

America in Bloom 2018 Evaluation Report



Community: Decatur, IL

Evaluation Dates: July 19 – 20, 2018

Judges: Kristin Pategas & Mary Hertel

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage and planting pride through volunteerism.

Seven Criteria (Codes)	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
1. Flowers (FL)	60.00	38.00	63.33%
2. Landscaped Areas (LA)	72.00	50.00	69.44%
3. Urban Forestry (UF)	80.00	43.00	53.75%
4. Environmental Efforts (EE)	68.00	42.00	61.76%
5. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	64.00	44.00	68.75%
6. Community Vitality (CV)	56.00	39.00	69.64%
7. Overall Impression (OI)	88.00	54.00	61.36%
Other			
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation & Actions (ET)	12.00	12.00	100.00%
Scoring			
Total Points and Percentage	500.00	322.00	64.40%
Star Rating: 7			

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%	2 stars = 10% – 10.99%	3 stars = 20% – 20.99%	4 stars = 30% – 39.99%	5 stars = 40% – 49.99%
6 stars = 50% – 59.99%	7 stars = 60% – 69.99%	8 stars = 70% - 79.99%	9 stars = 80% – 89.99%	10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	Title	Email
Ellen Hearn	Decatur AIB, Chair	erhconsulting@comcast.net
Jill Davis	Beautify Decatur, Co-Chair	Jlad4ever@gmail.com
Nicole Bateman	Community Marketing, Manager	nbateman@decaturedc.com
Mona & Marvin Sowers	Beautify Decatur, Volunteers	Sowers1011@yahoo.com

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, judges will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. An N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages.

Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Meeting (0 pts.): Programs or procedures are not in place

Approaching (1 pt.): Programs or procedures are in place but not fully realized

Meeting (2 pts.): Programs or procedures are implemented but need improvement

Exceeding (3 pts.): Programs or procedures are implemented and succeeding but have not realized their full potential

Exceptional (4 pts.): Programs or procedures are exceptional

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location.

General Observations and Recommendations (recommendations are indicated in italics):

Congratulations Decatur on your first year participating in America in Bloom. Decatur has much to be proud of: a community that blooms not only in flowers, but in nature, outdoor activities, heritage, volunteerism and community spirit. This year's entry served as a catalyst - pulling together residents, businesses, the Parks District and other volunteer organizations - to create a symbiotic team that will continue to grow and benefit Decatur. We look forward to Decatur's continued participation in America in Bloom and witnessing how future developments and programs continue to blossom in your special community.



With the State of Illinois budget cuts, municipal staff across the state has suffered, leaving many departments short-handed. Typically, communities would experience less care of their urban forestry, elimination of flower displays, lack of ordinance enforcement and rundown play equipment. Decatur is fortunate to have a Parks District, served by an elected six-member board and an appointed Executive Director, that is funded by a corporate tax and revenues from various recreational facilities. The district maintains over 1,975 acres designated for recreational purposes as well as the airport, zoo, senior center and indoor sports complex. The district is not affected by these budget cuts and has not only maintained but grown their commitment to creating a diverse



natural environment with numerous recreational activities.

Decatur is also a community of volunteers. From its residents, to its businesses and philanthropists, Decatur has defined itself as a community that gets involved. Not only do you understand the potential of collaboration through volunteerism, but you have made volunteering a source of community pride. This first year's entry in America in Bloom generated more opportunities for Decatur to volunteer its time and monetary support in beautifying and enhancing your quality of life.



Decatur is also to be commended for their use of social media to keep the community informed and engaged in the myriad of activities – from volunteer opportunities to special events to current developments – happening in this community of 75,000.



Decatur is a very special community and America in Bloom looks forward to its continued momentum, involvement and growth.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Pategas and Mary Hertel
America in Bloom Judges

Decatur, IL 2018

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Flowers Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
1. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
Leadership and Policy						
FL.01 - Management of flower display programs				X		
Plan of Action						
FL.02 - Action plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of flower displays				X		
Design						
FL.03 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest and dramatic effect while appearing coordinated					X	
FL.04 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for environmental conditions and flourishing together					X	
FL.05 - Distribution and Location: displays found throughout the community and at key locations					X	
FL.06 - Seasonal Displays: seasonal displays with spring, summer, fall, and/or holiday displays			X			
Maintenance						
FL.07 - Watering program to maintain growth in place					X	
FL.08 - Fertilization: appropriate fertilization program using slow-release, liquid fertilizers, and/or soil amendments				X		
FL.09 - Grooming: regular pruning, dead-heading, removal and replacement of dead plants					X	
FL.10 - Plant health programs in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases (IPM/Integrated Pest Management)				X		
FL.11 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust and floriferous					X	
Community Involvement						
FL.12 - Flower displays are funded all or in part by volunteer contributions						X
FL.13 - Volunteers participate in the design, planting, and/or care of flower displays				X		
FL.14 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school programs, etc., sponsor plant sales, plant swaps, or educational sessions that contribute to the quality and implementation of the community's flower displays				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
FL.15 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Floral displays at Overlook Adventure Park						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
1. Flowers (FL)	60	38	63.33%			

Flowers (FL) Recommendations:



One of Decatur's most powerful assets is the strength of its volunteer groups that work both independently and together. This is evident from the gardens developed by the Macon County Master Gardeners, the Garden Club of Decatur, the Dogwood Society and the Beautify Decatur Coalition to name a few. What you accomplished your first year participating in America in Bloom is remarkable. The quantity and quality of the work is admirable. We noticed floral displays throughout the city from public spaces, to city parks, golf courses both private and public, residences, hospitals, commercial sites and college campuses. Decatur has embraced the power of flowers. The floral displays throughout town, including the downtown planters, were colorful and vigorous.

