

2019 IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW ONE  
DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2018



CITY OF DECATUR PLANNING DEPARTMENT

# 2019 IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW ONE DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2018

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**THE ONE DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY OUR COMMUNITY. THERE ARE MANY GRASSROOTS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BLOSSOMED AND BUILD ON IDEAS EXPRESSED DURING THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS. TO FULLY IMPLEMENT OUR PLAN WE ARE SEEKING ENTITIES THAT HAVE A PASSION FOR THE MATTER AT HAND**

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## CREATING A QUALITY PLACE

Efficient use of land resources that offers distinctive and desirable places to live, work and play, includes strategic revitalization throughout the community, maintains historic and natural assets, and supports a high level of community pride.

### Objective 1. Promote desirable and financially beneficial development patterns.

**QP 1.1 Reform the City's zoning and land development codes.** City codes are the primary means of implementing the Future Land Use recommendations illustrated on the Future Land Use and Character Map. An update to the zoning code and land development regulations should include standards that prescribe the form of development as well as allowable uses. There are various regulatory actions throughout this plan. In terms of improving the physical character of development, zoning reform should:

**COMMENTS** - The zoning rewrite was initiated On November 8<sup>TH</sup> and 9<sup>TH</sup> with public meetings and will be an approximately 18-month process.

**QP 1.2 Create a task force to consider various incentives for development.** The task force should evaluate various financial or regulatory incentives and make recommendations about using incentives to promote development in designated areas. The types of incentives considered should include tax increment financing (TIF), density bonuses, and limited property tax abatements, among others.

**COMMENTS** – The City is actively discussing this and the Chamber and (Entrepreneurial Center) EC are also researching options.

**QP 1.3 Conduct a 'return on investment' analysis for major development proposals.** Not all development projects bring net fiscal benefits to the City over the long term. For large-scale development proposals that require changes to zoning, infrastructure investment or other financial incentive from the City, an assessment of the net fiscal impact should be conducted to evaluate the proposal. A fiscal return on investment (ROI) analysis would determine the fiscal benefits to the City relative to costs for providing public improvements to support a development. ROI methodology will vary by project, but would generally consider project costs to the City (initial incentives and long term utility and service costs), fiscal returns (sales and property tax revenue) and economic returns (direct and indirect benefits such as jobs, related investments, and amenity value).

**COMMENTS** –The city has recently employed a Chief Financial Officer (CFO). This will be discussed in more detail when a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is in place. He has recently developed an investment policy.

**QP 1.4 Adopt a strategic annexation policy.** An annexation policy would identify priority areas for potential future annexation and outline terms for properties annexing into the City. Those terms should include rezoning of a property in accordance with this plan's Future Land Use and Character Map. This policy would continue to require that provision of public sewer utility service be tied to annexation.

**COMMENTS** –The sewer extension policies are part of a strategic annexation policy have proven effective. The policy should also consider requiring water and other city services being provided with annexation. There continue to be discussions on various priority locations for future annexations that become evident prior to adoption of a policy. An example of this is the recent request by the Alabama Robotics Technology Park to be annexed into the City of Decatur in order to receive city safety services.

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**QP 1.5 Collaborate with Decatur Utilities to evaluate infrastructure funding models.** The City should encourage Decatur Utilities (which is independently managed) to consider other models of funding sewer and water infrastructure expansions. The current developer-funded model minimizes the use of taxpayer funds for capital improvements. However, it may be beneficial for the City to encourage development by pro-actively funding infrastructure expansion to drive growth.

**COMMENTS** –Initial discussions have centered on the long term value of infrastructure extension as an incentive. The sewer extension and service extension policies are part of this and effective. The sustainable creation of a CIP is part of this initiative. We continue to work on our processes and procedures to achieve streamlined and customer friendly procedures. **Decatur Utilities** “The city and Decatur Utilities are continuing to discuss how best to implement this.”

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 1. Promote desirable and fiscally beneficial development patterns.</b>							
QP 1.1	<b>Reform the city's zoning and land development codes.</b>	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC	Underway	yes	yes
QP 1.2	<b>Create a task force to consider various incentives for development.</b>	Short-term	CFO	PC, CC, Chamber	Underway	yes	yes
QP 1.3	<b>Conduct a 'return on investment' analysis for major development proposals.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	CFO	Planning, PC, CC, chamber	Underway	yes	yes
QP 1.4	<b>Adopt a strategic annexation policy.</b>	Mid-term	Planning, Legal	PC, CC	Underway	yes	yes
QP 1.5	<b>Collaborate with Decatur Utilities to evaluate infrastructure funding models.</b>	Short-term	DU, CFO	CC and DU board	Underway	yes	Discussion is ongoing

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## Objective 2. Improve the appearance of public and private property throughout the City (particularly gateways).

**QP 2.1 Redefine the 6th Avenue Gateway.** As the primary entry to Decatur, the appearance of 6th Avenue between Downtown and the river fundamentally shapes visitor perceptions and community pride. The City should focus beautification efforts on this area through capital improvements to the street (lighting, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, utilities), and also through zoning updates that support higher quality design and pedestrian-scaled development. (See demonstration corridors, page 66)

**COMMENTS** - The zoning rewrite will address future design standards. Lighting and underground utilities continue to be addressed with new standards being coordinated by DU (Decatur Utilities) and the City. Land banking in this area is ongoing. **The Chamber** has established a group under the leadership of Stratton Orr to work on ways to beautify the Sixth AV corridor.

**QP 2.2 Recognize and award business and homeowners who enhance their properties.** The maintenance and appearance of individual properties has an impact on the appearance, pride and reputation of the community. Decatur should reinstate the beautification awards or create a new a program that recognizes and awards property owners for their positive efforts. The City should also consider monetary rewards that could enhance participation, such as a one-year tax abatement or credit awarded to one "most improved" property per year.

**COMMENTS** - Keep America Beautiful program spearheaded by Council members Bibbee and Hill, will begin to address this.

**QP 2.3 Relocate utilities from view of primary streets.** In highly visible areas, the City should evaluate the feasibility of relocating utilities (preferably underground) during major redevelopment projects.

**COMMENTS** - This will be addressed during the development process on new construction and the city will continue to work with DU on current proposals where feasible.

**QP 2.4 Create a tree planting and street tree replacement program.** A tree planting program would have aesthetic, economic, and environmental benefits. The program could involve regulatory changes such as requiring street trees in all new developments and incentivizing the preservation of existing trees, especially large shade trees in new development and redevelopment projects. It may also include proactive efforts by the City such as planting trees and installing landscaping along streets (on the side of streets or within medians) in targeted revitalization areas such as 6th Avenue, Moulton Street, Wilson Street, and the Beltline.

**COMMENTS** - There have been meetings recently and more are to follow starting with the historical districts due to storms in the spring of 2018. The program is being monitored by the Parks and Recreation working with Streets and Environmental Services and City Engineering to establish the correct species and location if in the public rights of way.

**QP 2.5 Strengthen development regulations regarding aesthetics Citywide.** An update to the City's zoning should evaluate landscaping, signs, lighting and other aesthetic standards for all development.

**COMMENTS** – This will be part of zoning rewrite.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 2. IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY THROUGHOUT THE CITY.</b>							
QP 2.1	Redefine the 6th Avenue Gateway.	Short-term, Ongoing	DDRA, Planning	PC, DU, Various partners	Future	Yes	yes
QP 2.2	Recognize and award business and homeowners who enhance their properties.	Mid-term, Ongoing	Parks and Rec, CD,	Planning, Building, Engineering, CC, PC	Underway	yes	Yes
QP 2.3	Relocate utilities from view of primary streets.	Mid-term, Ongoing	DU, Engineering	Planning, PC	On going	yes	Yes
QP 2.4	Create a tree planting and street tree replacement program.	Short-term	Parks and Recreation	Planning, PC	Underway	yes	yes
QP 2.5	Strengthen development regulations regarding aesthetics citywide.	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC, CC, BOZA	Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3. Encourage redevelopment along the Riverfront (and other areas).

**QP 3.1 Initiate zoning map updates to targeted areas.** Upon adopting a major update to the zoning code and zoning map, the City should develop rezoning procedures for targeted sites to encourage redevelopment. The City may establish a process where it initiates rezonings to targeted areas to align the zoning map to the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use and Character Map (like all rezonings this process would require multiple public hearings).

**COMMENTS** - This will be part of the zoning rewrite and should follow soon after completion

**QP 3.2 Create a riverfront redevelopment task force.** There are several potential sites along the riverfront that could be redeveloped to create a signature mixed use destination that would serve as a catalyst for revitalization. A task force should be established to research and recommend steps necessary to create an upscale, publicly accessible riverfront development. Such steps may include land acquisition, developer recruitment, infrastructure upgrades, and financing options (among others).

**COMMENTS** – We have initiated discussions with different groups that impact use of the riverfront today. Creation of a task force will continue to be a consideration.



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**QP 3.3 Meet with key property owners.** Approach property owners in target redevelopment areas to discuss the potential acquisition of key properties or to build awareness of the City's support for redevelopment. For example, Decatur Housing Authority should be approached to evaluate opportunities for riverfront development.

**COMMENTS** - We continue to have discussions with property owners and land banking opportunities. For example, the property at the corner of Moulton Street and Sixth Avenue was recently acquired by the DDRA (Downtown Redevelopment Authority).

**QP 3.4 Seek resources to remediate brownfield sites.** Redevelopment of key riverfront sites may be challenged by contamination due to previous land uses. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management offers several mitigation programs to help fund cleanup of so-called brownfield sites.

**COMMENTS** – The city and other agencies are evaluating the need to continue to apply for EPA grants and identify sites that will need remediation.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 3. ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS.</b>							
<b>QP 3.1</b>	<b>Initiate zoning map updates to targeted areas.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	Planning, CC	PC, Development departments, DDRA	Future		yes
<b>QP 3.2</b>	<b>Create a riverfront redevelopment task force</b>	Short-term Code Reform	Planning, GIS	PC, CC, BOZA	Initiated	yes	yes
<b>QP 3.3</b>	<b>Meet with key property owners.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	Planning	Various property owners	Initiated	yes	yes
<b>QP 3.4</b>	<b>Seek resources to remediate brownfield sites.</b>	Ongoing	CD	CC, PC, Planning, Building	Initiated	yes	yes

### Objective 4. Stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods.

**QP 4.1 Develop a "maintain, revitalize, redevelop" program for neighborhoods.** The State of Alabama supports the creation of revitalization/redevelopment districts that offer cities power to target programs and improvements, acquire land, and promote redevelopment. The City would first need to designate a specific area and prepare a revitalization plan. Such a plan would also make the City eligible for Federal HUD Choice Neighborhood Grants.

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**COMMENTS** – Continue working with Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA), Community Based Development Organizations (CBDO) and other agencies on projects like the Seville Subdivision. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – “The City has completed 5 houses in the Seville subdivision 3 homes have been sold and one is under contract. We are about to start the 6<sup>th</sup> home. The City is required to complete a 5 year consolidated plan every 5 years for our CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) program. We will begin that process in the next couple of months.”

**QP 4.2 Expand community-based neighborhood enhancement programs.** Expand upon existing volunteer-based community-building programs offered by the Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA) such as a “Clean Team,” patterned after Habitat for Humanity, to help with neighborhood clean-ups throughout the community; a “Curb Appeal” program to provide landscaping and design services and matching funds to property owners, particularly for historic structures and along major corridors; a “Paint the Town” program (perhaps a competition) to utilize volunteers and corporate sponsors to assist property owners in painting homes and other structures; and an Adopt-a-Block program.

**COMMENTS** - Work with the CAPNA to encourage neighborhood groups like Northwest and East Acres neighborhood organizations

**QP 4.3 Create a housing upkeep community education program.** This program would be designed to encourage the maintenance and upkeep of current housing stock by spreading awareness of available tools and programs (such as, FHA 203K renovation loans; HUD energy efficiency tools; HUD renovation for seniors; etc.).

**COMMENTS** – Continue to Coordinate with CAPNA and Habitat for Humanity to better utilize the programs that already exist. – **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – “The City continues to assist CAPNA with their housing development component in that the City has 2 representatives who serve on their Housing development board.”

**QP 4.4 Continue the blight abatement program.** Decatur has maintained a robust program of vacant structure demolition in the interest of neighborhood stabilization and public safety. Prior to demolition of a vacant structure, the City should evaluate whether the structure is viable. An effort should be made (through a land bank authority) to connect potential investors (or non-profits) with properties that could be renovated.

**COMMENTS** - Code enforcement continues to aggressively address demolition of unsafe structures. Legal is working to update the license requirements for residential rental properties, rooming houses and boarding houses that may negatively impact neighborhoods.

**QP 4.5 Establish a land bank system.** The City owns and maintains numerous vacant parcels. A land bank should be established to strategically work toward transferring properties into productive use. As an example, the City of Birmingham’s Land Bank Authority catalogs thousands of potential parcels for purchase through an online map.

**COMMENTS** – The City has recently used DDRA to land bank properties. The need for a public-private land banking authority needs to be explored and a program developed. We believe this will help with infill development opportunities.

**QP 4.6 Create a mow-to-own program.** A mow-to-own program could reduce the City’s cost for maintaining vacant lots, potentially return formerly tax-delinquent properties to the tax rolls, and improve the appearance of neighborhoods. Mow-to-own has been adopted by several major cities as a way for property owners to take ownership of nearby vacant lots that are currently owned by the City. A property owner agrees to mow and maintain the appearance of the lot in exchange for

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earning credit toward the purchase of the property, up to a certain dollar amount per year. In other programs, the property is deeded to the new owner for a nominal fee with a lien that requires the owner to maintain the property.

**COMMENTS** - Consider expanding the DAWN (Decatur Assists Willing Neighbors) program to make provisions for a mow to own system or other creative ways to address the ongoing maintenance of these properties through effective transfer of ownership.

**QP 4.7 Establish Neighborhood Branding Programs.** A branding program focused on the City's neighborhoods, including its historic districts, could be established to help create stronger neighborhood identities and boost pride.

