

Charlestowne Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 548
Charleston, SC 29402

Comments and Recommendations Submitted to the Advisory
Committee to the 2014 Tourism Management Plan Review
May 13, 2014

Restoring Quality of Life in the Historic Residential Neighborhoods

The 1994 City of Charleston Tourism Management Plan and its 1998 Update clearly and consistently emphasized the need to preserve the residential quality of life in the historic district. The 1994 Plan recognized that “The accommodation of tourist desires can lower the quality of life for the resident. This accommodation of tourist desires and the possible reduction of the quality of life for the resident amounts to a resident ‘subsidy’ of the tourism industry.”

The primary tourist appeal of Charleston over the decades has been the quiet, historic neighborhoods which can be enjoyed by walking, bicycling or taking a guided tour, carriage tour or bus tour. The City has promoted itself as a tourist destination and has now been designated the No. 1 tourist destination in the country. Success in attracting tourists, coupled with an explosion of parades, races, walks, festivals, and film shoots, has tipped the “healthy resident-to-tourist balance” that was a goal of the 1998 Update. On many days in March-May, the historic district is “over full”—residential sidewalks are crowded, traffic is congested, resident parking is unavailable, and frustrations rise. A similar situation is rapidly developing in October-November.

The City’s statistics show that tourism is up 70% since 1994. Carriage rides are up 16% since 2000. Tourists at the Festival of Homes and Gardens exceeded 11,000 last year. Pedicabs have been added to the streets. Peninsula hotel rooms have mushroomed from 2,544 in 1998 to 3,569 in 2013. Another 1,500 hotel rooms are approved or planned. Large cruise ships now dock at the edge of the Historic District two to three times per week.

Accelerated growth in tourism and tourist activities on the Peninsula has occurred since the 1998 Update, yet many of the recommendations of the Update were not implemented to mitigate the myriad effects of tourism growth on residential neighborhoods. The Historic District is no larger, its streets and sidewalks are no wider, but the press of activity has increased significantly since 1998. Like any homeowner, residents of the Historic District would like to have quiet enjoyment of their homes.

Mass tourism has replaced heritage tourism.

The primary issues are:

- (1) enforcement of existing tourism ordinances,
- (2) volume of tourists and event activities, particularly in the peak months of March-May and increasingly in October-November.
- (3) coordination among City departments,
- (4) new ordinances needed,
- (5) quiet enjoyment of residents' homes,
- (6) public restrooms, and
- (7) cruise ships.

ENFORCEMENT

The 1998 Update recommended that tourism enforcement officers (TEOs) be moved into the Police Department, receive training through the Departments of Traffic and Tourism Management and work closely with the Tourism Commission. The Update refers to two (2) full-time and four (4) part-time TEOs and later addition of two (2) more full-time TEOs. Such a force is not in evidence today. While the enforcement challenge has increased significantly, enforcement officers are not in the field.

Proposal: Four (4) full-time and four (4) part-time TEOs are needed to enforce the tourism ordinances related to carriages, walking tours, tour buses, pedicabs and bicycles and to enforce event and filming permits.

We believe the TEOs should be on foot, segways or bicycles in the neighborhood. This would enhance enforcement and be a deterrent to violations. Tourism ordinances were designed to maintain a desirable balance. There should be no hesitation to issue citations that might "inconvenience" a tourist; residents are inconvenienced by the violators. TEOs need not be in the Police Department and could be a revenue source, as with parking enforcement.

On any given day, multiple citations could be given for violations observed regularly by residents:

- carriages without medallions
- Zone 3 carriages in Zones 1 and 2
- carriages slow to pull over
- carriage "caravans" causing traffic backups
- walking tours blocking sidewalks
- pedicabs giving tours
- pedicabs in White Point Gardens
- pedicabs racing
- tour buses idling
- bicycles on sidewalks
- bicyclists not obeying traffic rules
- unauthorized tourist vehicles
- motor coaches off prescribed routes
- motorcycles violating the noise ordinance

ACTIVITY LEVEL

The 1998 Update included an objective "to discourage any significant increase in tourist numbers during the peak months (April-May)". Another objective stated "Because of the need to preserve and enhance our residential areas, all City transit and tourist related development activities must include careful consideration of possible negative impacts on those areas."

We are aware of no efforts to mitigate growth in tourist numbers during peak months. In fact, the peak season has been extended from March to May with the addition of the Wine and Food Festival, Antiques Show, Fashion Week and success of the Festival of Houses and Gardens. The Convention and Visitors Bureau may not advertise "downtown events" during peak months, but general promotional advertising by the CVB and promotion by tour and event sponsors remains intense.

