South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center
Community Task Force Recommendations

FINAL TASK FORCE PRESENTATION
CITY OF ATLANTA
AUGUST 2, 2023
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Background

- A 400-acre property in unincorporated DeKalb County was originally purchased 50 years ago by the City of Atlanta to construct a Prison Farm for those convicted of non-violent crimes. The Prison Farm closed in 1995.

- The property has also been the site of the Police Training Academy since 1974. But current training facilities for all Atlanta Public Safety Communities are in deplorable conditions.

- The City of Atlanta owns hundreds of acres of land in unincorporated DeKalb County. The Public Safety Training Center is being built in the South River Forest area on 85 of those acres (30 of which will be greenspace) and has pledged to preserve over 300 additional acres.

- A Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee (CSAC) was formed to provide additional input on designs and plans for the Center, to make it more community-oriented and available for community use.

- To get input on preserving the 300+ acres, Mayor Andre Dickens directed establishing of The South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center Community Task Force.
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.
Taskforce Subgroup Goals

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
Recommendation Process Flow

Task Force Vision & Goals

Task Force Subgroup Goals

Subgroup Vision

Subgroup Goals

Subgroup Recommendations

Subgroup Guiding Principles
Guiding Principles

Set of statements that will establish the framework for the expected behaviors and decision making for implementation of the Task Force recommendations to be attainable, sustainable, and successful.

1. Prompt implementation of a community-led leadership team dedicated to the responsible management and implementation of each subgroup area.

2. Financial resources should be committed and allocated to directly support and strengthen the recommendations put forth by the South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center Community Task Force.

3. Regular monitoring of progress should be established and measured by indicators defined by the community-led leadership team.
Task Force Recommendations

• It is important to the Task Force members that communication, engagement, and transparency continue.

• All communication regarding recommendations should be inclusive of two-way communication.

• Accurate and respectful communication is necessary to restore community trust.

• If any of these recommendations or policies are already in place, this should be communicated more efficiently to the community, and an enhancement or expansion of said recommendation or policy may be needed.

• Task Force recommendations are a direct reflection of the comments, input, and feedback from the Task Force members and are in no way reflective of the opinions of the APD Urban Team or the City of Atlanta.
Subgroup Vision, Guiding Principles & Recommendations
Vision Statement
Parks and Greenspace

Our vision is to develop a sustainable greenspace that conserves the tree canopy, values the South River watershed, and connects the park to trails, other greenspaces, and surrounding communities. Inclusive recommendations for community stewardship and preservation of the natural landscape will ensure the greenspace will be a multigenerational asset.

Guiding Principle

All plans for parks and greenspace must align with relevant adjacent plans to encourage connectivity, advance the City’s green mission, and support the local community’s needs, which include protection from gentrification and displacement.
Parks and Greenspace
Recommendation Goal Statements

**Community:** Ensure the long-term preservation and safeguarding of the natural and social environment and advocate for mitigation strategies that mitigate threats and minimize harm.

**Conservation:** Promote sustainable management practices and responsible use of natural resources, balancing human need and ecological integrity.

**Activation:** Create inclusive, accessible park spaces that serve as catalysts for community interaction and wellbeing and encourage public engagement.
Parks and Greenspace - Top 4 Recommendations

Recommendations Goal - Community

1st
P3: Connect the park and greenspace to the local community's history through naming conventions, dedications, and memorialization.

2nd
P2: Develop park activities that align with the desires of the community.

3rd
P4: Encourage Park Pride to create a community leadership structure such as a “Friends of” group, after an initial visioning session led by the City of Atlanta that prioritizes community engagement and considers activation and financial support.

4th
P1: Create historical connection inclusive of the local community.
Parks and Greenspace - Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal – Conservation

1st
P5: Detail a masterplan that incorporates an ecological restoration plan and landscaping typology plan and protects & improves existing natural resources identified in an existing conditions survey.

2nd
P9: Dedicate funding for system-wide park maintenance to ensure this park (the 300 acres and areas around the lakes) are conserved.

3rd
P6: Perform natural resources and existing conditions survey that shows locations of tree species & at-risk plants, and the presence of wildlife.

4th
P8: Create legislation/agreement that designates the greenspace as a park protects the ponds from development in perpetuity and outlines a commitment to streambank restoration.

5th
P7: Identify ideal locations for overlooks.
Parks and Greenspace - Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal - Activation

1st
P11: Expand a trail network to existing trails (i.e., Atlanta Beltline and South River Trail).

2nd
P19: Include accessibility throughout the park that prioritizes views for differently abled visitors.

3rd
P13: Schedule phased access via preliminary pathways before site completion for community members.

4th
P22: Install signage that indicates the physical changes made to the site across development phases.

5th
P17: Activate paths and trails to include seating, signage, lighting, and trash cans.
Vision Statement

A dynamic evidence-based public safety curriculum that emphasizes the core values of integrity and transparency while promoting respect and compassion between first responders and the community. The curriculum will advance effective communication, collaboration, honesty and a commitment to innovation in public service.
Guiding Principles

Atlanta Police Department and City government must acknowledge its role in the current state of policing and its relationship to protest, while making a commitment to prioritize restorative justice practices for affected populations, particularly the African American community.

