



Decatur Parking Development Proposal

08.31.2022

—

Taliesin Utz
Ms. Janet Underwood
Certified Technical Writer Course

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Problem..... | 2 |
| Objectives..... | 3 |
| Survey Data..... | 4 |
| Solutions..... | 4 |
| - Dissuasion..... | 5 |
| - Persuasion..... | 5 |
| - Accessibility & Remodeling..... | 5 |
| Method..... | 6 |
| Feasibility..... | 8 |
| Schedule..... | 8 |
| Conclusion & Goals..... | 9 |
| References..... | 9 |
| Appendix..... | 11 |

Introduction:

Whether you live in a small town or a big city, proper urban planning is vital to the future success of every community. Although urban planning was entirely focused on furthering economic development in the past, contemporary urban planning's primary concerns center upon public welfare, evaluating building sites based on potential efficiency, safety, and environmental impact (McGill).

Chief among the considerations in urban planning is parking space. Claimed by the Chicago Metropolitan District for Planning (CMAP) as “one of the largest single-land uses in municipalities’ “footprints,” parking serves a pivotal role in influencing the flow and organization of a community (CMAP). However, despite its vital importance, parking is often not prioritized in city planning. This lack of foresight often increases traffic and vehicle-related accidents, as well as a decrease in business income streams.

Nonetheless, it is essential to note that some communities that lack adequate parking space, in order to dissuade the use of privately-owned vehicles, invest in secondary methods of infrastructure for transit, including an expansion in public transportation such as the Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (MARTA), bike paths, and sidewalks. While successful in smaller communities, installing bike paths and extended sidewalks in larger communities often comes at the price of road space. This, combined with a .84% yearly average increase in vehicle purchases since 2012, creates a situation where more cars are on the road with less space to accommodate them (FinanceOnline). Although recent, these difficulties and challenges are becoming more evident in our City of Decatur. To rectify this, this proposal asks that the Decatur City Commission consider an initiative to expand parking in downtown Decatur.

Background:

Decatur has been steadily growing since its population slump in the 90s, increasing from 17,304 residents to 24,569 by the 2020 census (Census Bureau). This increase has been marked by a rigorous economic recovery and innovative resident engagement program that resulted in Decatur being named a finalist for the 2018 All-America Award. Decatur’s economic recovery has turned it into a major transportation artery for Atlanta (GA) and its neighboring suburbs, serving as a point of intersection for highways such as U.S. Routes 78 (78), 278 (278) and GA State Route 155 (SR 155), as well as three individual MARTA terminals. These developments, combined with Decatur’s highly rated public school system, have turned a once-quiet suburb into a bustling economic center.

Problem:

However, this meteoric rise has come at the cost of accessibility, the increase in population and traffic proving itself an untenable problem for Decatur’s limited road and parking space. In fact, according to Hans Utz, a former Deputy COO of the City of Atlanta, major roads in Decatur, such as East Ponce de Leon, have seen an average daily traffic count increase from 8,750 in 2010 to 11,400 in 2018, constituting a 23% rise over 8 years (Decaturish).

Furthermore, despite the city's best efforts at promoting public transit and third-party transportation services like Lyft and Uber, visitor and resident preferences remain fixed on using private vehicles. In the face of this consensus, little has been achieved in terms of resolving this pressing issue. Unsurprisingly, the unresolved state of this issue, according to a second survey

conducted by Hans Utz, has resulted in resident satisfaction toward parking availability dropping from an already low 38% in 2012 to a staggering 24% in 2018 (Decaturish).

The lack of parking availability has wide-ranging ramifications for the development and health of Decatur. The jump in traffic not only manifests as a nuisance for residents but, with so many additional vehicles, also increases the presence of carbon dioxide in the air, worsening our community's air quality. The safety hazards do not stop there. In addition to dangerous rises in air quality, more traffic means a potential increase in vehicle-related accidents. As a community built around promoting a safe environment for our children, the new traffic situation, and its potential for creating unsafe commuter situations, may place our children in harm's way. Lastly, despite Decatur's historic economic growth, the pandemic caused a significant business revenue downturn. This, compounded by the traffic and parking difficulties, both potential problems capable of stymying commerce within the city, could contribute to further financial hardship for our community.

