Findings on the state of diversity in the City of Decatur

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City of Decatur®

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decatur is changing. This is obvious to the most casual observer. The streets, the buildings and the people who live here have all changed over the past two decades. Community concerns about the changing demographics are real, and have been discussed time and again at meetings and other public forums. Out of this anecdotal evidence came the recognition of a need to gather baseline data in order to accurately assess what Decatur looks like today compared to in the past, and predict what a diverse Decatur might look like in the future. A full understanding of the changing demographics will enable city leaders to continue to plan effectively moving forward.

This is the first time the City of Decatur has compiled demographic data into a single baseline document. The purpose of this study is to assess the state of diversity in the city in the past and today so the community and city officials can better plan for the future. Fifty years ago Decatur, like the areas around it, and most of the American South, experienced seismic shifts in population and community with the realization of full racial civil rights (see Appendix B). Today as the city transitions into the 21st century it is time to consider what Decatur's community and neighborhoods could look like fifty years from now.

The Decatur community has stated that diversity is a shared value and has incorporated a commitment to diversity into the city's 10 year strategic plans. In the 2000 Strategic Plan it was included as Goal #4: Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural and other types of diversity, with three supporting tasks. It was also mentioned in that plan's executive summary. The 2010 Strategic Plan went into more detail with Principle B: Encourage a diverse and engaged community with Goal 5 listing Tasks 5A-5F. This principle and tasks came from round table sessions where participants stated they value a diverse community but expressed concern that economic forces may diminish the city's diversity over time.

The topline findings of this report show that the community's concern was not misplaced. Oakhurst, once one of the poorest parts of the city, now has the highest median household income in the city. Income by race was not possible to examine because the samples are too small in Decatur, especially for groups other than black and white, to draw any meaningful inferences. It does appear that people of all different races moved to South Decatur in the past fifteen years as long as they had high incomes. Home values also rose greatest in South Decatur during this time period.

While nearby cities and the metro Atlanta region as a whole have seen a decline in the white population, Decatur has seen the reverse: a decline in the black population and a growth in the white population. However, Decatur in 1990 was divided almost entirely into two distinct races (black and white), and Decatur in 2010 is beginning to look more like the rest of the region, state and country with a growing non-black minority population, especially in the primary school ages. The African-American population in Decatur as of 2010 is disproportionately concentrated

in the older age brackets. From 2000 to 2010 the share of the population aged 25-34 years old decreased significantly, while the 55-64 years demographic increased greatly.

Households in Decatur, like households across the U.S., have gotten smaller in the past 30 years. Decatur also has a greater percentage of same sex households than the U.S., the Atlanta area, or DeKalb County. And while Decatur is historically better educated than the rest of metro Atlanta and the country on average, it has grown increasingly well-educated in the past few decades. Almost two thirds of adult residents now hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

METHODOLOGY

Sources

Demographic source data for the quantitative analysis in this report comes from public U.S Census Bureau products including the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey. The U.S. Constitution requires a population count every ten years to determine congressional apportionment, which has occurred since 1790. Between 1940 and 2000, the Census Bureau surveyed the population (via a sample) while taking a complete count. As a result, most households received a "short form" while about one in seven received a "long form" that included specific questions of income, occupation, education, etc. However in 2010, the Census Bureau switched to only the "short form" basic questions of race, sex, age, etc. Since the data collected in the "long form" is vital to public agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations at every level, the Census Bureau rolled out a continuous sample survey in 2005 known as the American Community Survey (ACS). This survey samples approximately 1 in 480 addresses every month, which results in a much smaller sample size than the "long form" of the Decennial Census.

Qualitative data is derived from a convenience sample of 21 community members varying in age, race, sex/gender, occupation, City of Decatur residency status, and length of time in the community. Convenience sampling is a statistical method that uses volunteers or other easily accessible units to represent a greater population. The major benefit of this strategy centers on ease of access and is suited for research with limited resources. However, a convenience sample may be biased and not represent the true population. Efforts were made to interview a diverse group of people that were contacted by referral from city staff or residents.

Geographic Scope

Decatur is a physically small, urban, and densely populated city within Georgia's DeKalb County that is divided into four census tracts. A census tract is a small contiguous subdivision of a county based on population and is between 1,200 and 8,000 (ideally about 4,000) persons depending on population density. These relatively permanent subareas are usually drawn with boundaries that follow visible or easily distinguishable features, and vary in spatial size. Occasionally census tracts are split to reflect population growth or are merged to reflect

substantial population decline in an area. The City of Decatur, whose boundaries have remained virtually unchanged over the years, is more or less evenly divided among four census tracts. These four census tracts (Figure 1) make up the base study area for demographic data in Decatur and match up well with established neighborhoods.

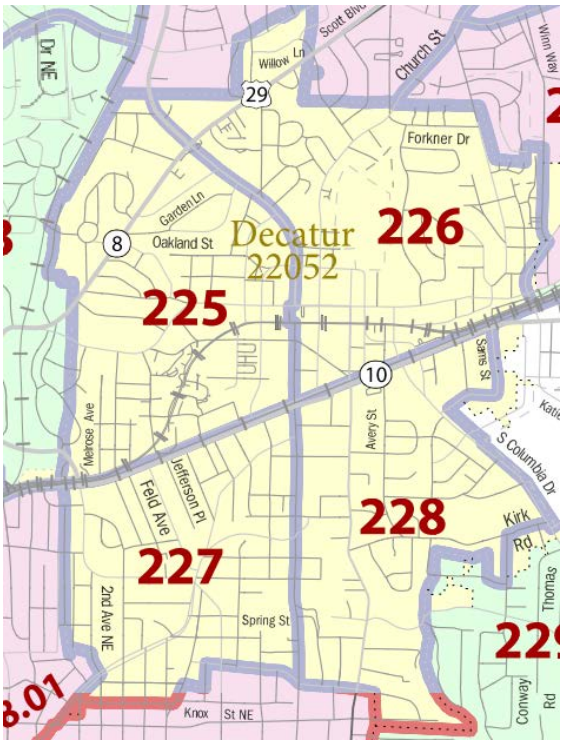


Figure 1: Decatur Census Tract Map. Adapted from 2010 DeKalb County Census Tract Map, U.S Census Bureau.

In this report, neighborhood names are used to replace the official code or the name of census tracts. For example the northwestern quadrant of the city (DeKalb County Census Tract 225) is referred to as Clairemont for simplicity and to keep disparities among areas in a community context. Census Tract 226 (northeastern quadrant) represents both the Sycamore and Great Lakes neighborhood, Census Tract 227 (southwestern quadrant) represents the Oakhurst district, and Census Tract 228 (southeastern quadrant) represents Winnona Park. North Decatur in this report refers to Clairemont and Sycamore/Great Lakes together (the area north of the railroad tracks) and South Decatur refers to Oakhurst and Winnona Park together (the area south of the railroad tracks).

Aggregated data of the four census tracts are used to represent the entire City of Decatur but this method does not include city parcels that have been annexed over time that may fall outside of the census tracts. Another geographical designation used in this report, when appropriate, is a census designated place. This classification does follow changes in legal borders

over time and offers a greater sample size from which to draw inferences. For example, analyzing the presence of a foreign language spoken is more accurate at the city level than the individual neighborhood level where there may only be a handful of cases.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas encompass large populations (at least 100,000) in a core city and surrounding communities that exhibit a high degree of economic and social integration. They are made up of counties and, unlike census tracts, these geographical units change boundaries to reflect increasing intra-regional activity. The present day Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is made up of 28 counties surrounding Atlanta, Georgia. The Atlanta MSA is frequently referenced as a benchmark in this report as it is a good representation of regional trends.

Variables and Design

A cross-sectional research design, characterized by examining specific variables over a determined period of time, guides this analysis. Some cross-sections include values for variables as far back as 1990 due to availability and comparability of data over time. In other instances a beginning date of 1980 is used, coinciding with the city's 1982 Town Center Plan.

Variables using three levels of measurement are used in this report: nominal scale (also called categorical), ordinal scale (ranked), and interval scale (specifically ratio variables, or values with a true zero such as income or age). Nominal scale variables include race and household type. The only ordinal scale variables used are education level and diversity definition. Interval scale variables include household income, age, average household size and home value.

This report uses three primary race categories based on Census Bureau definitions: white/Caucasian (alone), black/African-American (alone), and non-black minority (including Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, multiracial and undefined races). These mutually exclusive categories were chosen due to the limited quantity of data on racial groups other than black and white in the area of study. As more robust data emerges for other ethnic and racial groups, these groups may be expanded in future reports to better reflect demographic trends.

Household type is examined by three separate nominal variables that act as proxies for the types of families found in Decatur and the extent of their presence. The first of these variables is the presence of children (dependents and legal minors under 18 years of age) in the household. The number of households that meet this criterion is divided by the total number of households to get the share of households with children. The second variable looks at whether or not the individuals in the household are a family (related by blood or marriage). The same division by total number of households is used to determine the share of family households in an area. The final household type variable is used as a proxy for the LGBT community and is determined by the sex of the householder (or head of the household) and the sex of the partner. Same-sex households are then grouped by female householders with female partners and male householders with male partners. These are taken as a share of total households as well. It is

important to remember that this question is not a direct substitute for self-identified sexual orientation (the Census Bureau does ask this question on its surveys).

Educational attainment is separated into seven categories, ranked from lowest to highest level of completion: less than ninth grade (primary) education, some high school (ninth to twelfth grade) with no diploma, high school graduate or equivalent, some college with no degree, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate or professional degree. These levels are determined for the population 18 years and older.

Medians, rather than means, are used to describe the central tendency in monetary variables (household income and home value). Averages are more susceptible to extreme highs and lows and therefore more likely to overstate or understate true "average." Medians represent the middle value in a distribution, with half of the values above and half of the values below.

RESULTS

Defining Diversity

The noun "diversity" is defined as the state of being diverse, or a state of unlikeness, variety, or mulit-formity. Its root means "to turn aside," and is the same root for the word "divert." In a historical context, "diversity" was not used in reference to people but rather to describe something that was simply dissimilar. Without context, the word "diversity" is somewhat useless, a fact commonly referred to in interviews with community members. In today's language "diversity" has a positive connotation and almost always refers to qualities and characteristics of people. In order to properly understand diversity in Decatur, it is essential to gauge both the context in which it is used here and the types of people to which it refers. Community member responses were typified into five levels: 1) lack of definition, 2) literal definition, 3) race alone (black and white), 4) race and other characteristics, and 5) an idealistic definition.

Two of the 21 interviewees could not answer the question, "How do you define diversity?" The term proved to be too abstract or comprehensive for them to respond with a concrete definition even using their own words. Many community members, however, gave technical definitions of "diversity" in a number of different ways:

- Inda: "Having a lot of choices; a variety of people."
- Mike: "A place where everyone doesn't look, sound, talk, and think the same…"
- November: "A variation in the type of person that lives here."
- Romeo: "Various peoples, races, and cultures; a melting pot [so that we can learn different things from each other]."
- Uniform: "A legitimate cross section in the community."

A single resident defined diversity in the third classification as "Black and white coming together."

The most common response type falls under the fourth category, which acknowledges that race is an important factor but includes other characteristics in the definition:

- *Alpha: “Any number of differences that an individual brings to the table or to the community… Obviously the most visible indicator of diversity is racial diversity, but it’s so much broader than that… sometimes you can see a difference that that person is bringing to the table… and then you hear it in terms of background and environment… difference in culture, in thought, in ideas, in experience. It’s important to have an environment that can foster diversity instead of oppress it.
- Bravo: “… race, sexuality, socioeconomic status, education, [and] age.”
- *Charlie: “Income and race.”
- Delta: “Different experiences and perspectives, whether ethnicities, economic experiences, educational experiences, or religious experiences.”
- Foxtrot: “It’s multifaceted; a big range of types and usually falls under gender, race, and economics.”
- Oscar: “Race is the tip of the iceberg. [Diversity is] a mixture of income, talent, experiences, [and] nationalities.”
- Papa: “Much larger than what the media makes it, not just black and white. Diversity of age, income, cultures… everyone brings a unique piece.
- Quebec: “More than just white and black.”
- Sierra: “Race is [seen] first, [then diversity of] income, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation, thought, outlook, and opinion.”

The final level of response builds upon the previous level, and takes it a step further by adding the element of valuing and encouraging diversity within its definition. Two of the twenty one participants fall into this category.

- Golf: “[Diversity is] more than being accepting and tolerant than people different than you, it’s embracing that as a positive part of your life. Experiences, backgrounds, interests. . .it’s not racially based, age based, gender based, family status based, it’s having all of that stuff. There’s no quota to it, no magic number. We all value the same things.”
- Hotel: “ [A diverse place is] a place where we all can live, and work, and play, and worship and do all those things together. And it’s not like I want to be your buddy, your pal, or your friend. I just want to be in a place where I can be just what you want to be – comfortable.”

Untypified – Echo: “Diversity is one of those terms that has to be defined. People get very hesitant when talking about it, and people dance around what they really mean. Context has to be determined.”

Age

Figure 2.1 shows Decatur’s population split among 12 age groups for each decennial census since 1980. The rising share of persons 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 years of age is reflective of the national trend of an aging population. Decatur’s population has historically skewed older.

