

City of Decatur Blog Policy
Effective June 2008

Blogs are one of the City of Decatur's communication tools and offer the opportunity to invite conversation with the community. They take time, commitment, a willingness to listen, and a thick skin capable of showing authentic attention to criticism. Topics should explain or educate and serve as a vehicle to build trust, interest, awareness, and enthusiasm.

Blog Request and Approval Process

A request to have a blog must come from a department or division within the City of Decatur and must first be submitted to the Community & Economic Development Department for review and discussion. The request should include a written proposal that answers the following questions:

1. What is the overall goal of the blog?
2. How will it enhance and not duplicate current communication efforts?
3. Who will be responsible for writing and posting the content?
4. How often will content be posted on the blog?
5. What type of content will be posted? Give examples of topics the blog would address.
6. Please write a sample blog entry and submit it with the proposal.
7. Write a two or three sentence description of the blog.

Based on discussion and review of the proposal, the Community & Economic Development Department will make a recommendation to the City Manager who has the final authority to approve a proposed blog.

Blog Design

The design/overall look of the blog must be approved by Linda Harris or a designee in the Community & Economic Development Department. Logistics related to posting the blog itself should be worked out with Catherine Lee in the Community & Economic Development Department.

Blog Content

The content of department blog postings should reflect the stated goal of the blog and should enhance but not duplicate current communication efforts. Each blog should contain relevant and informative content on specific topics related to the area/department where it originates. Topics should not be designed to intentionally raise controversial questions or issues.

Blog Postings

Blog content should be concise, clear, and relatively informal without being unprofessional. Content should be simple, focused and contain one idea per post.

Blogs must be updated consistently and routinely with a minimum of weekly postings. All postings must be submitted for approval to Linda Harris, Catherine Lee, or an appointed designee in the Community & Economic Development Department. Content may be edited/ revised if necessary before final posting.

Blog Comments

Blog comments that result from postings must conform to the Blog Comment Policy posted on the website. Comments that conform to the Blog Comment Policy must be posted. A posted comment does not imply endorsement or agreement.

It is the responsibility of the blogger to confirm that comments conform to the Policy before posting them to the website. If there is a question or uncertainty about a comment, check with Lyn Menne, Linda Harris, or Catherine Lee in the Community & Economic Development Department. If they are not available, check with Peggy Merriss, City Manager or with a Deputy City Manager or Assistant City Manager. It is better to ask first rather than have to remove a comment after it has been posted.

Blog Replies

Blog replies to comments must also conform to the Blog Comment Policy posted on the website. All comments do not need a reply. Replies should explain or educate not debate.

When comments are exaggerated and untrue, other bloggers usually weigh in to set the record straight. Bloggers must have a thick skin, show authentic attention to criticism, and be willing to learn from negative comments.

Removal of Blogs

Blogs that do not conform to the guidelines may be removed or suspended at the discretion of the Community & Economic Development designee, an Assistant City Manager or the City Manager.

Open Records

All content, comments, and replies posted on the City of Decatur website are subject to compliance with Georgia Open Records laws. Information found on City of Decatur blogs is subject to being re-printed in newspapers, magazines, online or in any other media format.

Blog Comment Policy
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Welcome!

The City of Decatur is pleased to begin posting blogs from city departments on its website. Comments, suggestions, ideas, feedback and questions are welcome and encouraged. Some blogs offer basic information and others are designed to promote dialogue. The following guidelines address what belongs in a civic forum and comment submissions will be moderated based on the following comment policy:

- Stay on topic. Comments and/or links to outside websites/sources should relate to the topic being discussed in the original post.
- Keep it clean. Comments should not contain profanity, racial slurs or any other derogatory terms.
- Personal attacks are taboo. Comments should not contain personal or defamatory remarks or attacks.
- Agree to disagree. Reasonable arguments for opposing views are encouraged. A posted comment is the opinion of the poster only. Publication of the comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by the author of the blog or the City of Decatur.
- Campaigning belongs elsewhere. This blog is not the place to endorse candidates or a particular stance on currently active ballot measures.
- This comment policy may be revised at any time.
- Comment submissions that repeatedly violate this policy may be prohibited.
- Submission of a comment constitutes acceptance of this comment policy.

If you have questions or comments about this policy, email blogpolicy@decaturga.com.