



**Community and Economic Development**

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February 28, 2025

Rondah Q. Thomas  
Area Manager  
South Dekalb/Rockdale Counties  
Georgia Power Company  
241 Ralph McGill Boulevard NE  
Atlanta, GA 30308

RE: Georgia Power Project P501-1 Decatur-Scottdale 115kV Proposed Mega Line Install

Dear Rondah,

This letter constitutes the Decatur Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC) response to the proposed installation of 100-foot 115kV transmission lines along Sycamore Street, which is subject to environmental review pursuant to O.C.G.A. Sections 12-16-2 and 12-16-9, as amended. The street lies within Old Decatur Local Historic District, a 19th and early 20th century neighborhood built along a Muscogee trade route, later a stagecoach route, between Atlanta and Augusta.

With heavily travelled sidewalks and dense tree canopy painstakingly preserved by residents with HPC oversight, Old Decatur Local Historic District is downtown Decatur's last surviving historic residential neighborhood. The buildings represent the roots of the city's development, and many have local or regional significance.

The district contains several exceptional assets. Death House at 813 Sycamore Street is a rare high-style Queen Anne residence that is a cornerstone of the district's architectural heritage. Its importance is such that when MARTA was built it was moved from its original location rather than being demolished. The Stewart Roland House at 218 Barry Street is among DeKalb County's oldest structures and the old train depot at 303 E Howard Avenue is attributed to the nationally prominent architect Edmund G. Lind.

Georgia Power representatives stated their planning process began years ago; yet critical stakeholders, including the City of Decatur, CSX, and MARTA, were excluded from discussions. Residents only learned of the project after receiving easement or eminent domain notices. Lacking residents' input, Georgia Power determined their proposed alignment would be the least intrusive and would have minimal impact on historic properties. The HPC does not concur with this finding.

The proposed transmission lines require a 25- to 50-foot buffer on either side, necessitating the clear-cutting of dozens of mature, historic specimen trees. Visual characteristics important to the integrity of the district, such as shaded porches, building orientations, and entryways all leading to pedestrian-centered streets, would be adversely affected. The loss of this vegetative screen would also increase light and noise pollution from the train as well as urban heat.

Old Decatur Local Historic District is surrounded on three sides by existing industrial and commercial areas with few trees that offer many alternatives. The HPC formally opposes installing 100-foot 115kV transmission lines along Sycamore Street and proposes the following options:

- Install above-ground lines along the CSX right-of-way at E College Avenue.
- Relocate the lines to industrial or heavy commercial areas.
- Bury the lines at E College Avenue.

Moreover, Georgia Power must involve local stakeholders, including the HPC, in meaningful discussions to ensure preservation is prioritized in future projects.

The public was given the opportunity to comment on the proposed project at the November 19, 2024, regular meeting of the HPC. Enclosed are copies of the meeting minutes and a petition signed by residents. Please feel free to contact Aileen de la Torre at [aileen.delatorre@decaturga.com](mailto:aileen.delatorre@decaturga.com) or 678-553-6596 if you have questions regarding this letter or the public comments. The HPC welcomes the opportunity to meet with Georgia Power's leadership.

Sincerely,



Andrew Navratil

Chair

Historic Preservation Commission

City of Decatur

Enclosed:

Minutes of the November 19, 2024, HPC Meeting

Neighborhood Petition

Old Decatur Local Historic District Map

Decatur Heights-Glenwood Estates-Sycamore Street National Register District Map