for greenspace protection and enhancement in the city. The Commission is responsible for developing and implementing a greenspace preservation strategy for the city, advising the City Commission on greenspace-related issues, and administering the State’s Greenspace Program locally.

With the exception of minor pending standard administrative activities, the City has completed the program in accordance with state procedures. The City of Decatur elected to use the entire \$187,047 program land protection funds for three (3) land acquisitions and one (1) conservation easement.

The Greenspace Commission is staffed by the Planning Services Officer of the City of Decatur. The Planning Services Officer is the official point of coordination between the Greenspace Commission and the City of Decatur.

Water Planning Districts

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

As a municipality of DeKalb County, the City of Decatur is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD). The MNGWPD was created by state law on April 5, 2001. The general purposes of the District are to establish policy, create plans, and promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues in a 16-county area including Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, Rockdale and Walton Counties.

It is the primary purpose of the District to develop regional and watershed-specific plans for storm-water management, wastewater treatment, water supply, water conservation, and the general protection of water quality. Responsibility for implementation will be by local governments in the district. Through a two-year planning effort, the Districts have developed a District-wide Watershed Management Plan to address the Atlanta Region's stormwater management issues. The City of Decatur, as well as other jurisdictions in the 16-county district will be responsible for implementing the provisions of the Watershed Management Plan.

The Watershed Management Plan is designed to address all aspects of stormwater management including water quality, water quantity, and maintenance issues. Each local government is required to develop and implement its own storm water management program which should be coordinated with the DeKalb County government. Aspects of the storm water management program include adoption of model ordinances, operation and maintenance requirements, total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements, enforcement of associated State programs and requirements, rehabilitation efforts in impaired watersheds, land use planning provisions, and public education. In 2004, the City of Decatur completed the Storm Water Master Plan. The Stormwater Master Plan includes an inventory of the stormwater system and an assessment of the condition of the system. The City will utilize the plan to improve maintenance and upgrade operations and prioritize capital improvements.

Assessment of Current and Future Needs

As a relatively small municipality, the relationships and coordination described in the inventory are important for service delivery. The City of Decatur finds that existing mechanisms and agreements are generally adequate for each of the entities and programs/requirements in the inventory. However, based on the inventory provided in this section, the assessment of intergovernmental coordination has resulted in the following findings.

Regarding a specific issue with DeKalb County, the City would like to negotiate with DeKalb County on the definition of a sewer tap in regard to high-density residential development.

Regarding other governments, the inventory of coordination mechanisms did not result in new issues regarding growth and development in nearby municipalities.

Regarding land use issues, no specific land use conflicts or lack of information about DeKalb County or City of Atlanta land use were identified. As stated previously, the City of Decatur has acknowledged that minor changes to the Summary of Land Use Agreements will be necessary to reflect changes in state legislation since 1999. The City will have the opportunity to update the

Summary of Land Use Agreements during the 2005 Service Delivery Strategy update process.

Regarding services to residents and businesses, the City of Decatur will continue to work with DeKalb County to obtain a satisfactory delivery of services so that no service redundancy appears to exist.

Regarding other plan elements, no other specific problems or needs were identified in any of the comprehensive plan sections that would benefit from improved or greater intergovernmental coordination.

The intergovernmental coordination element concludes with a community vision and a set of goals. These items reflect the inventory for intergovernmental coordination and the findings of the assessment.

Intergovernmental Coordination Community Vision and Goals

Community Vision for Intergovernmental Coordination

The City of Decatur vision for intergovernmental coordination reflects the need for strong and sound relationships and the highest level of coordination with DeKalb County, the City of Decatur Schools, and other governmental entities, and agencies. The vision recognizes relationships between the City of Decatur and other entities should maximize services to residences and businesses and minimize inefficiency and redundancy.

Goals for Intergovernmental Coordination

- Update the Service Delivery Strategy and monitor the relationships within the agreement during its five-year period.
- Resolve sewer service tap fee disagreements with DeKalb County in a way that is favorable for high-density residential development.
- Maintain quality services for residents and businesses through effective intergovernmental coordination with other governmental entities and agencies in the area.

LAND USE

Introduction

The City of Decatur covers 4.2 square miles of land area, or about 2,700 acres. Decatur lies directly east of the City of Atlanta, approximately 6 miles from Atlanta's central business district. It is the second oldest municipality in the Atlanta region, incorporated in 1823. Due to Decatur's age and proximity to a major metropolitan area, the majority of Decatur's land area has been developed for the last fifty years.

Decatur's general pattern of development can be described as a central business district in the geographic center of the community, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The town center is characterized by the Old DeKalb County Courthouse, the DeKalb governmental complex, mid-rise office and professional buildings, a retail-entertainment district, and high-density residential buildings. Medium and low-density residential neighborhoods radiate from this central core.

Three MARTA stations are located within the City limits. The Decatur MARTA Station is located in the center of downtown Decatur. MARTA's East Lake and Avondale transit stations lie on west and east boundaries of the city. The historic Georgia Railroad corridor, now owned by CSX, bisects the City east to west.

Other significant land uses include two additional commercial nodes located in the southern portion of the City in Oakhurst Village and along the College Avenue corridor. The campuses of Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary anchor the southeastern quadrant of the City.

Through a long history of land use planning and zoning, Decatur has been successful in preserving the character and integrity of its existing historic single-family neighborhoods. The City has been equally successful in redeveloping the downtown area into a compact urban community with high-density residential, non-motorized access to heavy rail transit, a profitable employment center and a vibrant entertainment district.

Inventory of Existing Land Uses

To ensure consistency with the land use standards established by the Department of Community Affairs, land use in the City of Decatur is inventoried according to the categories listed below. This information is also illustrated in table 8.1 and the Existing Land Use Map.

Low-Density Residential

These are properties developed with single and two-family dwellings with densities not exceeding seven (7) dwellings per acre. Low-density residential development is the most common land use in Decatur, covering approximately

1,415 acres or 52% of Decatur's land area.

Medium-Density Residential

Medium-density residential developments include multiple family properties and townhouse communities with up to 18 dwellings per acre. About 181 acres, or 7%, of Decatur's land area is developed with medium density residential dwellings. Most medium-density residential development is located near the downtown area and along major thoroughfares such as Clairemont Avenue, Scott Boulevard and Church Street.

High-Density Residential

Properties in the high-density residential class include multiple-family dwellings of up to 43 units per acre. Presently, most high-density residential dwellings are located in or near downtown Decatur. About 22 acres, or less than 1% of the City's land area, are developed with high-density residential developments.

Commercial

Commercial properties include those where business and trade activities are conducted, and include such uses as office buildings, establishments for the retail sale of goods and services, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment facilities. About 132 acres, or 5% of Decatur's land area is used for commercial development, primarily in the downtown area and commercial districts along College Avenue and in Oakhurst Village. High density residential is a permissible use in any commercially designated area.

Industrial

Industrial properties include facilities for manufacture, distribution and storage of goods and products. Industrial properties make up one of the smallest land uses in Decatur, covering only about 13 acres, less than 1% of the City's land area and could be more properly described as "heavy commercial" uses rather than industrial. This use is generally located in the district south of East College Avenue.

Public/Institutional

About 299 acres or 11% of Decatur's land area is presently used for Public/Institutional purposes. Typical uses in this category include public and private schools, churches and other places of worship, institutions of higher learning such as Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary, governmental offices such as the Decatur City Hall and DeKalb County Government Center and similar uses. Institutional uses are located throughout the City.

Parks, Recreation and Conservation

This is land and buildings used for both active and passive recreational activities. Included are public parks, recreational facilities and conservation areas such as Decatur City parks, the Decatur Cemetery and the Woodlands. Approximately

127 acres, 5%, of Decatur's land area is presently devoted to this use. These uses are located throughout the City.

Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

This category includes such uses as the Avondale, Decatur and East Lake MARTA transit stations, power substations, and similar uses. Separately listed within this category are public streets and rights-of-way. About 483 acres or 18% are used primarily for transportation, communications and utility purposes.

Undeveloped/Vacant

This includes land not presently developed for a specific purpose. There are presently only about 28 acres of vacant land in Decatur, or about 2% of the City's total land area.

Agricultural

This category is reserved for land used for farming, livestock, timber production, and similar activities. No land in Decatur is presently included in this classification.