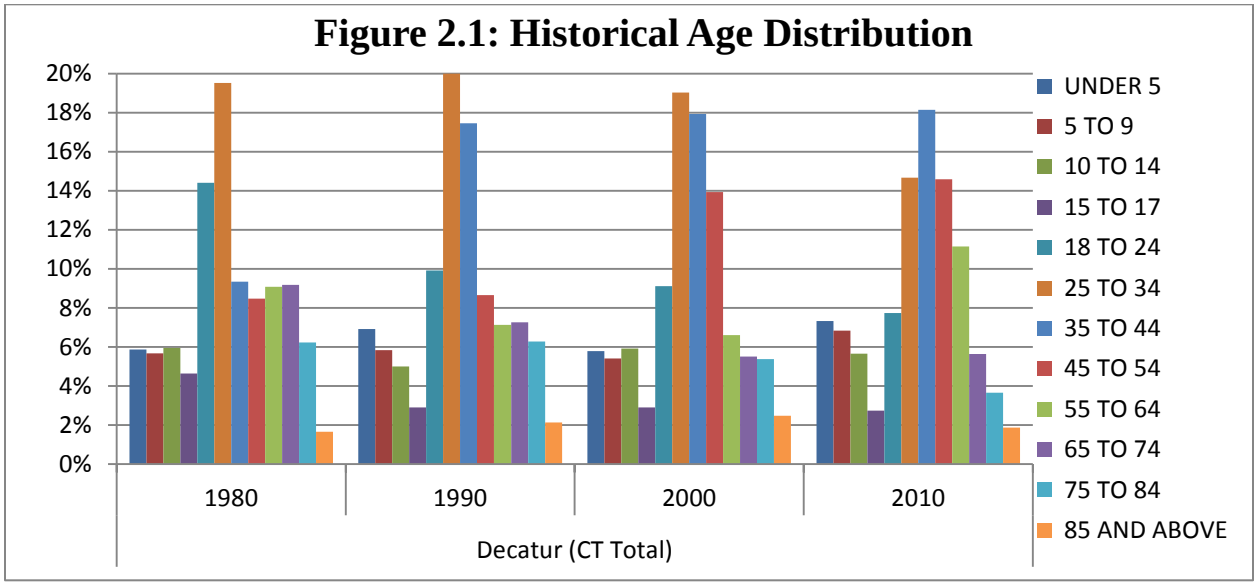
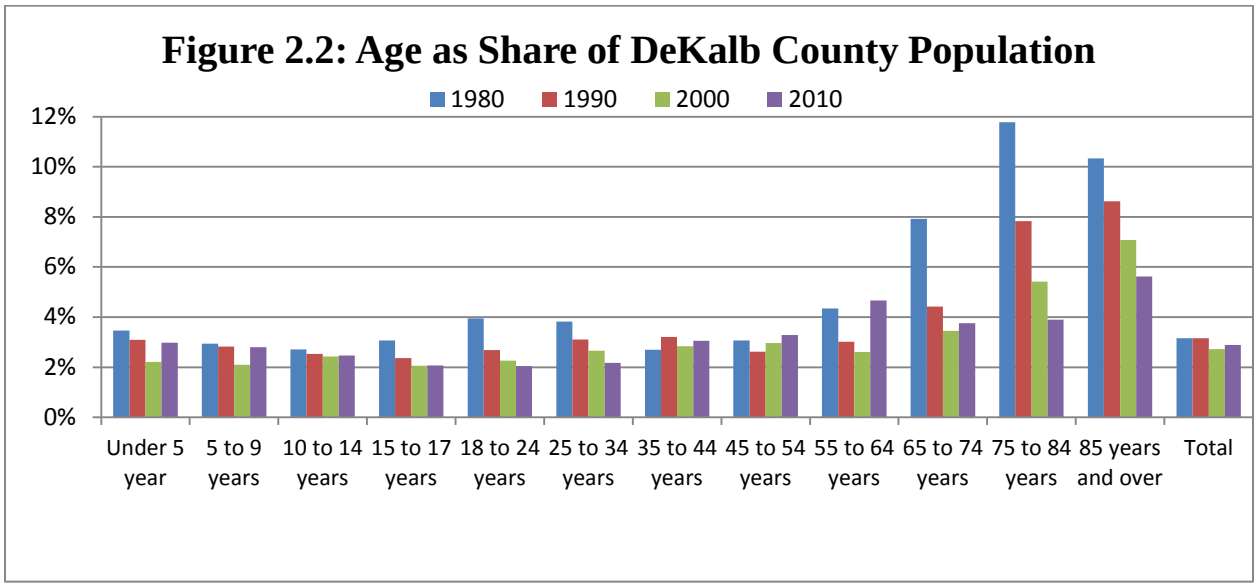


Figure 2.2 shows each age group in Decatur as a share of the county's population for that age group. For example, while Decatur overall has historically held about 3% of DeKalb County's population, it held almost 5% of the 55 to 64 year olds in the county in 2010. In 1980 this contrast was even higher, especially for the oldest age groups; 12% of the 75 to 84 year olds in DeKalb County lived in Decatur in 1980. While differences have diminished as the population in general ages, there remains a clear relative concentration. For the most recent data point (2010), Decatur's highest concentration lies within the 85 and over age group.



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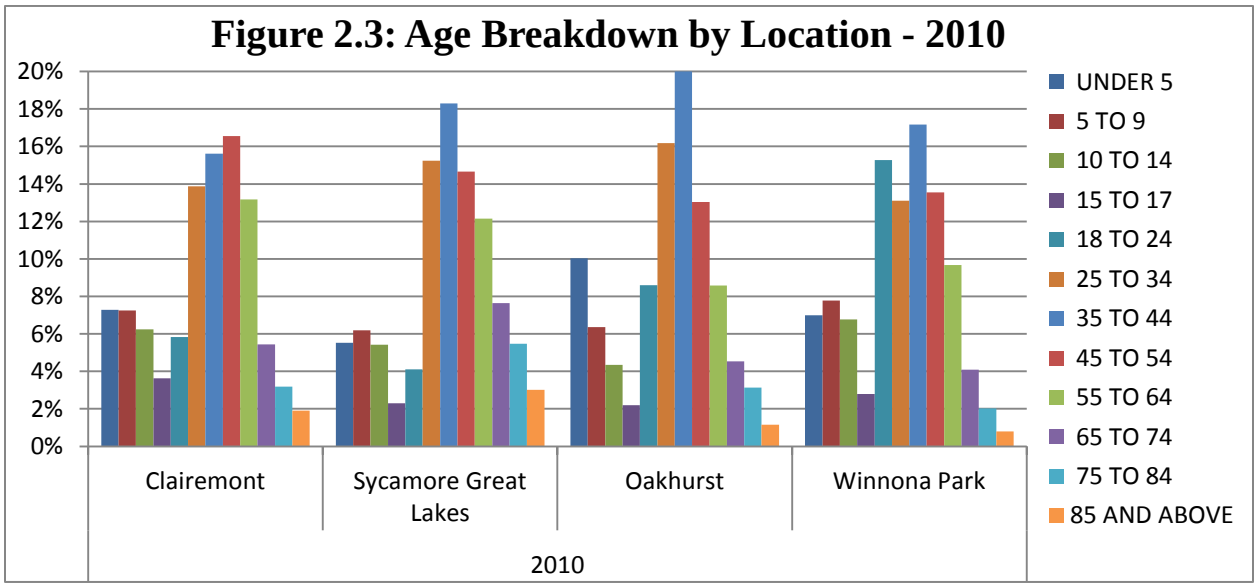
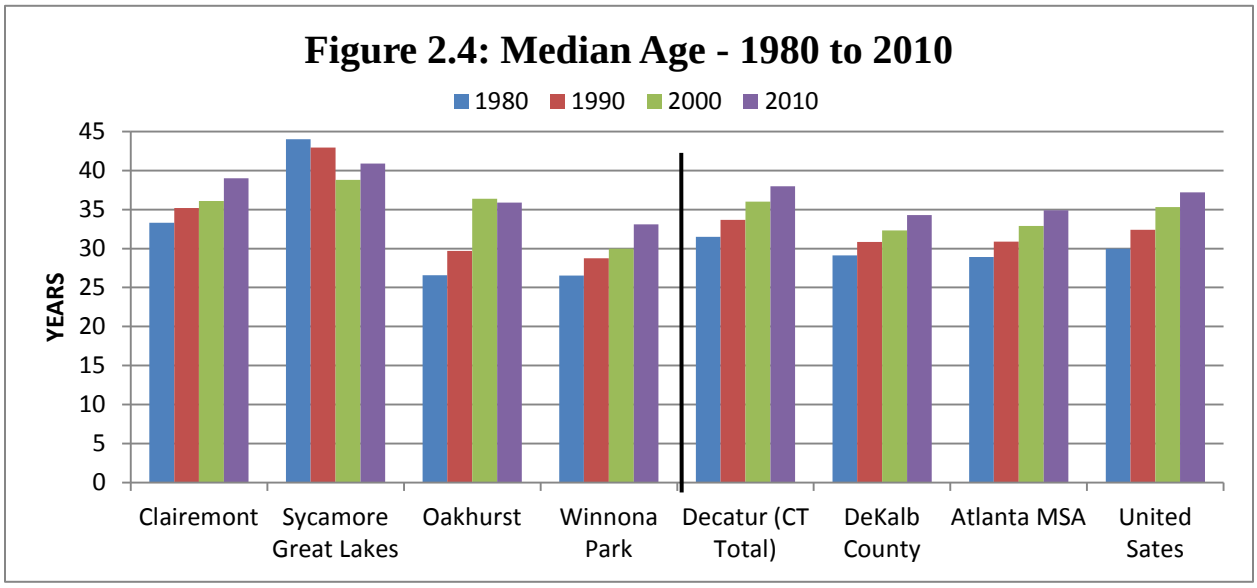
Each neighborhood in Decatur seems to have its own relative concentrations in particular age groups. Out of the four neighborhoods, for example, Clairemont held the highest share of 45 to 54 year olds in 2010, higher even than the share of 35 to 44 year olds. Across Clairemont Road to the east, Sycamore/Great Lakes held the largest share of each of the oldest age groups: 65 to 74, 75 to 84, and 85 and above. Younger residents were more abundant in South Decatur. Children aged 5 and younger accounted for 10% of Oakhurst's population. Oakhurst also held the largest share of 25 to 34 year olds as well as 35 to 44 year olds. Winnona Park had a very high amount of 18 to 24 year olds (over 15% of the population) due to the presence of Agnes Scott College. A number of factors can account for the different age distributions across Decatur neighborhoods, including local amenities, housing options, and transportation choices.



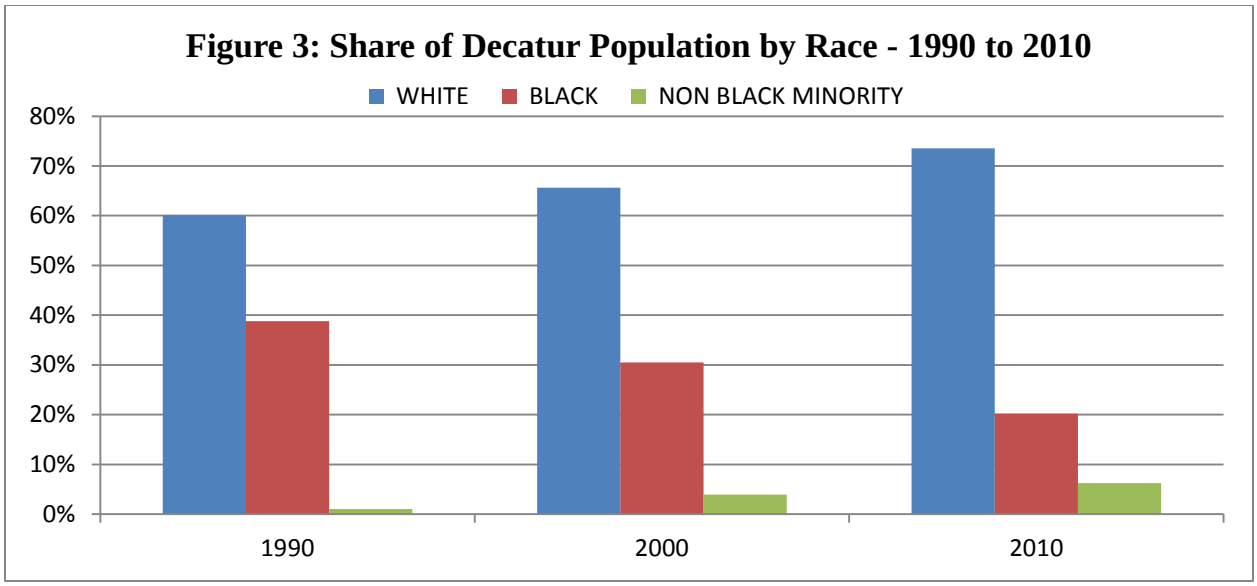
Another angle with which to examine age in Decatur is by the median. Figure 2.4 shows that not only has Decatur historically been a little older than the benchmarks but that there has been a large gap in age between North and South Decatur.



In 2010, half of the residents in Clairemont were more than 39 years old (up from 33 years in 1980), and this value was about 41 years in Sycamore/Great Lakes (down from 44). For comparison, the national median age in 1980 was 30 years old and 37 years old in 2010. South Decatur has historically been younger than North Decatur and the United States. Oakhurst's median age actually increased from less than 27 years in 1980 to 36 years in 2010, while Winnona Park's median age increased from between 26 and 27 years old to 33 years old in 2010. Decatur is, by several metrics, an older community inside an otherwise young region and county.

Race

Age is not the only variable by which Decatur resists larger trends. Decatur also stands out for its racial composition. Since 1990, the white share of the population in the City of Decatur has grown from 60% to 73.5%. This is the opposite of the national trend, where the share of the white population has declined from 80% to 72%. The black share of the population in Decatur decreased from 39% to just 20%, but nationally has remained more or less 12% since 1990. In fact, non-black minorities actually outnumber blacks in the United States, making up 15% of the population in 2010 (up from 7.7% in 1990).The non-black minority share of the population in Decatur has grown from just 1% in 1990 to over 6% in 2010. Decatur is coming from a common position in the American South characterized by a legacy of tense black-white relations, which plays an important role in the context of these demographics.



The following four charts (3.1 through 3.4) show how location has played a role in racial diversity in Decatur. Clairemont's racial composition has remained relatively unchanged for the last 20 years, though the number of non-black minorities has grown. Sycamore/Great Lakes has actually grown in both black and non-black minorities, and holds the largest population of the latter. Oakhurst has seen the most change in that the black population fell from almost 4,000 persons in 1990 to 1,400 in 2010 and the white population rose from about 900 to 2900. Winnona Park experienced a much more modest rate of decline in the black population which dropped from 1,200 to 700 by 2010.

