

ROUNDTABLES ROUND 3: DISCUSSION GUIDE

COMMUNITY CONNECTION, CIVIC SPIRIT

In our first Roundtable discussion we shared our thoughts about Decatur — what we're proud of, what needs work, and what aspirations we hold for the future.

In our second Roundtable session, we explored specific topics where there was no clear agreement among participants regarding how to move forward on some key issues — neighborhood zoning changes that could assist in affordable housing and inclusivity efforts, managing traffic as we build out our walking and biking networks, and how aggressively we should address climate change at the local level.

In this third and final Roundtable session we will explore how we become and stay connected — to the city, to nonprofits and civic organizations, and to each other — and how those connections can be strengthened and better leveraged in the service of addressing our challenges.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION

Welcome by facilitator [15 minutes total]

Welcome, reconnection, and ground rules

» Introductions:

» Much has happened since we last met in person. Take the necessary time for re-introductions and reconnection among the group.

» Leading the conversation requires a *neutral role*

» Facilitators can contribute as individuals but should not *advocate* for particular positions or otherwise work to *influence* others' opinions.

» Facilitators encourage discussion among the entire group 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 taken should be circulated among the group post-discussion to ensure that all are in agreement with how comments are being documented.

DESTINATION:2030

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» Ground rules

- » Everyone is encouraged 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- » Do not quote or attribute group conversation outside the group.
- » Find a quiet space to remain focused and uninterrupted.
- » Keep cell phones muted or off.
- » If using Zoom or similar platform, use your camera for better social connections.
- » Listen to understand before responding.

COMMUNICATION & COMMON GROUND: HOW WELL ARE WE CONNECTED?

Community thrives on inclusion, relationships, and participation. How well connected is Decatur? Please discuss the following questions. **[40 minutes total]**

- » How do you stay up-to-date on city issues? What channels of information do you find most effective? In what ways could the city better communicate with its residents?
- » How do we create ways for citizens to better engage with each other outside of often polarizing online forums? How might the city foster the neighborly connections and productive discourse that helps build common ground?
- » How can we get people involved in public life? What can we do to encourage all kinds of people to volunteer in the community and serve on community boards and commissions?
- » In this process, we've used the Roundtable approach for productive conversations towards community decision-making. What are some other Decatur ways to build and maintain common ground, even on difficult issues where we cannot reach agreement?
- » In what ways can the City of Decatur ensure that everyone, regardless of circumstances, has opportunity to participate in community decision-making?

CONTRIBUTIONS: WHAT CAN WE DO, ALONE AND TOGETHER?

Change happens when community members agree to take ownership and to work for change at different levels. Consider the following levels of change and make a list of what can be done at each of these levels. [30 minutes total]

- » **Individual change.** What can one person do to make progress on a particular issue?
- » **Organizational change.** What are the ways in which we gather and organize, both formally and informally? How can these groups of citizens most effectively make a difference?
- » **Institutional change.** How can our institutions like schools, religious congregations, governmental authorities, and others make a tangible civic difference? How might the City of Decatur partner with such institutions to solve specific problems?

LEVERAGING OUR COMMUNITY FABRIC IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

Since last March, much has impacted our community and what we might consider our most pressing challenges and priorities — from a pandemic public health crisis, to escalating efforts to combat racial discrimination and injustice, to the growing signs and effects of climate change. Please discuss the following questions. [25 minutes total]

- » How is a stronger, more connected community an asset in the face of such challenges?
- » How might a strong and connected community be better leveraged to address problems of such overwhelming scale or to assist those suffering the effects of such problems?

NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

This is the last of our three Roundtable discussions. Here's what to expect and how to participate as we move forward. [10 minutes total]

- » Roundtable input will be collected, distilled, and assessed. This assessment will further identify common themes, areas where the community is in solid agreement, and areas where potential conflicts exist among participant input.

- » Themes identified and questions raised will inform online participation opportunities such as surveys and comment forums this Fall.
- » Roundtable participants are encouraged to continue their participation with these activities as well as help spread the word to those who were unable to participate in the Roundtables. There are still substantive ways for all to contribute.
- » Later this Fall and following our online activities, our public input phase will conclude with the “Decatur 202s” in which the most challenging issues raised through the process — those with no clear direction from the community on how to proceed — will be addressed through a series of topic-specific online public meetings led by subject matter experts.
- » Upon the completion of the public input phase, the planning team will begin drafting the 2020 Strategic Plan which will be presented for public review, feedback opportunities, and final revision as it moves towards adoption in Spring 2021.
- » Stay tuned for further notice as we move forward.

By participating in the Roundtable discussions, you have played an important role in shaping the future of our wonderful city. Thank you!