

A PATH TO A DOWNTOWN DECATUR PARK!



www.downtowndecaturneighbors.com

Downtown Decatur Neighbors
August 20, 2016

AGENDA

- The Economic Value of Parks

Andrew White

Director of Park Visioning, Park Pride

- How We Can Build a Downtown Park

George Dusenbury

President, Downtown Decatur Neighbors

- Facilitated Discussion – Next Steps

Paula Collins

Managing Partner, Simply Flourishing



The Economic Value of Parks

Andrew White

Director of Park Visioning

PARK PRIDE

Mission

To engage the community to activate the *power of parks*.

Philosophy: *The Power of Parks*

Great parks have the power to increase our quality of life and strengthen the fabric of our cities. They are places for members of the community to gather, play, relax, and lose themselves in nature, encouraging mental and physical health. Great parks promote community engagement, safety, and revitalization. *They spur economic development and benefit tourism*. Great parks make our citizens happy, our communities strong, and our cities sustainable.

Vision

A nationally recognized network of locally inspired parks, greenspaces and trails that engages individuals, strengthens communities and transforms Atlanta.

What is the Economic *Value* of Parks?



What is the Economic *Value* of Parks?

Parks and park systems create value as a function of their capacity to generate benefits, all theoretically quantifiable.



What is the Economic *Value* of Parks?



How are Local Cities Using Parks?



“We don’t want to be like every other city in Gwinnett or the area. We want to **compete** with the Greenville, South Carolinas of the world. We’ve got a ‘go big or go home’ mentality.”

- Mayor Steve Edwards
Sugar Hill

How are Local Cities Using Parks?



Parks Spur Economic Development

1. Real property values are positively affected
2. Municipal revenues are increased
3. Affluent retirees are attracted and retained
4. “Creative class” workers and talent are attracted to live and work
5. Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes



Real Property Values are Positively Affected



After Centennial Olympic Park was built, adjacent condominium prices rose from \$115 to \$250 a square foot.

Municipal Revenues are Increased



There are studies that indicate prices for products in districts with trees and parks were on average 11% greater than in districts without trees and parks

Affluent retirees are attracted and retained



100 Retired
Households can
match the financial
impact of a new
business spending
\$4M annually in the
community

“Creative class” workers and talent are attracted to live and work



A survey of 1,200 high tech workers in 1998 found that quality of life in a community increases the attractiveness of a job by 33%

Homebuyers are Attracted to Purchase Homes

2001 Survey by the National Association of Realtors:



- 57% would choose a home near a park over not
- 50% would be willing to pay 10% more for home near park
- 65%: Parks would seriously influence them to move to a community



Andrew White

Director of Park Visioning

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Parks are Integral to Decatur's Strategic Plan

03

CITY PARKS FORUM
BRIEFING PAPERS

How cities use parks for...

Economic Development



Peer-Reviewed, Academic Research



Executive Summary

Parks provide intrinsic, environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees.

At the bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for a community. Understanding the economic impacts of parks can help decision makers better evaluate the creation and maintenance of urban parks.

Key Point #1

Real property values are positively affected.

Key Point #2

Municipal revenues are increased.

Key Point #3

Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.

