



DEKALB COMMUNITY ACADEMY

ENGAGE. EDUCATE. EMPOWER

 DeKalb County
GEORGIA
Department of Planning & Sustainability

LaSonji Marshall
Special Projects Coordinator

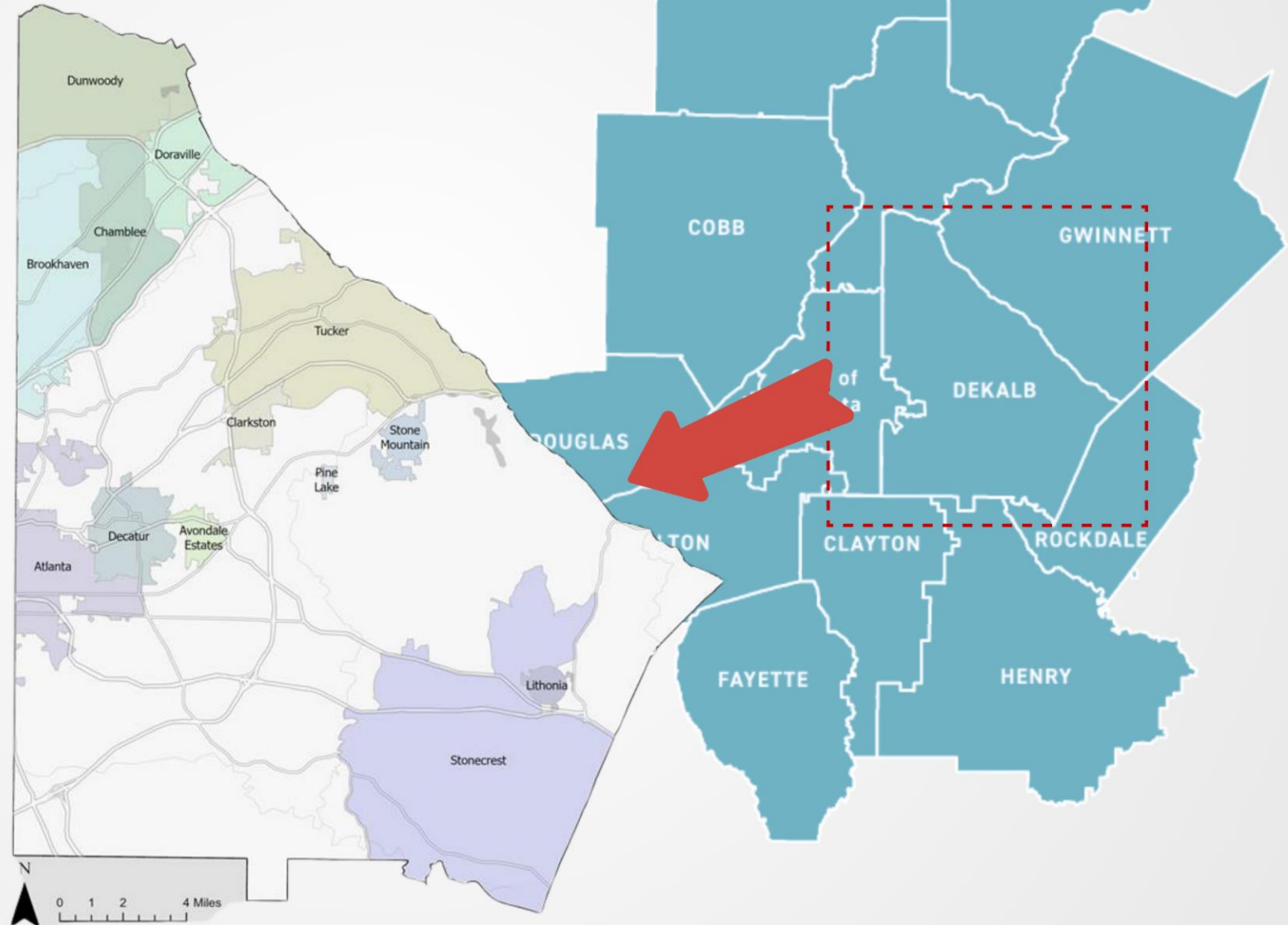


Eva Chauveau
Planner



DeKalb County: Overview

DeKalb County is part of the Metro Atlanta Region with a population of over **420,000 people** (2020 Census Data). DeKalb County is made up of **43% incorporated** (individual municipalities) and **57% unincorporated** (areas that make up the County proper).





COMMUNITY 101

Proposing Change through Empowerment





Topics for Discussion

01 Introduction: DeKalb Community Academy

Why DeKalb Community Academy?

02 What is Community 101?

Equipping DeKalb County Residents

03 Building the Narrative

Community Impact: McNair, Columbia, & Redan

04 Engaging, Educating, & Empowering 101

Program Objectives, Collaboration Model, & Ambassador Program

05 Conclusion: Staying Connected

Q&A

Engaging ★ Educating ★ Empowering

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Introduction: DeKalb Community Academy



Mission & Purpose

DeKalb Community Academy

An initiative aimed at *empowering communities* and *fostering partnerships* through education on policy, zoning, land-use, and other planning-related matters.

