Equity is Not a Thing, It’s Everything

Georgia / Tennessee Planning Associations Joint Conference 2021
A Few Introductions

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City of Decatur

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Senior Associate & Planner
TSW

Sarah McCollery, AICP
Associate & Planner
TSW

Fonta High, LPC, NCC, MAC, CPCS
Professional Counselor
Co-Chair Beacon Hill
Black Alliance for Human Rights
Context: the last decade in America
Mentimeter Question

How did the events of 2020 affect your community?

Join Mentimeter 2 ways:
https://www.menti.com/t4s1d1hpyd
OR
www.menti.com and use code 1685 9146
Context: the last decade in Decatur
Mentimeter Question

How has community engagement with your local government changed in the last decade?
Decatur’s History of Planning

Decatur in 1928

Decatur in 1993

Source: Emory University Woodruff Library
http://www.digitalgallery.emory.edu/luna/servlet/mnp2sw

Source: Google Earth
Decatur’s History of Planning

Urban Renewal in Beacon Hill

Image source: www.decaturga.com/beacon
Decatur’s History of Planning

“the scourge of slums and blight”

“Urban Renewal will open up an ill arranged, drying up, stagnated area of Decatur for positive growth. . . . It’s an investment in a better, brighter future for all.”

“verified by a professional urban planning agency”
DECISION MAKING POWER

Citizen Empowerment

Collaborate

Involve

Consult

Inform
Starting the Conversation

Community Healing

The work has just begun & how we're moving forward
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity/ Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Marital or Family Status</th>
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<td>Cultural Identity Groups</td>
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<td>Neighborhood/ Community</td>
<td>Neighborhood Associations</td>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Minority Pride</td>
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<td>Music/Arts/ Entertainment</td>
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<td>Hobbies</td>
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<td>Education / Schools</td>
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<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Urbanism / Smart Growth</td>
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Decatur Strategic Plan
Audience Outreach Matrix
A JOINT, ONLINE PUBLIC FORUM FOR EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

PRESENTED BY THE BETTER TOGETHER ADVISORY BOARD AND THE CITY OF DECATUR’S 2020 STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT.

Join us, together with local partners, as we wrap up our Anti-Racism Speaker series with a review of its highlights, then adjourn to breakout discussions that explore real world options for change in the coming decade.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14
6-8PM ON ZOOM

Register now to attend:
decatur2030.com/the-decatur-202s

With your host, Ed Lee, EdD
Senior Director, Alben W. Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue, Emory University
## Climate Action

**Cut Emissions for the Long Term. Prepare to Adapt Now**

### What do you think?

Write your thoughts on a sticky note and place on the board, or put a green dot next to your favorites.

#### Energy

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<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Interconnected Topics</th>
<th>What do you think?</th>
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<td>Solar panel</td>
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<td>Wind turbine</td>
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<td>Bioenergy</td>
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#### Placemaking

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<td>Pedestrian</td>
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<td>Public parks</td>
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#### Education & Culture Change

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<td>Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
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From Public Comments to Action

Example Action Items for Housing

AH.01a - AH.01t - Implement the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Force report.
AH.02 - Ensure that each neighborhood provides its fair share of affordable housing.
AH.07 - Update affordable housing metrics to include transportation costs.

Change zoning to increase density, allowing efficiency requirements, Github, and improvements to housing options already available in Decatur. - Ideas Wall Participant

"If the city insists on higher density housing, it should perhaps consider taking a more active role in maintaining, improving, enforcing parking and traffic rules, keeping overgrowth of the sidewalks, making sure city trash cans are emptied, upgrading city parks and pools, etc." - Roundtable participant

I am curious about the status and plan for the report produced by the Decatur Affordable Housing Task Force earlier this year. My understanding is that the city has "received" it and I would be interested whether any specific recommendations are being considered for implementation. - Ideas Wall participant

"Someone has to pay to make the city more affordable. We should be up front and honest about the tax burden." - Roundtable participant

"Cost of housing isn't just the housing unit—also need to include transportation costs + utilities." - Decatur 2022 Discussion Group

Preferred Affordable Housing Tools
- Online Tool Survey Ranking (202 responses)
- Owner Incentives such as tax abatements to preserve existing naturally occurring affordable housing units and rental programs to provide rent assistance programs
- Strategic Partnerships with the Decatur Land Trust and Decatur Housing Authority

Civic Trust | Affordable Housing | Equity & Racial Justice | Climate Action | Mobility | Economic Growth
It’s All Connected

- In most cases, Decatur’s issues are interconnected or interrelated
- Equity and Racial Justice issues and Climate Change are the broader and ever-present context in which we operate
Why Call Out Race?

Sometimes people use “diversity” to avoid addressing the specific concerns of Black people.

Decline in Decatur’s Black Population since 1980
Bold recommendations
Going beyond the previous plans
Moving Forward
Equity Action Items

- Community-directed reparations task force
- Equity tool and scorecard
- Recruit and retain diverse businesses
- Affordable retail space
- City Equity Director and Employee Relations Director
- Acknowledge and address history
- Continuing conversations
Other Action Items

- Evaluate carbon impact of City decisions
- Continue to empower Decatur’s citizens
- Draw on the expertise of advisory boards
- Create more online resources
- Implement and make official most of the Affordable Housing Task Force report
- Expand housing options
- Include transportation and other costs of living when considering housing cost
Other Action Items

- Make walking and biking easier
- Environmental impact of transportation decisions, goals for non-car trips
- Work with MARTA to increase transit service and implement TOD plans
- Encourage affordable retail space
- Start a business incubator
- Start a facade improvement program
- Focus on people- and place-based economics
What’s coming to Decatur on September 12?

Art for the People

NEW DATE!

Art for the People combines three elements about which I care deeply: Education, Creativity, and Social Justice. Ellex Swavoni has created Decatur’s own member of the Dora Milaje to inspire, guide, and protect us on our difficult journey toward an anti-racist future.

Lew Letton

FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF DECATOR MAKERS
Where is your fire?  
I say where is your fire?  
Can't you smell it coming out of our past?  
The fire of living... not dying  
The fire of loving... not killing  

Ellex Swavoni  
A hero is nothing more than a human being who decides to place themselves between the innocent and cruel.
Discussion Groups
Discussion Question

Consider your community: what issues is it facing around equity and race?
Discussion Question

How do you chart a different trajectory and amplify voices that have been historically excluded?
www.decatur2030.com