



## NEWS RELEASE

## *City of South Fulton Government*

### Department of Communications and External Affairs

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### **South Fulton Officials to Attend National Institute Focused on Blighted and Vacant Properties**

(City of South Fulton, GA – June 30, 2021) – Because of a strong commitment to addressing blight and abandoned properties, the City of South Fulton has been nominated to attend the 2022 Vacant Property Leadership Institute.

A delegation from the city's Community Development and Regulatory Affairs (CDRA) Department will complete the training program. The institute equips participants with skills and knowledge needed to ensure the quality of life in their communities by addressing vacant, abandoned and deteriorating properties.

"The City of South Fulton's involvement in this program will enhance our ability to rid the city of blight," said Mayor William "Bill" Edwards. "We have properties that have caused continuous issues, some for more than a decade. This instruction will help our team solve those problems once and for all."

In March, city officials adopted the Fight Against Blight program, which created a strategy and budget for addressing problem buildings. Seven properties are scheduled for demolition or abatement this year, with the first home torn down in March. Since the city's inception, CDRA has worked toward resolving 63 cases involving vacant, abandoned and blighted structures.

Institute sessions will cover equitable development practices that address vacancy, abandonment, deterioration and returning buildings and land to productive uses. Those strategies include data and market analysis, delinquent tax enforcement reform, strategic code enforcement and land banking.

"Residents have spoken and we have heard them," said South Fulton Code Enforcement Administrator Brian Morris, who worked with Economic Development Director Christopher Pike to complete the city's application. "These demolitions and others planned for this year will accomplish our goal to remove dangerous eyesores that degrade our neighborhoods, harbor vagrancy and crime and pose safety concerns."

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Twelve cities from Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin were chosen to participate in the institute. These communities have populations between 14,000 and 2.7 million. College Park and Perry are the other Georgia representatives.

All participants face similar challenges, such as faulty mortgage foreclosure processes, tax delinquency, ineffective property maintenance system, and other property issues.

Sponsored by the Wells Fargo Foundation, institute is a joint initiative of the Center for Community Progress and the National League of Cities. It combines Community Progress' leading national blight expertise with the National League of Cities' history of providing 19,000 U.S. cities and towns with in-depth research, tools and on-the-ground solutions.

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### **About the City of South Fulton**

Home to more than 100,000 residents, the City of South Fulton is Georgia's fifth-largest city. It covers more than 85 square miles and features both urban and rural landscapes with the most undeveloped land on metro Atlanta's southern side. Incorporated on May 1, 2017, South Fulton is among Georgia's youngest and fast-growing cities – on the rise and recognized as the place you want to be. Learn more at [cityofsouthfultonga.gov](http://cityofsouthfultonga.gov).