

AN FAQ SHEET FOR

# Cop City



## Q1: What is Cop City?



Figure 1- Architect's drawing of the training campus

The Atlanta Public Safety Training Center, commonly known as Cop City, is a police and fire services training campus under construction in the South River Forest area of Dekalb County near Atlanta, Georgia. Before the area was greenlit for the construction of Cop City, the area for the site was used as a prison farm until 1995. The center is expected to cost \$90 million and take up over 85 acres, with the "remaining portion of the 265-acre property as greenspace," according to the center's website, which will impact the Weelaunee Forest.

It's important to note that the Weelaunee Forest where the site will be built neighbors mostly Black residents. In addition to this, the center will include an "auditorium for police/fire and public use," a "mock city for burn building training and urban police training," an "Emergency Vehicle Operator Course for emergency vehicle driver training," a K-9 unit kennel and the training center will also include a mock city to practice urban warfare, burn towers, bomb simulations, and multiple firing ranges.

## THE NAMED ADVOCATES

Cop City poses an ongoing risk to Atlanta residents, especially those in the Black community, due to its promotion of state-sanctioned militarized policing. Concerns have been raised by activists and community members, fearing that law enforcement will train with military-grade equipment, potentially leading to fatal force, police violence, and future use of such equipment on Atlanta residents. Studies have demonstrated that increased militarization of law enforcement agencies results in heightened violent behavior among officers.



Critics argue that investing millions in a facility perpetuating militarized tactics, instead of addressing the underlying causes of violence, jeopardizes public safety in Atlanta.

Additionally, there is a concern about racialized police violence, with Cop City housing K-9 unit training, historically linked to disproportionate harm against Black individuals.

## Q2: What are the (said) pros?

Advocates for the construction of Cop City argue for the so-called “benefits,” some are listed as follows:

- **Enhanced Public Safety:** The foremost benefit of Cop City is improving public safety. By bringing law enforcement operations together, we can ensure better coordination, quicker response times, and more effective crime prevention strategies. We all deserve a safer Atlanta, and Cop City can play a significant role in achieving that goal.
- **More Efficient Resource Allocation:** Cop City allows us to consolidate police departments, training facilities, and administrative offices, reducing redundancy and wasteful spending. This means we can better use taxpayer funds, directing them towards the areas that truly matter for public safety and community well-being.
- **State-of-the-Art Training Facilities:** Cop City will provide top-notch training facilities for our law enforcement officers. We're talking about cutting-edge simulation centers, educational institutes, and resources that will help our officers stay up-to-date with the latest techniques and technologies. Investing in their training is investing in the safety and professionalism of our police force.
- **Economic Growth and Stability:** Atlanta is an economic powerhouse, and we want to maintain and enhance that status. Cop City contributes to economic growth and stability in several ways. It attracts investments, creates job opportunities, and strengthens our city's reputation as a safe and secure place to live, work, and do business. A thriving economy benefits all Atlanta residents.

## Q2: What are the (said) pros?

Advocates for the construction of Cop City argue for the so-called “benefits,” continued:

- **Community Engagement and Trust-Building:** Cop City is not just about law enforcement; it's about building bridges between the community and the police. With dedicated community spaces and programs, Cop City fosters positive interactions, dialogue, and transparency. It's an opportunity to strengthen trust, improve relationships, and create a united front against crime.
- **Senior Legal Analysts from the Heritage Foundation Hold the View That Cop City Will Benefit the Atlanta Community:** “By training officers and keeping them certified and holding them accountable for the few who make a mistake and using that training facility for best practices, you're going to reduce Fourth and Fifth Amendment violations.”
- **City Officials Say That the Site is Needed to Replace Inadequate Training Facilities and Would Become One of the Largest Such Centers in the Country:** They have said that some protesters have crossed the line from civil disobedience to domestic terrorism.



