



DeKalb County Government

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

Agenda Item

File ID: 2024-1564

Substitute

9/23/2025

Public Hearing: YES ☐ NO ☒

Department: Board of Commissioner - District 2

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

A Resolution to Allocate DeKalb County Funding for the Creation of a Land Trust for DeKalb County

Information Contact: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears and Commissioner Ted Terry

Phone Number: 404-371-2863

PURPOSE:

To approve the attached resolution to allocate DeKalb County funding for the creation of a land trust for DeKalb County.

NEED/IMPACT:

DeKalb County is committed to promoting equitable access to affordable housing and home ownership, preserving natural resources, supporting sustainable urban agriculture, and fostering inclusive community development. The creation of a DeKalb County Land Trust would serve as a valuable tool to advance these goals by holding and managing land for the benefit of current and future residents of DeKalb County. Land trusts have been proven effective in other jurisdictions across the country and in Georgia in creating a new pathway to home ownership, maintaining affordability, conserving natural spaces, and ensuring that land use aligns with the long-term needs and values of the community. The establishment of a DeKalb County Land Trust would provide a strategic means to address the growing challenges of housing affordability, environmental preservation, and equitable land use in DeKalb County, acknowledging that a recent study of land in Unincorporated DeKalb County showed that less than 3% of DeKalb County is left “undeveloped.” The attached resolution allocates funding in the FY 2025 DeKalb County budget in the amount of \$122,000.00 for the express purpose of procuring a third-party technical assistance vendor to collaborate with Commission staff, local housing stakeholders, and the Administration and Law Department of DeKalb County to envision and create an operational and start-up plan for a new DeKalb County Land Trust.

FISCAL IMPACT:

FY 2025 DeKalb County Budget in the amount of \$122,000

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the resolution and allocate DeKalb County funding for the creation of a Land Trust for DeKalb County and authorize the chief executive officer or her designee to execute all necessary documents.

**A RESOLUTION TO ALLOCATE DEKALB COUNTY
FUNDING FOR THE CREATION OF A LAND TRUST FOR
DEKALB COUNTY.**

WHEREAS, DeKalb County is committed to promoting equitable access to affordable housing and home ownership, preserving natural resources, supporting sustainable urban agriculture, fostering inclusive community development; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a DeKalb County Land Trust would serve as a valuable tool to advance these goals by holding and managing land for the benefit of current and future residents of DeKalb County; and

WHEREAS, the rate of homeownership for households earning less than 150% of the area median income has lagged behind the rate for higher-income households; and

WHEREAS, these and other conditions prevent many DeKalb households from experiencing the stability, opportunity to build wealth, and other benefits provided by home ownership; and

WHEREAS, land trusts have been proven effective in other jurisdictions across the country and in Georgia in creating a new pathway to home ownership, maintaining affordability, conserving natural spaces, and ensuring that land use aligns with the long-term needs and values of the community; and

WHEREAS, the long-term land stewardship and shared-equity model of ownership commonly utilized by land trusts reduce the long-term public investments required to maintain affordability in land trust homes, resulting in a more efficient use of public funds than other common housing affordability investments; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a DeKalb County Land Trust would provide a strategic means to address the growing challenges of housing affordability, environmental preservation, and equitable land use in DeKalb County, acknowledging that a recent study of land in Unincorporated DeKalb County showed that less than 3% of DeKalb County is left “undeveloped”; and

WHEREAS, the framework for the DeKalb County Land Trust must be carefully crafted to reflect the unique needs and priorities of DeKalb County residents, ensuring transparency, accountability, and community involvement in the trust's operations; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners recognizes the need for a comprehensive and inclusive process to develop this framework, involving key stakeholders, experts, and community members, and that the Board of Commissioners seeks to implement a county-wide Housing Plan, where a County Land Trust model will be crucial in realizing the goals of the housing plan;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Authority of DeKalb County, Georgia, to allocate funding in the FY 2025 DeKalb County budget in the amount of \$122,000.00 for the express purpose of procuring a third-party technical assistance vendor to collaborate with Commission staff, local housing stakeholders, and the Administration and Law Department of DeKalb County to envision and create an operational and start-up plan for a new DeKalb County Land Trust. The technical assistance vendor shall have substantial national expertise in community land trust operational models, business planning, and program structure necessary for a land trust that will operate county-wide in both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, that all aforementioned parties are hereby requested to develop and present a framework for the creation of a DeKalb County Land Trust no later than October 15, 2025.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2025

Michelle Long Spears
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer, this ____ day of _____, 2025

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA SANDERS
County Clerk
Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer

WILLIAM LINKOUS
County Attorney
DeKalb County, Georgia