



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Brian Fullmer
Policy Analyst

DATE: August 12, 2025

**RE: Parking Regulations in the Downtown Zoning Districts Text Amendment
PLNPCM2025-00008**

Item Schedule:

Briefing: July 1, 2025

Set Date: July 8, 2025

Public Hearing: August 12, 2025

Potential Action: August 19, 2025

BRIEFING UPDATE

During a July 1, 2025 briefing Council Members discussed the reasons for current building cladding requirements found in City code. Planning responded by saying they are to align with other sections of the code, improve building design, and enhance the pedestrian experience. It was further noted that these requirements can make it unfeasible to include upper-level parking in buildings, which may lead to more surface-level parking. The proposed changes will accommodate parking while creating aesthetically pleasing buildings.

A Council Member commented the proposal strikes a balance between providing parking in a smaller footprint for those who wish to drive, with transit availability into the downtown area.

The following information was provided for the July 1, 2025 briefing. It is included again for background purposes.

ISSUE AT A GLANCE

The Council will be briefed about a proposed text amendment from the Administration related to parking regulations in the Downtown and Gateway zoning districts. Design standards for these regulations are found in three sections of City code. The proposal consolidates them into the design standards section of City code for ease of use, and to eliminate conflicts. Some obsolete review process requirements are also



proposed to be eliminated. These changes are summarized in Key Consideration 2 found later in this report. Affected areas are shown in the image below.

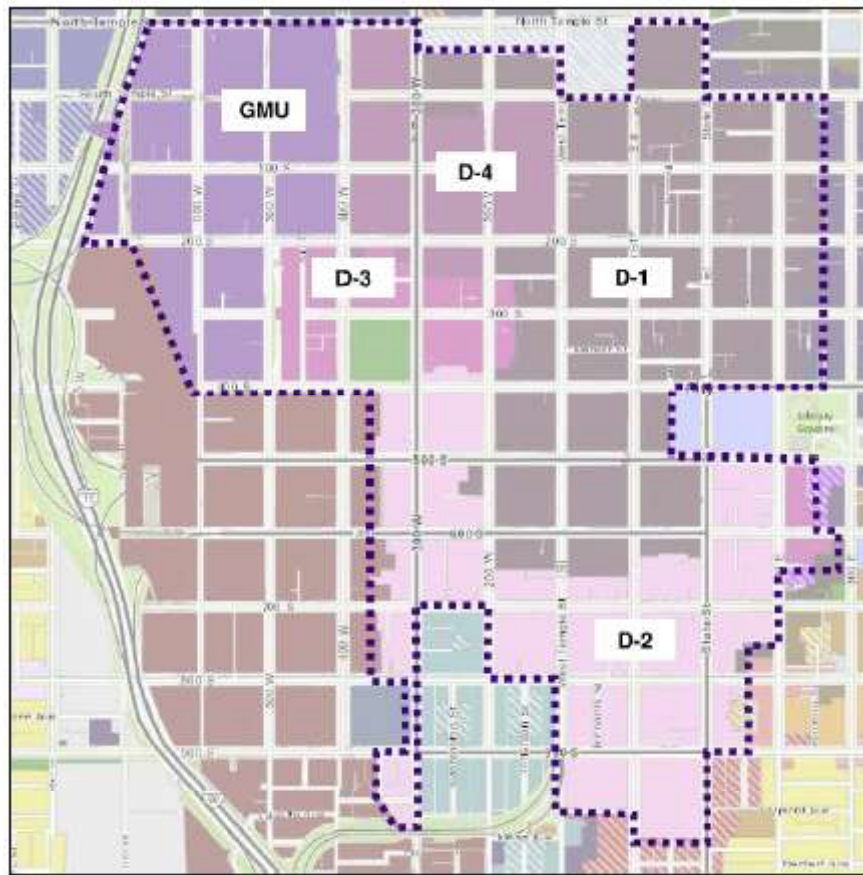
It is worth noting that required parking garage screening and limiting street level parking lots and those in front of buildings are not proposed to be changed in this text amendment.

