

2022

DECATUR AND MACON COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

DECATUR - MACON COUNTY ILLINOIS

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The Decatur and Macon County 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - Alternative (CEDS) was prepared by Key Strategic Group and overseen by the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur-Macon County.

» EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The communities of Decatur and Macon County represent a powerful and unique spirit: a region with a wealth of natural resources, a history rich in manufacturing and agriculture, and a mission of collaboration aimed at bettering the lives of all who live within the region. This spirit drives momentum to build structures and systems to ensure that when one ship rises from economic prosperity, all ships rise.

Economic development and community leaders have come together to vision a collective economic growth strategy for the region. By calling upon individuals, groups and organizations from all sectors—public, private, and nonprofit alike—Decatur and Macon County aim to holistically examine the sphere of economic development in the region. This was done through inclusion of all critical stakeholders in the process of creating an economic development framework that not only accounts for the economic structure, but for the very people that exist within that economic structure.

With an understanding of the region's history, strengths, shortcomings, and opportunities to grow, community leaders have recognized the ways in which they can fortify the systems in place that need stabilizing, while also creating new opportunities to support economic growth in the region. By focusing on housing, healthcare, transportation, infrastructure, education, workforce, and the overall perception of Decatur and Macon County, community leaders are armed with the framework needed to effectively address economic development calls to action across all sectors.



In total, nine strategic priority focus areas have been identified as follows:

1. Public Perception of Decatur and Macon County
2. Distressed Properties and Corridors
3. Educational Systems Improvements
4. Workforce Housing Development
5. Downtown Economic Development
6. Lake Decatur Economic Development
7. Workforce Ecosystem Development
8. Health and Quality of Life Improvements
9. Transportation System Improvement

From these nine priority focus areas, community leaders and stakeholders envisioned ideal goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes to ensure that these priorities are achieved. The culmination of the engagement with leaders and stakeholders regarding the priority focus areas and the region's economic ecosystem, as well as their expertise and experiences, aided the development of this CEDS-Alternative. Through that engagement, a defined hope was present throughout: economic prosperity for Decatur and Macon County.

Through the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy-Alternative, regional leaders, partners, collaborators, and stakeholders are laying the foundation for regional collaboration, growth, and success for the benefit of all. Through deep, intentional, and purposeful work, the communities of the region can bring that shared vision of an economically prosperous Decatur and Macon County to fruition.

» PURPOSE OF THE CEDS-ALTERNATIVE

The purpose of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Alternative (CEDS-Alternative) is to develop a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. With the strategy being regionally-owned and collaboratively developed, the CEDS is designed to aid the region in creating capacity and guiding processes toward economic prosperity and resiliency.

The CEDS-Alternative functions as a key feature to provide the region with additional opportunities for national development dollars from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) that can set the stage for long-term, sustained development and funding. The CEDS-Alternative also creates avenues for additional funding opportunities to be applied for in order to add additional dollars to regional growth and development.

While also acting as a foundational piece for acquiring development funds, the CEDS-Alternative is a collaborative effort that calls upon the work of the public and private sectors, economic actors in the region, community stakeholders and more to develop a plan to drive economic development in the region. Using the CEDS-Alternative as a tool for strategy-driven economic development in the region provides the opportunity to engage community members and leaders in conversations and strategies regarding economic development, foster public/private sector connections that lead to long-term partnerships and growth, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. With the development of the CEDS-Alternative, we aim to foster long-term, sustainable and intentional economic development strategies and actions in Decatur and Macon County for years to come.



» STATE OF DECATUR AND MACON COUNTY

Environmental and Natural Resources

Founded in 1829, Decatur and Macon County shine as the epitome of the country's agricultural heartland. With the county having a total land area of over 581 square miles, the region has a strong and thriving agricultural economy. Settled within the watershed of the Sangamon River Valley, the region is filled with natural features and resources, from scenic vistas to Lake Decatur, one of Central Illinois's largest bodies of freshwater.

Population

The region holds a total population of the following: Decatur with 70,522 individuals and Macon County totaling at 103,998 individuals respectively. The region has experienced population decline between 2010 and 2020, with a larger share of population loss occurring in Decatur compared to Macon County. By race, Decatur and Macon County have a predominantly white population (62.9% in Decatur and 72.2% in Macon County) with the next largest population by race identify as Black (26.4% in Decatur and 18.2% in Macon County). The region has a small Latino population (3.1% in Decatur and 2.6% in Macon County) with the remaining population identifying as other (7.6% in Decatur and 7.0% in Macon County).

Regarding population by age in the region, roughly one fifth of the population is below the age of eighteen: 21.0% in Decatur and 22.3% in Macon County respectively. Roughly fifty-nine percent (58.8%) of the population in Decatur and 57.8% of the population in Macon County fall between the ages of 18 and 64.

Sources: U.S. Census, retrieved via Social Explorer; U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

Population	Decatur	Macon Co.	Illinois
2020	70,522	103,998	12,419,358
2010	76,122	110,768	12,830,632
Change vs 2020	-7.4%	-6.1%	-3.31%
2000	81,860	114,706	12,419,293
Change vs 2020	-13.9%	-9.3%	-0.001%

Population by Race	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
White / Non-Hispanic	44,371	62.9%	75,117	72.2%	8,874,067	71.4%
Black/ African-American	18,606	26.4%	18,886	18.2%	1,796,660	14.5%
Hispanic or Latino	2,167	3.1%	2,733	2.6%	2,337,410	18.8%

2020 Population by Age	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
< 18	15,104	21.0%	23,319	22.3%	2,855,433	23.0%
18 to 24	7,087	9.9%	9,084	8.7%	1,174,031	9.5%
25 to 34	9,823	13.7%	12,602	12.0%	2,539,347	20.4%
35 to 44	7,642	10.7%	11,897	11.3%	1,638,700	13.2%
45 to 54	7,720	10.7%	12,177	11.7%	1,636,992	13.2%
55 to 64	9,925	13.8%	14,802	14.1%	1,756,753	14.1%
65 to 74	7,845	10.9%	11,556	11.1%	1,146,641	9.2%
75 to 84	4,305	6.0%	6,148	5.8%	573,017	4.6%
> 85	2,406	3.3%	3,103	3.0%	270,768	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

Workforce Transportation

Transportation in the region regarding industry is strong, with its interconnected networks of roadways and railways. With the Midwest Inland Port serving as a multi-modal transportation hub in the region, Decatur and Macon County are primed for both domestic and international transportation of goods and services. The Midwest Inland port serves as an integral transportation corridor for companies that connects them from coast to coast.