The Charleston Marathon, MS Walk, Walk for Water, i5K Run and March for Babies have also been added to the event calendar in the Historic District—which already included:

Preservation Society Fall Tour of Homes
Veterans Day Parade
Turkey Day Run
Holiday Parade
Reindeer Run
St. Patrick's Day Parade
Hibernian Parade
HCF Festival of Houses and Gardens
Cooper River Bridge Run (which impacts the entire City)
Garden Club Tours
Spoleto Opening Festival
Palmetto Day Parade

These activities, plus numerous film shoots for TV series (Southern Charms, Reckless and Identity) and catalog photo shoots, involve street closures and traffic interruptions, take up parking spaces, bring crowds and interfere with the normal activities of a residential neighborhood—all of them on top of peak levels of carriage tours, walking tours, tour buses and house tours.

October-November are increasingly becoming challenging months for residents, with more Fall tourists and festivals. In October-November of this year 22 cruise ships, almost three per week, are scheduled at Union Pier.

Since 1998, each increment of growth, new activity or new event may have been considered small, but the cumulative total (like “death by 1000 cuts”) is above carrying capacity at peak periods. A “healthy resident-to-tourist balance” has been exceeded.

Each of the activities contributing to peak congestion should be adjusted to contribute to restoring residents’ quality of life.

Current carriage regulations put up to six (6) carriages in Zone 1 and up to six (6) carriages in Zone 2, which zones share Meeting Street as their boundary. Additional carriages providing “transportation” without medallions add to the carriage traffic in the Historic District. There is no capacity for additional carriages.

The limit of 36 tour buses was set well before traffic became more congested, pedicabs and cruise ships were added and tourism saw such substantial increases. The current 24 buses, with up to 6 in a single zone at a time, should not be increased. Tour bus operators should be encourage to transition to more modern narrower buses.

The Preservation Society and Historic Charleston should review peak season house tour activities to manage peak day numbers and avoid waiting lines on public sidewalks.

Proposals:

- No new events should be permitted for the Historic District and some of the current special events should occasionally be re-routed.
- Maintain the current number of carriage medallions and require transportation medallions (if point to point is maintained).
- Reduce the number of permissible tour buses to the current 24.
- Avoid issuing filming permits at peak tourism times.

CO-ORDINATION

The Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes tourism. The Tourism Commission regulates carriages, walking tours and tour buses. The Tourism Management Division of the Clerk of Council's Office administers the tourism ordinances. The Traffic Department regulates pedicabs. The Special Events Committee issues permits for races, walks, parades and festivals. The Office of Cultural Affairs issues filming permits. The Police Department is charged with enforcement.

Neighborhood residents feel particularly oppressed when multiple activities take place on the same day or many occur in the same week, especially during peak months when streets are already filled with carriages, walking tours, pedicabs, tour buses and house tours.

The 1998 Update contemplated "careful consideration of possible negative impacts" by city departments and recommended an "annual tourism management forum". These could be better implemented. For example, in 2015 it seems the Carnival Fantasy will once again be at Union Pier on March 28, the day of the Cooper River Bridge Run, which causes great congestion.

It would be desirable for the City to collect meaningful data on tourist presence on the Peninsula over time. This requires a well co-ordinated program. Promotion could be more tempered and selective so as not to produce unmanageable numbers in the future.

Proposal:

Tourism Management, Special Events, filming, enforcement and promotion should be fully co-ordinated under a full time Tourism and Events department head.

NEW ORDINANCES

A number of changes to the existing tourism ordinances are needed.

Too many carriages are seen without medallions, with unsatisfactory excuses. Too many carriages end up in "caravans" of 3, 4 or 5, making it difficult to pass or for all of them to pull over. It is impossible for a resident or TEO to determine whether a carriage without a medallion is an illegal carriage on the street or is providing point-to-point transportation.

Bicyclists need to understand and obey the rules of the road. Certain unacceptable tour vehicles have begun to appear on the streets. We appreciate that a new City ordinance bans tourist golf carts and quadcycles as inappropriate vehicles.

Our proposals are:

Carriages:

- Impose an automatic citation for failure to display a medallion (no "broken hook" or "too windy" excuses).
- Require a reasonable separation between carriages, like a 50-yard or one-block rule.
- Eliminate point-to-point carriage transportation.

Bicycles

- Attach "rules of the road" cards to rental bicycles.

Inappropriate Vehicles:

- Fully implement the ordinances banning rental golf carts and quadcycles.

RESTORING QUIET ENJOYMENT

Tourists visit the historic district for the same reasons residents choose to live here: ambiance, charm, quiet, walkability, uniqueness. It should remain a good place to live, work, raise children and retire. Tourism should not pre-empt these attributes. They are compatible with heritage tourism, but not mass tourism. They can be jeopardized by the onrush of overwhelming numbers, in excess of the "carrying capacity" of the area.

Many residents have elected to change their shopping habits due to Peninsula congestion, finding it easier to drive to West Ashley for groceries, drug stores and dry cleaners rather than endure the congestion of using their traditional Peninsula vendors.