Table 8.1 – City of Decatur 2005 Existing Land Use

Land Use	Area (acres)	Percentage of Total Land Area
Low-Density Residential	1415	52
Medium-Density Residential	181	7
High-Density Residential	22	<1
Commercial	132	5
Industrial	13	<1
Institutional	299	11
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	126	5
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	483	18
Vacant	28	2
Total	2700	100

Source: City of Decatur

(Insert Existing Land Use Map)

Existing Land Use Assessment

Historic Factors

Historic land use and zoning policies adopted by the City Commissioners have been designed to protect, preserve and enhance the City's residential neighborhoods and to limit commercial development to existing commercial areas. As a result, Decatur's land use has remained remarkably stable for the last half of the 20th century.

As early as 1925, City ordinances were approved which enacted limited zoning restrictions. Decatur's first general zoning plan was established in April 1937. Comprehensive development plans were developed as early as 1958 and 1972.

The construction of the downtown MARTA heavy rail station in the 1970's disrupted the downtown area and both retail sales and real estate values declined steadily. In the early eighties, business owners, leaders, and residents rallied and developed a groundbreaking revitalization plan. The 1982 Decatur Town Center Plan set in motion a renewed vision for the downtown emphasizing mid-rise office buildings, pedestrian-friendly retail and high-density residential developments. Although it took years to manifest, the overwhelming success of the plan is evident today as Decatur leads the Atlanta Region as a model urban center. The downtown MARTA station is now considered one of the greatest assets of the City.

Land Use Patterns and Densities

As a mature community, the City has not had to "catch up" with rampant rapid growth and haphazard development. Instead, Decatur has focused a large amount of attention on preservation of existing neighborhoods and redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized commercial areas. The City has been successful with matching appropriate development with areas of existing infrastructure. The City has one of the highest densities of single-family residential areas in the state. High-density residential development is located in the downtown area along with commercial and retail properties and transit, providing a pedestrian scale, mixed-use downtown. Underutilized industrial parcels have been redeveloped as medium density facilities with mixed-use commercial and retail space. The result has been the creation of a compact urban community that encourages alternative forms of transportation and efficient delivery of City services.

Redevelopment Areas

The City has identified several areas that are in need of redevelopment. These include:

Downtown Decatur MARTA Redevelopment Plan

In mid-2005, the City will begin implementation of the Downtown Decatur MARTA Plaza Redevelopment Plan. The project includes the redesign of the entrance and plaza of the downtown MARTA station. Specifically the plan calls for the removal of the large planter walls, expansion of stairs and expansion of the sidewalks on either side of the plaza. Streetscape improvements will be extended along the retail sidewalks to add street trees, street lamps and more room for outdoor dining. Handicapped access will be provided to the plaza level from both sides of the station area and the upper brick level will be expanded to allow for more effective use during festivals and special events.

Calloway Building

The City of Decatur is working with DeKalb County on the redevelopment of the Calloway Building. The building is located on approximately 6+ acres in downtown Decatur adjacent to the Decatur High School. The City has prepared several alternatives for the reuse and redevelopment of the site. The City's vision includes a mix of uses – live/work housing, office and retail, consistent with other areas of downtown Decatur. Preliminary plans also include an underground parking deck and a new local road.

Avondale MARTA Station

Through a 2002 Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative grant, plans were designed for the redevelopment of a 40+-acre site on the south side of the station. The Decatur Housing Authority is spearheading the implementation of a mixed-use project that includes apartments, condominiums, 14,000 square feet of ground level retail and the construction of a parking deck for MARTA patrons on a 7.3-acre site. Permitting for Phase I of the project should begin in 2005. Since the site is located adjacent to the Decatur boundary, the City will work with DeKalb County and the City of Avondale Estates to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

Other areas noted by the City as ripe for redevelopment include the East Howard Street corridor, the East Trinity block from Church Street to College Avenue, the Selig property on Church Street and the Bank of America site on Commerce Drive. Through the Downtown Development Authority, the City plans increased contact with property owners to create redevelopment concepts and assist in appropriate ways.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The City is committed to protection of its greenspace, historic and environmentally sensitive natural resources. The City has a long history of preservation efforts. These efforts are coordinated by the Greenspace and Historic Preservation commissions. A full listing of the resources is located within the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of this document. The City has a strong policy of directing development away from these areas.

Other Land Use Issues

Annexation Study

In 2003, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government conducted a study for the City examining public policies by which future boundary changes related to annexation might be evaluated. The study not only looked at fiscal issues, but also other areas such as land use, service delivery, infrastructure and quality of life.

The Institute is currently applying those policies in an additional study examining the feasibility of annexing various parcels of land adjacent to the City. The study is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2005. Implementation of the plan's findings could begin as early as 2006.

Infill Design Guidelines

Infill development and recent teardown activity within the City's single-family neighborhoods have created the need for design guidelines. Throughout the public involvement process, dissatisfaction with new construction homes that are out of scale and architectural character of the surrounding neighborhoods was voiced.

Lifecycle Housing Ordinance

As a result of successful planning, property values are up and demand for Decatur residential property is high. The City is trying to provide for workforce and senior housing by encouraging a mix of housing types and by adopting a lifecycle housing ordinance. The ordinance offers density bonuses to developers who set aside a percentage of their residential developments for affordable housing.

Future Land Use Demand

Through the planning year 2025, the Atlanta Regional Commission forecasts an increase of 29% in population and 32% in households for the City of Decatur. Since the City is near 100% build-out, almost all of the forecast growth is expected to be absorbed through redevelopment of existing underutilized properties that are predominantly located in and around the downtown Decatur area. As depicted on the Future Land Use map, high-density residential and commercial are slated for the downtown central business core. Medium density residential corridors have been identified along Clairemont Avenue, Church Street, Scott Boulevard, and East College Avenue.

ARC forecasts a 23% increase in employment growth in Decatur. This growth is expected to be accommodated by redevelopment of existing commercial and office property in the downtown Decatur area and underutilized industrial property along East College Avenue.

No additional land area is expected to be needed for industrial uses in the 2005-2025 planning period. Acreage dedicated for this use has decreased significantly since 1995, with a 68% decrease. If present trends continue, even less land area than present may be needed for these uses.

Throughout the twenty-year horizon of this plan, it will remain a challenge to significantly increase the City's dedicated park and recreation acreage through land acquisition. The City will continue to participate in the Georgia Greenspace Program and purchase additional properties as they become available. The City also intends to continue coordination with private recreational organizations to offer residents a full spectrum of leisure opportunities.

Future Land Use Narrative

As previously stated, land use in Decatur is clearly not the result of haphazard and random development. Development patterns today are the result of plans and policies set in motion decades ago. The City has taken great care in preserving its single family and historic resources while encouraging managed growth in identified areas and corridors. Future land use, as depicted on the accompanying map and narrative, is continuation of these efforts.

Considering Decatur's build-out conditions, the Future Land Use map closely resembles the current Existing Land Use map. As such, future land use policies closely mirror present policies. The City will continue preservation efforts of its existing residential neighborhoods. While small amounts of infill housing will continue to occur, significant opportunities for growth will be directed to the redevelopment of previously identified downtown properties, nearby commercial properties, and surrounding corridors. This is illustrated in the Future Land Use map and in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 – City of Decatur Future Land Use

Land Use	Area (acres)	Percentage of Total Land Area
Low-Density Residential	1421	53
Medium-Density Residential	199	7
High-Density Residential	32	1+
Commercial	160	6
Industrial	0	0
Institutional	287	11
Parks, Recreation, and Conservation	126	5
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	447	17
Vacant	28	1
Total	2700	100

Source: City of Decatur

(Insert Future Land Use map)

Land Use Community Vision and Goals

The Land Use Community Vision is to provide for projected limited future development within the City in a manner that enhances and builds on the City of Decatur's existing "small town character."

- Maintain a small town quality of life and small town character while accommodating medium and high-density redevelopment in appropriate areas.
- Maintain and improve the individual character and identity of established neighborhoods and commercial centers.
- Limit future commercial development to the downtown area or to already established neighborhood commercial centers.
- Locate higher density residential developments either in previously identified commercial or transition areas adjacent to other higher density uses or in areas adjacent to rapid transit stations when compatible with existing uses.
- Create residential infill design guidelines to ensure compatibility of new construction with existing resources.