The Planning Commission reviewed this proposal at its March 26, 2025 meeting and held a public hearing at which no one spoke. **The Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.**

Goal of the briefing: Review the proposed text amendment and determine if the Council supports moving forward with the proposal.

POLICY QUESTION

The Council may wish to ask if there are other existing non-conforming surface parking lots in the Downtown and G-MU zoning districts.



Zoning districts affected by the proposed text amendment

Image courtesy of the Salt Lake City Planning Division

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As shown in the image above, proposed changes would affect the following zoning districts:

- D-1 (Central Business District)
- D-2 (Downtown Support District)
- D-3 (Downtown Warehouse/Residential District)
- D-4 (Downtown Secondary Central Business District)

- G-MU (Gateway-Mixed Use District)

Currently, parking lots are only allowed behind buildings. Under the proposed changes new parking lots must be co-located with a building, limited to 40 spaces, and would be allowed either behind or to the side of the building. Lots located to a building's side would be limited to a single parking row and aisle and set back at least 25 feet from the front or corner side lot line. This setback area would be subject to applicable landscaping requirements.

Under the proposal parking lots in these zoning districts would only be allowed when associated with a building on the property. Existing lots may continue but would need to comply with new standards if the property is redeveloped.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Planning staff identified two key considerations related to the proposal, found on pages 5-13 of the Planning Commission staff report, and briefly summarized below. For the complete analysis, please see the Planning staff report.

Consideration 1 – How the Proposal Helps Implement City Goals & Policies Identified in Adopted Plans:

Planning staff believes the proposed changes align with principles and concepts found in *Plan Salt Lake*, the *Downtown Master Plan*, and the *North Temple Boulevard Master Plan*. The proposal aims to provide quality design while meeting the need for parking in a dense pedestrian-oriented environment. It also seeks to simplify City code making it easier for the public and staff to understand and use.

Consideration 2 – Key Changes

Key changes found in the proposal are generally in two categories: design standards, and parking use and location regulations. These are briefly summarized below. Please see the Planning Commission staff report for additional information.

Design Standards

Proposed changes to the design standards focus on upper floors because ground floors of most buildings with a street-facing façade in these zones are required to have active uses such as restaurants and retail establishments that draw people into the building rather than parking.

Issue: Parking on Upper Building Levels

The Off-Street Parking, Mobility and Loading Chapter of City code (21A.44) for Downtown and Gateway zones requires all floors of buildings to be wrapped with uses other than parking. Of concern is the vagueness of this requirement which can lead to varied interpretations and result in hallways, storage, or stairwells wrapping buildings rather than a more beneficial use.

Proposed Change:

Planning staff recommends removing the requirement for upper floors to have a use other than parking. It is their opinion that ground floor requirements in the Downtown and Gateway zones improve the streetscape and pedestrian experience. Screening requirements will remain for upper floors to ensure quality building design.

Issue: Upper Floor Glazing

Upper floors of street facing building facades in the Downtown and G-MU zoning districts are required to have glass. This requirement may result in unintended consequences of increased costs

and limiting needed ventilation for parking garages which could lead to more surface parking. Additionally, parking garage design standards are intended to screen the garage's interior from view. Requiring glass can counteract the screening's intent.

The following table from the Planning Commission staff report shows the percentage of required upper-level glass. Boxes with an X indicate when the requirement for parking garages and structures applies. (Note-changes to chapter 21A.37 proposed in the commercial and mixed-use consolidation are included in the table.)

Standard (Code section)	District				
	D-1	D-2	D-3	D-4	G-MU
Glass: upper floors (%) (21A.37.050.C.2)	50	50	50	50	40
Reflective glass (21A.37.050.C.3)	50	50	50	50	50
Parking garages or structures (21A.37.050.L)	X	X	X	X	X

Proposed Change:

Planning staff recommends portions of buildings in the Downtown and G-MU zoning districts used for parking are exempt from providing upper-level glass.