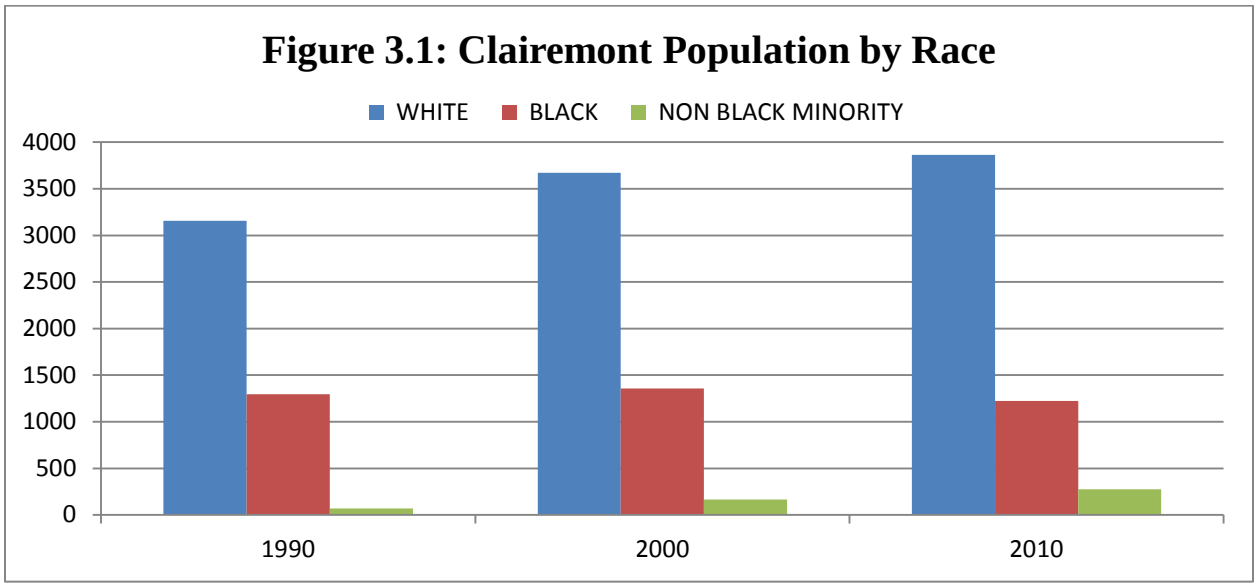


Figure 3.2: Sycamore/Great Lakes Population by Race

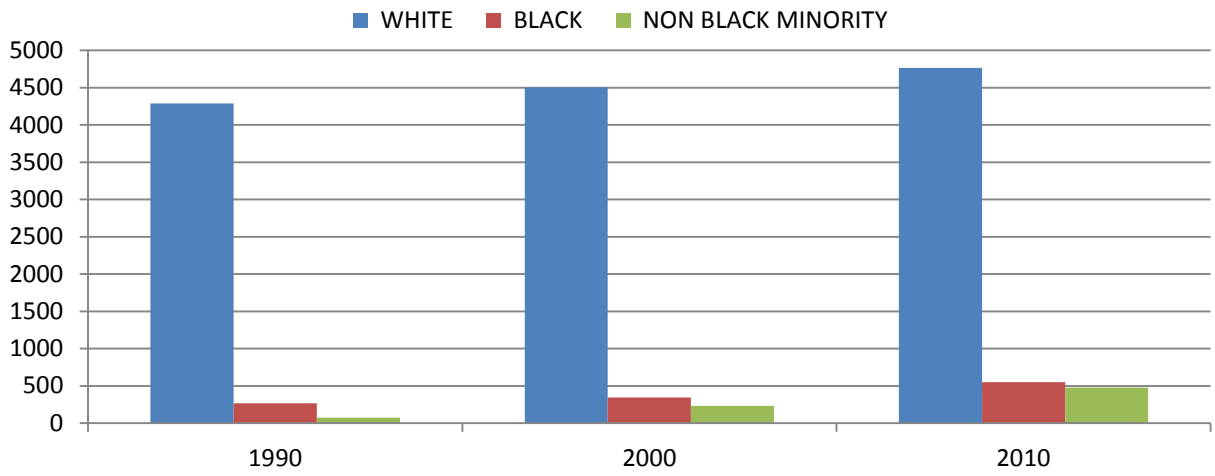
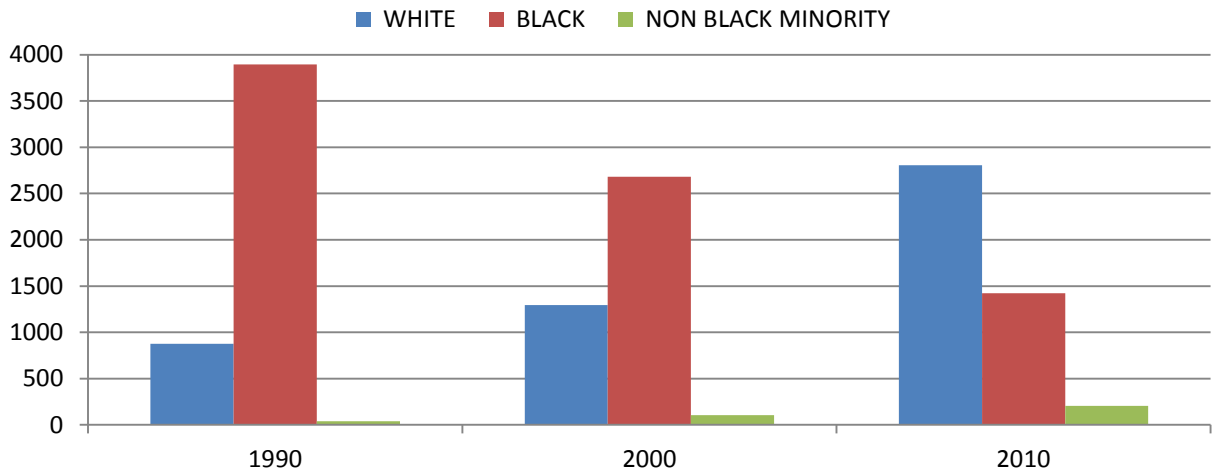


Figure 3.3: Oakhurst Population by Race



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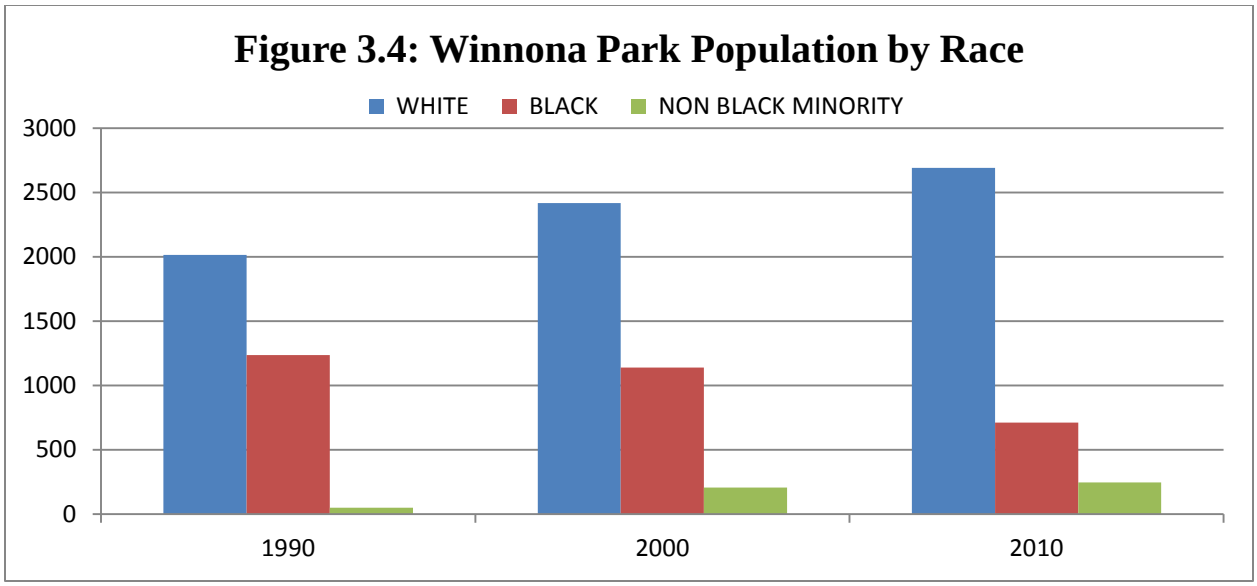


Age and Race Together

As shown, there has been noticeable change in both the racial and generational make up of Decatur. Throughout this research it was apparent that a connection exists between race and age in the community. For example, in the literature review of the city's strategic plans, efforts to support and encourage diversity (Principle B) directly reference programs to assist the elderly (Task 5E, 2010 Strategic Plan). In fact, "promoting Decatur as a lifelong community" (Task 5A) is a large focus of Goal 5's aim to encourage diversity (p. 56) as evident in the full-time position of Lifelong Community Coordinator and the volunteer-based Lifelong Community Advisory Board. It therefore seems appropriate to examine these two variables, age and race, together to determine if there is such a connection.

Figure 3.5 shows the racial composition for two age groups in Decatur, age 17 and younger and age 65 and older. The "Total" column on the right is the total population by racial share as a comparison. While one in five Decatur residents was black in 2010, about one in three residents aged 65 and older was black. This suggests that the elderly population in Decatur is disproportionately black. Outside of Decatur, the share of the black population is higher in the younger age groups rather than in the older age groups, as seen in Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7.

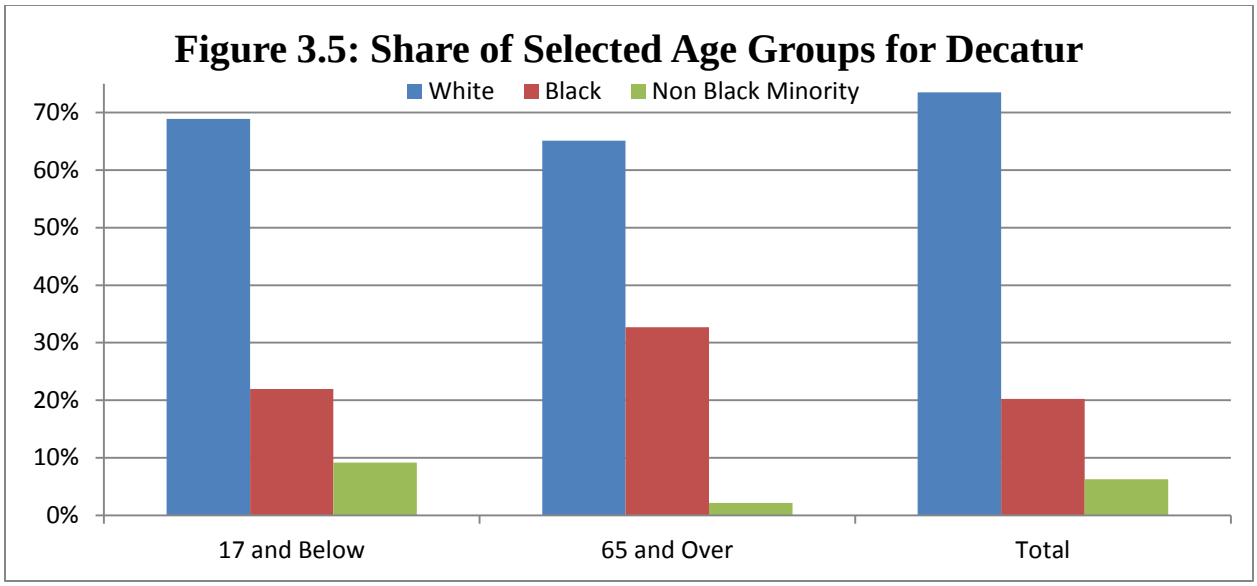


Figure 3.5: Share of Selected Age Groups for Decatur
White
Black
Non Black Minority
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
17 and Below
65 and Over
Total

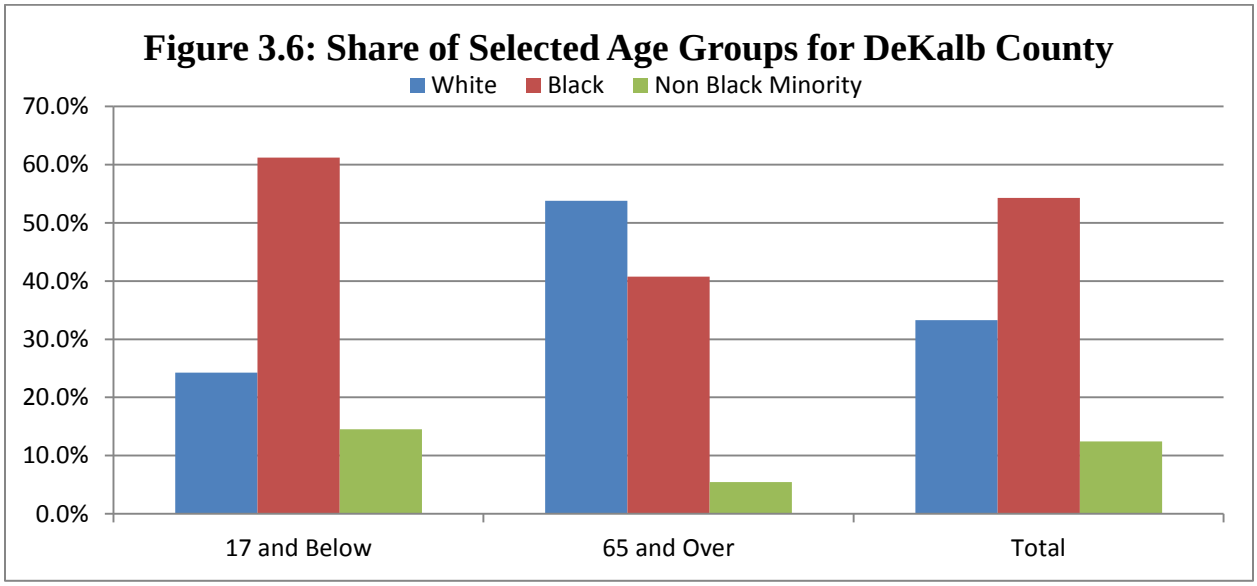
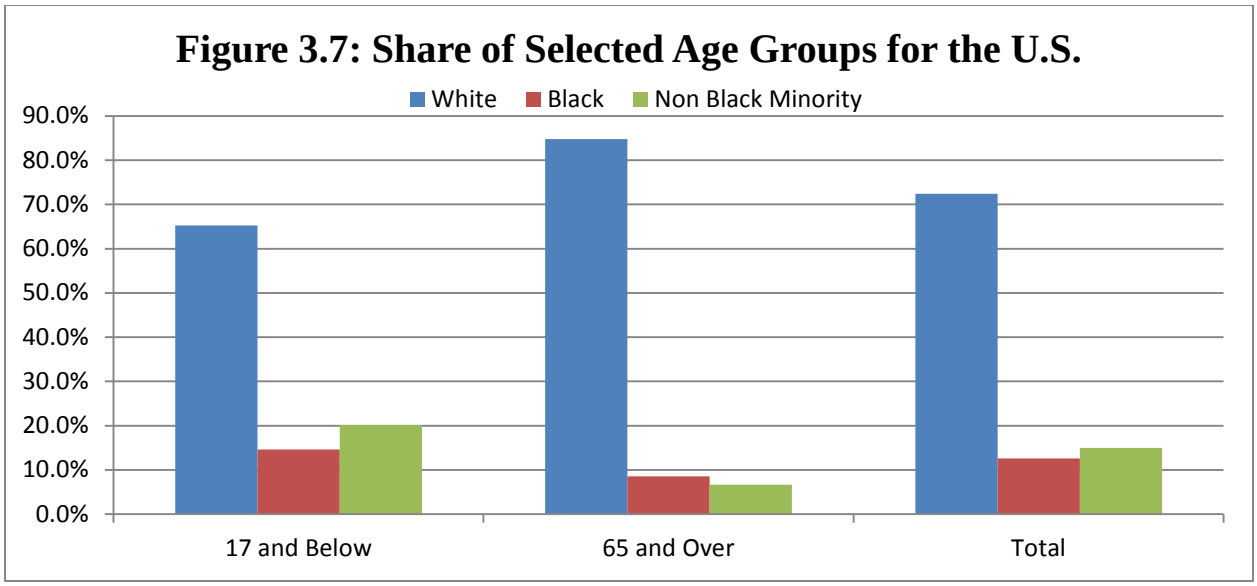
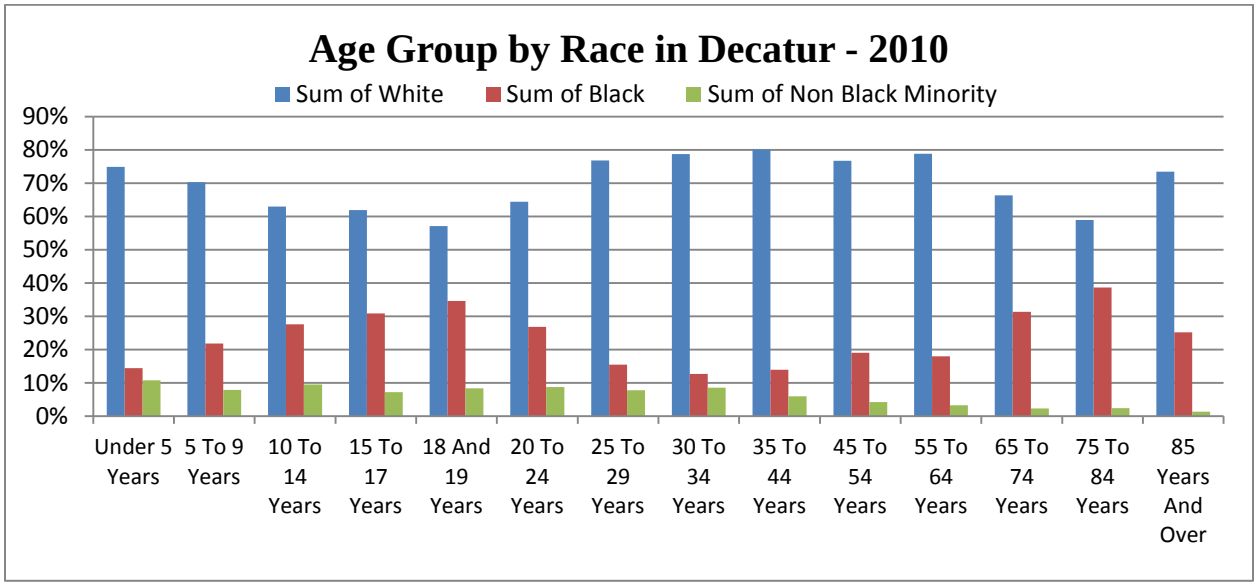