Objectives:

1. To dissuade visitors and non-residents, through signs and inscribed directions, from parking in residential zones.
 2. To generate more parking space and accessibility by buying and repurposing abandoned lots in downtown Decatur.
 3. To promote more affordable public parking by replacing outdated parking meters with ones capable of accepting cash and debit cards.
 4. Using a targeted marketing campaign to convince both residents and visitors to use public transit instead of private vehicles.
 5. To preserve and secure the economic growth and financial surety of Decatur businesses.
-

Solutions & Data: It is important to note that, individually, these solutions will only partially lessen existing problems. However, collectively, they can address both the source and the symptoms of our traffic and parking difficulties.

Survey Data

Survey size is 30

Chart 1

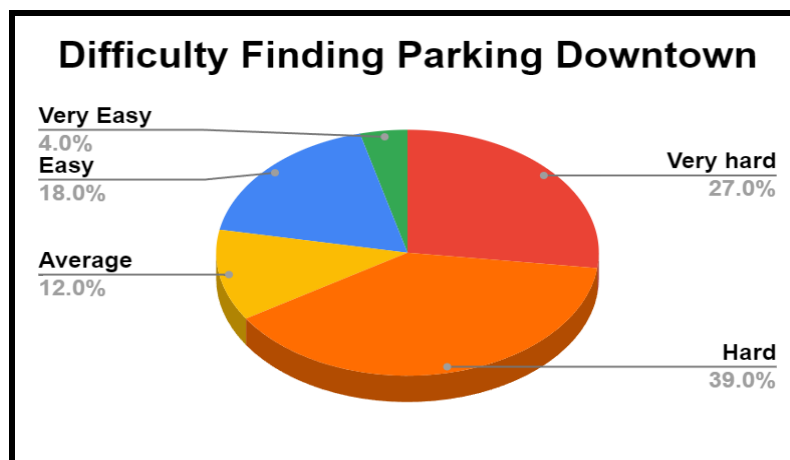
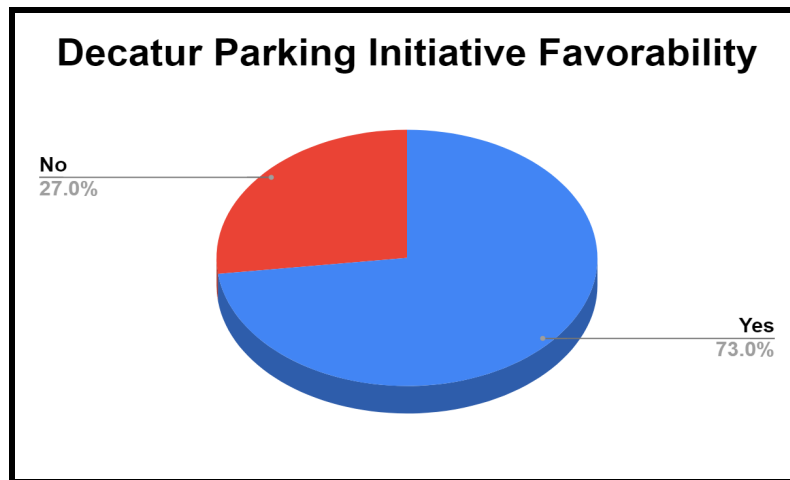


Chart 2
Survey size is 30



Dissuasion:

One of the most common complaints that our survey received in the free-response section was that residential parking was being overwhelmed by visitors unable to find parking downtown. One respondent even stated that she was “unable to leave [her] driveway” on multiple occasions due to the parking backlog.

There are several ways of addressing this issue. First, the Decatur City Commission could create resident parking permits that give Decatur residents preferential access to on-street parking spaces in neighborhoods. This solution has been met with success in both large cities such as Chicago and Boston as well as smaller cities such as Athens, GA. Evidence in cities such as Chicago shows that after parking permit implementations, the percentage of resident-intended parking usage by non-residents decreased from 45% to 20% (Chicago.gov). Further methods to dissuade non-residents from parking in neighborhoods include putting up warning signs that demarcate enforced towing and booting zones and requiring non-residents interested in owning a parking permit to pay more than residents.

