

## **Atlanta City Council approves USD 31 million for controversial “Cop City”**

By Peoples Dispatch

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The 11-4 vote took place after 15 hours of public comments were heard regarding the project, with the vast majority expressing overwhelming concern over the project and rejecting it.

Atlanta’s 15-member City Council approved USD 31 million in funding to help build “Cop City,” the “urban warfare” training facility proposed to be built in the forest in the southern city. The 11-4 vote took place after 15 hours of public comments were heard regarding the project, with the vast majority expressing overwhelming concern over the project and rejecting it.

Throughout the session, over 1,000 people gathered inside and outside Atlanta City Hall to protest the controversial project.

The Atlanta Police Foundation (APF), ostensibly a nonprofit but which provides support for the Atlanta Police Department and is spearheading the project of Cop City, believes that the facility is necessary. Current training facilities “fail to meet the training needs required of a major urban law enforcement agency,” the organization claims.

The APF claims it will raise the remaining USD 60 million in funds from corporate and philanthropic sources. However, a report by the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* reveals that the project could actually end up costing taxpayers around USD 67 million through decades of annual “lease-back” payments.

This vote follows the high-profile raid and arrests of three bail fund activists who have been accused of money laundering and charity fraud. These accusations stem from Georgia’s labelling anti-Cop City activists as “domestic terrorists.”

According to local journalists who ran a tally of the comments during the session, only four of the 242 comments given during the 15 hours of comment were in support of Cop City. Yet, in a deleted Twitter thread the city of Atlanta only promoted video of two comments supporting Cop City despite the overwhelming opposition.

Speaking to the environmental impact of cutting down hundreds of acres of Atlanta forest for the training facility, a member of the Indigenous Muscogee tribe addressed city councilmembers, “let me be the first one to welcome YOU onto Muscogee land.” He continued, “If I can speak bluntly... I think everyone here breathes air, drinks water, and has to have food... let’s see how long we last without those things.”

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