Key Point #4

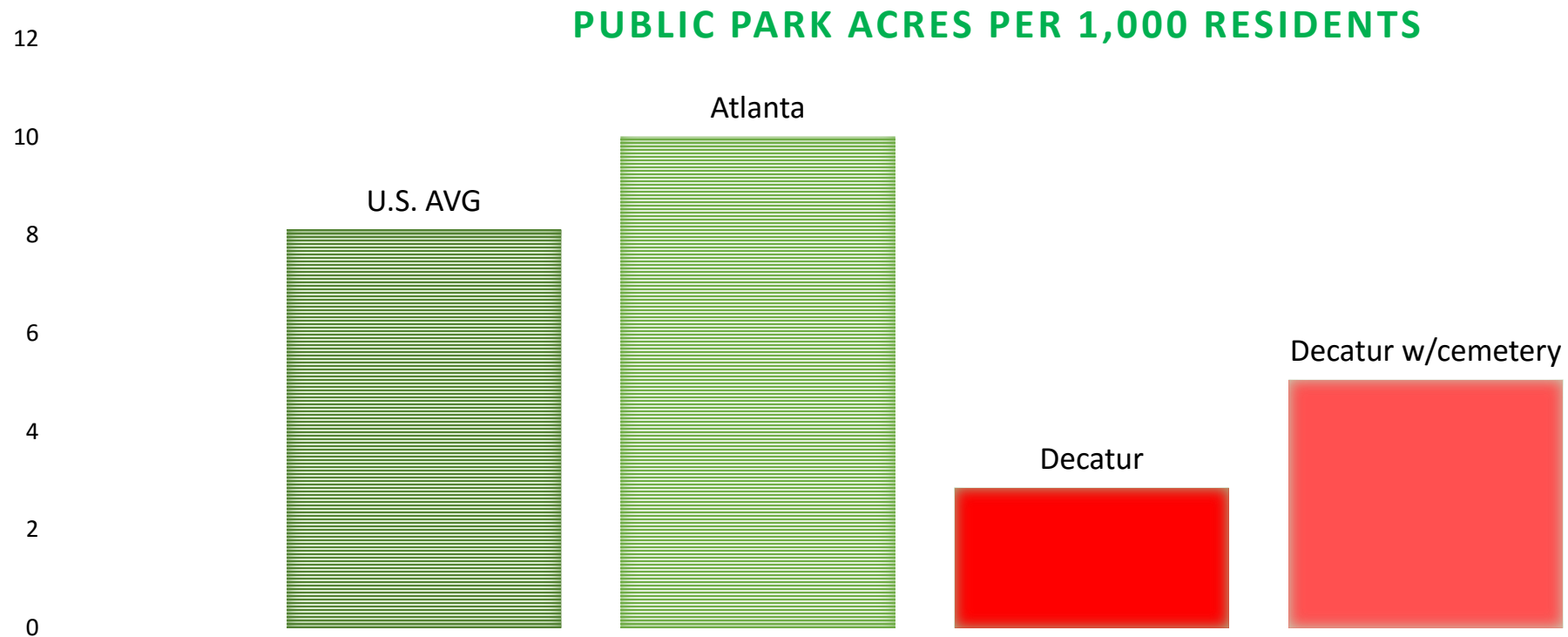
Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work.

Key Point #5

Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes.

1. Parks increase property values.
2. Municipal revenue grows.
3. Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
4. Parks attract talented professionals to live, work and play.
5. Homebuyers want to live near parks.

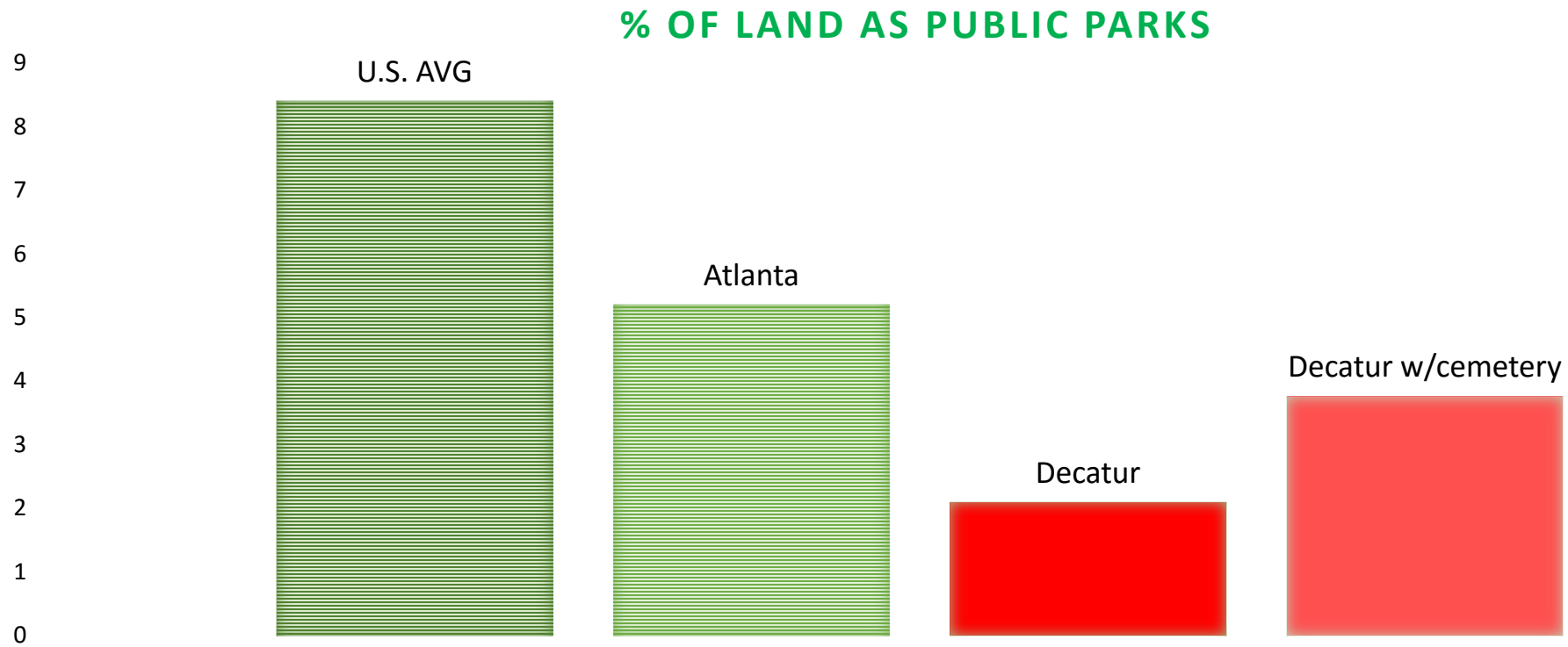
Decatur Public Parkland Is Less than Half the National Average



SOURCE DATA: The Center for City Park Excellence (Trust for Public Land); City of Decatur web site.

