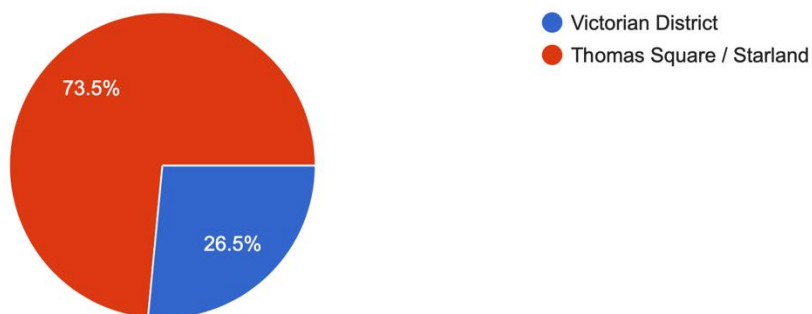


# Joint Neighborhood Survey on Future Hotel Development - VNA & TSNA

## RESPONSES

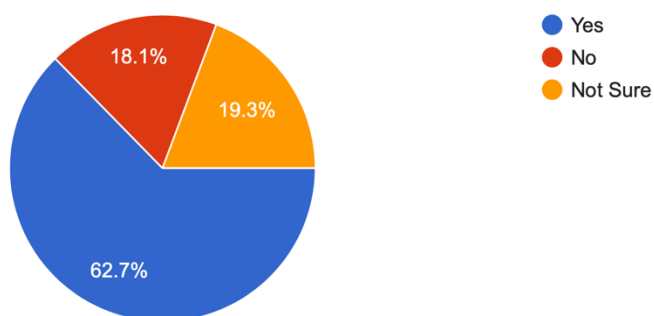
Your Neighborhood:

83 responses



1. Generally, do you feel that hotel development is having a negative impact on residential quality of life?

83 responses



### Written option:

83 total responses

49 null responses

34 written responses

1.

I would prefer to see more STVR properties than hotels. The neighborhoods would retain the charm as the existing buildings/homes are repurposed for vacation use, but on a regulated basis.

Furthermore, properties are not torn down for a huge hotel footprint. Hotels have a large impact on the surrounding properties - trash removal/dumpsters, grease traps, parking etc. Hotels should be limited to the Historic District. Do we actually need more hotels? They are being constructed at a furious rate downtown. Do all current hotels maintain 90%+ occupancy? The city wants to limit the number of STVR's in these neighborhoods as there are claims that they are have unmanaged, unruly guests and that the STVR's affect the 'neighborhood' feel - fewer residents. How does a hotel differ? Yes, the hotels are staffed 24/7 - usually, but that does not mean no unruly guests, and certainly does not mean more residents In these two districts, SCAD has a huge footprint. Carving out space for a hotel is not going to improve the parking situation, or improve the neighborhood. If you go underground for parking I believe you will have the same problems you had with Ellis Square - digging etc it going to negatively impact the structural integrity of properties nearby. The standard hotel model is not the future of travel. People want different experiences. They want to travel but live like a local when they do. They want unique experiences. Savannah is a huge destination market - particularly for weddings. We see most of our brides want to have a unique place to stay. They will book a small hotel block, but we find so many of them utilize STVR's.

2.

Hotel development isn't generally good or bad, it depends on whether the hotel is successfully integrated. This means the number of rooms, the amenities, the price of hotel rooms, the quality and refinement of building design, etc. Hotels like the Drayton or Perry Lane generally respond well to the character of the surrounding environment (adjacent streets, precedents for scale, use of materials, etc.) and have added amenities that are enjoyed by both tourists and locals (restaurants, bars, rooftop uses...) Big box hotels in my opinion are generally less successfully integrated, though on certain streets this can still be acceptable (i.e. corner of MLK/Monthgomery & Oglethorpe is less problematic due to significant traffic volume and historic automobile corridor precedents).

3.