**COMMENTS** – This may be part of the City branding initiative.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 4. STABILIZE AND REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS.</b>							
QP 4.1	Develop a “maintain, revitalize, redevelop program for neighborhoods.”	Ongoing	CD	Planning, CC, CAPNA	Ongoing	yes	yes
QP 4.2	Expand community-based neighborhood enhancement programs.	Ongoing	CD	Planning, CC, CAPNA	Underway	yes	yes
QP 4.3	Create a housing upkeep community education program.	Ongoing	CD	Planning	Future		
QP 4.4	Continue the blight abatement program.	Ongoing	CD	Building	Ongoing	yes	yes
QP 4.5	Establish a land bank system.	Mid-term, Ongoing	Planning, DDRA	Various non-profits	Future	yes	yes
QP 4.6	Create a mow-to-own program.	Mid-term, Ongoing	CD	Planning, Legal, CC	Future	Yes	Yes
QP 4.7	Establish Neighborhood Branding Programs.	Mid-term	Planning, PIO	PC	Future	Yes	Yes

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**Objective 5. Establish standards to ensure that new residential areas exhibit strong neighborhood qualities including walkable blocks, integrated open space (parks), and a variety of housing options.**

**QP 5.1 Require that neighborhoods have a well-connected street network and walkable blocks.** The City's land development regulations should be updated to require that new neighborhood development utilize a street pattern of walkable blocks with minimal use of cul-de-sacs. Neighborhoods should provide multiple connections to adjacent neighborhoods. All neighborhood streets including local streets and collectors should be designed with sidewalks on both sides of the street.

**COMMENTS** – A full update of the Subdivision Regulations will be the next phase of the rewrite of our development codes. The current regulations discuss this and development standards are evolving.

**QP 5.2 Ensure that the zoning code defines and permits a wide range of housing types.** An update to the City's zoning code should include definitions for a range of housing and other building types, their design characteristics, and their appropriate land use context. Residential development intensity should be determined by design characteristics such as building type, height, distance from the street, architectural variety, and streetscape features rather than by units-per-acre alone.

**COMMENTS** - The city has contracted with Clarion and Associates to rewrite and update the zoning ordinance.

**QP 5.3 Allow mixed housing types within new neighborhoods.** While the City's current zoning classification "planned residential district (PRD)" allows for flexibility in neighborhood design with multiple housing types, the PRD process is more involved than a conventional zoning district. An update to the City's zoning code should clearly define criteria for mixed or "traditional" neighborhood development and allow such development through a standard approval process.

**COMMENTS** - We have worked to help this happen through the processes we have now. The rewrite of the Zoning ordinance should make it much easier.

**QP 5.4 Evaluate open space provisions in proposals for new neighborhoods.** Open space is a critical component of complete neighborhoods. Proposals should be examined to ensure that open space is integrated into the design of new neighborhoods and how such open space will be maintained in the future. To consistently evaluate open space provisions, the City should adopt a standard for how much open space should be provided per residential unit.

**COMMENTS** - some of this can be accomplished with the zoning rewrite but a rewrite of the subdivision regulations will also be needed. In existing neighborhoods some of the land banked or city owned lots could be utilized as open space with careful screening and consideration.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 5. ESTABLISH STANDARD TO ENSURE THAT NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS EXHIBIT STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITIES INCLUDING WALKABLE BLOCKS, INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE (PARKS) AND A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS.</b>							
<b>QP 5.1</b>	<b>Require that neighborhoods have a well-connected street network and walkable blocks.</b>	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC	Future	no	yes
<b>QP 5.2</b>	<b>Ensure that the zoning code defines and permits a wide range of housing types.</b>	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC	Underway	yes	yes
<b>QP 5.3</b>	<b>Allow mixed housing types within new neighborhoods.</b>	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC, CC	Underway	yes	yes
<b>QP 5.4</b>	<b>Evaluate open space provisions in proposals for new neighborhoods.</b>	Short-term (Code Reform)	Planning	PC, CC	Underway	Yes	yes

### Objective 6. Continue to support current revitalization efforts downtown.

**QP 6.1 Facilitate Downtown Development.** The City should continue to work closely with the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDRA) and support implementation of its five-year strategic plan (Forward Decatur) which is based on its long-range plan, Envision Decatur. The current Strategic Plan focuses on residential development in Downtown, the establishment of the Education and Technology Business Park in developing the Decatur Downtown Commons and streetscape improvements and economic development of the 6th Avenue Gateway Corridor. City leaders should receive annual updates from DDRA and be involved in their short-term strategic planning efforts.

**COMMENTS** - DDRA continues to be active and the City continues to support them both financially and in-kind through installation of bicycle racks and signage, the expedited Public Space Usage process, park and open space maintenance, police and fire presence during downtown events, provision of free public parking, making provisions for dumpsters on public property for private property owners, etc.

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**QP 6.2 Create a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID).** As mentioned in the Envision Decatur plan, the City should consider the creation of a Business Improvement District or BID. A BID is an area where property owners within the BID area pay a special assessment that funds improvements in that area. BIDs have been successfully used in many downtowns across the country to fund a wide range of needs. A Downtown BID would fund improvements that are prioritized by DDRA.

**COMMENTS** - This is proposed for later in the planning period.

**QP 6.3 Continue to acquire land in the Dry Creek to support creation of Decatur Commons.** The City should continue to acquire and land bank property in the dry creek area to facilitate future development of a signature community gathering space and mixed use employment area connected to Downtown.

**COMMENTS** – There continues to be activity on attempts to acquire land in the Dry Creek area working closely with DU (Decatur Utilities) on right of way and easement acquisitions.

**QP 6.4 Maintain the historic trolley tracks on upper Bank Street and Church Street.** The tracks exposed in the center of Bank and Church streets contributes positively to the character of Downtown, however the tracks are in a state of disrepair. The City should consider options for rehabilitation or another use of the historical trolley tracks that retains their presence in future street improvements.

**COMMENTS** - We continue to look for cost effective and pedestrian safe ways to do this. We need to hear from the community about this.

**QP 6.5 Expand railroad "quiet zones."** With a large amount of rail traffic and at-grade crossings near Downtown, train horn noise is a frequent issue. A quiet zone is an area where trains are prohibited from sounding their horns. The City has established a quiet zone on Vine Street near the depot, but that zone should be extended. Establishing a quiet zone may require that the City mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of a horn through supplemental safety features approved by the US Federal Railroad Administration.

**COMMENTS** – We have identified Second Street next to the Decatur Morgan County Farmers Market and Moulton Street as potential future quiet zones.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 6. CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CURRENT REVITALIZATION EFFORTS DWONTOWN.</b>							
QP 6.1	Facilitate Downtown Development.	On going	DDRA	Planning	On going	yes	yes
QP 6.2	Create a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID).	Mid-term	Legal, Planning	PC, CC	Future	yes	yes
QP 6.3	Continue to acquire land in Dry Creek to support creation of Decatur Commons.	Ongoing	DDRA, Planning	PC, CC	On going		

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
QP 6.4	Maintain the historic trolley tracks on upper Bank Street and Church Street.	Short-term	Engineering, Street and Environmental Services	DDRA, HPC	Future	yes	yes
QP 6.5	Expand railroad "quiet zones."	Mid-term	Engineering, DDRA		Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 7. Improve code enforcement tools.

**QP 7.1 License rental properties (rental unit certificate of occupancy program).** Some rental properties are responsible for a disproportionate share of police and emergency calls and property code violations. A rental licensing program would be a way to reduce some problems by requiring landlords to register rental properties before leasing them. The City would provide inspections to ensure that properties are well-maintained, compliant with codes, and safe for habitation. This program would apply to all non-owner-occupied dwellings including short-term and long-term rentals, boarding houses and group homes. Many cities and counties have such requirements. In Anniston, licenses are renewed on an annual basis, so properties would be inspected yearly. In other places, licenses are granted for two-years, while some cities tie inspections to tenant lease renewals. Another model may simply require registration, but not inspections unless there are complaints. Licensing fees may be based on property type and size. A rental license program in Decatur should be designed to minimize the burden on responsible landlords.

**COMMENTS** – Legal is currently working on this by addressing the need to license these type uses. Inspection tied to license requirement will require a cost benefit analysis with the desired outcome accomplished in the most cost effective manner.

**QP 7.2 Create more robust regulations for housing, safety and nuisances.** Review the City’s code restrictions on occupancy including the number of persons per housing unit and number of unrelated persons. Also include definitions for group homes, boarding houses, short-term rentals, and home sharing and the conditions and locations where such uses are permitted. Clarifying these regulations will help with enforcement of unsafe conditions.

**COMMENTS** – This is currently being addressed through safety and sanitary issues built around the property maintenance codes on number of persons in a structure. We have developed educational material in English and Spanish and provide these to the public as needed. The license requirements will have a positive effect on this initiative. **CAPNA** “In general, good idea, but can add burden to low income households.”

**QP 7.3 Regulate short-term or transient rentals.** Short-term or transient rentals are two terms that refer to the relatively new and growing market for home-sharing and vacation rentals. The City should require that such rentals be licensed with the intent of allowing property owners the option to utilize their properties in this way, while minimizing public safety risks and the noise, trash and parking problems often associated with short-term rentals and home-sharing without creating additional work for the local police department, and to ensure that the City does not lose out on tax revenue that could be invested in much needed services for permanent residents.

**COMMENTS** – We currently only allow these uses in R4 (multifamily) zoning districts it will be further enhanced and strengthened by the work being done in legal mentioned in 7.1.

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**QP 7.4 Upgrade the City’s tracking system.** A GIS-based tracking system should be considered to manage code compliance, rental registration, and 311 requests. Such a system would help staff determine patterns and allocate time and resources efficiently.

**COMMENTS –INFORMATION SERVICES** “There are plans to update software for code compliance. To interface with other software used by the city, several other software modules will need to be implemented first. Those modules are part of an ongoing software upgrade that spans all departments.”

**QP 7.5 Adopt a cooperative compliance model.** Under a cooperative compliance model, code enforcement officers do much more than inspect housing and issue violation notices – they also provide guidance to property owners on how to properly address problems and comply with codes. The officer may also help the property owner find resources for fixing the violations by providing written materials, offering classes, or identifying sources of low-interest loans or grant funding. As a result, code enforcement officers can be considered trusted community partners, helping to improve housing and neighborhood quality, and help save the City time and money on re-inspections, abatement hearings, and prosecutions.

**COMMENTS** – Code enforcement provides much of the guidance in this section. Formalized systems may need to be established in the future.

**QP 7.6** Continue to provide educational material about code compliance. When it comes to City regulations, renters often don’t know their rights, do not understand the process, and/or don’t feel they can file a complaint about housing conditions. Renters are often unfamiliar with existing protections and programs, and those with language barriers or disabilities may have trouble navigating the system. In addition, many residents avoid notifying their property owner of problems for fear of increased rent, retaliation, or eviction. The City should continue to provide informational material to inform residents of their rights, City codes, and services available to address property issues.

**COMMENTS –COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – “The Community Development Department has produced 8 pamphlets in both English and Spanish which deals with a number of fair housing issues along with the problems associated with overcrowding.” CAPNA also works to provide education and training to those that they serve.

**QP 7.7** Recognize landlord responsibility. Prevent property owners who have unresolved violations from establishing (or renewing) a rental property license. Reward rental property owners that have no recorded code violations in a certain time period, such as through reduced or waived rental registration fees.

**COMMENTS** – Legal is currently working on this as part of the license requirements mentioned in QP 7.1.

Action	Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?	
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 7. IMPROVE CODE ENFORCEMENT TOOLS.</b>							
<b>QP 7.1</b>	<b>License rental properties (rental unit certificate of occupancy program).</b>	Immediate, Ongoing Code Reform	Legal	Planning, Building, Code Enforcement, Revenue	Future	Yes	Yes



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Action	Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
QP 7.2 <b>Create more robust regulations for housing, safety and nuisances.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing Code reform	Legal	Community Development	Underway	Underway	Yes
QP 7.3 <b>Regulate short-term or transient rentals.</b>	Immediate, Ongoing (Code Reform)	Legal	Planning, Building, Code Enforcement	Underway	Underway	Yes
QP 7.4 <b>Upgrade the city's tracking system.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	Development departments	IS, GIS	Future	Yes	Yes
QP 7.5 <b>Adopt a cooperative compliance model.</b>	Ongoing	Code Enforcement	Development departments	Future	Yes	Yes
QP 7.6 <b>Continue to provide educational material about code compliance.</b>	Ongoing	Development departments	PC, CC	Underway	Yes	Yes
QP 7.7 <b>Recognize landlord responsibility</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	Legal, Revenue	CC, Development departments	Underway	Underway	Yes

### Objective 8. Maintain our historical assets.

**QP 8.1 Develop an expedited review process for historic properties.** Decatur has a simplified or expedited approval process for roof replacements in historic districts, but any other building permit must be reviewed by the HPC. Most cities have an expedited review process, implemented by a City staff member, for repairs or replacements that do not involve changes in style, materials, colors, etc. Implementing such a process significantly reduces the amount of time home and property owners spend obtaining a building permit for simple items. If the City had an expedited process for simple items, other historic districts, those that are not yet locally designated, may be more willing to consider designation, as the process can seem less burdensome.

**COMMENTS** – The City has allowed the HPC (Historic Preservation Commission) to work with a consultant to develop expedited review approvals for 70 different review types.

**QP 8.2 Designate other local historic districts.** Decatur currently has two locally designated historic districts; however, the City has at least three other historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places that are candidates for local designation. More neighborhoods are eligible for National Register nomination. Local designation is the only way to ensure that historic properties are protected, as national and state registers are honorifics only. Currently, the City has no way of ensuring that the historic buildings in districts, other than in the Old Decatur and Albany neighborhoods are significantly altered.

**COMMENTS** – We believe this is important and should be explored in the future. Additional staffing and funding will be needed.

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**QP 8.3 Educate property owners regarding historic designation.** Many property owners seem to see historic designation as a burden rather than a benefit. Historic designation offers numerous benefits, including increased property values, greater neighborhood stability, and tax incentives. An educational campaign could inform property owners of the benefits of designation and garner support for the designation of more local districts.

**COMMENTS** – The HPC works to educate the public through aggressive outreach to the Board of Realtors, attorneys and closing agents; neighborhood training including seminars and tour; and the board members often speak to community groups about what they do and why.

**QP 8.4 Require HPC review prior to demolition.** The City's current regulations do not require review prior to demolition of a structure within a historic district. To ensure that buildings and structures worthy of preservation are not inadvertently demolished, a permit and review by the HPC should be required for proposed demolition of structures in a historic district. Such review may not always prevent the demolition of historically significant buildings or structures. If the building is deemed significant, then issuance of the permit may be delayed for a specific period of time to pursue landmark designation, or to explore preservation solutions such as selling the property to a purchaser interested in rehabilitating the structure or finding alternative sites for the proposed post-demolition project.

