



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0210R, Version: 0

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Introductory*

**City of Baltimore
Council Bill R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Burnett

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Request for City and State Action - Establish a State-City Partnership Park at Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park

For the purpose of calling on all relevant City, State, and nonprofit partners to collaborate on the creation and management of a State-City partnership to enhance and maintain Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park.

Recitals

Whereas, the Baltimore City Council seeks to maximize recreational opportunities and support employment opportunities for Baltimore's citizens, while also attracting visitors and economic investment to historically under served areas of the City;

Whereas, exposure to nature and the outdoors is essential to a happy, healthy life, and access to high-quality urban parks for young people improves their physical health, performance in school, ability to concentrate, and creativity, while also improving their mental and physical health;

Whereas, Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park is a unique, nationally recognized asset, being both Baltimore's largest park and 1 of the largest forest parks in any northeastern city, with over 1,000 acres of mature forest, streams, diverse natural habitats, historic structures, and many miles of scenic trails;

Whereas, the City is challenged to provide adequate staffing, maintenance, and programming for Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, leading to public safety concerns, lack of necessary maintenance, and a public reputation that results in sub-optimal use and enjoyment of the park;

Whereas, the current condition of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park is in part the result of more than 100 years of disinvestment and racist policies affecting West Baltimore, and this proposal would repair a portion of that harm;

Whereas, Baltimore City is 1 of only 2 jurisdictions in the State of Maryland that lacks a State park, and thus misses out on the recreational and economic advantages that having such an entity confers;

Whereas, Maryland law provides for the establishment of a collaboratively-managed “State-City Partnership” park, which would marshal the strengths and resources of the State, City, and volunteer residents to advance public access to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, providing public health benefits, improved public safety, and conservation jobs for youth in Baltimore;

Whereas, the 2021 State Park Investment Commission Report, chaired by former Governor Parris Glendening, recommended that “the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the City of Baltimore should collaborate on improvements to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park”;

Whereas, the Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 earmarked significant new State funding for the operation, maintenance, and capital improvements of State parks and for Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, and these funds are currently available, requiring no increase in taxes or fees.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, that the City Council calls on all relevant City, State, and nonprofit partners to collaborate on the creation and management of a State-City partnership to enhance and maintain Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.