It appears that all the design and planning, in addition to the maintenance which includes watering, fertilizing and grooming of the downtown planters, is done by Connie's Country Greenhouse. *We suggest that a member or two from one of the volunteer groups work with Connie's on the planning and design stage each year. There may be suggestions as to a theme for the year related to the Celebrate Decatur Festival or a seasonal addition such as spring bulbs (more on that later in the report). Another suggestion is to partner with Amy at the Country Club of Decatur or James at South Side Country Club for past successful floral combinations. Engaging volunteers in this phase of the floral displays will build interest and ownership.*



Plant maintenance of the containers is also done by Connie's, and little information is passed on or recorded by the groups who have taken the lead to fund raise and plant these planters. *Next year we recommend that volunteers record what was planted, what the soil mix was, pre-plant and post-plant fertilizations, how the plants performed, and any insect or disease issues noted. This would allow for future volunteers to have records to refer to and make suggestions for best success in the following years.*

Consider partnering with the Missouri County Extension to create a pest management guide for volunteers. Include pictures of potential pests as well as beneficial insects so volunteers working on floral displays can recognize and report pest problems before they spread. Then develop management strategies that use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to control these pests. This can include cultural, mechanical and bio-rational controls.



We understand that there are some winter seasonal events such as the Holly Tour and lights strung in Central Park. If you really want to make a statement and welcome shoppers to the downtown area during the holidays, seasonal displays are welcoming. *The addition of fall decorations such as pumpkins, gourds, chrysanthemums and bare branches, such as curly willow, added to the containers would set the tone for the fall. During the winter the branches could be left in or evergreens, stars and ribbons could be added. If you could make use of the festival lighting outlets, more lights could be put in place. When appropriate, spring bulbs such as tulips or daffodils could be planted followed by your successful summer planting. Try planting bulbs this fall in a couple planters to see how well they perform next spring.*

The floral displays are well irrigated. Throughout the city the flowers were lush and looked well fertilized. In asking about the new beautiful hanging baskets at Central Park we learned that these are hand watered, but the posts could be retrofitted with drip irrigation in the future. *If drip irrigation is a possibility, we recommend investing in Coastlock Snap Swivels to hang the baskets (<http://www.cabelas.com/product/SPRO-Ball-Bearing-Swivels-with-Coastlock-Snap-Black/738803.uts>). These swivel hooks would allow the baskets to be turned during the season to allow for maximum symmetrical growth. Look for ball-bearing swivels and choose your swivel size by measuring the average weight of a fully grown and watered basket.*



If adding drip irrigation to the existing poles is not possible, we then recommend switching to a self-watering basket that attaches directly to the main pole, eliminating overhead hangers. *The large water reservoir in each container can stretch waterings and save time. Consider upgrading to H2O Labor Saver baskets www.h2olaborsaver.com / 586-264-5678 made by Eckert's Greenhouse. These innovative and lower water-use baskets are designed to reduce the amount of water needed. The 24" Weekender is a good choice. Savings in labor costs and water usage can be quickly achieved.*



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Be sure to record the volunteer hours used to hand water these baskets as well as all beautification efforts. The value of having plants hand watered for a season can help offset the cost of installing a drip system or purchasing new self-watering baskets. In 2016, the IRS rated this time at \$24/hour. You will be amazed at the value of all the time donated. This information can be used in annual reports, but more importantly, as the matching funds portion for grant applications.

Landscaped Areas Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
2. LANDSCAPED AREAS (LA): plants and related programs for the leadership, design, installation, and maintenance of landscape (shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, evergreen topiaries), turf, and groundcovers						
Leadership and Policy						
LA.01 - Management of planting of public landscaped areas					X	
LA.02 - Municipal landscape ordinance requires landscaping and maintenance for new and/or improved commercial development					X	
Plan of Action						
LA.03 - Planning for restoration of natural areas					X	
LA.04 - Program for management of invasive plants					X	
LA.05 - Promotion and installation of demonstration/display gardens with interpretive signage; i.e. pollinator, wildlife, native, low-water use				X		
LA.06 - Recognition program for attractive landscapes in place					X	
Design						
LA.07 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest while appearing coordinated					X	
LA.08 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for environmental conditions and are flourishing together					X	
LA.09 - Distribution/Locations: landscaping found throughout the community and at key locations					X	
Maintenance						
LA.10 - Grooming: pruning of plants, removal and/or replacement of dead plants					X	
LA.11 - Plant Health: programs such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
LA.12 - Weed Management: programs in place to manage weeds (removal, mulching, etc)					X	
LA.13 - Health and Vigor: Plants are robust					X	
LA.14 - Turf Care: regular mowing, edging, and removal/replacement of dead turf					X	
LA.15 - Turf Health: programs such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases, pests, and weeds				X		
Community Involvement						
LA.16 - Volunteer donations contribute to funding landscaped areas in public areas					X	
LA.17 - Volunteers assist in design, installation, and care of landscaped areas and turf in public areas				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
LA.18 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Main Street Medians re-landscaping and adoption by residents						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
2. Landscaped Areas (LA)	72	50	69.44%			

Landscaped Areas (LA) Recommendations:



Decatur has beautiful parks, residences, golf courses, and commercial areas which helps bind the community together and create a great impression for the residents and visitors to the city. Fairview Park is a wonderful example of a well-used beautiful community park with walking/running trails, benches, fountains, memorials, gathering areas, playground equipment and recreational sports courts. The two golf courses we toured and the one we observed were quite beautiful and well cared for. We were truly impressed by the beautiful parks, the diversity and the number. Residents looking to find a passive or active

area were rewarded by well-maintained landscapes and turf areas.