I feel that the city's focus on tourism over residents is what's causing a negative impact on residential quality of life. I don't think hotels should be added in \*either\* district until the city can get its act together. Resolve the drainage issues. Focus on crime problems. Make the streets safer for pedestrians/bikers/drivers. Hire qualified workers to fulfill Code Compliance, STVR regulation, and public safety roles. The city of Savannah needs to STOP catering to tourists at the expense of residents. (And I say that as someone who makes a living in the tourism industry.)

4.

Hotels bring tourists who have different values, interests, and needs than local residents. Our quality of life in the Victorian District is in danger of being eroded by over-tourism and commercial operations that cater to tourists rather than residents. We welcome visitors who are respectful of our neighborhood and support our local businesses. However, we must avoid a tipping point where visitor and tourist activities overwhelm the needs of residents, as has happened further north in the Landmark District.

5.

If the hotels replace residential development, it can be a negative due to reduced permanent residents, opportunity costs for additional housing. But it can also provide additional customers for local restaurants and businesses, potentially increasing the options available in the neighborhood where residential density isn't there. In general, I'd say it's often a net negative, but might be useful in moderation where there is existing commercial development.

6.

I can't think of a single instance in the downtown area where a new hotel has been constructed and it displaced former homes or residential structures. The hotels have been built close to residential areas, homes, and apartments, but those residences have always been in close proximity to other commercial, high traffic uses in the downtown area over the years (restaurants, bars, stores, and even car dealerships until the 1960's).

7.

I think hotel development in the more "downtown" parts of the city make sense to support the tourism industry, but I don't think that adding hotels, even "small" ones in the residential areas of the Victorian and Thomas Square neighborhoods makes sense, other than, possibly along MLK to help take care of some of the blight.

8.

Large hotels do not belong south of the park. Small boutique hotels would be fine. Too many tourists is NOT good for community cohesion. I almost never go downtown because I feel that it is geared for tourists not residents. I chose to live down here to avoid that even though downtown Savannah is beautiful.

9.

With limitations, I think it improves seas IF the hotels are nice and bring in an upper level clientele. I also think that the police are more visible and present in the more "touristy" areas, so if new hotels bring tourists, then I think it will increase the police presence in our area

10.

In the Thomas Square neighborhood, I would say AirBnBs are much more prevalent. I don't think these are having a negative impact, but if larger hotels were developed in the neighborhood, I could see that making parking for residents more difficult (especially on street cleaning days).

11.

It changes the landscape of the neighborhood and would make starland less of a haven for locals. I wouldn't mind a small boutique hotel, or even a motel, like the Thunderbird. But I do not think a large chain hotel should be able to move in and drastically change our neighborhood.

12.

Traffic, noise, congestion, potential spread of COVID-19 are some of the negative impacts that hotels are having on our quality of life. There is also the aesthetic and historic scale issue that is broken beyond repair in our urban fabric.

13.

I have no issue at all with the map presented above. My only concern is that any hotel approved (new build) must adhere to strict architectural standards so that it would be design appropriate for the area.

14.

People who actually live in a neighborhood generally care about the quality of the built environment. Developers, on the other hand, care about maximizing the profits from their investments.

15.

Residential parking and privacy has been compromised by the addition of multiple commercial enterprises, without regard or notification to existing residents.

16.

We have too many hotels in the historic district that cause dead blocks, with no space for commercial activity and no storefronts. Our hotels are overbuilt.

17.

The scale and similar design has compromised the integrity of historic district but also so many taxpayer dollars get funneled to this area too

18.

Rising commercial prices - locals need to be able to utilize their city. At the moment developers run roughshod over the little guy.

19.

A lot would depend on the size and location of the hotel. And how traffic/parking would be handled. It's not a clear yes or no

20.

We have enough hotel space in the core of the city and the scarce space should be developed for long term residential use.

21.

It's too difficult to get parking downtown to visit anything due to increased tourism since I moved here 12 years ago.

22.

Increased vehicular traffic and demand for limited parking negatively affect neighborhood quality of life.

23.