Additional transportation efforts in the region must focus on ensuring that the systems in place to move people are just as connected and efficient as the systems that move goods and services in the region: while paying close attention to its working population. In Decatur and Macon County, a near total majority of workers in the region commute to work via vehicle with little to no use of public transit options. It is important to note that when the data is disaggregated by race, you see over half of residents in Decatur and Macon County that utilize public transportation are Black. Investing quality multi-modal transportation has been an issue mentioned in the community and has been noted as an integral factor to create safer, more connected transit in the region.

Decatur, IL

Transportation To Work By Race	Total	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit
Workers 16 years and over	29,967	24,857	2,344	495
Black or African American	13.5%	13.1%	14.2%	50.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Asian	1.5%	1.3%	2.9%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%
Two or more races	3.4%	2.8%	4.6%	7.6%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	2.0%	1.6%	4.1%	1.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	79.6%	81.1%	75.3%	40.7%

Transportation To Work By Age	Total	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit
Workers 16 years and over	29,967	24,857	2,344	495
16 to 19 years	4.3%	3.7%	6.1%	4.6%
20 to 24 years	10.8%	9.7%	15.6%	31.3%
25 to 44 years	42.9%	43.6%	41.3%	42.6%
45 to 54 years	17.7%	18.4%	18.0%	9.3%
55 to 59 years	9.9%	9.9%	6.9%	6.9%
60 years and over	14.4%	14.7%	12.1%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

Macon County IL

Transportation To Work By Race	Total	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit
Workers 16 years and over	45,446	38,783	3,121	516
Black or African American	19.9%	19.8%	18.2%	52.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	1.8%	1.3%	3.2%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	1.2%
Two or more races	4.0%	3.3%	4.7%	7.9%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	2.4%	1.8%	4.5%	1.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	72.0%	73.7%	70.0%	38.2%

Transportation To Work By Age	Total	Drive Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit
Workers 16 years and over	45,446	38,783	3,121	516
16 to 19 years	4.2%	3.8%	6.2%	4.5%
20 to 24 years	9.6%	9.0%	13.4%	30.8%
25 to 44 years	41.3%	41.6%	39.2%	42.8%
45 to 54 years	19.7%	20.0%	22.7%	8.9%
55 to 59 years	10.6%	10.7%	6.9%	7.4%
60 years and over	14.7%	14.9%	11.7%	5.6%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer



Education

Education in the region shows a near ninety percent high school diploma attainment with over half the population experiencing some form of post-secondary education. Over one-fifth of Decatur's population has a Bachelor's Degree (21.5%) while just over fifteen percent of Macon County residents has a Bachelor's Degree (15.7%). There is a clear push for post-secondary education in the region that is only bolstered by the educational and learning opportunities present in the region.

With action plans in place for continuing to develop Decatur Public School District 61, regional parochial school options, and higher education opportunities at Richland Community College and Millikin University, the region provides thousands of students with the opportunity to continue to grow and learn. For post-secondary learning at Richland and Millikin, opportunities have been highlighted by the community to expand learning options and promote greater connectivity between those higher education institutions and local businesses.

Education Status Age 25 years *	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
Population 25 years and older	49,666		72,285		8,686,700	
< High School	5,205	10.4%	6,301	8.7%	898,338	10.3%
HS or equivalent	44,461	35.5%	24,815	34.3%	2,220,409	25.6%
At least some college	12,081	24.3%	17,704	24.5%	1,775,548	20.4%
Associate's degree	4,048	8.2%	6,421	8.9%	707,131	8.1%
Bachelor's degree	10,676	21.5%	11,316	15.7%	1,875,011	21.6%
Graduate or professional degree	3,865	7.8%	5,728	7.9%	1,210,263	13.9%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

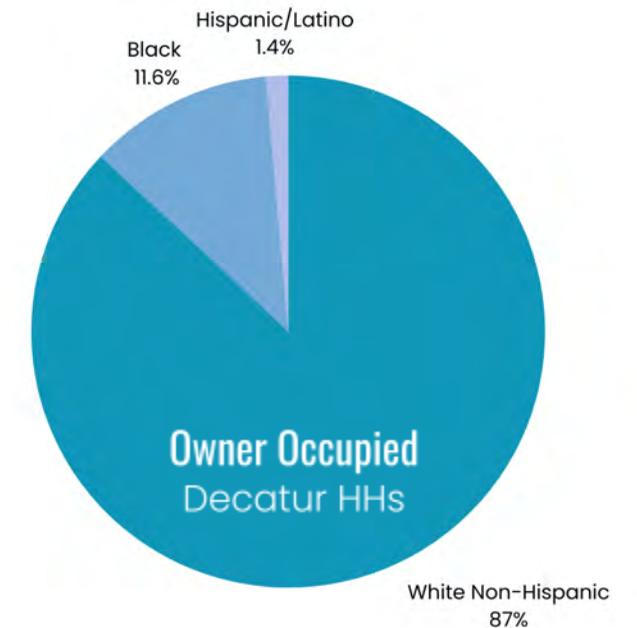
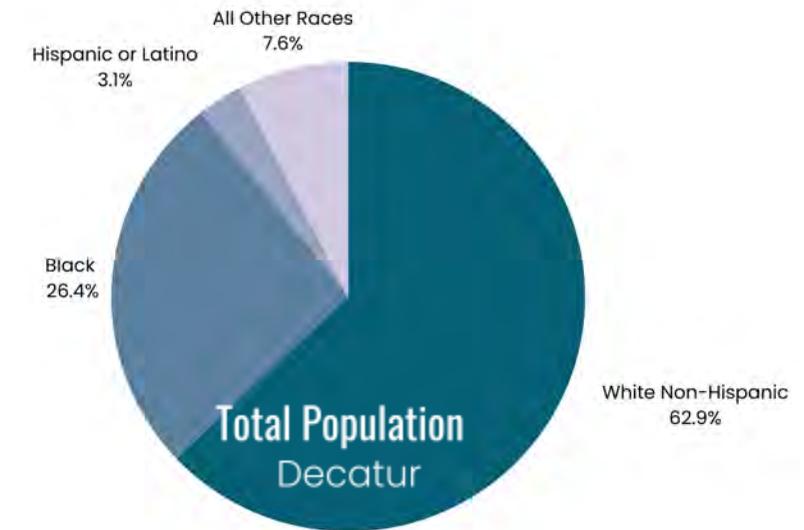


Housing

In the region, housing is owned primarily by a majority of white residents: 84.4% in Decatur and 88.6% in Macon County respectively having owner-occupied housing. Residents of color only account for 15.6% of owner-occupied housing in Decatur and 11.4% of housing in Macon County.

