


## MEMO

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Joseph A. Melder, City Manager 

**SUBJECT:** FY 2024-2025 Budget Allocation for Civic Center Redevelopment

**DATE:** December 17, 2024

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As you know, earlier this year, Mayor and Council passed a resolution in favor of removing the arena and renovating the theater, ballroom, and community meeting rooms at the Savannah Civic Center. In alignment with the Council's approval and direction, my office has prepared a comprehensive plan to move forward with this initiative.

This plan is supported by a \$1.2 million allocation proposed as an FY 2024 close-out entry within the current year revised budget to support site planning, design, equity and public engagement components of this legacy project, to include: market demand study, economic and land use study, topographic survey, geotechnical investigation, archeology assessment, asbestos and lead assessment, and engineering and architectural design of arena removal with a new temporary façade.

Overall, this comprehensive plan is guided by the goals set forth in the adopted resolution, which aim to:

- **Revitalize the Savannah Civic Center area** through an equitable approach to redevelopment;
- **Retain the name and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;**
- **Restore as much of the Oglethorpe Plan as feasible** to honor Savannah's historic urban layout;
- **Provide a vision for the future** that prioritizes housing, including affordable and workforce housing;
- **Prohibit the development of new hotels** and restrict the use of short-term vacation rentals;
- **Optimize the space for public and municipal use** while allowing for appropriate retail and commercial spaces and;
- **Achieve future parking needs** with planning for an underground parking deck.

This allocation and plan represent a significant step toward revitalizing the Civic Center site, ensuring the project reflects the Council's goals and serves the needs of the Savannah community.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support.