Residents bear all of the burdens of tourism and gain few of the benefits. They have to date willingly borne the brunt of the substantial increase in tourist numbers. They deserve some consideration for this civic engagement and support of the tourism industry

The 1998 Update also defined an objective to "reduce downtown traffic congestion" which would be of major benefit to residents. Traffic congestion has instead been worsened by the increase in tourists and special events.

Although much has been done since 1998 to accommodate the tourist, little has happened to address the concerns of residents. Relatively little tax money has been spent on improvements in the historic neighborhoods. Resident parking, traffic and pollution are major issues. There should be a study of successful approaches in other cities on providing resident parking (such as Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco and New York City) and lessening vehicular traffic in the downtown area (such as London).

We propose the City address the following actions:

- Eliminate carriage and bus tours on Sunday morning.
Neighborhoods have a considerable number of churches, and Sunday morning should be a time of relative quiet.
- Eliminate point-to-point transportation carriage rides.
Alternative transportation exists, and these are often not distinguishable from tours.
- Study "resident only" parking districts.
- Reduce downtown vehicular traffic.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Public restrooms would not be welcome or appropriate additions to residential neighborhoods. These facilities have a history of attracting unsavory activities and vandalism and are difficult to maintain in functioning condition. In fact, public restrooms were removed from White Point Gardens years ago, for these reasons, and do not belong in a small historic park. No resident should face the prospect of viewing restroom lines from their home or seeing evidence of unsafe or unacceptable activity nearby. Our research on experience in other cities validates these points.

CRUISE SHIPS

The 1994 Plan provided that "Waterfront development [Waterfront Park to Charlotte Street] should be mixed use with an emphasis on residential, recreational and educational uses....Plans should include continuous waterfront access and substantial public park space with athletic fields." The 1998 Update states that a formal planning process for this area "was accomplished with the Union Pier Plan".

Yet from 2009 the City has acquiesced in the location of a new cruise ship terminal at Union Pier that brings ships carrying 2000-3500 passengers to the edge of the historic district twice a week and provides

10 acres of paved parking for 900+ cars. In October-November 2014, 22 cruise ships will call at Union Pier, next to the Historic District and residential neighborhoods.

The membership of CNA and HANA adopted resolutions by overwhelming vote to relocate the terminal, limit size and number of cruise ships and provide shore power as necessary steps to mitigate the impact of large cruise ship home port operations. The prospect of more and larger cruise ships in the future highlights the urgency of the needs.

Charleston can forever be diminished by the arrival of more and larger cruise ships, out of scale and out of character with the historic district. Development of the waterfront will be co-opted from that envisioned in the 1994 Plan and 1998 Update, due to the presence of a cruise ship terminal and the type of enterprises it can attract.

We hope the historical preservation impact study required of the Corps of Engineers and input from the national Advisory Council on Historical Preservation will address these issues. For historical reference, it was the conclusion of the ACHP in 1971, with the help of Historic Charleston Foundation, that moved the terminus of the James Island Connector from Beaufain Street to Calhoun Street due to the inappropriate impact on the historic district.

The City should support an objective study of relocation of the terminal, adopt size and number limits on cruise ships and advocate shore power.

THE FUTURE

The Historic District is a small area and home to several thousand residents willing to share their part of Charleston with a reasonable, manageable number of tourists. The 2014 Plan Update should adopt all of the goals and objectives of the 1998 Update—central to which is a “healthy resident-to-tourist balance” and maintaining quality of life. The number of tourists since 1998 has far outstripped the number of residents. The balance is not just stretched—in peak months, it is broken.

The Historic District is FULL on many days. Attracting more tourists and creating more events raises the prospect of October-November also becoming additional peak months—an intolerable result.

Residents would like to continue to support tourist activity, special events and house tours in their neighborhoods, but there is a limit and the necessary goodwill is being tested.

Rental golf carts and quadracycles recently appeared on City streets, and the City Council recognized the issue and acted on these “theme park” vehicles. New threats to monitor are the current offerings of helicopter tours over the Peninsula and slow-moving, darting cars with drivers using self-guided tour “apps”.

We hope no further hotels will be permitted on the Peninsula until the current building boom is absorbed and any further increase is determined not to place more people on the Peninsula than space and quality of life allows. We hope a better location is found for a cruise ship terminal. We hope that all out pursuit of mass tourism does not forever change the unique nature of Charleston.

As John Rivers, a CNA member, wrote in a thoughtful May 6 Post and Courier oped on the future direction of the City: “Right now the city appears to want ‘more’ of anything. We need to be more selective in choosing our ‘more’.” That certainly applies to tourism, which needs a “winning, palatable solution.”

We hope our proposals will be given full consideration so that a healthy tourist-to-resident balance is restored.

