South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center
Community Task Force

SUBGROUP MEETING 2 – MAY 16 & 17, 2023
Table of Contents

01 Welcome
02 Expert Presentations
03 Review Visioning Session
04 Final Visioning Exercise
05 Next Steps
Welcome
Task Force Vision and Goals

Vision
The vision for the South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center Community Task Force is to contribute to the policymaking for a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment that provides comprehensive training for all public safety professionals and encourages public interaction with the site.

Goals
The goals for engagement are to:
• Create inclusive and community-driven recommendations for the surrounding green space (300 acres) and the public safety training curriculum.
• Facilitate an inclusive engagement process that incorporates the aspirations and expertise of the Atlantan community.
• Provide opportunities for fact-based education and awareness of the public safety training center and surrounding green space.
Task Group Areas

Group 1: Parks & Greenspace
Develop programming for passive and active uses of the land, while preserving its natural ecology

Group 2: Police, Fire, and E911 Curriculum
Provide input on the collaborative potential and direction of the public safety curriculum

Group 3: Sustainability & Resilience
Introduce and encourage the use of best practices with regards to infrastructure and development

Group 4: Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site
Contextualize the future best use of the Atlanta Prison Farm Site given its history
Expectations

Engagement activities are centered around the planned development of the site

Recommendations will be delivered to the Mayor’s Office, but all may not be implemented

Task force members are representatives of their community of influence

The Task Force is focused on the 300 acres surrounding the Public Safety Training Facility site

Only selected Task Force members are to participate in the activities
Rules for Engagement

- Be Respectful of Others
- Be Present; No Substitutions
- Silence Cellphones
- One Conversation at a Time
- In Absence, Review Materials & Provide Comments
Meeting 1: Inform and Early Visioning

Meeting 2: Final Vision and Early Recommendations

Meeting 3: Recommendations

Meeting 4: Priorities

Meeting 5: Review & Vetting of Final Recommendations for all groups
Expert Presentations
Presenters

• Sheffield Hale, Atlanta History Center
• Doug Young, Director of Planning for the City of Atlanta
• Douglas Blackmon, Author of *Slavery by Another Name*

Today’s presenters will:
• Provide additional context on current initiatives and/or best practices
• Share initiatives or relevant information not provided in the Previous Plans and Studies Summary
• Address questions presented in previous meetings
Brief History of the Atlanta Prison Farm Site

Sheffield Hale, President & CEO
May 16, 2023
A Note on Sources and Scope

— This presentation and upcoming report were compiled using a variety of sources, including census data, tax digests, City of Atlanta records (Council minutes and ordinances, payroll records, annual reports), maps, newspaper articles (primarily the *Atlanta Constitution*), and photographs.

— This presentation is not meant to be comprehensive: the goal is to provide an outline of the Atlanta Prison Farm site’s basic history and to help inform areas of future research.

— There has been much confusion about this history in prior sources, so all findings are subject to further research, which is ongoing.

— Do not rely on the 1999 Historical Analysis report- conflates 3 different sites and has been continuously cited, including in today’s AJC on May 16, 2023.
Land Lottery and Private Ownership

— Most of the Atlanta Prison Farm property is located in Land Lot 82, with a small portion in Land Lot 83, in District 15 of DeKalb County

— Land originally ceded by members of the Muscogee Nation to the State of Georgia in the Treaty of Indian Springs in 1821

— Land Lot 82 was bought by Uriah Brown, Land Lot 83 was bought by Samuel Philbrick

— Many records between 1821-1848 were destroyed by a fire in DeKalb County

— As of tax digests of 1848-1850, William Morris owned both lots 82 and 83

— George P. Key purchased both lots on January 10, 1855; land was used for farming by up to 22 enslaved individuals as indicated by the DeKalb County tax digests

— Key died in 1883, land went to William B. Key and Thomas T. Key

— William Key married Susan Meriweather and had a child named Eva

— Eva Couch (married Charles Couch) sold the land to the City of Atlanta in 1911
1911 Survey Map of Property from Couch sale to City of Atlanta

- Bordered by “public road” (later Fayetteville and Key roads) and Constitution Road
- Identified as “proposed location of new crematory on Key property”
City Acquisition

— Land was intended to as a site for a crematory, but was leased to N.H. Maddox in 1912, who evidently farmed and ran a dairy on the site.

