

MEMO

To: Tim Richards, Craig Richardson, Karen Smith
From: Michael Curtis, Jamie Greene
Re: Results of Public Kick-off Code Discussions

November 21, 2018

This memorandum summarizes the Public Kick-off Workshops conducted for the City of Decatur's Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. It is organized into the following structure:

1. **Overview** (purpose and format)
2. **What did we learn** (themes reported from each workshop activity)
3. **Who did we hear from** (characteristics of participants)
4. **Supporting Material** (all the input gathered from the workshop)

1. Overview

On November 8, Decatur hosted two public workshops to kick-off a process to rewrite the zoning ordinance. These workshops were called the "Code Discussions." Approximately 160 people attended the meetings, but a substantially lower number participated in the activities.

The code discussions were held at:

DECATUR HIGH SCHOOL
6:00-8:00 PM

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL
6:00-8:00 PM

Purpose

The purpose of the code discussions was to introduce the rewrite process and allow citizens to share insights on the development ordinance and on shaping the future of development in Decatur.

Format

The workshop activities included:

Goals Rating. Five draft goals, which are statements of intent about what the city hopes to achieve through the rewrite process, were evaluated and rated individually. Participants were given a form with the goals and asked to circle how important they felt each statement was. All five goals were assumed to be important, so the form used a scale from one to five with one being "somewhat important" and five being "very

important.” There was also a comment area below each goal for participants to suggest edits, clarifications, or other thoughts. Ninety (90) Goal Rating forms were collected.

Group Discussion. Participants worked in small groups to discuss responses to the nominal question, “What are specific needs that should be addressed through the rewrite of the zoning code to improve future development in Decatur?” One participant at each group recorded the group’s responses on a designated form. Twenty (20) group discussion forms were collected.

Exit Questionnaires. Before participants left the Workshop, they were asked to fill out an exit questionnaire. Those responses provide insight into the overall satisfaction with the workshop and characteristics of the participants. Seventy-nine (79) Exit Questionnaires were collected.

2. What did we learn?

Goals

Overall the five goals were rated quite high, ranging from 4.2 to 4.5 on a scale of one to five with five representing full support. Below are each of the five goals as presented, with their average rating of importance, and a summary of participant comments.

RATING AND COMMENTS

1. Create a user-friendly zoning ordinance

- a. graphically rich
- b. better formatting and organization
- c. more “plain English”
- d. clearer, more streamlined development review procedures

Average Rating: 4.4

Themes from comments

- Graphic and diagrammatic component is highly desirable.
- Simpler language and readability should be a priority.
- Public availability online and a search function would improve access to the code.

2. Implement One Decatur

- a. high quality design
- b. better use of vacant/underutilized structures and land
- c. walkable, connected downtown and centers
- d. strong neighborhoods
- e. greater variety of housing
- f. strong industrial areas

Average Rating: 4.5

Themes from comments

- The community created One Decatur and the community wants it to be implemented.
 - Pursue mixed-use while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods.
 - Improving walkability is a priority
 - Need housing for young people
 - Industrial development in appropriate locations – not near residential areas as currently exists
 - Some hesitation about mixed-income housing; Mixed housing type neighborhoods should include appropriate buffers
-

3. Modernize zoning districts and uses

- a. aligned with One Decatur recommendations
- b. more consistent with 21st Century economy and modern zoning best practices

Average Rating: 4.2

Themes from comments

- Zoning updates should be flexible
 - Concern for business owners being driven out by updated zoning codes and districts.
 - Unclear on what the current zoning codes are and what they mean.
 - Support of mixed-use zoning and progressive zoning for newer companies like AirB&B.
-

4. Improve quality of development

- a. modernize development standards
- b. ensure development is appropriate for its context
- c. support environmentally-friendly building practices

Average Rating: 4.4

Themes from comments

- Design standards and overall image improvement will help draw people into the City, especially around key areas and gateways and corridors (landscaping, lighting, bury utilities, etc.).
 - Addition of green space, trees, and green infrastructure is central; Protect flood-prone land and preserve natural areas
 - Encourage buffer zones between incompatible uses
 - Walkable, bikeable pedestrian friendly streets are desired.
-

5. Incorporate new regulations for Limestone County

- a. address unique development context in Limestone County
- b. development in gateway corridors consistent with community desires

Average Rating: 4.2

Themes from comments

- Getting this area “right” could be the key to Decatur’s growth.
 - Any development here should protect Wheeler Wildlife Refuge.
 - Area should be thoroughly studied, evaluated, and regulated before anything happens to make sure it is done right the first time.
-

Other comments

- Addressing the current needs in Decatur should be prioritized over attracting new people into the City.
 - Dedicated funds to public art or beautification should be considered.
 - Overall City should strive to be more well connected, well thought out, and attractive.
 - Need to improve basic services like access to food and affordable housing.
-

Group Discussion

167 ideas and comments were recorded on the group discussion forms. Listed below is a summary of recurring themes from those comments organized by the draft goals. The verbatim comments are listed in Section 4. Supporting Material.

Create a user-friendly code.

- **Clear language** – Write the code so it is easy to understand by both the public and developers.
- **Transparency to public** – Enable openness between the public and city about decisions and updates regarding the code.
- **Streamline procedures** – Create a more streamlined approach to apply for zoning adjustments and accessing the existing code.

Implement the Decatur Comprehensive Plan.

- **Concurrency with Infrastructure and Public Facilities** – To the extent possible, encourage necessary infrastructure to be in place before development occurs, including roadway and utilities. When considering development projects, public facilities should meet the necessary capacity, including schools, hospitals, senior care, and recreation.
- **Encourage more housing Options** – Create a variety of housing options to meet the needs and preference of all ages.
- **Embrace the Riverfront** – Unlock the potential of the riverfront as a destination for public use. Think holistically about the development of the Riverfront to encourage growth while preserving its natural amenities.
- **Support Mixed Use development** – Vertical mixed-use development should be encouraged in appropriate locations
- **Support for walkable developments and mixed neighborhoods** – As described in One Decatur, several participants mentioned a desire for new neighborhoods that are walkable and could include small-scale services in addition to residential uses.