Owner Occupied	By Race	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
Total Households		31,073		43,810		4,884,061	
Average Household Size		2.20		2.31		2.54	
Owner Occupied Housing Units		19,208		30,265		3,237,778	
	White non-Hispanic	16,081	84.4%	26,802	88.6%	2,460,761	76.0%
	Black or African American	2,149	11.2%	2,213	7.3%	266,028	8.2%
	American Indian and Alaska Native	58	0.3%	68	0.2%	6,493	0.2%
	Asian	83	0.4%	140	0.5%	147,894	4.6%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	43	0.2%	43	0.1%	1,003	0.0%
	Some other race	79	0.4%	83	0.3%	107,164	3.3%
	Two or more races	582	3.0%	756	2.5%	71,816	2.2%
	Hispanic or Latino origin	261	1.4%	339	1.1%	323,659	10.0%

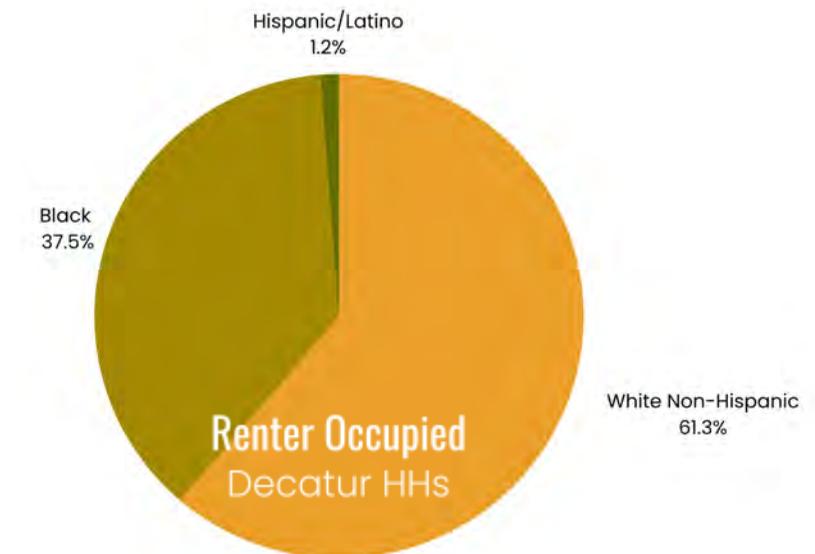
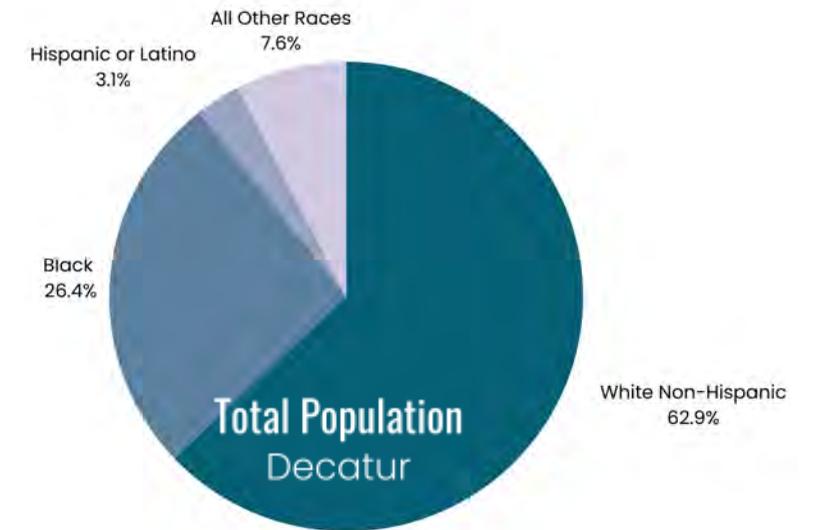
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer



With regards to renting, people of color account for just under 50% of renters in Decatur and just under 40% in Macon County. Promoting equitable access to housing in the region has been a point of development highlighted by the EDC and the City of Decatur to foster long-term living in the region.

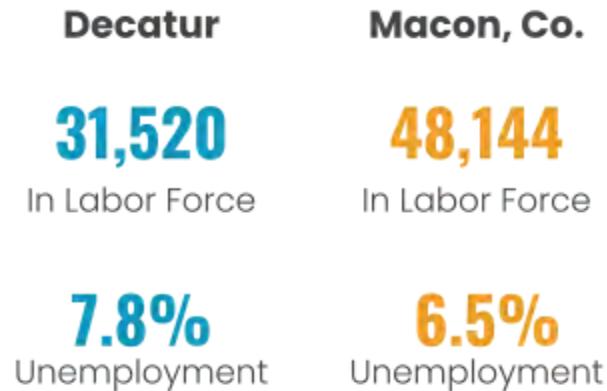
Renter Occupied	By Race	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
Total Households		31,073		43,810		4,884,061	
Average Household Size		2.20		2.31		2.54	
Renter Occupied Housing Units		11,865		13,545		1,646,283	
	White non-Hispanic	6,733	56.7%	8,330	61.5%	839,489	51.0%
	Black or African American	4,123	34.7%	4,123	30.4%	410,496	24.9%
	American Indian and Alaska Native	85	0.7%	88	0.6%	4,576	0.3%
	Asian	260	2.2%	278	2.1%	94,710	5.8%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	845	0.1%
	Some other race	33	0.3%	33	0.2%	98,749	6.0%
	Two or more races	557	4.7%	594	4.4%	64,633	3.9%
	Hispanic or Latino origin	133	1.1%	158	1.2%	267,721	16.3%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer



Employment

In the region, when compared to overall population data, nearly half of the population is in the workforce. In the region, a majority of workers find themselves in the private sector, over 80% in both the city and the county. When looking at unemployment in the region, Macon County has experienced a downward trend in unemployment while Decatur has shown a fluctuating level of unemployment throughout 2022.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022)