— City of Atlanta purchased “the dairy herd, stock, buildings, equipment, etc.” from Maddox in 1917 and began running the site as a city dairy.

— Dairy provided milk to several city-run sites, including the Battle Hill Sanitorium, Grady Hospital, and the Contagious Hospital.

Pictured: 1911 Deed from Eva Couch to City of Atlanta.
Dairy Farm to Prison Farm

— The main city prison, the Atlanta Stockade, was overcrowded and in poor condition.

— In November 1922, the Prison Committee of the City requested that the city engineer begin planning for housing for inmates on the Dairy Farm Property.

— Reports from the Prison Committee for the year 1922 indicate that transfer of inmates had not yet occurred.

— By end of October and November, 1925.

STOCKADE BUILDING TO BE CONVERTED INTO CITY SCHOOL

The building formerly used by the city for a stockade, located near East Fair street, will be converted into a new grammar school, it was learned at city hall Friday. Mayor Walter A. Sims will push the plan to convert the building into a school which will serve the people of the South Boulevard section.

PRISON COMMITTEE OF CITY COUNCIL GIVES BARBECUE

Several hundred city, county and state officials and prominent Atlanta citizens enjoyed a barbecue Saturday, afternoon at the city dairy farm near Constitution, Ga., which was given by the prison committee of council. Councilman Charles E. Chosewood, chairman of the prison committee, was chairman of the entertainment committee. A barbecue dinner was served and there were entertainment features.

The last prisoners were transferred Friday from the old stockade. The men were taken to a new prison on Hilliard street, near Decatur street while the women prisoners were taken to the city dairy farm near Constitution.

Mayor Walter A. Sims, William Hanson, chief of construction, and E. L. Jeff, acting chief of police, were among guests. The visitors were taken on an inspection tour of the new prison building for women, which was dedicated.
Prison Farm Expansion

— There were several additions to the Atlanta Prison Farm over the years, one of which came in the late 1930s due to severe overcrowding.

— In the 1930s, Hilliard Street Prison housed African American male inmates, while white women and men were housed at the Atlanta Prison Farm. It is unclear if African American women were housed at the farm or another facility.

— Future expansions included adding new sleeping quarters and work buildings throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s and beyond.

— Further research is necessary to determine the exact timeline of when inmates were moved to the facility.

Rendering of potential new plan for housing at Prison Farm- June 13, 1937 Atlanta Constitution Article

Though new housing was created, it is unclear if this exact plan was implemented.

4. Would be laundry, kitchen, and admin offices.
"Site" refers to area surveyed by Terracon in 2021; Prison Farm property ran all the way to Constitution Road and Intrenchment Creek.
1949 Aerial Photograph

Source: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Terracon Project No. 49217142
A Note: Atlanta Prison Farm vs. Atlanta Stockade vs. Federal Honor Farm

— Previous sources have confused the Atlanta Prison Farm with both the Atlanta Stockade and/or Federal Honor Farms (prison farms)

— Sources of confusion:
  — The Stockade site had a prison farm and quarry. Some sources will note that the Prison Farm site was originally purchased in the late 1800s as a place to put a cemetery—this is incorrect. The Stockade site is the property being described.
  — The Federal Honor Farms (prison farms) were located close to the Atlanta Prison Farm, and remained in operation for many years alongside the Atlanta Prison Farm. The Honor Farm concept was put into practice across the country.
  — The Atlanta Prison Farm was sometimes called simply the City Dairy or Dairy Farm in early years, and sometimes the City Prison Farm

— These errors have been replicated in online histories, newspaper articles, and some archival records
Photos of Farm and Hog operations at the Prison Farm, 1940s
Controversy and Reform