Modernize zoning districts and development standards.

- **Regulate short-term rentals** – Regulate but permitting short-term rentals.
- **Expand entertainment Districts / alcohol sales** – to encourage more restaurant development and attract younger people, restrictions on the location of alcohol sales should be reduced.
- **Development Standards** – Include appropriate standards for regulation of building heights, density, mixed-uses, and parking. Participants repeatedly mentioned support for mixed-use development

Improve quality of development.

- **Protect rural character** – In rural areas, protect the character of the place from sprawl and suburban development.
- **Protect Existing Neighborhoods and Commercial Development** – The code should be updated with acknowledgement to existing businesses and properties that should be preserved. New development should be appropriate to its context. Require new or infill development to be cohesive and compatible with existing development. Ensure transitional barriers are in place between conflicting developments.
- **Improve Appearance through Design Standards** Include appropriate standards for the regulation of signage, facades, sidewalks, and landscape to foster a better city identity.
- **Enhance Greenspace** – Encourage development to include sustainable practices in their construction (such as solar panels) and restrict development in areas where green space should be nurtured.

Incorporate new regulations for Limestone County.

- **Protect Wheeler Wildlife Refuge** – Preserve wildlife through all phases of potential development within this area.

3. Who did we hear from?

Attendance

Approximately 160 citizens participated in the workshop, not including staff, consultants, and volunteers. The participation was measured based on the number of signatures on the sign in sheet.

Demographics

The exit questionnaires provide insight into the demographic makeup of workshop participants compared to Decatur's demographics reported by the most the American Community Survey, 2016. The exit questionnaires reflect only those 79 participants who responded.

Age

- **Participants mostly middle-age and older.** Participants aged 45+ made up 79% of respondents, compared with 42% of residents according to American Community Survey.

- **Younger demographic under-represented.** There were only 6 respondents under the age of 35, a subset which makes up 45% of Decatur’s population, according to American Community Survey.

Race

- **Racial composition roughly aligned with that of the entire community.** Approximately 83% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, whereas 71% identified as such in the American Community Survey.
- **However, minority groups were underrepresented.** Approximately 16% of respondents identified as Black/African American, whereas 22% of Decatur’s population identified as so. There was 0% Hispanic or Latino respondents, whereas 13% would represent the community as a whole.

Income

- **Household income was generally moderate to high with 87% of respondents earning \$50,000 and above for family household income.** Approximately 70% of respondents identified their household income at a level above \$75,000 per year, compared to 27% from the American Community Survey. Groups identifying with household earnings below \$50,000 comprised just 14% of respondents, in comparison to 56% of Decatur’s households as indicated by the American Community Survey.

Educational Attainment

- **Participants generally have high levels of education.** Respondents had higher overall levels of educational attainment including 51% with Associate’s or Bachelor’s Degree and 38% with a Ph.D. or Master’s degree. This compares to 27% and 8%, respectively, from the American Community Survey. 6% of respondents had a high school diploma or less, while 44% fall in this category in Decatur.

Residency

- **Most participants live in and work in Decatur.** All but one respondent live within the City of Decatur, and 64% currently work within the city. 20% work outside the city, and another 16% of respondents are retired. 87% of respondents own property within the city, and 36% own a business.
- **A mix of resident tenure but mostly long-time residents.** Approximately 82% of respondents have lived in the city for 10 years or longer.

Motivation

The exit questionnaires polled participants about their interests and opinions about the workshops. The results indicate high levels of satisfaction.

Why did you choose to attend the code discussions?

Participants had a variety of motivations for attending the workshops. Some of these included:

- Wanted their opinions to be heard
- Make Decatur a great place to raise a family
- Concerned citizen
- Business and land owners
- Long time citizens who want to be part of the process

YES

Were you comfortable completing the meeting activities? **98%**

Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately? **97%**

Did you participate in a One Decatur community meeting in 2016 or 2017? **60%**

	<i>Too Long</i>	<i>Too Short</i>	<i>About Right</i>
<i>Rate the workshop length.</i>	9%	5%	86%

Will you continue to participate in the planning process? **97%**

4. Supporting Material

This section contains complete results and verbatim comments collected from participants. It is organized into the following parts:

- **Goal rating and comments**
- **Group discussion comments**
- **Exit Questionnaire summary statistics and expository responses**

Goal rating and comments

Rating	Create a user-friendly zoning ordinance.	Implement One Decatur.	Modernize zoning districts and uses.	Improve quality of development.	Incorporate new regulations for Limestone County.
1	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	1 2%
2	2 3%	3 4%	0 0%	0 0%	3 5%
3	7 10%	5 7%	11 17%	7 11%	15 23%
4	23 34%	12 18%	23 35%	21 32%	11 17%
5	36 53%	48 71%	31 47%	37 56%	36 55%
Total Responses	68	68	66	66	66
Average Rating	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.2

The following tables contain complete verbatim comments for each goal.

Create a user-friendly zoning ordinance

Rating	Comment
4	To the best of my knowledge, as within my job. I know there is only a PDF version of our zoning map. Could this be implemented with the GIS map for parcel viewing? Where is clearly accessible for the general public?
2	Communication is key. "Rich" positive and bright flashing lights is nice but over kill.(Face-to-face person needed)
4	For a developer-5 For me-3
4	Clear but legal
4	More understanding leads to better implementation fewer conflicts, more cooperation.

Rating	Comment
4	This will be a benefit to the Planning Commission and builders
3	Depending on the business/use, within a given zone, more specific/difficult requirements may need to be included.
4	Simple charts as they apply to specific zone district.
2	I feel like this should go without being said. Why would you re-write an ordinance that was not user friendly.
4	Any rules the gov't enforces should be understood by the average citizen.
5	It's key for the continued growth & development of our area. As a realtor, it's imperative we have the information & that is easy to interpret.
4	Want to be able to easily understand the zoning and what it takes to modify/change.
4	Make it easy for developers to know what they can and can't do.
5	design standards, landscaping standards
4	Yes, who would not want a user-friendly and intuitive ordinance? Of course. Why would anyone want a confusing or counter intuitive ordinance?
5	So the average citizen can understand easily.
5	Easy to find plain English instructions/laws for new developers
5	Simple language is very important. Short sentences, possibly bullets, links to definitions.
4	Streamline is key, easily understood.
5	Possibly add examples of what has been approved and what has not been approved in zoning classifications.
5	Improve communication of Historic Preservation ordinance.
3	Besides being out of date, the existing ord. is not awful. Needs improvement? Sure. U/F not a big issue for me. (But I have construction background)
4	Clarity is vital to support consistent implementation.
5	The zoning ordinance
5	Graphic examples-easier to understand.