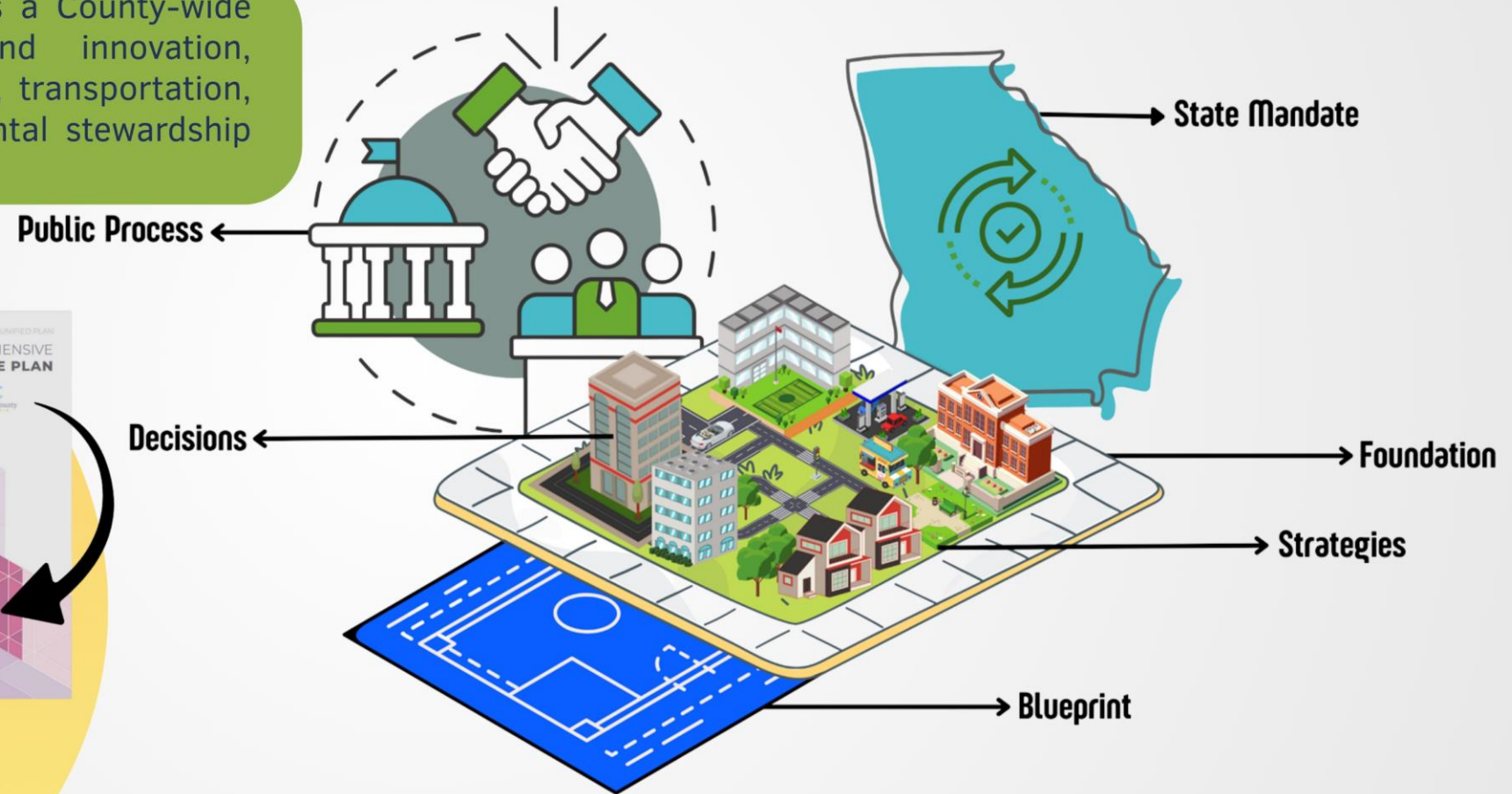
Our goal is to advance the vision of a livable, equitable, sustainable, beautiful, and prosperous DeKalb County.

18 districts within Unincorporated DeKalb County.



Why DeKalb Community Academy?

The DeKalb 2050 Unified Plan provides a County-wide focus on sustainability, equity, and innovation, addressing key issues such as housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental stewardship over the next three decades.



**Breakdown of DeKalb County's 2050 Unified Plan
(Transportation & Land Use)**

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What is
Community 101?





A Bridge

for community empowerment, education, and action

A Vehicle

to address short-term and long-term key issues in the community districts

A Strategy

for sustainable community development



WHAT IS COMMUNITY 101?

The “Community 101” program is designed to provide training tailored to DeKalb County residents, equipping them with essential knowledge about the services offered by the DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department.

An Opportunity

to align development in the community with the 2050 Unified Plan

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Building the Narrative:

