



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0871, Version: 1

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ECOSYSTEMS, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE CHAPTER IN AN EXISTING OR FUTURE CITY PLAN:

A RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THAT MAYOR JORDAN DIRECT THE CITY STAFF OR CONTRACT FOR SERVICES TO DRAFT A NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ECOSYSTEMS, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE CHAPTER IN AN EXISTING OR FUTURE CITY PLAN THAT WILL INFORM FUTURE POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS THAT IMPACT ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOSYSTEM ISSUES, TO ASSESS AND EXPAND THE FOOTPRINT OF LANDS OF HIGH ECOLOGICAL VALUE, TO PROVIDE FUNDING IF NEEDED TO DRAFT THE PLAN, AND TO CREATE A PERMANENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BUDGET FOR THE PURCHASE OF LANDS WITH HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL OR ECOLOGICAL VALUE

WHEREAS, climate change is rapidly accelerating and altering historically predictable rainfall and temperatures in our environment; and

WHEREAS, cities, counties and countries must begin the process of planning and responding to climate change by implementing new policies and tracking key environmental parameters; and

WHEREAS, a network of preserved green spaces will help provide climate resilience by buffering climate change impacts such as flooding from more intense rainfall events and heat stress and associated heat island impacts from severe heat waves and droughts; and

WHEREAS, a network of these future and preserved properties would help to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration, protect sensitive areas prone to flooding, improve water quality, mitigate stream bank erosion and restore and expand natural habitats; and

WHEREAS, Fayetteville's City Plan 2040 endorses the creation and preservation of an Enduring Green Network and natural resources or green spaces for our city, to identify and preserve high-value open spaces and create a network of greenspaces and greenways throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the City of Fayetteville with a variety of partners has continued to make significant progress in protecting important preserved woodlands and waterways (e.g.: (1) Mount Sequoyah Woods; (2) Brooks-Hummel Nature Preserve; (3) Kessler Mountain Regional Park; (4) Centennial Park on Millsap Mountain; (5) Fay Jones Woodland; and (6) a portion of Markham Hill; (7) Underwood Park; (8) Clabber Creek; (9) West Fork of the White River; and prairie, wetlands and other natural areas (e.g. : (1) Wilson Springs, (2) Woolsey Wet Prairie, (3) World Peace Prairie, (4) Westside Prairie and (5) the Wetlands at

Deadhorse Mountain; and

WHEREAS, more study is needed in order to update the inventory of assets in areas of the city with identifiable ecological, environmental, and agricultural values that would provide human and biological greenway linkages between major open space anchors including; significant forests, riparian corridors, parks, trails, and land identified as having high ecological value; and

WHEREAS, the city of Fayetteville is a member of the NWA Regional Planning Commission and has developed an NWA Open Space Plan for the region that can be used to inform Fayetteville's plan development process; and

WHEREAS, a natural environment, ecosystems, and climate resilience chapter in an existing or future plan can help coordinate future efforts to protect other urban forests and preserve undeveloped areas which could serve as wildlife corridors and pedestrian paths between preserved woodlands, prairies, streams, historical and cultural resources, wetlands, sensitive habitats, and other natural areas; and

WHEREAS, the city of Kirkland, WA and numerous peer cities have created similar plans that can serve as models for developing a chapter with quantifiable goals, implementation actions, and assessment and tracking tools; and

WHEREAS, a sustainability decision making matrix could be used to better guide the city of Fayetteville in development, growth, and conservation in natural resource areas and greenspaces and can be used to identify criteria to assess existing public lands and associated ecosystems and determine appropriate land preservation policies and best management practices.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS:

Section 1: That the City Council of the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas hereby requests that Mayor Jordan direct appropriate staff or contract for services to draft a natural environment, ecosystems, and climate resilience chapter for an existing or future integrated sustainability plan that will inform future policies, programs and actions that impact environmental issues, to assess and expand the footprint of lands of high ecological value that will create the conditions for a resilient, equitable, and thriving economy that also provides environmental benefits, such as flood mitigation, habitat conservation, and carbon sequestration, and to analyze environmental justice considerations (low income or minority population's vulnerability to climate change) when reviewing, prioritizing and implementing land conservation and preservation measures.

Section 2: That the City Council of the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas hereby requests that Mayor Jordan allocate \$100,000 to help fund and augment, if needed, the drafting of a natural environment, ecosystem and climate resilience chapter for an existing or future integrated sustainability plan.

Section 3: That the City Council of the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas hereby requests that Mayor Jordan request that a permanent capital improvement project budget line be created and a minimum annual amount of \$100,000 be allocated to purchase land, fund conservation easements or for other expenditures that would be used to fulfill the mission of the city of Fayetteville's natural environment, ecosystems, and climate resilience chapter in an existing or new plan.