Rating	Comment
5	Wilson Morgan Park should be rezoned Institutional instead of Agricultural-and our parks and recreational areas protected from commercial and business development.
5	Long overdue!
4	Easy to consume is important.
4	Simplify & streamline variance process + appeals process online, dynamic search, clear citations & state/national references.
5	Readily available for easy access-easy for developers to understand. A zoning ordinance w/future goals in mind rather than just the current environment.
5	Get up-to-date with current trends.
5	Searchable on line
5	Yes to the graphics!
5	Important to attract developers.
4	Clear diagrams will be a huge improvement.
5	As a designer, a code that is easy to read and research is very important.
4	Yes! More user friendly. Streamlining is great. It allows home builders & developers to move fast. Love the idea about graphs & pictures & charts.
	What do you mean by: Graphically rich? Better Formatting?
	Graphically rich, more plain English

Implement One Decatur

Rating	Comment
3	Supporting zoning update is essential citywide. But the citizens are/seem disconnected and not informed in a way that their opinions are listen to.
5	No apartments in the Upper River Road area. The public has increase traffic tremendously and will ultimately have a negative impact on the Wheeler Refuge.
5	New neighborhoods-should BLEND with current surroundings/structures. Should NOT contrast with them!

Rating	Comment
3	Very vague-no descriptions
4	"One Decatur" should be cornerstone/foundation for all we do.
5	Mixed neighborhoods should not be forced together. Don't mix single family with apartments complexes.
3	Strong new neighborhoods are only as strong as the existing neighborhood.
5	I am concerned about new housing (such as apartments) which could drop the value of the older established neighborhoods. Sidewalks are needed to encourage more walking to various businesses in a safe manner.
5	Have to have sidewalks! Need a variety and needs to be concentrated. No new sprawl.
5	"Highest and best use" normally raises values and aesthetics of an entire area. "A rising tide lifts all boats."
4	Difficult to access this as overall because "STRONG INDUSTRIAL" because I would prefer to leave INDUSTRIAL separate from- neighborhoods walkable areas - i.e.-our river works for industry-But should also be enjoyed by the people-i.e.-keep a large area open and available for tourists, locals, etc. (After group explanation, this is better understood)
5	I think that developing strong communities is the key to making Decatur a town that attracts new residents. I think Decatur One will accomplish this.
5	The community created One Decatur. The community wants this by definition. Our gov't should implement.
5	Define "strong" and what will it cost the people in existing neighborhoods?
5	Very important to be able to market our city as a place to live & work. Any improvements to the areas by developing plans is great cohesive areas, inviting
5	There are too many different types of areas to consider.
4	It's important to reflect what the community wants.
5	Sidewalks-connect neighborhoods
5	Walkability! Cycling paths! Maintain historic buildings and sites. Green spaces are important. More development along river (restaurants, shops, recreation). Public transportation.
5	Maintain over "Old Town" Community to remember it does impact the city as a whole. Be inclusive to all communities in the city.
4	Need more residential development downtown, "essential" stores nearby (i.e. grocery)
5	This was a plan created by residents, it had a large amount of input covering many areas of Decatur including zoning.

Rating	Comment
5	This goal encourages current residents and attracts new residents, and it is a plan that as created with input directly from residents.
5	Zone heavy industry away from residential.....bad smells, loud noise kept away from homes integrate appropriate retail (E.G. small bakers & restaurants) closer to homes to reduce auto traffic.
5	Massive amounts of energy v resources put this plan in place. Need to implement.
5	After spending months on developing the One Decatur Plan, it seems logical to support an implement the plan as adopted as best as can be done.
5	Better connections via path systems between parks and schools, businesses and neighborhoods, connect Delano Park w/these.
5	Walkability/accessibility is key. Reliance on automobiles causes many struggles for individuals & communities.
4	Making the town more walkable would be great.
5	Vacant structures/land s. very high priority.
5	City should actively seek code violations and enforce them.
5	Follow the vision, too easy to get LOST without a Roadmap to a planned destination!
4	Mixed-use is a growing trend that help to modernize & create vibrant space.
5	Strong neighborhoods-many stable neighborhoods have concerns regarding mixed use encroaching area.
3	Mixed use should not destroy current neighborhoods.
5	Cutting back on "Urban Sprawl" and giving the town a "look; a "personality" rather than the hodge podge that it is.
5	Incredibly important. Warm, inviting, safe neighborhoods.
4	Preservation of current neighborhoods! Stronger role for neighbors!
5	A need for housing for young professionals. Potential multi-family complex. Installation of more sidewalks.
5	Sports tourism needs to be considered an industry in Decatur and new facilities and current facility upgrades need to happen to match the goals of our sports tourism.
5	Have more stored on the NW/SW side -grocery store-nail shop-fast food restaurants
	Connectivity, walkability, complete stats-beautification-variety-understand utilities. Industrial development-water quality/pollution. Repurpose vacant/underutilized structures-prioritize green space/parks.

Rating	Comment
5	Make sure all development includes sidewalks & bike paths
5	Greater variety of housing.
5	Building/redeveloping older neighborhoods
5	This would be a game changer. Encourage revitalization of older neighborhoods.
5	The great work of One Decatur needs to be incorporated into law.
5	Many vacant structures that could be utilized.
2	Need more apartment land. Need more land for trailer parks.
5	Destroying Old River Rd neighborhoods by building apartment development which means transit types of tenants, lowering property values overall. Converting farmland to apartments & low cost housing @ the expense of established neighborhoods. Not to the detriment of established neighborhoods.
	Historic neighborhood issues

Modernize zoning districts and uses.