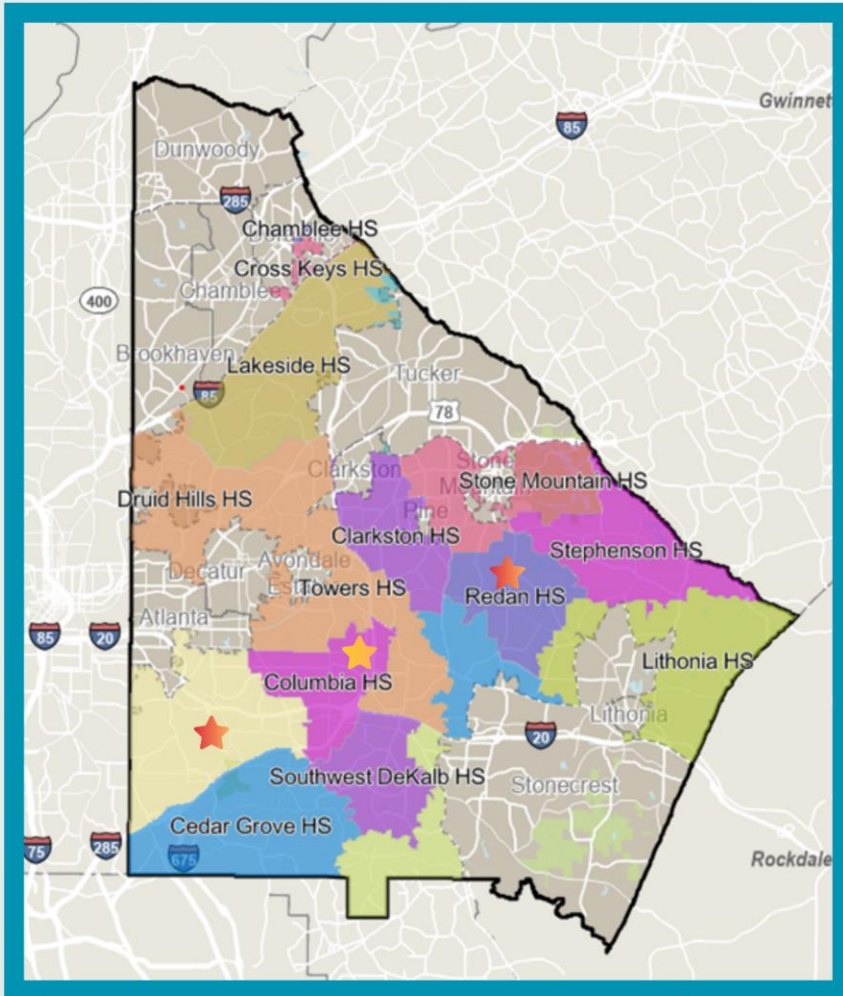
McNair, Columbia, & Redan



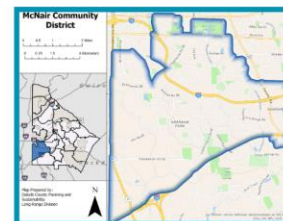
Community Districts

DeKalb Community Academy

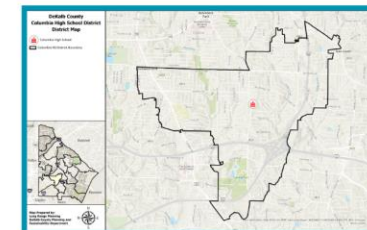
Boundary areas for the Community 101 program are determined by school districts. For example, the Redan boundary area is defined by Redan High School and its feeder schools within radius.



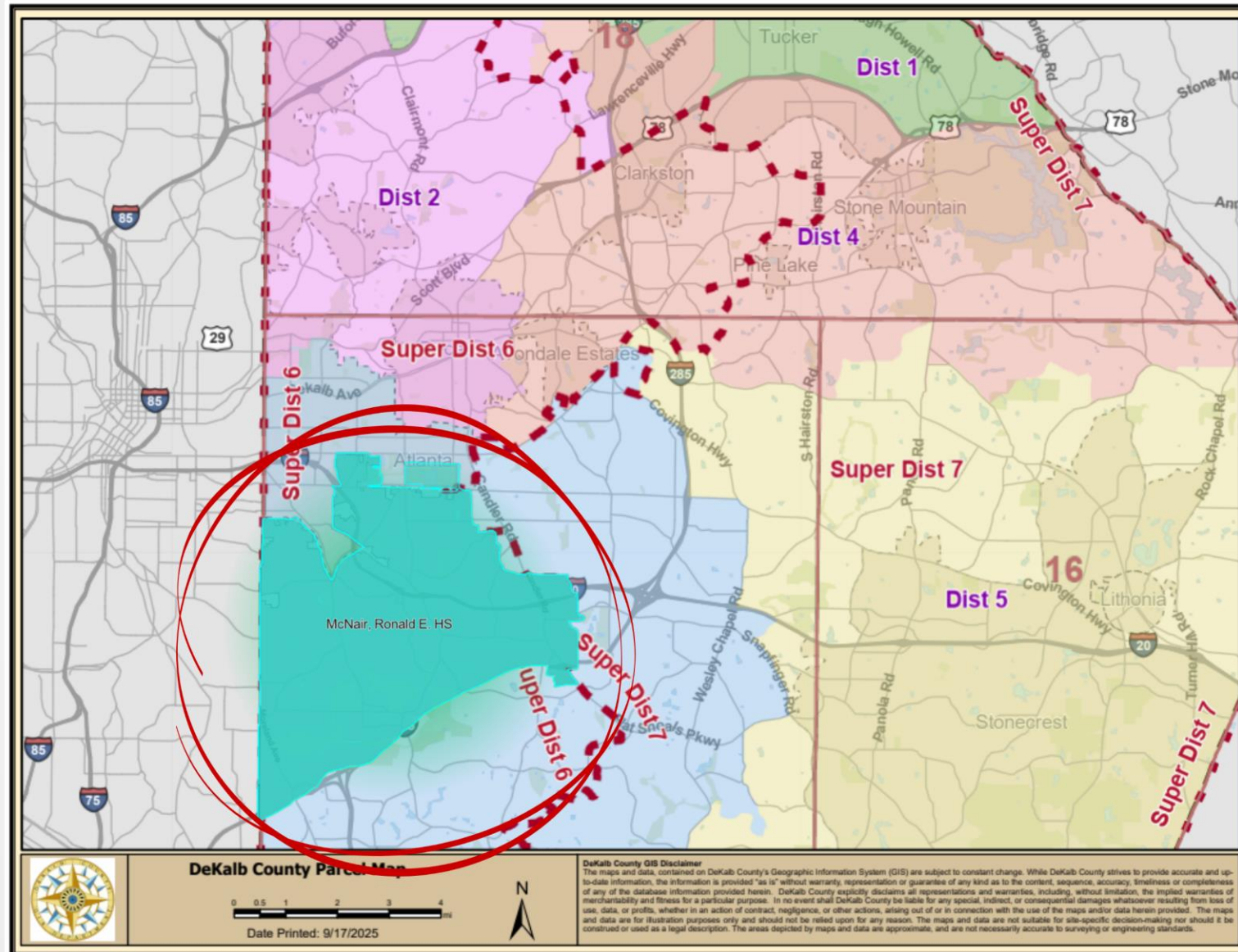
The McNair Community District helped us kick-start the Community 101 program for DeKalb County, focusing on public safety, sustainability and best zoning practices.



The Columbia Community District was a learning opportunity for both County Planning Officials and residents, focusing on SWOT analysis, interdepartmental collaboration, and engagement.