**COMMENTS** – The HPC fully supports taking these steps. This will require a great deal of public communication and information sharing to do correctly.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 8. MAINTAIN HISTOICAL ASSETS.</b>							
<b>QP 8.1</b>	<b>Develop an expedited review process for historic properties.</b>	Immediate (Code Reform)	Building, HPC	Planning	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>QP 8.2</b>	<b>Designate other local historic districts.</b>	Mid-term	Planning, HPC	PC, CC	Futures	Yes	Yes
<b>QP 8.3</b>	<b>Educate property owners regarding historic designation.</b>	Short-term	Planning, HPC	Development Departments	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>QP 8.4</b>	<b>Require Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review prior to demolition.</b>	Mid-term (Code Reform)	Planning, Legal	HPC, PC, CC	Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 9. Protect our watersheds and conserve sensitive habitat.

**QP 9.1 Develop more runoff restrictions for areas adjacent to waterways that drain to the Wildlife Refuge.** Currently, the City's stormwater ordinance regulates runoff and storm water management, but runoff and sedimentation is still an issue at the Refuge. The City should conduct a study to determine problem areas for runoff and create restrictions that will protect the Refuge and Tennessee River.

**COMMENTS** – The study and new standards are a future project that will include Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). **Streets and Environmental Services** “In conjunction with the Engineering Department the Streets and Environmental Services Department is in the early stages of installing grates to filter out debris that washes to the Tennessee River. There will be approximately ten grates in the initial test phase.”

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**QP 9.2 Adopt low-impact development standards.** Incorporate natural systems and practices to manage stormwater in order to protect water quality and aquatic habitats such as the Refuge. Use green infrastructure techniques when possible for City projects by preserving or de-channeling streams while at the same time creating green space that is both functional and useful. Bio retention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements are some examples of ways to incorporate these practices.

**COMMENTS** –This will be a future project that will include NWR.

**QP 9.3 Create a pilot project to test storm water filtering techniques.** While runoff regulations and low impact development standards may help reduce certain types of pollution caused by storm water runoff, visible pollution in the form of debris and litter often find their way into waterways. The City should initiate a project to test techniques such as rain gardens and tools including floatable litter traps. The City could secure business sponsors for individual demonstration projects.

**COMMENTS** – We are in the process of purchasing and testing storm box guards to test the effectiveness and the cost to maintain them.

**QP 9.4 Promote environmental education programs** through the Refuge and River as major assets, important for protection and preservation. The River and the Refuge are unique environmental assets that deserve better appreciation. If residents appreciate these assets as important to their quality of life, they will support efforts to protect them. The City could work with the organizations protecting these resources to raise awareness about existing educational programs and sponsor volunteer clean-up days or crews, hold City events at these places, etc.

**COMMENTS** – “WWR (Wheeler Wildlife Refuge) currently has a very good educational program that is directed to school age children. Other groups are also doing educational programs but a unified larger effort is needed that require additional support from State and Federal agencies.” Rick Ingram Director of WWR.

**QP 9.5 Maintain Wilson Morgan Lake for flood control.** Wilson Morgan Lake serves a critical role in the City's flood control infrastructure. The lake has not been adequately maintained, which could compromise its effectiveness. A engineering study is currently underway to evaluate the lake and make recommendations on its future maintenance needs and potential uses. The City should support the recommendations of that study.

**COMMENTS** – A study has been accepted by the city and appropriate recommendations accepted. Currently engineering work is being performed on the creek crossing Country Club RD and Brookmeade that flows into WWR.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>CREATING A QUALITY PLACE</b>							
<b>Objective 9. PROTECT WATERSHEDS AND CONSERVE SENSITIVE HABITAT.</b>							
<b>QP 9.1</b>	<b>Develop more runoff restrictions for areas adjacent to waterways that drain to the Wildlife Refuge.</b>	Mid-term (Code Reform)	Engineering	Legal, Refuge	Future	Yes	Yes

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
QP 9.2	Adopt low-impact development standards.	Mid-term (Code Reform)	Planning, Engineering	Legal, Refuge	Future	Yes	Yes
QP 9.3	Create a pilot project to test stormwater filtering techniques.	Mid term	Engineering, Street and Environmental Services	CFO	Future	Yes	Yes
QP 9.4	Promote environmental education programs through the Refuge and River as major assets, important for protection and preservation.	Short-term, Ongoing	DCS, Refuge		On going	Yes	Yes
QP 9.5	Maintain Wilson Morgan Lake for flood control.	Short-term, Ongoing	Engineering	Parks and Recreation, CC	Underway		Yes

### IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY

A well-maintained, smart and sustainable transportation system that offers strong regional and internal connectivity, provides attractive and safe options for cycling, walking and public transportation, and supports desirable development and a strong economy.

#### Objective 1: Design street improvements to balance mobility, accessibility, land use, and desired development character.

**MO 1.1 Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.** Complete Streets policies require all streets to be planned and designed to consider the safety and accessibility of all users, no matter their age and ability. Complete streets prioritize sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and safe crossings in accordance with the street's context and function. Therefore, streets near schools may reserve more space for walking and cycling, while higher speed arterials may set aside less space or focus on off street connections.

The City of Decatur currently does not have a Complete Streets policy, but other cities in Alabama have adopted such policies, including Birmingham, Mobile and Huntsville. Adopting a policy would help guide future decisions to prioritize space for safe cycling and walking and improve crossing facilities to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

**COMMENTS** –This is being discussed and we look to adopt general policy supporting complete streets by mid to late 2019.

**MO 1.2 Design street improvements with considerations for the surrounding context and various users.** The Street Design Typology Matrix (on page 60) uses a street classification system that relates to the destinations served by the road, future land use, and how people travel along the corridor. When related to the community's future land use character areas, the tool offers a framework for future decision making and serves as a guide to prioritize certain travel modes in each corridor and understand design decisions.

**COMMENTS** –A Complete streets policy is being initiated by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) today.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 1: Design street improvements to balance mobility, accessibility, land use, and desired development character.</b>							
<b>MO 1.1</b>	<b>Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.</b>	Short-term	Planning, Engineering	MPO, CC, Streets and Environmental Services	Future	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 1.2</b>	<b>Design streets with considerations for the surrounding context and various users.</b>	Mid-term, Ongoing	Planning, Engineering		Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 2: Improve the appearance and condition of the City's streets.

**mo 2.1 Undertake strategic improvement projects in demonstration corridors.** This plan provides a more detailed vision and set of strategies for five corridors in Decatur. These corridors have been selected to demonstrate conditions and opportunities that exist throughout the City. The intent is to provide strategies applicable beyond the boundaries of the selected corridor. Each corridor includes existing transportation and land use context as well as corridor improvements that enhance connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and improve travel, safety, accessibility, and appearance. Demonstration graphics provide a visual cue of key strategies for each corridor and accompany a narrative explanation. See the Demonstration Corridors beginning on page 65.

**COMMENTS** –This will be reflected in future projects along the demonstration corridors. See QP 2.1 the process will be expanded to all the demonstration corridors in the future. The Chamber has also established a task force Chaired by Stratton Orr to work on ways to improve the Sixth AV gateway and corridor.

**mo 2.2 Fully utilize GIS software to track, plan and prioritize street maintenance and drainage improvements.** The City of Decatur currently owns software that can be used to track and plan street maintenance projects. However, current practices rely on paper tracking among various individual staff files. The City should revise protocols and invest in staff training to fully utilize GIS-based software to improve the efficiency and prioritization of street maintenance, sidewalk improvements, and other infrastructure improvements.

**COMMENTS** – We have purchased the software and are in the process of hiring staff to fully implement. **ENGINEERING** “We currently use our GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software for tracking, planning and prioritizing resurfacing projects. We will continue to look for improvements and other ways to utilize GIS. **INFORMATION SYSTEMS** – “GIS software is already being utilized to track, plan and prioritize street maintenance. Tracking drainage improvements has been done for several years, but is in the process of being updated to better integrate with the rest of the GIS system.”

**mo 2.3 Establish corridor appearance standards or guidelines with an emphasis on sustainable landscaping.** City streets make up a significant portion of the public realm, and their design and appearance are major contributors to the character of Decatur and the City's economic potential. Public streets can enhance the community's overall identity and image through thoughtful, quality design. Design standards for new and redeveloped major transportation corridors should address appropriate transportation modes as well as access, land uses, setbacks, building appearance, lighting, utilities, signage, and landscaping. Where possible, priority should be given to consolidating or burying utility lines. These standards should be targeted and tailored to the conditions of specific corridors such as 6th Avenue, the Beltline, and other highways and major corridors that serve as community gateways. Thoughtful design can also minimize expenses

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associated with landscape maintenance. In particular, replacing grassy medians on corridors such as Beltline Road with low shrubs would improve aesthetics and minimize maintenance.

**COMMENTS** – This will be part of the rewrite of the Zoning ordinance.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 2: Improve the appearance and condition of the city's streets.</b>							
<b>MO 2.1</b>	<b>Undertake strategic improvement projects in demonstration corridors.</b>	Mid-term	Engineering, MPO	Planning, CC (budgeting)	On going	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 2.2</b>	<b>Fully utilize GIS software to track, plan and prioritize street maintenance and drainage improvements.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	GIS, Engineering		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 2.3</b>	<b>Establish corridor appearance standards or guidelines with an emphasis on sustainable landscaping.</b>	Mid-term	Planning	PC, Development departments	On going	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3: Increase efforts to make City more walkable and bike friendly.

**MO 3.1 Create a sidewalk repair program. Many existing sidewalks in the City's older neighborhoods are in need of repair.** A City program should be established to repair existing sidewalks and prioritize new sidewalk connections. Such a repair program could be part of the City's regular capital improvements effort or could be a matching grant program whereby the City shares the cost with adjacent property owners. Sidewalks also should be a standard and sufficient width, which requires the City's subdivision regulations to reflect a minimum of five feet width with wider sidewalks in the downtown core. This may require an amendment to the City's subdivision regulations.

**COMMENTS** –We have obtained an ALDOT grant for sidewalks around Decatur High School and the Hospital. The city had budgeted money for sidewalk restoration. We need to create a retrofit program and formalize sidewalk projects and plans for areas with no sidewalks and limited pedestrian access.

**MO 3.2 Update and formalize a plan to connect the urban trail system.** Strategic connections to the existing Decatur greenway system can help link recreational opportunities and economic activity centers by way of low-stress bicycle and pedestrian facilities. A formal trails and greenways planning effort should be considered as an essential next step toward providing active transportation mobility and creating these crucial links. Connections may take the form of multi-use paths, on-street bicycle facilities, and sidewalk connections depending on feasibility. The design of the system should create a comprehensive network of intersecting pathways that serve short- and medium-distance trips. Other considerations for the formal bicycle and pedestrian network plan include:

**COMMENTS** –We have obtained a ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) grant that will connect Cedar Ridge Middle School and Austin High School. We continue to look for opportunities to connect our facilities. In the future we see a need to formally update the Plan as part of the Singing River Trail/ Trail of Tears. The city has made a financial contribution and become a partner in the Singing River Trail project.

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**MO 3.3 Seek funding to implement trail and path connections.** ALDOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program provides matching grants and technical assistance for implementing pedestrian, bicycle mobility and Safe Routes to Schools initiatives. Other competitive grant programs are available to help cities complete safety improvement projects, sidewalk or bike facility connections, or begin educational programs to develop a safer active transportation environment.

**COMMENTS** –See comments above 3.2. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – “The City has just completed the Ingalls to Rhodes Ferry park bike trail. We also have 2 additional grants that deal with bike trails and sidewalks throughout the city. The City will continue to seek out grant opportunities which will connect city facilities within the city.”

**MO 3.4 Increase marketing and wayfinding efforts to support the urban trail system.** Awareness of Decatur’s existing bikeway and trail system should be improved by providing maps (electronic and print), installing wayfinding signs, conducting safety education campaigns, and improving street markings to better designate on-street connections. As a major effort, designating a location such as the Old Decatur Depot as a trail hub for downtown Decatur can provide both a tourism boost to the downtown area as well as a practical center for local active transportation efforts. This location should offer maps and information about sights and events around town, as well as bicycle parking and a potential bike share location in the future.

**COMMENTS** –We need to make this part of the branding projects. We have received state funding to increase our way finding and implemented additional signage. We are also part of ALLTRAIL and Trail Link mobile apps. The city supports the benefits of our trail system through funding.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 3: Increase efforts to make the city more walkable and bike friendly.</b>							
<b>MO 3.1</b>	<b>Create a sidewalk repair/retrofit program.</b>	Short-term	Engineering, Planning		Ongoing	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 3.2</b>	<b>Update and formalize a plan to connect the urban trail system.</b>	Ongoing	Planning, Engineering, Parks and Recreation		Ongoing	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 3.3</b>	<b>Seek funding to implement trail and path connections.</b>	Ongoing	Grants		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 3.4</b>	<b>Increase marketing and wayfinding efforts to support the urban trail system.</b>	Ongoing	Parks and Recreation, Engineering		Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 4: Expand access to shared-ride transit options.

**MO 4.1 Reevaluate the feasibility of a Downtown Circulator.** Decatur’s lack of comprehensive transit service is a gap to be addressed on a long-term time frame. As the downtown further develops and the City grows, transit service that was previously deemed infeasible might prove to be a sound investment. The City should re-evaluate the feasibility of the fixed-route circulator with an expanded scope that connects downtown and major employment centers as well as commercial hubs and recreational destinations in an efficient way. Continued coordination with the Northern Alabama Council of Governments (NARCOG) and

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regional partners will be necessary. In addition, transit supportive land use planning and development can ensure transit remains a key part of Decatur’s future transportation vision.

**COMMENTS –NARCOG TRANSIT** “I believe this to be a great need and we have been exploring opportunities and preparing for the potential for a downtown circulator for several months. The only barrier at this time is funding and bus stop location.”

**MO 4.2 Establish a transit connection between Calhoun Community College and Downtown.** Connecting the Alabama Center for the Arts in Downtown Decatur with Calhoun Community College and the Alabama Robotics Technology Park as well as the Huntsville campus would improve educational opportunities for many residents who do not have access to personal vehicles. NARCOG, Morgan County’s transit provider, is currently exploring the feasibility of providing this route, and the City of Decatur should support its development as a first step toward comprehensive regional transit options.