Rating	Comment
4	Legacy/Grandfather zoning of pre-existing uses needs to be considered. Now zoning is good but difficult.
5	Have not seen this document
5	Should Not alter the current neighborhood ambiance! Long term - keep commercial CALL out of individual housing areas.
3.5	Important to bring codes up-to-date Alignment w/One Decatur-no brainer-Must align.
4	Need to understand what they are today.
3	I am hearing a lot about plans but not much about how zoning changes will affect current residents.
3	There needs to be a balance between modernizing zone definitions with older zone standards that may conflict with the new, but are important to current residents and other occupants.
5	Would like an example from another city's journey through this-Chattanooga is a great example-understanding they are larger with many corporations H.Q. located there But we should be able to understand what new zoning that currently does not exist.
4	Create "forward thinking" zones to provide up and coming uses.

Rating	Comment
5	Look at agricultural uses and limit or exclude from certain areas.
4	Am in favor of Air B&B type of use!
5	Update code to exclude Air BNB in city limits.
3	Not sure what "modern zoning best practices" are
5	With such outdated ordinances, it is time to look at what cities going through large growth have done. (A & E, short term rentals)
5	Needs to be upgraded so owners or future buyers know what to expect.
5	Best practices are key as well as realistic review of antiquated ordinances dealing with parking and such. Aesthetics are important as well as FLEXIBILITY to allow exceptions to support business and neighborhoods....and overall reasonable growth.
3	Confused because do not know potential-Important to strengthen historic neighborhoods increasing overlay for review. Include historic Downtowns in the overlay.
5	Three decades behind!
5	Include potential nuisance impacts from NOISE ad ODOR as well as traffic on adjacent zones and in mixed use areas.
3	I do not place a lot of emphasis on Decatur One. I have concerns that changes in zoning is primarily for the benefit of developers and investors. Home owners must be protected.
4	What about grandfathering?
5	Aligns & creates the vision of One Decatur.
5	Preserve/Grandfather current, allowed use so as not to "take by over-regulation" from current landowners.
4	LED lights on bridge.
5	Shared economy, best practices-leap frog other areas & store for best not status quo-particularly concerning environmental regulations, design quality.
4	Mixed use
4	This will help stimulate the economy.
4	Mixed use buildings
5	Stimulate economic growth in our 2nd Ave & Bank St.
4	Needs to be closely coordinated w/the comprehensive plan.
1	If it aint broke-don't fix.
5	If at the expense of existing property owner's this can be a net negative to some.

Improve quality of development.

Rating	Comment
4	A lot of areas within Decatur are run-down or outdated. Bringing Buildings up to code w/new ownership should be looked into for the future of our city image we have a fast-growing housing market. Our business areas need to have attention paid to that.
4	Again best practice zoning seems essential. But Decatur has dropped the ball and time and again go with a "one price/size fits all." Change aesthetics is important but requires diversity.
5	Artificial build-up of flood plain areas will impact surrounding neighborhoods, putting them at RISK!
3.5	Implement a code that is "modernized" results in improved quality of development.
5	Buffer zones between different zones.
5	It is very important that the zoning take into consideration the present structures and neighborhoods.
3	We need good quality development, of all kinds, but must be concerned that requirements will be cost effective to the business and residents.
5	Very important as long as ordinances do not cost so much that a local businessman cannot afford to implement.
4	We need to update how business could be presented on the Ave. Gatlinburg, TN did this. Everything went from neon lights & neon colors to a mountain theme over about a ten-year period.
5	For the continued improvement of being a pull for residents/business-make sure the standards are set to be beneficial to our city.
5	The look especially along major gateways is very important.
5	Also, downtown needs design standards/practices.
5	Green spaces, environmentally-friendly is very important to me! No payday loans. More landscaping, nice lamps, trees, more beauty.
5	First we need to maintain what we have clean streets, alleys kept cut & good roads to attract new business & people.
5	Appearance, Appearance, Appearance ex: not 6th Ave title loan consider-make cosmetics pleasing.
4	Needs lots of green space, trees.
4	New development alone is great, but development that adds aesthetically to the city is very important, especially at gateways and key streets downtown.

Rating	Comment
5	This area and goal could assist Decatur in learning what has been successful in other municipalities and is acceptable to newer developers as well.
5	We need upscale apartments. Very important to provide zoning that allows it.....yet gives some guarantees to their neighboring property.
5	Any changes to help facilitate stronger neighborhoods with-Qualities-mixed use-neighborhood retail, sidewalks, etc. Going forward zoning should encourage and support efforts of developers to go above and beyond the average standards.
5	Enforce sign ordinance! Enforce letter ordinance! Reduce imperviable surfaces-plant treat-parking in back of businesses.
3	More of a building code issue? I think bldg. code should be correct 2015/2016? That would cover some (much of sustainability)
5	Landscaping/beautification codes are a must.
5	Especially downtown, how do we make sure the building that is condemned on 2nd is replaced with something that fits (and not just a metal shell building)
5	Keep some Riverfront for public use, don't give all the best to industry/business use.
4	Make sure developments are appropriate for surrounding neighborhoods.
5	Decatur needs to highly restrict or eliminate title pawns & check cashiers.
5	This goes hand in hand w/#2.
5	Decatur's façade needs to be legislated, enforced, & can greatly improve the "looks" of the city.
	Neighbor voice needed, current policy is to allow bigger & more buildings, irrespective of neighbors input. Storm resilience needed for new buildings....Neighbors buildings with sticks constitutes risk to others.
5	Environmentally friendly practices-storm water management on site use latest technology & incorporate bio/parks & not just status quo. Focus on incentives for green energy-context with vision for future.
5	Landscaping plan for all DCS schools is needed.
5	Underground utilities
5	Underground utilities
5	Bury powerlines

Rating	Comment
5	Incorporate modern master planning techniques. Multi-use facilities. Walkable communities & bikeable. Tree replacement-remove 1, replace w/3. Incorporate more green space development-green space-development
4	Yes! Development appropriate for its context, it should make sense-environmentally friendly building is good if it makes sense for the area. LEED often requires pointless things, numbers game.
1	Sounds like more areas for the government to control people's individual rights of land ownership.
5	Look to what Huntsville has achieved since they incorporated Stringmont landscape Dev Ordinances-in late 80's-early 90's-drastic improvement-current L.S. Dev. Codes are lacking.
	Extend public kind with property for multiple uses

Incorporate new regulations for Limestone County..