DeKalb County
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McNair 101: A Review

- McNair is fairly well located in relation to Downtown Decatur and Atlanta, though traffic and transit options will affect that. Access to major roads is decent.
- Access to grocery stores, local shops, and restaurants are limited, with most in short driving distance rather than walking.
- Some infrastructure or services may lag transit or access might not be ideal everywhere.

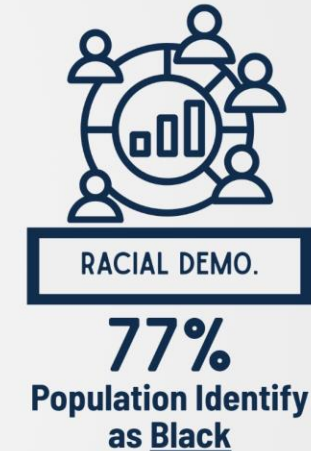
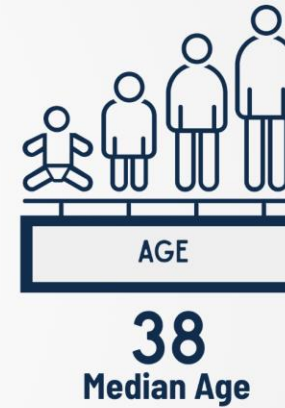
Community Priorities

Support economic development throughout the community district through collaboration

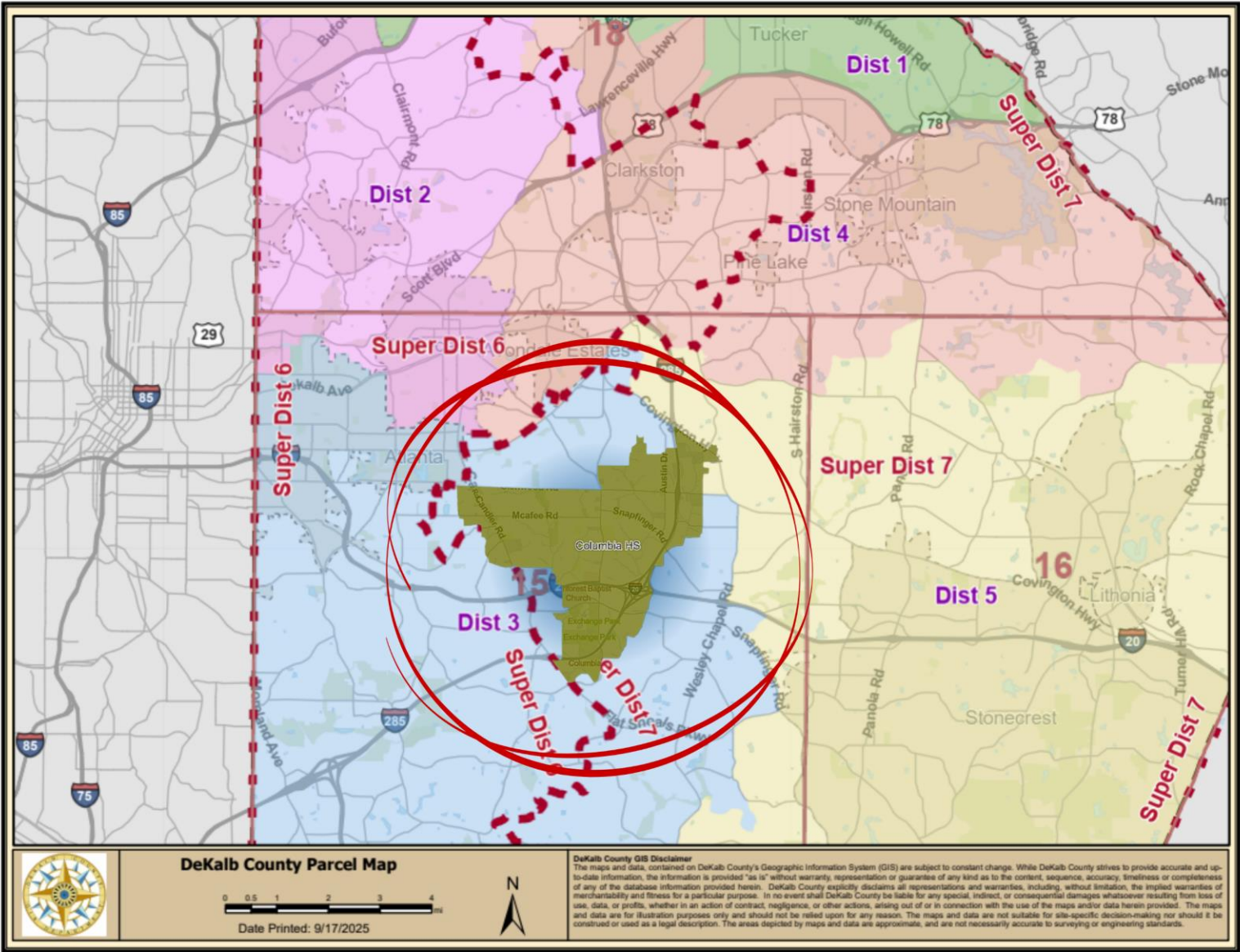
Target marketing and communications to educate community on planning process

Improve mobility through infrastructure enhancements that focus on increased pedestrian access

Create new methods for notifying the community about action items in local area



Columbia 101: A Review



Columbia 101: A Review

- ⚙️ Columbia area is a fairly long street that runs through various parts of Decatur and unincorporated DeKalb.
- ⚙️ Proximity to major roads & highways (I-20, I-285) gives relatively good access to the rest of Metro Atlanta.
- ⚙️ Noise, traffic congestion, and visibility of crime tend to be higher closer to commercial strips, busy intersections, or major roads

