



# COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

**TO:** City Council Members

**FROM:** Brian Fullmer  
Policy Analyst

**DATE:** April 4, 2023

**RE: Downtown Building Height and Street Activation Text Amendment  
PLNPCM2022-00529**

Item Schedule:

Briefing: April 4, 2023

Set Date: April 4, 2023

Public Hearing: April 18, 2023

Potential Action: May 2, 2023

The Council will be briefed about proposed amendments to the City's zoning ordinance pertaining to building heights and pedestrian engagement in the *Downtown Plan* area. The city worked with a consultant, Design Workshop, on the proposal.

Proposed changes would affect the following zoning districts as shown in the image below:

- D-1 (Downtown Central Business District)
- D-2 (Downtown Support)
- D-3 (Downtown Warehouse)
- D-4 (Downtown Secondary Business District)
- G-MU (Gateway Mixed Use)
- CG (General Commercial)
- FB-UN-1/2 (Form-Based Urban Neighborhood 1 and 2)

The Administration's proposal also recommends changes to the Design Standards found in Chapter 21A.37, and the Design Review process found in Chapter 21A.59 of *Salt Lake City Code*.

The proposal includes three main elements: Pedestrian Orientation, Human Scale Design, and Building Height. These are summarized below. Please see the attached presentation from Planning staff and Design Workshop to view a presentation the Planning Division provided that outlines the key changes.



*Pedestrian Orientation*

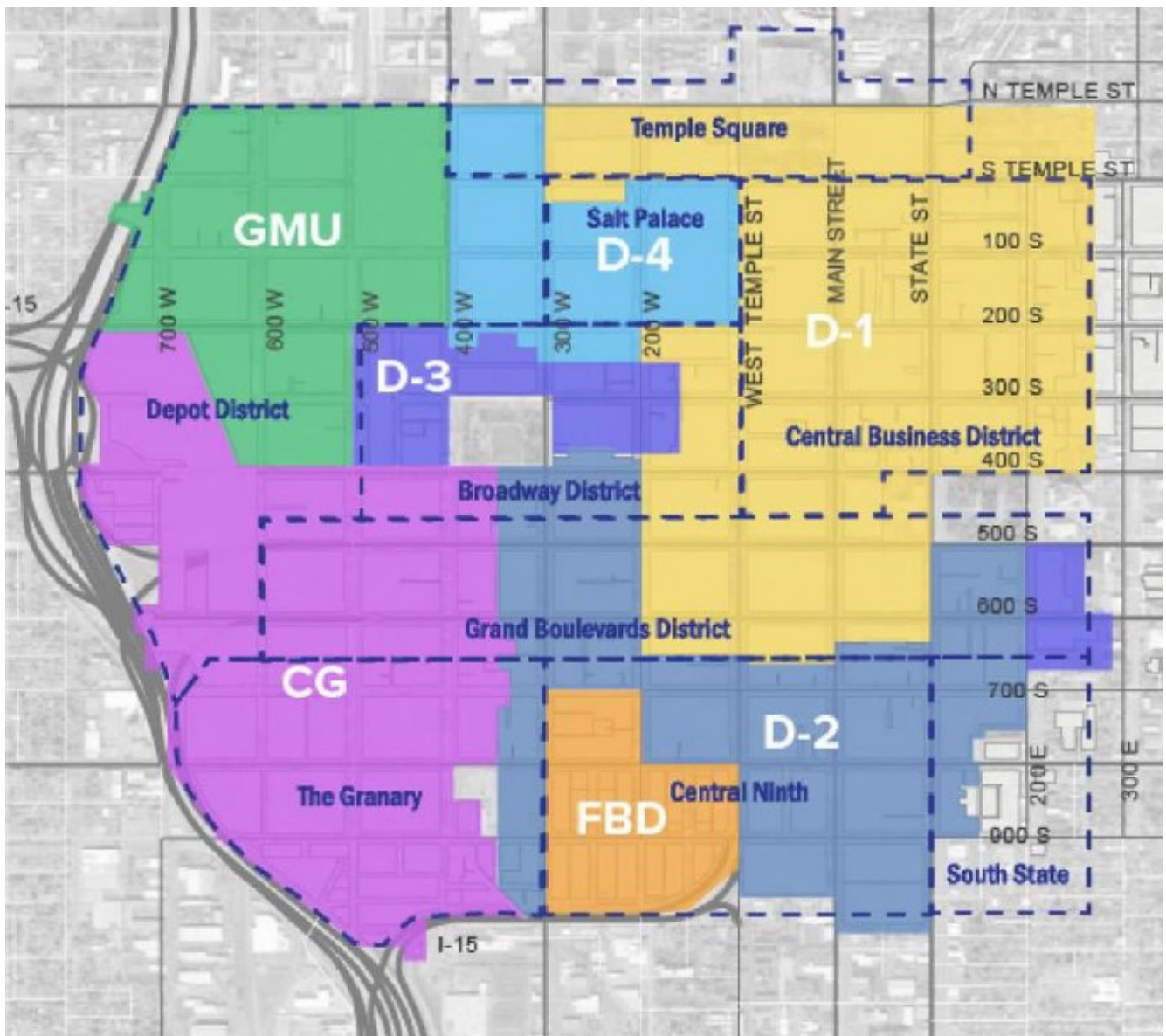
Under the proposal an area is considered pedestrian oriented if sidewalks and public spaces feel safe, welcoming, and free of barriers to those walking or using a wheelchair.