Rating	Comment
5	Causeway +I65 corridor may be the fastest growing area and require the most attention. "Get it right the 1st time" Fresh start begins here.
5	but, don't negatively impact the Refuge!
5	Planned new development-should modernize infrastructure FIRST. City sewage, etc., in place for existing residents BEFORE new developments. City busses for school is another example.
4	It is blank sheet of paper that could be used for many purposes but needs to be "controlled" via code/regulations.
5	Use this area for new style developments. Don't try to cram things into existing areas.
5	I think the Limestone County land would be a wonderful place for growth. It wouldn't disturb present neighborhoods.
5	Is it possible to require buffer zones for land adjacent to WW Refuge?
4	The opportunities with a "blank canvass" should be investigated and evaluated. Street layout should assure use of all the acreage.
5	Area that is in city limits should definitely be developed to create a beautification/visually pleasing along river.
4	Utilize the opportunities of location.
5	Must use this as an opportunity to draw both commercial/residential.
5	Very important! An opportunity to start from scratch and create something new.
5	Residential near refuge, commercial near industry retail etc.

Rating	Comment
3	It's a good idea for regulations to precede the expected growth.
5	Great for new business & development.
5	Need to make sure commuter traffic is not impacted.
5	This is huge, it brings us close to Madison/Huntsville, it's location is key to a huge development. Opportunity to use this area to increase Decatur's presence on a residual scale.
5	Update to reflect for mixed residential/commercial not only commercial.
5	These new regulations could assist in development there and give flexibility for consideration of the future development that Decatur residents want to see there.
5	This becomes our new gateway and needs to be improved in a fashion that is traffic friendly.
5	As the gateway to our city, strong efforts should be made to encourage Aesthetically pleasing modern, inviting developments to draw in those from outside the city.
5	Protect pastoral old fashioned sense & place, park-like-no heavy industry.
5	Massive growth potential. More so than any other area of Decatur (IMO)
5	Getting this section right is the key to Decatur's future/growth.
5	How much of the land is in the city (The RV Center is not aesthetically pleasing) How do we stop developments like that.
5	Need to develop clearer vision of use to apply right zoning.
3	With updating current roads & sidewalks within Decatur first.
4	Time to do it right-But this area should not be given differential treatment for existing city areas.
2	Consistency is good; worry about home first.
5	Research/Tech Company - Housing/Commercial. Avoid industry-keep corridor appealing. Just look how terrible that RV store looks coming into the city.
5	Be very careful about not impacting traffic. Decatur has a lot of people that travel to Huntsville.
4	Need new housing development in this area. This could draw more people who work in Huntsville. Do not impact traffic to & from Huntsville. Large % of people work in Madison/Huntsville.
2	Don't know what limestone County has. Can't comment.
	Mixed use as in well at 6th and 2nd

General Comments

Comment
Make it count! Don't just create your own reality. Please don't over look the community @large. Its not all about a new coat of paint. It's about something comprehensive yet effective.
Making the lives of current Decatur residents better <u>should come first</u> . Building first to attract new people minimize the current residents.
I think the most important to decide what kind of city Decatur wants to be. Retirement, family, or young professional are the ones we have pushed in the past. We need to decide what we want to be. We can't successfully be all of them. Let's choose the one that we can logically achieve. Zoning is a major part of how we plan to use the city.
The entrance to the city from the bridge needs to be beautified-landscaped-eyesore structures removed.
Emphasizing that residents know that zoning regulations apply only within the municipal limits and not the planning/police jurisdiction.
We have some bad zoning of food product manufacturers (chicken processor, pet food) allowing bad smells to waft over wide areas of Decatur-this continues to be a problem for daily life of Decatur homeowners. These industries need to be zoned further away from residential areas. We need more control over the airspace above our homes. The Redstone Test Center flies test, using military helicopters, over the city, without having taken into account residents input-this may not be a zoning issue per se, but it involves similar considerations-perhaps it is a zoning issue after all.
Any consideration of "Public Art" initiatives encouraging public art in new developments would be appreciated. In larger cities, we are now seeing a trend of requiring a small percentage of budget be dedicated to public art. Worth considering.
Protect Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. Emphasis on green infrastructure-maintain sense of pace of Decatur, AL-historic welcoming, park-like setting-traffic calming on Highway 31/6th Ave-Preserve and protect historic parks, structures and public spaces. No billboards-plant trees-trails connecting historic downtown, parks.
We had a beautiful river that thru allowing irresponsible industry to have the property they now own, these industries have not only ruined the aesthetics but also the environmental health of our river and water. Keeping a hand on urban sprawl. It has been proven that this leads to death of the heart of a City-the implosion of downtown areas-resulting in vacant buildings, dying malls, etc.
Current regulations fail to consider account for growth impacts on roads and infrastructure, schools & services until after the fact....Bad policy should be fixed. Provide raw data collected for/from public sessions swiftly.
Food-access healthy foods in all Decatur neighborhoods. Zoning that supports decreasing poverty-incorporate affordable housing in redevelopment projects/apartments-integrated w/o being isolated community structures. *Preserve Historic Districts/Downtown Character.
Help clean up Decatur. Help test scores in DCS so people will live here.
Please help our city look more connected, well thought out, attractive! We love our city!
Mixed use is great if it does bring people to the area more than just during the day. Incorporate living, business, shopping and restaurants.

Comment
This survey is too broad for me. My ratings were affected by too much broadness. T-shirt manufacturing should be in a B zoning-not in a M-1 zoning, P.S. Please forgive my handwriting.
As well as others are here in attendance primarily because we are in the midst of the city sanctioned deterioration of our neighborhood. Low cost housing & apartment development has been proposed for the Old River Rd. Area. There are many estate sized residences resulting in low density housing. The planning commission has given its blessing to this development. We understand development is inevitable, but greater restrictions are what may be built, zoning considerations for the quality, diversity & how it effects current neighborhoods should be of prime importance. apartments in the vicinity of \$500k-\$1,000,000 houses is not. good plan.