Employment (Ages 16+)	Decatur	Macon Co.	Illinois
In Labor Force	31,520	48,144	6,459,700
Employed	29,069	45,004	6,172,800
Unemployed	2,451	3,140	287,100
Unemployment			
January 2022	8.1%	7.4%	5.0%
February 2022	7.7%	7.0%	4.8%
March 2022	7.3%	6.8%	4.7%
April 2022	7.8%	7.0%	4.6%
May 2022	8.2%	7.1%	4.6%
June 2022	7.2%	6.5%	4.5%
July 2022	7.8%	6.5%	4.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022)

Employment Sectors	Decatur (%)	Macon Co. (%)	Illinois (%)
Private Sector	82.4%	82.0%	83.1%
Public Sector	14.1%	13.4%	12.2%
Self-Employed	3.5%	4.5%	4.6%
Unpaid Family Workers	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

Industry

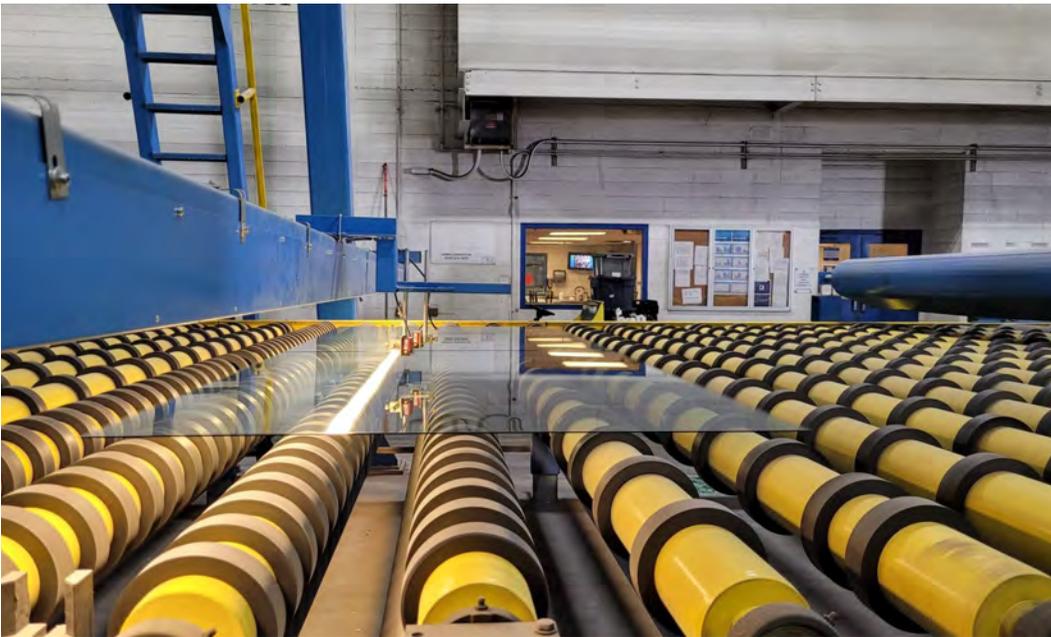
In the region, a majority of workers find employment within the following industries: Manufacturing; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and Education and Health Services. The employment in the region speaks to the long economic history of Decatur as a manufacturing hub in the region that continues to perform as such. It also speaks to the robust network healthcare systems that employ many of the region's workers in Decatur and Macon County. When examining employment levels throughout 2022 in the Decatur MSA, employment has generally remained steady: showing some increases such as in Manufacturing and some decreases in Education and Health Services.

Employment by Industry*				
Decatur MSA	March 22	April 22	June 22	July 22
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,800	4,000	4,100	4,200
Manufacturing	10,700	10,800	10,800	11,000
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	9,800	9,800	9,700	9,700
Information	300	300	300	300
Financial Activities	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Professional and Business Services	2,200	2,300	2,300	2,300
Education and Health Services	7,300	7,300	7,300	7,200
Leisure and Hospitality	4,200	4,200	4,500	4,500
Other Services	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,300
Government	5,400	5,500	5,500	5,200
Illinois	March 22	April 22	June 22	July 22
Mining, Logging, and Construction	228,600	231,400	234,600	236,700
Manufacturing	566,400	571,200	572,500	572,700
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,220,000	1,215,900	1,215,800	1,217,800
Information	92,500	92,500	93,300	93,500
Financial Activities	409,800	407,500	407,600	406,000
Professional & Business Services	975,400	983,200	961,900	963,400
Education & Health Services	909,900	914,000	916,200	918,700
Leisure & Hospitality	556,500	564,700	572,900	581,800
Other Services	244,800	246,400	245,900	245,200
Government	789,400	792,900	792,400	793,300

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) *Numbers rounded to the closest hundred due to reporting of BLS

Occupations

When looking at occupations in the region, a majority of individuals find themselves in professional and related services (20% and 21% in Decatur and Macon County respectively). Material moving, management, production, office administrative support, and sales hold similar percentages of employed workers in both Decatur and Macon County.



Occupation	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%
Management, Business, and Financial Operations	2,962	10%	5,757	13%
Professional and Related	6,084	20%	9,604	21%
Healthcare Support	1,033	3%	1,423	3%
Protective Service	595	2%	873	2%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	2,135	7%	2,753	6%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,378	5%	1,822	4%
Personal Care and Service	798	3%	1,187	3%
Sales and Related	3,063	10%	4,519	10%
Office and Administrative Support	3,781	12%	5,523	12%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	107	0%	233	1%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	2,155	7%	3,816	8%
Production	2,976	10%	4,037	9%
Transportation and Material Moving	3,303	11%	4,453	10%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

Income

Earnings by Education

When looking at earnings based on education level, there is a clear correlation between higher educational attainment and increased earnings in both Decatur and Macon County.

Household Income

In Decatur, just over half of households are below \$49,999 (54.5% of households). In Macon County, however, just over half of the households earn above \$74,999 (52.6% of total households). When looking at median household income, in Decatur, the income is \$45,404 while in Macon County, the income is \$53,725. When further disaggregating the data by race, White and Latino median incomes fall closely to the median incomes of the city and the county. However, when looking at Black median family income, that number is nearly half of the median income in Decatur and below half in Macon County.

