



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:**

**Text Amendments to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance**

**Re: To create Article P, Hotel Development Overlay District, including amendments to, and the creation of, the following ordinance sections:**

**Article A. (Generally)**

- Sec. 8-3002 (Definitions)

**Article B. (Zoning Districts)**

- Sec. 8-3025(a) (C and R Use Index and Schedule)
- Sec. 8-3025(b) (B and I Use Index and Schedule)

**Article P. (Savannah Historic District Hotel Overlay District)**

**Petition of the City of Savannah  
File No.: 17-005213-ZA**

**MPC ACTION:**

**Approval** of the Hotel Development Overlay District for the Savannah Historic District.

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

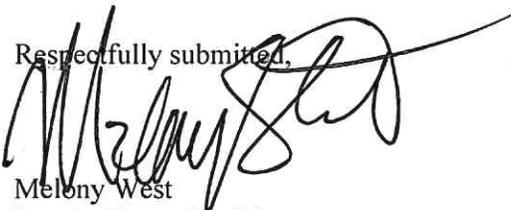
**Approval** of the Hotel Development Overlay District for the Savannah Historic District.

**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)

<b>APPROVAL</b> Votes: 9	<b>DENIAL</b> Votes: 0	<b>ABSENT</b>
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

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## Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

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### January 12, 2018 Special Called MPC Meeting

#### **Title**

TEXT AMENDMENT: Creation of Article P, Historic District Hotel Overlay District | Amendment of the City of Savannah | File No. 17-005213-ZA

#### **Description**

This petition proposes to create a hotel development overlay district for the Savannah Historic District to establish defined 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. A related map amendment/rezoning is also on the January 12 agenda, which is required to place the overlay district into effect if this text amendment is adopted.

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-17-005213-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*

**TO:** City of Savannah Mayor and Aldermen  
**FROM:** Metropolitan Planning Commission  
**DATE:** January 12, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Text Amendments to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance  
Re: To create Article P, Hotel Development Overlay District for the Savannah Historic District, including amendments to, and the creation of, the following ordinance sections:

**Article A. (Generally)**

- Sec. 8-3002 (Definitions)

**Article B. (Zoning Districts)**

- Sec. 8-3025(a) (C and R Use Index and Schedule)
- Sec. 8-3025(b) (B and I Use Index and Schedule)

**Article P. (Hotel Development Overlay District)**

Petition of the City of Savannah  
File No.: 17-005213-ZA

**ISSUE:**

The creation of a hotel development overlay district for the Savannah Historic District to establish areas where hotels would and would not be permitted, and to identify areas where small and large hotels are appropriate.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Mayor and Aldermen have been concerned 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 “dis-incentivizing” 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. This led to the creation of the proposed Hotel Development Overlay District. If the overlay district is adopted, a map amendment/rezoning is also necessary. The map amendment will also be reviewed at the January 12 MPC meeting (File No. 17-005888-ZA). The map amendment must be adopted for the overlay text amendment to take effect.

The hotel development 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 hotel development overlay district, which is the entire Savannah Historic District.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. As of November 17, 2017, 40 hotels are existence and 15 hotels are under review or construction within the Savannah Historic District. One hotel—the Quality Inn on Bay Street—will be demolished and replaced by another hotel. There are presently 4,038 existing hotel rooms with 2,393 more rooms proposed. In total, these hotels will provide approximately 6,379 hotel rooms. This does not include additional rooms that are available at inns or short-term vacation rentals. Of the hotels in review or under construction, 13 will be in the “large” hotel category (75 or more rooms); these hotels range from 96 rooms to 419 rooms.
2. The proposed map on page 6 shows how and where hotels will be permitted. Specifically, the map indicates that hotels are permitted in certain areas of the district according to size. Areas that would permit small hotels (16-74 rooms) are shown in yellow. Areas that would permit small and large hotels (75 or more rooms) are shown in green. Red areas indicate that hotels would not be permitted regardless of size.

Location would be further restricted by street. Hotels must be located on one of the streets or lanes identified on the map. They include all or portions of: Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Montgomery Street, Whitaker Street, Drayton Street, Abercorn Street (Bay to Oglethorpe), Fahm Street, Ann Street, River Street, Indian Street, Bay Street, Bryan Street (west of Lincoln)

Broughton Street, Oglethorpe Avenue, Liberty Street, Zublely Street, Turner Boulevard, Louisville Road and Jones Street (west of MLK).