May 13, 2014

Comments and Recommendations Regarding Tourism Related Issues Affecting
The French Quarter
Presented to the Tourism Management Plan Advisory Committee

In May of 1997, the City of Charleston, Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, College of Charleston, Historic Charleston Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preservation Society of Charleston co-sponsored an all day tourism management forum. The forum was the result of increasing concerns related to tourism in the historic district. *The issues rose at the forum covered congestion caused by touring vehicles, enforcement of tourism management ordinances and the continued debate of knowing when enough tourism is enough--can we define our capacity for tourism?*

As a result of the tourism management forum, the City established a committee that was given the task of updating the 1994 Tourism Management Plan. According to the Executive Summary contained in the 1998 update, "the issues addressed are categorized much as they were in the 1994 Tourism Management Plan: Long Range Planning, Tourism Ordinance Enforcement and City Image, Tourist Related Vehicles and Transportation. The one major difference during this update was the addition of a thorough review of the tourism ordinance enforcement system. "

It is now 2014 and sadly those issues raised at the forum and in the 1998 report still have not been resolved, and tourism is up 70% since 1994. We understand there has to be a healthy balance between residents and tourists; yet, the quality of life in the French Quarter continues to be negatively impacted. In order to develop meaningful recommendations, the newly formed Tourism Management Plan Advisory Committee will need to take a holistic approach to "tourism" and address concerns in a comprehensive fashion.

The management of tourism related issues exists in silos - the Tourism Commission (of which I am a member) address carriages, tour guides, buses and mini-vans, another department has responsibility for special events which have grown immensely, yet another issues permits for the ever increasing requests for filming TV series, commercials, etc., and of course, the SPA has responsibility for cruise ships. Yet none of these exist in a vacuum. Each affects the other and taken together can create a perfect storm of havoc - traffic standstills, no parking for residents, the inability of residents to get to their homes during events and, importantly, the absence of quiet enjoyment for our residents. Charleston needs a comprehensive management plan that incorporates all factors affecting tourism and/or tourist type events.

The French Quarter, in particular, is affected by street closures due to events, filming and/or cruise ships and the sheer volume of people attending festivals, special events such as parades and races, the resulting loss of residential parking and carriage tours with sometimes 2 and 3 carriages back-to-back on our fairly narrow streets.

In summary, the critical issues that affect our residents' quality of life and quiet enjoyment of their property include:

- Lack of comprehensive management policy - need coordination among City departments and a full-time, proven, professional Tourism Executive overseeing all aspects.
- Number of tourism vehicles on the streets at any one time - perhaps cap the number of motor coaches, mini-vans at a lower number than is presently approved.
- Traffic congestion due to motor coaches parking on Concord and exiting via Vendue and East Bay. These large coaches should be parking at the visitors' center. This is especially an issue for our residents living east of East Bay.
- Lack of enforcement of existing tourism ordinances - while the Parking Enforcement Officers have increased their activity and helped our streets, we see no evidence of any Tourism Enforcement Officers. Enforcement could alleviate some congestion.
- Residential parking and traffic - perhaps develop remote parking locations with shuttle vans to accommodate out of state visitors. Other cities have developed similar programs.
- Increase in number of special events which often necessitate street closures - we would appreciate a policy for advance notice and consultation with neighborhood associations prior to issuing permits for new events and/or filming. Also, a cap on the number of events would be appropriate.
- Public restrooms - need more signage for current locations

The French Quarter is a tiny neighborhood compared with many others in our city, yet it is one of the most beautiful and historic. Our residents have proudly invested in this neighborhood and willingly share the neighborhood with theaters, restaurants, businesses, hotels and bars and tourists. Yet with the substantial increase in tourist numbers and the impact on parking, pollution and traffic congestion, this neighborhood is becoming ever more fragile. We are proud to live in such a charming, historic area and implore this Advisory Committee to give serious consideration to our concerns and suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bass
President
French Quarter Neighborhood Association

Historic Ansonborough Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 821
Charleston, SC 29401

Comments and Recommendations Submitted to the Advisory
Committee to the 2014 Tourism Management Plan Review

May 22,2014

Restoring Quality of Life in the Historic Residential Neighborhoods

The 1994 City of Charleston Tourism Management Plan and its 1998 Update clearly and consistently emphasized the need to preserve the residential quality of life in the historic district. The 1994 Plan recognized that “The accommodation of tourist desires can lower the quality of life for the resident. This accommodation of tourist desires and the possible reduction of the quality of life for the resident amounts to a resident ‘subsidy’ of the tourism industry.”