Group discussion

The following are verbatim comments from the group discussion.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
1	1	Neighborhoods connected through walkways to schools, parks, & public access.
1	2	Protect neighborhoods from business/industrial.
1	3	Create Mixed use.
1	4	Make easier to build homes.
1	5	High end apartments for older adults & younger adults.
1	6	Zoning to encourage revitalization of older neighborhoods.
1	7	Zoning restrictions regarding upkeep of public spaces-areas between business and roads.
2	1	Streamline the process of zoning adjustments
2	2	Have more than 1 meeting (BOZA) per month.
2	3	Consider possible means of adapting ways to possibly allow the addition of structures (multi-family) on or in single family neighborhoods.
2	4	Make zoning ordinances adaptable to change for the future uses so we are not doing this again in 10-15 years.
2	5	Have zoning ordinances in place to address growth before development gets started. Hurry! Design Standards, density, landscaping.
2	6	Address commercial encroachment of existing neighborhoods and plan than this does not become a problem for future development.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
2	7	Plan the area around Austin High (vacant property) with "community" type development-housing, banking, grocery/convenience stores, some appropriate mixed use, upscale apartments.
2	8	As opportunity presents itself, + improve use of existing developed (blighted) areas.
3	1	What is the process of changing zoning code?
3	2	How are residents notified of potential changes?
3	3	How is rental housing regulated in subdivisions?
3	4	Would love sidewalks in subdivisions.
3	5	Ability to have chickens, small livestock.
3	6	Satellite dishes not in the front of the house.
3	7	Control of outbuilding size and aesthetics.
4	1	Variety if housing (Apartments needed) Variety of pricing.
4	2	Maximize use of both sides of town.
4	3	More entertainment on the side of town w/greater possibilities for expansion.
4	4	Continue reconstructing old/worn building.
4	5	Make sure developments meet the desires of the community's diverse population.
4	6	Create a more efficient way of hearing the voices of all communities; survey the needs of everyone.
4	7	Maximize the use and luxury of having the river.
5	1	Easy for developers to understand. Clearly state requirements.
5	2	Easily accessible to public as well as developers.
5	3	More "quality" (aesthetic/construction/etc.) where appropriate (downtown shopping zones, etc.)
5	4	Mixed-use facilities (i.e. retail/restaurant 1st floor, living above)
5	5	Incorporate or promote outdoor areas such as outdoor /sidewalk dining.
5	6	In "walkable" areas (i.e. downtown) parking behind buildings to create an urban walking environment along the major street(s).