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

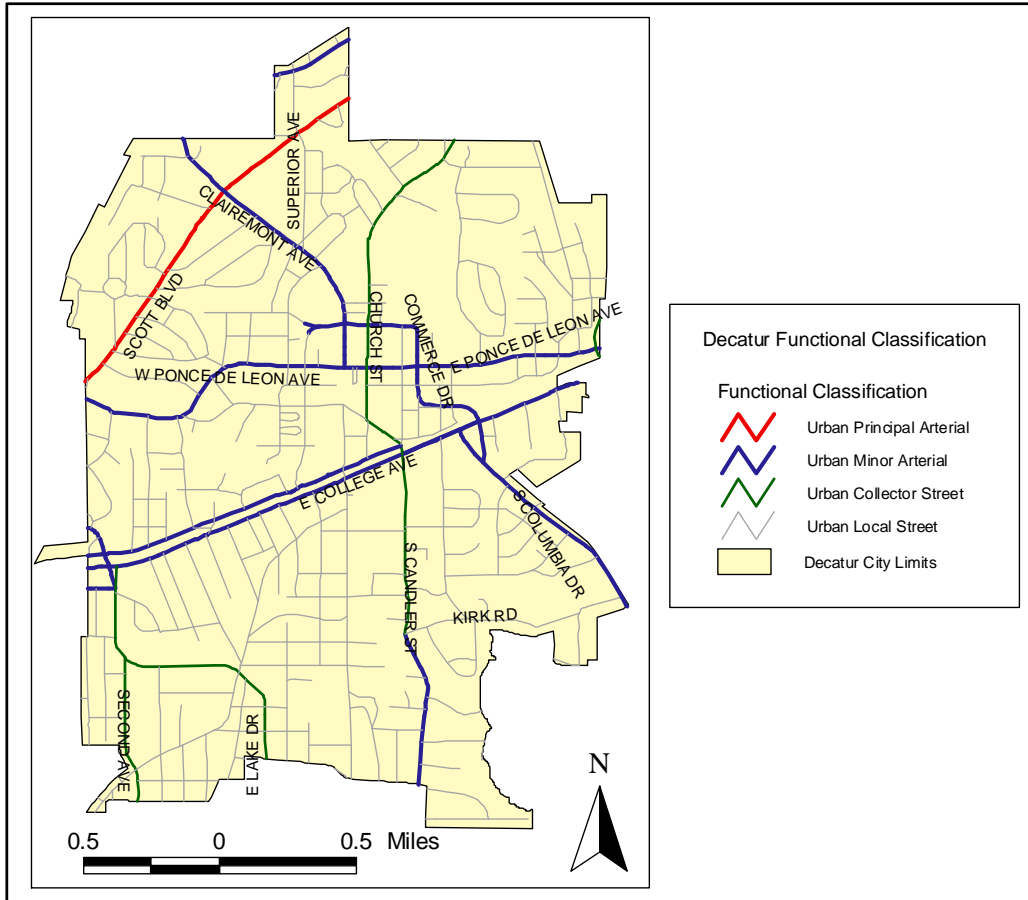
There are several collectors with the City limits. These roads generally run in north-south direction and include:

- 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
Collector Streets	Second Avenue	2	5030	6750
	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.

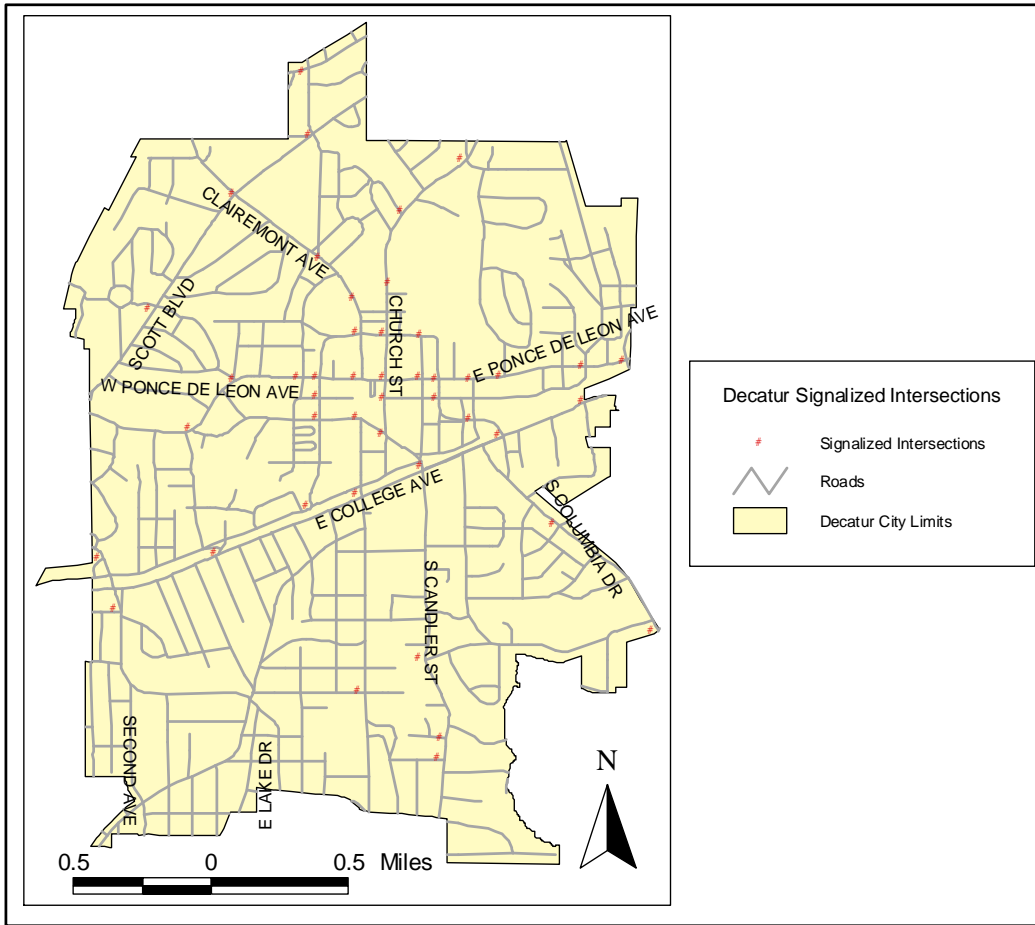
Table 9.3 – Signalized Intersections

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.

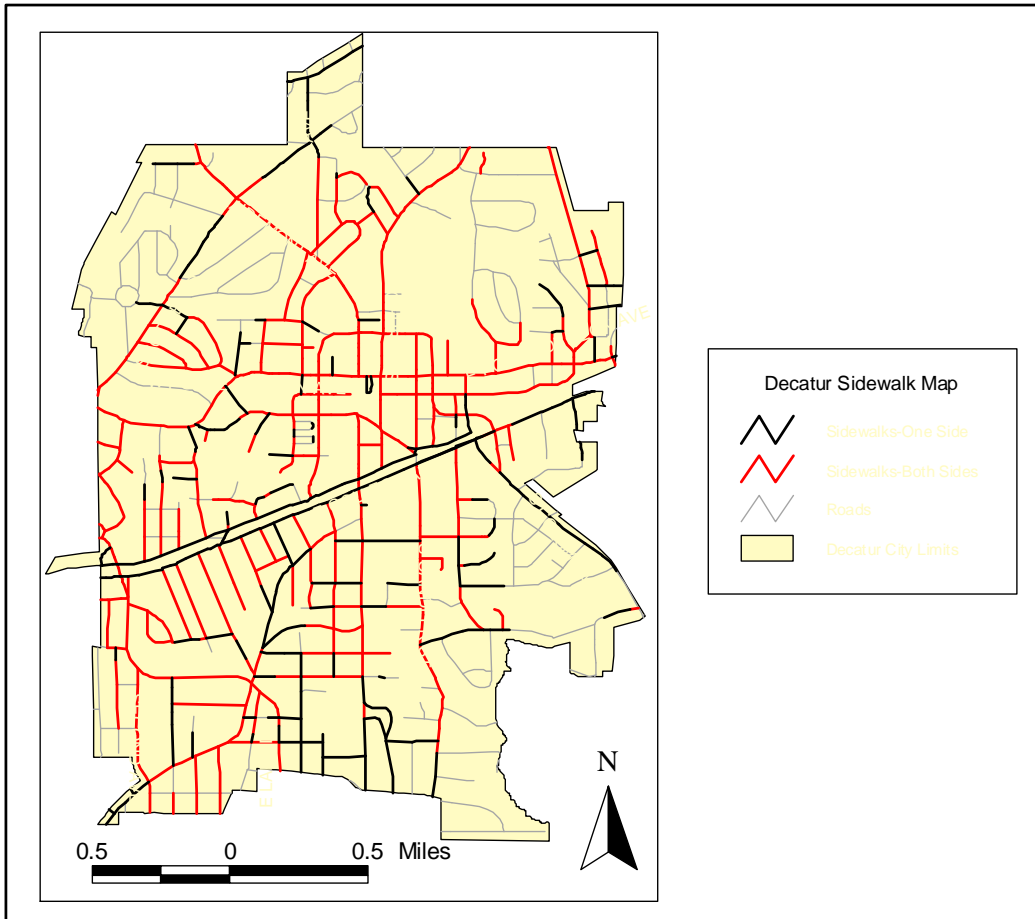
The City is also home to portions of the PATH Foundation’s Trolley Line on-street bike route and greenway trail that originates in Atlanta. The on-street bicycle route enters Decatur’s southwest border on Oakview Road and extends north to McDonough Street where it meets the multi-use trail. The greenway 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