The primary tourist appeal of Charleston over the decades has been the quiet, historic neighborhoods which can be enjoyed by walking, bicycling or taking a guided tour, carriage tour or bus tour. The City has promoted itself as a tourist destination and has now been designated the No. 1 tourist destination in the country. Success in attracting tourists, coupled with an explosion of parades, races, walks, festivals, and film shoots, has tipped the “healthy resident-to-tourist balance” that was a goal of the 1998 Update. On many days in March-May, the historic district is “over full”—residential sidewalks are crowded, traffic is congested, resident parking is unavailable, and frustrations rise. A similar situation is rapidly developing in October-November.

The primary issues in Ansonborough are unique in nature due to our neighborhood borders on East Bay, Calhoun Street, Meeting Street and Pinckney Street. Anson Street is a one-way thoroughfare that services bicycles, carriages, pedi cabs, tourists, bus traffic as well as residents.

(1) Enforcement of existing tourism ordinances. Late night noise from surrounding bars, extreme noise from the cruise ships, illegal carriage tours.

(2) Coordination and resident awareness of Special Events. The Gaillard Auditorium, The Grand Bohemian give HANA advance notices on a weekly basis. Why can't the Special Events department of the City of Charleston have the same courtesy to the neighborhood residents? Increases in Special Events are an extreme concern with the upcoming completion of the Gaillard Auditorium and Gadsonborough Park.

(3) Coordination between City of Charleston departments with an increase of Cruise Ship traffic on East Bay. East Bay Street on cruise day is a mismanaged parking lot with cruise traffic, buses, incoming tourist and residents. Merging cruise traffic from Concord Street to Hasell Street to East Bay with no law enforcement direction is a bonus.

(4) Non-Resident Parking within Ansonborough has become outrageous. HANA has four churches, the College of Charleston, restaurant employees, carriage employees and tourist parking in the residential zones. The majority of the Ansonborough residents do not have off street parking and rely heavily on their day to day residential parking permits. Neighbors have requested thirty minutes allowances instead of one hour.

Upon review of the recommendations and reviews from the CNA and the French Quarter Associations, the continuing themes are tourism enforcement and control of tourism growth. That being said, we must continue the theme of livability and quality of life for our residents. Walk in our shoes and see how we live day to day. Restoration of a healthy tourist to resident balance has reached a critical stage in the future of Charleston.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Drake
President
Historic Ansonborough Neighborhood Association

Mazyk Wraggborough Garden District Resident Feedback on Tourism

Vangie Rainsford

Tourism as we know around the world set an all-time high last year; Charleston sits as the number 1 tourist destination in the world. But tourism success is at what price for the average resident in our city downtown. There is now a serious disconnect with tourism "massing" and the enjoyment of everyday living. The image of our city is a capricious phenomenon difficult to repair if lost.

What is revealing and yet tragic to our residents of the Garden District is being acquainted with tourism management study and the hereto lack of implementation to educated recommendations made by that committee and its work.

Now is the time to turn those recommendations from that study and the present committees change into an implementation plan. We see that it is easy to produce plans but what usually holds back progress is a resistance to change.

Tourism and its development align itself on three levels:

1. Commercialism (the economic driver) – creating jobs, goods, services, and activities for residents as well as tourists
2. The residents – compatibility with these effects and
3. The city as a whole – control

Words used for tourism management should be limiting as well as controlling. High impact times for tourism should be highlighted (Feb. thru June) and given more attention.

Our historic neighborhood, the Garden District, sits as the gateway entrance to our city. With the tourist's first arrival destination at the Visitors Center, to the ever-increasing happenings each week in Marion Square, we serve as the center of activity for Charleston. With the addition of a revitalized Upper King St. Bar and Entertainment District coupled with having almost 2000 hotel rooms within a five minute walk from our homes, you can understand why our frustration levels are high.

Growth is inevitable within a vibrant urban setting but with uncharted and unbridled growth we are slowly eroding away at the qualities of life that have drawn each of us initially here.

Each neighborhood in the city is affected in various degrees by tourism. The issues we feel need to be addressed are:

1. Events
2. Parking and Transport throughout the city
3. Enforcement and the lack of
4. Public restrooms
5. Unchecked tourism

1) Events

- Protraction of events during the year doesn't provide our residents any "down time" from the effects of tourism. Most of the events for the city can be focused entirely on Marion Square. Resident complaints center on too many events concentrated in too few areas. There is minimal respect given to the integrity of our neighborhood with regards to events and event planning.

Solution:

- Distribution of events in a more equitable fashion around the city. A site such as White Point Gardens is seen as a possible new location for Piccolo Spoleto's Art Show. This location is not entirely surrounded by residential neighborhoods. It provides easy access and is underutilized.

