

## **INITIAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

### **Neighborhood Goals**

- The petitioning neighborhoods are not anti-hotel or anti-tourist; they support mixed-use and multi-family development and small businesses.
- Eliminating hotels as a use in these neighborhoods would help keep property affordable while encouraging infill (mixed-use and housing) on large vacant properties.
- Housing as opposed to hotels would positively impact neighborhood vibrancy and sustainability.

### **Neighborhood Concerns**

- Savannah is at a tipping point regarding the encroachment of tourism-related development into neighborhoods.
- There is desire to pull tourism activities to areas outside of downtown so it's not all concentrated there—e.g., trolley now goes to Starland Yard.
- Small businesses risk losing business as property values and rents increase.
- Hotels change the context of how the area is marketed; national chains would soon replace local businesses; the combination of impacts threatens to change the fabric of the neighborhood.
- Specific areas of concern – Sears building, AT&T building
- Hotels would bring increased traffic, parking pressures, rising property taxes.
- These neighborhoods are not built to support density.
- Neighborhoods west of MLK, Jr. Blvd. should be preserved as a residential community.

### **Need Clear Standards and Procedures that Provide Predictability**

- Neighborhoods want certainty, predictability regarding hotel development; otherwise, neighborhoods are forced to have to constantly react to development proposals; need to shift burden of proof and create a means of dialog.
- Developers want a good regulatory process and state law requires clear regulations.
- Need to address misinformation among Kayton Frazier residents regarding purpose of hotel development overlay; some fear it is meant to attract hotel development.
- Hotel overlay would add a layer of protection and predictability; under the existing ordinance, residents and neighborhood leadership must be constantly vigilant.
- An overlay offers the opportunity for potential developers to be required to come to the neighborhood and work collaboratively to shape the development.
- Tinkering with the existing zoning ordinance (e.g., adding use conditions; improving the special use permit process) would be time consuming and would not improve predictability.

- Existing overlay is problematic, particularly the way in which streets where hotels are permitted were identified.
- Need to change policies governing site-specific plans to provide more adequate time for public notice and staff review.
- Should make neighborhood meetings mandatory.
- Possible Use Standards to consider (Article 8.0, Sec. 8.4 Commercial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses):
  - No surface parking for hotel uses;
  - Lower threshold of “small hotel” category
- Small hotel category maximum (74 rooms) is too high; needs to be lowered.
- Entitlements given through variances, special use permits, etc. should be tied to project, not to the land.
- Notification of proposed zoning changes—rezonings, variances, COAs, special use permits, etc.—should be more broadly distributed.
- Need more interaction with neighborhoods by City and MPC.
- Based on experience with the previous hotel overlay process, participants recommend a large town hall type meeting to let all express concerns and a small working group selected by the larger group to develop recommendations.

### **Need for Small Area Plans**

- Need neighborhood or small area plans to address concerns; need to look at future development/redevelopment holistically; what is desired, what the area can support.
- Overlay may not be the right tool to address neighborhood concerns.
- Livability is a key concern. Need to plan for mixed-use, livable neighborhoods.
- The goal should be to manage impacts of hotel growth on residential neighborhoods.

### **Hotel Development**

- Consider a smaller threshold for small hotel definition in certain areas.
- Hotel/business organizations are not opposed to extending the overlay to the three other districts but would like to exclude the Bull Street corridor from Henry/Anderson to Victory Drive.
- The existing hotel overlay (downtown) needs to be eased if opportunities for hotel development are taken away in the Victorian and Streetcar districts; some streets currently not marked for hotel development should be added to list of permitted streets, e.g., Congress Street.
- Limiting hotels will not attract multi-family development.
- Hotels have a shelf life; need to be innovative about reuse opportunities.

- Hybrid boutique hotel/residences could be considered, e.g., Pendry Washington, DC-The Wharf.
- A hybrid hotel/residential development would need more height than zoning allows (5 stories); would need 80-90 hotel rooms and 30-40 apartments/condos.
- Bull and 37<sup>th</sup> may be an area of interest for hotels.
- Small boutique hotels are good for neighborhoods; they will by nature of their size become more neighborhood-oriented and add value to the neighborhood and local businesses.

#### **Public Housing Developments in the Proposed HDO Area**

- HAS understands concerns about hotel impacts on residential areas and small businesses but also sees an advantage of having housing for hotel workers close to places of employment. Hotels provide employment for residents.
- Kayton Homes was converted to Section 8 through HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) initiative; HAS currently has no plans to redevelop the property. The RAD conversion provides more operating income that can be reinvested to better maintain the property.
- Frazier Homes is a PHA property and is fully occupied; HAS is currently preparing its 5-year capital plan, which will include improvements to Frazier Homes. No RAD conversion is planned over next 5 years.
- Yamacraw is currently in HUD Section 106 environment review. HAS will relocate about 200 families via Section 8 vouchers. Demolition and disposition of public housing is governed by Section 18 of the Housing Act of 1937 (the Act).