To enforce new residential parking permits, many cities have turned to technology such as ‘OperationsCommander’ to ease the additional strain that extended parking monitoring has on the city’s budget and police force. ‘OperationsCommander’ is a holistic parking regulation tool that uses instant in-field data access to expedite police ticketing and registration processes. The automated parking monitoring system, known for its simplicity in both enforcing and monetizing parking, is used by major universities such as Carenton and Lakehead as well as major companies such as Kaiser Permanente (OPS-COM).

Combined, these parking implementations will enable Decatur police to enforce strict parking mandates, thereby lessening the strain felt in residential areas, establishing a new city-based income stream, and creating a safer place for our families and community.

Persuasion:

The average Decatur family consists of approximately three people and owns an average of two vehicles. This, combined with a population of 24,569, 68.9% or 16,928 of which can drive, means that Decatur has approximately 12,539 vehicles within city limits. Even without including the out-of-town traffic, the current abundance of vehicles in Decatur promises to create untenable traffic problems. In a city such as Decatur, in which downtown is within comfortable walking distance for most residents, the exclusive use of privately owned vehicles is not only wasteful but does not make sense (Census Bureau). Nevertheless, it has been difficult to convince car owners not to use an amenity they paid so much money for.

To address this issue, we propose the use of a targeted marketing campaign promoting the use of public transit and available infrastructure. Such marketing campaigns have met with sweeping success in cities such as Denver (CO). Specifically, in 2004, the City of Denver government launched a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote an increase in MARTA ridership. This resulted in a “17.96% increase in ridership compared to June 2003, and a 23.45% increase over June 2002 (Metro Magazine).

Bearing this data in mind, it is likely that Decatur residents will be receptive to alternative ways of avoiding traffic if presented with a comprehensive plan of action. Furthermore, public opinion, as indicated in ‘Chart 2’, shows that Decatur residents are 73% in favor of taking action to fix our lack of parking. A targeted marketing campaign that is presented to an already receptive and primed audience is much more likely to find traction and achieve tangible changes in Decatur’s parking situation.

Accessibility & Remodeling:

The most vital point of success for this proposal hinges upon the creation of new parking spaces in downtown Decatur. According to our most recent survey, as represented in ‘Chart 1’, 68% of Decatur residents have either a “hard” or “very hard” time finding parking downtown. As a result of this consensus, we asked Decatur residents where they would prefer a new parking lot. Out of the four location options offered to residents to vote on, the abandoned lot on 250 East Trinity Place received over 50% of the voices. The significance of this choice cannot be understated. As a plot of land located only 500 ft away from Decatur’s city center, it offers the best chance at drawing cars off the roads in our most congested intersections. Similarly, according to a study conducted by the University of Tennessee’s department of agriculture on average parking-spot dimensions, the land in question, approximately 0.39 acres in size, could potentially accommodate over 50 parking spaces (UTIA).

Purchasing and redesigning this plot of land not only provides additional parking space but, through its remodeling, facilitates the removal of a visually unappealing area in Decatur’s city center and enables the creation of a more aesthetically pleasing location.

Besides providing the city with an expanded parking pool, this proposal also recommends a shift in how parking is monetized in Decatur. More specifically, as the means for monetary exchange becomes digitized and coinage is discarded, upgrading the city’s parking meters from ones only capable of accepting coins and credit cards to ones that accept cash as well as any proffered card, could incentivize the use of underused parking locations. This upgrade, followed by a decrease in the fixed per-hour parking fare of \$3 to \$1, is likely to lead to greater public parking usage. In fact, in an interview conducted for this proposal, one resident, who asked to remain anonymous, stated that they “never use public parking because of the fixed rate.” In

addition, this individual mentioned that some parking in Decatur had a fixed rate of \$6 an hour. This rate must be fixed if we are to incentivize the use of public parking.

If we can achieve these changes, not only will we succeed in bringing balance to Decatur's streets, but this multipronged strategy for expanding, beautifying, and incentivizing parking in downtown Decatur will help bring customers back to our businesses and revive our city's economic center.

