

**A RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE THE CREATION OF
THE MERCER UNIVERSITY URBAN FOREST**

- WHEREAS,** Mercer University has a major campus in DeKalb County that offers Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional programs as well as schools of Pharmacy, Nursing, Business & Economics, Education, and other disciplines; *and*
- WHEREAS,** there are more than 3,000 students attending classes on this campus in addition to approximately 400 faculty and staff who work there and thousands who visit annually; *and*
- WHEREAS,** the Mercer Atlanta Campus in DeKalb County is on a 295 acre site that includes 140 acres of pristine, yet imperiled, environment featuring a mix of upland and bottomland ecosystems, an abundant and diverse plant community, and over two miles of streams at the confluence of Henderson Mill Creek and the North Fork of Peachtree Creek; *and*
- WHEREAS,** the size, diversity, and location of the land, streams, and wetlands afford a unique opportunity for restoration, preservation, research and education, and offers opportunities for residents to experience and better understand the role of natural environments; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Mercer University has expended \$20,000 from its own resources, along with \$15,000 of in-kind professional services contributed by the local landscape architecture and planning firm HGOR, to initiate a site assessment of this area to document the environmental features and assets this resource offers; *and*
- WHEREAS,** if Mercer University is successful in developing the support and partnerships needed to accomplish this initiative, the Urban Forest will be accessible to the residents of DeKalb County and the region; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Mercer University wishes to develop a partnership with DeKalb County to enhance and protect this site as a model Urban Forest and develop a sustainable green infrastructure to enhance water quality, improve tree canopy, reduce excess urban heat and mitigate the effects of climate change; *and*
- WHEREAS,** the North Fork of Peachtree Creek is a part of an urban stream network known as the Peachtree Creek Greenway that connects three DeKalb cities and major portions of unincorporated DeKalb County; *and*
- WHEREAS,** this stream corridor and greenspace is an essential part of DeKalb County's planned network of urban trails and alternate travel corridors; *and*
- WHEREAS,** the Mercer Urban Forest initiative is consistent with DeKalb County's Sustainability Plan and Transportation Plan and supported by the DeKalb Energy and Environment Manager; *and*
- WHEREAS,** the policy objective of this partnership is a cooperative example of urban sustainability that can be replicated and advanced in other areas of public policy, public- private partnerships, and the engagement of K-12 schools as participants in promoting resilience and sustainability; *and*
- WHEREAS,** in pursuit of additional support to advance planning for the Urban Forest and stream corridors, in anticipation of implementation towards construction of this part of the Peachtree Creek Greenway, DeKalb County and Mercer University have initiated an effort to pursue funding for this project; *and*

Now therefore, be it resolved that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners and the CEO of DeKalb County do hereby fully endorse this effort to promote the creation of the *Mercer University Urban Forest* to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, natural resource protection, community and neighborhood connectivity, alternate travel corridors, and the general promotion of outdoor enjoyment.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this 8th day of August, 2017.

Kathie Gannon

Presiding Officer

Board of Commissioners

DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer, this 8th day of August, 2017.

Michael Thurmond

Chief Executive Officer

DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA SANDERS

County Clerk

Board of Commissioners and

Chief Executive Officer

O.V. Brantley

County Attorney

DeKalb County, Georgia