— Over the many decades of operations, the Atlanta Prison Farm was frequently overcrowded
  — More than 1,000 inmates were regularly housed in facilities built for around 400 people
  — Population began to decrease in the 1970s, especially after the process of criminalizing alcoholics changed in 1974

— Many people incarcerated at the Prison Farm were sent there for short sentences for minor offenses, such as public drunkenness and traffic violations
  — A City report in 1969 found that of the nearly 1,700 people at the farm, 85-90% were people struggling with chronic alcoholism
  — Efforts during the 1970s sought to refocus farm operations on treatment
  — Sentences ranged from 15-60 days

— Reports of poor sanitation, inadequate medical care, and inadequate food were common, including in a 1965 exposé in the Atlanta Constitution, by a reporter named Dick Herbert who got arrested on purpose to provide the reporting

Operations

— Much of the food for inmates throughout the City of Atlanta system was grown or raised at the farm
— Prison Farm was operated by the City of Atlanta via a Farm & Dairy Committee in the very early years, then a Prison Committee, eventually transitioning into the Department of Corrections
Hogs on the Prison Farm- 1982
Prison Farm Closure

— In August of 1990, a livestock auction sold off the 230 cattle and 250 hogs living at the site

— A 1992 ordinance leased a large portion of the farm to a company interested in piloting a beef program

— By 1994, was referred to as “closing” in a newspaper article and 1995 saw the opening of the 1,100 bed Atlanta City Detention Center
From 1992 Legislation
1999 Aerial Photograph

Key Road
Intrenchment Creek
Constitution Road

Source: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Terracon Project No. 49217142
2017 Aerial Photograph
Prison Farm Buildings: Current State

Credit: Atlanta History Center, 2023
Prison Farm Buildings: Current State

Credit: Atlanta History Center, 2023
Prison Farm Buildings: Current State

Credit: Atlanta History Center, 2023
Prison Farm Buildings: Current State

Credit: Atlanta History Center, 2023
What are some best practices for historic preservation of sites, particularly ones with difficult histories?

- Find and then ask the descendants / families of people jailed there about their experience, conditions, etc.
- Consult with other sites:
  - Eastern State Penitentiary (Philadelphia, Pa.)
    https://www.easternstate.org/
  - Convict Leasing and Labor Project (Sugar Land, Tx.)
    https://www.cllptx.org/sugarland95
    https://www.texascjc.org/county-reform- work/harris-county/convict-leasing
  - Monticello (Charlottesville, Va.)
    https://www.monticello.org/slavery/
  - Colonial Williamsburg (Williamsburg, Va.)
    https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/visit/itineraries/african-american-experience/
  - Tenement Museum (New York City)
    https://www.tenement.org/
  - Whitney Plantation (New Orleans, La.)
    https://www.whitneyplantation.org/
• **What are some potential or allowed uses for the site given its location and the degree of decay of some of the physical buildings?**
  - City-owned property within the City of Atlanta is not subject to the City’s zoning code requirements, but generally tries to follow such requirements. However, property is not located in the City of Atlanta.
  - Need to confirm applicability of any zoning / use / density regulations from Dekalb County on the property (already know they issued a Land Disturbance Permit).
What are some potential or allowed uses for the site given its location and the degree of decay of some of the physical buildings? (continued)

- Could restore key buildings to a condition that allows for visitors to understand their use and their functionality with the Prison Farm operations. However, not all buildings would necessarily need this to happen to illustrate the effects of abandonment, challenges of restoration, later “phases” of the property’s history, etc.

- Need to know what happened in which buildings to allow for representative spaces to be interpreted, explained, etc. – living spaces, office, common rooms, cells, solitary confinement, etc.

- Need to consider all the portions of the property that were connected to the operations/life of the Prison Farm beyond the standing buildings and their immediate vicinity, including the fields or pastures, outbuildings, pathways / drives, former fence lines, etc.
Atlanta Prison Farm Subcommittee

- Are there similar historic sites in the Atlanta area that the group can look to for inspiration?
  - Aside from the Chattahoochee Brick Company and the Bellwood Quarry (Westside Quarry Park), we are not aware of other sites like the Prison Farm, but they likely exist.

