

April 1, 2020



TO: Salt Lake City Planning Commission

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

RE: PLNPC2019-01170 The TwentyOnes 2029 South 2100 East Design Review

This was on the agenda of the February 10, 2020 Sugar House Community Council Land Use and Zoning Committee meeting. Twenty-six people signed the roll for this project and 7 comment cards were received. I received many comments from the website, and have attached a document 20+ pages of comments for you to read. I sent an email to the two trustees for the neighborhood and two former City Council persons, and asked them to notify the neighborhood. I'm not sure this happened because I received hardly any comments. The city sent postcards to those around the project for 300 feet, but that was just a paltry amount of people compared to how many drive through this intersection every day. This was noticed in the February SHCC newsletter which went out January 28. Readers were told to review the plans on our website and send in comments. The same newsletter notified the community that this would be on the February 10 LUZ agenda.

A few years ago, as a result of another proposal for this corner, the city undertook the 2100 South and 2100 East Neighborhood Plan, which was adopted November 21, 2017. The goal of the plan was to create an improved and beautified business district that is a unique destination but still remains compatible in scale with nearby existing, well established neighborhoods. It is this plan, carefully written, with much input from the neighborhoods surrounding this corner, that we use to measure this proposal. It is interesting that the new plan recommended the same zoning that had been in place for years. The changes mostly had to do with the design and feel of the place. The placement of the buildings in relation to the street, parking placement, entrances from the project for automobiles to enter the street. Small buildings are preferred instead of one large one.

On first glance, this project seems to meet the requirements of the Community Business (CB) Zone. This project is being reviewed through the Design Review process because it is in excess of 15,000 gross square feet. The building must be compatible with other buildings on the block face. The block is a poor example with a very dilapidated parcel on the immediate property and a Hodge podge of other retail up and down the street on either side. This building does appear to have good transparency on the ground floor at street level and active uses are planned. The developer is talking about retail, including coffee shops, restaurants, etc. Signage is shown to be at pedestrian scale with the use of blade signs indicated in the drawings. There is an outdoor dining patio on the west end of the street facing building.

Parking is angled in front of the building, and there is additional parking on the north side, for customers and tenants. The North building has additional parking underneath. There will be 99 apartments with 116 parking stalls, one for every bedroom. The 16,127 square feet of retail has 42 parking stalls. I continue to be amazed that a restaurant needs 1 parking space for 500 square feet of restaurant. This might work if there was enough bus service in this area. I would rather see it be based on number of tables. If they have 30 tables, then they get 15 parking spaces. If the retail will be made up of small shops that serve coffee, or frozen yogurt, you can probably count on much of that being customers that walk in from the neighborhoods. But if it is an upscale restaurant, people don't eat at that sort of restaurant once a week. Those restaurants count on customers coming from all over the area to provide enough patrons to be financially viable. This doesn't even allow enough parking for the people who work in these establishments, because they probably won't be able to afford to live within a walkable distance of this project.

It is interesting to read the comments, so many of them related to the speed of the traffic, and the huge amount of traffic passing through the intersection in recent years. Because there are other apartments north of this proposed development, all the street parking is already filled along 2100 East. There are worries about not having enough parking, not only for the residents, but for patrons of the businesses. They are also very worried about the speed of the traffic,

and the congestion. There are two school's north of 2100 South, and children walking to the schools, and parents dropping students off at school, add to the traffic and congestion. They are talking about neighborhood parking permits. Or maybe the developer needs to build a bridge so the students can get to school safely. They prefer retail on the second floor instead of apartments, thinking that would help with the parking shortage. They do not want to lose the parking that is now available in their neighborhoods.

We find it amazing that when we read the new 2100 South and 2100 East Neighborhood Plan, there is not a single mention of transportation issues in this area. Surely the planners consulted with the Transportation Department, yet not a single word made it into the plan other than to ask UTA to consider expanding bus service in the area. A terrific example of the silos in SLC Corporation. Each department working by themselves, instead of in tandem.

The comments from the neighbors includes a number of comments like "Why can't we have something like what was recently built in Holladay?" Yes, this is the developer who built the Holladay project. Somehow, that indicates something is missing here. Holladay is mostly red brick, like what we have a lot of in the core of Sugar House. Yet this project is beige stucco, and looks more like a strip mall, with the same materials used for each section of the building. It doesn't look at all like a village with different buildings, it looks like a strip mall, or one big long building. If there are 7 separate units (buildings?) in the one on 2100 south, they should look like different buildings. The "Building Mass and Scale" section of the new plan describes changes in articulation or material, that is completely lacking in this plan. A change of materials and some articulation or details could make this look like a series of different buildings, a village. One thing the commenters need to remember is how difficult the Holladay area is to navigate, I have heard many comments about that, plus my own experience trying to find the entrance to a parking lot, and then how to get out of it.

There is no detail shown for building entrances, they all look the same. Do the doors open inward to avoid striking pedestrians? There are no front yards shown on these plans. Some of the buildings should be recessed to allow for planters and vegetation, outdoor dining is an allowed front yard use. Surely a coffee shop should have room for outside tables in warmer weather. The sidewalks are 10 feet wide, but the first two feet next to the street should be a different color or paving. There are no street trees, although there are a number of trees along the outside edges of the property, especially on the north side. Trees are to provide shade and oxygen for people, not just cars. Trees need to be along both streets abutting this development. That way, they might add something to the community.

Comments from neighbors say this is not at all like the drawings they were shown by planners when they were working on the small area plan. The only street furnishings are on the west side of building 1, which makes it look like a private space. They should be shown up and down the street, to make the street interesting. I don't see any bike racks. Or outdoor seating, or tree grates. I know the developer has spent many months working on this plan, but I think some key elements are missing. Reducing the number of units might be a good first step. And work on the design elements surely will make it more interesting. Some are worried about the angle parking, backing up into the street with oncoming traffic barreling down the road at 50 mph. One person didn't want noisy restaurants. And several people said they didn't get postcards. I know the city sends postcards to people who live within 300' of a development. In this case, when the whole point of the new 2100 South and 2100 East Neighborhood Plan was to address issues that were brought up for this corner by a previous development application, the city could have sent an email notification to the group of people who were on the mailing list for the neighborhood plan.

We are not sure what to think about the special exception application for additional building heights. The plans are difficult to read and if these are changes to the original plan it is not apparent, perhaps they were there all along and didn't mention or didn't realize that a special exception was needed. I know there are comments from the neighbors in the condo complex to the north that they don't want to lose what little view they have left. They also don't want the building to block out the sun, either. We can't tell if this is an absolute necessity to make this building higher, or if it was drawn that way and it wasn't mentioned on the first set of plans. We leave this up to the Planning Commission.