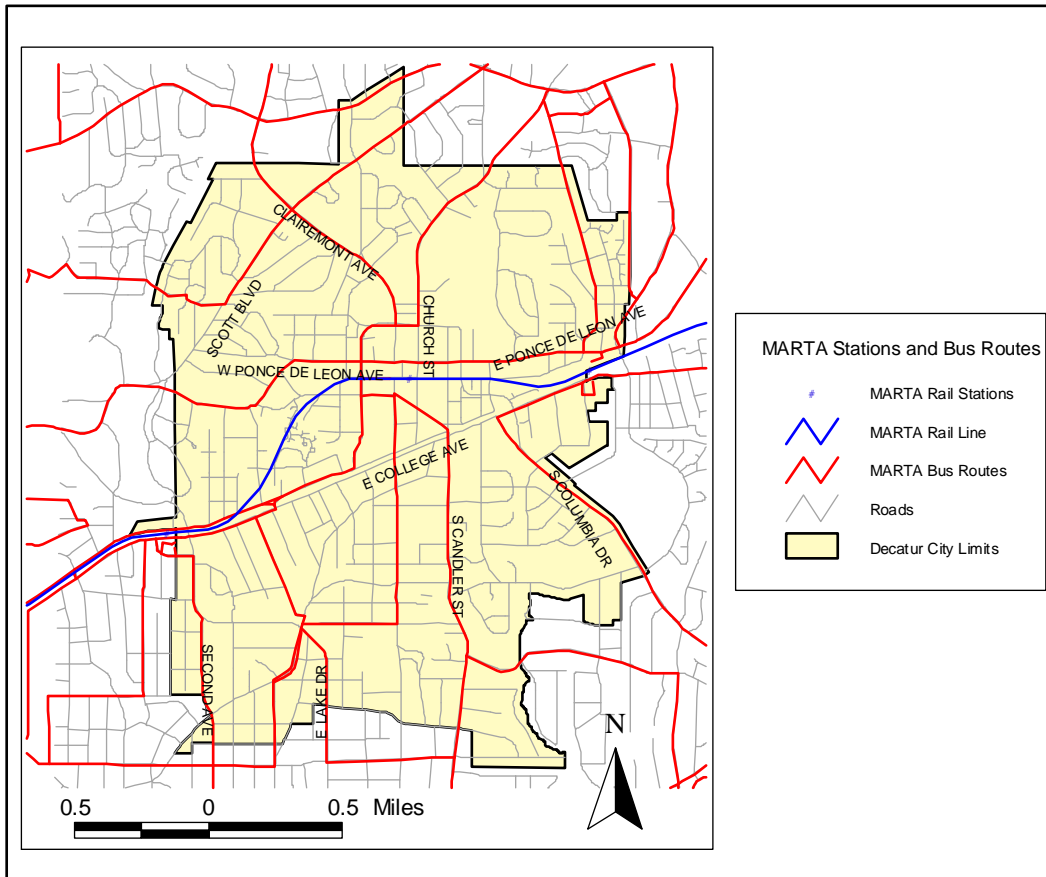
The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) operates three heavy rail stations located within the city limits along its East-West Line: East Lake Station, Decatur Station and the Avondale Station. In addition, sixteen bus routes serve the stations and the Decatur area. The following table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

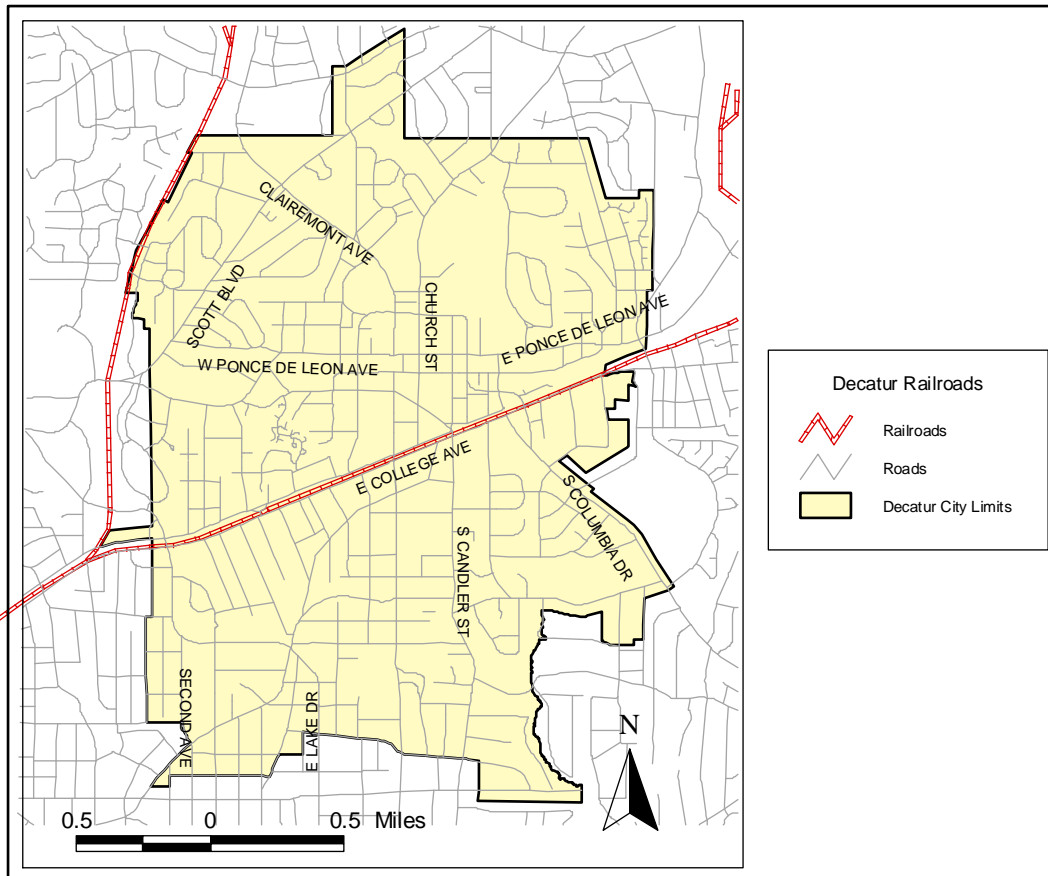
Table 9.9 – Residency Distribution of MARTA Patrons

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.