**COMMENTS - NARCOG TRANSIT** “This was discussed with the previous CCC administration. We need to revisit this opportunity. I believe this is something that we can quickly address.”

**MO 4.3 Establish an express connection to Huntsville.** A substantial amount of traffic travels each day between Decatur and Huntsville at predictable commute times. This route is a key contender for express bus service that provides choice of travel and alleviates some peak travel time congestion.

**COMMENTS – NARCOG TRANSIT** “There are limitations to providing this service. Federal regulations may not allow this type of service. Presently, trips to Huntsville must be scheduled individually. We cannot establish circulating route outside of our service area.” The city and partners need to explore different ways to achieve this.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 4: Expand access to shared-ride transit options.</b>							
<b>MO 4.1</b>	<b>Reevaluate the feasibility of a Downtown Circulator.</b>	Short-term	NARCOG transit	DDRA, Planning	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 4.2</b>	<b>Establish a transit connection between Calhoun Community College and Downtown.</b>	Short-term	NARCOG transit	Calhoun Community College and Athens State	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 4.3</b>	<b>Establish an express connection to Huntsville.</b>	Mid-term	NARCOG transit	Other partners	Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 5: Improve Downtown mobility.

**MO 5.1 Develop a Downtown parking strategy to address changing parking needs.** Though parking space in Downtown Decatur is sufficient for current and future parking demand, many people cite a need for more parking convenient to key destinations. Improvements to parking wayfinding, parking facility designs,



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and potential policy changes can address these concerns without substantially adding capacity to the already adequate parking supply. The strategy should consider a potential parking deck as well as upgrades to current on and off street parking. Consolidating parking

**COMMENTS** –The City continues to work to provide parking for our downtown community. A funding plan and source need to be found for a parking deck. The opening of the Cook museum and increased enrollment at the Alabama School for the Arts will generate increased demand on parking. More signage and continued prioritization by the city and county will be needed. **NARCOG TRANSIT** – “I believe that any conversation connected to a parking strategy should include transit input. Bus routes should be connected to as many parking lots as logistically possible. We are taking parking into consideration during the circulator planning process.”

**MO 5.2 Evaluate the feasibility of reestablishing strategic connections across the railroad.** Mobility in downtown Decatur is constrained by many natural and man-made barriers. The railroad corridor that borders Downtown to the west limits connectivity with the residential neighborhoods, and causes an overreliance on a few arterial streets. The City should study the feasibility of establishing strategic vehicular and/or bicycle/pedestrian connections over the railroad to increase local connectivity and spur economic development activity. May make land available for development.

**COMMENTS** – In conjunction with QP 6.5 (quiet zones) we will evaluate at grade crossings. The utilization of over passes may need to be part of a future grant project. Creative solutions like the highway 20 railroad underpass should be sought. We currently have a grant opportunity to connect Wilson Morgan to downtown and the government sector utilizing the Fourteenth St overpass.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 5: Improve Downtown mobility.</b>							
<b>MO 5.1</b>	<b>Develop a Downtown parking strategy to address changing parking needs.</b>	Short-term	Planning, Police, DDRA		underway	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 5.2</b>	<b>Evaluate the feasibility of reestablishing strategic connections across the railroad.</b>	Mid term	Engineering		Future	Yes	Yes

### **Objective 6: Support strategic efforts to improve regional connectivity**

**MO 6.1 Plan for a new bridge.** As one of the key routes into and out of Decatur, the US 31/AL 20 bridge over the Tennessee River causes bottlenecks, especially for freight traffic. ALDOT has recently spent approximately \$10 million to improve traffic flow at the base of the bridge. Additional improvements to the existing bridge are constrained by nearby historic properties and available right-of-way. Long term, a new river crossing should be evaluated in partnership Morgan County, Limestone County, Lawrence County and other appropriate regional entities. Those plans should identify preferred locations and design concepts. While a new bridge could reduce traffic on US 31 and Highway 20, it would also potentially have a major boost to revitalizing the Wilson Street riverfront. By redirecting through traffic, Wilson Street could more feasibly become a neighborhood street (as envisioned in the Demonstration Corridors section). That change could help reconnect Old Decatur and downtown with the riverfront and support the conversation around potential riverfront redevelopment sites.

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**COMMENTS** – Coordinated regional cooperation will be needed. All counties involved will need to participate. Planning for the impacts will be a future project. The work being done as part of regional discussions in PR 6.2 and 6.3 will be key to this and other future regional projects.

**MO 6.2 Establish regional trail connections.** Additional multimodal trail segments should be constructed in collaboration with the regional Launch 2035 effort to connect Decatur to cultural, educational, and recreational destinations in the region as well as to create a multimodal connection between Decatur and Huntsville.

**COMMENTS** –The city is actively involved in the Singing River Trail/Trail of Tears project. **NARCOG TRANSIT** “There is potential for transit to establish bus stops near trail heads.”

**MO 6.3 Establish a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Tennessee River.** Currently, the Tennessee River is a major regional barrier with no safe way for cyclists and pedestrians to cross. Providing safe crossing options would improve recreational opportunities, economic connections between communities on both sides of the river, and provide alternate transportation options to alleviate congestion.

**COMMENTS** –**NARCOG TRANSIT** “There is potential to use transit as a “ferry” to cross the river if pickup points and link to transit dispatch could be established.”

**MO 6.4 Consider the viability of regional passenger rail service at the restored Decatur Depot.** With the Southern Railway Depot newly renovated, Decatur should consider restoring its place as a strategic regional transportation hub. The Southern Rail Commission has expressed some interest in restoring passenger rail service to Huntsville and Decatur, and the City, MPO and other regional partners should be planning to assess the long-term viability of that service and its role in the regional network.

**COMMENTS** –This will be a future project as opportunities arise. **NARCOG TRANSIT** – “The downtown circulator can easily be connected to the depot.”

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>IMPROVING OUR MOBILITY</b>							
<b>Objective 6: Support strategic efforts to improve regional connectivity.</b>							
<b>MO 6.1</b>	<b>Plan for a new bridge.</b>	Long-term	Planning, MPO		Future	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 6.2</b>	<b>Establish regional trail connections.</b>	Mid-term	Launch2035, Planning	CC	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 6.3</b>	<b>Establish a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Tennessee River.</b>	Short-term, Long-term	Planning	Development departments	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>MO 6.4</b>	<b>Consider the viability of regional passenger rail service at the restored Decatur Depot.</b>	Long-term	NARCOG transit, Planning		Future	Yes	Yes

## ADVANCING OUR PROSPERTIY

A thriving economy that offers a variety of jobs, attracts new businesses and residents, and provides a diversity of retail, entertainment, and housing options.

# 2019 IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW ONE DECATUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2018

## Objective 1. Expand the number, diversity, and wage level of employment opportunities.

**PR 1.1 Complete a business recruitment and marketing strategy.** Using the target industry assessment, develop a strategy for marketing and attraction of desirable industry sectors. Marketing and business recruitment should focus on the following competitive advantages. (page 82)

**COMMENTS** –The city has committed to a branding effort to better tell our story.

**PR 1.2 Diversify Decatur's industry recruitment targets.** With Decatur’s relative affordability within the region, the City is an attractive location for a diverse set of businesses serving clients in other parts of the region (such as NASA / Redstone contractors, high-tech firms, equipment suppliers, technical and professional services, etc). The County Economic Development Association (EDA) has done well in the past recruiting large industrial employers to Decatur, but future recruiting should focus on specific target industries identified in the Target Industry Opportunities section. Additional 501(c)(3) marketing and networking organizations (or Chamber divisions) can be formed to

**COMMENTS – MCEDA (Morgan County Economic Development Association)** “On going activities associated with existing industries and new companies moving in help direct and identify new industrial targets. For example, new Mazda-Toyota facility added emphasis to automotive suppliers, steel processors and other various tier 1, 2, and 3 automotive suppliers.” Jeremy Nails

**PR 1.3 Consider criteria for business incentives.** Consider basing incentives for industrial projects partly on the job creation, wages, and target industry of the particular employer. Formalize a set of criteria for evaluating proposed incentives.

**COMMENTS** – This will be part of an ongoing discussion of incentives.

**PR 1.4 Create regulatory fast-track program.** Streamlining the regulatory path for existing business expansion and new business development is critical. The City should continue to enhance the approval process and staff training. Examine each regulatory hurdle (e.g., business licensing, sign ordinances, building and permits, etc) to determine where consolidation and fast-tracking can occur. Consider designating one City staff member as an ombudsman or business advocate to meet with and assist businesses. Link fast-track incentives to job creation, wages, and target sectors.

**COMMENTS** –The city has hired a plan review processor in the building department who communicates and coordinates needed outside approvals. This section will require further review and will evolve with understanding the staffing needs and requirements. The city continues to provide TRC review of developments and pre-development meetings as needed. The rewrite of the zoning ordinance will also provide cleared requirements.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>							
<b>Objective 1. Expand the number, diversity, and wage level of employment opportunities.</b>							
<b>PR 1.1</b>	<b>Complete a business recruitment and marketing strategy.</b>	Short-term	Chamber, Planning		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>PR 1.2</b>	<b>Diversify Decatur's industry recruitment targets.</b>	Ongoing	MCEDA, Planning		Underway	Yes	Yes

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
PR 1.3	Consider criteria for business incentives.	Short-term	CFO		Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 1.4	Create a regulatory fast-track program.	Ongoing, / Long term	Development departments		Initiated	Yes	Yes

### Objective 2. Strengthen the existing labor force.

Strengthening the existing labor force is an investment in the City's future. There are opportunities for the City to engage more pro-actively with the public schools as well as with industry and the community college system to enhance existing resources and programs.

**PR 2.1 Target Workforce development efforts on "Skills for the Future."** While there is an effort to engage industry to identify current skills needs, there is as yet only limited attention paid to future skills requirements and development of the next generation of workers.

**COMMENTS** - Demand for the following skills has been identified for the region: Construction, Tech/IT, Management, Professional Services, and Office Administrative Support. **The chamber**, Decatur School system and Calhoun Community College and others do a work force career expo for high school juniors and seniors, leadership program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and various other programs that expose our students to the skills needed for the future. **SWeETy** Camp (Summer Welding & Electrical Technology Camp) is designed for 9th-12th grade girls. This camp is free and provides hands-on welding and electrical training for girls to prepare them for future careers in this field. We offer 2 camps so we can reach more high school girls.

**PR 2.2 Collaborate with public schools to expand vocational programming.** Pro-active efforts are needed to develop programming geared to skills development from an early age. There are various examples of this type of programming nationwide. In Memphis, the City funds a non-profit that engages 4th grade students in software coding, for example. Support vocational-education programs already being developed in the public school system in collaboration with Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) and the tech sector.

**COMMENTS** – See comments above. In addition the EC recently announced a partnership with the University of AL at Huntsville and the Midland Institute to promote entrepreneurial partnerships/ mentorships for high school students. They are also actively reaching out to businesses interested in HUB (Historically Underutilized Businesses) opportunities and actively reaching out the Marshall Space Center for relevant opportunities. **Chamber Teachers on Tour** - Exposed over 1,200 teachers across Morgan County to different industries so they could take the knowledge of in-demand careers back to the classroom. **EQUIP** - Leadership class for 8th graders across Morgan County. Teaches them hands on training and career development. Designed to have 20-25 students/semester with 5 classes each semester. **Endless Opportunities** - Event for all 8th graders across Morgan County. Students are exposed to over 60 companies during the event including utilities.

**PR 2.3 Establish partnerships with industry to expand workforce development opportunities. Develop new programs in partnership with local and national industry.**

**COMMENTS** –The City Schools in conjunction with Morgan County Schools and Decatur Heritage Christian Academy, the EC and business owners, have initiated a Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities program for high school students. This program was started by the Midland Institute in Illinois and was suggested

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by the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Historically students who participate are more likely to stay in the community. This is the first program of it's kind in Alabama.

**PR 2.4 Strengthen Ready-for-Work Programs.** Local businesses have identified a serious deficiency in workforce readiness, soft skills and essential skills. While there are efforts underway to close this gap, there is a need for more program operating resources in this area. For example:

**COMMENTS** –The Decatur Public Library Training Center (DPLTC) offers important information technology (IT) assets and assistance for those seeking employment and building basic skills such as in computer literacy. The center was initiated in part through a grant from the Institute of Museum & Library Sciences (administered by the Alabama Public Library Service), but there will be ongoing requirements for operating funds and it is recommended that a public-private partnership be formed to include area businesses that will benefit local industry by enhancing basic literacy and growing technology-based skills in the community. By securing funds for operation and expansion of DPLTC programs, the community will be investing in its future economic success. Please also see comment above about Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities program. **LIBRARY** “Decatur Public Library now regularly offers computer classes for workforce skills such as Microsoft Office including Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. We’ve recently added more job focused classes such as creating resumes, cover letters, job searching, online applications, and interview skills. Additionally, we partner with local corporations and organizations such as Wayne Farms, the Alabama Career Center, and Calhoun

Career center to host programs unique to these audiences and their needs. The library plans to continue to grow and adjust this programming according to the needs of our local community as we regularly conduct surveys with class attendees and partners.” **DCS** “Decatur City Schools opened the Career Academies of Decatur in August of 2018. The classes provided at the center are set up as a simulated workforce to help better prepare students when they graduate. As we expand the center, we will expand where the business and industry needs dictate. Students are also able to utilize Dual enrollment options.”

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>							
<b>Objective 2. Strengthen the existing labor force.</b>							
<b>PR 2.1</b>	<b>Target Workforce development efforts on "Skills for the Future."</b>	Ongoing	DCS, Calhoun Community College, Athens State		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>PR 2.2</b>	<b>Collaborate with public schools to expand vocational programming</b>	Ongoing	DCS, Entrepreneurial Center		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>PR 2.3</b>	<b>Establish Partnerships with industry to expand workforce development opportunities</b>	Short term			Underway	Yes	Yes

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
PR 2.4	<b>Strengthen Ready-for-Work Programs.</b>	Short-term	DCS, Entrepreneurial Center		On going	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3. Encourage entrepreneurship and expand support for small businesses.

Some have identified a lack of “entrepreneurship” in Decatur. There are existing programs trying to address this issue, such as the Entrepreneurial Center (EC), which provides affordable incubation space and assistance. A substantial share of the EC client base is retail-oriented, but there are opportunities to grow the number of technical service providers, suppliers, business and office administrative functions (e.g., processing operations), and other businesses as identified in the target industry assessment.

