

BETTER TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FOR EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ENGAGEMENT

PRESENTED BY THE BETTER TOGETHER LEADERSHIP CIRCLE AND
THE ART OF COMMUNITY

Monday, July 20, 2015

www.decaturnext.com



Consulting Team

The Art of Community

- Mattice Haynes
- Ashley Cooper
- Jessica Daniels
- Ellen Mayer
- Shannan Miller
- Dwayne Patterson

Tonight's Objectives

1. Introduce Leadership Circle members and consulting team
2. Provide an overview of the work of the Leadership Circle to date
3. Share timeline for upcoming engagement opportunities

Better Together

The purpose of the Better Together initiative is to invite community participation in the development of a Community Action Plan (CAP) focused on addressing goals and tasks that support **Principle B** of the City of Decatur 2010 strategic plan: *Protect and expand diversity among Decatur residents, businesses, and visitors while promoting an innovative, engaged, and informed community.*



Participatory Leadership

- Highly participatory - diverse voices contributing
- Offers a set of skills and tools to discover what's important
- Responsive to what is and is not happening in the community - who is and is not involved
- Strategic --- move FORWARD together
- Allows people to come up with creative solutions and act on what they have passion for



Principles to Support Working Across Differences

- Relationship as resolution
- Inquiry as answer
- Seek multiplicity
- Power and equity matter
- All levels all the time
 - Personal/Internal
 - Interpersonal/Team/Group
 - Organizational/Institutional
 - Structural/Societal/Systemic

Source: Adapted from Tuesday Ryan-Hart



Leadership Circle

- A diverse group of 17 Decatur residents who serve as an organizing committee and have met monthly since December 2014
- Engaged in learning across differences and building relationships
- Identified three specific action areas to support the 2010 strategic plan's Principle B
- Developed a process for engaging community members in conversations to identify recommendations for each action area

Leadership Circle

Jon Abercrombie

Christy Amador

Shan Arora

Haqiqa Bolling

Mike Booker

Don Denard

Yvonne Dodd

Eli Dodson

Linda Harris

Lyn Menne

Peggy Merriss

Christian Perry

Jamilah Rashid

Kijua Sanders-McMurtry

Rozie Slaughter

Nibs Stroupe

Casie Yoder

Examples of Learning Tools

- Power of Belonging
- Understanding Identities
- Four Levels of Listening
- Danger of a Single Story
- Cracking the Codes: System of Inequity
- Four Allegories of Race and Racism

Leadership Circle Member Sharing

- Jon Abercrombie
- Christy Amador
- Haqiqa Bolling
- Yvonne Druyeh Dodd

Local Trends

- The shift in the City's demographics as described in the State of Diversity report
- Further demographic changes that would occur with anticipated annexations
- Recent community racial profiling incidents
- Widely-discussed concerns regarding the availability of diverse and affordable housing options

Community Action Plan Focus Areas

- An Equitable and Inclusive City
- Racially Just Community Policing
- Diverse and Affordable Housing

Equitable and Inclusive Community Framework

- Equity is just and fair inclusion. An equitable society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goals of equity must be to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. (Source: Partnership for Southern Equity)
- Moving towards equity and inclusion requires commitment, practice and investment. It takes a welcoming and hospitable approach that is fortified by a commitment to doing the personal, interpersonal and institutional work that is necessary to eliminate historic and systemic barriers that have limited marginalized groups of people from being genuinely embraced.
- Portland, OR and Seattle, WA have similar initiatives





Equality = SAMENESS

Equality is about **SAMENESS**, it promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing.

BUT it can **only work IF everyone starts from the SAME place**, in this example equality only works if everyone is the same height.



Equity = FAIRNESS

EQUITY is about **FAIRNESS**, it's about making sure people get access to the same opportunities.

Sometimes our differences and/or history, can create barriers to participation, so we must **FIRST ensure EQUITY** before we can enjoy equality.

Source: Google Images



Moving from Inviting to Equitable

	Inviting	Inclusive	Equitable
The Message	“Come, join our community and share our cultural values and heritage.”	“Help us to be diverse and share some of your cultural heritage.”	“Bring your culture, values, heritage, voice, worldview, lifestyle - your whole self; we want to engage in truly mutual relationship.”
The Goal	<u>Assimilation</u> : community invites new people to enter and adopt dominant identity	<u>Incorporation</u> : community welcomes marginalized groups, but no true shift in community’s cultural identity and practices	<u>Justice</u> : community embodies and expresses the full range of voices and gifts present, including The Other
The Effort	Systems and programs in place to invite and incorporate newcomers into existing structures and identity; rejection or marginalization of those who do not assimilate	Stated commitment to inclusivity, but less attention to ongoing programs, systemic analysis or power; emphasis on individual efforts	Systems and programs in place to invite and welcome people, including those from the margins; to ensure their presence, gifts and perspective will be visible and valued; and to ensure that these communities, gifts and values influence the community’s identity, policies and structures
The Result	Healthy numbers (perhaps with some members who claim marginal identity) but community and its membership is overwhelmingly monocultural	Revolving door, with people coming from margins only to stay on the fringe or leave; community remains monocultural, with some pockets of difference	Transformed and transforming community with open doors and open hearts; different groups share power and shape identity, values, culture, leadership, structures and policies

Adapted from Radical Welcome by Stephanie Spellers



Milestones and Key Engagement Opportunities

- August 22nd training
- August 29th Community Conversation
- Community survey
- Independently hosted conversations using conversation kit
- November follow-up event
- December: Finalize Community Action Plan

Opportunities for the City Commission

- Participate in upcoming training session and community conversations
- Engage City staff in the process
- Promote engagement in the process across the city
- Continue learning and working differently by engaging in personal and institutional practices such as naming equity as a principle, practicing cultural humility, and building internal equity capacity



Questions

BETTER TOGETHER DECATUR



BETTER TOGETHER

www.decaturnext.com

