



DeKalb County Government

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

Legislation Text

File #: 2023-0835, Version: 1

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Board of Commissioners - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

A Resolution to Commit to the Transformation of the South River Forest by Adopting the Recommendations of the “Explore South River Forest” Report and For the Administration to Prepare and Deliver an Implementation Plan

Information Contact: Commissioner Edward C. “Ted” Terry

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PURPOSE:

To commit to the transformation of the South River Forest by adopting the recommendations of the “Explore South River Forest” report commissioned by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). This includes requesting a presentation from the CEO and administration to prepare and deliver an implementation plan.

NEED/IMPACT:

The South River Forest is 3,500 acres of greenspace and forest in Atlanta and DeKalb County. On June 5, 2023 Atlanta adopted resolution 23-R-3665, committing the city to investment in the South River Forest. This DeKalb County resolution matches the city of Atlanta’s showing the need for joint stewardship efforts towards this valuable network of greenspaces that spans both municipalities. The need to protect and invest in this critical natural resource is great due to ongoing effects of climate change and the benefits such as carbon removal from the atmosphere, preventing erosion and stormwater runoff, reduction of heat island effect, and filtering pollutants from our water supply. Further, this South River Forest area has faced historical environmental injustice in the form of landfills, correctional facilities, truckyards, and heavy industrial uses in the area. Investment in the South River Forest will protect legacy communities, commit DeKalb County to environmental justice, slow effects of climate change, create climate resiliency, achieve goals in our DeKalb County 2050 Unified Plan, improve quality of life for South West DeKalb residents, and further stimulate economic growth in the south west portion of the county. See ARC “Explore South River Forest” report:

<https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/explore-south-river-forest.pdf>

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcdn.atlantaregional.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fexplore-south-river-forest.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Ckecato%40dekalbcountyga.gov%7Cbcd3d73c6fe439d94e408db78187400%7C292d5527abff45ffbc92b1db1037607b%7C1%7C0%7C638235819008052111%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=9CTCd2RCPAD0R1qgaW7kOitrIen%2BwZ20bKc%2B5h2VI7c%3D&reserved=0>

This resolution supports DeKalb County Government's commitment to environmental justice and repairing histories of disinvestment and damage, and acts on the importance of protecting our trees and forests lands and how forests are vital for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, slowing the rate of climate change, preventing erosion, reducing stormwater runoff, and filtering pollutants from our water supply.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Current fiscal impact currently unknown. Could be in the \$100 million bracket to match the City of Atlanta's funding efforts. To be discussed after the implementation plan presentation and what is possible to work in 2024 budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the attached resolution and for the Administration to prepare and deliver an Implementation Plan from the ARC recommendations.