

Summary of Grow Decatur Plan

Revised Dec 15, 2015

We used the following information to discuss and build the proposal for ongoing Grow Decatur activity:

- *Information about existing Critical Imperatives, gathered and refined over the past several years*
- *Input from numerous meetings during the summer of 2015, including*
 - *General sessions to discuss our existing imperatives and other community needs*
 - *Specific sessions for each of the existing imperatives and new possible imperatives*
 - *General sessions with focus on the African-American community*
- *Prioritization suggestions and input from several groups, including*
 - *Grow Decatur Stakeholder Committee*
 - *Grow Decatur Constituent Committee*
 - *Chamber of Commerce 2015 Decatur Leadership Institute*

General Planned Activities (some of which have already occurred)

- Report to various groups and organizations on the revised plan. Included: Grow Decatur Stakeholders, Community Constituent Committee, Major Employers, City Manager, open Community meetings, Grow Decatur community database, post on growdecatur.org, post on social media, editorial boards, etc.
- Build and/or refine Grow Decatur imperative teams, and begin/continue planning and work
 - Use input received and compilation of comments from 2015 Summer Community Meetings as input and information to team meetings
- Build Grow Decatur support teams, such as Engagement, Communications, and Metrics, and begin planning this work.

Planning Activities Specific to Critical Imperatives

- We have identified our proposed plan of Critical Imperatives. These Tiers and Imperatives appear on following pages. We have grouped imperatives into tiers that reflect characteristics such as perceived priority, existing efforts and assigned resources, etc.

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Launched Imperatives

Three of the original Critical Imperatives have been effectively well-launched and are currently self-sustaining with a clear direction, a comprehensive plan, a designated owner, multiple year commitment of resources, and sufficient scale to be transformational.

Grow Decatur will continue to monitor and provide support as needed.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>“Owner”</i>
Inland Port	Existing	Strategic development of Decatur as a distribution transportation center, capitalizing on Decatur’s central geography, its existing rail services and interconnectivity, the potential of its quality airport infrastructure, and its interstate access.	Midwest Inland Port
Water Supply	Existing	Support and promote City initiatives to ensure Decatur has an ample and reliable water supply.	City of Decatur
Community Marketing and Branding	Existing	Effectively tell Decatur’s story. Capitalize on the community’s diverse set of assets to market Decatur as a desirable place to live, to work, and to raise a family.	Community Marketing Manager

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Tier 1 Active Imperatives

These three imperatives represent an urgent need, and are more crucial to Decatur’s development and success. These imperatives require some or all of these necessary attributes to be self-sustaining: a clear direction, a comprehensive plan, a designated owner, multiple year commitment of resources, and sufficient scale to be transformational.

Grow Decatur teams will actively engage community organizations and citizens to align and make progress.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>
Education	Existing	Insure that all students complete an educational track resulting in readiness for a career or advanced education without the need for remediation. Fill Decatur’s job opportunities with fully qualified local candidates. Establish Decatur’s public schools as destination schools of choice.
Prosper and Succeed	New	Our community is challenged by significant poverty levels, including poverty that stretches over family generations. This poverty affects numerous other areas of our community growth, including education and workforce development. In addition, and perhaps as a result of the poverty around us, members of our community may set low expectations for the future of our community and even for their own personal future. Address these issues to determine ways to eliminate barriers that restrict our community’s forward movement.
Workforce Development	Existing	Provide training and development opportunities for Decatur residents – employed, underemployed, and unemployed – preparing them for highly skilled and high-paying careers and employment within the community. Development includes both technical and soft skills.

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Tier 2 Active Imperatives

These three imperatives represent a significant need in Decatur’s development and success. These imperatives require some or all of these necessary attributes to be self-sustaining: a clear direction, a comprehensive plan, a designated owner, multiple year commitment of resources, and sufficient scale to be transformational.