*Human Scale Design*

The proposal calls for development to be scaled toward humans through building form, visual interest, first floor activation, façade transparency, overhead elements, setbacks, and public access points.

*Building Height*

Building heights may be adjusted and will be considered as they preserve visual corridors, reflect the character of downtown’s individual districts, and include public benefits for height bonuses.



*Downtown Plan Boundaries and Zoning Districts  
Image Courtesy Salt Lake City Planning Division*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After the Planning Commission forwarded its recommendation and Planning staff was preparing the ordinance in coordination with the Attorney's Office, they identified a few changes they would like to ask the Council to consider including the final ordinance:

- **Design standards for the D-1 (Central Business District) zoning district.** The draft ordinance includes an upper floor step back of 10' for buildings between 78'-104' and 15' for buildings taller than 104'. Step backs were introduced to additional districts outside the Sugar House Business District (CSHBD) and Form Based Urban Neighborhood-2 (FB-UN2) to encourage additional light and air in higher density districts.
  - Planning staff doesn't believe the D-1 (Central Business District) warrants a step back to this degree and recommends the Council remove this requirement, given the distinct feel of the downtown core.
  
- **Clarification in the Sugar House Business District (CSHBD) and Form Based Urban Neighborhood (FB-UN) design standards.** The draft ordinance includes a 15' step back for buildings in the CSHBD districts taller than 60'.
  - Planning staff recommends eliminating changes from the current step back requirement for buildings taller than 45'. For buildings in the CSHBD that abut single- or two-family districts Planning recommends a step back be incorporated at 30'.
  
- Omission of requirement for buildings in the Form Based Urban Neighborhood (FB-UN) zones taller than 30' to include a 15' step back was omitted in an earlier draft ordinance.
  - Planning Staff corrected that omission in the current draft ordinance.
  
- The recently adopted off-street parking ordinance is also being amended as part of this proposal due to language in the draft ordinance limiting size and location of surface parking in the Downtown (D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-4) and General Commercial (CG) zones.
  - Planning staff is recommending those changes be included in the draft ordinance.
  
- Changes to the Form Based District and Design Standards chapters in *City Code* making standards for the FB-UN1 and FB-UN2 consistent with the proposed FB-UN3 form-based zoning district being considered by the Council.
  - Proposed changes to open space landscaping requirements discussed during the Council briefing for the FB-UN3 zone are included.

***Goal of the briefing:*** Review the proposed text amendments, determine if the Council supports moving forward with the proposal.