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
5	7	Encourage "livable" communities.
5	8	Establish rules on street parking, bike lanes, streetscape landscaping road width to control speed, etc.
5	9	Incorporate landscaping in roadways. Consider plantings in medians and maybe create turn lanes in lieu of the open center turn lane.
5	10	Establish massing zones so that a tall building couldn't be right on the street (taller behind) .
5	11	Enhance entrances into the city. *immediate fix: put color changing LED lights on the truss bridge coming into Decatur in 20. Make a piece of Art.
5	12	Embrace more public art: wall paintings, sculptures-perhaps roundabouts w/a sculpture in it. Green areas w/art.
5	13	Need higher end apartments as part of the residential fabric.
5	14	Encourage developments with multiple types of housing-(like providence)-apartments, lofts, townhouses, free-standing & duplex all in the same "zone".
5	15	Encourage revitalization of downtown-reusing old buildings and promoting in-fill buildings.
5	16	Embrace the waterfront. Allow for positive "people-oriented" development.
5	17	Establish an "Amusement Zone".
5	18	Allow alcohol sales downtown (!.E. Bars, clubs w/minimal food requirement)
6	1	You need to visit Decatur utilities website & maps & see were selective sewer service has been run this stops developers from coming to Decatur to develop. Same standards should apply to ALL citizens of Decatur.
6	2	Make sure building codes des not deter the developers where they go to Madison, Limestone, Hartzell, Trinity.
6	3	Protect property owners so their property value stay high ad their land is best use.
6	4	City to look at the average wages that people in Decatur make \$43,000 and build accordingly to their needs.
7	1	Get it right in Limestone County! Is 2020 too late? Need to act now.
7	2	Is downtown adequately regulated to control development? More regulations to results in appropriate development-not a Dollar General in H.M. Nowlin's bldg.
7	3	Would like to see zoning that encourages neighborhood development that is attractive & allows for character-definition is seen between neighborhoods.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
7	4	Walkability is "key"! Move within a neighborhood. Allow neighborhood retail. Sidewalks! Sidewalks! Sidewalks!
7	5	Encourage "attractive" development-green space, etc.
7	6	Continue sidewalk and underground utility construction in neighborhoods.
7	7	Allow/create more mixed multi-use areas-restaurants/retail-would attract younger, high income residents-6th/Beltline.
8	1	Protect our riverfront.
8	2	Control urban sprawl.
8	3	Have minimum façade restriction-downtown area.
8	4	Have multi use areas-in certain areas
8	5	Annexation rules need to be updated to eliminate spotty city-county-city-county area.
9	1	Our concern is infrastructure. Many people in the city don't have sewer, yet money is allocated for sewer for new subdivision.
9	2	New residential should be compatible to the surrounding land use area.
9	3	Zoning ordinances should take into account the availability of schools, fire departments, police stations & road infrastructure.
9	4	Zoning ordinances should take into account the safety and outdated structure of some roads. The roads and bridges need to be able to handle additional traffic.
9	5	There should be sufficient access to town even in an emergency.
9	6	If we want growth, the zoning ordinances should be compatible with surrounding cities.
9	7	Existing citizens should be considered before zoning ordinances are changes.
9	8	Our building inspectors are a reason that there isn't much building in Decatur.
10	1	We are concerned about the possible building of apartment near Hickory Hills subdivision. Our concerns are wildlife, such as the sand hill cranes use this land, will the apartments lower the value of the houses in this area, and the increase in traffic due to possible new housing. Will the additional lighting effect the wild life that comes to the Refuge?
10	2	Will new zoning effect existing business in the downtown area? Specifically commercial business.
10	3	Construct more sidewalks in residential areas and in business areas so people can walk from place to place in a safe manner.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
11	1	Sign ordinance.
11	2	In Limestone Co; offer innovative zoning to attract businesses.
11	3	Protect existing neighborhoods.
11	4	Remember to address lighting/noise when drafting zoning needs.
12	1	90 pages for the subdivision; more graphics is needed for clarity.
12	2	Not clear; very complicated; leaves people to just guess the rest of information.
12	3	Zoning ordinance is a bit vague (how do we enforce if it is not concise)
12	4	Break the zoning into small parts (ex: curbs-bullet points of rules).
12	5	Use of hyperlinks on the online code.
12	6	Create a "search" option of the website.
12	7	Strong neighborhoods; sometimes there is concern of mixed-use into neighborhoods (i.e., bar where there might be a retiree area); possibly focus on taking care of what you currently have.
12	8	Public transportation many people not able to access to driving.
12	9	Grocery stores closer to residential area.
12	10	Certain types of commercial store that meet low-income persons-development (hair shops)
12	11	Walking access to commercial areas; SE Decatur.
12	12	Not enough sidewalks especially in SE Decatur where there is high-levels of disabled persons
12	13	Changing plan to accommodate future sidewalks/new development.
12	14	A place where there can be an informal get-together; doesn't have to be a city-wide park; space w/in smaller communities.
12	15	Create activities; things for them to do.
12	16	Plan for population growth.
12	17	Decatur Riverfront is mostly industry; create opportunity for public access to gather; (ex. wadding in river, launching a canoe, etc.).
12	18	Those types of public "free" access draws people to community.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
12	19	Limestone County area; is it in flood zone area.
12	20	Not enough drainage in Decatur; need to take into account climate change. Need to plan for flood rise.
12	21	More green based development; solar-energy developments.
12	22	New planning needs to take into account for road expansion.
12	23	Traffic patterns needs to be monitored for reconfiguration.
13	1	Structure in place-have less opportunity to apply for variance.
13	2	Zoning need to coincide with city plan. Is it possible to have a buffer zone for land adjoining to Refuge?
13	3	Re-evaluate Riverfront properties an zoning.
14	1	Zoning ordinances modified easily accessible.
14	2	Make zoning laws business friendly, modernized.
14	3	Using zoning to ensure we do not sprawl uncontrollably.
14	4	Get a specific understanding of what "improved future development is".
14	5	Zoning ordinances should be structured/streamlines throughout the whole city vs. the "piece mail" we have now. (ex. Storefronts -ex. Signage, construction/look of buildings.
14	6	More walkable areas, continued beautification.
14	7	Be careful to ensure of city's home values do not decrease in value by opening up avenues to different housing types. We must be careful to make the best decisions for our residents to bring more people here instead of hurting our home/land values (ex: apartments next to \$1 million homes).
15	1	Sign ordinance to be enforced.
15	2	Clearly define residential/subdivision master plan.
15	3	Revise existing business zones to roll into a more broad category.
15	4	Allow for mixed-use but take into consideration the surrounding neighborhoods.
15	5	More regulations for multi-family designated owners
15	6	Need more zoning allowing more apartments, condos, greater variety of housing etc.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
15	7	Need more multi-use, mixed property uses.
15	8	Need more commercial property.
16	1	Expand access to /riverfront for recreation, retail, restaurants (barges?) try to sell land for commercial development-zone not for industrial.
16	2	Decide which areas are going to change from agricultural to residential/commercial (Danville rd.).
16	3	Want city to stay quiet.
16	4	Preserve historic neighborhoods & structures, allow them to grow within historic preservation (i.e. Grinding)-preserve façade but allow interior to be modernized.
16	5	Regulations on group homes. (drugs, rehab, halfway houses) where can they/can't they be places? (example: Breathe Life in Detroit)
16	6	Air BNB taxes goes to hotel tax.
16	7	When single family homes are converted to duplex or to multi-family or apartments parking must be considered.
16	8	Pursue city-wide wi-fi.
16	9	Look @ uses we want to keep out-strip clubs, pay day loans.
16	10	Remove ordinance prohibit alcohol near church-(near school prohibition is ok).
16	11	Fast food drive thrus should not block parked cars.
16	12	Pedestrian crossing @ major areas (6th Ave to downtown).
16	13	Beautification of main streets (6th Ave)-especially coming over bridge
16	14	Bury power lines.
16	15	Maintain alleys.
17	1	Please do not over simplify the rewrite, at the peril of ambiguity--plain English, limit the lawyers!
17	2	Refine & clarify impact on P.J., or better yet, eliminate the P.J.
17	3	New zoning districts must protect the expectations of occupants of old zones that may have been effectively discontinued.
17	4	Parks/Rec should be zoned institutional, not AG, City GIS should provide overlays for all zones, services, allowed/disallowed uses.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
17	5	Eliminate planning commission bias favoring developers over neighbors.
17	6	Upgrade GIS capability for easy resident understanding.
17	7	Fire protection (response & hydrants) code does not match zoning & planning--code should require infrastructure to match allowed use.
18	1	Design standards downtown-keep historic aesthetic.
18	2	Landscape standards-keep properties trimmed/maintained/weeded
18	3	Air BNB regulations.
18	4	Rental homes-registry for landlords to keep up with absent landlord/owners.
18	5	Gemstone Chicken Plant Holly Street rezoning (no grandfathering for previous tenant) new
18	6	Tenant follows current zoning regulations.
18	7	Utilize refuge on Interstate for residential apt/dev utilize interstate for mixed use (Decatur Limestone entrance).
18	8	Asheville Style signage-building aesthetics similar throughout whole city.
18	9	Require more greenspace in future developments.
19	1	Mixed-use development
19	2	Encourage development of restaurants & grocery stores in NW Decatur.
19	3	Focus on context of use-what will it be used for in the future? Does it meet the plan and surrounding, existing development?
19	4	Mix public housing/affordable housing in with new development.
19	5	Limestone Co-aim to use that won't prevent future use-for example, if there will be industry, focus on light industry that will not ruin the land for different future uses the way that a chemical plant might.
19	6	Utilize the river wherever possible for development for public use like restaurants & entertainment. As an example, Rhodes Ferry Park is underutilized-could it be rezoned & used differently?
20	1	Morgan co. Fairgrounds needs to be moved out into the country.
20	2	Utilities underground on 6th Avenue w/smaller signs.