Figure 3.6: Share of Selected Age Groups for DeKalb County
White
Black
Non Black Minority
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
17 and Below
65 and Over
Total





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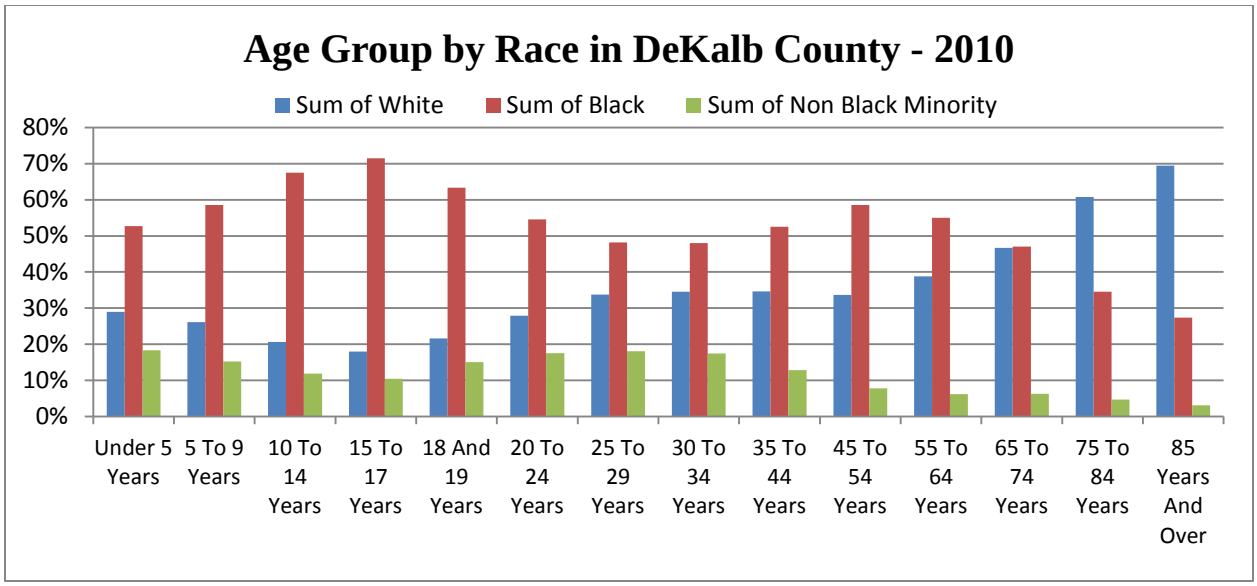

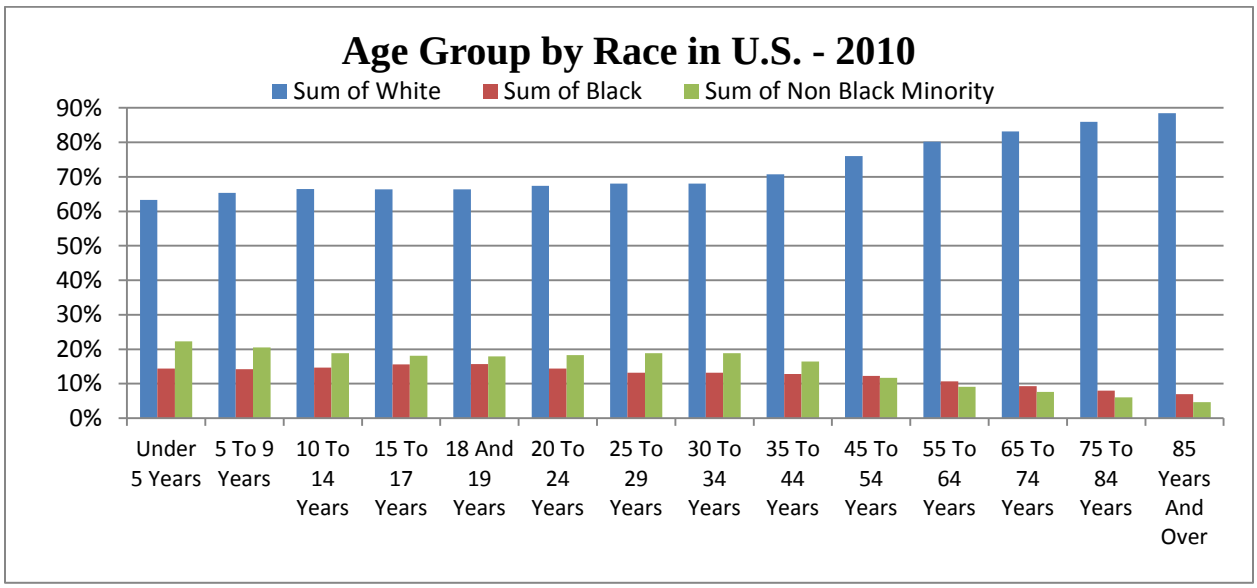

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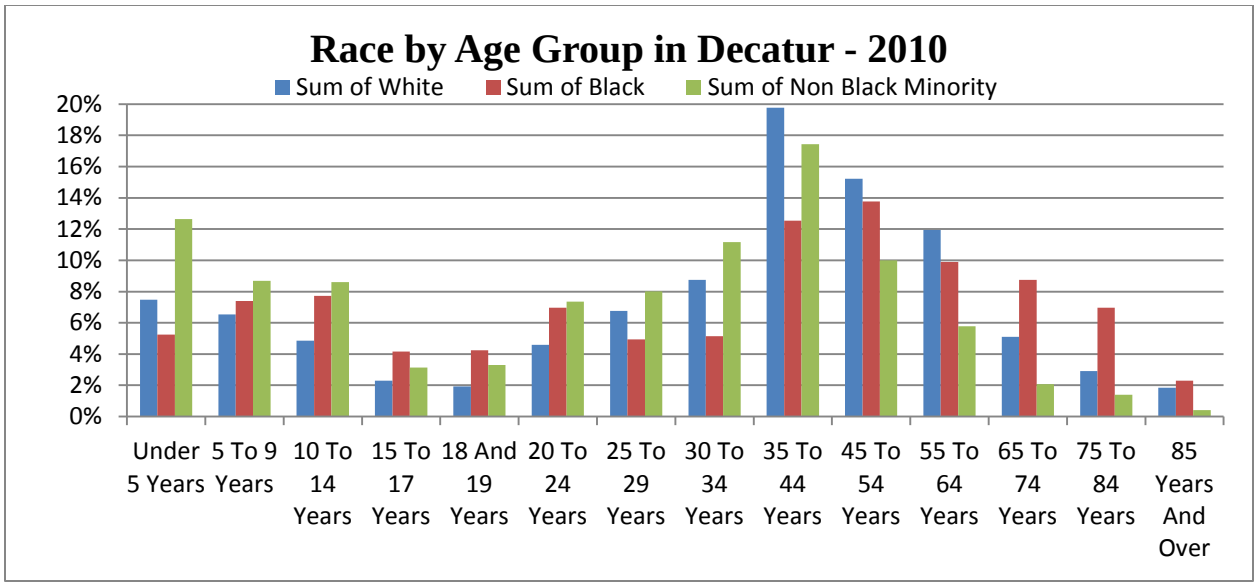

