



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 12, 2018

TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petition to Establish a Hotel Overlay District for the Savannah Historic District

City of Savannah, Petitioner

Shane Corbin, Zoning Administrator, City Representative

Aldermanic District: 1 (Johnson) and 2 (Durrence)

County Commission District: 2 (Holmes) and 3 (Lockett)

File No. 17-005888-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Subject to the approval of the creation of the Savannah Historic District Hotel Overlay District, **approval** of the request to establish a Hotel Overlay District zoning district for the Savannah Historic District.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

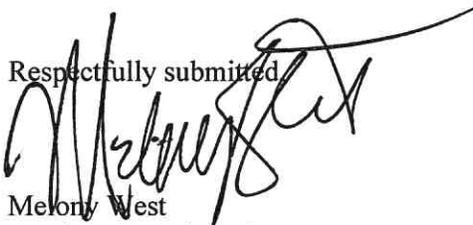
Subject to the approval of the creation of the Savannah Historic District Hotel Overlay District, **approval** of the request to establish a Hotel Overlay District zoning district for the Savannah Historic District.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 8 + Chairman

James Overton, Chairman
Joseph Ervin
Thomas Branch
Travis Coles
Roberto Hernandez
Karen Jarrett
Tanya Milton
Linder Suthers
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (9-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 9	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Overton Ervin Branch Coles Hernandez Jarrett Milton Suthers Woiwode		Cook Coleman Manigault Smith Welch

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 12, 2018 Special Called MPC Meeting

Title

MAP AMENDMENT: Creation of a Hotel Development Overlay Zoning District for the Savannah Historic District | Amendment of the City of Savannah | File No. 17-005888-ZA

Description

This petition would establish a hotel development overlay zoning district for the Savannah Historic District to define areas where hotels would and would not be permitted, and to identify areas where small and large hotels are appropriate. Small hotels are proposed to have 16-74 room; large hotels are proposed to have 75 or more rooms. A related text amendment is also on the January 12 agenda to create the overlay district (File No. 17-005213-ZA). This item was continued from the January 9 Planning Commission meeting.

Recommendation

Approval.

Contact

Charlotte L. Moore, AICP
moorec@thempc.org | 912.651.1465

Financial Impact

n/a

Review Comments

Attachments

📎 [Staff Report-17-005888-ZA-Jan 12.pdf](#)



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

TO: City of Savannah Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Planning Commission

DATE: January 12, 2018

SUBJECT: Petition to Establish a Hotel Development Overlay Zoning District for the Savannah Historic District
City of Savannah, Petitioner
Aldermanic District: 1 (Johnson) and 2 (Durrence)
County Commission District: 2 (Holmes) and 3 (Lockett)
File No. 17-005888-ZA

Issue:

The creation of a hotel development overlay district for the Savannah Historic District to define areas where hotels would and would not be permitted, and to identify areas where small and large hotels are appropriate. Small hotels are proposed to have 16-74 rooms; large hotels are proposed to have 75 or more rooms.

Background:

The Mayor and Aldermen have expressed concern with increasing hotel development in the Savannah Historic District, particularly with regards to impacts on residential areas and the possibility that hotel development may discourage new residential development.

To explore if existing regulations were "incentivizing" hotel development and "disincentivizing" residential development, Council requested that a study be undertaken. The MPC prepared a hotel study that identified regulations and policies that could make hotel development easier to pursue than residential development. The Savannah Development and Renewal Authority and City staff prepared a residential incentive study. The latter study led to a text amendment that was approved by City Council on November 21, 2017 to eliminate residential density requirements for the Savannah Historic District.

As part of the hotel study, MPC was also requested to provide text amendments to determine areas where large and small hotels would be most appropriate. At that time, small hotels were identified to be in the 50-55 room range, while large hotels would be more than this range.

After submission of the study, City staff met with stakeholders and alternative amendments were prepared. Council reviewed these amendments but determined that more input was necessary from additional stakeholders (File No. 17-002806-ZA). This led to the creation of the proposed Hotel Development Overlay District. The text for the zoning district will also be reviewed at the January 12 MPC meeting (File No. 17-005213-ZA). The text must be adopted before the overlay district can be adopted.

The overlay district is specific to only the hotel use within the Savannah Historic District. It does not affect the requirements of the Historic District (i.e., the design standards) or change off-street parking requirements.

The attached map identifies the proposed area of the overlay district, which is the entire Savannah Historic District.

Findings:

1. **Public Notice:** Public notice of the Planning Commission meeting is not required by local or state law. Published noticed prior to the City Council meeting will be required at least 15 days but not more than 45 days before the scheduled public hearing. The petition will also be placed on the Council agenda that is available on the City of Savannah website (<http://www.savannahga.gov/>).
2. **Proposed Savannah Historic District Hotel Overlay District:**
 - a. **Proposed Intent of the Overlay District:** “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.”
 - b. **Proposed Uses:** The base zoning district for a property within the overlay district identifies the permitted land uses. The overlay district affects only the hotel use. The overlay district will identify where hotels would and would not be permitted, as well as the size of the hotel in areas where they are proposed to be allowed.
 - c. **Proposed Development Standards:** The base zoning district for a property within the overlay district identifies the development standards. In addition, there are specific Historic District standards (Sec. 8-3030). The overlay district will not affect either of these.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses that would create traffic volumes, noise level, odor, airborne particulate matter, visual blight, reduce light or increased density of development that would adversely impact the livability or quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood?*

Yes ___ No X

2. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses that would adversely impact adjacent and nearby properties by rendering such properties less desirable and therefore less marketable for the type of development permitted under the current zoning?*

Yes ___ No X

3. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses that would generate a type or mix of vehicular traffic on a street or highway that is incompatible with the type of land use development along such street or highway?*

Yes ___ No X

4. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses that would generate greater traffic volumes at vehicular access points and cross streets than is generated by uses permitted under the current zoning district to the detriment of maintaining acceptable or current volume capacity (V/C) ratio for the streets that provide vehicular access to the proposed zoning district and adjacent and nearby properties?*

Yes ___ No X

5. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses or scale of development that would require a greater level of public services such as drainage facilities, utilities, or safety services above that required for uses permitted under the current zoning district such that the provision of these services will create financial burden to the public?*

Yes ___ No X

6. *Will the proposed zoning district permit uses or scale of development that would adversely impact the improvement or development of adjacent and nearby properties in accordance with existing zoning regulations and development controls deemed necessary to maintain the stability and livability of the surrounding neighborhood?*

Yes ___ No X

7. *Will the proposed zoning district permit development that is inconsistent with the comprehensive land use plan?*

Yes ___ No X

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the request as presented.
2. Deny the request.
3. Approve an alternative classification.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Establishing a hotel overlay district for the Savannah Historic District supports the desire of the Mayor and Aldermen to guide future development of hotels.

RECOMMENDATION:

Subject to the adoption of the Hotel Development Overlay District text, **approval** of the request to establish a Hotel Development Overlay District zoning district for the Savannah Historic District.