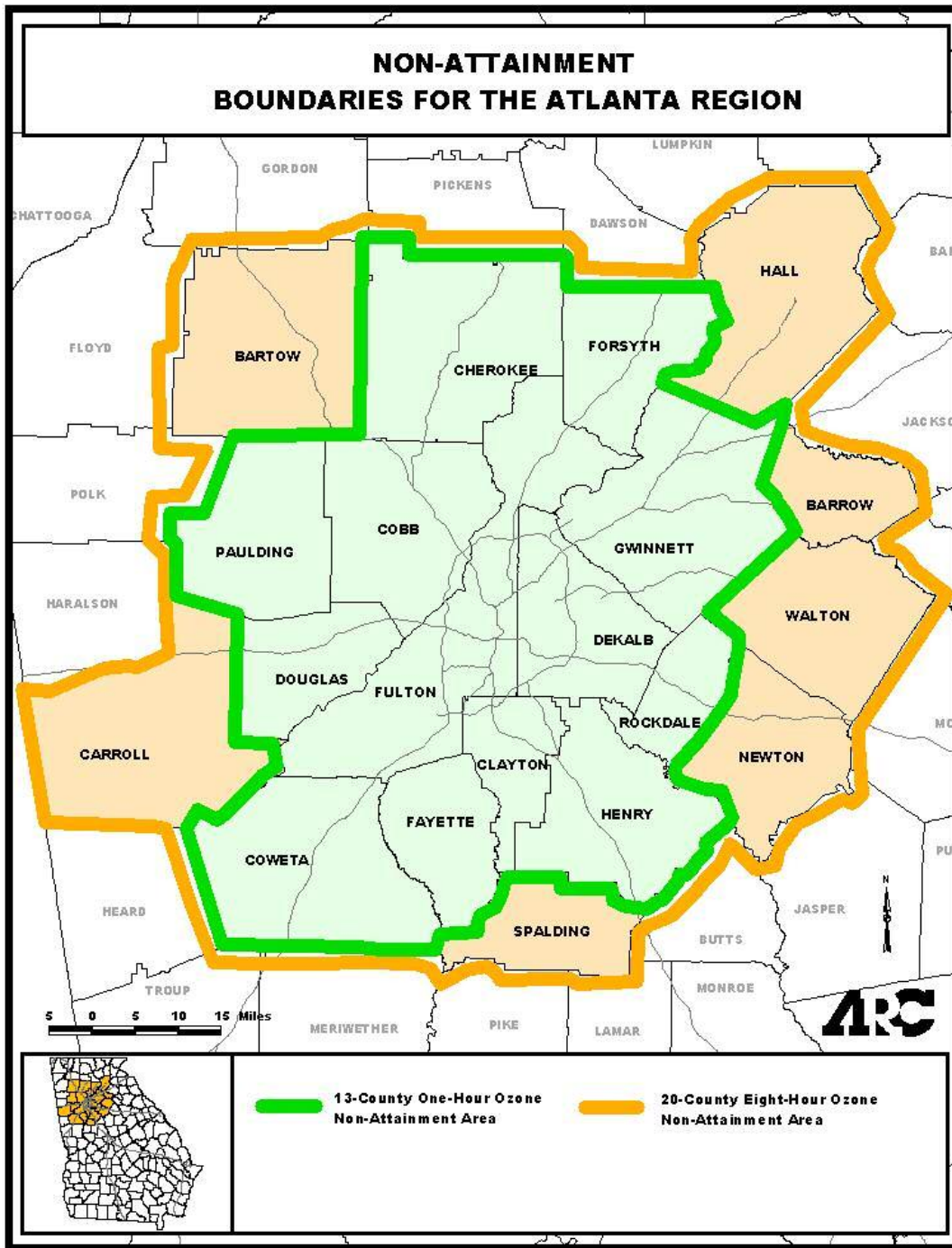
A map illustrating the one-hour and eight-hour non-attainment area boundaries appears on the following page.

PM-2.5

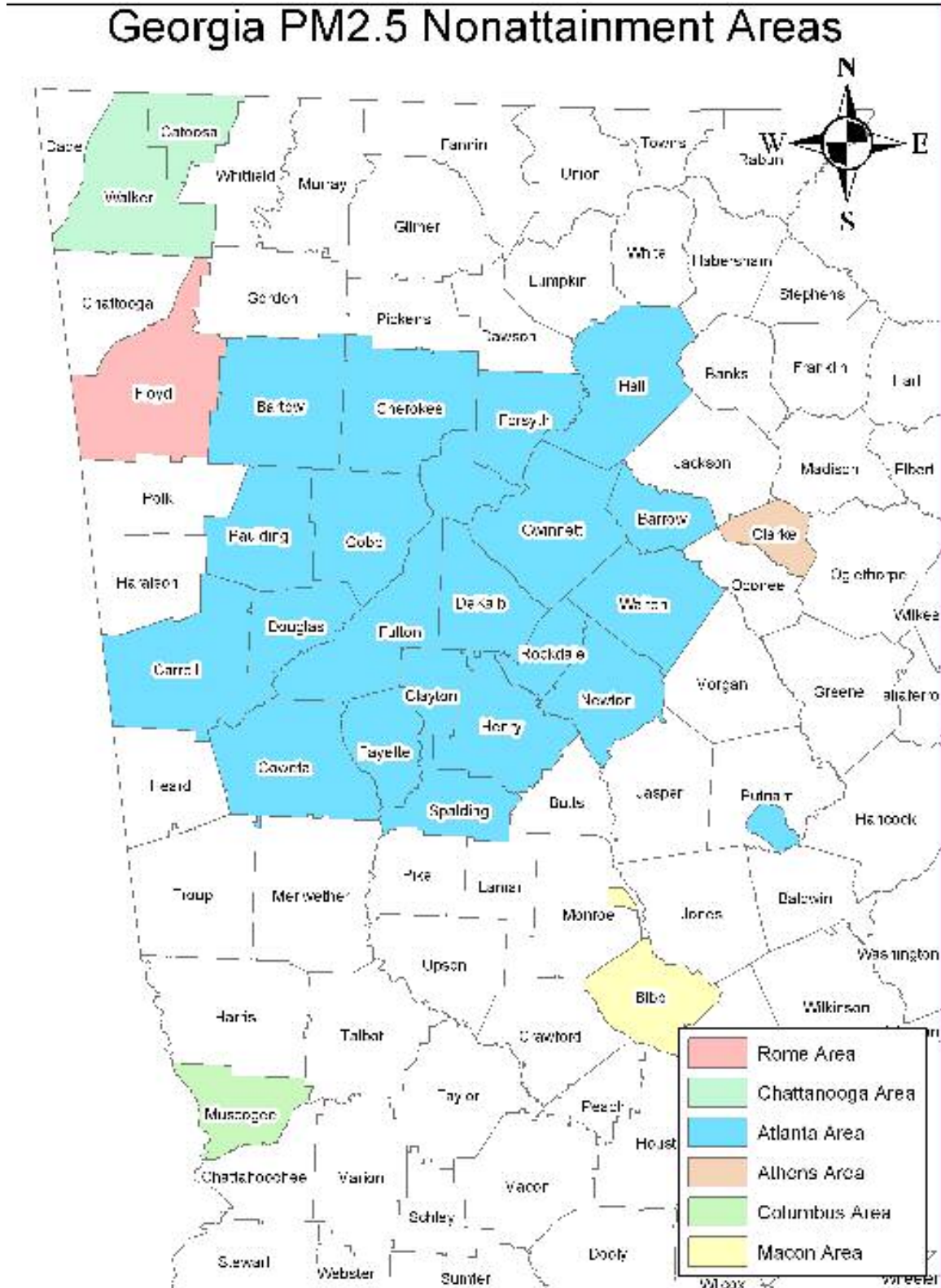
Particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Fine particulate matter, referred to as PM-2.5, are airborne materials that measure 2.5 micrometers in diameter. In 1997, a fine particulate standard was established to reflect latest research which revealed that 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of the Short-Term Work Program is to provide a detailed listing of the various projects and programs recommended in the City of Decatur for implementation during the first five years covered in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Priority projects and program initiatives resulting from the overall planning process are listed in the Short-Term Work Program for each of the five years (2005-2009).

In addition to the scheduling of priority items for the City, the five-year work program also provides guidance regarding cost estimates and potential sources of financing. By scheduling major City initiatives and capital expenditures in advance over a period of years, the five-year work program will assist the City in undertaking activities to implement the Comprehensive Plan and achieve its goals and objectives.

To be effective, the Short-Term Work Program must be linked to and coordinated with the City's annual operating budget. The majority of the items contained in the Short-Term Work Program require direct City expenditures or indirect costs to the City through allocation of staff time. Therefore, implementation of most of Decatur's goals, policies and recommendations are tied directly to the City's annual budget.