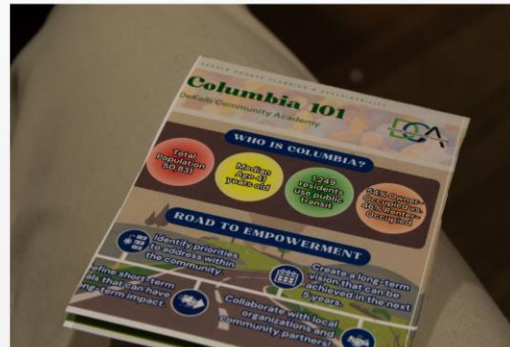
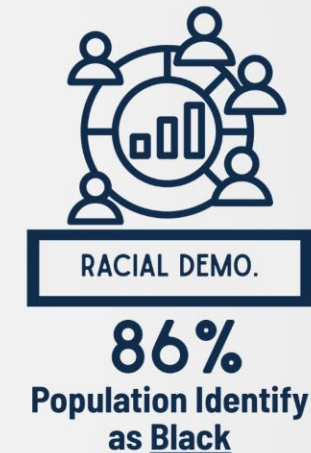
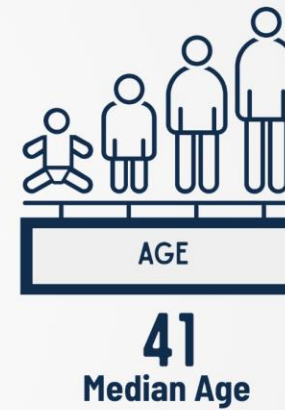
Community Priorities

Neighborhood renewal through revitalization and beautification

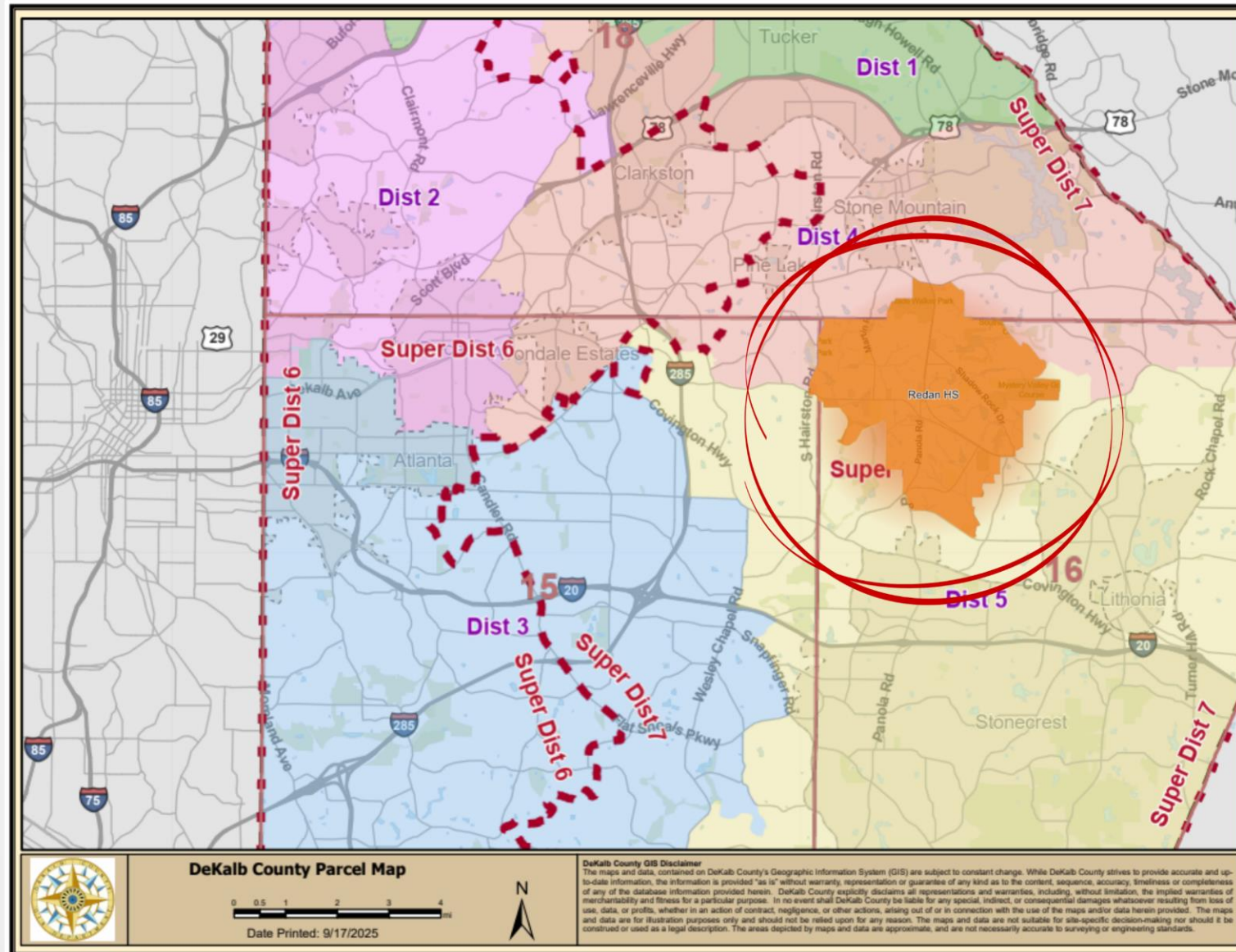
Community policing and ensuring public safety throughout the area

Encouraging new economic development and improving commercial blight

Improving communication and community outreach



Redan 101: A Preview



Redan 101: A Preview

- Redan is primarily a residential, suburban community, with many single-family homes, townhomes, and apartment complexes.
- There is a high percentage of renters compared to homeowners in some neighborhoods.
- Many small businesses and local restaurants serve the community, especially along Redan Road and S. Hairston Road.