Hotels development has lead to grossly overpriced commercial spaces which have ended local businesses.

24.

Traffic, parking, skyline....all affected. Go take a look at Charleston to see what this brings.

25.

Growth is progress. It is better for the growth of the city, tax base, and for property values.

26.

Savannah has reached a saturation point and current hotels need to maximize occupancy.

27.

I do not agree with hotels tearing down existing housing to build or expand a hotel.

28.

Not inherently but how it has manifest in mass and unsympathetic context

29.

I do not want hotels of any size in my residential neighborhood.

30.

Hotels should be limited to busier, non-residential areas

31.

Too much focus on tourists, not enough on residents

32.

I would've liked to have a "not yet" option.

33.

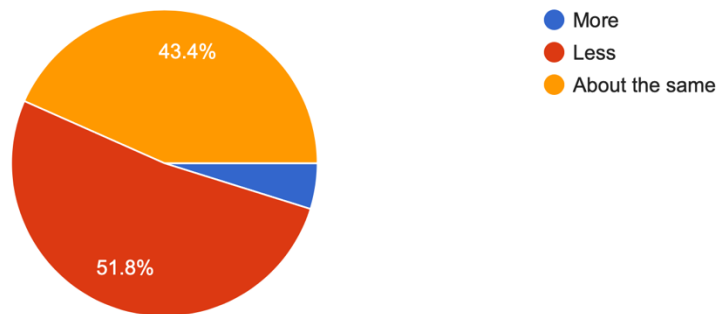
We are over built with hotels

34.

Not in my neighborhood.

2. As the tourism sector has grown in the Landmark Historic District, do you visit this part of Savannah as often as you might have in the past?

83 responses



**Written option:**

83 total responses

55 null responses

28 written responses

1.

We definitely walk downtown more on the weekends, mostly due to entertainment and bands offered along the Riverwalk at Plant Riverside on Friday and Saturday evenings. For a while we were also tending to go more just for shopping at stores that depended on the traffic from both locals and tourists. Between the effects of the pandemic, national retailers closing stores, the never ending "improvements" and construction along Broughton Street, plus the City's seeming

disregard for the growing number of homeless camping along the streets downtown, we probably shop less downtown. The stores that are left very much could not just survive on the locals who live in the downtown area or the lesser number of Savannah residents who are willing to go downtown due to parking, safety, convenience, or any other number of reasons.

2.

Tourists don't stop me from going to the Historic District. But I do think for many reasons that it's sad to see the changes that have taken place in that area over the past couple decades. (My earliest memories of Savannah are from around the late 80s to early 90s.) I used to chat with neighbors on their porches and loved seeing seasonal wreaths on doors, and those things have been replaced by strangers loading and unloading suitcases into Airbnbs and empty homes with dark windows during the slow season. I do, however, avoid visiting downtown restaurants on weekends, because I anticipate that it would be difficult to get in if I hadn't made a reservation weeks (if not months) in advance.

3.

For the most part, the amenities that have come with tourism growth in the LHD have enhanced the attractiveness for locals. There are some areas, such as City Market, that I personally frequent less often, though other corridors such as Liberty Street have managed to strike a good balance for both tourists and locals. Again, much of the attractiveness depends on the integration of hotels in to the urban fabric--not the presence of hotels themselves per se.

4.

Savannah has a population of 145,000 with 15 million visitors per year. This is a ratio of more than 100 tourists for every resident of Savannah. Venice Italy with a resident population of 270,000 had a peak of 4.8 million visitors in 2019. This is a ratio of less than 18 tourists for every resident. These type of ratios have their pluses and minuses, but do we want to expand the tourist trade in preference to a liveable city?

5.

I am pleased tourism has continued to boom in Savannah. My business partly depends on it. But as a local, I do not go downtown as often. Parking is always an issue, and streets are crowded with tourists. Should I go out to eat it is usually not in the Historic district as one has to preplan far in advance. I tend to go to restaurants south of the Historic District or Southside.

