



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

File ID: 2022-1392

Substitute

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Planning and Sustainability

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Districts

To adopt a resolution to establish a Revitalization and Elimination of Blight Goals and Task Plan for 2022-2026.

Information Contact: Andrew Baker, AICP, Director of Planning & Sustainability

Phone Number: 404-687-7154

PURPOSE:

To consider a Resolution that list the strategies/goals and tasks for the next five years focusing on Operation Clean Sweep, Housing, Human Investment, Neighborhood Stabilization, Economic Development, Combating Crime, and Quality of Life.

NEED/IMPACT:

DeKalb County recognizes that blighted properties cause adverse impacts in the community, including depressing property values and limiting economic development opportunities, and there is a need to address those problems in a systematic and orderly fashion. As such, the County the enacted resolutions in 2018 and 2019 identifying a number of goals and objectives that were designed to aid in the reduction of blight within the County. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic created a health and economic development emergency causing various initiatives to be delayed while the County focused on providing vital services to citizens during the Pandemic.

The Resolution creates a roadmap listing the goals and tasks for eliminating blight for the next five years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Special Project Coordinator position which was funded in the 2022 budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

To adopt the Revitalization and Elimination of Blight Goals and Task Plan to mitigate blighted properties that cause adverse impacts in unincorporated DeKalb County.

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, OUTLINING THE GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED IN 2022-2026 WITH REGARD TO REVITALIZATION AND THE ELIMINATION OF BLIGHT CONTRIBUTORS IN DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the County recognizes that blighted properties cause adverse impacts in the community, including depressing property values and limiting economic development opportunities, and there is a need to address those problems in a systematic and orderly fashion;

WHEREAS, in early 2017, the County undertook the task of identifying various administrative and legislative changes to aid in the reduction of blight in residential areas across the County;

WHEREAS, the County enacted resolutions in 2018 and 2019 identifying a number of goals and objectives that were designed to aid in the reduction of blight within the County;

WHEREAS, since 2017 the County has accomplished a number of the tasks outlined in its 2018 and 2019 resolutions;

WHEREAS, completion of these tasks has allowed the County to reduce blight and eliminate public health, wealth and safety issues that arose from private property not being in compliance with various laws;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic created a health and economic development emergency causing various initiatives to be delayed while the County focused on providing vital services to citizens during the Pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Georgia issued an Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency Order on March 14, 2020, so the Courts were not fully operational during the Pandemic and in-person hearings were limited or not occurring at all;

WHEREAS, the Magistrate Court of DeKalb County began to hear ordinance violation cases via zoom on September 18, 2020, and in rem cases via zoom on May 20, 2021. As of August 30, 2021, more than 2000 ordinance cases have been adjudicated and 14 in rem cases have been before the Court.

WHEREAS, participants in both kinds of hearings indicate a higher percentage of attendance for zoom hearings as opposed to in-person hearings;

WHEREAS, [in May on March 22](#), 2022, the Governing Authority will consider a Resolution whereby the Commission will consider a Revitalization Resolution listing the goals and tasks for the next five years; and

WHEREAS, this Resolution creates a roadmap listing the goals and tasks for eliminating blight for the next five years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Authority as follows:

Operation Clean Sweep

1. The County will focus on litter removal, combating illegal dumping, grass mowing, curb bumping, and removing debris, trash and grass from County streets, sidewalks, roadway drains, and right of ways through the multi-departmental initiative Operation Clean Sweep.
2. The County will work to protect the public health, safety, environment, and general welfare through the regulation and prevention of litter through the DeKalb County Litter Control Ordinance. The County will also conduct a Litter Awareness Campaign that is designed to prevent littering along County roads and public spaces throughout unincorporated DeKalb County.
3. The County shall systematically conduct Code sweeps along each commercial corridor in unincorporated DeKalb County for compliance with the International Property Maintenance Code and Chapter 18 of the DeKalb County Code.
4. The County shall strategically implement both the Tree Bank and the Re-leaf DeKalb programs to help aesthetically beautify commercial corridors.