Poverty

In Decatur, just under one fifth of the population experiences poverty (19.4%) while roughly one sixth of the population in Macon County experience poverty (15.2%). When looking at poverty through race, just over a third of Black individuals in the region experience poverty (33.2% in Decatur and 32.5% in Macon County) while roughly one fourth of Latino individuals experience poverty (27.5% in Decatur and 22.3% in Macon County). Childhood poverty is more prevalent in Decatur relative to Macon County: 30.0% in Decatur compared to 22.8% in Macon County.

Median Earnings by Education Level	Decatur	Macon Co.	Illinois
Less than High School Grad	\$20,995	\$21,621	\$26,397
High School Grad (or Equivalent)	\$30,547	\$32,153	\$32,612
Some College or Associate's	\$33,313	\$37,108	\$39,189
Bachelor's Degree	\$47,581	\$51,128	\$60,045
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$54,857	\$63,672	\$77,135

Household Income	Decatur	%	Macon Co.	%	Illinois	%
Less than \$10,000	2,941	9.5%	43,810	4.2%	298,656	6.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2,029	6.5%	3,195	7.3%	179,484	3.7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3,494	11.2%	2,346	5.4%	396,382	8.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3,317	10.7%	4,313	9.8%	394,653	8.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,154	16.6%	4,243	9.7%	548,980	11.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,688	18.3%	6,679	15.2%	815,673	16.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3,622	11.7%	8,397	19.2%	627,786	12.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,897	9.3%	5,451	12.4%	810,249	16.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,073	3.5%	5,352	12.2%	380,957	7.8%
\$200,000 or more	858	2.8%	1,999	4.6%	429,798	8.8%
Median Household Income	\$45,404		\$53,725		\$68,428	
Median HH Income (White)	\$47,854		\$55,031		\$74,204	
Median HH Income (Black)	\$25,250		\$25,846		\$41,021	
Median HH Income (Latino)	\$42,143		\$50,200		\$53,440	

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (2020) - 5 Year, retrieved via Social Explorer

» SWOT ANALYSIS

A regional SWOT analysis was conducted with the Economic Development Corporation board members and key community leaders through an economic environmental scan of the region. The environmental scan highlighted accomplishments, setbacks, strengths, weakness, risks, and opportunities unique to the region of Decatur and Macon County.

Viewing the region from the three categories of Past, Present, and Future, the following top findings were noted. *Text in blue* highlights shared views between the two breakout groups. The remaining black text shows top findings that were individually noted between groups.

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
<p>Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Post-secondary institution growth</i> → <i>Lake Decatur improvements</i> → <i>Farm Progress Show</i> → <i>Downtown development & revitalization efforts</i> → Midwest Inland Port → Economic investments → Regional infrastructure <p>Setbacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Housing</i> → <i>Regional Inequities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Race, Wealth, Housing, Workforce</i> → <i>Lack of workforce development ecosystem</i> → <i>Loss of manufacturing companies</i> → <i>Population loss</i> → Covid-19 pandemic → Taxing structures (local, state, federal) 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Industry support</i> → <i>Strong community leadership</i> → <i>Regional collaboration across sectors</i> → <i>Cost of living</i> → <i>Infrastructure</i> → <i>Richland Community College</i> <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>K-12 education</i> → <i>Asset deterioration and vacancy</i> → Housing → Lack of educational and training instructors 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Public perception → Local media and social media → Vacant land → Gun violence → Continued population decline → Future workforce opportunities, availability, and accessibility <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Perception and image → Understanding workforce needs → Skills training and programming → Increased job training for non-college residents → City and community revitalization and development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Downtown and Lakefront

Observations

The results of the ecosystem scan point to a large consensus around the region's accomplishments, setbacks, strengths, weaknesses, risks, and opportunities and how all of these factors influence the economic structure of the region.

In the past, many accomplishments focused on post-secondary education, regional events that showcase the strengths of the region, and development of the region's core sectors: Lake Decatur and Downtown Decatur while also noting setbacks such as housing, regional inequities, and the workforce system.

The present highlighted strengths focused on strong collaboration and industry support, the educational and distressed properties and corridors, and cost of living while also examining weaknesses in housing, education, issues regarding distressed properties and corridors.

The future noted risks regarding public perception, and continued vacancy, tying in continued population decline and issues with the workforce system, while also recognizing opportunities to change public perception, developing a stronger workforce system, and revitalizing key sectors of the region: downtown and the lakefront.

The valuable insights from the kick off meeting as well as findings from previous regional reports determined the following priority focus areas for the CEDS. Those priority focus areas are as follows:

1. Public Perception of Decatur and Macon County
2. Distressed Properties and Corridors
3. Educational Systems Improvements
4. Workforce Housing Development
5. Downtown Economic Development
6. Lake Decatur Economic Development
7. Workforce Ecosystem Development
8. Health and Quality of Life Improvements
9. Transportation System Improvement

» STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN

Vision Statement

Through collaboration with community leaders, board members, and learnings from previous regional reports, the regional vision statement for Decatur and Macon took form. The following vision statement was developed to encompass the region’s desire to promote economic prosperity and growth in the region:

"Foster an economically prosperous Decatur and Macon County through strategic, intentional, equitable investments and collaborative development efforts, leading to a high quality of life for all."

Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Framework

With this regional vision statement, regional goals outlined from previous reports, and input from key community leaders and stakeholders, the following CEDS-Alternative goals, objectives were developed in line with the key priority focus areas: Evaluation standards were developed in tandem with key economic development leaders in the region, standards from previous regional reports, and input from community leaders to ensure the goals and objectives outlined in the nine priority focus areas are achieved and sustained.