Community Priorities (Sample)

TBD

TBD

TBD

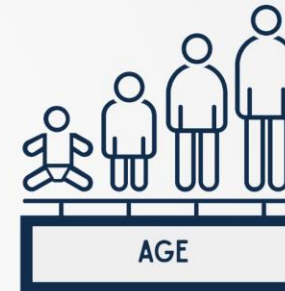
TBD



25,348
People



7.2%
Unemployment Rate



37.4
Median Age



87%
Population Identify
as Black



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Engaging, Educating, & Empowering 101



Program Objectives

1ST
MONTH

Assess community districts and select next area to begin Community 101 program.

2ND
MONTH

Gather SWOT data to present to 1st Steering Committee and Public Meetings.

3RD
MONTH

Analyze data to create personalized priority buckets with strategies for implementation.

4TH
MONTH

Gather feedback on recommendations from 2nd Steering Committee and Public Meetings.

5TH
MONTH

Finalize priority matrix with project timelines (long-term vs short-term), lead/support roles, and suggested project partnerships.

6TH
MONTH

Conclude Community 101 with ArcGIS StoryMaps, final recommendations, and selected Ambassadors to lead community projects following their Ambassador Action Plan.

Building a Priority Matrix

Determining Program Recommendations:

Define priorities (A, B, C, D)

Understanding SWOT analysis and interpreting community challenges to be addressed.

Short-Term Goals

Determine what can be achieved in the next 1 to 3 years through community efforts.

Long-Term Goals

Determine what can be achieved in the next 5 to 10 years through community efforts.

Involving Local Partners

Create a Community-Based Organization List and highlight cultural/community assets that can help to achieve goals.

Engagement 101: What do we accomplish?

1st Steering Committee Meeting

Typically occurs during the 1st month of the program.
Present County SWOT analysis to committee members for feedback.
Members are selected through our Community-Based Organization list and District email notification to gather interest in participating.



2nd Steering Committee Meeting

Occurs during the 3rd or 4th month of the program.
Data gathered from initial steering and public meetings are presented through ArcGIS StoryMap that is uploaded to the Engage DeKalb (website).
Priorities from SWOT are finalized for public meeting .



Engagement 101: What do we accomplish?

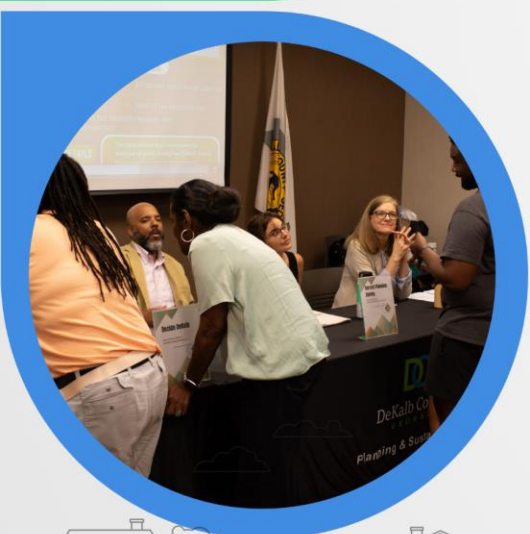


1st Public Meeting

Typically occurs during the first month of the program start.

Present County SWOT analysis to public and gather feedback to create priority matrix.

Involves activities through workshop sessions, workbook activities, mapping activities, etc.



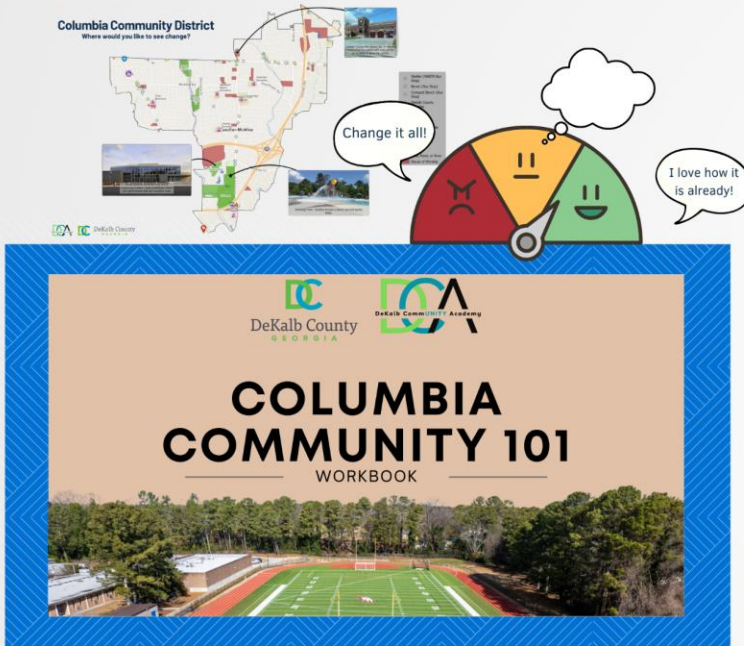
2nd Public Meeting

Typically occurs between the 5th and 6th month of the program to conclude.

Finalized priority matrix is presented to community for public comment and a forum is held for residents to ask questions to County experts.

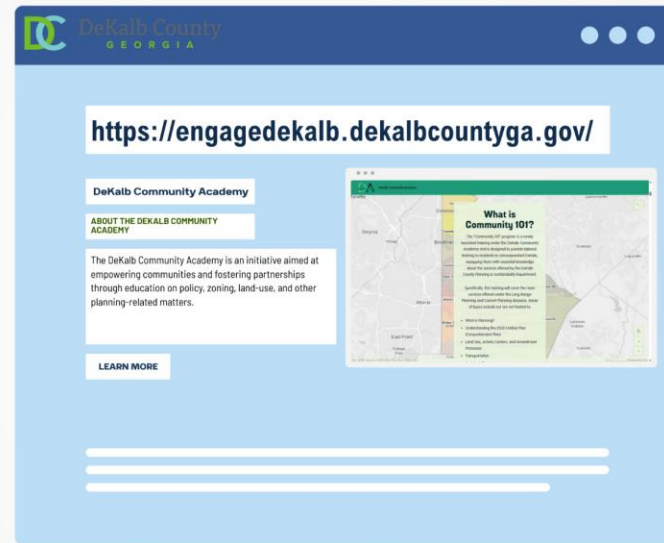


Engagement 101: How do we engage?