We felt the management of the public lands, between the Decatur Parks District and the Macon County Conservation District, are under good stewardship for the benefits of the residents. Also, we were glad to see that there is a landscape ordinance in place for new/improved commercial construction, high density residential and industrial. The well written landscape ordinance also includes incentives for developers to go above and beyond the minimum by offering various tax abatements. *We suggest that the accepted plant list in the ordinance include the botanical names for these plants along with the common name.*

We were impressed by the number of educational opportunities in Decatur, through the parks, libraries, hospital and schools. The master gardeners have several display gardens at the public library that showcase shade plants, xeriscaping, container gardening, native plants, herb gardening to name a few. The Decatur Garden Club has a large Monarch Waystation and pollinator garden at the library also. There is another monarch garden at the Children's Museum. *As these display and demonstration gardens are developed, the addition of educational signage for pollinator gardens, rain gardens, monarch waystations, etc. would be a benefit. The Scovill Zoo had educational signage in place with information as to animal habitat, native environment, and conservation efforts. These can serve as examples for future signs.*





Decatur fortunately has a climate that allows for a diverse plant palette. The variety of shrubs used in the parks, residences and commercial areas allows for varied landscapes. A nod to Millikin University, Millikin Homestead, the Master Gardeners, Decatur Garden Club and the Schaub Floral Display Center for their efforts to identify plants in the landscapes. *It would be a great project to expand these efforts and be prompted by the Decatur Parks District throughout its landscaped areas. Uniform signage could be placed including plant identification and a QR code that contains additional cultural information. Also, adding a plant list to the website with associated locations within the city parks would be helpful to the residents.*

Throughout the landscaped areas we visited, the plants looked healthy and vigorous. They appeared pest free and were well groomed. When asking about specific issues such a system in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases, we were told that problems were solved on a case by case basis. *We suggest developing a proactive, written plan to address control methods for a pest invasion or disease outbreak and have monitoring systems in place to check populations and treatment when deemed necessary. Having an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in place would be a wise idea for all the larger landscaped areas. This includes the golf courses, parks, hospital grounds and college campuses that do not currently have such a program in place.*



One note of special interest is the replacement of the original turf at the Country Club of Decatur to zoysia turf. The zoysia grass uses far less water than the original and one quarter of the fertilizer. This was a large investment and a huge risk to close the course for a year. Fortunately, through the partnership between the city and the Country Club, members were able to play alternative city courses. The Country Club realized other benefits from the city in cost reductions during the conversion. The initial cost was great, but the payback was only two years. *We hope that other golf courses in Decatur, as well as neighboring communities, are looking into this changeover to zoysia grass. We recommend that the Country Club of Decatur provide an economic analysis and benefits report of switching to zoysia and share it with other courses.*

Volunteers in Decatur are again acknowledged for their participation in maintaining landscaped areas. The

Decatur Garden Club, Master Gardeners, historical preservation groups, many business and schools contribute to the cause. The Main Street medians, the beautification awards, the demonstration gardens to name a few all benefit by volunteer funding, labor, maintenance and design work. So much has been accomplished in Decatur due to volunteer effort. The cooperative spirit between the volunteer organizations and the city allows for great ideas to grow. *Consider adding Adopt-a-Median signs on Main Street noting those volunteers who have committed to their upkeep is a way to acknowledge this group of volunteers.*

Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
3. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands						
Leadership and Policy						
UF.01 - Qualified personnel on staff or access to trained individuals				X		
UF.02 - Tree board/commission is active		X				
UF.03 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for tree preservation on public and private property		X				
UF.04 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for protection of trees during construction			X			
UF.05 - Currently a Tree City USA community and/or has the Growth Award designation					X	
Plan of Action						
UF.06 - Tree inventory for public areas is complete and current			X			
UF.07 - Annual tree planting program for public areas				X		
UF.08 - Management program for dead, imperiled, and/or invasive trees				X		
UF.09 - Recognition and protection of heritage trees				X		
UF.10 - Effective communication to residents of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," and/or maintenance					X	
Design						
UF.11 - Variety: appropriate selection of tree species planted					X	
UF.12 - Placement: appropriate spacing and planting area for optimal root and canopy growth					X	
UF.13 - Planting: correct planting depth (root flare at/above grade)					X	
UF.14 - Arboretum in place with labels and descriptive signage				X		
Maintenance						
UF.15 - Tree Health: program in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
UF.16 - Watering, Mulching, and Pruning: program for watering new trees; proper mulching (i.e., no volcano mulching); appropriate pruning, removal of dead limbs, and canopies raised adequately above vehicle and pedestrian areas					X	
Community Involvement						
UF.17 - Volunteer donations contribute to funding tree planting in public areas						X
UF.18 - Residents participate in Arbor Day activities				X		

UF.19 - Volunteers assist in tree planting and care				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
UF.20 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Parks District educational programs with CN Grant						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
3. Urban Forestry (UF)	80	43	53.75%			

Urban Forestry (UF) Recommendations:

Decatur is fortunate to have the Parks District oversee much of its public urban forestry. Touring some of the 1,975 acres it maintains we observed a healthy tree canopy, active tree planting, proper pruning and mulching as well as a plan to deal with invasive and imperiled trees. About 650 trees infested with the Emerald Ash borer have been removed and healthy trees continue to be monitored. It is the goal of the district to manage its urban forest and we were pleased to hear that a staff member is pursuing his arborist certification.