3. As proposed, the overlay district will “trump” any requirements of the base zoning districts. This includes allowing hotels in zoning districts where hotels are not presently permitted and prohibiting them from portions of some base districts that presently allow them.

Six base zoning districts within the Savannah Historic District do not allow hotels as a matter-of-right. Two base districts allow hotels with special use approval. It is intended that the overlay district would “override” the base districts and allow hotels to be developed in these areas provided that the hotel is located on one of the identified streets within the Historic District.

Base districts that do not presently permit hotels are: RIP-A, RM-25, BG-1, BG-2, BN-1 and I-L. The R-B-C-1 and PUD-IS-B districts require special use approval.

Two base districts, RIP-B and RIP-C, allow hotels as a matter-of-right provided they are located on an arterial street. In certain areas, the overlay district would not allow hotels.

4. Three hotel use conditions are proposed: 1) size (large with 75 or more rooms and small with 16-74 rooms); 2) restriction to streets identified on the overlay map; and, 3) historic single-family residential structures cannot be converted into a hotel use. These conditions are not variable. If a change is desired, a text amendment would have to be submitted and approved by City Council after a recommendation from the Planning Commission.
5. To support the creation of the overlay district and its intent, some definitions are also proposed to be eliminated or revised.

**a. Definitions Proposed for Elimination.**

“Apartment-Hotel” is proposed to be eliminated. It is defined as “A building providing transient, temporary or permanent lodging, which is divided into living units consisting of single- or multiple-occupancy bedrooms, each of which is served by private bath or common bath facilities and each of which may or may not be served either by private or common kitchen facilities.”

This definition has been confused with other lodging uses, including short-term vacation rentals and even rooming/boarded houses. A variation of this use existed when the original ordinance was adopted; it was intended to provide dwelling units within a hotel for non-transient persons. It is unclear why changes to the definition were made. To avoid misinterpretation, the use should be removed from the zoning ordinance.

**b. Definitions Proposed for Revision.**

- i. **Hotel, Motel or Motor Lodge.** This use is defined as “[a] lodging establishment consisting of one or more attached or detached buildings containing more than 15 bedrooms or suites to transient guests.”

It is proposed that the use be limited to “Hotel, Motel” and that the definition be: “A lodging establishment for transient guests with more than 15 guest rooms. Any on-premises use that is accessible by the general public, such as a restaurant, bar or event/assembly space, is a separate principal use and must be an allowed use in the base zoning district. Any on-premises use that is accessible only by hotel guests is an accessory use.”

The change is proposed to eliminate the reference to attached and detached buildings (not relevant) and bedrooms and suites (too specific and not defined). It also makes clear that if services are provided to the public who are not staying overnight, those services (i.e., uses) have to be permitted in the base zoning district. This would make clear, for example, that a small hotel locating in an RIP-A district could not have a restaurant or bar that is open to the public. It would not prevent these uses, however, from being established only for overnight guests.

- ii. **Inn.** This use is defined as “[a] lodging establishment providing bedrooms and meals to transient guests which contains not more than 15 bedrooms or suites.”

It is proposed that the definition be: “A lodging establishment for transient guests with no more than 15 guest rooms. Any on-premises use that is accessible by the general public, such as a restaurant, bar or event/assembly space, is a separate principal use and must be an allowed use in the base zoning district. Any on-premises use that is accessible only by hotel guests is an accessory use.”

The proposed change is similar to the proposed “Hotel, Motel” definition. The reference to meals having to be served has been removed. Required meal service is not relevant to the use and has caused confusion.

- iii. **Lodging Accommodation.** This use does not presently exist. The definition is proposed to be: “An establishment where a room, camp site or dwelling unit is provided for overnight stay, in exchange for compensation, to one or more transient guests whose usual place of residence is elsewhere. Lodging establishments include the following: bed and breakfast homestays, bed and breakfast inns, inns, hostels, hotels, motels, short-term vacation rentals, recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds. If a lodging operation or a proposed lodging use does not meet the definition of any the lodging uses listed above, it shall not be permitted.

The purpose for adding this definition is to identify all the various types of accommodations that are considered lodging and that these uses are intended for transient guests (i.e., those staying less than 30 days who reside elsewhere).

- iv. **Transient Guest.** This use is proposed to be revised. The current definition is “A person who resides at a place other than his usual place of residence for no more than 30 consecutive days in exchange for compensation.”