Method

Materials & Costs: Parking lot construction is simpler and requires fewer pieces of equipment than parking deck construction. However, since significant remodeling and limited terraforming must take place to balance usability and aesthetics, the process has to begin with heavy equipment.

| Heavy Equipment: | Cost(Average): |
|--|----------------|
| 2x Excavators | \$3,928/month |
| 1x Bulldozer (3 cubic yards articulating wheel loader) | \$4,332/month |
| 1x Grader | \$8,460/month |
| 4x Dump Truck (10-14 cubic yard) | \$5,357/month |
| 1x Roller (47 inches Double Drum Ride-On) | \$1,768/month |
| 2x Asphalt Truck | \$4,635/month |
| 1x Milling Machine | \$5,690/month |

Information found at <https://www.bigrentz.com/rental-locations/georgia/decatur>

| Building Materials: | Cost(Average): |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Asphalt (Binder + Topcat included) | \$150/ton |
| Floor-Marking Paint | \$2.20/sq ft |
| Electrical Wiring | \$8/ft |

Information found at <https://homeguide.com/costs/asphalt-prices>

| Labor: | Cost(Average): |
|--------|----------------|
|--------|----------------|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Clearing & Scrubbing | \$0.12/sq ft |
| TRUEGRID | \$4.16/sq ft |
| Paving | \$3.48/sq ft |
| Painting | \$0.02/sq ft |

Information found at <https://www.jwhitconstruction.com/blog/2021/07/23/the-cost-of-land-clearing-how-is-it-determined/>

| Personnel: | Cost(Average): |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Project Manager | \$49/hour |
| Site Manager | \$27/hour |
| Construction Workers | \$17/hour |
| Solicitor | \$18/hour |
| Civil Engineer | \$35/hour |
| Estimator (Finance & Resources) | \$32/hour |

Information found at <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>

| Maintenance: | Cost(Average): |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Sweeping | \$18/hour |
| Painting | \$18/hour |
| Security Monitoring | \$14/hour |

Per Dekalb County policy, cost expectations for permits and zoning cannot be calculated until acceptance of proposal

Feasibility:

According to information provided by local construction companies such as Goodman Construction, the average cost of a parking lot that requires excavation, remodeling, and asphalt application is \$3-\$6 per square foot (Goodman). Taking into account the additional costs as well as the size of our potential parking space, the final cost estimate stands at \$76,500. Compared to other Decatur City Commission construction initiatives, which average in the millions, this parking space provides an affordable solution to our current problems. Furthermore, according to the Decatur City Commission's most recent budget report for public works, the city has over \$7,269,290 allocated for potential construction projects (City of Decatur). Further study of the budget reports reveals that large portions of this have not been allocated to a specific project. With these numbers in mind and an apparent excess of income, it appears that Decatur has both the will and the means to begin construction on this parking initiative.

Schedule:


| | Plan Start | Plan End |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Phase 1: Terraform + Clear | 10/2/22 | 10/20/22 |
| Concrete Excavation | 10/2/22 | 10/8/22 |
| Debris Removal | 10/8/22 | 10/10/22 |
| Water Drainage | 10/10/22 | 10/12/22 |
| Grading & Flattening | 10/12/22 | 10/15/22 |
| Inspection | 10/15/22 | 10/16/22 |
| Phase 2: Install + Paint | 10/17/22 | 11/2/22 |
| TRUEGRID Installation | 10/17/22 | 10/19/22 |
| Binder & Topcat Application | 10/19/22 | 10/22/22 |
| Asphalt delivery + Application | 10/22/22 | 10/26/22 |
| Oversight: Divider Install | 10/26/22 | 10/28/22 |
| Delineation & Security Install | 10/28/22 | 10/31/22 |
| Final Inspection + Zone Clear | 10/31/22 | 11/2/22 |

Conclusion & Goals:

This proposal, with all its contents, has, through a multifaceted collection of examples, presented a comprehensive and achievable solution for Decatur's parking and traffic difficulties. Through a rigorous analysis of successful case studies, a thorough revision of fiscal feasibility, and an irrefutable public consensus, this proposal has presented the Decatur City Commission with an opportunity to hold its promise to its constituents and a chance to fulfill its mandate as the governing body of the City of Decatur.