- What role does the GA Power easement play in potential development limitations or opportunities?
  - Potential height limitations within the easement, per the easement terms
Atlanta Prison Farm Subcommittee

- Are there existing plans, mandates, or design constraints that may address accessibility, and could have an effect on some of the recommendations (i.e. trail connections, parking structures, grading, ADA compliance)?
  - All of these could be constraints on the recommendations, but can be addressed during the concept design and Design Development phases of any proposed physical improvements.
Atlanta Prison Farm Subcommittee

- What are the remaining “historic” artifacts left on the site that are up for use/repurposing?
  - We don’t know yet what, if anything, is left on the site related to the history of the property.
  - If there is artifacts, then they should be used appropriately to interpret the site and not used as random objects or “props” without context – not used as yard ornaments or utilitarian objects, such as benches.
The City of Atlanta’s Future Places Project is an initiative to ensure that Atlanta retains its historic identity as the city moves forward.
Why do the Future Places Project?

The City’s “brand” / “that’s what we do”
Last time was in the mid-to-late 1980s
Rapid pace of physical change
Implementation of Atlanta City Design
Historic places impacted by the City
Myths vs. facts
The conversation / approach
Role of historic buildings and places
A roadmap for the next 30 years
Lessons Learned:

- Not expanding the conversation enough
- Increase the strength of public private partnerships
- Act with more urgency
- Explain better what historic preservation is now and what it can / should be in the future
- Increase accessibility to the topic / discussion
- Work harder to break down barriers / divides
Summary of the Call to Action:

Help People Know
Help People Understand
Help People Share
Learn More about Ourselves / Our City

Recognize What We Value
Keep What We Value
Protect What We Value
Bring Resources to the Table
Be Efficient and Helpful
The Brother needs you

come let us build a new world together

SNCC
3206 14th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010
Review Visioning Session Results
Vision Process
Recap of Week 1 – Vision Exercise

Visioning Exercise
1. Desired Outcomes
2. Individual Contribution
3. Selection of Key Vision Words
04

Final Visioning Exercise
Draft Vision Statements – Instructions

• Review drafted vision statements created from feedback and input from Week 1
• Edit the vision statements by placing colored dots:
  - [ ] Highly important or must keep
  - [ ] Not relevant or remove

• Feel free to add words or provide comments on the structure or content of the statement.

NOTE: You are not required to comment on every word in the vision statement!

Refer to the results from your group’s visioning exercise and consider how any recommendations shared during Week 1, plan summaries, and presentations today should inform the final vision statement for your group.
Our vision is to create a dynamic and interactive community center that provides recreational opportunities for all. We aim to foster a sense of community through innovative programming that engages people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Our focus on culture and collaboration will ensure that the community center remains a culturally sensitive and expressive space for everyone, while promoting equity and advancing educational opportunity for residents.
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For the residents of People Place

Would like to include some specific goals or priorities

Accessible and diverse

What metric can be provided to get specific?
Our vision is to preserve the historic significance of the Former Atlanta Prison Farm Site while repurposing it to promote community, education, and revitalization. The project will honor the dignity of its past while fostering vibrancy and multigenerational programming for the future.
Next Steps
Next Steps

• Week 3 – Recommendations
• Share Final Vision and Early Recommendations
## Task Group Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks and Greenspace</th>
<th>Police, Fire, &amp; E-911 Training Curriculum</th>
<th>Sustainability &amp; Resilience</th>
<th>Visioning, Memorializing, &amp; Repurposing Former Atlanta Prison Farm Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Wednesdays 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Tuesdays 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM</td>
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</tbody>
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**Large Group Final Recommendations**

Wednesday, August 2, 2023 · 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Communications

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For questions about media correspondence and press releases, please reach out to the City of Atlanta for assistance.

Website
www.atltrainingcenter.com