

- The tree ordinance doesn't do enough to preserve the tree canopy. We need to recognize the huge contribution that trees make, both to quality of life and the sustainability e.g. mitigating storm water runoff.
- We need more downtown green spaces. There are none.
- We don't really seem to have incentives for green construction including preservation. We don't have flexibility for six-inch wall construction, management of water runoff to have better design and use. The disincentives for breaking regulations are too light.
- Engineering needs to modernize about on-site infiltration. Houses don't need to have cement structures to manage storm water – bio-swales and other techniques.
- Building energy codes are inconsistently enforced and building quality in terms of sustainability is only bad to poor, wasting energy and resources for generations.
- Solar photovoltaic is difficult with the existing tree canopy and lack of incentives.
- Tree protection – overly restrictive on individual homeowners/far too lenient on developers.
- Boundary trees fail – all repercussions for damage trees fall on adjoining owners.
- Trees taken down in a neighborhood or specific lot are not replaced in the same neighborhood, nor is their canopy replaced (only the tree number not size).
- We need more auctions for alternative energy in houses and buildings.
- The lack of acknowledgment of alternative energy for single-family houses.
- Incentivize green infrastructure. Allow solar! Be careful on light pollution guidelines to not limit light. We need light for safety.
- Single-family detention ponds is crazy and unsustainable. Storm water system is overloaded. Streams are listed and unsafe for kids to play in. Building energy use is too high.
- Bio – retention: who is responsible once the developer leaves? What ordinance or zoning can handle this?
- Zoning by lot size – only way to have green space in neighborhoods (zero curb to rear houses built).

Unified Development Ordinance



- Require the use of circulation pumps on domestic and/or commercial hot water systems. I.e. how much water runs down the drain waiting for hot water.
- There are not enough incentives to do the right thing.
- Required versus incentivized? Required is threatening, incentivized is inviting.
- Trees in our neighborhoods are consistently being cut down – not just pines – hundred year old hardwoods – at the whim of the homeowner or the developer.
- Most people do not have education about new green infrastructure practices and think they are too expensive so they do not seek them out.
- Enforcement – preserving trees and hardwoods.
- Require green practices beyond "code," not just energy and water efficiency, but more.
- Green infrastructure!
- Basic energy code is reasonably enforced, but that is the bare minimum by law.

Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- Certified green buildings should absolutely be required. Set the bar high and enforce it. There is no other city in Georgia better suited to be a leader in this area. Create an environmental/development impact bond that permit applicants must pay into. Upon certification, the bonds will be returned. Any retest fees, additional inspections, etc. would come out of this bond.
- Encourage rooftop solar, especially on commercial buildings that likely have less tree shading.
- Required.
- Green infrastructure/landscaping should be incentivized in a way that is affordable for the common homeowner. Education about green landscaping practices should be easily accessed and understood.
- Stronger ordinances are needed for our trees.
- Incentives. Incentives. Incentives. E.g. Pavement on steroids. Savings when you bring your own bag. Renovations. Etc.
- Require on new construction. Hold workshops and provide incentives for existing homeowners to add systems.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Encourage solar. Compatible solar panels and fire department solar - could the city by power and use for city services? Green design – tree ordinance tie-in should be part of any new renovation or development.
- Create a citywide green infrastructure plan that includes combined detention/wetlands. Require site-specific green infrastructure for development. Create a high-performance building code for commercial. Promote/incentivize energy reduction for single-family. Provide options for community-wide composting, including food composting with methods for returning compost to landscape. Expand the tree ordinance to all land in Decatur, including single-family.
- Encourage alternative energy on new and renovated buildings and houses.
- Allow small solar panels and single-family home windmills. We need ordinances to encourage green roofs and solar panel installation on top of commercial buildings. Invest Atlanta has an incentive program. The city should incentivize green roofs/solar panel arrays over a set of downtown retailers.
- Is it possible to "buy back" unused power from residential solar panels? This is done in Germany by the solar companies. Solar panels are so expensive that teaming with Georgia Power to offer energy "buy backs" might make them more affordable in the long run.
- Is it possible to pull together resources to create a large park? I know it's probably not possible.
- Trees. Work with homeowners to accommodate lifelong resident/incentives for developers to find creative ways to keep existing trees.
- Boundary trees. Require that any and all construction have a plan to protect critical drip line areas of all nearby trees with sign off by adjoining neighbors/homeowners.
- Provide incentives to install solar and encourage community solar installations that residents and businesses can join together to invest in and lease the rooftops of schools and other public and private buildings for them.
- Implement a green building requirement for all new construction and renovation. Other cities in Georgia in the US have successfully implemented green programs. Set a minimum requirement and offer incentives for exceeding the minimum.
- More creativity and incentives to encourage green building and sustainability.
- Energy management efforts should be required.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Revised/more restrictive tree ordinance. Severely dis-incentivize the destruction of legacy/specimen trees, particularly in relation to new development.
- Yes – alternative energy. Yes – recycling on every corner and better signage so people use it.
- We need a code for leaf blowers – heavy polluters – and people feel compelled to blow dust around. Also, in residential areas they blow leaves into the street. Then who picks them up? Take care of your own leaves.
- Encourage but don't require.
- Fewer regulations, but stronger incentives to promote green. Recently the city passed a tree ordinance against the recommendation of much of the community, but did nothing to promote planting trees or saving trees, or for that matter other forms such as water reuse, gray water etc.
- City should not prohibit or suspend demolition for growth, but promote growth in line with the community's direction.
- I believe the city should have a reasonable impervious soil calculation for both renovated and new construction homes. This new policy should be equal to both renovated projects and new construction. So that all neighbors share the burden of storm water rather than putting all the burden on new construction.
- Definitely support for "greening" of homes – incentive programs... (unreadable) Incentivize energy efficiency, storm water for residential retention, and native landscapes. Maybe require efficient appliances or gray water for larger single-family homes, but not smaller homes to maintain affordability.
- Encourage solar power and hot water. Require alternative fuel stations in large multifamily and commercial sites.
- Make the "optimal default" of some regulations that prohibit the extensive cutting of trees that we recently experienced. Significant fine and requirements/regulations for certain/specific replacement tree plantings, water costs, etc.
- Incentivize communities/streets to be certified as wildlife friendly. The National Wildlife Federation has a self-scoring process for individual yards. This includes reducing pesticides, sources for water, native plants. My house and others in Decatur have this designation. Streets/parcels of yards can get this designation too.

Unified Development Ordinance



- For a city that wants to promote and retain affordable housing, we've been moving in the wrong direction.
- The home business regulations are fairly restrictive. It limits allowable space, number of employees, etc.
- Neighborhoods have to provide input on what they want to maintain the integrity of the area. Single-story homes should be a priority.
- Current regulation is becoming more restrictive on what homeowners can do with their property rather than incentivizing. As fear motivates the city to further tighten regulations, this will only serve to stifle the now growing high demand housing market.
- Not enough zoning categories.
- Large single-family homes seem more protected than other types of housing.
- Growth/renovations as opportunity to drive innovation and uptake of new technologies.
- Builders who are only after money are teaming up with real estate agents (name omitted) to con homeowners - often seniors who do not fully know the value of their homes - to sell cheap so that the builder can renovate or rebuild and they then share the profits.
- Historic homes need not be 100 years old. All Decatur homes have a characteristic style e.g. bungalows, craftsman.
- Codes which keep developers/builders from buying homes/lots and changing the character of neighborhoods for profit only disregarding/maneuvering around current codes to achieve their own ends.
- Old small bungalows are being demolished consistently and McMansions put in destroying the character of the city, therefore destroying its history.

Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- Don't just "allow" smaller houses – encourage and incentivize them. Charge a development penalty for houses over 2500 ft.². Encourage mixed housing throughout (e.g. Lenox Place neighborhood features single-family, duplexes, townhomes and multifamily apartments. This is good!!) Required.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Investigate unscrupulous real estate agents. They are damaging our city. Make ordinances to evaluate sales of older homes to builders and real estate agents.
- Allow small apartment buildings in neighborhoods. Tie the size of apartment buildings to the size of the lot. Three-story buildings at street corners. To preserve housing stock, allow relaxed zoning height/density for renovations.
- Is this the time or place to require tax breaks to afford aging in place?
- Retrofit on resale. Souped-up to cover more than just traditional things like toilets.
- Promote very dense housing clustered at/near the three Marta station and in commercial districts of neighborhoods.
- Zoning for smaller lots = smaller houses. Great question – if demolition is prohibited or further regulated, how to incentivize property owners to renovate? I will give that more thought because it would make a big difference.
- Allow for various forms of development yet promote alternative units such as smaller housing, tree preservation in conjunction with building incentives for "green." I am extremely concerned about an increase in regulation, especially stifling the economic growth the city that will eventually support the aging population. The tax base needs to be kept in mind.
- Garage apartments for R60 lots are still difficult to obtain unless you have a lot that is 7000 ft.² (or 9000 ft.²?). Make exceptions for small homes and small lots that one garage apartments to bring in renters.
- Loosening live/work restrictions for home businesses could help to cater attract more technology startups, which have a hard time affording office space.
- All ideas should be on the table. Allow cottage development and more apartment development. Mandate inclusionary zoning units in new downtown apartments/condo buildings (incentives don't work and you end up with a few token studio units). Land bank foreclosures and partner with Habitat for Humanity to develop affordable homes.
- I love the idea of smaller housing incentives – cottage courts - as well as significant incentives for renovation instead of teardowns. Institute loan/financial assistance programs to encourage renovations.
- Allow more flexibility on the placement of accessory structures and incentivize privacy and design.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Live/work in residential is interesting but needs to balance how that impacts traffic and parking and walking ability. Many neighborhoods do not have sidewalks so we walk and play in the street. Also residential has little on-street parking, so how does that impact those who live there?
- Live/work – regulate by size? Under 10 employees? Allow free architectural expression. Limit noise and air pollution (no live work ironworkers).
- Yes, encourage smaller houses. Allows separate residences/structures on a single lot – this helps sustainability and affordability – granny flats help too.
- Provide incentives for rebuilding at the original size – this lessens the drain on resources (environmental, utilities) and keeps housing stock affordable for aging in place. The impact on neighbors must be taken into account – window placement, etc. Neighbors' quality-of-life shouldn't be unduly affected.
- For small houses, another for rental - that's not diversity. Keeping and renovating old buildings lends itself to a sustainable plan.
- If you want people to keep moving into downtown, you need better noise ordinances – trash trucks at 5 AM, music at 10:00 and 11:00 PM – all these make downtown residents unhappy.
- Allow subdividing of large lots into smaller lots to support more affordable housing.
- Base ordinances on privacy, not distance from the property line. More regulation on scale, relevance, etc. Based more on privacy. Encourage true live / work.
- Tree-ordinance! We have been told that our clients will need to comply with replacement fund, tree replacement and penalty all at once, even when the tree in question is not a native tree and all these neighbors have signed a petition to have it removed.

Lifelong Communities

In what way do you think our existing development regulations fail to support the goals of the Strategic Plan?

- There are very few "common areas"/gathering spaces in downtown (except for festivals).
- Age diversity.

Unified Development Ordinance



Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- Continue to improve transportation, improving transitions from pedestrian to alternate sources. Encourage a variety of housing sizes and types. Take care not to create senior only or small house only neighborhoods. Mixture.
- Gradual residential tax regulations of some sort (age-based?). Broaden the tax base – what high revenue businesses can we encourage?
- Overlay zones that protect scaling character of housing.
- A finding features should be required. Senior housing units (including cottages) are essential.
- Motorized wheelchairs need to be addressed throughout the community. Are they supposed to use the street or sidewalk? This is both a lifelong community issue and a transportation one.
- To age in place... taxed to death?
- Incentivize renovation of older homes wherever feasible. Establish award programs to reward sustainable development.
- Allow constructions of homes of 1,000 sf or less. Discourage so many large houses.
- If an investment/renovation/expansion is for the expressed purpose of intergenerational living, can the city help make good development happen? Incentivize certain features. Some regulations and consultation. In other words, some combination of regulations and incentives to result in the best use of current and future. Examples: post parents, reuse as businesses, work-at-home, etc.
- We have to fix our sidewalks. They are not friendly for those in wheelchairs or who are more careful walkers. I have tripped while running several times and also stopped to help a senior who took a spill.
- City should allow for greater lot subdivisions if the developer is willing to build more and smaller houses. Basically a density bonus for cottages. There's also a lot of new technology that allows residents to age in place, such as telemedicine. Assure zoning code allows for in-home care, including live-in caretakers.
- Affordable housing options for both young and old.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Cluster cottages like you see in Oregon or Washington. With no more than two bedrooms and two bath surrounding green space.
- Consider more pedestrian zones, etc. Make Ponce de Leon Avenue pedestrian throughout town all weekend. Demolish old empty buildings. Create more inside public spaces.