### Q3: How is the movement concerned that Cop City will impact communities of color?

Healthcare in Atlanta is divided based on race and location. DeKalb County is identified as medically underserved due to a shortage of primary care providers, as per the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

Most parts of Georgia face similar challenges, but hospitals in the southern neighborhoods of Atlanta, including Cop City, receive lower ratings for healthcare quality compared to those in predominantly white neighborhoods in the northern areas, according to Medicare.gov.

The specific area around the proposed training facility site is labeled as "disadvantaged" by the White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool.

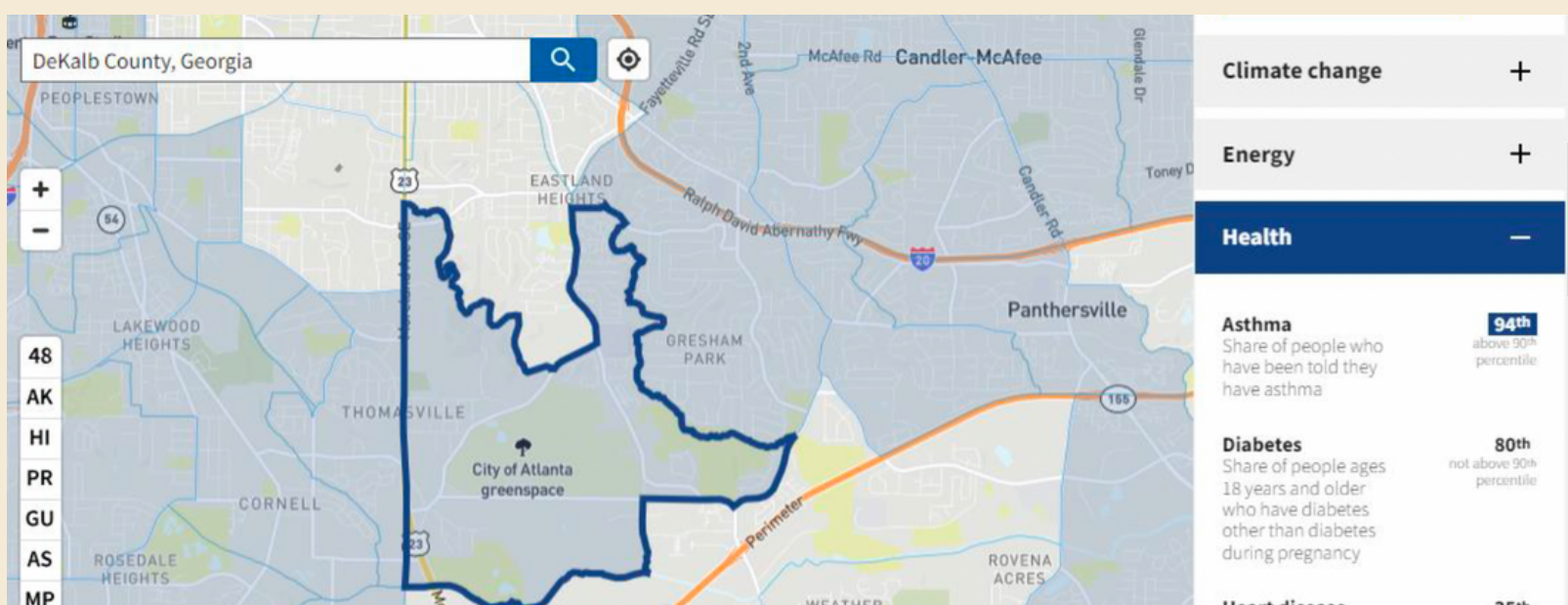


Figure 2 - Screenshot showing the health disparities in DeKalb County, Georgia

## THE NAMED ADVOCATES

This area has a population that is 67% Black and 27% white. It ranks high, at the 94th percentile, for the prevalence of asthma, 88th for households living in poverty, 93rd for wastewater discharge, and 92nd for overall poverty rates.

Nearly 20% of the residents have an education level lower than high school.

Thus, the destruction of the Weelaunee Forest will worsen air quality and contribute to these already worse health outcomes. Along with the construction of Cop City aiding in healthcare disparities, it is also an environmental risk as it the forest provides defense against flooding and the climate crisis.