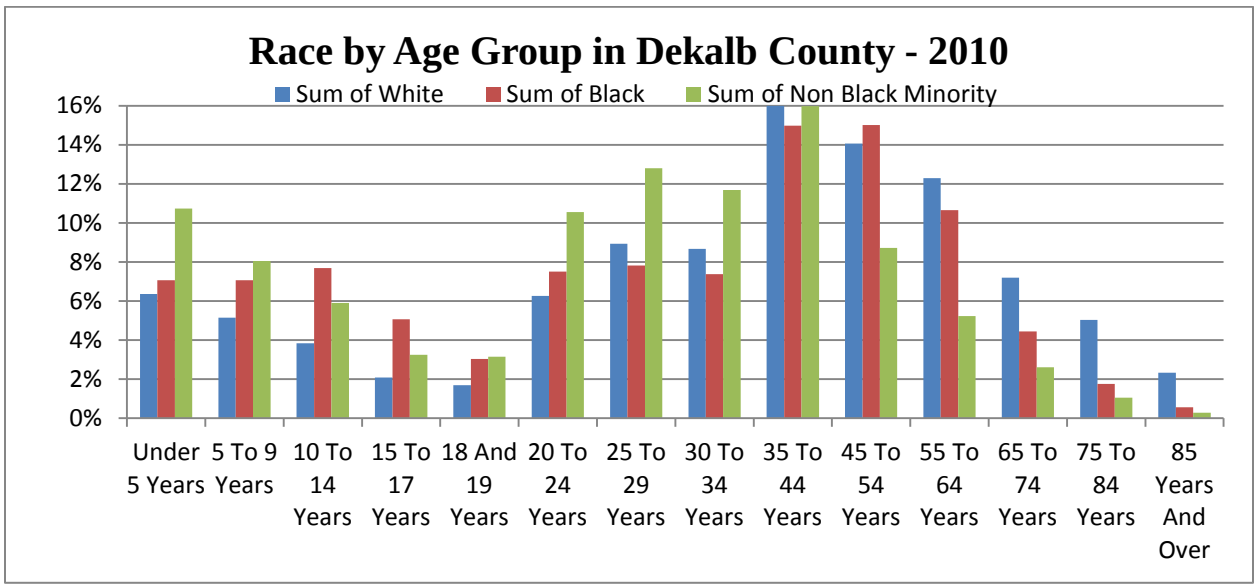

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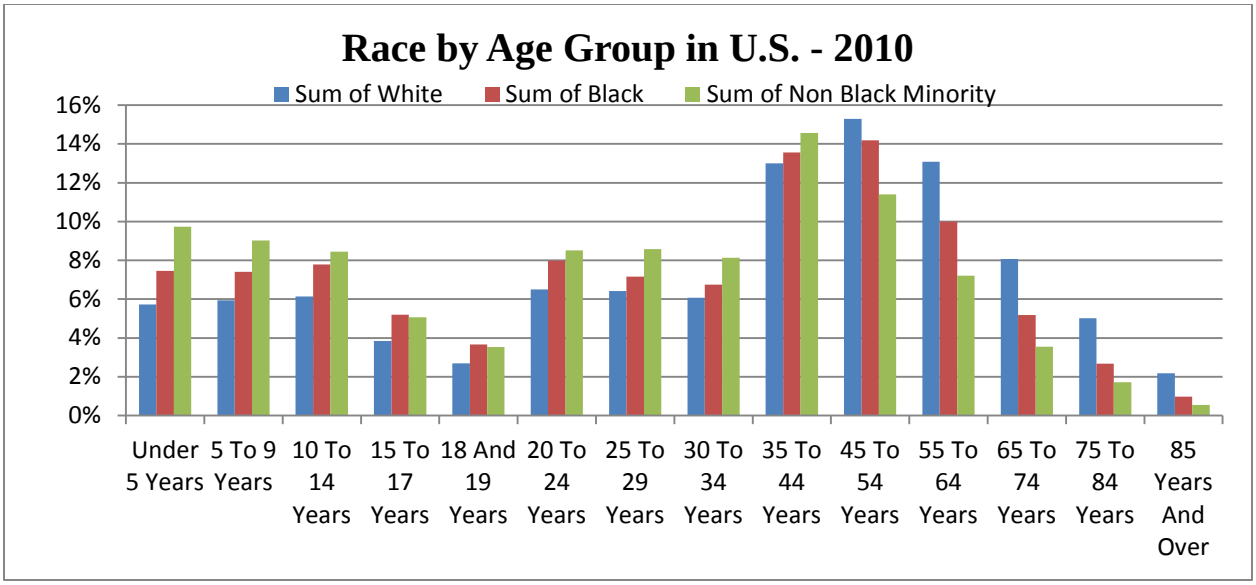
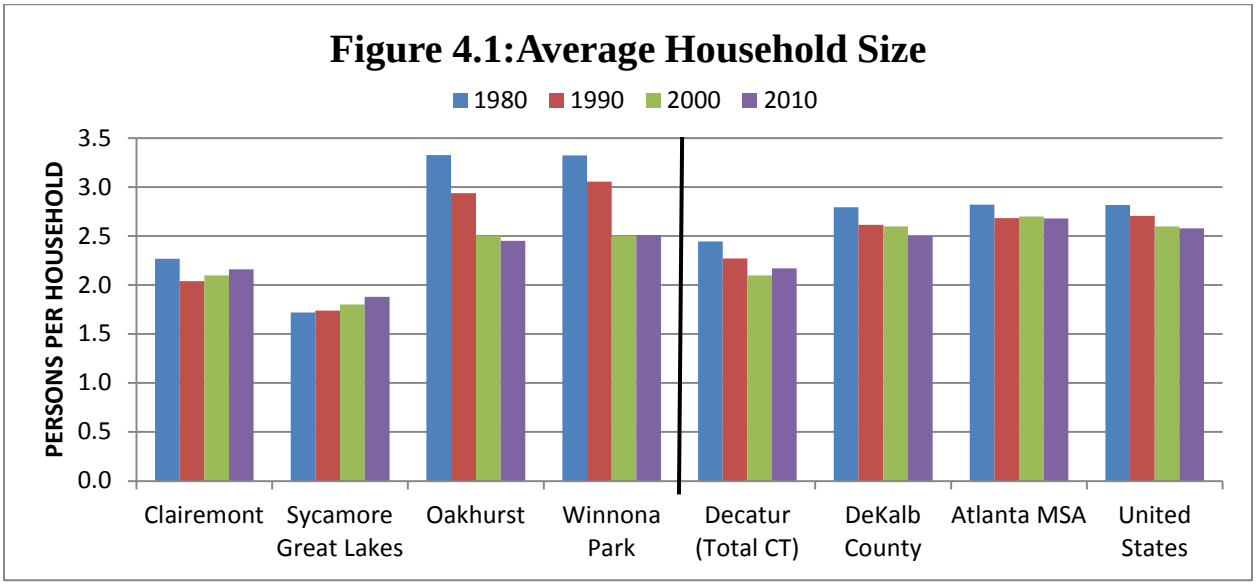


Household Type

Decatur traditionally has had smaller households by number of people than DeKalb County, the Atlanta region, and the nation. Average household size has dropped nationally because of changes in living preferences, including a larger number of people living alone and parents having fewer kids. Figure 4.1 shows North Decatur had substantially smaller households in 1980 and 1990 than South Decatur. In 2010 the average household size in Decatur was 2.2 persons, lower than the county figure of 2.5 and the regional figure of 2.7. Average household size in Clairemont was about 2.2 and 1.9 in Sycamore/Great Lakes. Both Winnona Park and Oakhurst had 2.5 persons per household in 2010, down from 3.3 persons in 1980. Only in Decatur is there an overall average household size increase from 2000 to 2010.



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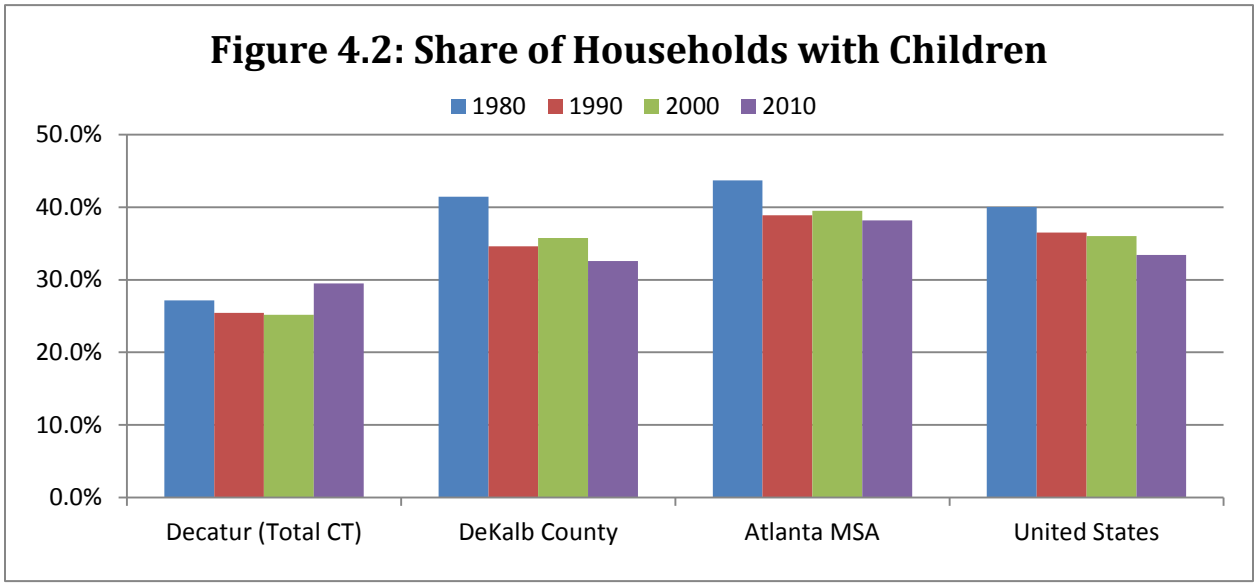
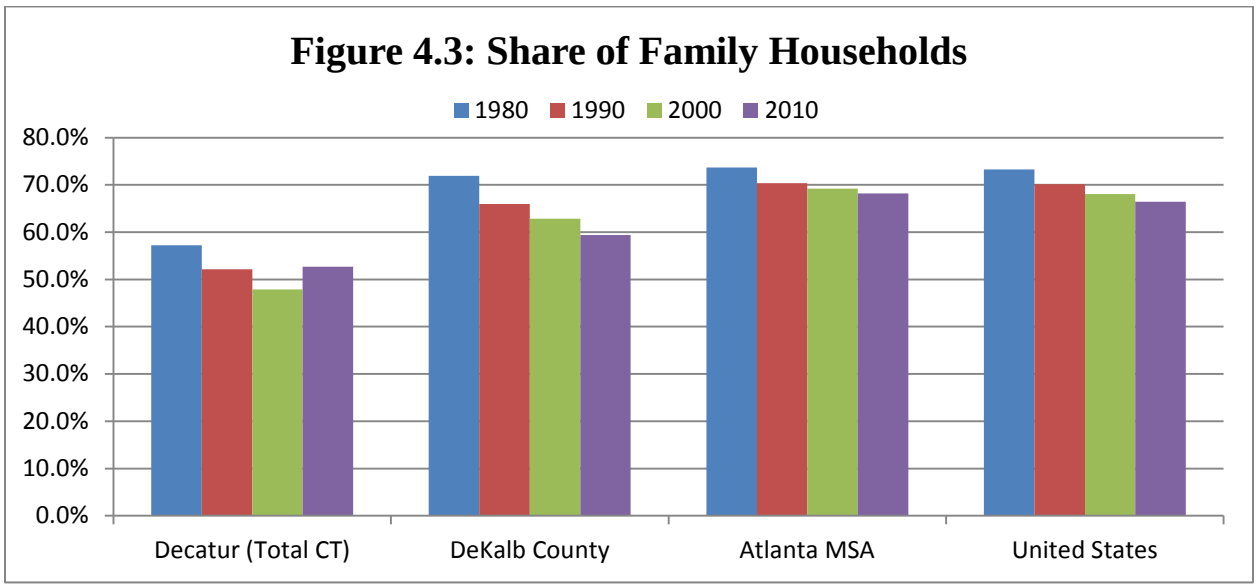
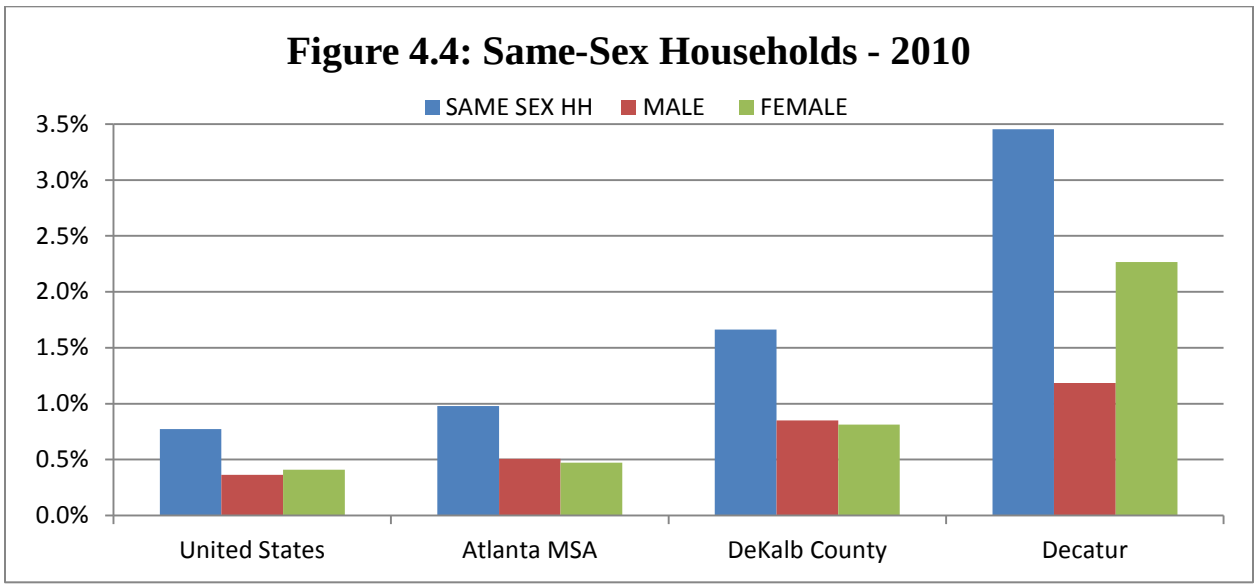


Decatur has had a relatively smaller share of households with persons less than 18 years of age than both the regional and national share (Figure 4.2). In 2010 the share of households with children in Decatur was 29.5% (almost three in ten households), the highest at any point since 1980. Despite this, the Atlanta metropolitan region held closer to four in ten households with children in 2010. This underscores the distinct age anomaly in Decatur, which favors older individuals who are less likely to have children under 18 years old. Like household size, however, Decatur's share of households with children is on the rise.

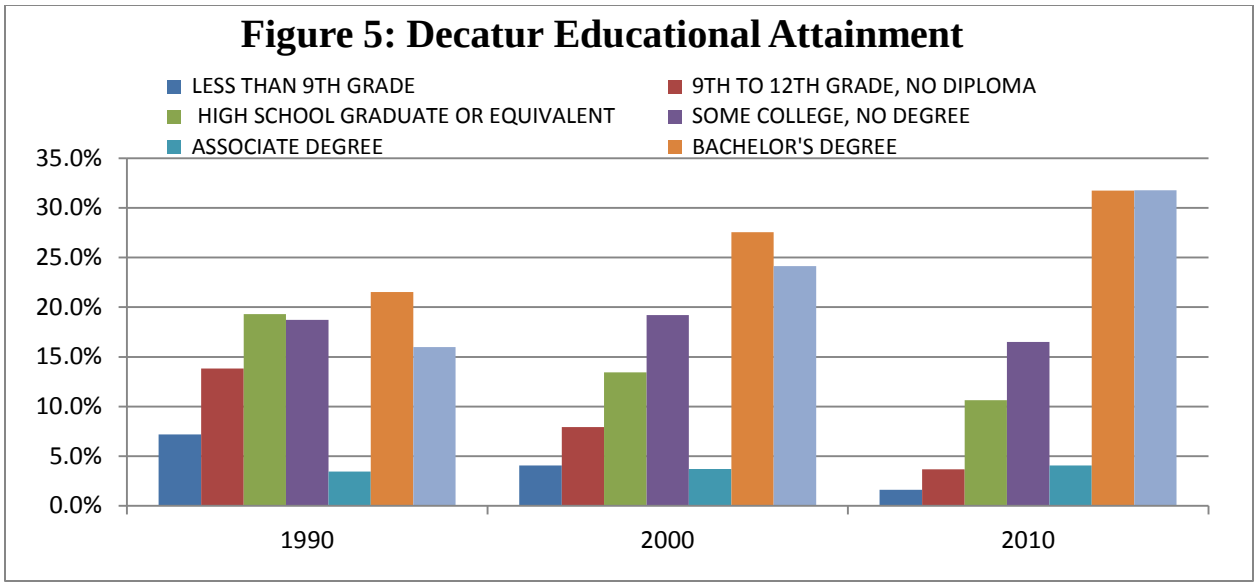


Decatur has a reputation for being LGBT friendly. Figure 4.4 shows the share of the population where a same-sex couple is recorded. In general, about 3.5% of Decatur's households were led by same-sex partners in 2010, compared to 1.7% in DeKalb County and 0.8% nationwide. The larger benchmarks have roughly an equal number of gay and lesbian households, yet Decatur heavily favors lesbian households (2.7%). In fact, same-sex male households actually saw a net decrease of almost 5% from 2000 to 2010. Only Winnona Park, which previously held the lowest number, saw an increase in same-sex male households in this period.



Education

Historically, Decatur has held proportionally more educated residents than DeKalb County, the Atlanta MSA, and the nation. Levels of educational attainment in the City of Decatur have grown significantly and rapidly over the last 20 years. Figure 5 displays how the educational composition has changed in Decatur from 1990 to 2010. The share of those earning a bachelor's degree or higher (the orange and sky blue columns) has almost doubled from 37.5% of the population 18 years and older to 63.5%. This means that in 1990 about one in three Decatur residents held a college degree or higher while in 2010 about two in three did. The United States as a whole saw its share of bachelor's and graduate degree earners increase from 18.5% (half that of Decatur) to about 26%. In 1990, 30% of DeKalb County residents had earned a college degree, compared to 35% in 2010. Regional share gains were also comparatively small, from 24.4% college degree holders in 1990 to 31.7% in 2010.



