



Legislation Text

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REPORT

Department: Office of the General Superintendent

Request: Approve

Report Title: Position Paper - Acquisition and Disposition of Land by the Forest Preserves of Cook County

Report Period: N/A

Summary: This position paper by the Conservation and Policy Council of the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the "Council") provides guidance related to land acquisition and disposition and other Forest Preserves' land use policies.

The Next Century Conservation Plan presents a goal of acquiring 21,000 acres over 25 years, which would result in the expansion of the Forest Preserves to approximately 90,000 acres. Accomplishment of this inspiring goal will provide the natural lands crucial for the health and well-being of the dense populations in Chicago and its suburbs. The Council recommends that the Forest Preserves finds creative ways to continue to buy more land while also exploring alternative strategies such as land banks, easements and partnerships to protect and conserve land. The Council also recommends a moratorium on disposition of land until a final disposition policy is developed and adopted. Finally, consistent with the recommendations of the Racial Equity position paper, the Council recommends that equity and access be considered when determining where to acquire additional land.

Upon approval of the position paper by the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Forest Preserves shall take steps to implement the recommendations, including creating or revising policies, ordinances, and other documents as necessary, as well as obtaining any required board approval related to such actions.

The Council thanks the following for their assistance developing this paper: Laurel Ross (Council Member and position paper committee Co-chair), Mark Templeton (Council Vice-Chair and position paper committee Co-chair), Alan Bell (Council Member), Bob Megquier (Openlands), Chris Adas (Forest Preserves), Delio Calzolari (Forest Preserves), Cathy Geraghty (Forest Preserves), Dave Kircher (Forest Preserves), and Chris Slattery (Forest Preserves).