Preservation

In what way do you think our existing development regulations fail to support the goals of the Strategic Plan?

- The guideline regulations for lot coverage and height/floor area are more than adequate. Supply and demand regulates the market, but we should incentivize builders/developers to build more multifamily, walkable living.
- It fails to protect neighborhood character.
- Incentives instead of requirements.
- Guidelines can constrain the development process. I do not support them.
- Current regulations do not encourage preservation and maintaining neighborhood character. It actually seems to favor teardowns. Too much attention is paid to developers and those with low voices. No real emphasis on maintaining a variety of housing styles.
- Many places in Decatur have completely lost their character. We have no real preservation plans in place for vulnerable structures. Preservation actually helps with affordable housing, senior housing, and green buildings.
- Giant infill homes without character. McMansions without even minor efforts taken to look like other homes. They are big, ugly Victorian boxes.
- The limit on building height hasn't kept infill from being completely out of character on a street in a neighborhood. For example, Mead Road has odd looking mansions, and other Oakhurst streets do too.
- Too much land is being covered by structures in residential neighborhoods. We need to build/allow smaller single-family homes - actually encourage it - and cut back on McMansions.
- The infill plan as it is does not protect neighborhoods from the giant new homes that are being squeezed into quarter acre lots. The city is allowing developers to build as much as they need to make as much money as they want. Just because

Unified Development Ordinance



there are consumers out there that are willing to pay big bucks for these houses does not make it right. The city's obligation should be to the residents that live and inhabit the city, not developers that live in other neighborhoods. These big, expensive houses also fly in the face of the city's desire for diversity.

- Incentivize renovation over teardowns. Old houses keep our character and are the "original green" buildings.
- Infill construction.
- Keep more historic homes and structures, but allow creative ways to upgrade and be made more energy-efficient.
- Use online polling for communities to address preservation.

Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- What is a historic property in Decatur? Can a neighborhood, like Decatur Heights, be conserved before it is gone?
- Make it hard to tear down an existing home. Force a review process. Charge a larger fee.
- Older historic buildings could provide reasonable in price and size space for small businesses in the service economy (with few staff). Provide tax incentives to preservation and active code enforcement.
- Make sure infill houses keep the existing character of each neighborhood.
- Prefer incentives to prohibitions on demolitions. However, stricter standards for older buildings (50+ years) seem reasonable. I know Athens Clarke County does that.
- Better description, in layman's terms, of what is and what is not allowed in a historic district.
- Attempt to preserve older houses by offering incentives to renovate rather than tear down. Offer accelerated permits, holds on the annual tax rate to equal the tax rate of original house for three years after the renovation.
- Do not allow variances to height and lot coverage for single-family new builds when a house was demolished in order to build the new house.

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- I would suggest the ability of property owners in local historic district to be able to transfer their development rights in order to obtain a fair market value for their property if they are prohibited from demolishing an existing structure, etc.
- Incentives.
- Guidelines around tree preservation, planting requirements. So much of our city is residential - require hardwood plantings, character/look/feel of homes being built.
- Require an overall neighborhood preservation for every community. Identify at risk structures. Encourage more preservation.
- Make it more difficult to tear down. Encourage less than 1,000 sf per resident in every home. Encourage maintaining neighborhood character.
- What about the privately owned businesses that own the property and the service? What are options for descendants that is a win-win for the family/estate/community/use/development/preservation? Case study: suburban nursery school and pre-K.
- Be very careful to not adopt historic preservation in a manner that strangles development. Really determine "historic," not "old."
- Old doesn't necessarily equal historic. Neighborhoods like Wynonna Park get character from having all different types of homes and designs. I wouldn't want them all to look the same.
- Create unique neighborhood guidelines for distinct, cohesive communities. Each should protect the character of the neighborhood.
- For multifamily, incentivize business space, smaller/distributed shopping, and so forth. As a resident for 16 years raising children in Decatur I am very concerned about this urge to limit development. Citizens who sell their homes and choose to move (generally profiting greatly) will not have this opportunity under future regulations. Incentivize.