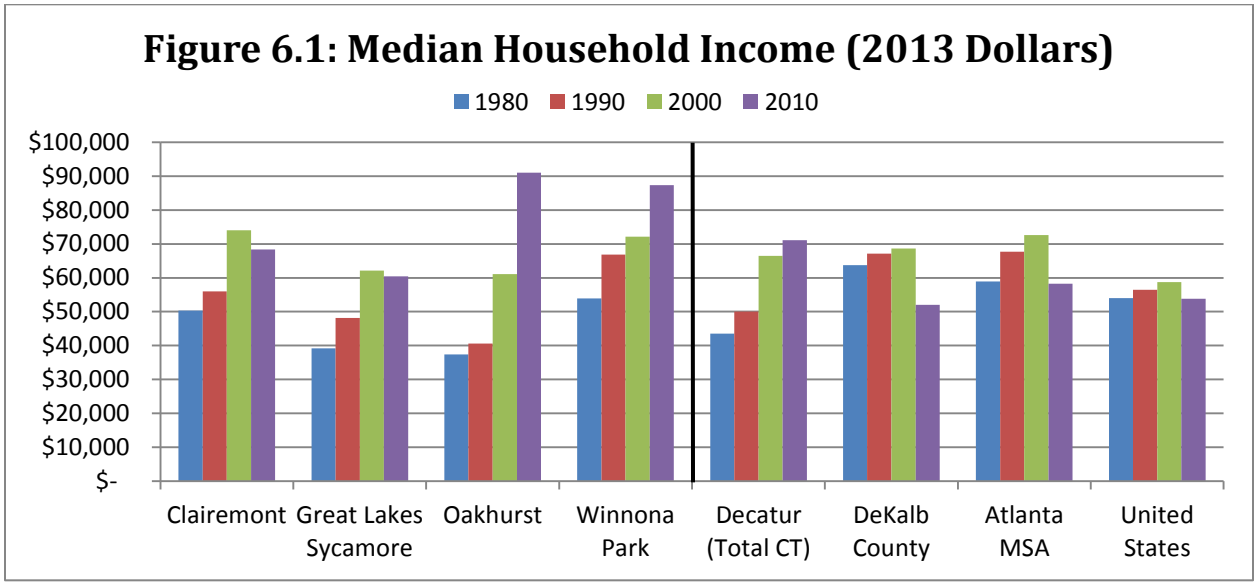
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

The degree of change in Decatur's educational mix is most evident at the highest level. Residents holding a graduate or professional degree constituted about 16% of the city's population over 18 years old in 1990, or about one in six residents, more than double the national rate of 6.3%. By 2010 this share grew to 31.8%, more than triple the national rate of 9.3%. In other words, one in three Decatur residents held a professional or graduate degree in 2010. However this rate varied among Decatur's neighborhoods. Some areas of the city held a large share of highly educated in 1990. In Clairemont (22.3%) and Winnona Park (20.8%) the rate was about one in five residents. In contrast, about one in six residents in Sycamore/Great Lakes (15.9%) held high level degrees while only one in twenty had advanced degrees in Oakhurst (5.2%). In 2010, Oakhurst remained the Decatur neighborhood with the lowest share of professional or graduate degree holders, but it grew significantly to almost one in four (23.6%). Sycamore/Great Lakes became the city's neighborhood with the largest share at 40%, or two in five residents. Clairemont's share increased to 31.7%, while that of Winnona Park grew to 27.2%. Since education is highly correlated to income, the next section examines how income levels in Decatur follow a similar trend as education levels.

Income

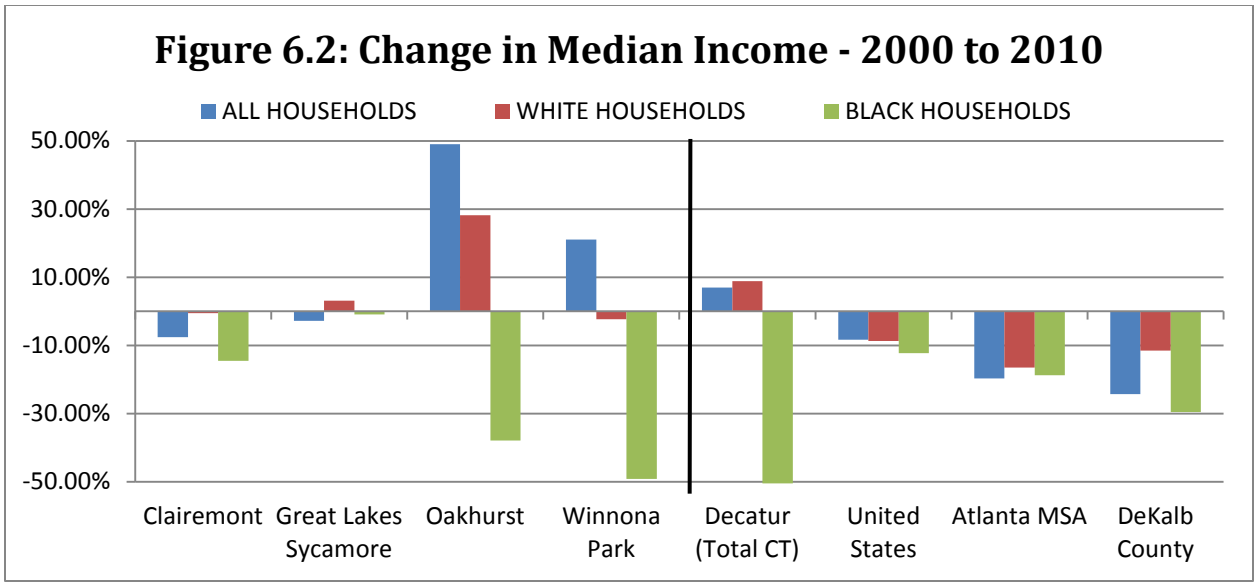
Household income in Decatur is higher than any other point in the last 30 years and is markedly higher than the surrounding areas. Figure 6.1 shows the income level changes for areas in and around Decatur across four points in time. In 1980 Decatur's median household income level was $43,500 (half of the households in Decatur earned more than this figure), around 19% lower than the national level of $54,000. In 2010 the median household income in Decatur was

approximately $70,000, about 30% higher than national level of $53,800. As another perspective, in 1980 Decatur's income level was about 46% lower than DeKalb County's median income at the time ($63,700), and in 2010 city income level was nearly 37% more than the 2010 county level ($52,000). It is important to note this prosperity is a fairly new phenomenon and median Decatur income lagged until 2000. In addition, only the City of Decatur's median income continued to rise from 2000 to 2010, a period marked by an economic recession. Despite the apparent economic success of Decatur residents, this progress was not shared evenly among the city's neighborhoods.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

The largest increases in income levels occurred in South Decatur. Oakhurst saw its median income increase from $37,300 in 1990 (the lowest in Decatur) to $91,000 in 2010 (the highest in Decatur). Winnona Park also enjoyed a substantial rise in income levels, from $53,900 (the highest in the city) to $87,300 (the second highest in the city) during the same time period. While North Decatur also realized healthy growth in income levels from 1980 to 2010, Clairemont and Sycamore/Great Lakes more closely mirrored the economic realities of the nation, region, and county from 2000 to 2010 (Figure 6.2).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

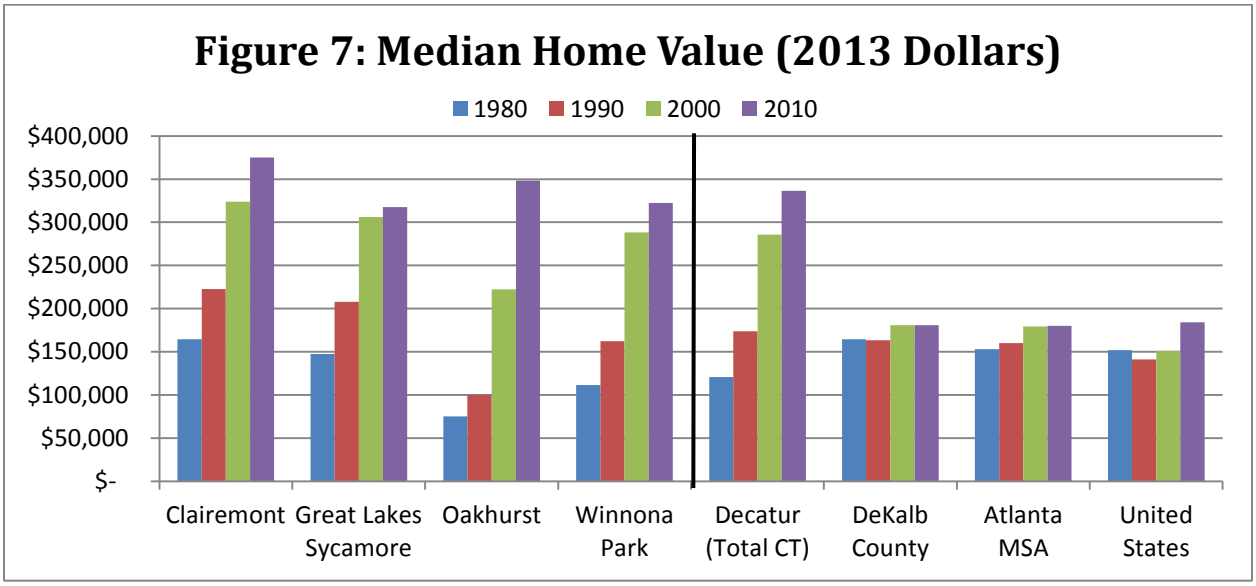
From 2000 to 2010 the overall median income level (the blue bar) for the United States decreased about 8%. Meanwhile Decatur still saw an overall increase in its median income level, from $66,500 to $71,100 (up about 7%). White households in Decatur experienced a slightly higher increase in income of almost 9% (from $81,500 to $88,700) while black household income levels decreased 51% (from $34,600 to $16,800). This significant disparity was not observed at the national or regional level, or even equally across Decatur.

Clairemont's median income level declined from $73,000 to $68,400 (almost 8%) overall, yet the area's black households saw a decrease from $10,400 to $8,900 (more than 16%) while white households had a less than one percent drop from $91,900. Overall income level in Great Lakes/Sycamore dropped less than 3% from $62,200, declined 1% for black households from $23,600, and rose 3% for white households from $67,200. Oakhurst's median income level grew significantly (49%) from $61,000 in 2000 to $91,100 in 2010. White households in Oakhurst saw an income level increase from $87,400 to $112,000 (28%), while black households dropped from $44,200 to $27,400 (38%). In Winnona Park, the medium income increased from $72,200 to $87,400 (21%). Both white and black households in this neighborhood saw their income levels decrease although at different rates (white households down 2% from $106,500 and black households down 49% from $44,200). Non-black minorities were intentionally left out of figure 6.2 because of the small sample sizes in the four areas.

Home Value

Figure 7 displays median home values for Decatur and benchmarks from 1980 to 2010. Like median income, the median home value in the City of Decatur is higher than that in

DeKalb County, the Atlanta MSA, and the United States. In 2010, 50% of the homes in Decatur were worth more than $336,400, compared to just $180,600 in DeKalb County. Unlike income levels among Decatur neighborhoods, there is relatively little variation in median home values. The lowest value of $317,700 was found in Sycamore/Great Lakes and the highest value of $375,100 (about 18% higher) was found in Clairemont. Oakhurst's median home value of $348,400 was approximately 8% higher than that of Winnona Park at $322,300.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey 2008-2012

In 1980 Decatur's median home value was $120,800, significantly lower (by 36%) than the county level of $164,600. An increase of 65% in Decatur median home value took place between 1990 and 2000, from $173,500 to $285,800. South Decatur experienced the largest increases. Median home value increased about 78% in Winnona Park (from $162,200 to $288,300) and 122% in Oakhurst (more than doubling from ($100,000 to $222,100). Income levels also experienced the most growth between 1990 and 2000.

NEXT STEPS

The data presented in this report represent a good beginning but further research opportunities exist, especially for more in-depth qualitative research, such as focus groups. A line item of $25,000 was written in the FY 2014-2015 budget for this type of work.

City staff demographics and data such as the National Employee Survey results, which asks questions about diversity and inclusion, would offer insight into if and how those who serve the community are representative of Decatur. Further study could also compare the number of

city employees who live in the city limits to those who do not and why employees live where they live.

It has been at least several years since the city last hired an outside firm to track the demographics of event attendees, and the city should consider updated attendance tracking for larger festivals to see if event attendance demographics are in line with resident demographics.

Tracking resident migration patterns would be useful but it is challenging. While the city can gather data on new residents and where they moved from, tracking where residents go when they move outside the city is difficult, if not impossible. Figuring out how to do this would be beneficial and worth studying.

Other data points that could provide further insight on Decatur's diversity include:

- Residents' occupation and location of employment
- Updated transportation patterns, including pedestrian counts at key intersections, as well as car traffic counts and residents' commuting patterns
- Political affiliation of residents
- Religious affiliation of residents
- Housing trends, which could include gathering housing sales data and layering with reconstruction and tear-down data as well as updating the Affordable Housing Study from May 2008
- Demographics of the city's small business owners

Maintaining diversity has been a major part of the city's efforts to date, specifically with programs like the Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project. The conversation now expands to how to attract new diversity, especially young professionals of color.

Since a diverse community is the intersection of many things and not a single data point, Decatur could consider exploring options to encourage diversity through economic incentives, housing choice, increased transit accessibility and annexation. Because of Decatur's small size, economic incentives such as a creating a city-wide minimum wage are impractical and would have little to no effect since most residents work outside the city's less than five square miles.

At a time when most other municipalities, including the City of Atlanta, have removed dedicated affordable housing and moved increasingly to Section 8 vouchers, the Decatur Housing Authority remains committed to preserving every single affordable unit in the city. The challenge is how to make market rate apartments affordable in Decatur.

Three major apartment complexes are currently under construction. Once complete, they will add hundreds of new housing options aimed at the 25-34 year old age demographic. Planned redevelopment around the Avondale MARTA station will include apartments and senior housing, further diversifying the city's housing stock. The Unified Development Ordinance, to be completed by the end of 2014, is expected to add new zoning options for residential housing, such as cottage courts, that would give those who want to buy options at lower price points.

An annexation master plan will be completed by the end of 2014. It is expected to include commercial areas such as the Patel Plaza shopping center which would add businesses that serve the Indian-American community to the city.

