

**RESOLUTION URGING CHATHAM COUNTY TO RESPECT THE OGLETHORPE
PLAN AND NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT BY FOLLOWING THE
APPROVAL PROCESS AND SECURING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
FOR THE CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX**

WHEREAS, the City of Savannah takes pride in its designation as a National Historic Landmark District and dedicates policies and ordinances to preserve this national treasure; and

WHEREAS, the City of Savannah has proven through its policies and practices that the City works diligently with local stakeholders--preservationists, residents and the business community--to protect our National Historic Landmark District with the goal of striking a balance between preservation, quality of life, growth, tourism; and

WHEREAS, maintaining the National Historic Landmark District designation remains important not only to recognize Savannah's internationally-recognized Town Plan but also as the foundation to Savannah's economic lifeblood through its visitor industry; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the National Park Service issued a conditions assessment of the National Historic Landmark District that deemed its designation "threatened" because of borderline decisions that detracted from the historic district's integrity; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 the Chatham County began the design of a Chatham County Courthouse Annex and followed the rigorous Landmark Historic District building approval process, including securing a variance to bridge over West York Lane; and

WHEREAS, despite this earlier commitment to ensure a notable public project at the gateway to Savannah followed the Landmark Historic District approval process, Chatham County has announced plans that the County may exercise a provision of the Georgia Preservation Act of 1980 to bypass the review and approval process and not obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness; and

WHEREAS, in particular, governments should serve as a model and leader of this commitment to the historic district's integrity, and notable projects include the Federal Courthouse Annex on Telfair Square in 2019, the City's decision to re-establish the lane at 415 East Oglethorpe at a cost of a few hundred thousand dollars in 2018; and the County's renovation of the Old Courthouse in 1989; notable policies include the City's adoption of an Archeology Ordinance and the development of the Tourism Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, Chatham County's decision to bypass the review and approval process toward a Certificate of Appropriateness would circumvent the Landmark Historic District approval process and exacerbate the district's "threatened" status; and

WHEREAS, the City of Savannah urges Chatham County to commit to securing a Certificate of Appropriateness and the recommendations provided by the historic preservation staff as well as consider comments from the Savannah Historic District Board of Review throughout building approval process; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah urges the Board of Commissioners of Chatham County to follow the design review regulations for the Chatham County Courthouse Annex, show its recognition of the importance of the Landmark Historic District designation and display leadership by circumventing a process intended to maintain the integrity of a national historic treasure.

FURTHERMORE, a copy of this resolution shall be submitted to the Board of Commissioners of Chatham County, Attention: Chairman, with a copy to the County Manager, and submitted for the record to the Executive Director of the MPC.

Approved this 28th day of May, 2020.

Van R. Johnson, II
Mayor

Attest:

Mark Massey
Clerk of Council