**PR 3.1 Expand Small Business Infrastructure and Incentives.** Aside from the EC (Entrepreneurial Center), there is a need to enhance Decatur’s small business infrastructure, including soft programs or incentives (fast-track, financing, training, and technical assistance) as well as “hard” infrastructure (e.g., affordable building space and broadband infrastructure) to accommodate the needs of “location-independent businesses” like IT consultants, web designers, and artisans.

**COMMENTS** –The EC 2.0 program is actively working on this. The city continues to support the EC and its programs.

**PR 3.2 Develop a Entrepreneur Mentorship/Partnership Program.** Existing industrial businesses contract with a variety of suppliers and services, and there are opportunities for expanding mentorship and partnership programs that match large businesses with emerging entrepreneurs.

**COMMENTS** - The EC 2.0 program is actively working on this. The city continues to support the EC and its programs. **The Chamber** “Chamber sponsored Breakfast & Biz networking and professional development events feature guest speakers presenting relevant topics to benefit small businesses. Topics focus particularly on areas of support such as human resources, labor laws, and customer service training not easily accessible to local small businesses. Small Business Award celebration acknowledges and celebrates small businesses and educates citizens on the importance of a strong, healthy small business economic base. This is an ongoing promotion throughout the year to stressing the importance of patronizing local businesses.”

**PR 3.3 Market business development opportunities in Decatur's HUB zones.** Six U.S. Census Tracts comprise the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone in Decatur and Morgan County. The Small Business Administration (SBA) designates the zone for the purposes of providing a leg-up in federal contracting opportunities for small businesses or their employees who are located within these zones. Given the large-scale federal contracting opportunities in this region, Decatur can more pro-actively market its HUB zone designation for attracting businesses and potential contractors. Adding to the competitiveness of the zone is the availability of significant office space within the downtown area. Partnerships between the Downtown Decatur Redevelopment Authority and building owners could help package these assets for broad-based business recruitment.

**COMMENTS** – This continues to be a high priority that has been actively pursued in the last two years.

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<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>							
<b>Objective 3. Encourage entrepreneurship and expand support for small businesses.</b>							
<b>PR 3.1</b>	<b>Expand Small Business Infrastructure and Incentives.</b>	Short-term	CFO		Ongoing	Yes	Yes
<b>PR 3.2</b>	<b>Develop an Entrepreneur Mentorship/Partnership Program.</b>	Short-term	Entrepreneurial Center, DCS		Ongoing	Yes	Yes
<b>PR 3.3</b>	<b>Market business development opportunities in Decatur's HUB zones.</b>	Ongoing	Development departments, MCEDA		Ongoing	Yes	Yes

### Objective 4. Encourage a variety of housing options that are competitive and serve the needs of a diverse population.

Several of Decatur's most pressing economic development and education issues relate directly to challenges in the physical environment, including housing and infrastructure. There must be a focus on creating more workforce and executive housing resources to retain and recruit the labor force and ensure Decatur's sustainable future.

**PR 4.1 Recruit High-Value Housing/Mixed-Use Development.** Decatur has seen a dearth of new housing development in recent years. There is an effort to recruit developers, but various challenges remain.

**COMMENTS – CHAMBER** - “Residential Development” is one of four key initiatives set forth in the new five-year plan of the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, “The Partnership”. The plan, developed by community leaders and partners, including a large group of young professionals, includes a focused effort on talent development, education, and community image as well. The residential development effort has a clear mission to create an environment that will foster the demand for builders and developers to bring new, quality residential developments to Decatur-Morgan County and allow our county to capitalize on the imminent growth coming to our region. The task team began meeting bi-monthly on July 10, 2018.” **CAPNA** “Mixed can be beneficial in supporting some affordable housing developments.”

**PR 4.2 Facilitate North-of-the River Development.** Facilitate efforts to attract a regional/national developer to establish a strong “brand” for Decatur through development of a high-value mixed-use project near the I-65/565 interchange. This project can be part of a broader concept for recreational and retail amenities that serve the broader community.”

**COMMENTS –** One of the most significant steps is that the city applied for a 2019 build grant and was awarded 14.2 million subject to all design requirements and approvals being met. This be a first step in providing for a safer more accessible corridor for the region. The city is actively working on branding and a rewrite of our zoning ordinance. Property owners are encouraged to develop master plans working with the city to develop the area. This will make it easier to attract and promote the area to developers. **CHAMBER** - The Chamber's Residential Development Task Team members have set 5 strategic goals for 2019 which include a comprehensive master plan for residential growth in Decatur/Limestone County – collaborating with Clarion Associates on zoning.

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**PR 4.3 Create developer packages to market sites.** Assemble developer-targeted marketing material for certain development-ready sites. This material should include, site specifications such as acreage, zoning, and any current studies or plans. These packages should act as a prospectus for each area and be marketed to specific developers.

**COMMENTS** – The city will work with property owners on in partnership with Morgan County Economic Development Association, Limestone County Economic Development Association, utility providers in the area and the Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce. **CHAMBER** - . Identifying potential growth sites with a graphic presentation is included in the Chamber’s Residential Development Task Team strategic goals, as well as a developer/builder query of key elements that will encourage investment and construction in Decatur. We also plan to review other community best practices related to incentives experiencing increased residential growth. **CAPNA** “This might work for marketing city owned infill lots.”

**PR 4.4 Facilitate Downtown Housing Development.** Build on Downtown’s growing asset base and potential to capture the Millennial and Empty Nester markets focused on walk-ability. New projects like 307 Second can act as a model for further infill and redevelopment.

**COMMENTS** –Continue to work with and support the DDRA in its efforts to develop downtown. **CAPNA** “This is a great mixed use opportunity.”

**PR 4.5 Evaluate the state of building code requirements relative to Decatur's competitiveness within the region.** There is a vast range of building code standards in use by cities in the region. While Decatur has historically adopted the most current standards available, other communities have not. This situation, where Decatur is often enforcing higher standards, fuels perceptions that development in Decatur is relatively difficult. The City should review its obligations under State law and consider whether a moratorium on the enforcement of certain codes (such as the energy code) that exceeds the 2003 code (of both the IRC and IBC) should be put in place until all municipalities within counties bordering Morgan County adopt and enforce the most recent codes as adopted by the State of Alabama or the State code itself is modified. City leaders should also work with the elected State delegation to pass legislation that either appeals or put a moratorium on said State-wide codes until such time as the State has the staff, resources and will to level the playing field for all counties and municipalities in the adoption and enforcement of such code legislation.

**COMMENTS** – The decision was made to remain on the current adopted codes and continue to evaluate the adopted codes of surrounding regional communities. We support a funded state wide building code system and encourage our state legislators to take the steps necessary to correct the current model.

**PR 4.6 Establish Housing Rehabilitation Programs.** There is a need for “carrot and stick” approaches to improve housing conditions throughout the City but especially in target neighborhoods, for example in northwest Decatur.

**COMMENTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** – “The city at one point had a housing rehab program but the cost of renovations resulted in the City discontinuing that program. With the regulations associated with renovating homes using Federal funds those renovation cost sky rocketed. CAPNA does offer renovation grants on a smaller scale when we get requests we normally refer them to CAPNA.” **CAPNA** “We could partner with the city and state/federal agencies to facilitate rehabilitation in the forms or grants and low-interest loans.”

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<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>						



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<b>Objective 4. Encourage a variety of housing options that are competitive and serve the needs of a diverse population.</b>							
PR 4.1	<b>Recruit High-Value Housing/Mixed-Use Development</b>	Immediate, Ongoing	Development departments	Development Community	Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 4.2	<b>Facilitate North-of-the River Development.</b>	Short-term	Development departments	Property owners, Development Community	Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 4.3	<b>Create developer packages to market sites.</b>	Short-term	Development departments		Future	Yes	Yes
PR 4.4	<b>Facilitate Downtown Housing Development.</b>	Ongoing	Development departments, DDRA		Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 4.5	<b>Evaluate the state of building code requirements relative to Decatur's competitiveness within the region.</b>	Ongoing	Building	Home Builders Association	Ongoing	Yes	Yes
PR 4.6	<b>Establish Housing Rehabilitation Programs.</b>	Short-term	Code Enforcement	CD CAPNA	Completed	Yes	Yes

### Objective 5. Enhance Infrastructure to Leverage Economic Growth.

Several targeted infrastructure investments are recommended to support economic development.

**PR 5.1 Establish Industrial Parks and Sites.** While there are large industrial sites, there is a lack of designated parks in the City that are branded and can accommodate high-value industrial uses. Industrial areas along the railroad should be given more “definition” through signage, branding, and marketing for emerging industrial, service and mixed-use.

**COMMENTS MCEDA** “MCEDA is actively exploring potential sites for development and/or redevelopment for industrial prospects. This is coordinated in conjunction with utility companies, TVA, railroad providers and engineering firms. In addition, MCEDA coordinates and maintains active available buildings and sites databases with both TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) and EDPA respectively.

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<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>							
<b>Objective 5. Enhance Infrastructure to Leverage Economic Growth.</b>							
<b>PR 5.1</b>	<b>Establish Industrial Parks and Sites.</b>	Long-term	MCEDA	Planning city	Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 6. Promote a positive and coordinated brand/image.

Decatur offers many positive assets including a rich heritage, culture, and exceptional people. But the City also suffers unfairly from a negative image in part because of a lack of positive branding. There is also a series of boundaries, geographic and otherwise, that contribute to the negative imaging. Recommended strategies include:

**PR 6.1 Conduct a Summit on Collaborative Branding.** There are many entities involved in communicating (to internal audiences and/or external audiences) about the Decatur community. Other places have demonstrated significant benefits by bringing the brand and marketing efforts of various entities into alignment. A community brand gets to the authentic core of the place's attributes and aspirations. An aligned community brand goes beyond coordination and collaboration to achieve a unified vision and consistent voice that links destination marketing, economic development and community pride. Ultimately a successful brand will be voiced through each person, business, and organization that supports the community. A summit on collaborative branding would be conducted with entities involved in branding and marketing to explore the benefits and challenges of leveraging individual work to create a stronger community brand. These entities include the Chamber of Commerce, Decatur-Morgan County CVB, Economic Development Association, Downtown Redevelopment Authority, the City, Decatur City Schools and others.

**COMMENTS** – The city has had a summit on Branding with all the above listed participants. The proposal was coordinated by our recently hired Public Information Officer. A selection has been made and the process which should take 12 to 18 months will starts off Friday January 11, 2019.

**PR 6.2 Lead or Create a Regional Vision.** While the collaborative branding mentioned above would focus on Decatur's identity and marketing, a related effort should look at integrating the City's brand into a regional vision. Decatur is part of a growing metropolitan region and it should promote development of a regional vision as well as a positive role for itself in the region. The City/County can take a leadership role in collaborating with Huntsville, Madison, Athens and other communities on this vision. But if that spirit of collaboration does not take hold, Decatur can still develop its own vision for the region that can be marketed to the City's benefit. As noted before, the market and economic development opportunities relate to capturing regional share.

**COMMENTS** –This is currently being implemented by the regional collaboration initiative Launch 2035 which includes Singing River Trial project.

**PR 6.3 Establish and sustain strong collaboration through the region.** Continue to build upon many existing relationships to promote economic development and resolution of key challenges. This effort may be aided by the engagement of a community-wide foundation. The collaboration should involve the following relationships - City/County-Industry, Schools-City-County, Vocational-Schools-City-Region-Industry and other Cities in Region.

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**COMMENTS** –We currently utilize all opportunities where we bring people together such as the MPO (metro...), Technical Review Committee, MCEDA, tourism, chamber et Calhoun foundation board airport authority 2035 Initiative

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<b>ADVANCING OUR PROSPERITY</b>							
<b>Objective 6. Promote a collaborative brand/image.</b>							
PR 6.1	<b>Conduct a Summit on Collaborative Branding.</b>	Short-term	Development departments	DCS, CVB, Chamber, MCEDA, County	Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 6.2	<b>Lead or Create a Regional Vision.</b>	Mid-term	Mayor's Office	Planning, DCS, CVB, Chamber, MCEDA, County	Underway	Yes	Yes
PR 6.3	<b>Establish and sustain strong collaboration through the region.</b>	Ongoing	Launch2035	County	Underway	Yes	Yes

## ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES

The following projects, policies, and programs support the goal for enhancing our Amenities:

A wide variety of modern City services, outstanding parks and recreational facilities, well-supported cultural institutions, and access to health services that support the needs of our community.

### Objective 1. Expand the number, diversity, and wage level of employment opportunities.

**AM 1.1 Establish partnerships to improve access to high speed internet** Access to high speed internet is an important economic development amenity but is increasingly seen as an essential service. The City recently partnered with Mobile-based Southern Light to expand broadband internet service in Decatur providing data speeds of 100 gigs per second throughout much of the City. As technology and public expectations evolve, the City should continue to seek opportunities to improve high speed internet access.

**COMMENTS – INFORMATION SERVICES** – “The city has reached out to various internet providers to establish the correct person at each company to partner with.”

**AM 1.2 Evaluate the feasibility of establishing public wi-fi in key locations.** Access to the internet is a vital part of modern life. The City offers free access to wireless networks (wi-fi) within City facilities, but there is interest among the community for broader access. City wi-fi would serve as a convenient amenity and also provide an essential service to some in the community who lack access. The cost-benefit of municipal wi-fi programs in other cities varies. Decatur should consider models in peer cities nationwide and within Alabama to evaluate the feasibility of expanding wi-fi in areas including Downtown and parks.

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**COMMENTS - INFORMATION SERVICES** – “Corridors have been selected on Second AV and Moulton ST as an area for a pilot project. Some equipment has been purchased. We are working with vendors to increase bandwidth capacity. We are also working with DU to gain permission to use poles for attachment of WI-FI access points. **LIBRARY** “While the library offers free wi-fi access even through our parking lot 24/7, we frequently receive feedback from visitors and residents for the desire for public wi-fi access in downtown Decatur and local parks.” We believe we have only begun to tap the opportunities available through social wifi and look forward to the many positive steps we may see in the futures.

**AM 1.3 Evaluate the feasibility of expanding recycling service.** While the City provides recycling pick-up for residential properties, it does not offer commercial recycling pick up, but there are drop off locations that commercial enterprises can use. A pick-up program or service would encourage more recycling by making it easy for businesses. Another way to encourage recycling is the use of recycling facilities at large public events such as festivals; the City could use divided trash bins so that recycling is convenient and accessible for attendees.

