

# DECATUR 202: CLIMATE BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Each group is tasked with discussing and finding common ground on the following questions. But first:

**Nominate a note taker.**

Take the notes of your discussion, then save them as a Word document or comparable and submit via email to [decaturdestination@gmail.com](mailto:decaturdestination@gmail.com) following the meeting.

After the breakouts conclude and we've returned to general session, your note taker will be prompted to share your group's highlights with all attendees.

Take a moment to say hello to your fellow participants. **Now let's begin.**

## 1. GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE (10 minutes)

It's not always easy to see how our individual actions contribute to climate change, and it's even harder to know what we can do as individuals to stop climate change.

- » In what ways have you come to understand how your choices affect climate change?
- » How can educational tools, social media campaigns, and other efforts help citizens see the true impact of their actions on the climate?

## 2. WHAT CAN WE DO? (15 minutes)

Governments (even small ones like our City) will play a major part in combating climate change. But each of us as individuals also need to do our part. Our decisions about how we get around, what we eat, and how much electricity we use have a significant impact.

- » There are many ideas for how we can live more sustainably, but what choices can we make as individuals to make the biggest impact on our carbon footprints?
- » What tools can the City and local non-profits provide to support individual and family-level efforts to move toward carbon neutral lifestyles?

|                         | Climate-Specific Impact | Impact on Environmental Sustainability More Generally |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Individual Actions      |                         |   |
| City Government Actions |                         |   |

### 3. SETTING REALISTIC AND FAIR GOALS (10 minutes)

City policies in response to climate change would impact all City operations and set aspirational goals for what Decatur wants to achieve. Our policies could also become a model for other cities in the region. A study is being conducted to document our current emissions, but we already know that most of Decatur's energy comes from fossil fuels.

- » Should we adopt a specific target for renewable energy use for City operations? Should we adopt a specific target amount or year for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for City operations or Decatur as a whole?
- » How can we implement climate policies so that the cost burden does not fall on disadvantaged households? How can the benefits of sustainability initiatives be extended to those who can't afford it?

### 4. GROWING SMART (15 minutes)

The form that future development takes in Decatur will have a significant impact on our environmental footprint for decades. More dense development makes it easier to walk or bike, saves energy through smaller or multifamily buildings, and conserves land.

- » The City has already completed plans for infill development near its three MARTA stations. How can we leverage these plans and encourage density in the right places to help reduce our carbon footprint and provide alternatives to driving, including for those who can't afford a car?
- » New construction has a significant carbon impact compared to re-using historic buildings (even if they are not energy efficient). How can Decatur encourage renovations or additions rather than tear-downs?
- » Trees are an ideal way to capture carbon and have many other benefits. How do we balance tree preservation with planting new trees, especially as new development occurs?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR NOTES  
AND MATRIX PICTURE TO [DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DECATURDESTINATION@GMAIL.COM)

WE'LL SEE YOU BACK IN THE GENERAL SESSION!