City government has the least amount of control over the community's cultural values, but it can create forums and opportunities for responsible, civil discourse about how best to foster a diverse community that is open and welcoming to all. The Decatur City Commission has approved a proposed timeline and budget for Phase I of a process to create a Community Action Plan for a Compassionate Decatur. In order to draw on the experiences and knowledge of the community, the city's efforts are intended to be comprehensive, intentional and take a holistic approach to developing a community action plan that appreciates diversity and supports a community of inclusion and compassion based on justice and equity.

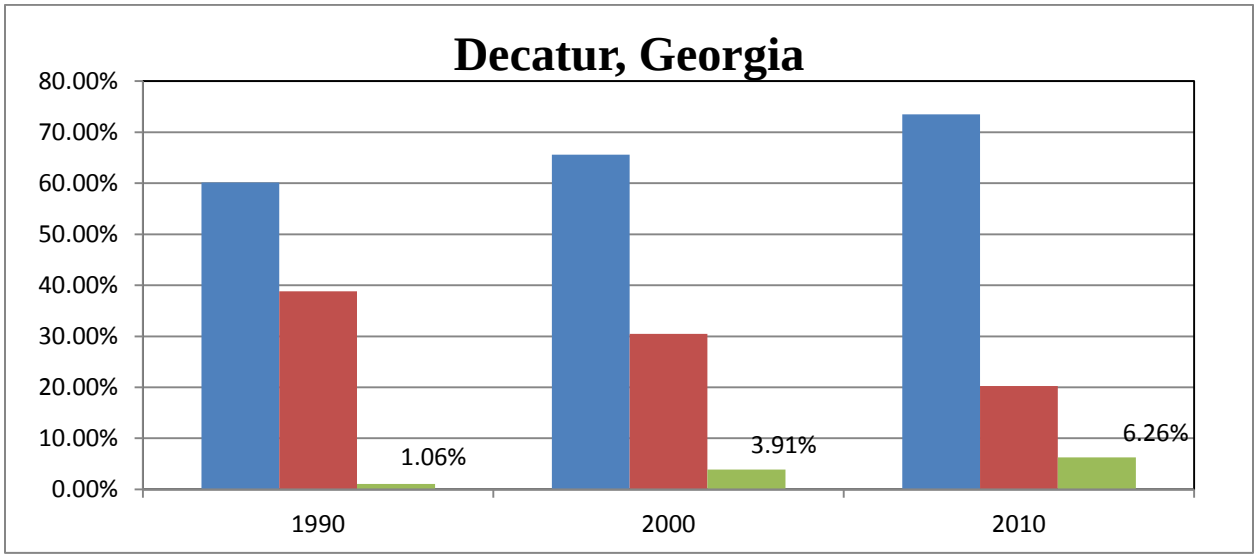
Earlier in 2014, the Decatur City Commission passed Resolution R-14-08 supporting the principles contained in the International Campaign for Compassionate Cities whose purpose is to encourage community leadership to create and bring together efforts toward increasing compassion through local initiatives, policy and projects. The Compassionate Cities process provides a framework and umbrella for developing the Community Action Plan. Phase I is currently underway and is expected be done by the end of the year. Phase II will most likely consist of large scale community conversations and development of the action plan over a 12-month period beginning in January 2015.

Appendix A: Benchmark Cities

In the fall of 2013, the City of Decatur's Performance Measurement Team embarked on a project to identify communities around the United States that were similar to the City of Decatur in order to make comparisons and learn best practices. As a starting point, comparable places were drawn from a list of jurisdictions that participate in the National Research Center's citizen survey program and are members of the ICMA Center for Performance Measurement Program. Nine cities were selected based on criteria that included population, proximity to a large city in a metropolitan region and a council-manager form of government. They are:

1. Cartersville, Georgia
2. Clayton, Missouri
3. Dover, New Hampshire
4. Greer, South Carolina
5. Needham, Massachusetts
6. Piqua, Ohio
7. Queen Creek, Arizona
8. Saco, Maine
9. Suwanee, Georgia

City staff and the City Commission use metrics about these nine cities as a way to benchmark Decatur's community engagement, transparency and people. The following graphs show the nine benchmark cities' and Decatur's racial composition from 1990 to 2010. In keeping with the other graphs in this report, the blue bar represents white, the red bar represents black and the green bar represents non-black minority.



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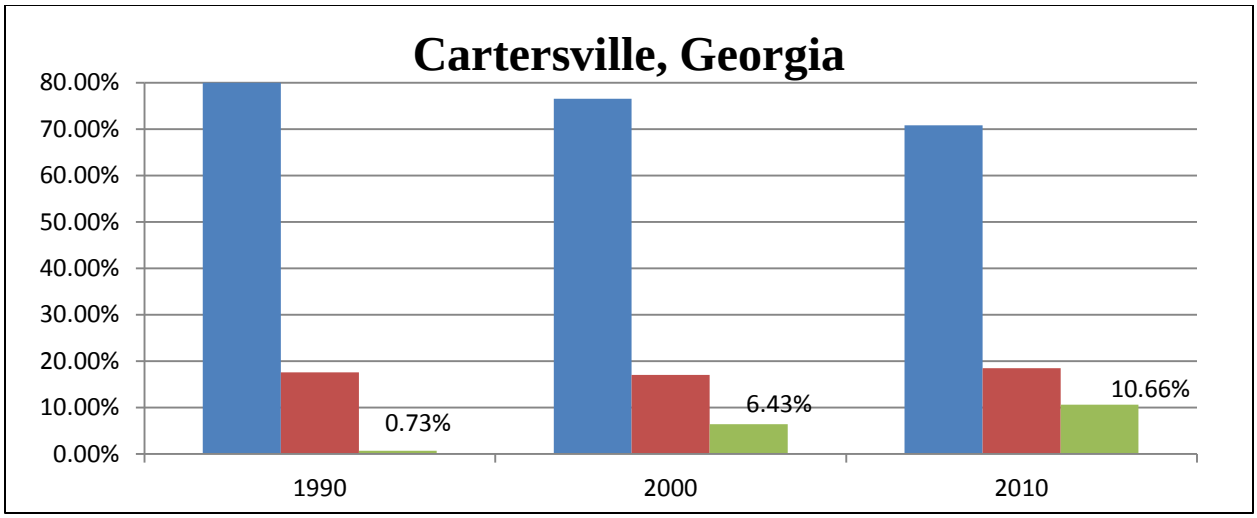

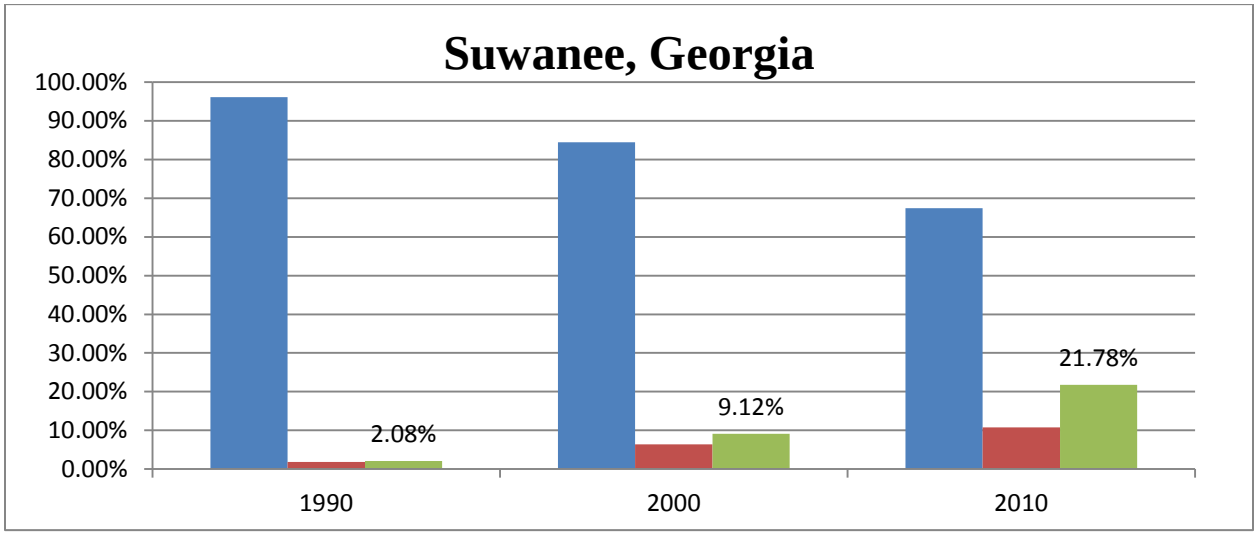

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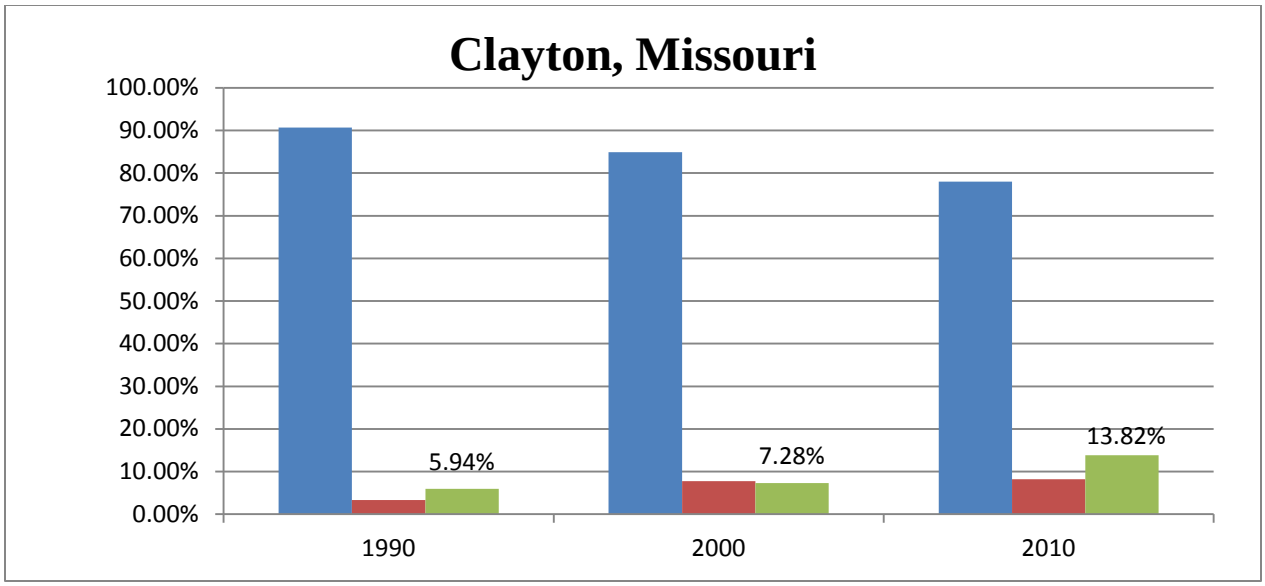

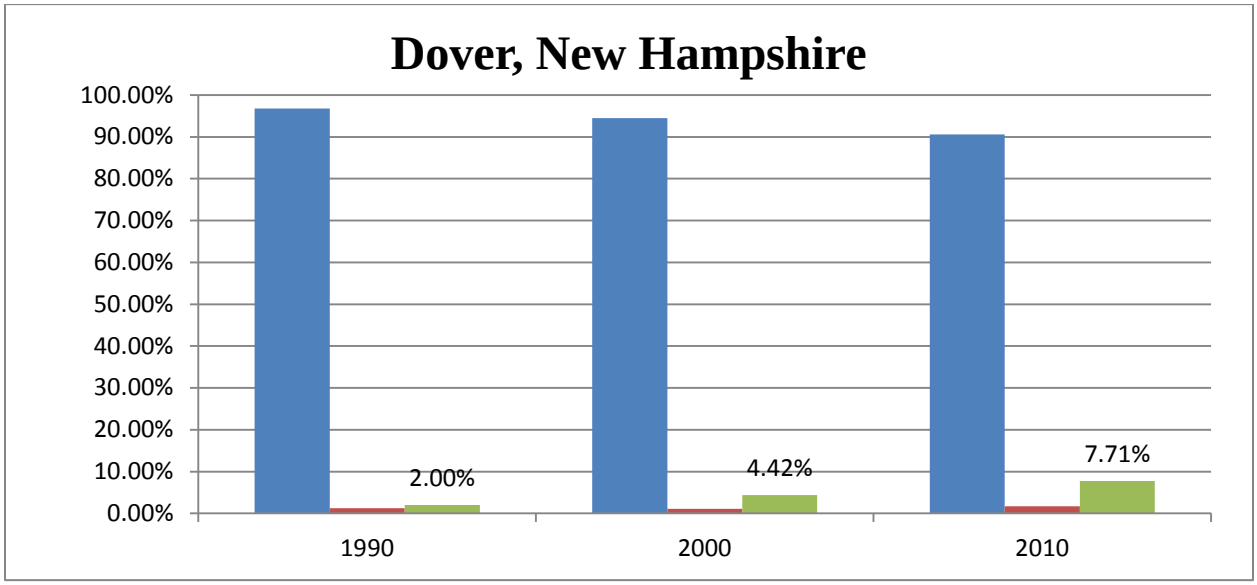

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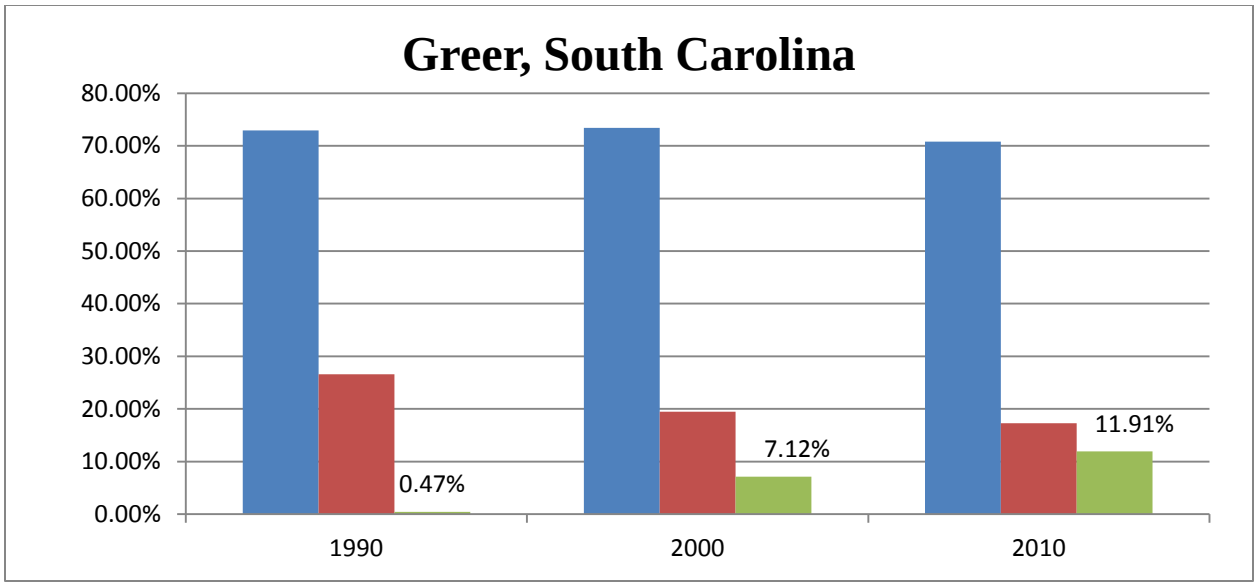