**COMMENTS - Street and Environmental Services** – “We have discussed expanding recycling services for several years. However, the landfill does not have the necessary funds to support an expansion nor does the recycling facility have the capacity. We are already beyond the initial design of the operation. We provide recycling services for Athens, Decatur, Hartselle, Cullman city and some of Lawrence County. The landfill is jointly owned by Decatur and Morgan County.”

**AM 1.4 Implement a 311 system.** A 311 system is a non-emergency phone number that people can call in many cities to find information about City services, make complaints, or report problems like graffiti, litter or road damage. In recent years, traditional phone-based citizen information and reporting systems have given way to online and mobile platforms. For example, a citizen could use the system to report a potential code violation or simply determine which day their next recycling pickup would occur. The advantage of such a system is that it empowers citizens to report issues and better connects them with City government. It also provides a large amount of useful data that can be used to better target City resources efficiently. The system should be regularly evaluated to assess citizen expectations and staff response.

**COMMENTS - INFORMATION SERVICES** –“The information Services Department had budgeted for this project. We will begin evaluating vendors later in the fiscal year. This may use a different software to start out with a test program and be expanded in years to come. .”

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 1. Expand the range of public services.</b>							
<b>AM 1.1</b>	<b>Establish partnerships to improve access to high speed internet.</b>	Mid-term	IS		Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 1.2</b>	<b>Evaluate the feasibility of establishing public wi-fi in key locations.</b>	Short-term	IS		Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 1.3</b>	<b>Evaluate the feasibility of expanding recycling service.</b>	Mid-term	Street and Environmental Services		Underway	Yes	No

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AM 1.4	Implement a 311 system.	Mid-term	IS		Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 2. Continue to improve the effectiveness of the City's safety services.

**AM 2.1** Create a long-term plan for police, emergency and fire safety services. As Decatur grows, police and fire coverage must grow with it. Development north of the River has created a potential need for a fire station in this area. A master plan for these services can provide a detailed assessment of needs based on existing development and predict needs based on future development. Both Fire and Police Departments indicate a need for capital purchases of equipment, facilities, etc., and a master plan can analyze these needs and prioritize them to provide effective safety coverage while utilizing City resources effectively.

**COMMENTS** – A master plan is desirable but is unfunded at this time. The Capital Improvement program will impact this.

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<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 2. Continue to improve the effectiveness of the city's safety services.</b>							
AM 2.1	Create a long-term plan for police, emergency and fire safety services.	Short-term	Police, Fire		Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3. Provide parks and recreational facilities that meet the needs of residents.

**AM 3.1 Establish a parks and recreation master plan.** A parks and recreation master plan will assess needs, create goals, and determine priorities for Decatur's parks and recreation system, examining these facilities as an interconnected whole. As Decatur's parks and facilities act as a regional draw, a master plan will outline future development to further develop the economic benefits and possibilities of these facilities, balancing the needs of the system as an economic generator and the needs of Decatur's citizens who use the facilities for a variety of activities, improving their quality of life. This plan should incorporate the trails and greenways plan that exists and make recommendations for the expansion and development of that system as well. It should consider:

**COMMENTS** – A master plan is desirable but is unfunded at this time. **Decatur Police Department** "Program implementation has included the following – conservation of resources (City of Decatur Corporate Limits Enforcement in Unincorporated Limestone County), storm shelter reforms, multicultural outreach board, community partnership development, Low-income fire alarm distribution, installation of neighborhood watch groups, and public information notice channels."

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 3. Provide parks and recreational facilities that meet the needs of residents.</b>							

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AM 3.1	Establish a parks and recreation master plan.	Short-term	Parks and Recreation	Planning	Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 4. Maintain competitive facilities that attract tourism.

**AM 4.1 Track the economic impact of travel sports events to the City.** With facilities such as the Jack Allen Recreation Complex, Point Mallard, and Ingalls Harbor/Pavilion, Decatur is a regional hub for travel sports and recreation, particularly large tournaments and events. These events have a major economic impact on the City beyond just the fees generated for the facilities that they use. Tracking this economic impact can inform priorities for future development of facilities in the parks and recreation master plan and help the City understand the advantages that these facilities offer and develop strategies and priorities to capitalize on these assets.

The Decatur Morgan County CVB tracks the impact of special events to the City and County and presents these studies monthly. However, understanding the direct return on investment to the City may require further analysis that factors in revenue from event fees and hospitality taxes, an assessment of related economic activity within the community by measuring changes in retail sales, and direct costs such as additional staffing, policing, or maintenance required by such events. The City may also consider gathering information to establish a baseline against which to measure economic impact, for example by gathering data on restaurant sales.

**COMMENTS** –Establish a baseline and associated metrics to identify the magnitude and direction of economic trends. A regular reporting schedule should be established. **CVB** – “The CVB does a monthly report that is provided to the elected officials in the future they will also provide that report to the CFO of the City of Decatur directly.”

**AM 4.2 Plan for an indoor sports facility.** While Decatur has several outstanding outdoor sports and recreation facilities, the City lacks a public indoor sporting complex. Public input revealed a desire for a facility for indoor recreation that would serve both community needs and those of organized sports including aquatic sports.

**COMMENTS** – This continues to be a point of economic development interest for the City, however there are no current plans to pursue this. These needs will continue to be explored by the Conventions and Visitors Bureau and the Parks and Recreation Department.

**AM 4.3 Explore the feasibility of an event space for year-round activities in or near Downtown.** There is a strong desire among the community for a venue such as a conference center, auditorium or flexible multi-purpose facility that can accommodate a variety of indoor events. The City should first consider options for better utilizing or improving upon existing facilities such as Ingalls Pavilion (expansion, retrofit, air conditioning). If there is perceived strong support or demand for a new facility, then a return on investment analysis should be prepared to assess the fiscal impact of such an investment. Ideally such a facility is located in or near Downtown, perhaps in the Dry Creek area or Riverfront. To maximize return on investment, a strong and consistent effort will be required to program events to fully utilize the venue (new or existing).

**COMMENTS** –There are ongoing plans to explore Ingalls Harbor improvements.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 4. Maintain competitive facilities that attract tourism.</b>							
<b>AM 4.1</b>	<b>Track the economic impact of travel sports events to the city.</b>	Ongoing	CFO	CVB	Future	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 4.2</b>	<b>Plan for an indoor sports facility.</b>	Short-term	Parks and Recreation, Planning	CVB	On going	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 4.3</b>	<b>Explore the feasibility of an event space for year-round activities in or near Downtown.</b>	Mid-term	DDRA	Development departments, Mayor's Office, CC	On going	Yes	Yes

### Objective 5. Improve recreational access to the river and Wildlife Refuge.

**AM 5.1 Establish a water trail (blueway) through the refuge.** As the Refuge offers incredible wildlife viewing opportunities, a blueway accessible to canoes and kayaks through it is an opportunity to attract a greater variety of visitors and provide access to all areas of the Refuge while maintaining the essential protections in place. Establishing such a trail would primarily involve the creation of access points and maps to direct visitors. As kayaks and canoes are available to rent at Point Mallard, the blueway could be a partnership between the entities to promote both. Recognizing the conservation mission of the Refuge, access to trails and blueways may be seasonal.

**COMMENTS** - Senator Richard Shelby heard our community efforts and needs delivered by State Senator Arthur Orr resulting in the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge being awarded in June 2018 with \$5.443 million dollars to improve access to trails, new restrooms, handicap accessible viewing tower, and other improvements that will open up new opportunities for the community to enjoy this asset. At the suggestion of State Senator Arthur Orr a 20 mile route will be established from Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge to Point Mallard as part of the Alabama Scenic River Trail system canoe trail system.

**AM 5.2 Market kayak/canoe rental at Point Mallard.** There is limited public awareness that kayaks and canoes are available to rent at Point Mallard. This service could be more utilized if made available outside of the water park facility and more deliberately marketed in connection to a blueway system in the Refuge.

**COMMENTS** –This will be addressed in the master plan for Parks and Recreation.

**AM 5.3 Develop the trail network within the Refuge.** Plan and continue to build out trails within the Refuge property. Create additional trail heads and parking areas to support hiking/biking on those trails. Publicize the Refuge trail system through maps available in print and online.

**COMMENTS** – See AM 5.1 above

**AM 5.4 Establish a multi-use path and bridge across Flint Creek.** Create a multi-use path and bridge across mouth of Flint Creek, connecting Point Mallard Park to the extensive network of trails that exist in the northern part of the Wildlife Refuge and provide a connection to the Hickory Hills / Rolling Hills neighborhood. This path could consist of a wooden boardwalk that includes one or more bridge spans of adequate height for boats to pass beneath.

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**COMMENTS** – This vision is one that will require a multiyear multi agency effort.

**AM 5.5 Conduct an awareness-building effort about recreational opportunities in the City’s natural areas.** Such an initiative would involve a marketing campaign to spread awareness about the Refuge and other natural areas with public access around Decatur. It would also encourage the Refuge management and/or City to thin vegetation along major roads to improve views into the Refuge.

**COMMENTS-** This will be part of the branding efforts.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 5. Improve recreational access to the river and Wildlife Refuge.</b>							
<b>AM 5.1</b>	<b>Establish a water trail (blueway) through the Refuge.</b>	Mid-term	Refuge	Planning, Community Development	Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 5.2</b>	<b>Market kayak/canoe rental at Point Mallard.</b>	Short-term	Parks and Recreation		Future	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 5.3</b>	<b>Develop the trail network within the Refuge.</b>	Mid-term	Refuge		Underway	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 5.4</b>	<b>Establish a multi-use path and bridge across Flint Creek.</b>	Long-term	Refuge	Mayor's Office and other City departments	Future	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 5.5</b>	<b>Create an awareness-building effort about recreational opportunities in the city’s natural areas.</b>	Ongoing	Refuge, City PIO		Underway	Yes	Yes

### **Objective 6. Strengthen support for community and cultural institutions.**

**AM 6.1 Evaluate the feasibility of relocating the library or establishing a branch library.** The library’s current facility was built in 1973 and is inadequate for growing needs and programs, with maintenance, parking, and access all cited as issues. While the Downtown location is desirable for access and centrality, it may prove difficult to expand in this location. The City and the library should explore possibilities for a new (relocated) library or an additional branch library. A branch library would be expected to offer or similar services available at the main branch including media, public computers and wi-fi, programs like story times and book clubs, and customer service. Former school facilities could offer options for a new or relocated facility. Alternatively, evaluating all alternatives may provide solutions for expanding the library in its current location. This evaluation should involve experts in library planning.

**COMMENTS – LIBRARY** “Decatur Public Library is in dire need of a new facility. Our current building has serious structural issues that often need repair, prohibit usage, or cause internal damage due to incoming rain. The layout and infrastructure is not conducive to the 21st century needs of community. Larger department spaces, electrical infrastructure, meeting spaces, and parking are ongoing needs requested by our patrons. However, our number one request from the community this past year has been the need for an auditorium to adequately handle library programming. We would



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welcome an evaluation from an expert in library planning to help us determine the best possible building solution(s) to serve our community. Such an evaluation would need to involve the following considerations:

Currently, 46% of our core usage comes from zip code 35601 while 34% is from zip code 35603. Would residents from 35603 use the library more frequently if the library was closer? Would relocating the library impact residents and their use in 35601? Decatur Public Library serves the city of Decatur as well as Morgan County residents. The City of Decatur alone covers a geographic area of approximately 60 square miles. Do we need a larger main library building to serve the entire city/county area that's centrally located or 2 adequately sized branches that are strategically located to serve as many residents as possible? A future facility should also be in harmony with the growth plans for the city as 72% of the library's patrons reside in Decatur city limits. Plans for a larger facility or an additional library branch **MUST INCLUDE A LOCAL FUNDING STRATEGY FOR STAFFING AND OPERATIONS.**

**AM 6.2 Participate in Decatur City Schools capital planning efforts.** The City should continue to participate in facility planning efforts with DCS to ensure that critical factors such as infrastructure availability and future land use plans are understood. Coordination may also help identify potential future uses for obsolete school facilities.

**COMMENTS** –DCS will continue to invite and City will continue to participate in their capital projects planning and work to find new ways to include city capital projects as they may relate to schools or school/city related infrastructure needs.

**AM 6.3 Form an arts council to promote arts in Decatur.** An arts council would be an umbrella organization representing the various arts organizations in Decatur including the Princess Theater, Carnegie Visual Arts Center, Alabama Center for the Arts, Decatur Arts Guild and other groups. The council would serve as a unified voice to convey information about arts in the City, promote arts venues and events, and coordinate educational opportunities such as workshops and festivals.

**COMMENTS** - There is a need to coordinate all the activities within the Arts community under an umbrella organization which will need funding. Currently, much is done by the Carnegie Visual Arts Center which has developed multiple new events for the community centered on the arts. They need the help and support that this organization could provide. The arts community recently started discussions about forming an Arts Alliance to coordinate art related events and maintain a calendar. An inspired leader needs to be found that would lead this organization.

**AM 6.4 Create a public art initiative.** Art and design can have a significant impact on a community's character, sense of place, and civic pride. An "art in public places" initiative should be explored in collaboration with public and private partners like Alabama Center for the Arts. One example of this is the recent efforts by Carnegie Visual Arts where temporary or permanent, large-scale art installations, such as sculptures and murals, were placed in prominent locations throughout the City. One of these installations is located near the Farmer's Market at the concrete embankment beneath the Gordon Drive overpass. Another potential location is along Lee Street across from the jail.

**COMMENTS** – The Carnegie has taken many active steps to share and provide public art. The Bike Racks, Butterflies and Dragon flies continue to be enjoyed. The Carnegie also has monthly exhibit changes and offers classes for children and adults. The Alabama Center for the Arts uses its entry area on Second AV to display art and has installed a Bruce Larsen sculpture there permanently for public enjoyment. This area is also used for concerts and art activities in support of events downtown. The ACA has a public art gallery that changes bi-monthly. The regular performances by students at the ACA are made available to and enjoyed by our community.

**AM 6.5 Enhance the Decatur Farmers Market.** Work with leaders of Decatur Farmers Market to evaluate opportunities for enhancement. Those opportunities could involve making the building more attractive and ADA compliant, expanding the market season to year-round, adding features such as a cafe or demonstration kitchen, or considering alternative locations for the market.