Managing a large urban forest requires knowledge of your tree canopy's age, health and species diversity to determine priorities in care, removal and replacement. *We recommend that the Parks District and the municipality conduct a tree inventory. Ice storms and drought have stressed and killed many trees in Decatur. Re-planting programs are underway, but a tree inventory would be a very wise and useful tool to direct future tree planting. Consider applying for grants to fund a comprehensive tree inventory with an outside contractor, such as Davey Tree Resource. If funds are not available, check the America in Bloom website, www.americainbloom.org, for a free, on-demand webinar that discusses how to conduct a tree inventory with volunteers.*

The City of Decatur oversees trees in the public right-of-ways, on commercial and private properties. The Urban Forestry Department has a city forester, however that staff has been cut from four full-time to two full-time people. This department is also responsible for mowing, landscape maintenance, weed control and flood abatement throughout the city. There is no city tree board and it does not appear that permits are required for the trimming or removal of trees they oversee. Illegal topping and removal of trees is a current problem. To fully protect the community's urban forest, *we recommend that the municipality create a voluntary tree board and task them to create ordinances to protect large trees, require permits for the removal of trees and enforce replacement or fines if trees are illegally removed on public and private property. Such ordinances are in place for new high-density residential, commercial and industrial development, employing a point system in determining trees required are especially needed for commercial development, requiring projects to protect trees during construction and add trees to parking islands and landscape buffers. This ordinance can be used as a model to create requirements for existing residential, business and public properties. Protecting the community's urban forest is the responsibility of not only the parks district, but the municipality, commercial and private property owners.*



Congratulations! Decatur has been a Tree City USA for 37 years. *The Arbor Day foundation also offers the designation of Growth Award for participating cities that actively add to their tree canopy, provide educational opportunities and strengthen tree partnerships. Go to:*

<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/growthawards.cfm> for more information on how you can grow your Tree City USA dedication. The Parks District already fulfills a number of these requirements.

Millikin University has a lovely campus full of over 325 unique and well-cared for trees. The Arbor Day foundation also offers a Tree Campus USA designation. *Invite the university to consider applying for this designation as well as creating an inventory of its campus trees, labeling them and providing a walking guide; either printed, web- or app-based. Not only would this be a great resource for Millikin's students, but for the community as well.*



The Macon County Big Tree Champions register was started in 1976 and has 35 species listed, noting that many are on private property. Though recognized, these trees are not protected from removal if still healthy. *Consider creating a heritage tree program for Decatur that recognizes and protects these champions, as well as all trees of 36" DBH (diameter at breast height) and greater. Celebrate these trees by creating a Heritage Tree Walk with labels noting the species and the year protected. A good place to start is with the Fairview Park Trees and the guide created by the Decatur Parks District. Determine which trees earn the heritage status, update labels (this is also a good opportunity to replace missing and damaged labels) and note these in the walking guide. When updating tree*

labels, consider adding a QR code that connects to the University of Illinois Extension tree selection guide. This gives participants immediate information without having to pick up a printed brochure.

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
4. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative transportation						
Leadership and Policy						
EE.01 - Environmental Advisory Board or Green Team in place				X		
EE.02 - Pet waste policies developed and enforced				X		
EE.03 - Electric/alternative fuel vehicle(s) used by municipality		X				
EE.04 - Electric vehicle charging station(s) provided			X			
EE.05 - Stormwater management program in place					X	
Plan of Action						
EE.06 - Litter and/or environmental clean-up programs in use					X	
EE.07 - Brownfield clean-up programs in place					X	
Resource Conservation						
EE.08 - Buildings are LEED certified and/or follow the standards					X	
EE.09 - Rain gardens and/or bio-swales in place					X	
EE.10 - Home energy audit program available			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.11 - Rain barrel program offered			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.12 - Low-flow water device incentives available		X	NS		NS	NS
Trash, Recycling, and Reuse Management						
EE.13 - Curbside recycling collection available			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.14 - Yard waste composting available or offered			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.15 - Prescription drug drop-off offered			NS	X	NS	NS
EE.16 - Hazardous waste and/or electronics waste collection or drop-off offered				X		
EE.17 - Plastic bag and/or foam container collection available			X			
Community Involvement						
EE.18 - Participation in Earth Day celebrations, Bike to Work Days, Walk to School Days, and similar opportunities that enhance public awareness of environmental issues				X		
EE.19 - Garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school curricula, and/or Soil and Water Conservation District, etc. provide educational opportunities for rain barrel usage, backyard habitats, and other environmental initiatives					X	
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
EE.20 - Judges to enter text below						X
National Sequestration Education Center and Richland Community College Sustainability Campus						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
4. Environmental Efforts (EE)	68	42	61.76%			

Environmental Efforts (EE) Recommendations:



Decatur's commitment to finding sustainable environmental solutions that have a direct and long-term effect on the city and its surroundings is evident. Efforts from the National Sequestration Education Center (NSEC), the Illinois Carbon Capture and Storage Field, the wind turbines on the Richland Community College campus, Center for Sustainability and Innovation Building and classroom technologies, the Macon County Conservation District, the Decatur Lake dredging project, Scovill Zoo, West Side 'Sustainability

Campus, to city-wide clean up days, many solutions are being sought. There is also the Macon County Environmental Management Office that has a wonderful website on information as to recycling and disposal for a vast array of items along with information regarding rain barrels, composting, and conserving water.

While we saw many examples of environmental initiatives in the private sector, these did not necessarily translate to the municipality or Decatur's residents. One recommendation could be for the municipality to *create an environmental advisory board or a City Green Team to promote sustainability for city staff and its residents. Start by writing a sustainability action plan, with an achievable, phased list of goals outlined for the city. This plan, which can be on the website or otherwise publicly available, could include a checklist of items which have been completed or are underway. The top priorities of such a plan would include an outline of goals for land use issues, recycling participation rates, purchasing from sustainable businesses and goals for new tree planting. Additional topics would include strategies for energy savings and reduced energy emissions, waste, light, noise, and air pollution. Follow this link to review an example of a sustainability action plan from fellow AIB community Winter Park, FL: <https://cityofwinterpark.org/departments/building-permitting-services/sustainability-program/sustainability-action-plan/>. This roadmap will show where the city is today and where it would like to be in the future regarding sustainability.*

We discovered there was an electric vehicle charging station at the Mt. Zion Hampton Inn that was reserved for guests, but if available, free to all. One station was for Teslas and the other for other types of electric vehicles. However, the City of Decatur and the Decatur Parks District did not have any public electric vehicles charging stations or use alternative fuel vehicles in their fleet. *We encourage the use of electric vehicles to reduce pollutants and decrease dependence on petroleum fuels. Start by providing electric charging stations for residents and visitors in public parking lots and adding either electric or alternative fuel vehicles to municipal and districts fleets.*