Unified Development Ordinance



Transportation

In what way do you think our existing development regulations fail to support the goals of the Strategic Plan?

- I've been happy to see traffic calming design, as well as more bike paths and sidewalks around town. We need more pedestrian pathways, in particular those connecting different parts of Decatur.
- Decatur is appealing because of its walkability. Anything to improve that is good. Pedestrian crossings at railroad crossings along College are scary. A lot of sidewalks are inadequate. More stop signs are needed in some neighborhoods. People drive fast on residential streets.
- Wayfinding with design standards for the aging is not provided. Parking seems to be more and more of a problem as more high-rises are being built.
- Sidewalk width. Code to enforce clear sidewalks.
- What are the "large" development sites that need to be broken up? It seems to be an artificial issue. We don't have these sites.
- Railroad crossings are not pedestrian friendly.
- Lack of sidewalks, street lighting, poor traffic signalization.
- I like how the goals are stated. There are still some areas that are not pedestrian friendly because they feel unsafe.
- Inter-neighborhood mobility.
- Walking and biking is not safe on our main streets. I run/walk 20+ miles a week on our streets. Slow down traffic and divert some to places like Scott Boulevard, etc.
- Is not easy enough to cross town without a car. Traffic congestion.
- Those who walk by the Marriott live in fear of running into the Zip sign! Make signs walker friendly.

Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- Commercial development of large sites should have multiple egress points for public use besides autos.

Unified Development Ordinance



- Constraints for bicyclists to prevent pedestrian deaths (this is happening in DC, New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for shared vehicle stations for cars, bikes, scooters, golf carts.
- Create a "trolley" connecting Oakhurst, downtown, North Decatur, etc. Create lots at the city's edge to leave a car and just get on the trolley or other method around the city.
- Have a pedestrian bridge to cross the railroad tracks by (unreadable) and one or two other strategic spots. You take your life in your hands with crossing there because of the massive roads that converge. Bridge for walkers and riders.
- Look at transforming creeks into Greenways/urban walkways for neighborhoods.
- Decatur has done a good job making a pedestrian friendly community. More Greenway connections and encouraging pedestrian activity.
- Increase walkability, add more multiuse paths and bike lanes.
- Improve sidewalks and crossings at railroads to encourage more walking from the south side of town.
- Biking and walking. Pedestrian zones on the weekends.
- Greenways, bicycle and walking paths included for developers.
- Protected bike paths along major roads. Improve sidewalks, especially along major roads. Include planting strips and street parking for the protection of pedestrians.
- Pathways and bikeways. Well lit.
- In particular we need a three-way stop at Ansley and Jefferson in Oakhurst. Very dangerous and people don't always stop. Is there a way that Decatur can help Marta be more efficient? I think more people that live here would take Marta if it were more available.
- Look for ways to claim unused space, or incentivize developers to create more walkways. We need to consider safety as well as visibility/lighting and police call boxes like they have on the Emory campus.

Unified Development Ordinance



Other

In what way do you think our existing development regulations fail to support the goals of the Strategic Plan?

- As a member of the Decatur Arts Alliance board, I strongly support the City's commitment to purchase art - it enriches our lives and builds community. We need to be able to get around to see the art, so we need transportation.
- Require thoughtful recycling and reuse of building materials and components when tearing down to minimize the amount going to the dump.
- Preserve trees and require reuse and repurposing of the wood when they are taken down. There should be no hauling of trunks to the landfill.
- I'm not sure if we're failing in this regard, but I very much support the idea more public art! Decatur is a creative community and it should look more like one.
- Incentivize, don't require, public art.
- I don't know of any incentives for public art.

Hack the Code: What revision or new regulation would perform better? Should it be required? Or encouraged with incentives?

- Enact a 1% tax for art (paid by restaurants and developers) and using local Atlanta (DeKalb-Decatur) artists, or pay 5% of development for art.
- Public art should be promoted, but not required.
- Bring some incentives or removing any current disincentives.
- I love almost everything that makes Decatur unique. The Valentines, the children on the Square, etc. The art helps, even the Art Institute's changing windows.
- Don't require art on each property. Instead, we should require money to go into the community art or landscape fund for the placement of art in optimum locations.
- I'm not sure if I'd require public art as part of new development, but certainly incentives would be worth considering, at least.
- Incentivize public art.

Unified Development Ordinance

