



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Brian Fullmer
Policy Analyst

DATE: April 15, 2025

RE: **First Step House Zoning Map Amendment at Approximately 273 East 800 South
PLNPCM2024-01153**

Item Schedule:

Briefing: March 18, 2025

Set Date: March 25, 2025

Public Hearing: April 15, 2025

Potential Action: May 6, 2025

BRIEFING UPDATE

During a March 18, 2025 briefing the Council expressed appreciation for work First Step House does meeting the needs of its clients, many of whom would be homeless without services the organization provides. It was noted that the vast majority of residents in another building First Step House operates are original tenants from when the facility opened in 2020. The need for affordable housing, particularly for those with very low income, was also discussed. Salt Lake County estimates that there are at least 1,000 people who need the very low-income housing and services First Step House provides.

The Council also discussed concerns the community council and neighborhood have with the concentration of affordable housing in this part of the city. A desire to provide housing in all parts of the city for those with very low incomes was expressed.

The Council took a straw poll and supported requirements for a development agreement requiring fencing around the property, exterior lighting and security cameras, and signage to discourage loitering on the property as suggested by the Police Department. A condition included in the draft ordinance requires the developer to enter into a development agreement with the City that includes these.

The following information was provided for the March 18, 2025 briefing. It is included again for background purposes.

ISSUE AT A GLANCE



The Council will be briefed about a proposal to amend the zoning map for the parcel at 273 East 800 South from its current I (Institutional) zoning to RMF-45 (Moderate/High Density Multi-Family Residential).

First Step House, an organization that assists those with very low income and behavioral health conditions, owns the property and intends to construct a deeply affordable housing development with approximately 34 one-bedroom apartments available to those with incomes at 30% area median income (AMI) or lower. Multi-family housing is not permitted in the I zoning district unless adaptive reuse incentives are used. A vacant single story office building on the site was not large enough to be utilized for the intended housing and has been demolished.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal at its December 11, 2024 meeting and held a public hearing at which six people spoke or had their comments read expressing opposition to the proposal. Concerns cited include: an oversaturation of homeless services in the area, the proposed building is out of character for the neighborhood, and a preference for family-sized for sale housing to help stabilize the neighborhood. **Planning staff recommended and the Commission voted 6-0 to forward a positive recommendation to the Council with a condition that the applicant enter into a development agreement with the City requiring the housing to be available to those with incomes at 30% AMI or lower.**

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

POLICY QUESTIONS

1. The Council may wish to discuss with the Administration how the proposed RMF-35/45 zoning consolidation project might affect the applicant's request. This petition was on the Wednesday, March 12 Planning Commission agenda. (See Consideration 4 below for more information.)
2. The Council may wish to discuss the Planning Commission recommendation to include a development agreement restricting housing to those with incomes at 30% AMI or lower if a residential development is constructed on the property.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The approximately 0.64-acre parcel is located on the northwest corner of 800 South and 300 East. Surrounding zoning is a mix of low and medium-density RMF-30, 35, and 45 multi-family, RB (Residential Business), and SR-3 (Special Development Pattern Residential) as shown in the area zoning map below. Single-family homes are located to the west of the subject property and fronting 800 South east of 300 East. Multi-family residential developments are located to the north, east, and south.

First Step House also owns a facility at 440 South 500 East that provides treatment services for those recovering from addiction. The proposed building that is the subject of this request is not intended to provide treatment but would have onsite supportive services including move-in orientation, case management, and tenant rights education.



Area zoning map with the subject property shaded in blue.

Transit options in the area include bus lines on 900 South, and on State Street. Additionally, the red line Library Trax station is approximately a half mile to the north on 400 South. There is also a network of bike lanes in the area including a protected lane on 300 East.

The Council is only being asked to consider rezoning the property. Because zoning of a property can outlast the life of a building, any rezoning application should be considered on the merits of changing the zoning of that property, not simply based on a potential project.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Planning staff identified five key considerations related to the proposal which are found on pages 3-5 of the Planning Commission staff report and summarized below. For the complete analysis, please see the staff report.

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

Planning staff reviewed the proposed zoning map amendment and how it aligns with *Plan Salt Lake*, *Housing SLC*, and *Thriving in Place*. They found the proposal would provide deeply affordable housing units in an area with needed infrastructure, services and nearby transit options.

Although the *Central Community Master Plan* future land use map calls for this property to remain within the Institutional zoning district, Planning noted there is not demand for office space in the existing building.

Consideration 2 – General Plan Amendment

As discussed above, the *Central Community Master Plan* future land use map lists the property as Institutional. In most instances a general plan amendment would be required so the proposed zoning would align with the area’s community plan. However, City code does not require a general plan amendment when proposed zoning includes affordable housing that is consistent with an identified need in a housing plan adopted by the City.

Consideration 3 – Comparison of Zoning Districts

The following table found on pages 4-5 of the Planning Commission staff report compares current and proposed zoning designations. It is replicated here for convenience.

Notable differences include reduced setbacks and buffers between the proposed building and adjacent single-family homes in the RB, and RMF-35 zones.