U.S. AVG1 is data for cities with medium-high density. U.S. AVG2 is data for cities with medium-low density (Atlanta is classified as medium-low)

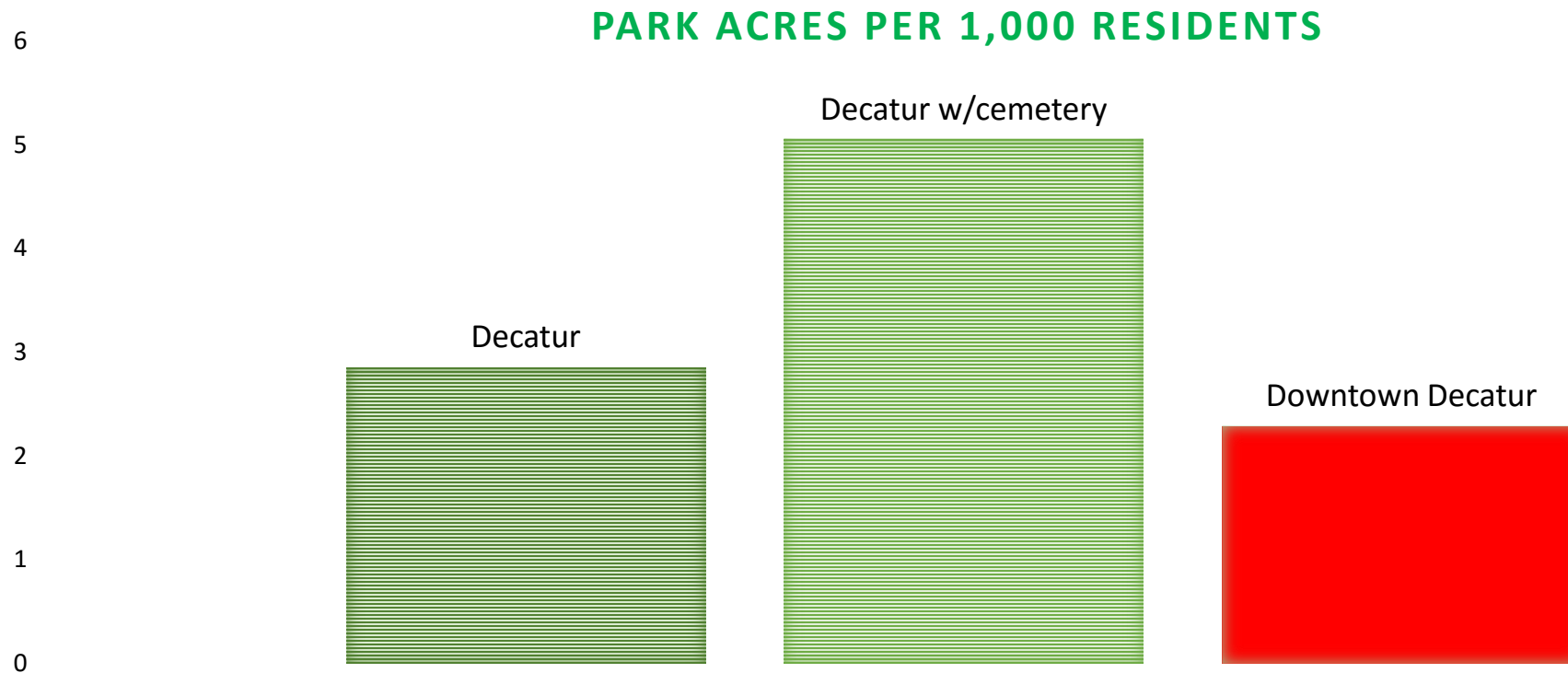
By Two National Standards



SOURCE DATA: The Center for City Park Excellence (Trust for Public Land); City of Decatur web site.