The proposed definition is: “A person who lodges at a place other than his usual place of residence for no more than 30 consecutive days in exchange for compensation. The lodging period may extend beyond 30 consecutive days if the guest maintains a usual place of residence elsewhere.”

The change acknowledges that some stays may extend beyond 30 days and that a guest would have to have a residence elsewhere. Requiring a place of residence elsewhere prevents the accommodation from becoming a permanent residence, which is sometimes the case for certain lodging uses.

6. Because changes are proposed to definition names, revisions are also proposed for Sec. 8-3025(a) and (b), the use index and the use schedule.

#### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The overlay district reflects the desire of the Mayor and Aldermen to determine where hotels are appropriate in the Savannah Historic District, particularly large hotels that have 75 or more rooms. The overlay allows for improved management of hotel locations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** **Approval** of the Hotel Development Overlay District for the Savannah Historic District.

# MAP 1: SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT HOTEL DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

## Streets Where Hotels Are Permitted

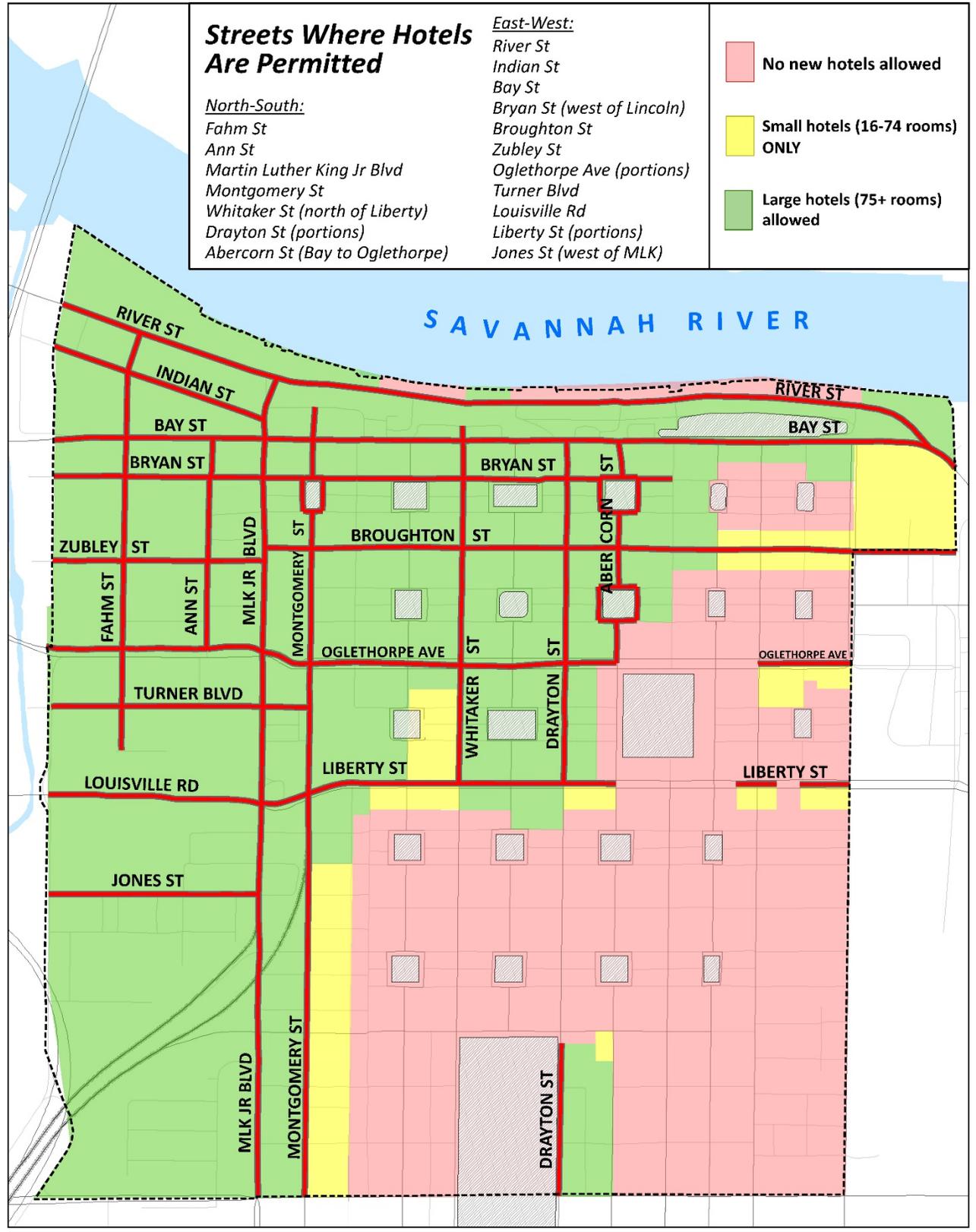
### North-South:

