



September 11, 2025

TO: Salt Lake City Planning Commission

FROM: Judi Short, Vice Chair and Land Use Chair
Sugar House Community Council

RE: Sugar House Hotel

The Sugar House Community Council had a presentation by FFKR about the hotel proposed by Magnus in Sugar House Park at the February 2025 SHCC meeting, and again at a SHCC Land Use Committee meeting on August 18, 2025 at Highland High School. We had 85 people sign the roster, we knew there were a number of additional people who didn't sign in. We have been collecting comments, both on our website and via email, and they are attached to this letter. Our website includes a lot of information about our August SHCC meeting, and John Potter's proposal, including the Q and A questions from August 18. Nick Norris explained the issues with the parcel, and said because the land was privately owned and not part of the park, the city couldn't just buy the land. We advertised this proposal in our newsletter, which is why we have a large number of comments from people who live or work in the area, in addition to those who attended the August 18 meeting. We have received 129 comments as of a week ago, and 107 were against this change. We have had a few additional comments since then.

A former trustee on the Sugar House Community Council reminded me how much time we spent working on the 1984 Sugar House Master Plan (SHMP). One of the key principles on which everyone agreed was that the Monument Plaza was our town center. The very idea that a seven-story building erupting from the smooth greenspace of Sugar House Park could ever be considered an "attractive bridge" to the park is nonsense, and considering it to be the town center is ludicrous. The current plan also incorporates the Sugar House Business District Master Plan (SHBDMP). It does **not** include incorporating the Sugar House Park into the Sugar House Business District.

When the RDA established the SHBD as an RDA project area, the east side of 1300 East was decidedly NOT part of the Sugar House Business District and is NOT considered as such by anyone to this day.

The mass of the proposed building does not give us a local feel. It is way too large. Sugar House Park is a wide-open space, with trees and grass and fabulous views. Putting a very heavy looking building of 90' in height is not acceptable. It is suitable for downtown Salt Lake City. We heard many times about the number of parking spaces provided, but there is no accommodation for the traveler who might come by something other than an average size automobile. I dare say the Sugar House Center across 1300 East on the west would not be thrilled to have those vehicles in their customer parking lot. Parking in the park is often at capacity, and vehicles must leave by 10 p.m.

There isn't a shortage of hotels, we have two right in the Sugar House Business District (SHBD) and another right above on Foothill Boulevard. Furthermore, there isn't a shortage of the additional "amenities" proposed for the hotel- a restaurant, banquet hall, lobby cafe, bicycle/outdoor-sports rentals, and retail shops, which

supposedly guarantee round-the-clock activity incompatible with the purpose of the park, which is the quiet recreational, educational, historical and cultural enjoyment of all residents of Salt Lake City and County (as per Sugar House Park Authority corporate documents.) The amenities (Community Benefits) for this building are not things that are in the city code as qualifying for a benefit. (21A.50.050.C.)

We have received many comments about the hotel being built right over the earthen dam. Apparently, there is 6' from the bottom of the parking lot to the place where the water table is. With all the conversation we had with Kum and Go about leaking gasoline, we are concerned (as are members of the Sugar House Community who have provided comments throughout our comment documents) that there is a possibility of pollutants from the parking lot seeping into the water table. Furthermore, there doesn't seem to be much protection of water from rain or pollutants from wind that get to the roof of the hotel or the hard surfaces around the hotel seeping through the ground to the water table.

Located directly south of the site for the proposed hotel is the Sego Lily at the Draw, a monumental sculpture designed by world-renowned environmental artist Patricia Johanson, to address the centuries-old problem of flood control on Parley's Creek. The Draw at Sugar House is engineered to work as a dam and is listed on the Utah Registry of Dams. It is the first flood control system in America that is also an internationally-famous art installation. It was built by Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City and the State of Utah. Designed in the shape of Utah's state flower, the Sego Lily Plaza has three distinct parts (petals). The north petal is a concave wall that is reinforced to divert flood water that overflows the pond in Sugar House Park, and redirects it to flow safely under 13th East St into Parley's Creek in Hidden Hollow. The north petal is part of the earthen dam that protects properties downstream from catastrophic damage in the event of a flood. Plans for construction of an underground, two-level 180+ - space parking garage under the proposed SH Hotel must be reviewed by Salt Lake County Flood Control engineers, and by the State Dam Engineer. Any excavation or construction that could destabilize the earthen dam around the flood-control facility could threaten the safety of people, residences and businesses downstream. Please investigate these issues and tell us that this isn't a problem.

We worry about the impact of parking vehicles in the park. Residents aren't going to pay for parking, they will try to park on the park road. Anyone who goes to the park regularly knows that the road is often at capacity, and when there are events, parking spills over to the garden building lot and Highland High School. It won't be a benefit to have extra vehicles also juggling for parking.

Commentors frequently noted the additional traffic that project would bring to an already-complicated intersection. This proposal will bring all that and more - every day and night. Some 15 years ago, the second in command Transportation Planner came to one of our meetings. He said that the corner of 2100 South and 1300 East was level F in transportation lingo, which measures an intersection by how well it functions on a scale of A to F. He said this was the worst intersection in the city, and "you guys just keep approving projects!" as if the SHCC had power over which projects were approved for which intersections. We all know that traffic is much worse than back then. It is almost impossible to get back on the freeway from this location, without making a big loop through Sugar House. We know that will entice drivers to find ways to cut through where they should not.

This corner, and the roads on either side, make it impossible to turn left from the parking lot or the 1300 East entrance. Traffic has to go north along 1300 East, or east along 2100 South. If this is approved, we recommend that a permanent divider (paid for by the developer) be placed along 2100 South from 1300 to 1500 East, to deter cars from making a U turn. That neighborhood already has more than its share of traffic diverting from the busy intersection and trying to get to the businesses along those streets, or to the University of Utah. There are more children living there than have been for many years, this makes it difficult to add more cars.

We see no evidence of signage on the hotel. It needs to comply with our signage ordinance, we do not know what the proposal is calling “prominent neighborhood signage”.

We ask that you deny this request for a rezone on this parcel. Our Master Plan approves of MU-3. The big city rezone of 27 zones into 6, didn’t entertain the idea of rezoning this parcel. This is spot zoning, which is never a good thing to do. It appears the vast majority of the residents of Sugar House are not in favor of this change.