



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: JANUARY 9, 2018
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance

Re: Amendment to revise the boundaries of the Plant Riverside Sign District, Section 8-3122

Applicant: RB-CIV Savannah Hotel, LLC

Agent: Joseph R. Ross (Morris, Manning & Martin, LLP)

File No. 17-007048-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Denial of the petition to expand the boundaries of the Plant Riverside development to include Lots 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, New Franklin Ward bounded on the north by River Street, on the east by Montgomery Street, on the south by Williamson Street, and on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial of the petition to expand the boundaries of the Plant Riverside development to include Lots 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, New Franklin Ward bounded on the north by River Street, on the east by Montgomery Street, on the south by Williamson Street, and on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 9 + Chairman

James Overton, Chairman
Thomas Branch
Travis Coles
Ellis Cook
Joseph Ervin
Karen Jarrett
Lacy Manigault
Linder Suthers
Joseph Welch
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (10-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 10	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Overton Branch Cook Coles Ervin Jarrett Manigault Suthers Welch Woiwode		Coleman Hernandez Milton Smith

Respectfully submitted:



Melony West
Interim Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

cc Luciana Spracher, Interim Clerk of Council
Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Beth Barnes, Department of Inspections





Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

January 9, 2018 Regular MPC Meeting

Title

D4 - TEXT AMENDMENT | Amend Plant Riverside Sign District Boundaries | Petitioner Joseph R. Ross | File No. 17-007048-ZA

Description

A petition to expand the boundaries of the newly created Section 8-3122 Plant Riverside Sign District in the northwest section of the Savannah Historic District to include the hotel currently under construction across River Street.

Recommendation

Denial of the petition to expand the boundaries of the Plant Riverside development to include Lots 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, New Franklin Ward bounded on the north by River Street, on the east by Montgomery Street, on the south by Williamson Street, and on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

Contact

Financial Impact

Review Comments

Attachments

📎 [Application 7048.pdf](#)

📎 [Map.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report1-17-007048-ZA.pdf](#)



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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

FROM: The Planning Commission

DATE: January 9, 2018

SUBJECT: Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
Re: Amendment to revise the boundaries of the Plant Riverside Sign District, Section 8-3122
Applicant: RB-CIV Savannah Hotel, LLC
Agent: Joseph R. Ross (Morris, Manning & Martin, LLP)
File No. 17-007048-ZA

Ellen I. Harris, AICP, MPC Project Planner

ISSUE:

A petition to expand the boundaries of the newly created Section 8-3122 Plant Riverside Sign District in the northwest section of the Savannah Historic District to include the hotel currently under construction across River Street.

BACKGROUND:

On November 21, 2017, City Council approved the creation of Section 8-3122 Plant Riverside Sign District at the recommendation of the Planning Commission (file no. 17-004435-ZA).

At that time, the justification for the creation of a new sign district for the area was primarily to recognize and reflect the unique history and character of that particular site, commonly known as Plant Riverside, as the entire site was once part of Georgia Power Company and consists of 3.875 acres.

Additionally, the Plant Riverside development was located within two sign districts, the River Street Factors Walk Sign District and the Historic District Sign District. It was desirable for the development to be located within one sign district.

The petitioner has stated that "the text amendment will provide for consistency in the signage of new properties being developed in this area. The Plant Riverside Project on the north side of River Street and the Petitioner hotel on the south side of River Street will share the improved West River Street corridor. The Text Amendment will provide a compatible platform for signage along both

sides of River Street.”

FINDINGS:

1. A comprehensive sign ordinance was adopted for the City of Savannah in 1960 as part of the zoning code. In 1976 it was amended to create special sign districts for Broughton Street and River-Street Factors Walk areas. In 1979 it was amended again to create the Historic Sign District which governs the remaining areas of the Savannah Historic District. It was amended in 2017 to create the Plant Riverside Sign District.
2. Each sign district was intended to reflect the unique and historic character of the area. Different sign types and sizes are permitted in each district.
3. The proposed expansion area is located within the River Street-Factors Walk Sign District.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The proposed expansion of the Plant Riverside Sign District does not appear to be based on a desire to reflect the historic physical characteristics of the area, but rather a desire to increase the types, sizes and amount of signage allowed. Expanding the district undermines the purpose of creating the Plant Riverside District, which was justified in part due to its unique history as the power plant for the city. The proposed expansion area is not historically associated with that use.

The Plant Riverside Sign Ordinance allows several sign types which are specifically not allowed in the River Street-Factors Walk Sign District and expands the sizes and quantities allowed. The table below illustrates the proposed sign types:

Sign Type	River Street-Factors Walk Sign District	Plant Riverside Sign District
Temporary Signs and Banners	nonprofit and governmental agencies only	3 sq ft max on lamp posts
Building ID Sign	30 sq ft max	90 sq ft max if fascia 350 sq ft max if painted
Roof Mounted Sign	-	140 sq ft- neon permitted- 1 max per district
Under canopy and canopy signs	2 sq. ft. max	12-20 sq. ft. max
Principal Use- Fascia	30 sq. ft. max	30 sq. ft. max
Principal Use- Projecting	16 sq. ft. max	30 sq. ft. max
Window Graphics	10% of glass area max	10% glass area max
Directory/wayfinding Signs	Directory on sign structures erected by City	16-32 sq. ft. max

The proposed expansion will set a precedent for expanding the district to any area along River

Street and will negatively impact the historic character of River Street.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Recommend approval of the request to amend the Zoning Ordinance as proposed.
2. Recommend an alternate amendment.
3. Recommend denial of the request.

RECOMMENDATION:

Denial of the petition to expand the boundaries of the Plant Riverside development to include Lots 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, New Franklin Ward bounded on the north by River Street, on the east by Montgomery Street, on the south by Williamson Street, and on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.