

ROUNDTABLES ROUND 2: DISCUSSION GUIDE

AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE, MOBILE, AND GREEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES TOTAL)

Welcome by facilitator

(Ensure the full group understands and is in agreement with the following parameters. If your facilitator is a no-show, choose someone to assume those duties for today.)

» Introductions:

» Most of your group has now likely met so you may expedite introductions as appropriate.

» Leading the conversation requires a *neutral role*

» Facilitators can contribute as individuals but should not *advocate* for particular positions or otherwise work to *influence* other's opinions. Facilitators encourage discussion but *do not challenge comments or opinions shared within the group*.

» Facilitators ensure the group stays focused with a fair and productive conversation.

» For full transparency, notes should be taken on the flip chart provided so that all are in agreement with how comments are being documented.

» Ground rules

» Everyone is given opportunity to speak, one person at a time.

» No one should dominate the discussion. Support your facilitator's efforts to manage diverse personalities for a fair and inclusive discussion. We're all neighbors here.

» Help the facilitator keep things on track with time monitoring or flip chart notes.

» Speak for yourself, not as a representative for others.

» Do not quote or attribute group conversation outside the group.

» Keep cell phones muted or off.

» Listen to understand before responding.

DESTINATION:2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA

HOUSING & INCLUSIVITY (40 MINUTES TOTAL)

CONTEXT:

The Affordable Housing Task Force report commissioned and recently accepted by the City Commission identifies density as one key tool in achieving broader affordability.

Among the report's many recommendations is this: "In order to increase the number of affordable units, the City will need to allow for a targeted increase in density in [residential neighborhoods]." This is recommended in the form of duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and cottage courts *scaled comparably to existing single family homes*.

This diversity of housing types in Decatur neighborhoods was the historical norm until 1988 when new duplexes, etc. were prohibited in response to the disinvestment and absentee ownership issues of the day.

Today, Decatur's need for more affordable housing exists in stark contrast to our issues of the 1980s, suggesting a need to restore our historical mix of housing types.

Together with your group, discuss the following questions presented by such an approach:

- » A diverse and inclusive Decatur has been a broadly shared community value for decades. How do we reconcile this with the reality that 91% of our residential land mandates single family homes, where the cost-of-entry starts at nearly a half million dollars and extends beyond a million?
- » Can we achieve greater economic diversity in our neighborhoods without a diversity of housing types? If so, how?
- » Many of our existing neighborhoods — like Oakhurst, Lenox Place, and Old Decatur — still provide some degree of this mix through duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings that pre-date the 1980s. Do you feel these units add to or detract from the desirability of these neighborhoods? How so?
- » Proposals of this nature are often supported in the abstract but opposed once the prospect of change on any particular street becomes evident. How might we as a community equitably act on this recommendation in the face of these conflicting feelings? Should we?

TRANSPORTATION (35 MINUTES TOTAL)

CONTEXT:

Decatur has been committed to improved walkability — particularly throughout and connecting to downtown — since 1982's Town Center Plan; and to an integrated network of bike lanes and paths since 2000's Strategic Plan.

Since then, the Decatur community has repeatedly reaffirmed its support for both of these values through public process — 2007's Community Transportation Plan, the 2010 Strategic Plan, the 2012 Environmental Sustainability Plan, the Comprehensive and PATH Connectivity plans of 2016, and the 2018 Community Transportation Plan.

By allocating public space more equitably, Complete Streets can offer the prospect of safer mobility for the broadest array of people — motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, kids, and the disabled — and the most realistic means of reducing local automobile use and traffic congestion *over the long haul*.

But the infrastructure we build today reflects what we as a community aspire to. And that can create frustrations and inconvenience in the present as existing traffic and use patterns overlap with our ambitions for the future.

In light of this difficult balancing act, consider the following questions with your group:

- » How can Decatur minimize frustration and conflict while continuing its planned, step-by-step efforts towards safer walking, biking, and access for the disabled?
- » How can we further increase walking, biking, carpooling, or school bus use by K-12 students as an alternative to parent chauffeuring or older students driving themselves in single occupancy vehicles?
- » What other strategies — via employers, for example — might reduce current auto use, particularly at peak drive times?

ENVIRONMENT (35 MINUTES TOTAL)

CONTEXT:

Environmental action in Decatur can extend from the most local (canopy regulations, green space preservation and acquisition, stormwater management, pollinator protection, etc.) to the regional (vehicle miles travelled, water quality, pollution emissions, etc.) to the most global (climate change).

The more local the challenge, the greater control we as a community have over the outcomes. In effect, we *own* the issue.

The larger, more widespread the issue, the more our actions might require support from or alignment with policy and action at the regional, state, Federal, and/or global levels to be most effective.

Given that we, like all communities, operate with limited resources and bandwidth, consider the following three position statements:

1. "Leadership must begin somewhere. Decatur should demonstrate tangible and meaningful action towards global climate change, even if such actions are not yet supported by government at the metro, state, and/or Federal levels."
2. "Decatur should address climate change, but only to the degree that we can *plug into* and support policy and action enacted at higher levels of governance."
3. "Think global but act local. Decatur should allocate its available resources towards the environmental outcomes we can directly affect or control locally."

Now discuss these questions with your group:

- » Which approach do you feel is best suited to Decatur? Can you achieve consensus within your group?
- » Within the limits of your answer to the previous question, what are the most important environmentally-focused actions Decatur should take in the next ten years?