Atlanta Fire Rescue will maintain its status as a trusted industry leader, providing exemplary emergency preparedness and response services while safeguarding the well-being of the community and overcoming emerging risks effectively.

As the first level of contact, E911 will ensure an efficient, reliable, and coordinated emergency response system that dispatches prompt and appropriate services while safeguarding the well-being of the community.
**Police, Fire, and E911 Curriculum Recommendation Goal Statements**

**Community:** Foster meaningful community engagement and collaboration that empower citizens to participate in the development, screening, and monitoring of curriculum.

**Collaboration:** Create framework for facilitating cross-sector partnerships, knowledge sharing, and diverse perspectives from non-governmental organizations and public safety officials.

**Transparency:** Establish open processes and clear, measurable indicators of progress towards responsible stewardship of curriculum development and encourage accountability to, and for, the greater community.
Police, Fire, and E911 Curriculum – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal - Community

**1st**

C6: Involve community leaders in developing and facilitating curriculum that acknowledges difficult history with policing.

**2nd**

C4: Create regularly scheduled meetings, preferably annually, that are spearheaded by local governments/colleges/universities to address protests and restorative justice experiences.

**3rd**

C9: Create innovative antibias, public safety and community specific courses, practices, and programs.

**4th**

C7: Re-implement ACERT (Atlanta Community Emergency Response Team). *ACERT is community education on preparing for emergencies and provides training in basic disaster response.*

**5th**

C8: Coordinate future public safety training programs with the community.
# Police, Fire, and E911 Curriculum – Top 5 Recommendations

**Recommendation Goal - Collaboration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>C12: Establish and incentivize continued education programs for APD officers at local colleges and universities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>C14: Pioneer a national center for innovation in community safety that convenes stakeholders, conducts research and assessments, and tests new/innovative methods in community safety.</td>
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<td>3rd</td>
<td>C10: Establish Citizens Public Safety Academy, with community non-governmental organizations and universities, that participate in curriculum development.</td>
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<td>4th</td>
<td>C15: Educate the public on all means and best practices of connecting with emergency services, including 911, non-emergency lines, online reporting, text-to-911, and telephone reporting.</td>
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<td>5th</td>
<td>C11: Clearly define intervention training for public safety officers that includes peer support, chaplaincy, and behavioral health professionals.</td>
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Police, Fire, and E911 Curriculum – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal - Transparency

1st
C18: Institute regular and ongoing psychological evaluations post recruitment.

2nd
C23: Establish training principles and/or metrics of success, in alignment with the 21st Century Community Policing Report and other evidenced based efforts.

3rd
C19: Publicize statistics and maintain a detailed private database of APD involved incidents that could be considered abusive to keep public accurately informed.

4th
C26: Define styles of community interaction to orient public safety training and expand these ideals across curriculum.

5th
C27: Commit to the release of all officer-involved interactions within 72 hours where feasible.
Sustainability and Resilience

**Vision Statement**

Our vision is to ensure innovative development practices through community driven sustainable solutions that amplify health and vibrancy. We will prioritize safety and equity to create a culture of inclusion for the surrounding community while creating opportunities to improve existing natural, cultural, and physical conditions in and around the 300+ acres of greenspace within the South River Forest including the Atlanta Prison Farm Public Greenspace.

**Guiding Principle**

A Community Benefits Agreement should be established, in collaboration with longtime residents, that prioritizes the development of programming that provides financial, social, and environmental opportunities to the community.
Sustainability and Resilience
Recommendation Goal Statements

**Live Well:** Improve quality of life for individuals and the community through the development of practices that are concerned with the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic factors.

**Infrastructure:** Influence the built and cultural environment, current and future, on and around the site through innovative practices and interventions that prioritize cultural vitality.

**Retention:** Integrate services, systems, and tools that preserve, leverage, and improve the site’s environmental, social, and economic characteristics with a focus on long-term viability and positive impact.
Sustainability and Resilience – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal – Live Well

1st
S3: Create social and financial programming and subsequent resources that identifies and addresses community and individual needs as it relates to economic, social, and wellness improvement.

2nd
S2: Encourage future development that prioritizes the delivery of fresh produce and food services (i.e., food trucks, local vendors).

3rd
S1: Create career and entrepreneurship opportunities for residents of the surrounding communities.

4th
S5: Develop a community pavilion.

5th
S4: Develop paths, trails and roads for pedestrian and bicycle travel.
Sustainability and Resilience – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommenda­tion Goal - Infrastructure

1st
S8: Create harmony with nature in all physical developments/buildings.

2nd
S7: Create a set of initial community-based driven projects (i.e. community gardens, home improvement, neighborhood safety programs) based on the unique need & preferences of the surrounding communities and neighborhoods.

3rd
S10: Create programming for coalition development, workforce training, community outreach, education, small business entrepreneurship financing/financial literacy.