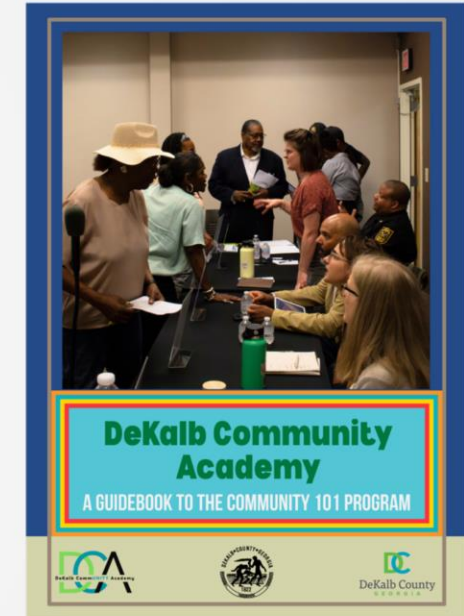
ACTIVITIES

Activities were presented during Public Meetings through mapping, workbook, and table activities.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

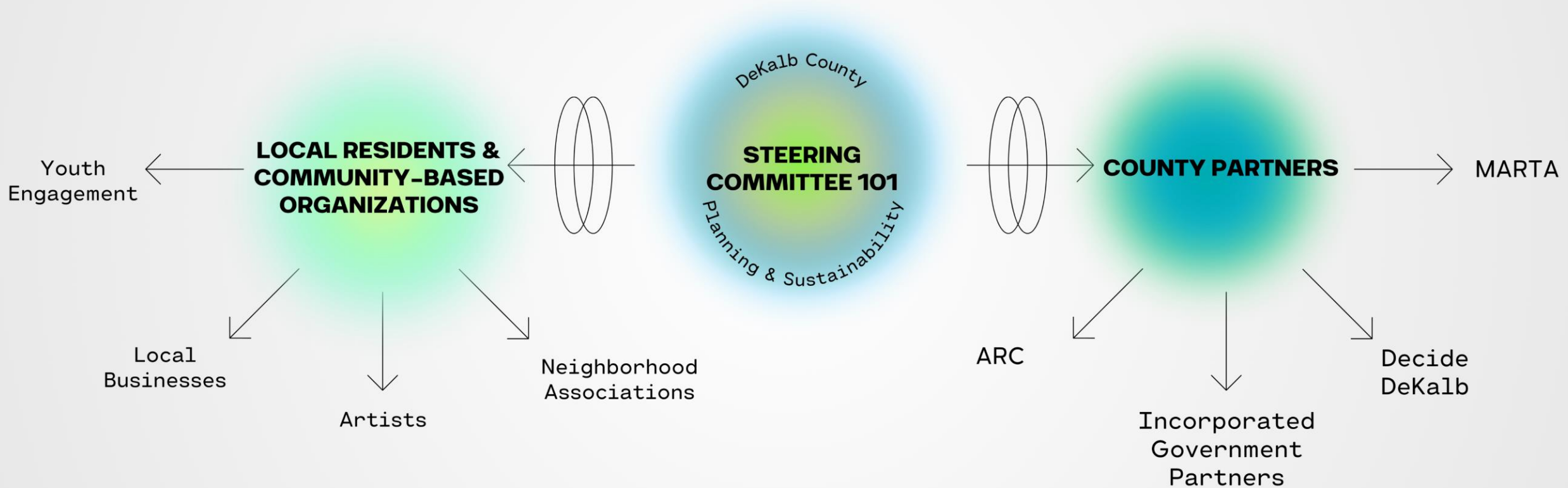
Online engagement was promoted through Engage DeKalb (website), such as surveys and StoryMaps.



GUIDEBOOK

A Guidebook will be used to help summarize overall direction of Community 101 and allow for replicability in other communities.

Engagement 101: Collaboration Model



Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), which are service organizations that assist the surrounding community. These can be educational programs, faith-based organizations, grassroot movements, and non-profits.

LET'S

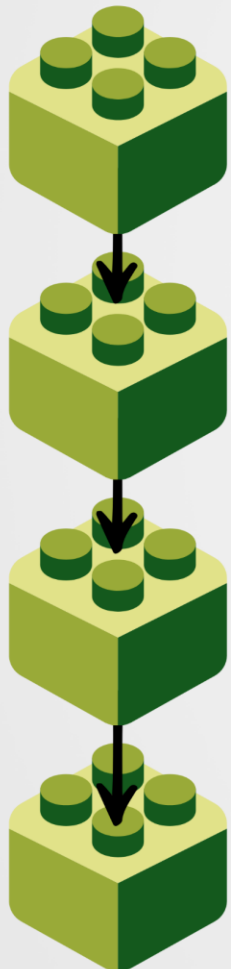
TALK

How can we improve your
quality of life?



Educating 101: What are our goals?

4 KEY PRINCIPLES



KNOWLEDGE
SHARING

EQUITY

ENGAGEMENT

EMPOWERMENT

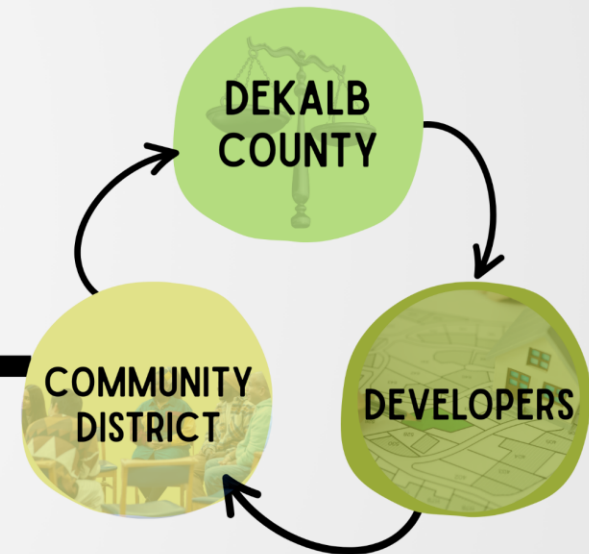
How do you see your community in 10 years?