Grow Decatur teams will actively engage community organizations and citizens to align and make progress.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>
Economic Development – the next big idea	New	After the Midwest Inland Port, what is our next major opportunity? Answer the questions and implement a solution: What will be the next focus area for building a stronger economic base in our community? What provides the best possible future impact, and how can we align the community’s resources and energies to pursue it?
Vibrant and Attractive	Existing	Establish Decatur as a community of choice for existing and potential residents, and for visitors coming to the area for work or play. Address issues affecting the ability to recruit and retain professional employees.
20 to 40	Existing	Develop and enhance the community’s attributes that will attract and retain young individuals as dynamic and productive residents of Decatur and Macon County

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Tier 3 Support Imperatives

Grow Decatur will provide support and advocacy assistance as needed for this group. We expect this assistance to be relatively less significant than for items in Tiers 1 and 2.

Imperatives have been assigned to Tier 3 for several reasons, briefly described below.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Reason for Tier 3 Status</i>
Housing in the City	Existing	Develop affordable and attractive housing opportunities in Decatur for all demographics including low-income, young professionals, seniors, families, etc.	The City of Decatur is planning significant effort in the demolition and renovation segments of this area, and we will see how we can help with their process. In addition, development of new housing options is seen to be more a “follow on” activity, rather than something that can be implemented early to stimulate other activity.
Grow the Middle	Existing	Develop Decatur as an attractive location for creation and growth of mid-tier businesses. Provide concierge-level support services to help grow businesses and increase employment.	There is a clear initiative with clear “owners” for this imperative: the development of a Business Development Resource Center appears to be moving forward, sponsored by the EDC, the City, the Chamber of Commerce, Millikin and Richland.
Lakefront Development	Existing	Support and promote lakefront development projects to provide Decatur with additional attractive options for housing, economic development, recreation and entertainment.	This imperative is firmly prepared for success, with the exception of the availability of sufficient financial resources. Grow Decatur will continue to advocate for these resources, and assist the imperative’s “owner,” the Decatur Park District.

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Tabled Imperatives

Grow Decatur recognizes these areas to be valuable in the community’s development. However, these proposed imperative areas “did not make the cut” when the planning process established priorities. While Grow Decatur may provide some support and advocacy assistance, these will not be active Grow Decatur initiatives at this time. Imperatives have been tabled for different reasons, briefly described below.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Reason for Tabled Status</i>
Relationships	Proposed	Decatur is comprised of many groups of people, and, generally, these groups interact in a congenial fashion. One of our community’s values is diversity – we want our community to respect and celebrate (and benefit from) diverse people and backgrounds. A ‘Relationships’ Imperative would focus on exploring and developing improved communications and understanding, providing the opportunity to work together, among groups, to achieve improved community performance. This focus area may include race relations, police / community relations, labor / business relations, socio-economic group understanding, etc.	This proposed imperative did not receive a high priority rating by those providing input, perhaps due in part to the belief that many of these foundational issues are being addressed in other imperatives. We intend to work on internal Grow Decatur functions, including Engagement and Communication, to a greater degree than in the past. We will reevaluate activity in the Relationships area after we gauge the success of those various efforts.
Recruiting	Proposed	Businesses and organizations have identified difficulties in bringing talented individuals to our community, due to issues such as available amenities and unflattering perceptions. This proposed imperative seeks to develop community efforts to significantly improve our ability to recruit (and retain) promising individuals, who would become contributing and valuable members of the Decatur community.	This proposed imperative did not receive a high priority rating by those providing input. We plan to wait and see how the success in other imperative areas, such as Vibrant and Attractive, affects the Recruiting (and retention) efforts in the community.

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Grow Decatur Internal Imperatives

Grow Decatur will also continue to improve its internal processes.

<i>Imperative Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Description</i>
Grow Decatur Engagement & Communication	Existing	Revisit the Grow Decatur engagement model. Leadership team will seek input, and develop a revised approach. Includes additional focus on the communication of Grow Decatur's activities, the work of the Grow Decatur teams and related effort throughout the community.
Funding	Proposed	<p>There is a need for funding and resources to support initiatives in virtually every imperative area. A strategic and collaborative focus on Funding would strive to leverage fundraising resources and bring additional efficiencies in seeking funding from local donors, governmental programs, foundation grants, corporations and other sources.</p> <p>This is not seen as an ongoing Grow Decatur imperative; instead, as imperatives achieve other necessary attributes, such as a well-defined, comprehensive plan and defined ownership and accountability, then the best approach for addressing funding requirements can be made on a case by case basis by the designated owners of the imperative.</p>