## POTENTIAL STRAW POLLS

1. Does the Council support Planning staff's recommendation to remove the step back requirement for buildings in the D-1 (Central Business District) zone?
2. Does the Council support the current requirement of a 15' step back for buildings in the Sugar House Business District (CSHBD) that are taller than 45'?
3. Does the Council support requiring buildings in the CSHBD that abut single- or two-family zoning districts include a step back at 30'?
4. Does the Council support other changes as recommended by Planning Staff (parking, landscaping requirements, etc.)?

## **POLICY QUESTIONS**

1. Additional height beyond what is allowed “by right” may be included through design review and would require a public benefit. The Council may wish to ask the Administration to specify what these benefits are and how they can be quantified and tracked for compliance (affordable housing for example).
2. The Council may wish to discuss minimum building heights and potential impacts they may have on developing some smaller parcels.
3. The draft ordinance includes changes to the Form Based District and Design Standards chapters of *City Code* that include FB-UN3 (Form Based Urban Neighborhood 3) the Council has been briefed about but has not yet adopted. These changes would make FB-UN3 zoning regulations consistent with proposed changes to the FB-UN1 and 2 zones. These include changes to open space landscaping requirements the Council discussed during the FB-UN3 briefing. The Council may wish to ask the Administration for their recommendation on how to move forward without creating any text inconsistencies.
4. The Council may wish to discuss and consider the request from UTA to amend the proposal to maximize allowable height in the GMU district to accommodate redevelopment plans proximate to a potential future UTA headquarters (see chart at the end of this staff report for a comparison of building heights proposed in different downtown zones).

## **PUBLIC PROCESS**

Design Workshop, consultants for the proposal, held several stakeholder meetings with community council representatives, members of the development community, business and advocacy representatives, the Downtown Alliance, and the Disability and Accessibility Commission. Feedback from these meetings helped guide the proposal. In addition, a citywide survey gathered more than 450 responses from the broader community.

Stakeholder Zoom Meetings were held with the following:

- Chambers of Commerce and Development Community - November 30, 2021
- Community Council representatives - December 1, 2021
- Community representatives, including members of the Disability and Accessibility Commission - December 2, 2021
- Downtown Alliance - January 19, 2022

The public survey was published on Planning’s website, listserv, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The survey was open for three weeks and closed February 24, 2022.

Notice was mailed to property owners within the Downtown Plan area May 13, 2022.

The Planning Commission was briefed on the proposal at its June 8, 2022 meeting and held a public hearing August 18, 2022 at which one person spoke expressing support. The Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation on the amendments to the City Council.

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) sent the attached letter to the Council expressing a desire for additional height in the Gateway Mixed Use (GMU) zone beyond what is in the proposal. UTA is preparing to redevelop property near the North Temple and Salt Lake Central Stations. These plans include relocating UTA’s headquarters and potentially construct as many additional floors to the building as allowed by the City, and what the market will support.

UTA asked to further increase allowed height or eliminate the maximum allowed height in the GMU zoning district.

## Current and Proposed Building Heights

Zoning District	Current Minimum Height	Proposed Minimum Height	Existing Maximum Height	Proposed Maximum Height
<b>D-1</b> Central Business District	100'	100'	375' Corner Lots 100' mid-block	None >200' subject to conditions and design review
<b>D-2</b> Downtown Support District	65'	65'	120'	120' with conditions
<b>D-3</b> Downtown Warehouse	75'	75'	90'	180' with conditions
<b>D-4</b> Downtown Secondary Central Business District	N/A	N/A	75' 120' - 375' in permitted locations	75' 120' - 375' in permitted locations <sup>1</sup> subject to conditions and design review
<b>GMU</b> Gateway District Mixed-use	45' 25' along 200 South Corridor	75'	75' flat roofs 90' non-flat roofs	Buildings over 90' up to 180' are subject to design review
<b>CG</b> General Commercial			60' 90' subject to design review	75' (76'-150' in Granary District with design review.) (76'-105' outside Granary District with design review.)
<b>FBD</b> Form Based District	N/A	N/A	30'	50'

1-The area bounded by South Temple, West Temple, 200 South, and 200 West