Public Perception of Decatur and Macon County

CEDS Goals	CEDS Objectives	Evaluation Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the public perception and self-image of Decatur and Macon County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the appearance of the major corridors Create opportunities to highlight the positive experiences in the region Foster a sense of pride in traits, attributes, resources, and qualities specific to Decatur and Macon County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social sentiment monitoring and surveying every two years Population increase Level of economic development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better market and promote the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the regional destinations and events key to the Decatur and Macon County Highlight the regions strengths Create opportunities to highlight the positive experiences in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIMITLESS Decatur website traffic Number of business and industry partners Number of regional destinations Number of new experience collaborations Number of attendees to events, venues, and destinations

Distressed Properties and Corridors

CEDS Goals

- Continue practices to address distressed properties
- Promote restorative development in distressed and disinvested corridors
- Invest in maintaining and sustaining the built infrastructure

CEDS Objectives

- Utilize strategic code enforcement outlined in the Equitable, Efficient, and Effective Code Enforcement Report for problem properties
- Utilize guidelines outlined in the Decatur Housing Strategy aimed at developing an ecosystem to address properties at substandard living levels
- Promote equitable, efficient, and effective development and investment practices in the Decatur and Macon County
- Implement infrastructure improvements that improve the current built corridor (e.g. Great Streets Great Neighborhoods)
- Attract commercial investment into previously disinvested corridors
- Provide resources to residents and communities to incentivize development
- Provide resources to residents and communities aimed at restoring properties
- Develop policy and code enforcement practices that minimize the development of problem properties
- Continue investments along major corridors in Decatur and Macon County
- Continue to Invest dollars in infrastructure improvements

Evaluation Metrics

- Number of development partners
- Investment dollars
- Code enforcement violations
- Number of properties acquired through code enforcement
- Data tracking of distressed properties
- Number of strategic demolitions
- Number of new businesses in development in disinvested areas
- Number of new residents
- Mileage of new sidewalks
- Number of bicycle facilities
- Number of new landscaping features
- Amount of lighting infrastructure
- Number of services for rehab and repair
- Dollars spent on infrastructure
- Dollars spent on demolition
- Businesses sustained in the region
- Number of new developments along major corridors

Educational Systems Improvements

CEDS Goals	CEDS Objectives	Evaluation Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve educational opportunities for future skilled workers in the region• Develop holistic support networks for students at all education and learning levels• Cross-collaborate between workforce and education sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect workers with appropriate skills training• Provide necessary wraparound services to K-12 individuals• Provide necessary wraparound services for post-secondary education• Create intentional programming between local educational institutions, local businesses, and trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of students enrolled in skills training• Number of support services offered• Number of students served• Graduation rates/Program completion rates• Number of partnership programs created• Career exploration days• High School Job Fairs

Workforce Housing Development

CEDS Goals

- Expand housing to meet the needs of changing populations

- Foster housing access in the region

CEDS Objectives

- Utilize guidelines outlined in the Decatur Housing Strategy aimed at:
 - developing a pool of qualified homeowners
 - developing housing stock in the region
 - preserving and restoring housing stock in the region
- Reuse underutilized properties for housing

- Utilize guidelines outlined in the Decatur Housing Strategy aimed at supporting homeowners with childcare, workforce training, and transportation
- Provide resources for housing support in the region
- Identify and support the homeowner ecosystem in the region

Evaluation Metrics

- New and available housing units
- Housing occupancy
- Assessed valuation
- Aggregated housing stock
- Aggregated housing stock condition
- Underutilized properties

- Housing occupancy
- Aggregated housing stock
- Aggregated housing stock condition
- Underutilized properties
- Number of connections between housing and support services such as daycares, training centers, and transit systems

Downtown Economic Development

CEDS Goals

CEDS Objectives

Evaluation Metrics

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage investments to develop Downtown Decatur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in business development in Downtown Decatur • Tie in key developments throughout Decatur with Downtown Decatur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dollars moving toward downtown investment • Number of open businesses • Number of vacancies • Connections between developments in other areas of the region |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the city core as a center of civic pride | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold events to showcase Decatur and Macon County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events • Event attendance |

Lake Decatur Economic Development

CEDS Goals

CEDS Objectives

Evaluation Metrics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect the water supply of the region for agricultural, economic, and community needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to conduct testing of the lake water quality Maintain guidelines for protecting Lake Decatur water quality Maintain guidelines for protecting Lake Decatur water quantity Continue to conduct testing of waterways that enter the lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality testing Water quantity available for construction and development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster economic development along and around the lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support recreational, commercial and residential development around Lake Decatur in accordance with the Nelson Park Master Plan Continue to support industrial development in the Northeast Corridor in and around the lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of businesses along the lakefront Number of new homes along the lakefront Number of recreational activities taking place at the lakefront Development of lake assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure connectivity between Lake Decatur and the Decatur MSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create points of multimodal connection between Lake Decatur and the Decatur MSA Highlight and promote connectivity between the lake and the Decatur MSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of accessible multimodal routes to and from the lake

Workforce Ecosystem Development

CEDS Goals	CEDS Objectives	Evaluation Metrics
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-collaborate between workforce and education sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create intentional programming between local educational institutions, local businesses, and trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnership programs created • High school job fairs • Career exploration days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better prepare the local workforce for future job growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better align skills training with regional workforce demand • Incorporate future workforce skills into education curricula • Foster early partnerships between youth and potential employers • Provide support services for new businesses • Invest in start-ups and entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of of new jobs created • Enrollment of individuals into skills training programs • Job placement rates • Job placement rates of individuals enrolled in skills training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster greater connectivity between workers and employers in the workforce system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect workers with relevant skills training • Create partnerships between skills training institutions and workers • Design and maintain a well-connected workforce development system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new jobs created • Workforce system usage • Number of job postings • Average extent of open job postings by job codes

Health and Quality of Life Improvements

CEDS Goals	CEDS Objectives	Evaluation Metrics
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- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve mental/behavioral health, economic disparities, and access to health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create and maintain wraparound support services for health ● Provide and promote access to quality healthcare services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of accessible health options ● Number of insured population ● Number of support services provide healthcare ● Usage of healthcare services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote sustained use of environmental resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct testing on key natural assets in the region for quality ● Create and maintain policy dedicated to protecting key regional environmental resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Park usage numbers ● Environmental quality testing (air, soil, water, etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve regional connectivity, safety, walkability, and growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligning regional connectivity practices with the Great Streets Great Neighborhoods project ● Promote multimodal transportation throughout region ● Improve development and connections along key corridors in the regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of accessible routes ● Mileage of new sidewalks ● Number of bicycle facilities ● Walkability Score ● Neighborhood connectivity ● Community safety surveys, focus groups, and conversations |