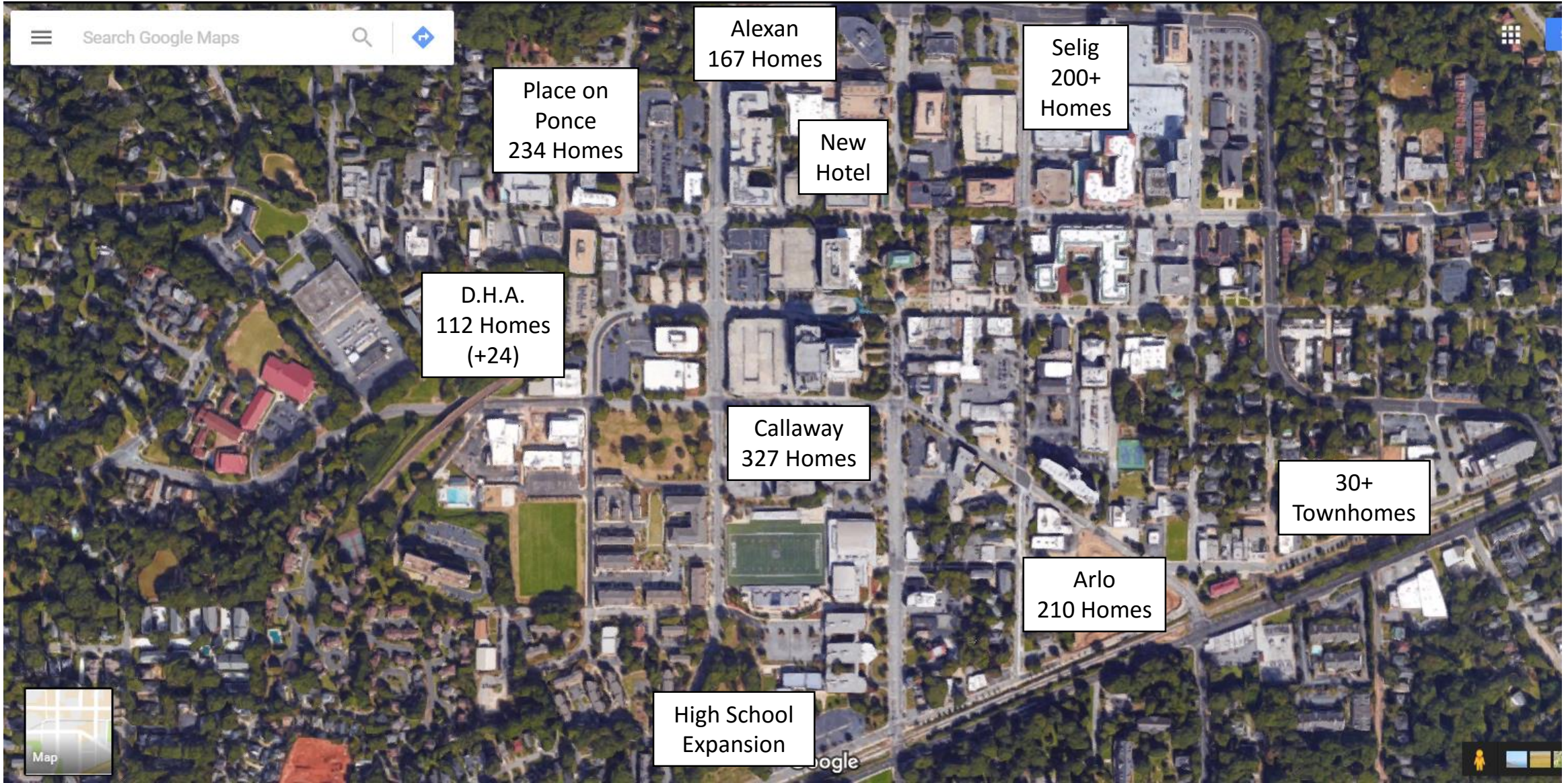
U.S. AVG is data for cities with medium-high density.

And Downtown Decatur Has Less Parkland Per Resident than the Rest of the City



SOURCE DATA: OneMap Decatur GIS, estimate of Downtown as 240 acres (per DDN boundaries).

Between 2015 and 2017, Downtown Decatur Will Have Added 990+ New Homes, With More to Come



And Have No New Parks Planned

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL #1

Manage Growth While Retaining Character

(this is why we are here)