Table #	Idea #	Comment / Idea
20	3	Change stop lights to be on metal poles so street signs are more noticeable.
20	4	Landscaping plan for all DCS schools to make schools more pleasing from streets.
20	5	Develop more housing in Decatur for upscale housing.
20	6	Buffer around new & existing neighborhoods (Oakleigh).
20	7	More business friendly!
20	8	Need to have business to attract young people.
20	9	Expand A & E District so we can have more restaurants/pubs.
20	10	Pedestrian bridge over Wilson Street to 2nd Avenue for guests & retired people.
20	11	More street lighting (Goldridge Avenue).

Exit Questionnaire

The following are the summary results from the exit questionnaire.

1	How did you hear about the Code Discussions?	-	-
		Responses	Percent
	Word of Mouth	19	18%
	Newspaper Article / Ad	19	18%
	Poster / Flyer	4	4%
	Decatur website	1	1%
	One Decatur website	6	6%
	Facebook	23	22%
	Community Presentation	3	3%
	Online News	2	2%
	Email	29	27%
	Total	106	100%
2	Did you participate in a One Decatur community meeting in 2016 or 2017?		
		Respondents	Percent

	Yes	46	60%
	No	31	40%
	Total	77	100%
	-		
3	Were you comfortable completing the meeting activities? If not, explain why.	Respondents	Percent
	Yes	65	98%
	No	1	2%
	Total	66	100%
4	Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately? If not, explain why.	Respondents	Percent
	Yes	57	97%
	No	2	3%
	Total	59	100%
5	Was the meeting...	Respondents	Percent
	Too long	49	86%
	Too short	3	5%
	About right	5	9%
	Total	57	100%
6	Will you continue to participate in the planning process? If not, explain why.	Respondents	Percent
	Yes	67	97%
	No	2	3%
	Total	69	100%
7	You are	Respondents	Percent
	Female	37	51%
	Male	36	49%
	Total	73	100%
8	What racial group do you most closely identify with?	Respondents	Percent

	Asian	0	0%
	Black/ African- American	11	16%
	Native American	0	0%
	White / Caucasian	57	83%
	Two or more races	1	1%
	Other:	0	0%
	Total	69	100%
9	Are you Hispanic or latino?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Yes	0	0%
	No	63	100%
	Total	63	100%
10	What is your age?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Under 15	0	0%
	15-24	1	1%
	25-34	5	7%
	35-44	9	13%
	45-54	23	32%
	55-64	19	27%
	65 or over	14	20%
	Total	71	100%
11	What is your highest level of education?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Less than a high school diploma	0	0%
	High school diploma	4	6%
	Some college	4	6%
	Associate's Degree	5	7%
	Bachelor's Degree	32	44%
	Master's Degree / Ph.D.	27	38%
	Total	72	100%
12	How long have you lived in Decatur?		
		Respondents	Percent
	0-4 years	5	7%

	5-9 years	6	9%
	10-19 years	7	10%
	20-29 years	14	21%
	30-39 years	9	13%
	40-49 years	9	13%
	50+ years	16	24%
	Love outside the city	1	1%
	Total	67	100%
13	Do you work within the City of Decatur?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Yes	44	64%
	No	14	20%
	Retired	11	16%
	Total	69	100%
14	Do you own a business within the City of Decatur?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Yes	25	36%
	No	44	64%
	Total	69	100%
15	Do you own property within the City of Decatur?		
		Respondents	Percent
	Yes	61	87%
	No	9	13%
	Total	70	100%
16	Please tell us about your annual household income:		
		Respondents	Percent
	Less than \$10,000	0	0%
	\$10,000 to \$14,999	1	2%
	\$15,000 to \$24,999	0	0%
	\$25,000 to \$34,999	1	2%
	\$35,000 to \$49,999	6	10%
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	11	17%
	\$75,000 to \$100,000	10	16%

	\$100,000+	34	54%
	Total	63	100%
17	Additional Comments (Optional):		
	See responses in Expository Answers section.		
	-		

The following are the expository responses from the exit questionnaire.

3. Were you comfortable completing the meeting activities? If not, explain why.	
1	I felt like I didn't know enough about zoning to contribute much
2	We have a lot of questions about zoning and what each set of rules entails
3	Not enough clarity regarding group discussion. Evolved into a gripe session
4	Kind of-I am agitated at the desire for rooftops at the expense of long time residents

4. Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately? If not, explain why.	
1	Don't know-remains to be seen
2	Little loud in room
3	Some folk sound innovative recommendations were drowned out by the volume of recommendations
4	We don't understand the various rules, reg's, etc for the various zoning types

6. Will you continue to participate in the planning process? If not, explain why.	
1	Not sure
2	Too noisy
3	Maybe, I'm not very knowledgeable. So I don't know what value my input brings
4	I may be a small voice, but a little effort can make a huge impact
5	I am concerned how expansion of building in the Upper River Road area will affect my property value in the Hickory Hills subdivision
6	Concerned about the new housing that could be coming near our subdivision

17. Additional Comments (optional)

1	Great meeting!
2	Thank you for hearing from residents
3	Thanks for the opportunity!
4	Make clear what zoning is vs city ordinances i.e. (amount of cars parked @ houses, what business can be located in business districts) signage on business
6	Not a lot of substance in this meeting
7	Bigger is not better-Better is Better!
8	Make Decatur a great place to raise a family
9	I am a land owner with rental property. I work in commercial real estate for Gateway Commercial Brokerage. My family has lived in Decatur for 6 generations. Please fee free to call me if you have any questions: 256-227-1524
10	Concerned citizen
11	Decatur's planning has been lax and fractured for many years. We identify and purchase more in Priceville than Decatur