Furthermore, the Atlanta Police Department's current and future use of chemical weapons will poison the soil and the waters, endangering Atlantans' health.



## Q4: How are the movement leaders concerned that Cop City will impact people with disabilities?

The construction of Cop City fails to reckon with the notion that ableism deeply permeates through the culture in our society and the promotion of state-sanctioned violence against Black Americans who are more likely to live with disabilities as those who live with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the carceral system.

The creation of Cop City, especially at this scale, in the city of Atlanta ignores the systemic problem of using police as we need to decenter police and look to other trained professionals to manage health emergencies for example.

We are failing to address a vital piece of the puzzle in changing how police in the United States interact with Black people, as no source that is in favor of Cop City explicitly mentions how the police will be trained to understand ableism and how they explicitly and implicitly contribute to that system and how it interacts with other interlocking systems of oppression.

Many websites in Advocates of the Construction of Cop City merely state that it will be good for understanding community values and centering the voice of those who live in Atlanta but don't have strict identifiable ways in which that will occur. The language use is extremely Broad and has no real metric of outcome evaluation.





## Q5: How can leaders support the Stop Cop City movement?



Figure 3 - The Rev. Keyanna Jones addresses a crowd of Stop Cop City protesters in front of the Georgia Pacific Building in downtown Atlanta. (Madeline Thigpen/Capital B)

According to the movement's official website <https://stopcop.city/>, leaders can:

- **Take action against the corporations and institutions that are responsible for the Cop City project near you and take action:** <https://www.stopcopcitysolidarity.org/>
- **Demand District Attorney Sherry Boston drop domestic terrorism charges against Stop Cop City protesters:** [bit.ly/3nGYXd3](https://bit.ly/3nGYXd3)
- **Autonomously organize your community to put pressure on contractors to pull out of the project information on contractors:** <https://stopreevesyoung.com>
- Pressure Atlanta Police Foundation funders to divest (ex: protests, call-in campaigns, letter writing, boycotting, etc.)
- **Donate to the Atlanta Solidarity Fund:** <https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/contribute-to-the-atlanta-solidarity-fund>

# SOURCES

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**"Shielded from Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States." Shielded from Justice: Atlanta, [www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo41.htm#:~:text=During%20the%20past%20several%20years,how%20little%20police%20officers%20fear](http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo41.htm#:~:text=During%20the%20past%20several%20years,how%20little%20police%20officers%20fear) Accessed 19 Oct. 2023.**

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**"The Lancet: More than Half of Police Killings in USA Are Unreported and Black Americans Are Most Likely to Experience Fatal Police Violence." The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, [www.healthdata.org/news-events/newsroom/news-releases/lancet-more-half-police-killings-usa-are-unreported-and-black](http://www.healthdata.org/news-events/newsroom/news-releases/lancet-more-half-police-killings-usa-are-unreported-and-black) Accessed 19 Oct. 2023.**