Storm water management was in place. The City of Decatur participates as part of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System which includes Macon County, City of Decatur, Village of Mt. Zion, Village of Forsyth and Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District. *We saw bio-swales at the Adventureland Park and recommend that all new or renovated parking lots be required to install rain gardens and bioswales to reduce runoff and pollutants. Rain gardens can also be recommended to residents on Lake Decatur to again collect runoff before it picks up fertilizers and other lawn chemicals and drains into the lake.*

It did not appear that there was any low-flow water device incentives in place. This is an issue that is important due to the periodic droughts and the current dredging project of Lake Decatur. Considering that Decatur is actively expanding opportunities for more business and residential growth, *now is the time to encourage existing residents and businesses to consider their water consumption and aid in the conversion. Have your city water utility offer free low-flow shower heads and faucet restrictors at city hall or during Earth Day events and offer rebates for low-flush toilets.*

Curb side recycling, while available, is not mandatory resulting in 50% of the residents participating. Some issues regarding low participation included: residents must pay extra for the service and the new containers are very large. *We suggest the municipality review its waste management contract and move towards mandatory recycling, whether it is a separate line item or integrated into the general cost of trash pickup. Some cities have free recycling and charge for trash pickup based on the amount of the trash put at the curb. This is a further incentive to recycle rather than throw recycling away. Smaller containers should also be available. Many communities have the choice for both trash and recycling container size based on need.*

Plastic bags and foam collection sites are available: plastic bags at grocery stores and department stores and foam at the Macon County Environment Management Recycling Center. While this is fine, possibly a better option would be to *ban the use of plastic bags and foam containers. There are many communities in the United States that have done both. It takes a bit of adjustment for the residents and businesses but environmentally it is a sounder choice. See www.baqlaws.com for plastic bag information and see www.arroyogrande.org to view their expanded polystyrene ordinance. State of Illinois SB1597, which has not been voted on, is requiring a fee placed on every carry out plastic bag. A start would be to make reusable bags available at various retail establishments wherein a percentage of the cost is given to the business and the balance to Beautify Decatur. Possibly, Decatur could be an early adopter of the plastic bag and foam ban.*

One idea to call attention to Arbor Day and Earth Day might be to have a celebration the third week in April every year to cover both (Earth Day is April 22 and Arbor Day is April 26 in 2019). The Children's Museum might be a great place to start as they have a clean water exhibit and a pollinator garden. We loved the geocaching activity in the park on Earth Day: "Cache in Trash Out". Consider expanding this to other parks and public areas that need attention due to litter.

We felt that the residents of the city appreciate and support the efforts to create a clean natural environment, whether to restore a natural area or keeping the city and neighborhoods litter free, their efforts did not go unnoticed. However, we felt there were many missed opportunities for residents and visitors to recycle. There were no recycling containers in most of the parks we visited or in the downtown areas. Self-bussing restaurants did not have recycling receptacles as well as the hotel we stayed in. *We suggest Beautify Decatur Coalition's next task is to promote recycling everyday by tasking businesses, the Parks District and the municipality to place recycling receptacles in public spaces and education everyone on the do's and don'ts of recycling.*



Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
5. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources						
Leadership and Policy						
CH.01 - Historic preservation ordinance provides designation and/or protection from demolition					X	
CH.02 - Incentives offered to promote preservation: tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, available rebates, etc.					X	
CH.03 - Effective communication about ordinances, policies, and restoration methods					X	
CH.04 - Land trusts and/or conservation easements are available	X		NS		NS	NS
CH.05 - Historic Preservation and/or Architectural Review Board in place			NS	X	NS	NS
CH.06 - Historical Society is active			NS	X	NS	NS
Plan of Action						
CH.07 - National Register of Historic Places district and/or individual designations in place					X	
CH.08 - Natural and/or agricultural areas are protected					X	
CH.09 - Archives, artifacts, cemetery records, and oral histories in place and properly stored				X		
CH.10 - Historical publications/websites, interpretive signage, and programs in place				X		
Commemoration						
CH.11 - Signage in place for historic neighborhoods and/or structures			X			
CH.12 - Historical museum(s) and/or interpretive displays maintained					X	
CH.13 - Cemeteries, monuments, and/or plaques in place and well maintained					X	
CH.14 - Community heritage promoted through tours (guided or self), brochures, Smartphone apps, etc.				X		
CH.15 - Parades, festivals, and other events commemorating a community's heritage are held					X	
Community Involvement						
CH.16 - Volunteers participate in planning and implementing recognition of a community's heritage through historical tours, parades, festivals, etc.					X	
CH.17 - Volunteers participate in maintaining historical sites and structures					X	
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CH.18 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Millikin House restoration						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
5. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	64	44	68.75%			

Celebrating Heritage (CH) Recommendations:



Decatur City Council created the Historical and Architectural Sites Commission to encourage the designation of historical landmarks and districts and to aid in the restoration of such properties. This board brings to city council those sites/properties that should be considered for historic status as well as review requests for structural changes or demolition of such properties. Certificates of Appropriateness are given when restoration/alterations meet the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior. If a property is under review for this certificate, no other permit is issued until secured. This board has help create two local historic districts, with 271 historic homes, and three national districts. *Conduct an annual audit of decisions to determine if the voluntary compliance is effective. Additionally, the audit should include an analysis of the work performed and determine if it meets the expectations of the commission and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Should the voluntary compliance prove successful, continued monitoring should be enough. Should it be determined that historic Decatur is endangered, a new*

system should be implemented as quickly as possible to reach the goals of the city. Please note: the city should also consider extending protections to the residential historic districts as residences are most of Decatur's historic resources.