Examples:

- Bridge Run Day brings in over 40,000 runners and spectators to a confined area. Residents are happy to share this experience with these participants but do ask that the massive traffic congestion created with Friday "pick up packets" day remain in North Charleston.
- Parking for tourists would include better signage in city to direct vehicles to garages and out of residential areas. Apps designed for smart phones would direct tourists to available parking garages.
- Moratorium on adding events to the calendar in an effort to analyze "the train out of control". The addition of over 2000 hotel rooms will carry "event potential" possibilities as well.
- Residential permitted parking areas offer little relief and effectiveness. Additional warnings to signs might include:

- 1) Towing enforced
- 2) A dollar amount to an infraction for parking in these areas
- 3) Increased fines for violations in residential parking districts

2) Parking

- In a study by Donald Appleyard he addressed "livable streets" which Charleston used to have and still needs and deserves. Residents of streets with light traffic had on average three more friends and twice as many acquaintances than people on streets with heavy traffic

- Residential parking is being threatened by events and other tourist related activities

Solutions:

- Additional enforcement officers are needed during peak tourist times of the year with special emphasis on Thursday thru Sunday control.
- "Residential-only" parking permits issued for neighborhoods
- More shuttles and trollies added to city supply with schedules available online

- Road space rationing strategy to reduce negative effects generated by peak travel demand. Restricting traffic access to city center based upon last digits of licenses; this is now operational in London's Town Center. "Interception" centers would be established to capture tourist traffic would be created outside the city. Large touring buses would be candidates for this with passengers being transported into the city on smaller shuttle buses
- As garages reach capacity "electronic" signals are given to direct people to an alternative garage site nearby

3) Enforcement

Enforcement continues to be an ongoing problem with regards to tourism – from tour bus violations, pedicabs, and bicycle riders who show disregard for the law as well as carriages that "wagon train" on our streets

Solutions:

1. Hire a full time Tourist Manager and Events Overseer
2. Additional Tourist office management officers are needed. At this time there is only one officer for the entire historic district. At least four full time and two part-time officers should be hired to enforce ordinances related to walking tours, tour buses, bicycles, and pedicabs
3. Communication and connectivity should be established and ongoing with:
 - a. A hotline number (#) to call with complaints and infractions. The city has already implemented a graffiti hotline and a pothole hotline as well
 - b. Quarterly review with a TEO which has been assigned to districts or zones in neighborhoods
 - c. An annual city Tourism Management Forum to be held in January of each year – before the peak season begins
 - d. Large tour buses should be banned in the Historic District. Routing of buses if allowed should be restricted to the arterial streets, never residential streets.

4) Public Restrooms

The public outcry for additional public restrooms must now be addressed. Sites for facilities must be identified.

Solution:

- White Point Garden vicinity must be given serious review. "Royal Portalets", which are often seen at upscale Kentucky Derby events, the British Open, and the Masters Golf Tournament could be a point of discussion. These could be brought to a site with an attendant present on a temporary basis until more permanent facilities could be built.

5) Unchecked Tourism

“Free zone” (7 day parking for free) parking should be eliminated and 2 Hour parking times should be established to free up more spaces. One of the worst “free zones” is around Wragg Mall in our neighborhood with the majority of spaces being taken up by students at the Charleston School of Law. This area sits at the entrance to the Visitors Center.

“Renting your home to tourists” or “Home Away” is becoming more prevalent in residential areas downtown. Many part-time residents who own homes are using their homes in this way. This practice should be studied by the city for its effects are far reaching and in some cases is negatively affecting residential quality of life.



May 22, 2014

Susan Griffin
Business and Neighborhood Services
City of Charleston

Dear Su:

This letter is in response to Tim Keane's request for information related to the City's Tourism Management Plan that is currently being revised. The notice requested the most important tourism related issue affecting our neighborhood with as much detail and facts as possible. I posed this question during our recent full neighborhood association meeting, held on May 19, 2014, and received a large number of comments from neighborhood residents. Although there were a variety of comments responsive to the request, a unifying theme emerged.

The paramount request from residents and businesses relative to the updated Tourism and Management Plan is a desire that the City direct greater attention and resources to the Cannonborough-Elliottborough neighborhood in order to improve the appearance of our neighborhood for tourism and visitors. Our neighborhood is located in the middle of the Charleston peninsula and is second in size only to the Charlestowne neighborhood on the peninsula. Our neighborhood has experienced dramatic growth and change in the past twenty years, including our thriving commercial area of Upper King Street. Our neighborhood is also experiencing an influx of terrific new restaurants and a number of large hotels will soon open within our neighborhood's boundaries. However, in spite of these changes, many residents believe there exists a general lack of appreciation that our area has evolved from the neighborhood it was twenty, or even ten years ago, and that our neighborhood is now increasingly becoming an area where tourists visit, stay, and dine. Residents and businesses owners believe that the City should now provide an investment in making Cannonborough-Elliottborough more desirable for tourists, residents and businesses alike, by dedicating resources towards improving the appearance of the neighborhood. More specifically, residents request that resources be dedicated to our neighborhood in order to: (1) clean up our neighborhood's proliferation of trash and litter; (2) provide additional parks or green space; (3) provide infrastructure improvements, such as bike lanes, improved sidewalks, pedestrian signals, and commencement of long-stalled two-way conversion projects for our neighborhood streets; and (4) budget City funds for the hiring of a dedicated livability officer for the Cannonborough-Elliottborough and Radcliffeborough neighborhoods. These requests are summarized as follows.