Fahm St  
 Ann St  
 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
 Montgomery St  
 Whitaker St (north of Liberty)  
 Drayton St (portions)  
 Abercorn St (Bay to Oglethorpe)

### East-West:

River St  
 Indian St  
 Bay St  
 Bryan St (west of Lincoln)  
 Broughton St  
 Zubley St  
 Oglethorpe Ave (portions)  
 Turner Blvd  
 Louisville Rd  
 Liberty St (portions)  
 Jones St (west of MLK)

- No new hotels allowed
- Small hotels (16-74 rooms)  
ONLY
- Large hotels (75+ rooms)  
allowed



**I. Article A (Generally), Section 8-3002 (Definitions).**

~~*Apartment hotel.* A building providing transient, temporary or permanent lodging, which is divided into living units consisting of single or multiple occupancy bedrooms, each of which is served by private bath or common bath facilities and each of which may or may not be served either by private or common kitchen facilities.~~

~~*Hotel, motel or motel lodge.* A lodging establishment consisting of one or more attached or detached buildings containing more than 15 bedrooms or suites to transient guests.~~

**Hotel, Motel. A lodging establishment for transient guests with more than 15 guest rooms. Any on-premises use that is accessible by the general public, such as a restaurant, bar or event/assembly space, is a separate principal use and must be an allowed use in the base zoning district. Any on-premises use that is accessible only by hotel guests is an accessory use.**

~~*Inn.* A lodging establishment providing bedrooms and meals to transient guests which contains not more than 15 bedrooms or suites.~~

**Inn. A lodging establishment for transient guests with no more than 15 guest rooms. Any on-premises use that is accessible by the general public, such as a restaurant, bar or event/assembly space, is a separate principal use and must be an allowed use in the base zoning district. Any on-premises use that is accessible only by hotel guests is an accessory use.**

**Lodging Establishment. An establishment where a room, camp site or dwelling unit is provided for overnight stay, in exchange for compensation, to one or more transient guests whose usual place of residence is elsewhere. Lodging establishments include the following: bed and breakfast homestays, bed and breakfast inns, inns, hostels, hotels, motels, short-term vacation rentals, recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds. If a lodging operation or a proposed lodging use does not meet the definition of any the lodging uses listed above, it shall not be permitted.**

**Transient Guest. A person who resides lodges at a place other than his usual place of residence for no more than 30 consecutive days in exchange for compensation. The lodging period may extend beyond 30 consecutive days if the guest maintains a usual place of residence elsewhere.**

**II. Article B (Zoning Districts), Section 8-3025(a) (Index for C&R Use Schedule)**

Index for Conservation (“C”) and Residential (“R”) Districts Use Schedule	
Use	Use No.
Hotel, Motel, Motor Lodge	11

**III. Article B (Zoning Districts), Section 8-3025(a) (C&R Use Schedule)**

<i>List of Uses</i>	<i>C-A</i>	<i>C-M</i>	<i>C-R</i>	<i>R20</i>	<i>R10</i>	<i>R-6</i>	<i>R6A</i>	<i>R6B</i>	<i>R6C</i>	<i>R-4</i>	<i>RM</i>	<i>RIP</i>	<i>RIPA</i>	<i>RIPAI</i>	<i>RIPB</i>	<i>RIP-</i>	<i>RIPC</i>	<i>RIPD</i>	<i>IP</i>	<i>RMH</i>	<i>RMH-</i>	<i>R-D</i>
(11) Hotel, Motel, Motor Lodge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	B
<p>a. <del>Provided, such uses located within an R-I-P A and R-I-P D zoning districts shall front on a street classified as an "arterial street." Such use may include accessory eating and drinking facilities and other necessary incidental uses; provided, such uses are otherwise permitted in the district. Providing, however, within the R-I-P district, complimentary meals and beverages (including alcoholic beverages) may be served to registered occupants of the facility and their guests but shall not be available or for sale to the general public.</del></p> <p><b><u>Such uses shall abut a street classified as an “arterial street” as indicated in Sec. 8-3048; however, within the Historic District, as designated in Sec. 8-3030, compliance with Article P (Hotel Development Overlay District) is required. Article P, in part, regulates the location and size of hotels which may or may not be permitted in the base districts listed within this Section.</u></b></p>																						
<p>b. <del>Provided, further, that such use located within an R-I-P zoning district may provide only complimentary meals and beverages and only when such services are restricted to registered occupants of the facility and to their guests and are not available or for sale to the general public.</del></p>																						