6.

I have only lived here for 2-1/2 years, so I don't notice a significant change from historic influence. The true historic "entertainment district" is frequently quite busy but we walk to it and walk home. We always appreciate how much more quiet it is in our Victorian district.

7.

I probably avoid late nights in certain areas due to the visiting party crowd, but a bigger issue is transportation/parking. While that's exacerbated by more tourism, that concern could also be resolved by better transit, particularly shorter headways and later hours.

8.

Many historic downtown neighborhoods have been utterly and irrevocably transformed into charmless commercial districts by these hotels. Their creep southward will do much the same to our residential spaces unless action is taken.

9.

I lived in Key West for 16 years prior to moving to Savannah and witnessed first hand what catering to tourism can do to a community, both positive and negative. I'm happy to get more involved in these efforts if you all need me.

10.

Again, traffic, noise, etc. (see above). Parking is impossible; unfamiliarity with our local traffic rules (eg, driving around the squares) raises the danger of accidents.

11.

A lot of the good local stuff was pushed out of downtown. I rarely make the trip down there and fight for parking to eat at the few remaining old spots that have survived.

12.

Downtown has become so tourist focused that long term residents have been displaced. This is not a sustainable goal. Sav needs more residents in the city not fewer.

13.

Parking, traffic and difficulty maneuvering around trolleys, buses and over-saturation of human bodies walking every which way whenever and wherever they please.

14.

Savannah is always a great city for walking. Expansion of the commercial and tourist aspects will likely make it safer to walk more of the city.

15.

Fewer and fewer businesses in the Landmark District cater to locals. Prices for meals, goods, and services are higher. Parking is inconvenient.

16.



I moved here in 2021 so can not fairly answer. I do tend to go downtown on week nights to avoid weekend groups

17.

The hotels have a sterile nondescript look that is at odds with the warmth of the existing architecture.

18.

Bachelorette parties are not fun neighbors. They ruin the downtown and are creeping into Thomas Square.

19.

So many inactive "active use" storefronts and rooftop bars that overlook other rooftop bars!

20.

More difficult to park, more difficult to get a table at a restaurant.

21.

We love interacting with tourists and know to avoid Congress after 11.

22.

Too crowded, parking very difficult to find, and they charge till 8pm

23.

It gets too crowded and you can't really relax when out walking.

24.

I can walk, so parking is not a problem for me, but it will be.

25.

Work in the neighborhood and own a business so the same.

26.

I live in the LHD, my office is in the TSNA.

27.

Too much congestion.

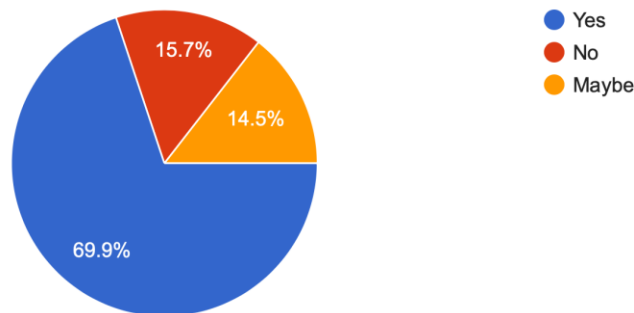
28.

Live in it

3. Would you support the extension of the City's "Hotel Development Overlay" as a method of completely prohibiting future hotels in the Victorian and Thomas Square (Starland) neighborhoods? Note: if hotels are prohibited, hotel developers would be required to seek rezoning and get approval from the neighborhood in order to build a new hotel.

3. Would you support the extension of the City's "Hotel Development Overlay" as a method of completely prohibiting future hotels in the Victori...rom the neighborhood in order to build a new hotel.

83 responses



4. If you answered "yes" above, skip this question. Ignoring present zoning, where in the Victorian and/or Thomas Square (Starland) neighborhoods do you think future hotel development might be appropriate? Please see accompanying map for reference. If you wish, you may print it out and draw on it, or digitally alter it (Photoshop, etc) and return it with your feedback.