Transportation System Improvement

CEDS Goals	CEDS Objectives	Evaluation Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe and efficient multimodal transportation options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create accessible stops for public transit options • Create pedestrian-friendly pathways in the region • Create bike-friendly streetscaping • Continue to support the Bike Decatur Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics outlined in Bike Decatur Master Plan • Number of car alternative options available • Number of pedestrian-friendly spaces • Usage of pedestrian-friendly pathways • Amount of bike-friendly streetscaping • Usage of bike-friendly streetscaping • Quality of multimodal transportation options • Transportation system usage • Number of transit systems • Traffic accident numbers • Regional trail usage counts complaints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote greater access to transportation systems and public mobility options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand public transportation usage hours • Increase transit stops in the region in areas of high need • Create positive media around multimodal public transit options • Continue to support the Bike Decatur Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics outlined in Bike Decatur Master Plan • Number of transit stops in region • Usage of transit stops in region • Positive media campaigns regarding multimodal public transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote public transit that is more connected with city and county infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better connect public transit with key city and county infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, grocers, and social service institutions • Increase transit stops in the region in areas of high need • Improve transit options to address “the last mile” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of transit stops in disinvested areas • Proximity of transit stops to key regional infrastructure • Increased bus transit • Usage of transit stops in the region • Number of transit options to close last mile gap

» ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Impacted by population decline, a global pandemic, and additional disasters both natural and manmade, the region has faced its fair share of economic storms. In the face of those disasters, the region remains committed to working collaboratively to address any and all hazards that may impact the region.

The Economic Development Administration¹ recognizes economic resilience through the following three attributes:

1. **the ability to recover quickly from a shock,**
2. **the ability to withstand a shock and,**
3. **the ability to avoid the shock altogether**

Those shocks manifest themselves as significant economic downturns that impact demand, loss of key industries that are vital to the regional economy, and external shocks that can take the form of natural disasters, pandemics, and climate change.

It is imperative that the region foster strong connections and relationships across all sectors to navigate the risk that potential shocks can have on the region.

Improving regional, cross-sector networks to promote resiliency

From recent disruptions to the region's economic system and the impact that it has had, it has become far too apparent that no structure or system exists in a vacuum. Regional networks are interconnected and an impact and stress on one network has the ability to cause immense harm. By fostering strong relationship networks between the sectors in the region, Decatur and Macon County can promote resiliency. Through cross-sector information and data sharing, data management and gathering, open communication, and sharing of resources, the region can not only create a network of surveillance regarding the arrival of threats and disruptions but also develop systems to mitigate the harms those disruptions may cause.

¹ <https://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>



Increase built and economic infrastructure resiliency

With a warming climate, severe weather events are becoming more frequent. Natural disasters such as heavy winds, severe weather, strong tornadoes, flooding, and intense heat waves will become more commonplace and have a detrimental effect on the overall economic system without adequate policies and practices in place to mitigate those damages. Implementing resilient development practices in the region's infrastructure such as stormwater management development, sturdy infrastructure, and more can dramatically increase Decatur and Macon County's ability to remain resilient in the face of natural and environmental shocks. Additionally, by providing resources to businesses impacted by shocks and disruptions and diversifying the economic structure of the region, Decatur and Macon County can mitigate the economic impacts that may arise from disaster events and economic downturns.

Anticipate disruptions and shocks to promote resiliency

From the Covid-19 pandemic to the Great Recession, the region has recognized how large-scale, national and global events can impact the region negatively. Through learning and incorporating lessons learned from those experiences and using those experiences as guidelines for future and potential threats, the region can develop policies and practices that aim to minimize the impact of those shocks going forward. By addressing the threats already known to the region as well—whether those threats be social, economic, environmental, or more—Decatur and Macon County can better prepare for potential disruptions.

Through recognizing the shocks that can impact the system, Decatur and Macon County will be better prepared and equipped to handle the economic challenges that the region may face in light of shocks to the system. By bolstering key assets, partnerships, relationships, connections, and resources in the region, Decatur and Macon County foster economic resilience in the midst of shocks for years to come.



» CONCLUSION

The work, efforts, and collaboration of community leaders and partners has brought about a regional vision for economic development. Through engagement of key stakeholders across all sectors, Decatur and Macon County have a far-reaching understanding of the integral facets that create its economic system. From education to employment and from transportation to housing, each piece is an important part of the economic puzzle.

Going forward requires a strong commitment and intentionality in how the region invests its time, dollars, energy, and resources into promoting an economically strong Decatur and Macon County.

The economic system of the region is dynamic. The nine priority focus areas highlight that dynamic system as well as the many different facets of the economic system in the region. Investing in each of those priority focus areas and recognizing the interconnectedness of those priority focus areas sets a solid foundation for creating, maintaining, and sustaining a robust economic ecosystem.

With a continued commitment from regional leaders to work toward a vision of equitable, intentional, and strategic investments as well as collaborative efforts across all economic sectors, Decatur and Macon County can flourish, fostering an economically and socially prosperous region that supports all who decide to call it home.

» Appendix A: Key Findings from Decatur and Macon County Regional Report Crosswalk

5.20.22

Regional Vision

Many of the regional goals examined from the region's reports focused on connectivity, efficiency, strategic investments, and quality of life improvements. Transportation improvements were featured heavily with regards to improving connectivity in Decatur and Macon County. Reports also envisioned strategic and guided investments to promote a diversified economy, improve economic vitality, and foster a greater sense of place. Quality of life improvements provided the most robust and cross-sector visioning, focusing on housing, health, transportation, environmental stewardship, recreation, connectivity, and economic vitality.

Visions Identified and Examined:

- Safe and efficient multimodal transportation
- Guide investments in expanding existing trail system with street improvements to increase access to recreation, business growth, and increased quality of life
- Balanced land development and conservation
- Quality of life improvements
- An accessible and connected county
- A diversified economy
- A sense of pride in place
- Enriching the community's quality of life and economic vitality of the region through parks
- Improve the lives and build stronger communities

Regional Goals

Below are the listed regional goals that aligned with the regional visions noted from the regional reports. Many of the goals had a strong emphasis on promoting safety, whether that be in transportation, within communities, or perception of the region. Developing efficient systems was also heavily present in the regional goals, highlighting key focus areas such as transportation, financing, land use, technology, and workforce systems. Fostering education in the region, whether it be primary or secondary education or job-related education, was also noted through many of the goals in the reports along with environmental sustainability and strengthening existing communities through strategic and targeted investment. Accessibility in transportation, education, and in the workforce system were highlighted in the reports, noting a desire to ensure that all can experience the benefits of the region's assets.