(1) As you are aware, approximately 70% of our neighborhood's population resides in rental properties according to the latest United States Census. Of these rental properties, a large proportion, if not majority, serve as off-campus housing for college students. While some of these properties are maintained, many others are not, to the detriment of our neighborhood's appearance. Many off-campus rental properties regularly have broken glass and beer cans, litter, and trash piles

in their yards, driveways, and on adjacent streets and sidewalks. Adding to the amount of trash generated by unmaintained rental properties, our neighborhood is used as evening street parking for visitors heading to Upper King Street's restaurants and bars. This combination of absentee property owners, student tenants, and nightlife visitors using our neighborhood as a path to and from the bars results in the generation of significant amounts of trash and litter in our neighborhood. Our neighborhood's full-time residents do the best we can at cleaning up trash, but we simply do not have the resources or manpower, which leaves many of our sidewalks and properties cluttered with litter and trash – an unsightly and unwelcoming sight for tourists visiting our neighborhood and its businesses. As our neighborhood increasingly becomes an area where tourists visit, we request that the City dedicate resources to help us remove the ever-present litter and trash from our neighborhood.

(2) As specifically identified in the City's Area Character Appraisal for Cannonborough-Elliottborough, our neighborhood requires additional parks or green space. Additional parks or green space does not simply benefit residents; it provides an attraction for tourists as well. Currently, our large neighborhood only has one small park that borders the Septima P. Clark Highway. Another small park is being constructed where the larger DeReef Park previously was located, which will now be surrounded by more than thirty towering three and four-story high residences. The amount of vacant land is rapidly disappearing from our neighborhood in the continued development pursuit of student rental properties, yet no action is taking place to designate additional park or green space in our neighborhood. That is a mistake. The City should work with the neighborhood and Charleston County in seeking funds to purchase land for additional parks or green space for the benefit of our neighborhood before it is too late.

(3) Our residents and businesses also request that the City perform infrastructure improvements that will improve visitors' experience, accessibility and safety in our neighborhood. There are currently two approved, but stalled, two-way conversion projects for our neighborhood streets, including Cannon, Spring, Coming, St. Philip and Line Streets. These capital improvement projects were approved by City Council in 2009 and 2012 respectively, but have yet to begin. It's past time to take initiative in completing these projects without further delay. Many of our neighborhood streets are in disrepair and the lack of pedestrian signals throughout our neighborhood pose safety threats for both residents and visitors. Residents also offered comments on their desire for bike lanes in our neighborhood. To my knowledge, we currently have none. Another comment suggested is the beautification of Porters Court, a pedestrian street located in our neighborhood. All infrastructure improvements serve to improve the appearance, accessibility, and safety of our neighborhood. We request meaningful action from the City in implementing some, if not all of these improvements.

(4) Our neighborhood's residents and businesses appreciate and regularly use the services of the City's Code Enforcement Officers. The Livability Division, lead by Sgt. Riccio, does a tremendous job responding to complaints. However, our full-time residents and business owners cannot keep up with reporting all the code and livability violations that occur in our neighborhood. According to Sgt. Riccio, our neighborhood and the adjacent Radcliffeborough neighborhood are the most prone areas for code enforcement violations throughout the entire City of Charleston. The Livability Division does not currently have the resources to proactively enforce code violations in our neighborhood. Reactive, as opposed to proactive enforcement, is simply not currently working to reduce the constant code violations in our neighborhood, such as litter, excess noise, trash, overgrown vegetation, unmaintained properties, graffiti, and sidewalk or street obstructions, among

others. Respectfully, the increasing number of nuisances in our neighborhood may ultimately serve as a deterrent and jeopardize our neighborhood's potential in attracting residents, businesses, and visitors. For that reason, our neighborhood requests that the City allocate funds in its budget for a code enforcement officer dedicated to our part of the Charleston peninsula, where it is most sorely needed, to improve the appearance of Cannonborough-Elliotborough.

I realize the items outlined above are probably unlike those requested from other neighborhoods. Our issues seek the encouragement of tourism in our neighborhood, rather than its limitation. I suspect our residents and businesses would be thrilled if our biggest issues were limiting rickshaws tours or hours of film productions. While our neighborhood has not traditionally been a location associated with visitors, it is inevitably and increasingly becoming so. As a result, I encourage the City and the Tourism Management Committee to consider and adopt measures that will encourage visitors to feel welcome and safe in Cannonborough-Elliotborough. Thank you for considering our neighborhood's requests.