The Five-Year Short-Term Work Program is intended to be a working planning document. The one thing that is certain is that it will change based on changing conditions and priorities, budgetary constraints and other factors. Each year as the City develops its work program and budget for the following year it should: 1) review the recommendations in the Short-Term Work Program for the upcoming year; 2) revise the recommendations based on current information; 3) transfer the recommended items that require local funding in that year to the City's annual operating budget and work program; 4) review and revise as necessary its already established work program for the following three (3) years; and 5) add a new annual work program for the fifth year. In this way, the City of Decatur will always have a systematic and current program for implementing its Comprehensive Plan.

The following is the City of Decatur's Five-Year Short-Term Work Program for the years of 2005-2009 and the Report of Accomplishments for the 2000-2004 Work Program.

Report of Accomplishments	STATUS OF PROJECT OR ACTIVITY				**Currently underway or temporarily postponed activities or projects should appear in new STWP *Explanation for Postponed or Not Accomplished Project or Activity
	Project or Activity from Previous STWP	Completed	**Currently Underway	**Postponed*	
2000					
GROWTH AND LAND USE					
Complete updated Strategic Plan.	X				
Continue revitalization of Oakhurst District.	X				
Assess standards for transition areas between commercial and residential districts. Prepare amendments to zoning ordinance.	X				
Refine development standards for downtown Decatur.	X				
HOUSING					
Complete work on Downtown Housing Demonstration Project.	X				
Support the rehabilitation and lower income housing provision efforts of the Decatur Housing Authority and the DeKalb County Community Development Department.	X				
Determine strategy for tax relief for elderly/low income homeowners. Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
Develop strategy for redevelopment of Olympic Village Apartments. Inventory property ownership and conditions. Consider redevelopment alternatives. Assess funding needs.	X				
Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES					
Start improvements to Historic Scottish Rite Hospital property (formerly Community Center of South Decatur).	X				
Develop plan and program for relocation of Decatur Train Depot.	X				
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X				
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Continue improvements to City parks and recreation facilities.		X			
Design improvements to Harmony Park.	X				
Begin storm drainage master plan. Issue RFP. Select engineering consultant.	X				
Implement Downtown Streetscapes, Phases 2 and 3.	X				
Improve diversity at public events.	X				
Support and expand volunteer opportunities for citizens. Identify current opportunities.	X				
Enhance community publications.	X				
Support the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance/similar organizations.	X				
Strengthen communications and connections among community members.	X				
Complete assessment of sidewalk improvements program. Determine priorities begin initial sidewalk improvements.	X				
Update school facilities survey. Assess need for additional school facilities, including a performance facility/gym at Decatur High School.	X				
Continue annual miscellaneous building improvements and equipment purchases.	X				
Continue on-going solid waste reduction, yard waste reduction and recycling programs.	X				
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Update retail/restaurant marketing materials.	X				
Begin downtown parking management and shuttle bus study.				X	Downtown development is ongoing - not appropriate time for parking study. Clifton Corridor TMA conducted the shuttle study on their own.
Coordinate with DeKalb County on development of North McDonough Courthouse development.	X				
Coordinate with DeKalb County on Callaway property development.		X			

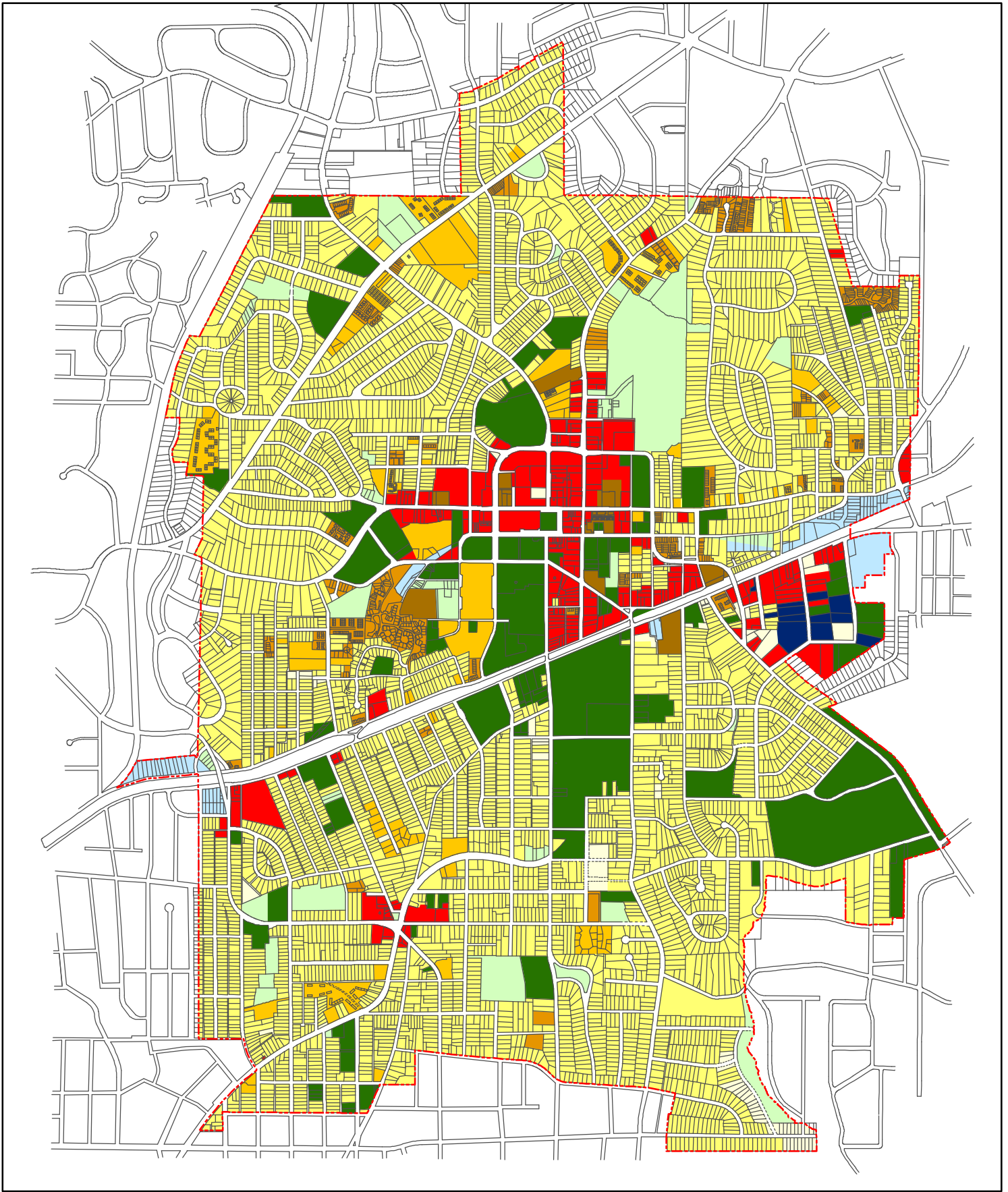
2001					
GROWTH AND LAND USE					
Develop standards for Oakhurst Business District/ West College Avenue assess needs with SDCCDC/ Consider "live/work" zoning. Develop standards. Prepare amendments to zoning ordinance.	X				
Assess city-wide traffic calming needs. Reduce auto traffic. Reduce auto speeds. Improve public transit.			X		Will be addressed in 2006 by Community Transportation Plan.
Develop standards for East College Avenue. Prepare development standards as part of a master plan, consider/adopt amendments to zoning ordinance.	X				
Implement standards for transition areas between commercial and residential districts including consider/adopt amendments to zoning ordinance.		X			
Implement development standards for downtown Decatur consider/adopt amendments to zoning ordinance.		X			
HOUSING					
Develop standards for infill residential development and additions to existing dwellings prepare amendments to zoning ordinance consider/adopt amendments.			X		Will be researched and developed by close of 2005.
Develop strategy to provide economically diverse housing options.	X				
Develop program to improve rental housing opportunities.				X	Individual projects have been implemented, however no formal program has been established.
Implement strategy for tax relief for elderly/low income homeowners.	X				
Implement strategy for redevelopment of Olympic Village Apartments.	X				
Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES					
Complete improvements to Historic Scottish Rite Hospital property (formerly Community Center of South Decatur).	X				
Implement plan to relocate Decatur Train Depot.	X				
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X				
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Analyze 2000 census data to determine population and demographic trends develop plan to adjust quality of life programs to reflect needs.	X				
Evaluate emergency service delivery.	X				
Develop funding options for MARTA Plaza redevelopment.	X				
Design streetscape improvements for Oakhurst Business District.			X		Lack of funding.
Appoint Capital Improvements Task Force determine needed public facilities capital improvements assess funding options.	X				
Continue improvements to parks/recreation facilities.	X				
Implement improvements to Harmony Park.	X				
Complete master planning for storm drainage improvement program.	X				
Design Phase 4 of Downtown Streetscapes.			X		Lack of funding.
Improve diversity at public events.		X			
Support and expand volunteer opportunities for citizens and identify current opportunities.	X				
Enhance community publications.	X				
Support the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance/similar organizations.	X				
Strengthen communications and connections among community members.	X				
Continue sidewalk improvements.	X				
Continue school facilities improvements.	X				
Continue annual miscellaneous building improvements and equipment purchases.	X				
Continue on-going solid waste reduction, yard waste reduction and recycling programs.	X				
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Develop strategy to diversify tenant base and attract high tech businesses to Decatur, prepare marketing study, develop marketing materials, target firms, and identify infrastructure needs.				X	Market study revealed high tech business is not an appropriate match for Decatur.
Develop strategy to encourage diversified and local owner-occupied retail uses.	X				
Develop plan for East College Avenue district including: inventory of property ownership, consider redevelopment alternatives, prepare master plan, assess funding needs.	X				
Coordinate with DeKalb County on North McDonough North Courthouse development.	X				
Coordinate with DeKalb County on Callaway property development.		X			
Complete downtown parking management and shuttle bus study.				X	Downtown development is ongoing - not appropriate time for parking study. Clifton Corridor TMA conducted the shuttle study on their own.