**Written option:**

83 total responses

60 null responses

23 written responses

1.

I'm not sure it should be up to the city or boards to dictate these locations so specifically. I think we should leave it up to creative minds to decide where a hotel might be able to go... and THEN weigh in on whether or not their ideas are appropriate for the neighborhood after hearing them out. In other words, this list of 7 options is very specific... perhaps none of these locations make sense for a thoughtful hotel developer (that in theory could be a good partner for the neighborhood and city), and perhaps, a thoughtful, and experienced professional creative developer, might identify a location outside of this list that might be good for them and exciting for the city and neighborhood. THEN... I think the city / zoning boards / neighborhood associations / citizens can weigh in on whether or not their idea makes sense for the community. And maybe their idea doesn't make sense... I just think that this creative neighborhood should

promote creativity, and should be open minded to creative development ideas (hotel or not). Creating rules that are so specific, does not promote creativity, creative ideas, and creative jobs- it just stifles them. All developers aren't evil and I think we can find ways to partner with the right ones and leave their potential canvas a bit more open than this. From a more technical standpoint... if you give developers just 7 options all potential developers would be competing over the exact same locations, which just drives up the cost of their project and chases them away... this might INCREASE the likelihood that a bigger, less thoughtful, less entrepreneurial developer will be the winner of the bids... because they're much more likely to absorb those additional costs than a smaller, niche, creative, entrepreneurial developer. In other words, there's no opportunity for developers to differentiate from one another if they're just competing over the exact same locations. Differentiation makes for interesting communities, interesting and successful businesses and jobs. So, in reality, such specific restrictions could end up working against the intended goal of keeping big, corporate, cookie cutter developers out. In summary, I'm not at all against efforts to ensure our neighborhood isn't overrun by bad hotel projects. I support thoughtful oversight. I'm just against such specific restrictions- and I'm for an approach that's more open at the start of the process (and receptive to new ideas) and thoughtfully restrictive towards the end of the process (within reason). Thanks for sharing the survey with me!

2.

The old Sears building property at Henry and Bull would be suitable for a larger hotel. The AT&T/Bell South switching building on Bull St could easily accommodate a smaller boutique hotel. There are also some underutilized, former commercial properties along Montgomery Street that would be suitable for hotel development. The increased foot traffic from hotel visitors, combined with the influx of apartments and townhouses being built in the area, could complement and support the kind of restaurants, stores, and street activity that many residents want in the area. I can see this becoming even more important as SCAD continues to shift its students into SCAD owned dorms along Victory, Montgomery, and in the big complexes over by the Bridge and River. SCAD students in the evenings walking along the streets in the Victorian and Thomas Square areas have made a big difference in making everything seem a little safer, particularly during the winter months. With SCAD students taking the SCAD buses back to the new dormitories on the fringes of downtown and Thomas Square near Victory, we may need to make up some of this lost street activity. For this reason, I think what could be a "knee jerk" reaction of outright banning hotels in the area may not serve the interests of the residents in the long term.

3.

Off-limit areas should include Park Lane to Victory Dr between Jefferson St and E Broad. However, small hotels on distinct stretches such as Park Ave between Whitaker & Drayton, or a mid-size mixed-use hotel development on the old Sears side would have a positive impact on the Victorian District as long as they bring additional amenities such as restaurants, bars, workshop spaces (think of how the Mansion integrated 700 Drayton cooking classes, for example). Small/Mid-size hotel development would also be acceptable along Montgomery Street corridor where sites can accommodate them, though I'd prefer more housing units to help maintain resident populations in the Victorian District. Finally, some sites along 37th Street corridor (e.g. Habersham & Price) could also accommodate small hotel development, though this must be weighed against opportunity cost of creating more housing instead.

4.