A Downtown Park Requires Three Things

1. LAND

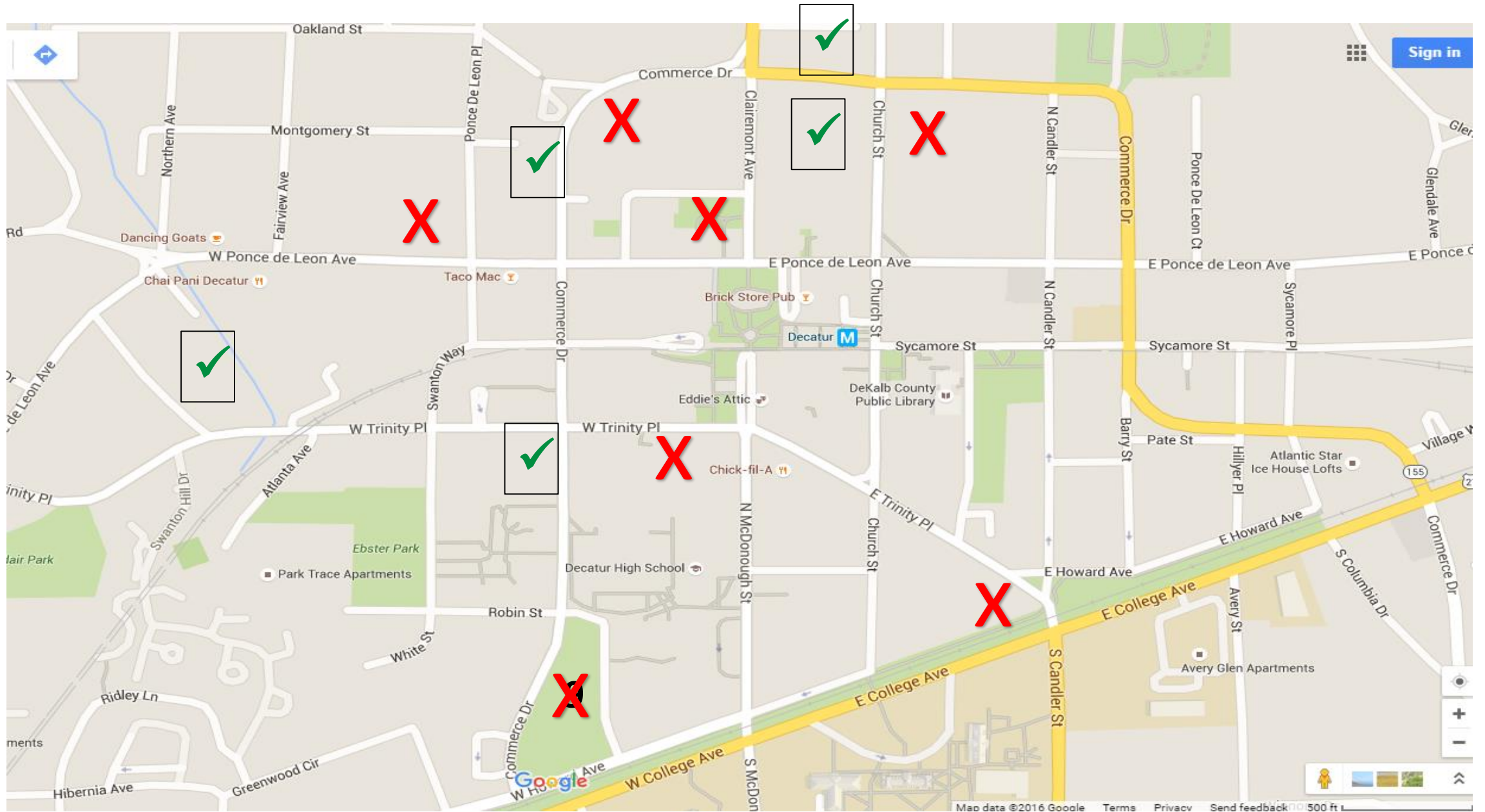
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2. MONEY