Sincerely,



Tim Muller

President, Cannonborough-Elliotborough Neighborhood Association

**Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association (WTNA) response to Tourism
Management Plan Advisory Committee.**

Introduction

Wagener Terrace is a diverse traditional neighborhood. The following tourism related 'macro-trends' have affected Wagener Terrace:

- The increase in the amount of persons, vehicles and materials 'drawn' to downtown Charleston (Destination) for tourism and its supporting industries.
- The increase in the 'off the peninsular' Origin of persons, vehicles and materials.
- The rapid development of Upper King as an enhanced, additional Commercial/Tourist hub.

Issue – 'Short Cuts, Long Delays and Sandwiched in Between'

Wagener Terrace is used as a '*short cut*' used by many whose journey DOES NOT originate in Wagener Terrace NOR is it their DESTINATION.

[Please refer to attach Annualized Traffic Counts to see the 'short cut' aspects in a data (traffic count) form from BCDCOG and SCDOT]

This has led to an increase in Congestion in Wagener Terrace thoroughfares. This congestion leads to:

- Increased commute times and *delay* for Wagener Terrace residents,
- Increased risk of accident with vehicles, pedestrians (especially children given the proximity of schools and park,) and bicycles, and
- Increased risk of poorer air quality from congestion related pollution.

Planned and future developments such as a cruise terminal, additional upper king hotels, restaurants, apartment/condominium developments near and south of Huger Street will increase the 'draw' of both tourist and related traffic. Residential and hotel developments astride the Airport/I-26 corridor will increase our traffic counts as a direct or indirect result of tourist related visits. Moreover, with developments such as the Magnolia just north of Wagener Terrace we risk being *sandwiched* in the middle and unable to attract the required funding to handle and support tourism that provides a benefit elsewhere on The Peninsular. We risk being left with poorly planned, inadequate and inefficient transportation and transit options because we are not a 'tourist attraction'. Hence, our livability will be adversely affected as our residents 'compete' with future traffic increases as a result of direct or indirect tourism, special events and poor transportation/mobility choices.

Respectfully,
Steven Eames For WTNA
[Steven.Eames@gmx.com]

Comments for Tourism Advisory Committee from the Harleston Village Association

Place descriptive, permanent signs at each item of interest (parks: Cannon and Hampton), statues, lakes (Colonial Lake), etc. for tourist and visitors to read.

Better marked pedestrian crosswalks and signs telling driver that state law says pedestrian have the right-of-way

Park and Ride lots using free CARTA. Stop bringing more cars downtown.

More bike racks.

Expand Second Sunday on King Street north/west of Calhoun to Spring Street and close King to cars for two Sundays a month instead of just one.

More Spoleto events in local neighborhoods

Bike lanes and marked bike routes on more streets

Strengthen the limits on infill residential and commercial development.

Stop issuing parking variances.

Dockside Neighborhood

Several thoughts :

-- What is the status of the cruise terminal ? We have been away for the past four months on a World Cruise. Great experience. All the ports were delighted to see us.

It is my observation that the congestion in the downtown area is the same whether a cruise ship is port or not.

If the intent is to limit the amount of visitors to our lovely city, we should have restricted the number of hotels, restaurants, bars and flights. I am one of the few residents who enjoy sharing our home with visitors and certainly support the cruise industry.

All that said, we need the following improvements:

Light rail facilities. Charleston is one of the few major tourist destinations without a convenient way to get around. I realize subways and canals are impractical.

Parking lots outside the city with rapid rail connections downtown.

Cost to build should not be a limiting factor.

Definitely need more upscale restrooms.

Trolley buses are much too large for our narrow streets. Most have few riders.

Jack Evans. President, Dockside Association

Hampton Park Terrace

The neighborhood (Hampton Park Terrace) has not been directly impacted.

Radcliffeborough Association

The Radcliffeborough Association Tourism Suggestions are listed below. Suggestions appear to be simple, but will require increased Livability staffing at Code Enforcement. Dan Riccio cannot achieve these improvements without more manpower.

1. Parking Control
2. Trash Control
3. Noise Control
4. Public Rest Room Placement
5. Limitation of Restaurant and Entertainment Development.

Radcliffeboroug's main area of concern is still St. Philip Street. Parking garage, bar and restaurant developers have all descended on this land area in the last year. Originally a Ine of small houses, this area has undergone multiple demolitions, and must now be carefully redeveloped in keeping with the residential character of Radcliffeborough's preserved interior. Let's not repeat the land use wrongs of Sears again on the same street. Both commercial and religious interests must be included in this land use control design.

Please thank Tim and Yvonne for their never-ending assistance. Yvonne and I have worked together on Radcliffeborough improvements for some thirty years. keep up the good work.