

Grow Decatur May, 2015 General Strategy Session Results  
Weaknesses Category Details  
June 3, 2015

Category	Count	Item	Category
unassigned	12	Aging population	unassigned
		Decreased state funding	unassigned
		Opportunity to develop / invest in next generation	unassigned
		Family values / leadership	unassigned
		Even in this venue we discuss Decatur, not Macon County	unassigned
		Lack of right to work	unassigned
		Who is next developer? Many developers are retiring	unassigned
		Labor relations / right to work	unassigned
		Immediate neighbors compete - Mt Zion, Forsyth	unassigned
		People who want to leave	unassigned
		Territorial -	unassigned
		Leadership in some areas - Workforce Development	unassigned
amenities	10	Aging community - need activities	amenities
		Retail variety	amenities
		Not enough tourism opportunities around lake	amenities
		Not so much for visitors to do	amenities
		No real highlight or attraction - outlet mall, schools, etc. - to make people visit for the day	amenities
		Higher cost of entertainment, like movies	amenities
		Need better looking / functioning senior center	amenities
		Perceived lack of retail/entertainment options	amenities
		Promotion of arts	amenities
		Lack of venues	amenities
awareness	3	Awareness of quality programs and opportunities	awareness
		Awareness / communication of programs / opportunities in community	awareness
		Lack of awareness of programs	awareness
business issues	7	Attitude that business is just to provide jobs	business issues
		Attitude that businesses exist to provide jobs	business issues
		Agriculture - limited small and mid-size businesses to complement large companies	business issues
		Company town mentality (ADM/Cat)	business issues
		Not leveraging strengths - target ag for business and education	business issues
		Not friendly to business start-ups or expansion	business issues
		MIP	business issues
collaboration (lack)	5	May not always work together - may reinvent the wheel too much	collaboration (lack)
		Competitiveness around services provided at times - still more collaboration needed	collaboration (lack)
		Competing social service organizations and groups (duplicate)	collaboration (lack)
		Silos - collaboration in some groups - DPS61, RCC, Millikin	collaboration (lack)
		Inability to quickly mobilize community resources to seize opportunity	collaboration (lack)
education	11	Poor literacy rate	education
		Low respect for public schools - choose parochial over public	education
		Perceived lack of educational opportunities	education
		Education systems (H.S.)	education
		Education	education
		School perception	education
		Literacy rate	education
		Uneducated youth	education
		Lack of value of education	education
		Community issues are brought in the schools - it is a fact. Decatur must recognize this. Know what can be done to help. Example - what resources can be utilized to assist with truancy	education
		Student performance on standardized testing	education
funding	5	Limited capacity as far as funding	funding
		Monetary resources	funding
		Funding	funding
		Lack of \$\$\$	funding
		Are there government incentives for small & mid-size companies to grow?	funding
government / city	4	City staff has greatly reduced their efforts to secure Federal funds for HOME, CDBG, etc. which has caused more home/property deteriorations	government / city
		Lethargy of city bureaucracy	government / city
		Inter-governmental "head butting"	government / city
		Government services needs surpass supply	government / city
health / drugs	11	Poor health stats	health / drugs
		Drugs	health / drugs
		Poor health status	health / drugs
		Drug & low self-esteem of school age & young adults without positive 2-parent family	health / drugs
		Unhealthy population	health / drugs
		Drug issues	health / drugs
		Lack of healthcare for poor population	health / drugs
		Health stats poor	health / drugs
		Health issues	health / drugs
		Access to health care (general and specialists)	health / drugs
		Employees that can't pass a drug test to become employed	health / drugs
housing	9	Lack of quality housing for young professionals	housing