Small boutique hotels would be OK but any more than 15 rooms should be in the downtown TOURIST area, not where residents are living. Placing big hotels down here will eventually create infrastructure (with shopping like fudge stores and t shirt shops) that will push out residents even further. The entire downtown has been ruined for actual residents of Savannah by an over reliance on tourism. River street is totally ruined. Please let the tourists stay in the Disney Mall Savannah that has taken over the downtown area and save at least some of Savannah for the actual citizenry. I would advocate for NO FRANCHISES of any nature to be in the victorian/thomas square district, including but not limited to marriot, hilton etc. Pretty soon there will be nothing for tourists to see but other tourists! This has happened in Charleston and it is really not pretty.

5.

I think the existing commercial areas around Bull St-Abercorn St are reasonable locations for a hotel. To ignore the terms of the question for a moment, the existing zoning for these areas requires a special use determination be approved by city council. Different process, but it already requires an additional approval that should be used by council to moderate hotel development. That said, some commercial areas over in the MLK and Montgomery corridors will probably only increase displacement pressure. Anything other than new housing is probably a missed opportunity and an overlay might be a useful signal to developers.

6.

Just a comment on the clarity of question 3. The word "extend" confused me because it implies a geographical or regional extension. I had to read over the info here a few times to be certain my response was what I intended. Maybe adding a sentence that explains the Hotel Overlay is currently prohibiting hotels in these districts (the map does help), thus the continuation/reinstatement of the overlay would continue to prohibit hotels (geez, that IS tough to articulate!) Anyway, just thought I'd add that. Thank you so much for the work you're doing to bolster our neighborhoods.

7.

Our house is at Barnard and 37th. With the increased restaurants and SCAD buildings, the area has gotten significantly better than when we bought our house 12 years ago. However, I do not think that we get equal city services to the historic district, which (I believe) is due to the fact that my neighborhood has less tourist traffic that brings in more money. I'm fine with smaller hotels, not high rise buildings, however.

8.

There is no place in the map provided, east of MLK for the development of large hotels. I would personally not have an issue with architecturally appropriate small hotels on current, overwhelmingly commercial streets within the mapped area. I do not know the area well enough to map out street-by-street designation, but clearly "residential" areas should remain so.

9.

Along 37th and Victory where property is vacant or a dilapidated closed business property. Also Montgomery or MLK with same caveat above. There may be other plots of land. But honestly, I'd rather any hotel go up anywhere over SCAD buying any more property. THEY NEED TO PAY TAXES IN LIEU OF. THEY ARE THE PROBLEM, the tourists bring us revenue.

10.

Sears Building, along the Bull, Victory, Drayton, and Habersham Street corridors (especially Bull and Anderson/Henry) and Habersham and 37th. Also in the Abercorn and Victory and Drayton/39th area and Starland all have historical Commercial areas of size that could accommodate multiple uses.

11.

No problem with further development outside of historic district. Parking is the only issue. If new developers have to provide/create parking and we don't leave it up to the city to provide a "solution", then there should be progress and development.

12.

I think a small hotel at the old Sears building would actually be hugely beneficial in bridging the gap between the LHD and Thomas Square, driving more foot traffic to businesses. Victory Village area, too, may support a small hotel if space allows.

13.

I think Bull St and Waters are fair game at this point. Anywhere where business development is happening but the design has to match the area. No modern nonsense.

14.

Close to Victory Dr or along Bull Street or MLK or Broad. Arterial streets are prepared for this kind of traffic, not our small neighborhood roads.

15.

Possibly small, definitely not large. I would like it if a small hotel(s) in the area would deter the addition of more short term rentals

16.

Hotels should be more distributed if growth continues, the LHD is saturated. Old Sears would be a good site for a hotel.

17.

Anywhere for a small hotel (like the Drayton) that respected historical styles. Nothing like that thing on Abercorn.

18.

All of the above would be appropriate for hotels, apartment complexes or film studios

19.

Bull corridor, Victory, west of Jefferson, parts of Abercorn.

20.

Old Sears building or BellSouth bldg - that's it !!!!!

21.

MLK and Montgomery

22.

old Sears Building

23.

Nowhere.