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**COMMENTS** - Decatur/ Morgan County Farmer’s Market Board is one of the few that exist on the local level in the state. We believe that is a strength. The board has been vocal in working toward improvements of the structure (bathroom remodel and handicap accessible). Prior to the season starting the traffic patterns and flow need to be addressed with the Decatur Police Traffic Division and the City Engineer. During the season the Market works to bring in the public with creative events like Tomato Sandwich Day and Food Trucks on Fridays. **Farmer’s Market Board** “Our farmers Market is one of the oldest, continuous running markets in the state (since 1936), and one of 7 in the state that is open 6 days a week during season. Decatur’s market is well known and favorably recognized by the State of Alabama Department of Agriculture. Most importantly, we are a 501c3 non-profit created to serve the farmers as an extension of their farms. We serve 7 counties and conduct farm tours to insure that produce offered for sale is actually grown on the participating farms.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 6. Strengthen support for community and cultural institutions.</b>							
<b>AM 6.1</b>	<b>Evaluate the feasibility of relocating the library or establishing a branch library.</b>	Mid-term	Library	Mayor's Office and other City departments			
<b>AM 6.2</b>	<b>Participate in Decatur City Schools capital planning efforts.</b>	Short-term	DCS	Mayor's Office and other City departments			
<b>AM 6.3</b>	<b>Form an arts council to promote arts in Decatur.</b>	Short-term	ACA / Carnegie	Planning			
<b>AM 6.4</b>	<b>Create a public art initiative.</b>	Short-term	Arts Council				
<b>AM 6.5</b>	<b>Enhance the farmer's market.</b>	Short-term	City, County				

### Objective 7. Improve access to quality healthcare and social services

**AM 7.1 Coordinate social services.** Many challenges to receiving social services could be mitigated with a better coordinated delivery. A one-stop-shop should be developed to better support residents seeking health care and other services. Functionally a one-stop-shop would involve a single website or phone number that people could contact to obtain assistance with a range of social services including healthcare needs, nutrition assistance and financial aid. This action could also be achieved by promoting the existing 211 service in Alabama which is a partnership with United Way.

**COMMENTS – United Way Morgan County** The United Way funds 211 through its annual campaign. 211 appears on all material printed by the United Way Morgan County. It is operated by Crisis Services of North Alabama out of Huntsville for multiple counties including Morgan, Madison, and Limestone. This consolidation of services is more cost effective.

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**AM 7.2 Communicate to State agencies the impact of closing State-run mental health facilities.** The closing of State-run mental health service providers including North Alabama Regional Hospital in 2015 is part of a long-term State initiative to promote community-based programs over large institutions. This initiative has led to a significant increase in the number of group homes in Decatur without a clear way to regulate how and where these facilities operate. There is also concern that some people in need of mental health services are not getting the care they need. The City should continue to communicate these challenges to State and seek potential solutions.

**COMMENTS** –This continues to be a priority for the City of Decatur and as we develop our code enforcement tools additional steps will be taken.

**AM 7.3 Create a healthy community initiative.** A healthy community initiative would spread information about health services and the specific health problems faced by the Decatur community. It would also promote healthy lifestyles and celebrate the organizations and individuals who are working to create a healthier community.

**COMMENTS** –This has come up a few times in different ways but no one department, agency or person has initiated a healthy community initiative. There are active groups that swim at the Aquadome, and River City Runners is also an active running group. Better awareness of the things we have available for our community more promotion of our walking trials and biking will be part of the branding project. **DMH (Decatur Morgan Hospital)** DMH participates in promoting a healthy community by offering various community screening programs, Health Fair, working with industry to ensure a healthy workforce and providing care regardless of a person’s ability to pay. DMH supports the community free clinic by also offering free services to citizens whom visit the clinics and require medical intervention. DMH has several outpatient primary care clinics located throughout the City and County to ensure citizens have access when medical attention is needed.

**AM 7.4 Establish a task force on poverty.** A significant number of Decatur’s citizens struggle with poverty. While there are a number of organizations and institutions that work to combat it, a task force on poverty would coordinate efforts, raise awareness about the challenge and establish an overall strategy for addressing poverty and those it affects in Decatur. Such a task force should include the Community Action Partnership of Alabama, other non-profits, institutions such as churches, safety and health services, Decatur Housing Authority, City staff, etc.

**COMMENTS** –A task force on poverty has been initiated. There will be more structure and information on this in the coming months.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES</b>							
<b>Objective 7. Improve access to quality healthcare and social services.</b>							
<b>AM 7.1</b>	<b>Coordinate social services.</b>	Mid-term	Planning		Future	No	Yes
<b>AM 7.2</b>	<b>Communicate to State agencies the impact of closing of State-run mental health facilities.</b>	Ongoing	Mayor’s Office	Development departments	On going	Yes	Yes
<b>AM 7.3</b>	<b>Create a healthy community initiative.</b>	Short-term	Hospital		On going	No	Yes

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
AM 7.4	Establish a task force on poverty.	Ongoing	Community Development	Mayor's Office, CC	On going	No	Yes

### STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

The following projects, policies, and programs support the goal for Strengthening our Community:

A united, proud, and confident community that embraces everyone, has highly competitive schools that prepare youth for success in life, and where residents and institutions are meaningfully engaged.

#### Objective 1. Strive to make Decatur City Schools a highly competitive school system on a state and national level.

The identity of any community is significantly shaped by its schools. Throughout the One Decatur process, improving the competitiveness of Decatur City Schools (DCS) was a recurring theme—indispensable to advancing personal and community prosperity. But, like many communities, Decatur's public schools are independent from City government, so addressing schools must be a collaborative effort. The Steering Committee recognizes that the responsibility for strong schools must not rest solely on teachers and administrators. Others in the community should play a supportive role in advancing academic success throughout Decatur. To address this important need, the Comprehensive Plan includes the following recommendations for consideration.

**co 1.1 Establish an Education Advisory Group.** An advisory committee made up of school officials, school foundation representatives, City leaders, and education advocates in the community could help to foster a positive academic experience at the City's schools as well as improve communication between the schools and City. This committee could be led by a key leader within the schools who is tasked with identifying best practice approaches that focus on improving student achievement through innovation, leadership structures that focus on success, and partnerships with the community. The committee could be a forum for sharing practices and successes from other districts and be tasked with advising on various initiatives such as:

**COMMENTS – DCS (Decatur City Schools)** An advisory committee has been established and met for the first time in December 2018 the next meeting is scheduled for February 2019.

**co 1.2 Establish an incentive program to attract, develop and retain more high achieving principals and teachers.** A community incentive program should be explored that would focus on attracting, retaining, and developing the best principals and teachers for Decatur City Schools. This program could be funded by businesses that have a keen interest in stronger education outcomes, including graduates that are ready for post high school opportunities.

**COMMENTS – DCS** “we have policies in place to post jobs early. We have mentioned signing bonuses with the School Foundation but there are no specifics on that yet.”

**co 1.3 Conduct a coordinated and long-term marketing effort to improve Decatur school's image.** While addressing measurable school performance is important, attitudes and perceptions about the schools are often slower to change. A coordinated marketing effort should be made to raise awareness about the successes of DCS. This effort should involve an internal component, aimed at Decatur residents, and an external component aimed at visitors, prospective

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investors, businesses, or new residents. An online component should target real estate searches within the region. To partially address this need, DCS has hired a media / public relations specialist for 2017.

**COMMENTS** –Some of this will be addressed in the City wide branding effort. **DCS** “This will be part of our five year plan that we are getting ready to work on. Our report card grade went from a C to a B this year.”

**co 1.4 Continue to emphasize skills for the future.** Build upon existing programs to become a recognized leader in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. As an example, programs could include expanding computer coding courses. (See Advancing our Prosperity, Objective 2)

**COMMENTS** – **DCS** “We opened the Career Academies of Decatur. We added STEM curriculum to our middle and high schools. (Green powered Car)

**co 1.5 Continue to emphasize career and vocational education.** Continue to develop programs that provide technical education and career pathways, especially as it relates to robotics and STEM jobs. This emphasis should also be featured in the district's marketing effort. Individual stories should be highlighted, all revolving around the same central brand / theme.

**COMMENTS** - Approximately 600 DCS students are dual-enrolled at Calhoun Community College or in some kind of career technical class. DCS should continue to work with Calhoun Community College to develop and promote these partnership opportunities.

**co 1.6 Evaluate feeder patterns.** Evaluate the benefits of establishing clear school feeder patterns between elementary, middle, and high schools. A clear feeder system would better enable individual schools to anticipate and tailor programming to the needs of their students.

**COMMENTS** – The school system implemented a new feeder patterns with the 2018-19 school year.

**co 1.7 Conduct city-schools joint work sessions.** To continue to develop a positive city-schools relationship, City Council and the School District should meet once or twice a year in a joint work session to share progress and make sure goals are aligned.

**COMMENTS** – The City Council and the School Board held a joint meeting April 27, 2018. We do not have a joint meeting scheduled yet for 2019.

**co 1.8 Lobby the State to update its school funding model.** Alabama schools rely heavily on State funding yet several high profile studies have determined that school funding in Alabama is neither adequate nor equitable. State funding is determined is based on school size rather than on student or district needs. Research demonstrates that to teach students in poverty, English language learners, and students with special needs requires additional resources. Decatur should join the voices in advocating for school funding reform at the state level.

**COMMENTS** – **DCS** We have and we hope to get more funding for EL student for the Fiscal 2020 budget.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Objective 5. Improve inter-governmental cooperation and coordination.</b>							
<b>CO 1.1</b>	<b>Establish an Education Advisory Group.</b>	Short-term	DCS, CC	Planning			

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
CO 1.2	Establish an incentive program to attract, develop and retain more high achieving principals and teachers.	Short-term	DCS and School Foundation	Chamber, CVB, MCEDA and City			
CO 1.3	Conduct a coordinated and long-term marketing effort to improve Decatur school's image.	Immediate	DCS				
CO 1.4	Continue to emphasize skills for the future.	Ongoing	DCS				
CO 1.5	Continue to emphasize career and vocational education.	Short-term	DCS, Calhoun Community College, Athens State, EC				
CO 1.6	Evaluate feeder patterns	Short-term	DCS		Done	Yes	Yes
CO 1.7	Conduct city-schools joint work sessions.	Immediate	DCS, CC				
CO 1.8	Lobbying the State to update its school funding model.	Immediate	DCS	City and other groups			

### Objective 2. Celebrate our community's diversity.

**co 2.1** Create new arts and cultural events. Utilize the wealth of arts and cultural resources available in Decatur — Princess Theatre, Carnegie Visual Arts Center, Alabama Center for the Arts, and Alabama Arts Hall of Fame — to develop arts and cultural events that will attract both residents and visitors to partake in this abundance of resources. A coordinated strategy among these and other groups can provide the foundation for an arts economy in Decatur, with a wide array and diversity of events throughout the year.

**COMMENTS** –Creating and funding an Arts and diversity council might allow for better coordination and promotion of art and cultural events.

**co 2.2** Create an online City events and cultural calendar. Decatur offers a variety of festivals and events throughout the year, including many diverse cultural opportunities. A central event and cultural calendar can allow groups to coordinate events to avoid overlap or duplication, and it can aid residents and visitors alike in seeing all of the activities, festivals, and events offered in Decatur.

**COMMENTS** –The CVB does a community calendar that has most of our events. There are plans underway to make this more user friendly.

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**CO 2.3** Create a commission on diversity and inclusion. Decatur’s population, while fairly diverse, still struggles with inclusion in various areas. A commission on diversity and inclusion could help ensure that all are able to participate fully in civic discourse, decisions, and activities in Decatur. Furthermore, a commission would be able to expand outreach efforts for various City and organizational processes in order to hear a variety and diversity of opinions and promote civic participation.

**COMMENTS** –There has been limited interest in this. **Volunteer Center-** “Create a service project to bring a diverse base of volunteers.”

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Objective 2. Celebrate our community’s diversity.</b>							
<b>CO 2.1</b>	<b>Create new arts and cultural events.</b>	Mid-term	Arts Council (once established)	Various community groups and agencies	Future	Yes	Yes
<b>CO 2.2</b>	<b>Create an online city events and cultural calendar.</b>	Short-term	PIO, CVB		On going	Yes	Yes
<b>CO 2.3</b>	<b>Create a commission on diversity and inclusion.</b>	Short-term	Community Development	Police, DCS	Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3. Encourage civic participation, mentoring and volunteerism.

**CO 3.1 Create an awareness effort about available volunteer opportunities.** There are many existing opportunities for interested citizens to volunteer through the City of Decatur, various faith-based organizations, and through the Volunteer Center of Morgan County. Nevertheless, community input indicated a lack of awareness about these opportunities. A campaign that includes traditional and online media could raise awareness and expand participation in volunteer activities in the community.

**COMMENTS** –The volunteer center is currently sending a monthly e-newsletter to 1,446 people regarding new volunteer efforts and they have an active website which is updated regularly.

**CO 3.2 Expand mentoring programs offered through Decatur youth services.** Mentorship was frequently mentioned as a means to address many social and economic challenges that exist in Decatur. Decatur Youth Services (DYS), an existing City department, provides many vital programs that improve the quality of life and potential for at-risk youth in the community. The City should continue to provide necessary support for DYS and seek opportunities to expand the reach of its programs, particularly the existing mentorship program.

**COMMENTS** –The City has two mentoring programs. Decatur Youth Services serves 40 young people with trained mentors and they have a waiting list of ten. Mosaic of North Alabama (formerly big brothers big sisters) currently has 90 trained volunteers but also has a waiting list. Seeking interested volunteers continues to be an issue.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Objective 3. Encourage civic participation, mentoring and volunteerism.</b>							
<b>CO 3.1</b>	<b>Create an awareness effort about available volunteer opportunities.</b>	Short-term	Volunteer Center of Morgan County	Planning	On going	No	Yes
<b>CO 3.2</b>	<b>Expand mentoring programs offered through Decatur youth services.</b>	Ongoing	Youth Services, DCS	Mosaic of North AL / DYS	On going	Yes	Yes

### Objective 4. Improve communication and cooperation between citizens, institutions, and government.

**co 4.1 Hire a community relations / public information officer.** Public information officers (PIOs) are the communications coordinators or spokespersons of government organizations. A PIO would help to improve communication between the City and external audiences by overseeing the creation of marketing collateral or other written communication, as well as setting protocols to guide the interaction between other City officials and the public. A PIO would also cultivate strong relationships with the media and public by answering queries promptly, arranging interviews or speakers when requested and being a familiar and involved presence at community events.