References

- Construction Equipment Rentals in Decatur, GA.” *BigRentz*,
<https://www.bigrentz.com/rental-locations/georgia/decatur>.
- “2022 Asphalt Prices: Cost per Ton, Yard, Square Foot, Pound.” *HomeGuide*,
<https://homeguide.com/costs/asphalt-prices>.
- “2022 Asphalt Prices: Cost per Ton, Yard, Square Foot, Pound.” *HomeGuide*,
<https://homeguide.com/costs/asphalt-prices>.
- “About Urban Planning.” School of Urban Planning, 7 Aug. 2015,
<https://www.mcgill.ca/urbanplanning/planning>.
- “Annual Budget Fiscal Year 2022-23.” City of Decatur, GA, 2022,
<https://www.decaturga.com/cmo/page/annual-budget-fiscal-year-2022-23>.
- “Construction Equipment Rentals in Decatur, GA.” *BigRentz*,
<https://www.bigrentz.com/rental-locations/georgia/decatur>.
- “Estimating the Number of Parking Spaces per Acre.” University of Tennessee,
<https://utia.tennessee.edu/>.
- “Parking Control, Parking Enforcement, and Security Management Platform.”
 OperationsCommander, 10 June 2022, <https://ops-com.com/>.
- “Residential Parking Permit.” City of Chicago: Residential Parking Permit,
<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fin/provdrs/residential-parking-permit.html>.
- “The Importance of Parking in Planning for Livable Communities - CMAP.” CMAP,
https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/the-importance-of-parking-in-planning-for-livable-communities.
- “U.S. Census Bureau: United States.” US Census Bureau,
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045221>.
- “The Cost of Land Clearing – How Is It Determined?: JWHIT Construction.” JWHIT
 Construction | Texas Land Services, 4 Sept. 2022,
<https://www.jwhitconstruction.com/blog/2021/07/23/the-cost-of-land-clearing-how-is-it-determined/>.
- Gilbert, Nestor. “The Number of Cars in the US in 2022/2023: Market Share, Distribution, and Trends.” *Financesonline.com*, 14 Jan. 2022, <https://financesonline.com/number-of-cars-in-the-us/>.



Glassdoor, <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>.

Janna Starcic, Senior Editor. "Tracking Transit Performance: A Measurement for Success."
Metro Magazine, Metro Magazine, 1 Feb. 2005,
<https://www.metro-magazine.com/10008753/tracking-transit-performance-a-measurement-for-success>.

Utz, Hans. "What's It to Utz? - Does Decatur Have a Parking Problem or a Perception Problem?"
Decaturish, 27 Feb. 2020,
<https://decaturish.com/2019/03/whats-it-to-utz-does-decatur-have-a-parking-problem-or-a-perception-problem/>. Accessed 29 August. 2020.

Appendix

Survey Results (30 Respondents):

- How long have you lived in Decatur?
 - Average (Year): 8
- In 1 week, how often do you drive downtown?
 - Average: 3
- When driving downtown, do you often encounter traffic?
 - Very often: 9
 - Often: 7
 - Sometimes: 4
 - Rarely: 7
 - Very Rarely: 3
- Do you have any positive/negative experiences with parking spaces in Decatur?
 - Yes: 25
 - No: 5
- Since the time you have been in Decatur, has traffic and parking worsened?
 - Yes: 18
 - No: 12
- How hard is it to find parking downtown?
 - Very Hard: 8
 - Hard: 12
 - Average: 4
 - Easy: 5
 - Very Easy: 1
- In your opinion, does downtown Decatur need more parking spaces?
 - Yes: 22
 - No: 8
- If you had to choose, which locations below do you think would be best for the new parking space?
 - 250 E Trinity Pl, Decatur, GA 30030: 17
 - 2924 Lavista Rd, Decatur, GA 30030: 1
 - 608 Commerce Dr, Decatur, GA 30030: 8
 - 2504 Rose Cir, Decatur, GA 30032: 4