Operation Neighborhood Stabilization

1. The County will submit to the Law Department for abatement or demolition, ~~thir~~thir~~seventy~~seventy-five (35) blighted properties during 2022 and will evaluate how many properties will be abated or demolished each successive year.
2. The County will improve tracking of the demolition and abatement of blighted properties by working with GIS to integrate Hansen technology into the entire demolition and abatement process, thereby increasing transparency. Moreover, citizens will be able to track code enforcement cases through the implementation of this new technology.
3. The County will reactivate the DeKalb County Land Bank Authority for the purpose of converting vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent properties to productive uses in order to stabilize neighborhoods and promote quality housing.
4. The Code Compliance Division will use the Comprehensive Property Survey report to develop a robust pipeline for processing of Nuisance Abatement cases over the next 18-24 months.
5. The County will abate, clean and secure 20 properties by December 2022.
6. The County will process for demolition 15 properties by December 2022.
7. County staff will research best practices and present an ordinance or resolution to the Commission that may include the establishment of a “Blight Tax.”
8. The Commission will adopt the International Property Maintenance Code to provide Code Enforcement with tools to combat blight.
9. County staff will continue to address repeat code offenders by updating and monitoring the comprehensive list of blighted hotels/motels and multifamily properties. County staff will keep track of repeat code offenders, track their business license status, and perform coordinated monthly sweeps (rotations) with Fire, Code Enforcement, Police and the Health Department.
10. County staff will continue to maintain a vacant property and foreclosure registry, submit budget requests to ensure the registry is properly funded, and provide a report to the Commission every six months.
11. County staff will continue to maintain and update a spreadsheet to identify and track blighted properties throughout the rehabilitation process.

12. The Commission will consider adoption of an ordinance establishing a code enforcement advisory board.
13. The Commission will continue to research and consider an ordinance revising policies related to sign kiosks, large signs, and other visual blight.
14. Of the 15 structures that will be submitted for demolition, ~~t~~The County will eliminate ~~a minimum of 10%~~ some of the level 5 structures through the In Rem process based on the Property Conditions Survey by December 2022.
15. The Code Compliance Administration, along with the Department of Innovation and Technology (“DoIT”), will develop and implement a modernized field inspection atomization system to improve the reporting accuracy and data integrity of the violations case management process, by January 2023.

Operation Housing

1. The Commission will continue to review and identify affordable housing for citizens, including an ordinance or resolution for rent controlled housing by the end of 2022.
2. County staff will endeavor to support an increase in home ownership by 12 additional citizens each year.
3. The County shall complete a Housing Study to establish a housing policy for unincorporated DeKalb County by the end of 2022.
4. In an effort to provide “middle housing,” which is defined as housing types that provide diverse housing options, such as duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and multiplexes that fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods and support walkability, locally-serving retail, and public transportation options, the County shall adopt a Workforce Housing ordinance during the third quarter of 2022 to offer incentives to private sector builders.
5. The County shall continue to utilize the collaborative efforts of the Multi-family Task Force to ensure that complexes have a Certificate of Compliance before issuance of business license renewals.
6. The County shall continue to utilize the Rental Rehab Assistance Program.
7. The County shall continue to utilize the Home Rehab Assistance Program.
8. The Land Bank shall provide residents with housing choices by converting vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent properties to productive uses in order to stabilize neighborhoods and promote quality housing.
9. The County shall work with non-profit organizations, the DeKalb County Housing Authority, and the private sector to improve the housing stock, increase housing choices, and to expand quality affordable housing throughout the County.

Operation Human Investment

Service Delivery Connection/Outreach

1. Develop 10 new joint Human Services Partnerships in the Revitalization Boundaries to expand youth, senior, non-profit, and faith-based services by third Quarter 2022. Revitalization Boundaries means those boundaries established by the DeKalb County School District high school attendance zones that have been established to help identify areas in need of services.
2. Increase mobility of seniors (aged 60+) within the Revitalization Boundaries by enrolling 15% of the targeted senior population in Human Services transportation services by fourth quarter of 2022.