+

3. POLITICAL WILL

LAND

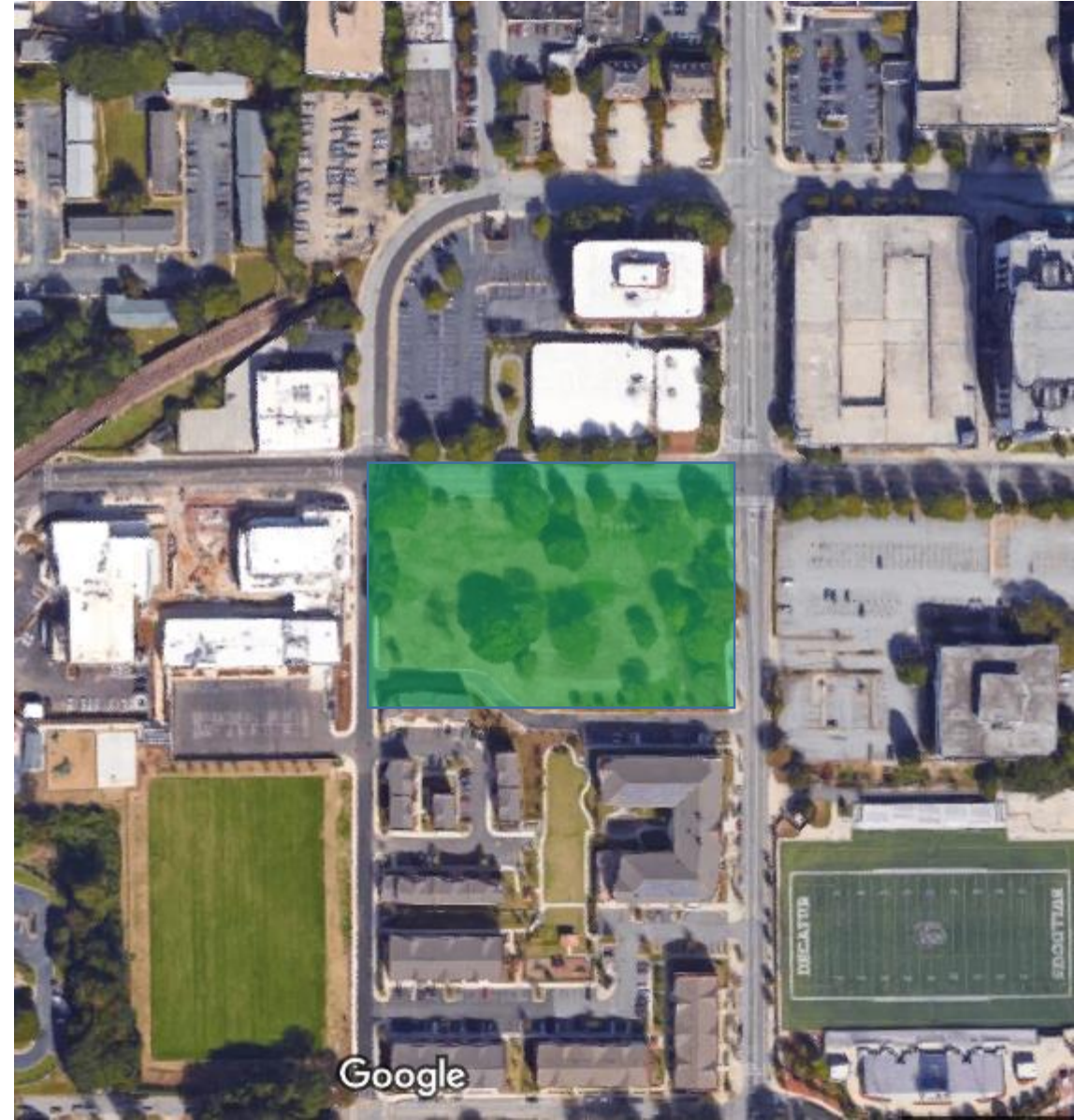


DECATUR HOUSING AUTHORITY



The Decatur Housing Authority site

1. Publicly owned
2. 2.2 acres
3. It already looks like a park (one of the last Downtown greenspaces not slated for development)
4. It is within a ¼ mile walk of the Place on Ponce, 335 West Ponce, the Artisan, the Callaway property, the Oliver House, Allen Wilson and Trinity Walk.

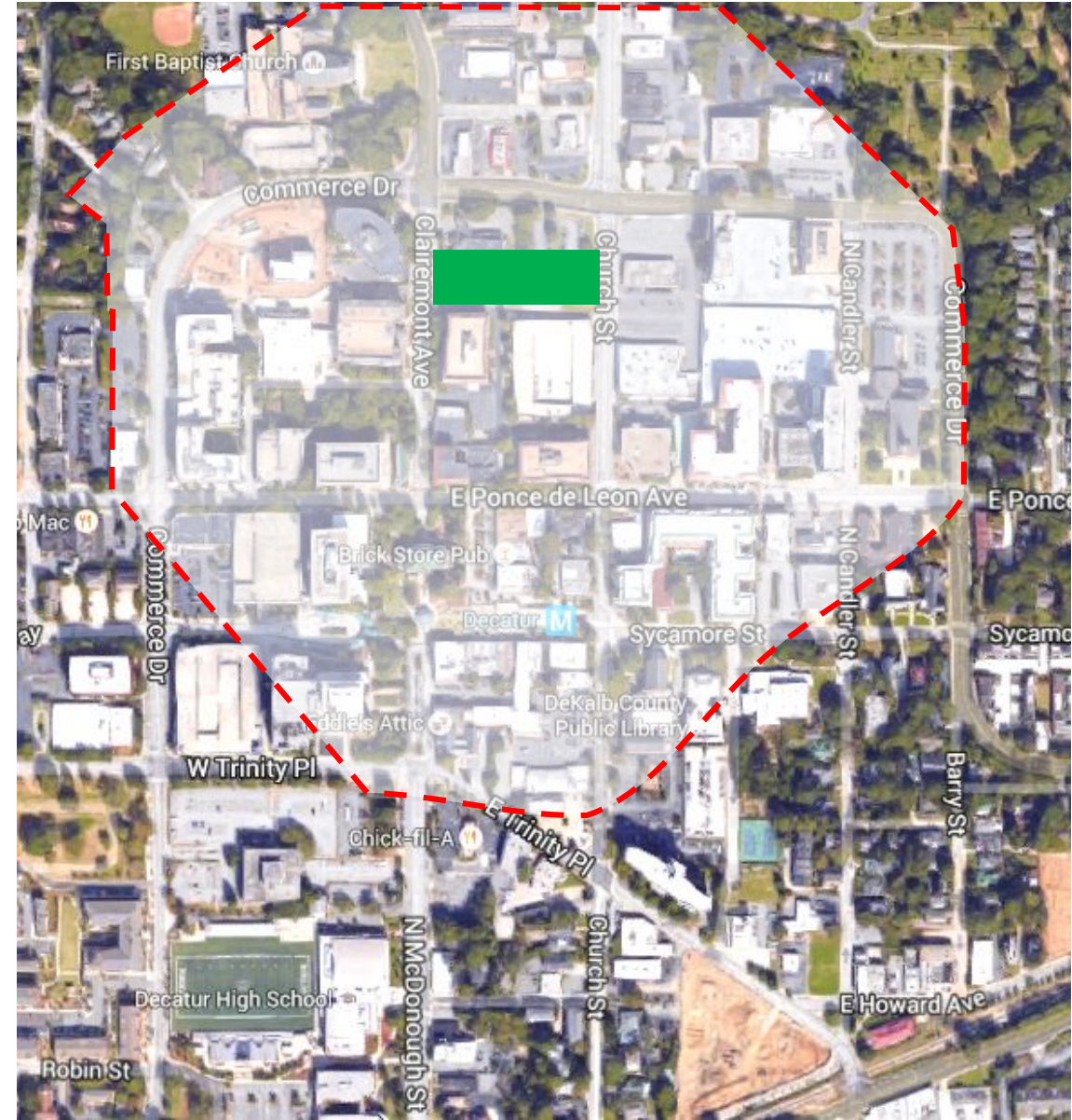


BANK OF AMERICA



The Bank of America site

1. 2.8 acres (0.512 acres sold for \$1.5 million in 2016; 2.29 acres sold for \$1.7 million in 2015)
2. One of every nine Decatur homes is within a ¼-mile walk
3. Surrounded by privately owned, commercially zoned property
4. Bank of America has a 99-year lease on the 2.29 acres



The bank will not move except to a new space on site, including a new drive-thru

A new drive-thru would require an exemption to Decatur's Special Pedestrian Ordinance.

Which requires a majority vote of the Decatur City Commission

that's a lot of leverage for negotiation

MONEY

1. Tax Increment Financing (*like TAD created for East Decatur Station*)
2. Park Impact Fee (*City announced at January DDN meeting that it is exploring*)
3. Leveraging concessions from developers
4. Sell current assets
5. Repurpose existing public land (streets & parking lots)
6. Open space and stormwater banking
7. Transfer of Development Rights
8. Private funding
9. Collaborate with governmental partners (CSD, DHA)
10. General obligation bond/property taxes
11. Hotel-Motel Tax

PRIVATIZE THE CONFERENCE CENTER

1. Immediately realize \$3+ million from the sale
2. Start collecting property taxes
3. Eliminate expenditures (stop paying for insurance, maintenance, etc.)

So what is the City's will?

“We’re really excited about it and we’re in the stages of trying to figure out how to make it so, because we have a unique moment in the life of the city and the region because we finally have revenue streams to figure out how to pay for all of these things.”

The Mayor in Friday’s AJC



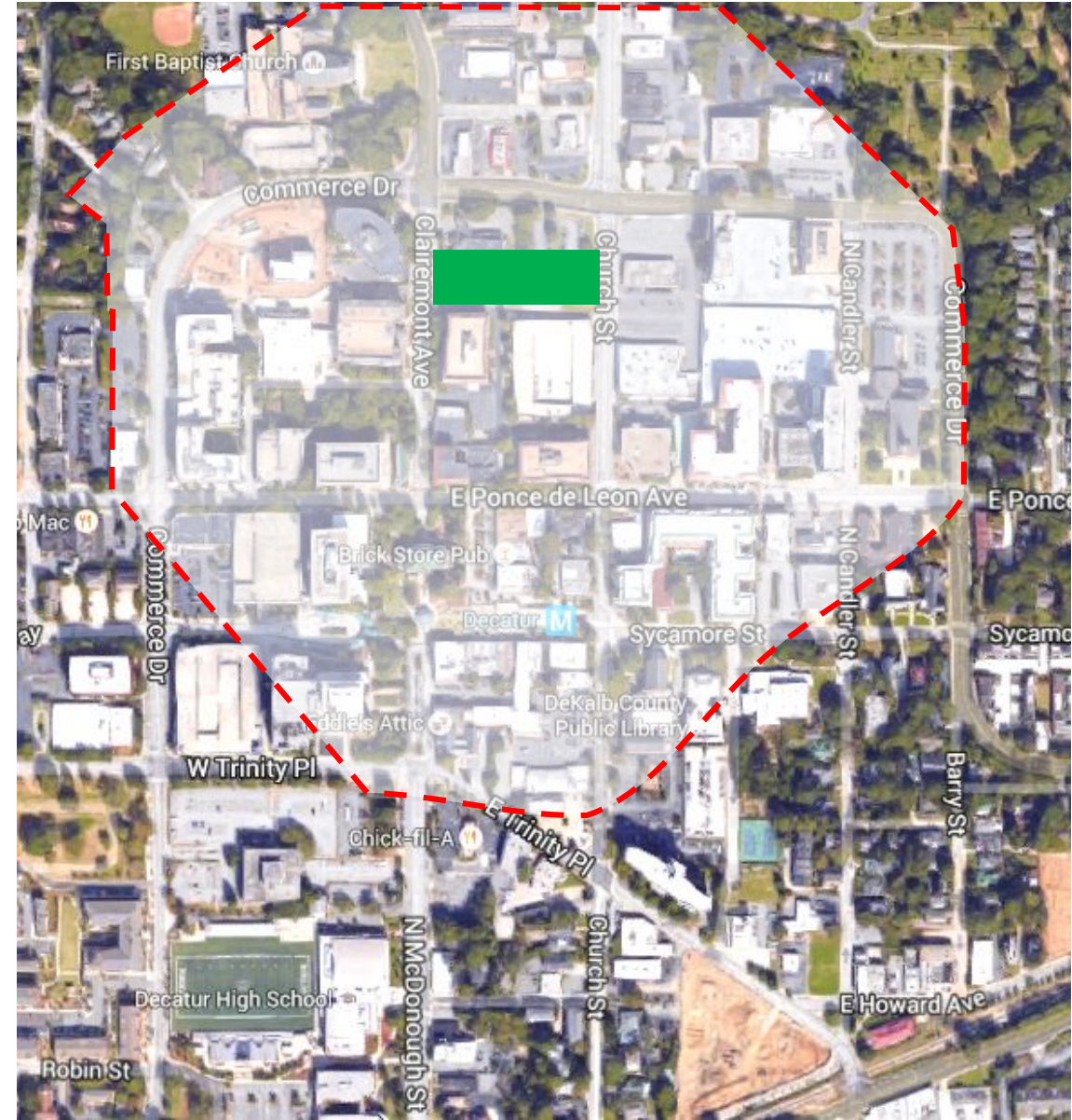
Mayor Kasim Reed talking about a proposed \$300 million, 14-acre park over the Connector

POLITICAL WILL

*The Bank of America property is not available for purchase and continuing to insist that there **will be** a park there does not seem to be realistic or productive.*

Why We Keep Saying the Site CAN Be a Park

1. There are ONE THOUSAND HOMES within a ¼-mile walk
2. The site is surrounded by privately owned, commercially zoned property
3. The site cannot be developed without the approval of the full Commission.



POLITICAL WILL

The Bank of America property is not available for purchase and continuing to insist that there will be a park there does not seem to be realistic or productive.

“I never purchased a piece of property that was for sale”

Kelly Jordan

The Driving Force Behind Arabia Mountain

POLITICAL WILL

The City is not considering selling the Decatur Conference Center as it is not an underperforming asset. The Decatur Conference Center is doing quite well and there is a long-term lease on the facility that has significant economic value.

A Downtown Park Requires Three Things

1. LAND

+

2. MONEY

+

3. POLITICAL WILL

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

-- Margaret Mead

What did you hear
today that moved
you in some way?

Why does this mean
so much to you?

**“Many great actions are
committed in small struggles.”**

-- Victor Hugo

LAND

Any other suggestions
for places?

WILL

What will you commit
to today?

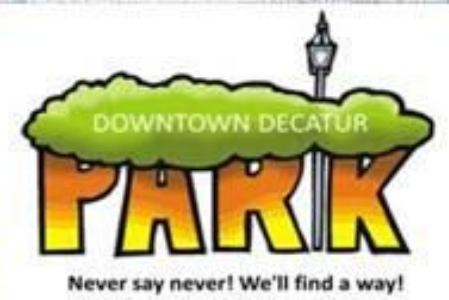
MONEY

Decatur Legacy Fund

501(c)3

**“How will the world be
different tomorrow as a result
of our meeting today?”**

-- Kathie Dannemiller



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