**IV. Article B (Zoning Districts), Section 8-3025(b) (Index for B&I Use Schedule)**

Use Index for Business and Industrial Use Schedule	
Use	Use No.
Hotel, <u>Motel</u> or apartment hotel	7

**V. Article B (Zoning Districts), Section 8-3025(b) (B&I Use Schedule)**

<i>List of Uses</i>	R-B	RB-1	B-H	B-N	BN-1	B-C	BC-1	B-G	BG-1	BG-2	B-B	I-L	IL-B	I-H	P-IL-T	R-B-C	R-B-C-1	O-I
(7) Hotel, <u>Motel</u> or apartment hotel	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	<u>X</u>	X	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	-	X	B	-
<p>Provided the uses front onto an arterial street.  <u>Such uses shall abut a street classified as an "arterial street" as indicated in Sec. 8-3048; however, within the Historic District, as designated in Sec. 8-3030, compliance with Article P (Hotel Development Overlay District) is required. Article P, in part, regulates the location and size of hotels which may or may not be permitted in the base districts listed within this Section.</u></p>																		

<i>List of Uses</i>	R-B	RB-1	B-H	B-N	BN-1	B-C	BC-1	B-G	BG-1	BG-2	B-B	I-L	IL-B	I-H	P-IL-T	R-B-C	R-B-C-1	O-I
(9) Motel	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	*X	-
<p><del>Including such ancillary uses as barber shops, beauty shops, restaurants with or without pouring licenses, cocktail lounges, tobacco stores, drugstores, and uses of a similar nature. Provided that within the R-B-C-1 district, no pouring license or alcoholic beverages sales shall be allowed.</del></p>																		

## **VI. Article P. Hotel Development Overlay District.**

### **Sec. 8-XXXX. Purpose and Intent.**

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.

### **Sec. 8-XXXX. Hotel Development Overlay District and Identification.**

The Hotel Development Overlay (“HDO”) District is identified on the official zoning map as “HDO”.

### **Sec. 8-XXXX. District Boundaries.**

The boundaries of the HDO District shall be the same as the boundaries of the Savannah Historic District, which are defined in Georgia Constitution Article XI and ratified November 5, 1968 (Ga. L. 1968 page 1591), and continued as part of the Constitution of the State of Georgia (GA. L. 1986, p. 5077) and shall be 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 on Map 1.

### **Sec. 8-XXXX. Relationship to Base Zoning Districts and the Historic District.**

For all properties within the boundaries of the HDO District, the regulations for both the base zoning district and the overlay district shall apply. Whenever there is conflict between the regulations of the base zoning district and the overlay district, the HDO District shall control. 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 Sec. 8-3030.

### **Sec. 8-XXXX. Permitted Uses.**

Within the HDO District, the permitted uses are the same as those in the base 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.

**Sec. 8-XXXX. Hotel Use Conditions.**

The below use conditions shall apply to new hotels. Variances from these conditions are not allowed.

- (a) ***Location.*** New hotels are permitted only within designated areas of the Historic District as shown on Map 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 Map 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 Map 1.

**Sec. 8-XXXX. Effect on Existing Hotels and Applications.**

- (a) ***Effect on Existing Hotels with Lawfully-issued and Valid Tax Certificates.***

As of [date of ordinance adoption]:

- 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 will not be terminated, and applications for renewal or transfer of such certificates will not be denied.

- (b) ***Effect on Existing Applications.***

As of [date of adoption 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 [*date of adoption 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.

[MAP 1 appears on next page.]

# MAP 1: SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT HOTEL DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

## Streets Where Hotels Are Permitted

### North-South:

Fahm St  
 Ann St  
 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
 Montgomery St  
 Whitaker St (north of Liberty)  
 Drayton St (portions)  
 Abercorn St (Bay to Oglethorpe)

### East-West:

River St  
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 Broughton St  
 Zubley St  
 Oglethorpe Ave (portions)  
 Turner Blvd  
 Louisville Rd  
 Liberty St (portions)  
 Jones St (west of MLK)

- No new hotels allowed
- Small hotels (16-74 rooms) ONLY
- Large hotels (75+ rooms) allowed