Are you satisfied with your community?

Which recreational facilities do you frequent the most?

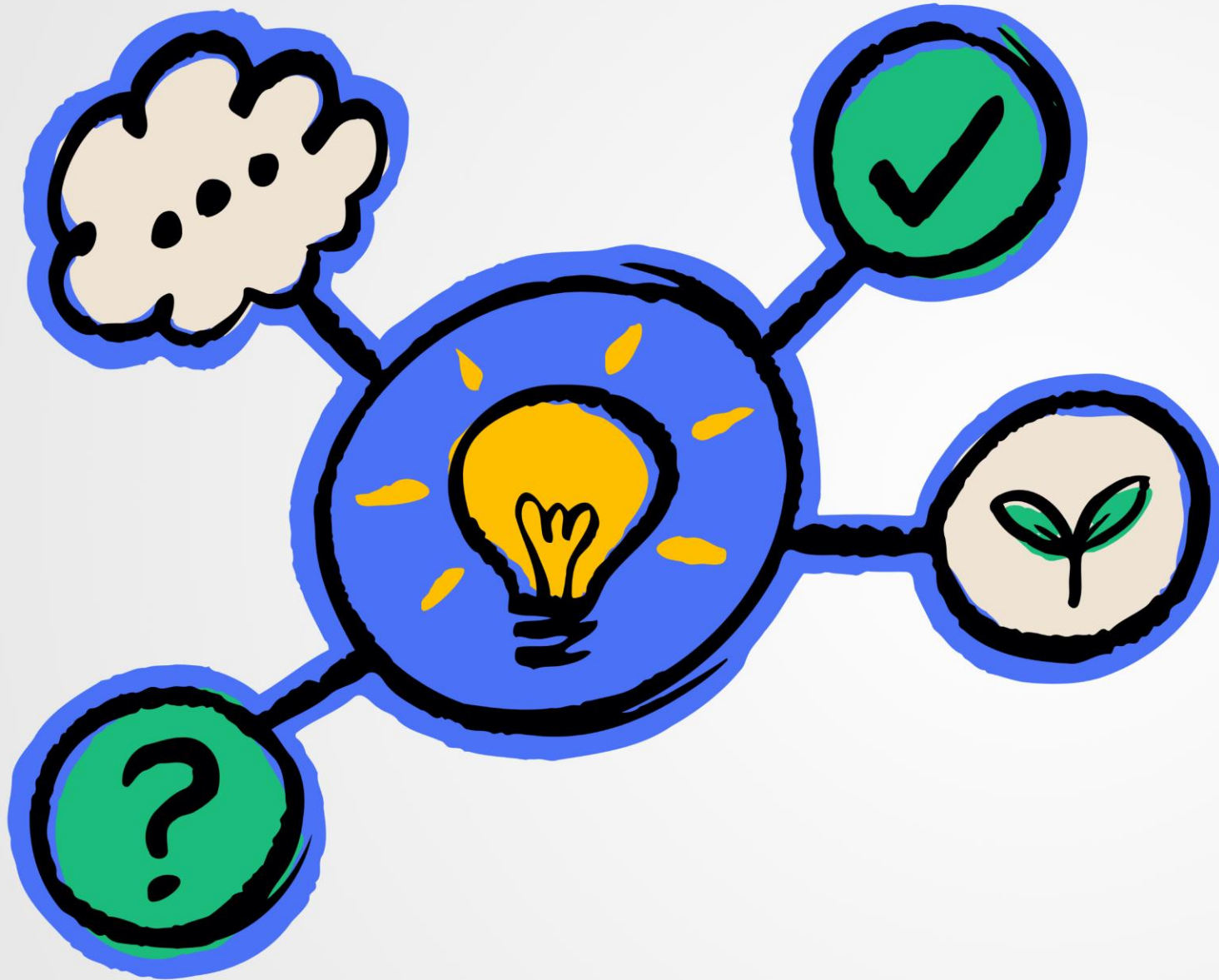
What would you like to see more of?

Where would you like to see the most improvements?



Educating 101: What are our goals?





Thinking About Empowerment

Knowing what you can do as a member
of your community.



Building a Local Support System

Finding organizations and institutions in your area that can support your cause.

Organizations, also known as community-based organizations, can include educational programs, faith-based organizations, grassroots movements, health & recovery centers, and non-profits that operate in or close to your community.



Raising Your Community Voice



Attend Public Meetings

Attending public meetings lets you voice concerns and influence decisions, promoting transparency. It builds community and encourages civic engagement for change.



Engage with Elected Officials

Engaging with public officials lets you share concerns and influence policies. It fosters accountability and strengthens community involvement.



Join Commissions & Organize Community Gatherings

Joining commissions and organizing gatherings help shape decisions and foster community engagement. They provide platforms for collaboration and collective action.

Empowering 101: Ambassador Program



GOALS:

- 1** PARTICIPATE IN QUARTERLY AMBASSADOR MEETINGS
- 2** IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN
- 3** EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY
- 4** MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL DECORUM

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Conclusion:
Staying Connected



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DCTV 23



How do you stay connected?





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Planning & Sustainability Department

DeKalb Community Academy

The DeKalb Community Academy (DCA) is an initiative aimed at empowering communities and fostering partnerships through education on policy, zoning, land-use, and other planning-related matters.

Which DCA District are you in?



tinyurl.com/DCABoundary

Visit the Project Page



tinyurl.com/DeKalbCommunityAcademy



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Have More Questions, Contact Us!



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Q&A