Decatur also has several historic sites open to the public for education as well as tourist destinations., including the Millikin Homestead and Oglesby Mansion. Numerous statues throughout the city pay tribute to Abraham Lincoln and how Decatur played a role in his life. The Transfer House originally built in 1896 in Lincoln Square was used for Decatur's electric streetcar system. This house was moved to Central Park, restored and now used for park events and appears on the city seal. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Throughout downtown, interpretive signage describes items of interest in relation to Decatur's history with Abraham Lincoln. A recent downtown renovation included new street signs showcasing the city seal. However, they do not denote that you are in a historic

district. Residential and commercial districts draw tourists and having they signed as such lets visitors and residents know when they are in the district.

Consider updating street signs that note you are in a historic district. If replacing existing signs, add a district logo and the name of the district. If not replacing, use a sign "topper" with the logo and name. Changing the background color can also add to the visual distinction. Adding this signage will also add pride to its residents.

Unfortunately, we were unable to visit the Macon County Historical Museum due to time constraints. *It is our understanding the museum is the repository of Decatur's and Macon County's artifacts, documents and photographs. It is our hope that these items are stored properly and that air-conditioning, and humidity are expertly monitored. This will help ensure the longevity of the collection. Also, oral histories are needed from those who can still share life experiences and stories of early Decatur. Once these histories are recorded, consider*



purchasing transcription software or using a free service such as <https://speechlogger.appspot.com/en/> (one of many) to translate the audio files to searchable text. This text can be indexed as well as posted on the web for easier searches. This website also needs to be expanded listing resources, documents and other artifacts that are available for historians and genealogists.

Fund for restoration are always a challenge. The Millikin Homestead has re-purposed itself as a wedding and event venue. Rental fees are then used for further restoration. However, continuous party-related public use can cause more damage and wear and tear than rental fees can cover. *We suggest that Millikin Homestead look to other sources of funding and limit its use for party rentals. One suggestion is to create a series of historic preservation courses taught at the homestead. These programs can be accredited and offered to restoration professionals, architects, etc. for their continuing education. They can also be a great resource for owners of historic properties.*



The West End Walking Tour Map is available for download from the city website. Unfortunately, this map only shows tour routes through the neighborhood. *This map needs to be greatly expanded to include addresses and images of select historic homes, brief descriptions of their significance and the year they were built. This can be a volunteer project that the commission can oversee. Consider approaching volunteers with the historical society or local Boy Scouts for an Eagle Project or the Girl Scouts as a community service project. Have this tour guide available for download and place signs with websites or QR codes at key locations for visitors to enjoy.*



In 1973 the National Trust for Historic Preservation established May as Historic Preservation Month. This campaign encourages people to celebrate the places that are meaningful to them and to their communities and is co-sponsored by local preservation groups, State historical societies, business and civic organizations across the country. *During Preservation Month, Decatur can celebrate by hosting an event to recognize its historic places, instill community pride, promote heritage tourism, and share the social and economic benefits of historic preservation. Create yard signs and distribute to historic property owners to display during the month. Don't forget to collect them for the following year. Go to: <https://savingplaces.org/thisplacematterstoolkit#.WaG4yz7fqos> for the "This Place Matters" toolkit.*

Community Vitality (CV) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
6. COMMUNITY VITALITY (CV): policies, programs, and outdoor activities and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and a sense of well-being. Includes parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities						
Leadership and Policy						
CV.01 - Clean Air (such as No Smoking) policies implemented					X	
CV.02 - Master plan in place for public green space and parks					X	
CV.03 - ADA accessibility in public outdoor areas including playgrounds					X	
Outdoor Facilities and Events						
CV.04 - Outdoor recreation facilities meet community needs					X	
CV.05 - Walking, biking, and exercise trails exist					X	
CV.06 - Outdoor performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, and/or cinema					X	
CV.07 - Run/walk/bike races and marathons held					X	
CV.08 - Benches and seating available near walking, exercise, and playground areas					X	
CV.09 - Trees or shade sails are in proper areas to provide shade for spectators and/or participants				X		
CV.10 - Playground equipment exists and age-appropriate ranges are offered				X		
CV.11 - Farmers' Markets are available					X	
Community Involvement						
CV.12 - Community gardening sites are in use				X		
CV.13 - Volunteer involvement in planning, funding, and/or implementing civic events such as organized runs, walks, etc.					X	
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CV.14 - Judges to enter text below					X	
Partnership of the Scovill Zoo (Parks District) and Childrens Museum (private) to enhance visitor experience						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
6. Community Vitality (CV)	56	39	69.64%			

Community Vitality (CV) Recommendations:

The Decatur Park District manages over 1,975 acres designated for recreational purposes. Included are numerous recreational facilities, parks, sports fields, nature centers, two golf courses, an aquatic center, the Scovill Zoo and 10 miles of biking/hiking trails. The Park District is also responsible for the Decatur Airport, a sculpture park, two dog parks, a miniature golf course and historic Nelson Park on the banks of Lake Decatur. Here, over 80,000 people enjoy this park each year, attending many of Decatur's festivities, road races and concerts. New to Nelson Park is a disc course and fitness trail.

In addition, there is more than 3,300 acres of conservation area managed by the Macon County Conservation District. Here the community can visit the nature center, hike or cross-country ski the trails and attend educational programs for kids and adults. There are endless opportunities for Decatur and Macon County residents to experience a vital lifestyle, have a sense of well-being and feel connected to the community spirit of Decatur.