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		No property to develop housing on (need city high-end development)	housing
		Housing	housing
		Lack of places to build new housing within city limits	housing
		Housing issues	housing
		Inner city housing is old	housing
		Housing	housing
		Lack of quality housing - young professionals	housing
		Lack of quality housing for young professional	housing
image / market / perception	52	Native negative view of town	image / market / perception
		Reputation as blue-collar town	image / market / perception
		City's self-perception	image / market / perception
		Self-image	image / market / perception
		Image problem	image / market / perception
		Don't tell our story	image / market / perception
		Perception of city	image / market / perception
		Image - need to help community belief in itself to help become ambassadors - good first impression	image / market / perception
		Poor image: crime, public schools, no jobs beside ADM/T&L, nothing to do entertainment-wise for 20-40	image / market / perception
		Unattractive housing	image / market / perception
		Internal negative view	image / market / perception
		Realtors/Media (perceptions)	image / market / perception
		Self-image	image / market / perception
		Educational image / (reality?)	image / market / perception
		Naysayers	image / market / perception
		Current area image	image / market / perception
		Perception of Decatur - education, crime, quality of life	image / market / perception
		Marketing our assets	image / market / perception
		Self-image	image / market / perception
		Image	image / market / perception
		Negative perceptions	image / market / perception
		Our own worst enemy	image / market / perception
		Consistent, positive messaging	image / market / perception
		Media focusing on bad news, creating image problem	image / market / perception
		Image of crime	image / market / perception
		Image - especially natives	image / market / perception
		Negative people putting down Decatur	image / market / perception
		Negative self-image	image / market / perception
		Negative perception of city - internal & external	image / market / perception
		Reputation as a blue collar town	image / market / perception
		Not boasting enough about successes & accomplishments	image / market / perception
		Positive discussion about Decatur	image / market / perception
		People born and raised in Decatur have negative view of Decatur	image / market / perception
		Reputation as blue collar	image / market / perception
		Personal image	image / market / perception
		We have a combination of negative (vocal) members of community and poor track record of talking about success to others in the region.	image / market / perception
		Negative self-images	image / market / perception
		Self-image	image / market / perception
		If you grew up here - not a great image	image / market / perception
		Need to celebrate and highlight how Decatur is a compassionate city	image / market / perception
		Poor internal image	image / market / perception
		Image	image / market / perception
		Negative self-image	image / market / perception
		Negative history to overcome	image / market / perception
		What people think of us	image / market / perception
		Nay-sayers	image / market / perception
		Low self-image	image / market / perception
		Negativity from ourselves	image / market / perception
		Image of Decatur by some residents	image / market / perception
		Many have negative image that is unfounded	image / market / perception
		Self-image	image / market / perception
		Some citizens are our own worst enemies at times	image / market / perception
income gap	4	Gap of haves & have-nots	income gap
		Gap between haves & have nots	income gap
		Gap between haves & have nots	income gap
		Income gap	income gap
infrastructure	6	Road maintenance	infrastructure
		General structure falling apart	infrastructure
		Aging infrastructure	infrastructure
		Roads	infrastructure
		\$ for infrastructure	infrastructure
		Road maintenance	infrastructure

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jobs	14	Too few white collar jobs	jobs
		White collar jobs	jobs
		Blue collar jobs (not enough white collar jobs)	jobs
		Lack of diversity in employers - need to Grow the Middle so, when layoffs occur, it's not so devastating	jobs
		Large unemployment rate	jobs
		Shrinking pool of manufacturing jobs	jobs
		Job opportunities	jobs
		Loss of manufacturing jobs	jobs
		High unemployment rate	jobs
		Quality jobs	jobs
		Cat layoffs	jobs
		Large number of unemployed, underemployed, not making living wage	jobs
		Unemployment	jobs
		Unemployment rate	jobs
look and smell	13	Areas that look unattractive	look and smell
		Smell / perception of poor air quality	look and smell
		Entries into city look uninviting	look and smell
		Housing vacancy	look and smell
		The smell	look and smell
		Poor housing and business structures/areas	look and smell
		Condition of some neighborhoods	look and smell
		Corridor appearance	look and smell
		Keeping up the neighborhoods - inner city not just downtown	look and smell
		There's no bad neighborhood - there are bad parts of all neighborhoods	look and smell
		Decatur smell	look and smell
		Dilapidated housing	look and smell
		City neighborhood decline	look and smell
low expectations	17	Poor Dad mentality - if it isn't cheap or free, I don't want it	low expectations
		Entitlement spirit among many	low expectations
		We have a population that doesn't believe they need to work for a living	low expectations
		We think cheap "Poor Dad"	low expectations
		Apathy of residents	low expectations
		Apathy for the rest	low expectations
		Lack of enthusiasm and/or knowledge of inland port & transportation hub	low expectations
		Seen as small-minded	low expectations
		% of population lack of pride in community	low expectations
		Population willing to live on Social Security, unemployment	low expectations
		Lack of confidence in Decatur (ourselves)	low expectations
		People talk negatively too much	low expectations
		We've always done it that way	low expectations
		Low cost of living - how it translates	low expectations
		Customer service (not a focus for some companies)	low expectations
		Housing/cost of living (seen as a symptom by outsiders)	low expectations
		Stagnant trends - behind the times	low expectations
population decline	13	Declining population tax base	population decline
		Declining population	population decline
		Decline in population	population decline
		Declining population	population decline
		Declining population	population decline
		Population decrease	population decline
		Population decline	population decline
		Decline in population	population decline
		Decline of population	population decline
		Loss of population	population decline
		Population decline	population decline
		Population decline	population decline
		Population decline	population decline
poverty	18	Generational poverty	poverty
		Increasing poverty rate	poverty
		Number of unemployment / welfare recipients	poverty
		Homeless / drug issues	poverty
		Large homeless population	poverty
		Kids don't have career role models (don't know people with jobs)	poverty
		Lack of self-sufficiency	poverty
		25,000+ below poverty 200%	poverty
		Increasing poverty	poverty
		Lack of independence of some residents	poverty
		Lack of economic hope in minority community	poverty
		Poverty numbers	poverty
		Poverty & population	poverty
		Growing poverty population	poverty
		High poverty rate	poverty