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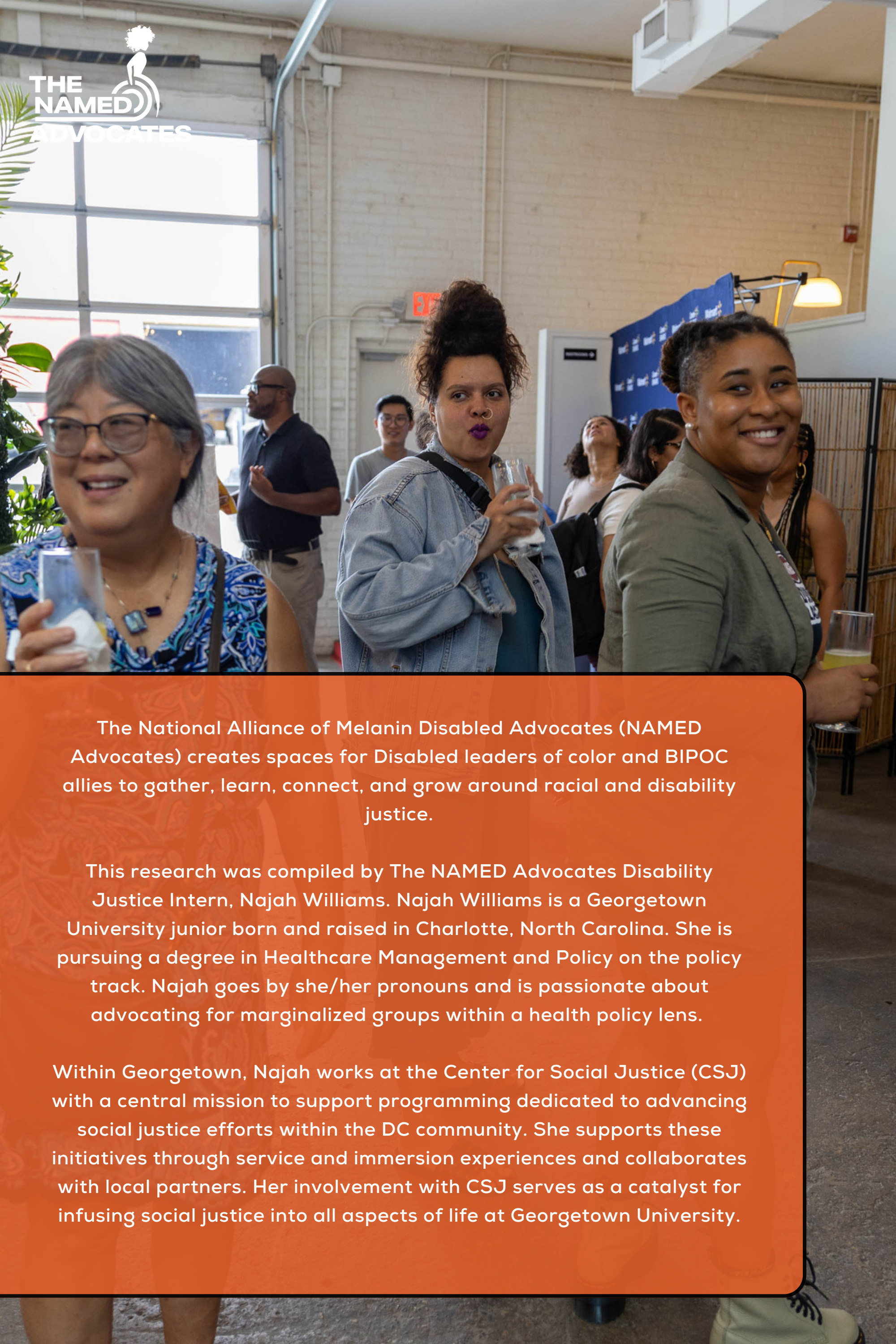
# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & READINGS

- [Stop Cop City's Instagram](#)
- [The Lancet: More than half of police killings in USA are unreported and Black Americans are most likely to experience fatal police violence](#)
- <https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/>
- [Stop Cop City Solidarity - Donate](#)

[Black disabled Americans continue to face higher rates of police violence](#)

[Police brutality and a lack of accountability in the United States](#)

[Interacting with Police if You Have a Disability](#)



The National Alliance of Melanin Disabled Advocates (NAMED Advocates) creates spaces for Disabled leaders of color and BIPOC allies to gather, learn, connect, and grow around racial and disability justice.

This research was compiled by The NAMED Advocates Disability Justice Intern, Najah Williams. Najah Williams is a Georgetown University junior born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina. She is pursuing a degree in Healthcare Management and Policy on the policy track. Najah goes by she/her pronouns and is passionate about advocating for marginalized groups within a health policy lens.

Within Georgetown, Najah works at the Center for Social Justice (CSJ) with a central mission to support programming dedicated to advancing social justice efforts within the DC community. She supports these initiatives through service and immersion experiences and collaborates with local partners. Her involvement with CSJ serves as a catalyst for infusing social justice into all aspects of life at Georgetown University.