Issue: Upper Floor Building Materials

Like the glazing requirements above, minimum percentages of upper floor street-facing facades (excluding windows and doors) need to be clad in durable building materials such as stone, brick, textured or patterned concrete, cement board or similar materials. Parking garages adjacent to streets or other public spaces are required to have external screening that conceals ramps and parked vehicles and improves the structure's appearance. These screening materials include heavy gauge metal screen, precast concrete panels, live green or landscaped walls, laminated or safety glass, decorative panels or other materials that match the building's materials and character.

Currently the code doesn't specify which requirement, for glass or durable building materials, on upper floors take precedence for parking garages. When both material types are applied it limits ventilation necessary for parking garages and increases costs as with the requirement for upper-level glazing noted above.

Proposed Change:

Planning staff recommends requiring a minimum of 50% of each street facing façade to be wrapped in one of the solid materials listed above. Planning believes this will conceal parked vehicles and ramps, allow design flexibility, and ensure upper floor parking garages are feasible.

Parking Use and Location Regulations

Issue: Parking Uses Prohibited When They Result in Building Demolition

Under current City code parking lots that are proposed as a single principal use of property in the Downtown and G-MU zoning districts are prohibited only when they would result in a building demolition. Planning staff found that it was easy to skirt this by demolishing a building and then later apply for permits to build a parking lot. Proving the building was demolished for parking would be difficult.

Proposed Change:

Planning proposes only allowing parking lots in the Downtown and G-MU zones when they are associated with a building on the property.

Issue: Parking Lot Location

City code currently requires parking lots to be located behind buildings and limits the lot size and configuration. Some building designs are not square or rectangularly shaped, which can present difficulties determining where to locate a parking lot. Additionally, parking lots for buildings on corner lots with two street frontages would be visible from one of the streets.

Proposed Change:

As discussed in the additional information section above, Planning recommends allowing parking lots on the side of a building (with additional standards) as well as behind buildings.

ANALYSIS OF STANDARDS

Attachment D (pages 26-27) of the Planning Commission staff report outlines zoning text amendment standards that should be considered as the Council reviews this proposal. The standards and findings are summarized below. Please see the Planning Commission staff report for additional information.

Factor	Finding
Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the city as stated through its various adopted planning documents.	<i>Complies</i>
Whether a proposed text amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.	<i>Complies</i>
Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards.	<i>Complies</i>
The extent to which a proposed text amendment implements best current, professional practices of urban planning and design.	<i>Complies</i>
The impact that the proposed text amendment may have on city resources necessary to carry out the provisions and processes required by this title.	<i>Proposal is intended to streamline the application process and likely won't increase impact on City resources.</i>
The community benefits that would result from the proposed text amendment, as identified in 21A.50.050.C.	<i>Only applicable to privately initiated amendments. (Mayor Mendenhall initiated this text amendment.)</i>

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

- January 6, 2025 – Zoning map amendment application received by Planning Division and assigned to Rylee Hall, Principal Planner.
- February 6, 2025 – Notice sent to all registered recognized organizations, beginning 45-day comment period.
- February 18, 2025 – Proposal posted to the Planning Division online open house page.
- March 12, 2025 – Planning Commission public hearing notice posted at Main Library.
- March 14, 2025 – Planning Commission public hearing notice posted on City and State websites, and notices sent via Planning Division listserv.
- March 17, 2025 – Planning staff presented the proposal to the Sugar House Community Council.
- March 23, 2025 – 45-day comment period ends.
- March 26, 2025 – Planning Commission briefing and public hearing. The Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.
- April 21, 2025 – Ordinance requested from the Attorney's Office.
- June 3, 2025 – Ordinance received from the Attorney's Office.
- June 5, 2025 – Transmittal received in City Council Office.