Playgrounds are an important amenity for residents and need to provide for all needs and abilities. All of Decatur's playgrounds have ADA accessible entrances and only Coleman Park has ADA swings. *We recommend choosing at least one park and update it to an all abilities playground including flexible surfaces, roller tables, gliders, spinners and ramps for accessibility. Its guaranteed this playground will become the most popular for all children. Also review each park for its available shade (either tree, structure or canopy) for children on play equipment and observing parents, restrooms, drinking fountains and bike racks.*

We toured the WE Grow community garden, a partnership between Millikin University and the Dennis Lab School. This garden successfully provides outdoor classroom space in a residential lot that once housed a dilapidated building. This garden has expanded and now provides plots for residents, a venue for nighttime entertainment and a Farmers Market. *This program should be expanded, especially in under-advantaged neighborhoods, to provide residential plots for producing fresh food and flowers. The added community gathering spot also brings neighbors together and creates pride for their neighborhood. The city can help identify potential lots that can be razed and re-purposed. Volunteers can work with residents to determine needs and approach local businesses for donations. Be sure to enlist one resident to oversee use of the garden to ensure proper maintenance and the fair distribution of the plots. For tips on how to start a community garden, go to: <https://communitygarden.org/resources/10-steps-to-starting-a-community-garden/>*



Community gardens can have added benefits through donations of excess produce to food banks or planned giving through programs such as Plant a Row for the Hungry: (<http://gardenwriters.org/gwa.php?p=par/index.html>). This national program is managed by Garden Writers of America and is a call to residents to plant an extra row of vegetables in their own gardens to donate to local food pantries. All additional fruits and vegetables can make a difference. Community Gardens thus have multiple benefits from socialization among the gardeners to helping the less fortunate in the community.

Ten years ago, the Smoke Free Illinois Act was passed, banning smoking in practically every public space. Initially some restaurants, in fear of losing customers, created outdoor dining areas where patrons can light up. However, today smoking rates have declined and patrons would like the opportunity to dine al fresco without inhaling second-hand smoke. *Consider enacting a local ordinance to make outdoor dining areas non-smoking. If an ordinance is not allowed, develop a health initiative to encourage restaurants to voluntarily adopt a no smoking policy. This would create cleaner air for outdoor diners and passers-by.*



The Little Free Library program promotes give-a-book, take-a-book. *Consider adding stations in public areas and throughout your community. This can be a great Eagle Scout or civic organization project. Structures can be themed to match nearby historic structures. Consider designing and printing a bookmark that promotes current volunteer projects and gives information on how one can help. Tuck these routinely into books as a surprise and gentle reminder. Be sure to make it colorful!* Visit: <https://littlefreelibrary.org>

Overall Impression (OI) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings					
	N/A	Not Meeting (0 pts)	Approaching (1 pt)	Meeting (2 pts)	Exceeding (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
7. OVERALL IMPRESSION (OI): adequate and effective amenities are provided in good condition, and the community is welcoming and beautiful						
Leadership and Policy						
OI.01 - Signage ordinances enacted and enforced					X	
OI.02 - Ordinances in place to address overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, etc.				X		
OI.03 - Code enforcement or compliance officer on municipal staff and making a difference				X		
Amenities						
OI.04 - Site furnishings in place: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles				X		
OI.05 - Crosswalks well marked				X		
OI.06 - Public restrooms available				X		
OI.07 - Effective community gateway entry features				X		
OI.08 - Effective use of banners, murals, and/or public art					X	
OI.09 - Effective wayfinding signage				X		
OI.10 - Effective use of non-plant seasonal decorations (i.e., lights, ornaments)			X			
Condition and Maintenance						
OI.11 - Condition of structures, buildings, decks, patios related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, peeling or faded paint and rust					X	
OI.12 - Condition of infrastructure: roadways, road shoulders, curbs, medians, sidewalks, crosswalks/pavement markings, transformers, and utility poles related to lack of weeds, vandalism, litter, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust					X	
OI.13 - Condition of signs and site furnishings: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles				X		
OI.14 - Condition of vacant lots, stormwater retention ponds, and swales					X	
OI.15 - Lack of snipe/stake signs, billboards, and posted flyers					X	
OI.16 - Regularly scheduled street sweeping				X		
Community Involvement						
OI.17 - Volunteer funding and participation in community revitalization and improvement programs, such as river sweep, home repair programs (CHIP), disaster relief, clean-up days, etc.				X		

Ol.18 - Programs are available for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches, brick pathways, etc.					X	
Ol.19 - Volunteer involvement in Adopt-A-Spot Programs, Habitat for Humanity Projects, River Sweep, etc.					X	
Ol.20 - Recognition programs for volunteers					X	
Ol.21 - Volunteer hours recorded				X		
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
Ol.22 - Judges to enter text below						X
Downtown Streetscape Program: Best use of volunteers and volunteer organizations						
Totals:		Possible Points		Actual Points		Percentage
7. Overall Impression (OI)		88		54		61.36%

Overall Impression (OI) Recommendations:



Decatur is a place for visitors and residents to visit and linger. It is a fun vibrant city with many new improvements and more on the horizon. The businesses are welcoming, the streets clean, the town litter and graffiti free and there is a wonderful array of public art throughout the city. The downtown area is interesting with its historical sites, improved Central Park with its stage and the old Transfer Station, the public library, the Decatur Arts Council Gallery, interesting shopping and restaurants. The parks are well-maintained and the amenities plentiful and in good condition. In addition, Decatur offers a zoo, sculpture garden, children’s museum, boat/kayak launching facilities and running/walking trails.