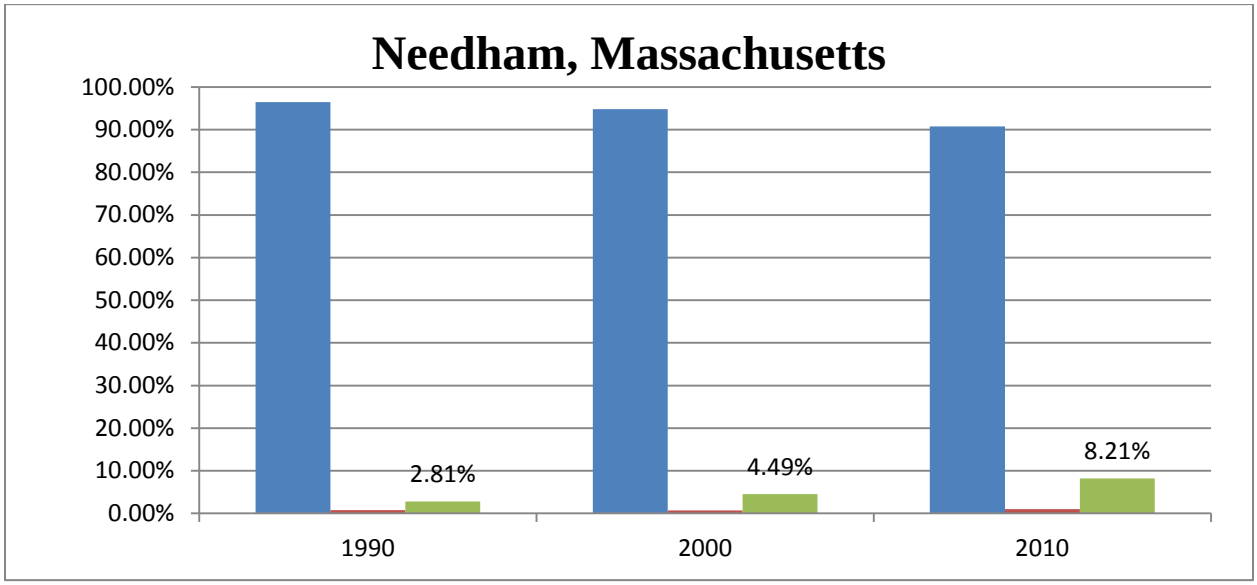

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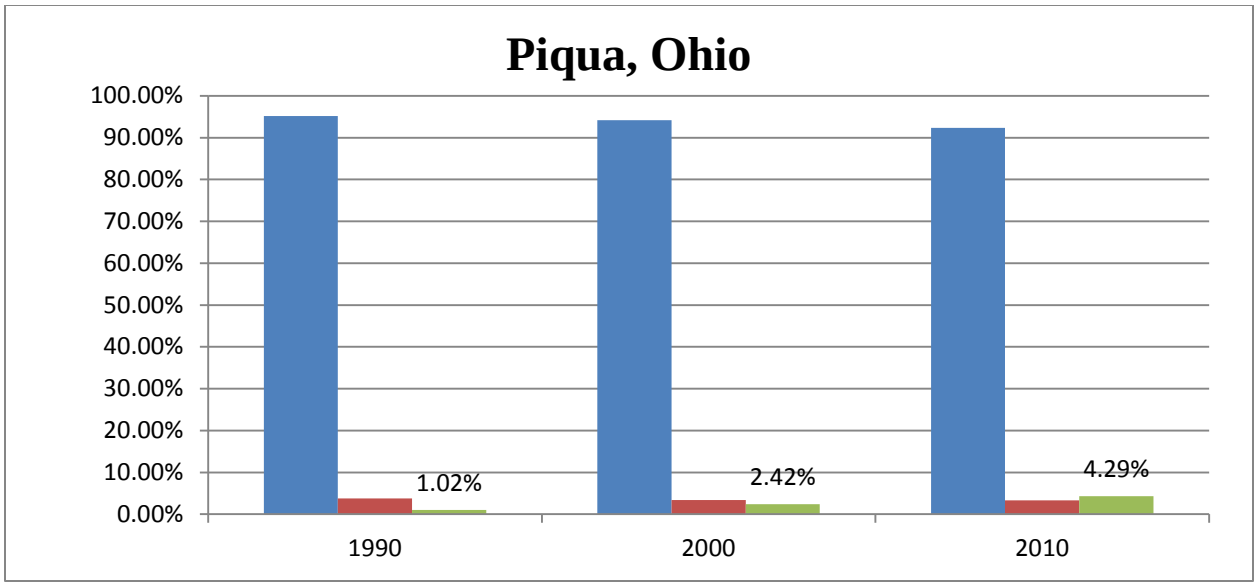

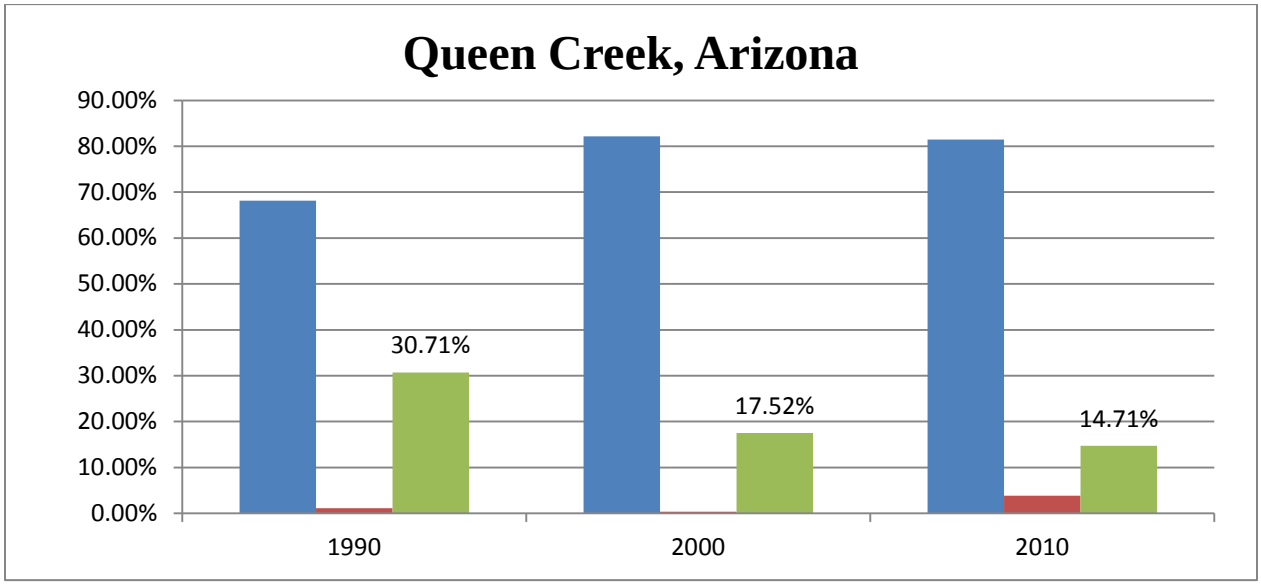

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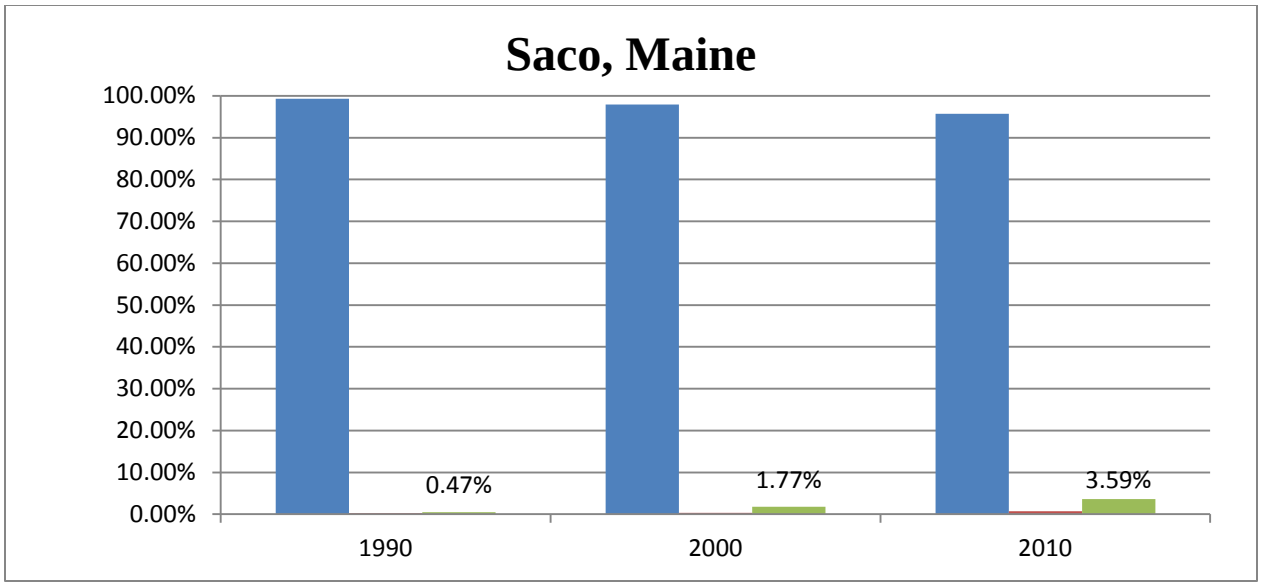

City of Decatur

Appendix B: Resources

Christian Perry and Casie Yoder presented a summary of the findings of this report to the Decatur City Commission on August 4, 2014. A downloadable copy of the PowerPoint and a link to archived streaming video of the presentation is available on the Decatur Minute blog: http://thedecaturminute.com/2014/08/05/diversity-project-results-presented-last-night

The memo outlining the details of the proposed process to create a Community Action Plan for a Compassionate Decatur:
https://decatur.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=943

Two City of Decatur staff members participated in the YWCA of Atlanta's first *It's Time to Talk: Forums on Race* discussion. The program was modeled on one created by the YWCA of Minneapolis more than a decade ago.

YWCA of Minneapolis:
https://www.ywcampls.org/events/its_time_to_talk_forums_on_race/
YWCA of Greater Atlanta: http://www.ywcaatlanta.org/its-time-talk

October is National Diversity Awareness Month, and the first Friday of the month (October 7th) is National Diversity Day.

Brown University study about most and least diverse cities:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/07/most-least-diverse-cities-brown-university-study_n_1865715.html

Community Dialogue Guide: Conducting a Discussion on Race - This sample document provides a guide for effectively starting a community dialogue on race issues.

Culture Connects All: Rethinking Audiences in Times of Demographic Change - This report by the Partners for Livable Communities describes events that are inclusive and accessible to everyone in your community.

Diversity resources from ICMA: http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/topics/topic/51
Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability: Local Governments, Social Equity, and Sustainable Communities

Links to other cities' diversity initiatives and efforts:

- City of Beaverton, Oregon: http://www.beavertonoregon.gov/index.aspx?NID=1318

- City of Boulder, Colorado initiative: http://icma.org/Documents/QuestionAnswer/Document/11131
- City of Burlington, Vermont: https://www.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/9LELGZ567D5D/$file/Communication%20City%20of%20Burlington%20Diversity%20%20Equity%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf
- City of Cincinnati, Ohio: http://www.cincyusa.com/multicultural/diversity
- Colorado Springs, Colorado, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Gainesville, Florida, and Fort Worth, Texas were all recognized by the National League of Cities for their effective cultural diversity programs.
- City of Dubuque, Iowa initiatives: http://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/16041 http://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/3623
- Fort Collins, Colorado established a Multicultural Book Series to prompt discussions on local diversity through great books that help give people new perspectives.
- City of Edina, Minnesota Human Rights & Relations Commission: http://edinamn.gov/index.php?section=boards_humanrights
- City of Little Rock, Arkansas: http://www.littlerock.org/citycommissions/?ID=26
- City of Longview, Texas: http://administration.longviewtexas.gov/city-managers-diversity-advisory-council
- Longview, Texas sponsored a month's worth of events promoting diversity during Diversity Awareness Month (October).
- "We're all on the Same Team" Cultural Diversity Program- This document is an overview of Phoenix's diversity program.
- Redwood City, California developed *Downtown WOW!* program primarily to help promote main street businesses, but many of its events center on the cultural diversity of the city.
- City of Seattle, Washington has several citizen boards that focus on various aspects of diversity: http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/boardsportal.asp
- Communication & Service in Sugar Land: Multi-Cultural Outreach & Education Program-The City of Sugar Land, Tex. has recently created their own multi-cultural inclusion program.
- Texas Diversity Council (different councils in various cities): https://texasdiversitycouncil.org/joinus.php
- City of Toronto, Canada: http://diversecitytoronto.ca/get-involved/onboard/join-board/

About the Authors

Christian Perry currently works as a fellow in the City Manager's office. He started working for the city as a summer intern hired to prepare this report. Perry has a background in research, statistics and data analysis, studies planning and economic development policy at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and will graduate with a Master's of Public Administration degree in 2015. A Decatur High School alumnus, Perry graduated with dual B.B.A. degrees in economics and regional economic development from Georgia Southern University in 2013.

Casie Yoder is the city's Public Information Officer. In this role she is the first point of contact for the news media, edits the Decatur Focus newsletter, oversees the city's blogs, coordinates the city's social media properties and works on special projects, including the writing and preparation of this report. She is also guiding the process of updating and improving the city's public and internal communication plans and procedures. Yoder has a B.A. in journalism from Georgia State University.