Additionally, as discussed above, the Institutional zone allows residential uses only when adaptive reuse incentives are used for existing buildings.

<i>Zoning Standard</i>	<i>Institutional (Current)</i>	<i>RMF-45 (Proposed)</i>
Maximum Height	35 feet and up to 75 feet with design review and additional setbacks.	45 feet
Front Yard	20 feet	25 feet
Rear Yard	25 feet	30 feet
Interior Side Yard	20 feet	8-10 feet
Maximum Building Coverage	60%	60%
Landscape Buffers	Required when abutting a residential district.	Required when abutting a lot in a single-family or two-family residential district.
Allowed Uses	No residential uses allowed, unless utilizing incentives to reuse existing building(s).	All forms of residential are allowed, except two-family and twin homes.
Design Standards Required	Exterior lighting	None required

Consideration 4 – Potential Future Zoning Changes

Planning staff has been working on a proposal to combine the RMF-35 and RMF-45 zoning districts into a new RMF-40 zoning district with a maximum height of 40 feet. However, on March 12, 2025 the Planning Commission received a follow-up briefing on the proposed RMF-35/45 zoning consolidation and held a public hearing. The Commission voted to continue the public hearing and table the item. Planning staff was

asked to continue working on the proposal. This will be reviewed again by the Commission before making a recommendation to the City Council. The proposed consolidation, as currently proposed, does not include an option to add additional height through the Affordable Housing Incentives.

In terms of how these proposed changes affect this project, it is worth noting that a future development on the subject site would be vested under zoning regulations in place when a complete building permit application is submitted. The desired height of this applicant would currently work within the existing RMF45 zone.

Consideration 5 –Public Input

Planning staff received several emails and phone calls supporting and opposing the proposed development at the subject site. Those who are opposed cited concerns with the concentration of affordable housing, social services, and homeless resources in the neighborhood, parking, and crime. Those expressing support of the proposal noted the opportunity to help people who need services, the good work First Step House does, and the benefits of providing housing for unsheltered people in the community.

The Central City Neighborhood Council submitted a letter to Planning expressing opposition to the proposed development if the property is rezoned. They cited concerns with an existing concentration of supportive services and low-income housing, the site’s proximity to Taufer Park and apartments that have a history of drug problems, and a desire to have for sale and/or family-sized housing, or retail uses on the site.

Analysis of Standards

Attachment D (pages 32-34) of the Planning Commission staff report outlines zoning map 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 map 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 map amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.	<i>Complies</i>
The extent to which a proposed map amendment will affect adjacent properties	<p><i>May affect abutting properties due to potential height.</i></p> <p><i>Some surrounding properties could be developed to similar heights and uses.</i></p>
Whether a proposed map amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards.	<i>Not applicable</i>

The potential impacts on the city to provide safe drinking water, storm water, and sewer to the property and other properties based on the additional development potential of future development including any impact that may result in exceeding existing or planned capacities that may be located further away from the subject property.	<i>Utilities already exist but the developer may need to upgrade.</i>
The status of existing transportation facilities, any planned changes to the transportation facilities, and the impact that the proposed amendment may have on the city’s ability, need, and timing of future transportation improvements.	<i>Nearby bus, Trax, and bike lanes provide transportation options.</i>
The proximity of necessary amenities such as parks, open space, schools, fresh food, entertainment, cultural facilities, and the ability of current and future residents to access these amenities without having to rely on a personal vehicle.	<i>Parks, shops, restaurants, and the future Intermountain Health hospital are within walking or biking distance.</i>
The potential impacts to public safety resources created by the increase in development potential that may result from the proposed amendment.	<i>No concerns from police but recommended installing fencing, cameras and lighting.</i>
The potential for displacement of people who reside in any housing that is within the boundary of the proposed amendment and the plan offered by the petitioner to mitigate displacement.	<i>Not applicable</i>
The potential for displacement of any business that is located within the boundary of the proposed amendment and the plan offered by the petitioner to mitigate displacement.	<i>Not applicable</i>
The community benefits that would result from the proposed map amendment.	<i>Provides deeply affordable housing.</i>

City Department Review

During City review of the petitions, no responding departments or divisions expressed concerns with the proposal but stated additional review, permits, and utility upgrades would be required if the property is developed.

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

- October 8, 2024 – Petition for zoning map amendment received by Planning Division and assigned to Cassie Younger, Senior Planner.
- October 15, 2024 –

- Central City Community Council and additional recognized organizations sent notice informing them of the petition.
 - Early notification letters mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the proposal.
- October 20, 2024 – Proposal posted to the City’s online open house webpage.
- November 6, 2024 – Applicant presented their proposal at the Central City Community Council meeting.
- November 23, 2024 – Planning Commission public hearing notice posted on property.
- November 27, 2024 – Public hearing notice posted to City and State websites and hearing notice mailed.
- December 11, 2024 – Planning Commission public hearing. The Commission voted 6:0 to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.
- January 6, 2025 – Ordinance requested from City Attorney’s Office.
- February 19, 2025 – Planning received signed ordinance from the Attorney’s Office.
- February 21, 2025 – Transmittal received in City Council Office.