

## **Rise Up to Stop Cop City**

WHEREAS, consistent with Unitarian Universalism’s living tradition, our 6th principle on a peaceful and justice world, our 7th principle on the interdependent web of existence, and our 8th principle on accountably dismantling racism, we affirm that the proliferation of policing at the expense of Black communities and the Earth is a threat to safety, sustainability, and Beloved Community everywhere;

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Police Foundation, in partnership with the Atlanta City Government and a committee of more than 40 corporate donors, has proposed the construction of a \$90 million militarized urban warfare training complex, deemed “Cop City,” in the heart of a predominantly Black neighborhood<sup>[1]</sup>;

WHEREAS, the construction of the Cop City campus requires the destruction of 381 acres of land in one of Atlanta’s largest remaining green spaces, known as Welaunee Forest, South River Forest, and one of the “four lungs” of Atlanta<sup>[2]</sup>;

WHEREAS, the Welaunee Forest is sacred land to the Muskogee people, who the U.S. government forcibly from their ancestral homelands in what is referred to today as the city of Atlanta in the 1820’s and 1830’s, and its further destruction continues the U.S. government’s centuries of violence and land dispossession against Indigenous nations and people<sup>[3]</sup>;

WHEREAS, organizers who mobilized against police violence and the police murder of Rashad Brooks during the Summer 2020 Uprisings called for the Atlanta City Government to divest from policing, invest in non-policing solutions to community safety, and give control over public safety resources to community members rather than government officials;

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<sup>1</sup> Micah Herskind, [This is the Atlanta Way: A Primer on Cop City](#), Scalawag Magazine, May 2023

<sup>2</sup> Welaunee Forest / South River Forest is referred to as one of the four lungs of Atlanta on [page 39 of this city planning document](#), Our Future City

<sup>3</sup> [Land Acknowledgement & Commitment](#), Stop Cop City

WHEREAS, members of the Atlanta Police Department, Georgia State Police, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation have already deployed violence in their continued efforts to build the Cop City complex and proven that their efforts do not increase community safety, including the murder of Indigenous nonbinary forest defender Manuel (Manny) “Tortugita” Terán, who was shot at least 57 times while sitting cross-legged with their hands raised, and the arrests of and “domestic terrorism” charges against at least 45 activists between January and June 2023<sup>[4]</sup>;

WHEREAS, pressure from Stop Cop City organizers and activists over the past two years has already resulted in the public divestment of individuals and corporations from the construction of Cop City, and continuation of these efforts is likely to lead to further divestment<sup>[5]</sup>;

WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), Unitarian Universalist Mass Action (UUMA), and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) have already joined more than 50 local, state, and national organizations in calling for Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens to terminate the city’s lease of the Welaunee Forest to the Atlanta Police Foundation and resign his position as mayor<sup>[6]</sup>;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT as Unitarian Universalists we recognize the momentum of collective action to demand social change and we call upon the UUA and its member congregations to Stop Cop City;

THEREFORE, we will take action through self-organized phone zaps, mass email campaigns, personal and institutional divestment from banks funding Cop City construction, and other solidarity actions against investors, funders, and other corporate partners across the U.S. and Canada<sup>7</sup>;

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<sup>4</sup> ACLU, [How Officials in Georgia are Suppressing Political Protest as Domestic Terrorism](#), March 2023 and Jocelyn Simonson, [The Details of the Atlanta Bail Fund Arrest are Even More Horrific Than First Described](#), Slate, June 2023

<sup>5</sup> According to [Stop Cop City Solidarity](#), Reeves Young Construction and Quality Glass Company have publicly announced that they will no longer be involved in Cop City construction and Emory University President Claire Sterk has resigned from the Atlanta Police Foundation Board of Directors

<sup>6</sup> [Community Demands Dickens Cancel Lease & Resign as Mayor](#), Stop Cop City

<sup>7</sup> Additional virtual / remote and community actions and action support can be found at [Stop Cop City Solidarity](#)

THEREFORE, we will support those engaged in direct action to Stop Cop City with spiritual and material resources, writing letters to incarcerated activists, calling for their immediate release from jail, demanding that all charges against them be dropped, and providing spiritual care for protestors and survivors of police violence;

THEREFORE, we will continue and expand local, state, and engagement through UU organizations to deepen our theological grounding in issues of environmental justice and policing and prison abolition;