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		Increased poverty	poverty
		Growing poverty	poverty
		Assistance for less fortunate to make them successful	poverty
relations / groups / race	29	Mistrust among population segments	relations / groups / race
		Insufficient collaboration among diverse demographic groups	relations / groups / race
		Racial tension - lack of recognition	relations / groups / race
		Challenge of engagement of every sector	relations / groups / race
		Failure to collaborate e.g. education	relations / groups / race
		Diverse group collaboration	relations / groups / race
		Stereotypes / our failure to really embrace diversity	relations / groups / race
		Lack of diversity in employment	relations / groups / race
		Don't take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with diverse groups	relations / groups / race
		Participation of / coordination with lower income families	relations / groups / race
		Lack of collaboration	relations / groups / race
		Diverse groups	relations / groups / race
		People who don't think they can impact what happens in the community - disenfranchisement	relations / groups / race
		Despite opportunities, some populations remain marginalized and disconnected from bright future or "limitless" possibilities	relations / groups / race
		Limited participation in making Decatur better (same people) - particularly "ownership"	relations / groups / race
		Relations - race, generation	relations / groups / race
		Age gap - understanding	relations / groups / race
		Race relations	relations / groups / race
		Local government not inclusive of all those in the community	relations / groups / race
		Poor race relations	relations / groups / race
		100% buy-in from community	relations / groups / race
		Engage everyone	relations / groups / race
		Segments of community still out of the loop	relations / groups / race
		Prejudices	relations / groups / race
		Lack of multi-race involvement	relations / groups / race
		Race relations	relations / groups / race
		Lack of participation by black community - White/Black differences in view of life in city	relations / groups / race
		Lack of African-American involvement	relations / groups / race
		Disenfranchised populations (minority and young professionals)	relations / groups / race
resources needed	4	Demand for government services exceeds resource support	resources needed
		Need technology / high speed internet accessible to all	resources needed
		Limited resources	resources needed
		Demand for limited resources	resources needed
safety / fear	7	Safety fear	safety / fear
		New reports of home invasions	safety / fear
		Crime, etc.	safety / fear
		Fear - seniors and others - especially going out at night	safety / fear
		Safety issues	safety / fear
		Drug abuse / crime	safety / fear
		Fear for safety	safety / fear
taxes	6	Property taxes are too high	taxes
		Tax base decline	taxes
		Declining EAV	taxes
		Decline in tax base	taxes
		Tax base	taxes
		Higher real estate taxes - reduce them (but I realize this depends on jobs, population, etc.)	taxes
transportation / location	6	Insufficient transportation out of the community	transportation / location
		Traffic flow	transportation / location
		Train delays	transportation / location
		Transportation services out of town	transportation / location
		No train station / easy access to train	transportation / location
		Have to have a car to get around, not a strong public transportation system	transportation / location
workforce development	8	Unemployable people - crime & drug records	workforce development
		Too few educated workers	workforce development
		Unskilled work force	workforce development
		Able workforce	workforce development
		Educational skills, knowledge, work ethic	workforce development
		Workforce	workforce development
		Shrinking workforce	workforce development
		Skilled work force	workforce development