3. Refer 100% of identified families within the Revitalization Boundaries who are food insecure to Human Service's network of resources, including but not limited to food pantries and meal providers.
4. Utilize child well-being and food bank data to address food deserts within the Revitalization Boundaries to offer programs for home-delivered, emergency meals and food pantry assistance by the fourth quarter of 2022.
5. Decrease food insecurity for seniors and youth in Revitalization Boundaries by 25% in 24 months.
6. Enroll 500 additional seniors in the Meals On Wheels program for seniors in the Revitalization Boundaries by fourth quarter of 2022.

Health Services

1. Assess quality of healthcare data for families within the Revitalization Boundaries for additional in-home and outpatient services.
2. Introduce dementia-friendly, cultural diversity, English- as-a-Second Language, and translator services in the Revitalization Boundaries.
3. Introduce services for exposure to violence/trauma for persons in the Revitalization Boundaries by the third quarter of 2022.

Youth Services

1. Offer a full range of Youth Services programming within 10 miles of the Revitalization Boundaries including transportation services by the fourth Quarter 2022.
2. Provide Human Services tutoring & mentoring programs for youth in the Revitalization Boundaries which including, but not limited to parenting, nutritional and supportive services.
3. Enroll 250 youth from the Revitalization Boundaries in Youth Services Virtual Village program.

Operation Economic Development (Jobs/Employment)

1. Reduce Poverty by one percent through job training and placement. The national poverty rate is 13.7%, while the DeKalb County Poverty Rate is 15.1%.
2. Increase training enrollments by 30% by June 30, 2022 for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth respectively.
3. Increase second quarter 2022 placements by 30% by June 30, 2022 for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth respectively.
4. Increase fourth quarter 2022 placements by 30% by June 20, 2022 for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth respectively.
5. Human Services will partner with Work Source DeKalb to develop youth/young adult, literacy, computer & financial literacy, and entrepreneurship programming by first quarter 2022.
6. The Land Bank shall seek to acquire blighted commercial properties for demolition and aggregation for economic redevelopment.

Operation Combat Crime

1. The County shall emphasize public safety by adopting an ordinance to require visual surveillance cameras at all gas stations and convenience stores in unincorporated DeKalb County by the third quarter of 2022.
2. The County shall continue to utilize the Late Night Task Force to mobilize a collaborative effort to ensure the safety of residents and combat illegal drugs, burglaries, and violent crimes.
3. The County shall continue to utilize the Hotel Motel Task Force to mobilize a collaborative effort to ensure the safety of residents and combat illegal drugs, burglaries and violent crimes.
4. The Police Department shall coordinate with the Business License division of the Planning &

Sustainability Department to ensure that no business license is issued for lodging accommodations with inadequate video surveillance system equipment.

5. The Police shall continue to hold crime prevention meetings and outreach to neighborhood associations and business associations.

Operation Quality of Life

1. The County shall consider appropriate budgets for park maintenance and improvements based on the Parks Master Plan.
2. The County shall consider appropriate budgets for sidewalk construction and enhancements to provide safe pedestrian access along collector roads and bus routes, and increase connectivity to parks, libraries, senior centers, activity centers, and other County locations.
3. The County shall construct 5,280 linear feet of sidewalk throughout unincorporated DeKalb County over the next five years through the Community Development Block Grant program.
4. The County shall work to increase participation in recycling programs.
5. The County shall expand the principles of sustainability and green practices through the adoption of policies and programs such as No Net Loss of Trees, Green Communities Applications and other development standards such as low-impact development.
6. The County shall work with the state to increase mowing along state roads.
7. The County shall work with MARTA to improve bus shelters.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2022~~1~~.

STEPHEN R. BRADSHAW ROBERT J. PATRICK

Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this ____ day of _____, 2022~~1~~.

MICHAEL L. THURMOND

Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD, CCC

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

[SIGNATURES CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE]

DRAFT

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

ZACHARY WILLIAMS
Chief Operating Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

VIVIANE H. ERNSTES
County Attorney

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