**COMMENTS** –The city has hired a Public Information Officer who is housed in the Police Department. She has coordinated the efforts to hire a company to help rebrand the city. She is also actively involved in the City social media presence.

**co 4.2 Create an ongoing forum for community input.** Using the One Decatur steering committee or an expanded platform, create an ongoing committee or forum for community input. The group would meet periodically to provide input on City policy and needs. They would also act as City champions or ambassadors to reach out to the community to obtain input and spread success stories. There could be multiple groups or task forces established to help with implementation of this plan's action items.

**COMMENTS** –Members of the One Decatur Steering Committee expressed an interest in being further involved in the implementation of the plan. An effort should be made to invite them to come together again and start a formal process of community input. This group could help develop a community survey and how that will be disseminated.

**co 4.3 Create a council of neighborhoods.** A council of neighborhoods is an umbrella organization that would consist of representatives from Decatur's various neighborhood groups or formal neighborhood associations. Liaisons from each of Decatur's neighborhood associations would meet regularly to share information, ideas, and collaborate on initiatives of common benefit. The council would also work with the City and other agencies to advocate on neighborhood issues and thereby provide an effective forum for bringing such issues to public attention.

**COMMENTS** –This has not been started at this time. The police department works with neighborhoods that would like to start neighborhood watch groups. It is possible that we might work with those groups to get this started.



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**co 4.4 Conduct citizen surveys.** City government delivers a diverse range of services that are directly tied to quality of life and prosperity. To track the effectiveness of City services, many communities conduct routine community surveys to measure satisfaction. A statistically valid citizen survey conducted every two to five years would help Decatur identify ways to improve the delivery of services and track progress.

**COMMENTS** – Please see comment on 4.2 above

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Objective 4. Improve communication and cooperation between citizens, institutions, and government.</b>							
<b>CO 4.1</b>	<b>Hire a community relations / public information officer.</b>	Ongoing	CC		Complete	Yes	Yes
<b>CO 4.2</b>	<b>Create an ongoing forum for community input.</b>	Short-term	Planning	PIO One Decatur Steering Committee	Future	Yes	Yes
<b>CO 4.3</b>	<b>Create a council of neighborhoods.</b>	Mid-term	Planning	PIO	Futures	Yes	Yes
<b>CO 4.4</b>	<b>Conduct citizen surveys.</b>	Short-term	Planning	PIO One Decatur Steering Committee	Future	Yes	Yes

### **Objective 5. Improve inter-governmental coordination and cooperation.**

One Decatur encourages a new era of cooperation and coordination among local governmental and quasi-governmental entities – at both the city and the county level. As demands increase for scarce public funds, these entities must seek new and better ways to deliver essential services as efficiently as possible. Furthermore, our City leaders must ensure that Decatur's interests are represented at a level commensurate with the City's population and funding provided. Specific recommendations for exploration:

**co 5.1 Establish formal information sharing relationships/protocols.** Review existing mechanisms and establish policies to improve information-sharing with regional organizations, institutions, and neighboring jurisdictions. Such sharing would include land use policies, infrastructure plans and other initiatives of mutual interest. Establish regular staff-to-staff meetings between the City and critical jurisdictional and institutional partners. Formally invite other institutions and organizations that have missions and programs that could align with Decatur's goals to construct mechanisms for collaboration.

**COMMENTS** –Currently there are meetings to share information which can be hit or miss. The Technical Review Committee of the Planning Commission might be a vehicle for this. The Technical Review Committee of the MPO also makes recommendations and shares information about road projects. The launch 2035 Landuse Committee could also help with this. **LAUNCH 2035** has started a Regional Collaboration Initiative the city is participating.

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**co 5.2 Conduct leadership roundtables.** Establish regularly scheduled meetings of Decatur’s leadership and leaders from partner organizations and jurisdictions to share information and discuss topical issues. These meetings could include elected officials, City department heads, and organization board members. They could occur annually or semiannually.

**COMMENTS** –This has not been started at this time. A possible connect with the Chamber leadership programs should be explored.

**co 5.3 Look for opportunities to consolidate and share services.** Identify and evaluate opportunities that may exist where Decatur and Morgan County can more efficiently deliver services under joint management. This approach has been successfully implemented in the joint city/county jail. Decatur and Morgan County should now search for other potential areas of cooperation and joint administration. Potential areas include information technology, joint purchasing, sanitation, road maintenance, parks and recreation, etc.

**COMMENTS** –Memorandums of Understanding exist with the Decatur Fire Department and the Volunteer Departments in the county. Our community continues to look for ways to work together to provide services. We continue to explore opportunities to share and merge services with the county. We have started using the county jail for city offenders and continue to seek other opportunities like this.

**co 5.4 Evaluate Decatur's representation by Morgan County Commission.** It has been many years since a resident of Decatur was elected to one of the five seats on the Morgan County Commission. Yet, over half of the County's population and revenue comes from Decatur. The City should review Act 258 of 1973, under which Morgan County currently elects commissioners using the “at-large, Numbered post” election method. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of Alabama counties elect county commissioners by district. Currently, approximately 60% of Morgan County’s residents live in District 1, while each of the other three districts contain fewer than 20% of county voters. One Decatur encourages the City to research potential improvements to Morgan County’s current method of electing county commissioners that would potentially provide for more equitable allocation of Commission seats and County resources based on County population.

**COMMENTS** -- A bill was introduced in February of 2018 that was not related to this initiative but did bring many questions to light. The bill failed for many reasons however the dialogue needs to be continued concerning Act 258 of 1973 if that method today provides for equal representation as to one person one vote as the best structure in today’s economy.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY</b>							
<b>Objective 5. Improve inter-governmental cooperation and coordination.</b>							
<b>CO 5.1</b>	<b>Establish formal information sharing relationships/protocols.</b>	Short-term	Planning	Development departments			
<b>CO 5.2</b>	<b>Conduct leadership roundtables.</b>	Short-term	Mayor's Office	Development departments			
<b>CO 5.3</b>	<b>Look for opportunities to consolidate and share services.</b>	Mid-term	Planning	Development departments			

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
CO 5.4	Evaluate Decatur's representation by Morgan County Commission.	Short-term	Mayor's Office, County				

### ACHIEVING OUR VISION

#### Implementation Actions

Outlined below are four objectives and 13 actions to support implementation of the plan.

#### Objective 1. Promote awareness and understanding of the plan and its recommendations.

**vi 1.1 Engage non-governmental partners to assist with implementation.** Identify and engage various civic organizations, neighborhood groups, institutions, and businesses to assist with implementing key strategies in the plan.

**COMMENTS** –We continue to reach out to our community.

**vi 1.2 Provide copies of the plan throughout the community and online.** Upon adoption, the plan should be made available at multiple locations such as the library, community centers and on the City's website.

**COMMENTS** –The plan has been distributed to a broad base of locations. We are also always seeking other places to share the information. This document will be shared on the One Decatur page when completed and approved. Decatur Public Library would also place a link to an electronic copy of the plan from our website.

**vi 1.3 Provide ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities.** The Comprehensive Plan references many innovative development concepts, programs, and policies. City staff should be supported in obtaining training to more effectively undertake the plan's recommendations. Staff, commission members, and elected officials should conduct visits to other communities to observe examples first-hand.

**COMMENTS** –The City is committed to training of staff and boards.

**vi 1.4 Develop a formal training program for commission and board members.** Training should focus on land use law, meeting procedures, organizational dynamics and how to use the plan.

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**COMMENTS** –The city encourages both the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning adjustment to seek Certified Alabama Planning and Zoning Official certification.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ACHIEVING OUR VISION</b>							
<b>Objective 1. Promote awareness and understanding of the plan and its recommendations.</b>							
VI 1.1	<b>Engage non-governmental partners to assist with implementation.</b>	Ongoing	Planning		Future	Yes	Yes
VI 1.2	<b>Provide copies of the plan throughout the community and online.</b>	Short-term, Ongoing	Planning		Underway	Yes	Yes
VI 1.3	<b>Provide ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities.</b>	Short-term Ongoing	City		Underway	Yes	Yes
VI 1.4	<b>Develop a formal training program for commission and board members.</b>	Short-term Ongoing	Planning		Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 2. Monitor and share implementation progress.

**vi 2.1 Establish an implementation task force.** Decatur should consider establishing a community-based task force to assist with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This task force could involve members of the One Decatur steering committee. City staff will identify the task force's responsibilities which may include coordinating specific action items or simply meeting semi-annually to monitor and report on plan progress.

**COMMENTS** – The Planning Commission will be asked to establish a subcommittee of the Planning Commission at the March 2019 meeting. The Committee may include – the Chairman of the Commission, the council liaison to the Commission, a commission member at large, the commission member who represents a public service entity, and four members of the One Decatur Steering Committee.

**vi 2.2 Prepare and share an annual report.** An annual report should be prepared that identifies the status of plan implementation and outlines annual accomplishments and priorities. This report would include a summary table of the plan's actions and the status of each. (Completed, underway, ongoing, and no longer relevant).

**COMMENTS** – That is being done currently

**vi 2.3 Share a summary of the annual report with media and public.** A annual summary of major accomplishments should be issued to the media and presented at a public meeting.

**COMMENTS** – This will be a part of the annual report next year.

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ACHIEVING OUR VISION</b>							
<b>Objective 2. Monitor and share implementation progress.</b>							
VI 2.1	Establish an implementation task force.	Short-term	Planning		Future	Yes	Yes
VI 2.2	Prepare and share an annual report.	Ongoing	Planning		Initiated	Yes	Yes
VI 2.3	Share a summary of the annual report with media and public.	Ongoing	Planning		Future	Yes	Yes

### Objective 3. Require concurrence with the Comprehensive Plan.

**VI 3.1 Update regulations and establish new regulatory tools.** Development regulations including zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes and related ordinances will be updated to reflect the plan's recommendations.

**COMMENTS** –A rewrite of the zoning ordinance has been initiated. The legal department is looking at our property maintenance and overcrowding issues. We are also considering licensing of rental property owners.

**VI 3.2 Require concurrence in rezoning and other major development approvals.** Major rezonings and development approvals will concur with applicable policies of this plan. Actions by City boards, commissions and staff will document concurrence in all decisions.

**COMMENTS** –This has been started and will continue to evolve.

**VI 3.3 Require staff reports to reference the Comprehensive Plan.** All staff reports related to development applications, code amendments, rezonings, policy recommendations, annual work programs and budgets will reference relevant plan recommendations.

**COMMENTS** –This has been started and will evolve with time.

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ACHIEVING OUR VISION</b>							
<b>Objective 3. Require concurrence with the Comprehensive Plan.</b>							
VI 3.1	Update regulations and establish new regulatory tools.	Short-term	Planning, Legal	PC, CC	Underway	Yes	Yes
VI 3.2	Require concurrence in rezoning and other major development approvals.	Ongoing	PC, CC	PC, BOZA, CC	Underway	Yes	Yes

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Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
VI 3.3	Require staff reports to reference the Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	Planning	PC, CC	Underway	Yes	Yes

### Objective 4. Provide resources for implementing the plan.

**vi 4.1 Establish and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).** A multi-year Capital Improvements Plan should be adopted and maintained. The CIP is a fundamental management document that outlines projected capital needs, priorities, funding estimates and sources, and time-frames for completion.

**COMMENTS** – The CFO is in the process of developing a methodology for doing a CIP and CIB. Stakeholder input will be at the foundation of this process.

**vi 4.2 Prepare annual departmental work programs with awareness of the Comprehensive Plan.** Departmental work programs and associated budget requests should demonstrate consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

**COMMENTS** – With upcoming changes in staffing and department we will begin a more formal process for this for 2020.

**vi 4.3 Identify and secure funds for prioritized initiatives.** Funding sources could include grants, tax measures, bonds, private investments, public-private partnerships, etc.

**COMMENTS** –Much has been done with this already including the Build Grant, the funding of the Zoning Rewrite, funding of the branding project, grants to extend the bike and pedestrian access in different locations around the city, contributing to the Singing River Trail project, hiring a consultant to help the Historic Preservation Commission efforts, street repaving and maintenance programs, Hiring a CFO and a PIO for the city, grants for improvements at et

Action		Time-frame	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities	Status	Acceptable progress?	Commitment to future action?
<b>ACHIEVING OUR VISION</b>							
<b>Objective 4. Provide resources for implementing the plan.</b>							
VI 4.1	Establish and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	Ongoing	Planning, CFO	CC	Future	Yes	Yes
VI 4.2	Prepare annual departmental work programs with awareness of the Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	Planning, PC	CC	Future	Yes	Yes
VI 4.3	Identify and secure funds for prioritized initiatives.	Ongoing	CFO, Planning, Grants, Mayor's Office, CC		Underway	Yes	Yes

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## ACRONYMNS

ACRONYMN	STANDS FOR
ACA –	Alabama Center for the Arts
AM	Enhancing our Amenities
BID	Business Improvement District
BOZA –	Board of Zoning Adjustment
CAPNA	Community Action Partnership of North Alabama
CBDO –	Community Based Development Organization –
CC –	City Council
CD or com dev	Community Development Department
CDBG –	Community Development Block Grant Program –
CFO –	Chief Financial Officer
Chamber –	Decatur Morgan County Chamber of Commerce
CIP –	Capital Improvements Program
CO	Strengthening our Community
CVB –	Decatur Morgan County Tourism
Dawn	Decatur Assists Willing Neighbors
DCS	Decatur City schools
DDRA –	Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority
DPLTC	Decatur Public Library Training Center
DU –	Decatur Utilities
DYS	Decatur Youth Services
EC –	Entrepreneurial Center –
EDPA	Economic development partnership of Alabama
EL	English as a second language
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
HUB	Historically underutilized business zones part of the small business administration
IBC –	International Building Code
IRC -=	International Residential Code
MCEDA	Morgan County, Decatur Economic Development Association
MO	Improving our Mobility
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
Park and Rec	Parks and Recreation Department
PC -	Planning Commission
PIO	Public Information Officer
PR	Advancing our Prosperity
QP	Creating a Quality Place
STEM	Science technology engineering and math
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
TRC	Technical Review committee formerly the Subdivision Committee
VI	Achieving our Vision
Wi Fi	Wi-Fi is technology for radio wireless local area networking of devices based on the IEEE 802.11 standards. Wi-Fi is a trademark of the Wi-Fi Alliance, which restricts the use of the term Wi-Fi Certified to products that successfully complete interoperability certification testing.



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ACRONYMN	STANDS FOR
WWR	Wheeler Wildlife Refuge