

CHAPTER 3. - ZONING (EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2019)

ARTICLE 7.0 OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Sec. 7.13 Hotel Development Overlay District

7.13.1 Purpose

The intent of this overlay district is to establish standards to guide the size and location of future hotel development within the Savannah Historic District.

The overlay district distinguishes hotel categories by large hotels (75 guest rooms or more) and small hotels (16-74 guest rooms) based on the Smith Travel Accommodations Report (STAR) program used by the global hotel industry. STAR benchmarks the performance of hotels in competitive markets. The local tourism industry uses STAR data to gauge market demand and plan accordingly.

7.13.2 Relationship to Zoning Districts

For all properties within the boundaries of the Hotel Development Overlay (“HDO”) District, the regulations for both the base zoning district and the overlay district shall apply. The HDO District determines if a hotel use is or is not a permitted use rather than the base zoning district. The HDO District does not eliminate or reduce any of the Historic District regulations established in Section 7.8.

7.13.3 Applicability

- a. The Hotel Development Overlay (“HDO”) District shall be identified on the official zoning map as “HDO”.
- b. The boundaries of the HDO District shall be the same as the boundaries of the Savannah Historic District, which are the area bounded on the north by the Savannah River; on the east by Randolph Street between the Savannah River and Broughton Street and by East Broad Street between Broughton and Gwinnett Streets; on the south by Gwinnett Street; and on the west by West Boundary Street as illustrated in [Figure 7.13-1](#)

7.13.4 Permitted Uses

Within the HDO District, the permitted uses are the same as those in the zoning districts with the following exceptions:

a. Hotels

The HDO District, not the base zoning district, determines if a hotel use is or is not a permitted use.

b. Motels

New Motels shall not be a permitted use within the HDO District. A motel is a lodging establishment where guest rooms have their own door to the exterior of the building.

c. Hotel Size

Hotels within the HDO District are distinguished by size (small and large) based on the number of guest rooms. A small hotel has 16-74 guest rooms. A large hotel has 75 or more guest rooms.

7.13.5 Hotel Use Conditions

The below use conditions shall apply to new hotels. Variances from these conditions shall not be permitted.

a. Location

New hotels are permitted only within designated areas of the Historic District as shown on [Figure 7.13-1](#) Location is based on street designation and the “small” or “large” hotel classification.

b. Frontage

New hotels must be located on a designated street as shown on [Figure 7.13-1](#).

c. Conversion of Residential Structures Classified as Historic

Any single-family residential structure identified on the Historic Buildings Map for the Historic District cannot be converted to a hotel use. Single-family residential includes the following: detached, attached, semi-attached, semi-detached, row, end-row, and accessory dwellings. This condition applies only to the areas designated as “Small Hotels Only” on [Figure 7.13-1](#).

7.13.6 Effect on Existing Hotels and Applications

a. Effects on Existing Hotels with Lawfully-issued and Valid Tax Certificates

As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance:

- i. Any existing hotels that are non-conforming or become non-conforming by virtue of the adoption of this ordinance will be considered conforming with regards to use, use location, and use conditions.
- ii. Lawfully existing business tax certificates shall not be terminated, and applications for renewal or transfer of such certificates will not be denied.

b. Effect on Existing Applications

As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance, if a valid application has been received by the City for any permit, license, variance or other approval which is required by the City relative to the development of a hotel, compliance with the zoning requirements in effect at the time of receipt shall be required.

c. Time Period for Re-establishing a Hotel

- i. As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance, if a hotel has not been in operation and a business tax certificate has expired (not renewed or transferred), the time period for re-establishing the use or obtaining a new business tax certificate for the same physical location is 12 months.
- ii. If a tax certificate for a hotel is terminated, not renewed or transferred within 12 months from the date of termination, regardless of whether the use is intended to be abandoned, the use cannot be re-established unless it complies with the requirements of this Section.

Figure 7.13-1 Savannah Historic District Hotel Development Overlay District

MAP 1: SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT HOTEL DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