4th
S13: Implement conscious landscaping such as rewilding and land restoration.

5th
S11: Support development of a community farm.
Sustainability and Resilience – Top 5 Recommendations

**Recommendation Goal - Retention**

1. **S24**: Conduct a community forum to identify critical issues & opportunities facing the surrounding neighborhoods and build capacity of community-based assets to be addressed in a comprehensive plan and/or community benefits agreement.

2. **S22**: Establish community of practice to align with Inflation Reduction Act, community capacity building, climate action, and funding opportunities.

3. **S17**: Adopt Kendeda Building principles and processes and pursue similar certification for development, current or planned, on the acreage.

4. **S18**: Create a rainwater harvesting system (i.e. cisterns, rain barrels, retention ponds) to reduce water overconsumption.

5. **S25**: Reimagine the use of the retired shooting range based upon community design and input. Potential uses include outdoor sports plex, community classrooms, or gardens.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site

Vision Statement

Our vision is to preserve the historic significance of the Former Atlanta Prison Farm Site while repurposing it to promote community, education, and resilience. We will honor the people of its past while fostering awareness about similar histories and provide multigenerational programming that encourages forward thinking and innovation in policing, incarceration, and protest.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site

Guiding Principles

A reconciliation and acknowledgement of the history of the site, its implications, and impact on the African American community is necessary and will enhance future dialogue on policing, incarceration, and protest in Atlanta.

A memorialization of connections to other histories of incarceration throughout the city is necessary to understand the impact of the site and envision a new future for incarceration and policing practices in and beyond Atlanta.

Development of programming that recognizes the site’s previous agricultural activity and, in collaboration with the City of Atlanta’s Parks and Recreation department, repurposes the site as a place for environmental stewardship and communal food practices through farming or gardening programs.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site

Recommendation Goal Statements

**Education:** Promote historical awareness of the depth and breadth of Atlanta’s history with policing, incarceration, and protest while fostering empathy, dialogue, and collective action toward change.

**Preservation:** Safeguard valuable physical and cultural resources while honoring historic relevance.

**Land:** Create a harmonious balance between the site’s historical significance, past use, and future utility in sustainable development.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendaion Goal - Education

1st

M1: Collaborate with universities and local schools, inclusive of service-learning centers to engage in educational and recreational programming for the farm.

2nd

M4: Obtain historic designation to develop national/international site for lectures and symposia regarding history of policing, mass incarceration, and prison reform.

3rd

M3: Create public programming with collaboration from other entities that deals with the impact of incarceration on families, specifically Black families.

4th

M7: Restore representative aspects of each building and its function so the public can see, touch, and experience layers of history and interact with the farm and prison's previous uses.

5th

M6: Create an outdoor historical display (i.e. reader rails, QR codes, digital media, art displays) that describes the history of the prison farm and its relationship with policing.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site - Top 5 Recommendations

**Recommendation Goal - Preservation**

1. **M16:** Acknowledge history of and potential gentrification, particularly because of development of amenities, to support future policymaking that protects the surrounding community from displacement.

2. **M12:** Preserve and renovate select historic buildings for uses as exhibit spaces, living history spaces, and other educational activities.

3. **M14:** Offer remaining Carnegie Marbles to artists to create site installation.

4. **M13:** Use cells in restored prison for art projects related to incarceration and prison reform.

5. **M15:** Maintain the "Mama Tried" street artwork as a relic and storytelling element.
Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site – Top 5 Recommendations

Recommendation Goal - Land

1st M17: Develop partnerships with food banks, urban farmers, community gardens, recreation, and land trusts to build upon the farm's original mission while creating new opportunities for farming and other food cultivation activities.

2nd M18: Memorialize commitment to resources from government for activation, preservation, and appropriate development of the site to ensure it is a longstanding asset.

3rd M25: Establish food learning programs (i.e., kitchen labs, nutrition) and spaces for food commerce (i.e. farm-to-shelf grocer, farm-to-table food stalls).

4th M24: Identify potential program management community partners that have a vested interest in the success of the community.

5th M23: Create opportunities for local students to participate in ambassadorship and land stewardship programs.
Next Steps
Mayor Dickens has established the South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center Community Task Force to seek further input and expert recommendations on key issues. The Task Force members will be assigned to a specific subgroup to study recommendations in four areas:

- Parks & Green Space
- Visioning, Memorializing, and Repurposing the former Atlanta Prison Farm Site
- Sustainability and Resilience
- Police, Fire and E-911 Training Curriculum

The City will also engage the Task Force for their input on issues including:

- Ongoing community engagement;
- Additional community uses of the site; and
- Consideration of the site for potential memorials or other community recognition.

The Community Task Force will begin meeting in April and provide an initial set of recommendations by July.

"We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in our vital public safety needs and establish the largest park the City of Atlanta would own," Mayor Dickens said. "I want the community at the head of the table, sharing their expertise and aspirations. I look forward to receiving recommendations which will continue to inform the Training Center and the parks, trails and community spaces our communities can be proud of."
Thank You!