

OBITUARY – A Little Bit of Downtown Decatur is Dying

The Clairemont Avenue greenspace, brought into this world by Dan Patillo at the urging of downtown business folk, will die this fall to make way for a Hampton Inn. Among downtown neighbors, It is predeceased by the Decatur High School Community Garden and the pocket park at 315 Ponce. It is survived in Downtown by the Decatur Square, Scott Park, and (for now) the Decatur Housing Authority greenspace.

In a community well below the national average in parkland, the Clairemont Avenue green space – though privately owned – was often pressed into public service. A faithful and longstanding host to Decatur festivals' needs, many children will grow up with fond memories of listening to their favorite authors while sitting under the trees. As the downtown population has continued to grow, old and new residents have enjoyed walking their dogs, throwing a Frisbee or finding serenity on its grass and below the trees. It has selflessly offered a respite from all the new development currently transforming Downtown Decatur.

The Clairemont Greenspace will take with it nearly an acre of grass and more than 50 trees, the majority mature shade trees that have both helped keep Decatur's temperatures a little cooler and done their part to fight global warming. The trees and pervious surface also absorbed significant amounts of stormwater, helping alleviate the pressure on Decatur's overtaxed stormwater infrastructure.

Friends of this space will host a small celebration at the Greenspace at 4:45 on Sunday, October 30. Given its impending destruction, this likely will be the last event held there. If so inclined, residents are invited to join park supporters as they march in the Haints & Saints parade. Mourners will carry a casket bearing dead foliage to mark the passing of the Greenspace. At the close of the parade, a lone trumpeter will continue from the Square to the Greenspace, playing a dirge to mark its passing. Attendees are invited to wear green shirts or green armbands.

In lieu of flowers, greenspace supporters ask that you contact your City Commissioner to express your support for a new Downtown Park. You also can like the Facebook Page ([facebook/downtowndecaturpark](https://www.facebook.com/downtowndecaturpark)) or purchase a Downtown Decatur Park T-Shirt at Sunday's' event (only \$10 – all profits will be used to advocate for a new park).