



Statement of Concern by Rosslyn Lone Tree Residents' Association (RLTRA)

Date: 12th September, 2025

As the Rosslyn Lone Tree Residents' Association, we wish to express our deep concern regarding the recent developments surrounding the management of Karura Forest, particularly the unilateral shift of revenue collection to the eCitizen platform, the accompanying increase in entry fees, and the uncertainty this has created for the long-standing community partnership model.

Karura Forest has for many years stood as a unique example of successful community-government collaboration in conservation. Through the joint management arrangement between the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Friends of Karura Forest (FKF), the forest has been transformed into a safe, accessible, and sustainable urban green space — serving not only the local community but also the wider public.

We are particularly concerned that:

1. **Lack of Stakeholder Consultation** – The decision to shift fee collection and increase charges was made without adequate public participation, contrary to the spirit of transparency and inclusivity enshrined in Kenya's Constitution and conservation policies.
2. **Increased Visitor Fees** – The new charges, once platform fees and VAT are factored in, have resulted in significant increases that risk discouraging local families, schools, and community groups from accessing the forest. Karura should remain an affordable public space for all.
3. **Threat to Financial Sustainability** – For over a decade, gate collections directly supported forest maintenance, staff, security, and community programs. Uncertainty over how funds collected via eCitizen will be reinvested into Karura raises concerns about the continued upkeep and sustainability of this vital green space.
4. **Risk to the Community Model of Conservation** – Karura has been globally recognized as a model of community-led conservation. Any move that sidelines the community partner (FKF) undermines this success story and sets a worrying precedent for other conservation areas.

As a residents' association situated near Karura, we recognize the forest's immense ecological, recreational, and social value. It is not only a sanctuary for biodiversity but also a vital resource for urban health, community well-being, and climate resilience.

We therefore call upon the Kenya Forest Service and the relevant government authorities to:

- Immediately engage in **transparent dialogue** with FKF, civil society, and resident associations to resolve the current stalemate.
- Ensure that **visitor fees remain fair and affordable**, safeguarding access for ordinary Kenyans.
- Guarantee that **funds collected are reinvested into Karura's upkeep**, staffing, and conservation, with clear accountability mechanisms.
- Uphold the **principles of joint management** and community participation as provided in the Karura Forest Management Plan (2021–2041).

Karura belongs to all of us, and its protection must remain a shared responsibility. We stand in solidarity with all stakeholders calling for a just, transparent, and sustainable path forward.

Signed,

Rosslyn Lone Tree Residents' Association (RLTRA)