There are sign ordinances in place which is evident when you move throughout the town. An observation made was the lack of uniformity of the site furnishings in some of the outlining areas and at Fairview Park. The branding evident in Decatur’s downtown streets and that developed for Lakeshore Landing is exceptional. This level of attention to detail should be carried through the other parks and city properties. *We recommend developing a “Pattern Book” for each commercial area, for the Parks district and for residential communities that specifies styles, materials and colors for light fixtures, seating, trash receptacles, etc. Having these style guidelines will ensure that future improvements build to develop a sense of place.*

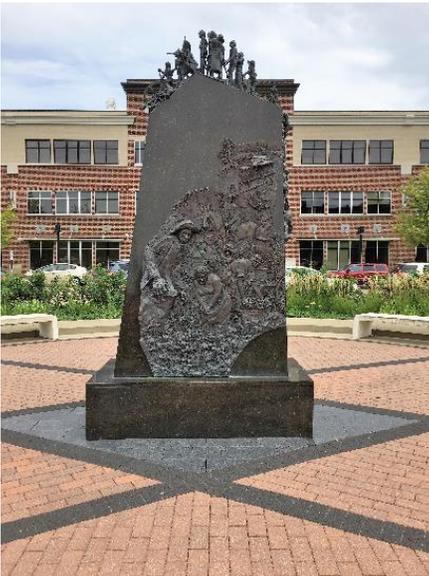




We found plenty of site furnishings such as benches, water fountains and bicycle racks in place in the areas we visited. However, there was a shortfall in restroom facilities in the downtown area. We were told that it is acceptable to ask businesses to use theirs, even when not doing business at the establishment. *We recommend that the city identify key locations and install public restroom facilities downtown to accommodate their visitors and residents.*

We are glad to see that there are nine gateway entry features, four that are lighted. The one we observed could be improved upon with some additional landscape features such as the use of hardscape and seasonal flowers. *Be sure that all the gateway features have a common thread. This could be the sign style (materials, lettering, colors), the style of hardscaping, the seasonal flowers used or the use of an iconic symbol. A design concept, if needed, could be a contest that is promoted by the Arts Council and invites local artists.*

We did not see any wayfinding signage during our tour. *As visitors are arriving from out of town it would be beneficial to "tell them where to go". For instance, signs with arrows pointing to downtown, parking, restrooms, Millikin College, the Nation Sequestration Education Center, Nelson Park, etc. These could be placed at a variety of key locations, especially at city entrances.*



We only hear about special lights that are installed in Central Park for the holiday season. Seasonal decorations add a certain ambiance and common thread throughout the city. Invite different businesses and organizations to sponsor lights downtown and throughout the commercial districts. Other seasonal displays could be added over time such as fall displays and scarecrows. *The addition of lights could be sponsored by the local businesses or consider asking an electrical contractor or the electric utility to help sponsor.*

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Definition	Metrics Ratings		
	N/A	Unmet (0 pts)	Met (1 pt)
8. EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS (ET): community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour			
Prior to the Evaluation Tour			
ET.01 - Community Profile provided to judges at least two weeks prior to their arrival			X
ET.02 - Community Profile includes contacts with emails			X
ET.03 - Community Profile from a returning community makes it clear what is new and/or implemented from judges' recommendations (scored as N/A for a new community)	X		
ET.04 - Evaluation Tour itinerary and Community map with boundaries provided to judges at least two weeks prior to their arrival			X
During the Evaluation Tour			
ET.05 - Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community			X
ET.06 - Judges met with municipal leaders			X
ET.07 - Judges met with the business and/or non-profit community			X
ET.08 - Judges met with the media			X
ET.09 - Judges met with volunteers			X
ET.10 - Judges were asked to give a presentation(s)			X
Final Wrap-Up			
ET.11 - Enough time was allotted for judges to work on the Evaluation Tour Report in a quiet place with adequate WiFi availability			X
ET.12 - Community participated in a wrap-up session at the end of the Evaluation Tour			X
Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note			
ET.13 - Judges to enter text below			X
Well organized tour with relevant information, excellent timing, great hosts and nametags for everyone.			
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET)	12.00	12.00	100.00%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Recommendations:

This year America in Bloom introduced a new evaluation grid with new metrics and the addition of a new criterion: Community Vitality. We appreciate that Decatur was aware of this change and created a beautiful and informative community profile that answered many of the metrics in the new evaluation. Adding the America in Bloom logo for AIB inspired projects and initiatives was very helpful for the judges. *Our suggestion is to continue building your profile, following this new format. Add images and information as needed and remember to always check the current evaluation report each year as this format gives America in Bloom the ability to update the metrics to reflect current trends. As you review the evaluation report you will find that some descriptions in the profile need to be moved to another criterion. Refining this document will continue to provide our judges with the*

best possible information before, during and after the tour.

Consider taking your community profile and turning it into a publication that can also be used by community development groups. Offer it for sale at city hall and use the proceeds to fund additional community projects.

This year's tour was one of the best organized tours your judges had experienced. Rehearsals paid off and each presented was well-informed. However, the judges needed more time to ask questions of each presenter either after their presentations or during a break or at meals. *Our suggestion is to include this time immediately following the presentation. If not, then consider inviting back the presenters to lunch or dinner or have them ride in the van to the next destination, so follow up questions can be asked. The PowerPoint presentation format with Q&A at the zoo was ideal.*

We also suggest that future tours include additional residential areas that provide a cross section of socio-economic levels. Also include more focus on residential services and amenities and less on future economic development. We cannot evaluate on future projects.

Lastly, try to bring in more city officials into the program, encouraging them to participate in your efforts and share with the judges their accomplishments as well as needs. Share this report with them so they can see the benefits of participating in America in Bloom.

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2018 Community Recognitions

Community: Decatur, IL

Recognized Criterion: Landscaped Areas

Decatur has beautiful parks, residences, golf courses, and commercial landscapes that bind the community together and creates a great sense of place for residents, employees and visitors to the city. Fairview Park is a wonderful example of a well-used and beautiful community park with walking/running trails, benches, fountains, memorials, gathering areas, playground equipment and recreational sports courts. Residents looking to find a passive or active natural area are rewarded by well-maintained landscapes and turf.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: The No Litter Zone

Beautify Decatur Coalition each year asks businesses to commit to train their employees that litter cleanup on their property is a daily requirement. Each year, these businesses receive a window cling showing their involvement in the No Litter Zone pledge. To date, over 400 businesses throughout Decatur have signed up.

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