Goals Identified and Examined:

- Create safe and efficient multimodal transportation
- Promote alternative modes of transportation
- Connectivity
- Safety
- Ridership
- Equity
- Community
- Managing regional growth
- Protecting farmland
- Strengthening the city core
- Maintaining accessibility
- Creating transportation choice
- Ensuring overall system efficiency
- Improving education for present population
- Creating attractive community for employers and skilled workers
- Equal access in education
- Strengthening our sense of place
- Focus growth on vacant and underutilized land
- Compact design to minimize demand for land
- Resource conservation and biodiversity
- A safe, suitable water supply
- Transportation investments for safe and secure transportation

Connectivity was also emphasized and took on two forms in the report: connection between transportation systems and connection between public and private partners. There is desire in the region to have better connected transportation options while also noting the need to have partnerships to foster social and economic growth in the region. Integrity was also a notable goal that appeared in the reports, indicating a desire in the region to be clear, honest, and accountable with community members. Other notable goals focused on addressing childcare needs, health disparities in the region, and developing trauma informed practices to better support the overall community of Decatur and Macon County.

- Improvement to the transportation system
- Strengthening existing neighborhoods and communities through investment
- Community design for walkable communities
- Foster lifelong learning
- Housing choice for all
- Public/Private partnerships to sustain and nurtur the County's commitment to higher quality of life
- Highlight the natural resources as a unique economic engine for tourism
- Have shovel ready sites for potential businesses
- Focal points of arts, culture, and civic engagement throughout the region
- Honor the diversity of the County in all neighborhoods, institutions, and government
- Protected parks, open spaces, and waterways
- Strengthen Macon County as the regional center for the distribution of goods through its extensive air, road, and rail network
- Urban corridors and collector streets reinforce connectivity

- Integrity: Execute duties ethically, with honesty and sincerity. Provide information readily to public
- Sustainability: Maintain efficient and effective use of financial, human, and environmental resources to ensure long-term viability of the District
- Service: Provide outstanding service to our entire community
- Partnering: Collaborate with citizens, governmental entities, and private businesses to maximize community resources
- Safety: Establish a safety awareness that is in the best interest of our visitors, employees, and facilities
- Social: The Decatur Park District will seek to provide an equitable distribution of high quality, accessible, and relevant parks and programming across all neighborhoods in the community
- Environmental: The Decatur Park District will reduce resource consumption and improve the environmental performance and functional efficiency of all Park District facilities.

- Economic: The Decatur Park District will improve the overall financial effectiveness of the system by focusing on core strengths, seeking partnerships, and improving facilities to reduce operating costs.
- Addressing Mental/Behavioral Health
- Addressing Economic Disparities
- Addressing Access to Health
- Integrity
- Quality
- Stewardship
- Better marketing of organizations in the region
- Targeted Population
- Connection Between People and Employment
- Trauma Sensitive Practices
- Building Community
- Changing Lives and Changing the Community
- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills for employment and economic self-sufficiency

- Support the educational and skill achievement of parents and family members to participate in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for families
- Assist immigrants and English learners in improving their English and math proficiency and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and
- Assist incarcerated individuals in strengthening their knowledge and skills to promote successful reentry into society
- Assist with childcare
- Address transportation and childcare issues
- Address basic skills deficiencies by obtaining additional tutoring services
- Demolish whatever must be demolished because it cannot be salvaged

- Repair and rehabilitate whatever structures can reasonably be salvaged
- Consider the use of more aggressive code enforcement, property inspections, registrations and other enforcement strategies to improve the local building stock
- Leverage private investment in the urban core with the selective development of “catalyst” projects that are large and visible enough to spur adjacent improvement
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Grow, Enhance, and Better Prepare Local Workforce to Meet Current & Future Demands
- A Healthy Central Core
- Incorporate Select New Technologies to Improve Municipal Service Delivery, Create Efficiencies, and Enhance Access to Information and Services for the Citizens of Decatur

- Implement New Revenue Initiatives and Cost Reduction Measures Designed to Make Decatur More Financially Secure
- Collaborate with others to ensure that Management of Lake Decatur, and adjoining Public Open Spaces, is Integrated & Wholistic
- Maximize use of adjacent and adjoining assets, including those owned and operated by the Decatur Park District, the city, and others
- Create future non-motorized transportation corridors
- Establish and market other destinations (e.g., the marina, campgrounds, amphitheater, parks, zoo, grasslands and other amenities) that are unique to Decatur
- Enlarge the city’s water supply options

» Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement Process Summary

CEDS – Alternative Meetings:

- CEDS Core Team Meeting
 - May 10, 2022: 60 minutes
 - June 7, 2022: 60 minutes
 - June 21, 2022: 60 minutes
 - July 6, 2022: 60 minutes
 - August 23, 2022: 60 minutes
 - August 25, 2022: 90 minutes
 - September 20, 2022: 60 minutes
- CEDS Kick-Off Meeting | May 24, 2022: 90 minutes – Community Stakeholders
- CEDS Final Presentation | July 13, 2022: 60 minutes – Community Stakeholders

CEDS – Alternative Kick-Off Advisory Committee Participating Organizations:

- ADM
- Ameren Illinois
- Argenta Oreana School District
- Building & Construction Trades
- Busey Bank
- Caterpillar
- City of Decatur
- Coalition of Neighborhood Organizations
- Community Foundation of Macon County
- Community Investment Corporation of Decatur (CICD)
- DCC Marketing/TCCI Manufacturing
- Decatur Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Decatur Memorial Hospital
- Decatur Park District
- Decatur Public School District
- Decatur Public Schools Foundation
- Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Corporation of Decatur-Macon County
- Greater Decatur Black Chamber of Commerce
- HSHS St. Mary's Hospital
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union
- LatinX Business Community
- Lutheran School Association
- Macon County
- Maroa Forsyth School District
- Meridian School District
- Metro Decatur Black Chamber of Commerce
- Millikin University
- Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce
- Mt. Zion Public School District
- Mueller Company
- O'Shea Builders
- Parke Warehouse
- Primient
- Richland Community College
- Sista Girls & Friends
- Skeff Distributing
- St. Teresa High School
- United Way of Decatur & Mid-Illinois
- Village of Forsyth
- Village of Mt. Zion
- Warrensburg Latham School District
- Workforce Investment Solutions