2002					
GROWTH AND LAND USE					
Determine feasibility of a downtown "business improvement district" to pay for improved security and pedestrian amenities, prepare feasibility study, assess support of downtown property owners and consider referendum.				X	Project was deleted. It was decided that the timing is inappropriate to impose an additional tax burden.
Complete traffic calming plan implement plan.			X		Lack of funding.
Develop standards for East College Avenue: prepare development standards as part of a master plan and consider/adopt amendments to zoning ordinance.	X				
HOUSING					
Investigate "resident-only" permit parking.	X				
Implement strategy for redevelopment of Olympic Village Apartments.	X				
Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
Implement strategy to provide economically diverse housing options.	X				
Implement program to improve rental housing opportunities.				X	Individual projects have been implemented, however no formal program has been established.
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES					
Develop greenspace/ open space plan. Inventory and assessment of unused rights of way, undeveloped properties, stream corridors. Consider purchase of undeveloped areas. Consider linking greenspace with bike paths and pedestrian amenities.	X				
Develop plan for re-use of Decatur Train Depot.			X		Efforts were focused on the physical moving of the facility. Plan for re-use has not been developed.
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X				
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Design and initiate next phase of storm drainage improvements.	X				
Consider a system of bicycle paths.			X		Will be addressed in 2006 by Community Transportation Plan.
Design uniform signage program for downtown area and neighborhood commercial districts.		X			
Implement Phase 4 of Downtown Streetscapes.			X		Lack of funding.
Improve diversity at public events.	X				
Support and expand volunteer opportunities for citizens.	X				
Enhance community publications.	X				
Support the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance/similar organizations.	X				
Strengthen communications and connections among community members.	X				
Continue sidewalk improvements include crosswalks, medians, bike paths.	X				
Continue school facilities improvements.	X				
Continue annual miscellaneous building improvements and equipment purchases.	X				
Continue on-going solid waste reduction, yard waste reduction and recycling programs.	X				
Redevelop MARTA Plaza.		X			
Implement streetscape improvements for Oakhurst Business District.			X		Lack of funding.
Begin Capital Improvement Program (CIP).	X				
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Develop plan for assembly and reuse of East Trinity/East Howard corridor. Inventory property ownership. Consider redevelopment alternatives. Assess funding needs. Consider East Trinity/East Howard intersection improvements.			X		City is working on acquiring several strategic parcels and coordinating with property owners.
Implement downtown parking management and shuttle bus plan.				X	Downtown development is ongoing - not appropriate time for parking study. Clifton Corridor TMA conducted the shuttle study on their own.
Implement strategy to diversify tenant base and attract high tech businesses to Decatur.				X	Market study revealed high tech businesses are not an appropriate match for Decatur.
Implement strategy to encourage diversified and local owner-occupied retail uses.		X			
Continue plan for East College Avenue district.	X				

2003					
GROWTH AND LAND USE					
Implement downtown "business improvement district" to pay for improved security and pedestrian amenities if feasible.				X	Project was deleted. It was decided that the timing is inappropriate to impose an additional tax burden.
Continue traffic calming plan.			X		Will be addressed in 2006 Community Transportation Plan.
Develop standards for East College Avenue.	X				
HOUSING					
Continue redevelopment of Olympic Village Apartments.	X				
Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
Continue strategy to provide economically diverse housing options.	X				
Continue program to improve rental housing opportunities.				X	Individual projects have been implemented, however no formal program has been established.
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES					
Implement plan for re-use of Decatur Train Depot.			X		Project still in the planning phase.
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X				
Begin implementation of greenspace/open space plan.			X		Plan was not complete until December 2004.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Evaluate emergency service delivery.	X				
Design Phase 5 of Downtown Streetscapes.				X	Lack of funding.
Improve diversity at public events.	X				
Support and expand volunteer opportunities for citizens.	X				
Enhance community publications.	X				
Support the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance/similar organizations.	X				
Support programs that strengthen community connections.	X				
Strengthen communications and connections among community members.	X				
Continue sidewalk improvements including crosswalks, medians, and bike paths.	X				
Continue school facility improvements.	X				
Continue annual miscellaneous building improvements and equipment purchases.	X				
Continue on-going solid waste reduction, yard waste, reduction and recycling programs.	X				
Continue CIP program.	X				
Design and initiate next phase of City storm drainage improvements.			X		Storm Water Plan was adopted in 2005. Implementation has not yet begun.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Continue strategy to diversify tenant base and attract high tech businesses to Decatur.				X	Market study revealed high tech businesses not an appropriate match for Decatur.
Continue strategy to encourage diversified and local owner-occupied retail uses.		X			
Implement plan for East College Avenue district.					
Implement plan for assembly and reuse of East Trinity/East Howard corridor.				X	Plan has not been developed yet. City is working on acquiring several strategic parcels and coordinating with other property owners.

2004					
GROWTH AND LAND USE					
Prepare new short term work program.	X				
Continue traffic calming plan.			X		Will be addressed in 2006 Community Transportation Plan.
Develop standards for East College Avenue.	X				
HOUSING					
Promote and support private housing rehabilitation and preservation efforts.	X				
Continue strategy to provide economically diverse housing options.	X				
Continue program to improve rental housing opportunities.				X	Individual projects have been implemented, however no formal program has been established.
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES					
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X				
Continue implementation of greenspace/ open space plan.			X		Plan was not complete until December 2004.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Implement Phase 5 of Downtown Streetscapes.			X		Lack of funding.
Improve diversity at public events.	X				
Support and expand volunteer opportunities for citizens.	X				
Enhance community publications.	X				
Support the Decatur Neighborhood Alliance/similar organizations.	X				
Support programs that strengthen community connections.	X				
Strengthen communications and connections among members.	X				
Continue sidewalk improvements including crosswalks, medians, and bike paths.	X				
Continue school facilities improvements.	X				
Continue annual miscellaneous building improvements and equipment purchases.	X				
Continue on-going solid waste reduction, yard waste reduction, and recycling programs.	X				
Continue CIP program.	X				
Design and initiate next phase of City storm drainage improvements.			X		Storm Water Plan was adopted in 2005. Implementation has not yet begun.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Continue strategy to diversify tenant base and attract high tech businesses to Decatur.				X	Market study revealed high tech businesses are not an appropriate match for Decatur.
Continue strategy to encourage diversified and local owner-occupied retail uses.	X				
Implement plan for East College Avenue district.	X				

SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM								
Project or Activity	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
TRANSPORTATION								
Develop Community Transportation Plan.		X	X			City/Consultant	\$500,000	City
Implement Community Transportation Plan.				X	X	City	\$15,000,000	City/GDOT
Design streetscape improvements for Oakhurst Business District.			X			City/Consultant	\$100,000	City/GDOT
Design Phase 4 of Downtown Streetscapes.			X			City/Consultant	\$100,000	City/GDOT
Design uniform signage program for downtown area and neighborhood commercial districts.	X					City/Consultant	\$200,000	City
Design Phase 5 of Downtown Streetscapes.				X		City/Consultant	\$100,000	City/GDOT
Initiate and complete signal timing study.		X	X			City/Consultant	\$150,000	City/GDOT
Continue sidewalk improvements.	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$150,000/yr	City
GROWTH & LAND USE								
Develop and implement design guidelines for residential infill development.	X	X				City	\$10,000	City
Complete & Implement Annexation Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	City/Consultant	\$50,000	City
Update of the Strategic Plan.			X	X		City/Consultant	\$250,000	City
Develop plan for assembly and reuse of East Trinity/East Howard corridor.			X			City/Decatur Development Authority	\$50,000	City
Citywide review of land use and zoning		X				City	\$10,000	City
HOUSING								
Construction of Columbia Park Development.	X	X				Decatur Housing Authority	\$20,000,000	DHA/GDOT
Construction of Tally Street Lofts.	X	X				Decatur Housing Authority	\$8,000,000	DHA
Continue affordable housing initiatives	X	X	X	X	X	City/Decatur Housing Authority		City/DHA
COMMUNITY FACILITIES								
Renovate City Hall.	X	X				City	\$3,500,000	City
Implement Recommendations of Athletic Facility Master Plan.	X	X	X			City	\$18,000,000	City
Implement Storm Water Master Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	City/Consultant	\$6,500,000	City
Relocate Public Works facility.				X	X	City	\$6,000,000	City
Decatur MARTA Station improvements	X	X				City	\$5,000,000	City/GDOT
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Hold Historic Preservation Fair.			X	X	X	City/Decatur Preservation Alliance	\$5,000/yr	City/DPA
Implementation of Preservation Corridor Plan.			X	X	X			
Plant minimum of 50 trees/year on public rights of way and other public areas.	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$10,000/yr	City
Provide financial support to the Woodlands.	X	X	X	X		City	\$200,000	City/Non-profit
Complete & Implement Cemetery Master Plan.	X	X				City/Consultant	\$2,000,000	City
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Pursue redevelopment options for the Big H property in Oakhurst.	X					City/Decatur Development Authority	\$25,000	City/Decatur Development Authority
Develop advertising program focused on young entrepreneurs and business startups.	X					City/Decatur Development Authority	\$20,000	City/Decatur Development Authority
Locate a suitable tenant and redevelopment option for the Old Decatur Train Depot.	X					City/Decatur Development Authority	\$10,000	City/Decatur Development Authority
Develop and implement a marketing and public relations strategy for the MARTA redevelopment.	X					City/Decatur Development Authority	\$10,000	City/Decatur Development Authority
Develop and implement an annual retail and restaurant advertising program.	X	X	X	X	X	City/Decatur Development Authority	\$10,000	City/Decatur Development Authority
Coordinate with DeKalb County on Callaway property development.		X	X	X		City/Decatur Development Authority	\$50,000	City/Decatur Development Authority



EXISTING LAND USE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Density Residential Medium Density Residential (TH) Medium Density Residential (MF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Density Residential Commercial Industrial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public/Institutional Transportation/Communication/Utilities Park/Recreation/Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant
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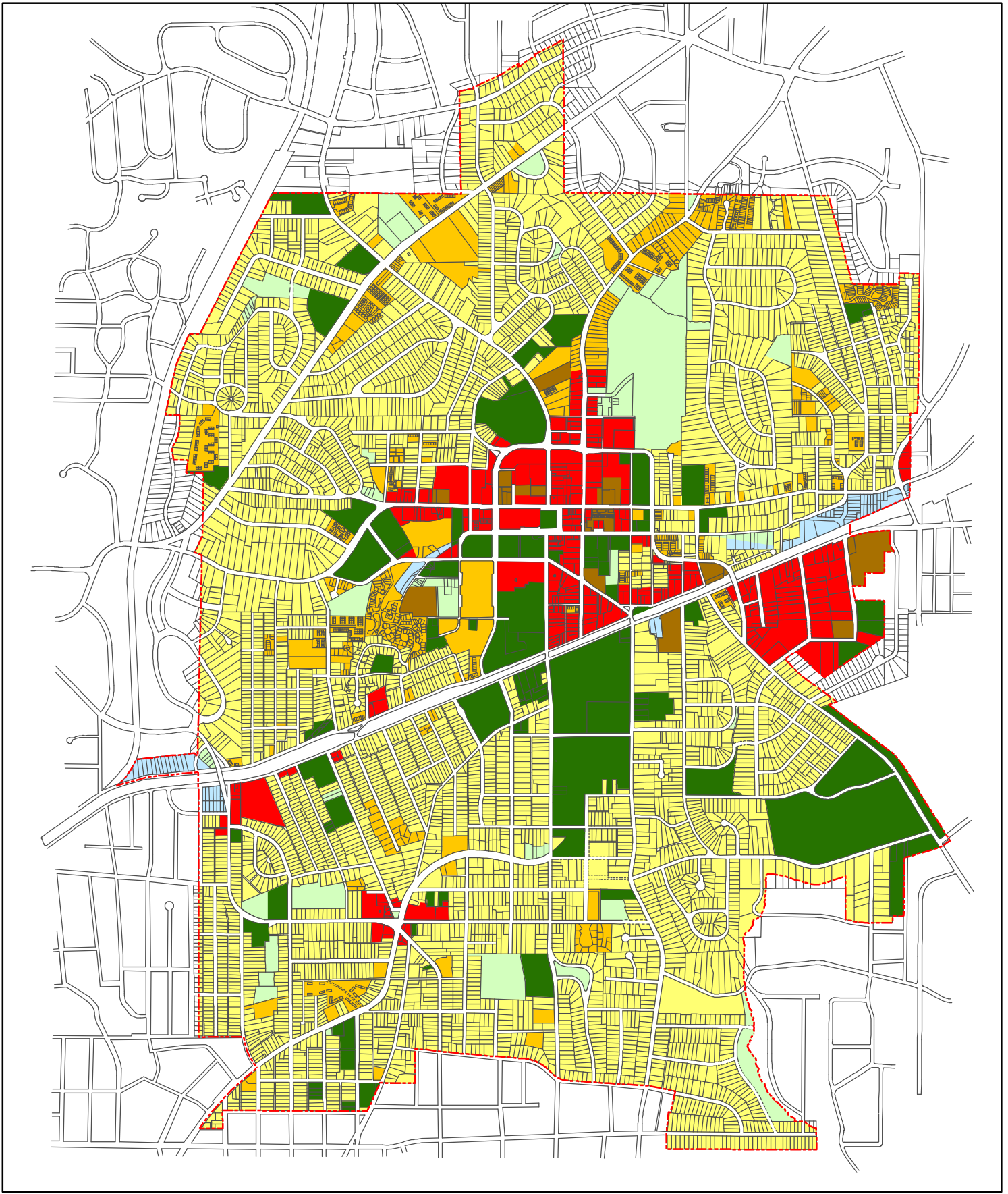
0 440 880 1,760 2,640 3,520 Feet 1 inch equals 1,807.481887 feet

NO.	ISSUE	DATE
1	First Issue	3/25/05
2	Revision	5/4/05
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

100%: All other files will have an 80% transparency overlay.
 25%: All other files will have a 25% transparency overlay.
 50%: All other files will have a 50% transparency overlay.

DATE: 05/11/15
 CITY OF DECATUR
 DEKALB COUNTY

CREATED BY: JAC
 CHECKED BY: WNY/HIS



FUTURE LAND USE

Low Density Residential	Commercial/High Density Residential	Transportation/Communication/Utilities
Medium Density Residential	Public/Institutional	
High Density Residential	Park/Recreation/Conservation	

0 440 880 1,760 2,640 3,520 Feet 1 inch equals 1,807 feet

NO.	ISSUE	DATE
1	First Issue	3/25/05
2	Revision	10/12/05
3		
4		
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100% (notwithstanding to whomsoever)
 CITY OF DECATUR
 DECATUR, GA
 10/1/15

CITY OF DECATUR
 DECATUR COUNTY
 10/1/15

CHECKED BY: