

Strategic Plan



THANK YOU
for shopping
LOCAL

The background of the slide is a photograph of a city at night. On the left, a large, modern building with many windows is visible. In the center-left, a bright red and white firework is exploding in the dark sky. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is gathered, some sitting on the ground and others standing. The overall scene suggests a community event or festival.

Mission:

We inform, connect, and unify the Decatur business community.

Vision:

We envision a vibrant Decatur community where businesses have the tools, connections, and information they need to thrive.

Values:

Contribute

We contribute to the well-being and success of businesses in the City of Decatur and understand that it looks different for every business.

Collaborate

We celebrate collaboration among businesses and other groups in the City of Decatur, always prioritizing inclusive and creative opportunities to collaborate.

Engage

We work with others to encourage engaging relationships between businesses and community members in the City of Decatur.

Note: We use “City of Decatur” and “Decatur” interchangeably in this document. The Decatur Business Association serves businesses within the City of Decatur, so that is the meaning behind both uses.

Innovate

We believe in the power of innovation, and connect businesses with opportunities for them to bring creative solutions and additions to their journeys.

Represent

We are advocates of representation for the business community in the City of Decatur, always finding ways to be at the table and create opportunities for businesses to sit with us too.

Support

We support businesses in their journeys to succeed by listening and sharing resources and information that will benefit them and their needs.

Strategic Initiatives + This Plan

The city of Decatur has changed since our founding in 1985. We helped turn Decatur into a destination through events, visibility initiatives, and partnering with residents. It's time for us to change our focus – we learned a lot about what businesses need during the pandemic, which was reinforced by our surveys and interviews for the creation of this plan. Decatur is a destination, and now we must change our focus to help businesses shore up operations, build connections in Decatur, and reach beyond the Square.

This new plan acknowledges these changes and is deeply informed by our members and business community. We will focus on three initiatives:



Inform
businesses on
leading practices



Connect
individuals with each other and
with pertinent information



Unify
all of the
City of Decatur

Organizational Background + Track Record of Success

“DBA membership provides us with many opportunities to volunteer and participate in community endeavors. We value our sponsorship as an integral part of sustaining growth throughout the city.”

– Herb McCoy, Branch Manager, VP Fidelity Bank

“More than a business association, DBA is a supportive community. As a member for more than ten years I appreciate the personal and professional relationships I have formed. It has positively affected my business in more ways than I can list here!”

– Wendy Watkins, Owner Mind Body and Business

In 2023, Decatur Business Association served close to 300 members from diverse businesses around the City of Decatur, including restaurants, retail shop owners, and small family-owned businesses.

INFORM



We provide members with resources that contribute to their success. We are seen as the go-to space for information and provide relevant training and workshops to the needs and wants of our members.

Online Resources

We want Decatur businesses to be empowered with information. Our website and social media share resources that are important to our members. This includes

- Links and How-Tos in different sectors (Marketing, Accounting, HR)
- Trainings or learning opportunities for businesses in the area
- Resources from the City that are useful to members

Workshops and Trainings

During our monthly meetings, we invite speakers (business owners, DBA members, commissioners, nonprofits) to share their knowledge with our members in an engaging and informative way. Additionally, these workshops and trainings provide an opportunity for mentorship between DBA members.

Meeting Structure

We want our meetings to reflect the needs of our members. We meet every month but alternate our meeting format: one month we host an evening meeting with informal networking, and the following month an afternoon or morning breakfast or lunch specifically designed to bring workshops and trainings to members. Additional educational resources and opportunities are shared through email.

CONNECT



Connection is essential to collaboration. We connect businesses to resources, news, and updates from the area that can contribute to the success of our members.

Representation

Representing our businesses in different spaces is important to us. We attend events that align with our core values and filter information by sharing news and updates that are relevant to our members' needs. We also host gatherings to connect ideas, opportunities, and people.

Mentorships

Connecting members with each other fosters collaboration. We know that our members are experts and learners at the same time. In order to create a structured and productive way of building relationships, we provide opportunities to be a mentor or a mentee. This mentorship program also includes training and a survey to identify roles and next steps to foster this connection.

Communications

We are committed to sharing our work digitally. This includes regular email updates, a robust website with resources, and social media presence. Through these channels we share resources, information about upcoming events and meetings, and highlight our members and their businesses.

Sponsorships/Partnerships

We want to connect our members to the communities in the City of Decatur. We sponsor events that align with our core values and build partnerships with groups that contribute to the success of our business community.

UNIFY

➤ We ensure that businesses in different districts are represented and we engage with the greater City of Decatur community by sharing and attending events in different areas of the city.

District Representation

It's important that the entire Decatur business community is represented by the DBA. We host meetings in different areas of town for visibility and also sponsor events beyond the Square to foster connectivity and unity between members and community members.

Event Engagement

We share information about upcoming gathering opportunities, and also support and participate in events that align with our core values and promote the businesses we represent. We believe that fun events make the business community vibrant and add to the success of our members.



Interested Parties Feedback

Decatur Business Association hired Purpose Possible to develop a strategic plan for the association. As such, Purpose Possible reached out to various collaborators and interested parties to garner feedback through a series of questions delivered via surveys and one-on-one interviews.



KEYWORDS

Networking

New and small businesses

City of Decatur

Key Takeaways

1. Member respondents indicated that “networking” and “staying updated/aware of new businesses” in the area was the primary **benefit they received as DBA members**.
 - It is also important to note some current members expressed that DBA is the only association of its kind and joining seems necessary when they open their businesses in the area.
2. Respondents all expressed desire for the following:
 - **DBA to be an educator:** providing its members with tangible services such as structured workshops/trainings
 - **DBA to be a connector:** between businesses and City of Decatur and bring community and members together
3. The most recommended change for DBA was related to their **meeting structure**. Although networking is appreciated and considered a benefit to members, they also expressed desire to have additional resources during these meetings.
4. Finally, all respondents agreed that DBA can work to expand their events and offerings **beyond the square**.





ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH:

- Increasing website and social media presence and updates
- Increasing communication with members (a lot of them didn't know their membership lapsed)
- Online community event calendar/for members to add their upcoming events

Why they are DBA members:

"To have a say in the organization's direction, strategy, and operational plans that may positively or negatively affect our business. The most meaningful benefit is the potential for collective action and forging connections for mutual benefit."

An ideal DBA:

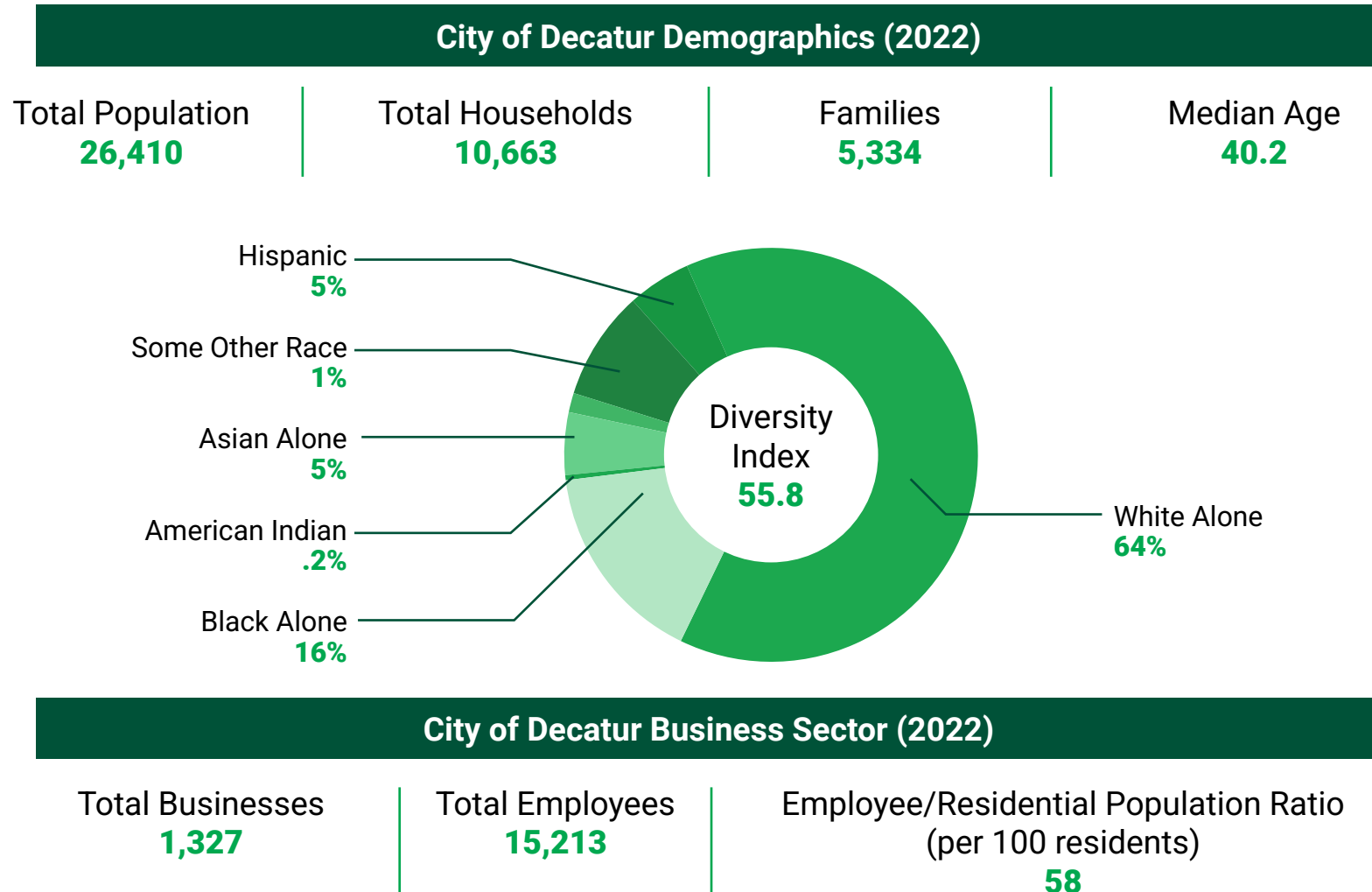
"An organization that is member-centric, led by tried-and-true business owners and entrepreneurs, and a consistent and ardent advocate for its membership."

An ideal DBA:

"We don't necessarily have to compete with Ponce City Market but how can DBA capitalize on the history that Decatur has been built but in a way that feels fresh to our families?"

Local Demographics + Statistics

Representation is incredibly important to us. As we grow and expand, we'll use the following data to ensure that the Decatur Business Association reflects the local business sector and the communities that make up the City of Decatur.



Source for statistics: Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography. Data on the Business Summary report is calculated using Esri's Data allocation method which uses census block groups to allocate business summary data to custom areas.

Methodology

The Decatur Business Association began working with Purpose Possible in January 2023 on a strategic plan. The steering committee helped us identify questions to ask, interested parties to survey, and generally ensure we were staying true to the Decatur Business Association. We spent February gathering interested parties feedback through one-on-one interviews and surveys. From there, we held a retreat with the full board and staff in early March. From there, the steering committee gathered three more times in March to engage in deep dives based on the goals that surfaced during the retreat. This strategic plan is a result of all of that work.

Our steering committee was made up of the following individuals:

Jill Joplin, *Executive Director, DeKalb Library Foundation*

Angela Threadgill, *Planning and Economic Development Director, Executive Director, Decatur Development Authorities*

Sean Crotty, *Kelly's Market*

Susan Sparks, *SparksFly*

Maria Alvarez, *My Virtual CFO Atlanta*

Marcia Lampe, *Lampe and Farley Creative*

Tammy Washington, *Operations Analyst, City of Decatur*

Shirley Baylis, *Business Development Manager, City of Decatur*

Linda Harris, *Asst. City Manager*



We want your help!

Here are some ways to contribute to our collective future:



Consider joining
a committee



Host a meeting
or training



Tell us what
content/trainings
you need