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Green Heart Action Plan

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Problem Definition/ Problem Statement

Clayton County has lost many trees because of new neighborhoods, roads, and businesses being built. Cutting down trees, also called deforestation, can harm our environment. Trees help clean the air, provide shade, prevent flooding, and give animals a home. Without enough trees, our community can get hotter and have more air pollution. This especially affects children, who need clean air and safe places to play. The problem is understanding how losing trees today could hurt the health, safety, and future of Clayton County.

Root Cause of the Problem

In places like Clayton County, Georgia, we're losing a lot of trees, and it's mostly because so many people are moving in so quickly. When new neighborhoods, stores, and roads are built, the land has to be cleared, which means a lot of trees get cut down. Some trees are also dying because they're old, sick, or not originally from this area, so they can't handle the conditions as well. On top of that, a lot of construction projects don't really make an effort to protect the trees and green spaces that are already there. When you add all of these things together, it explains why we're seeing so many fewer trees in these fast growing places.

List at Least Three Credible Resources that Support Your Problem Statement

[Global Forest Watch - Clayton County](#)
[Southern Forests: Protected Areas at Risk Due to Suburban Sprawl](#)
[County cuts non-native, invasive plants for safety](#)

Proposed Solution

There are three main steps to help solve the problem of deforestation. First, reforestation means planting new trees to replace the ones that were cut down in Clayton County. Second, land-use zoning protects forests by setting aside areas as nature preserves and limiting how land can be used. This helps stop forests from being turned into farms or cities. Third, environmental protection laws require new building, mining, or farming projects to think about how their work will affect forests before they start. These three steps can help protect forests and keep the environment healthy.



How We Will Measure Our Success

We could measure our success in a few simple ways. First, we can count how many trees are planted and how many survive after a few years. If more trees are growing and staying healthy, the reforestation plan is working. Second, we can measure how much forest land is being protected and check if fewer forests are being cut down because of land-use zoning. Third, we can track new building or farming projects to see if they follow environmental protection laws and avoid harming forests. If more trees are growing, forests are protected, and new projects follow the rules, it shows that the plan is working.

Who are Decision Makers We Need to Reach

David Scott (District 13, House of Representatives)
Alieka Anderson-Henry (Chairwoman, Board of Commissioners)
Kevin McOmber (Georgia's Representative, Environmental Protection Agency)

Our 3-5 Step Plan for Change

Reforestation: Require companies or communities to plant trees IN Clayton County to replace those that were cut down.

Land Use Zoning: Designate areas as nature preserves and regulates how land is used, limiting conversion of forests into farmland or urban areas.

Environmental Protection Laws: Laws requiring any new construction, mining, or agriculture projects to consider its impact on forests before starting.

Impact & Equity

We need to make sure that the same environmental protections and zoning that they have in other (richer) counties in Georgia, applies to everyone across the whole state. ALL children deserve a chance for a healthier future. Companies shouldn't be able to cause damage to counties just because the people are not as rich as in other areas.



What Help We Need to Be Successful

We need to learn how to talk to community leaders and lawmakers about how to make change in our community. We also need to learn more about how to make soil healthier and the effects of having more factories and companies move to Clayton County.

