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# Sugarhouse Street Car and Exploding Development

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- In 2012, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) granted \$26 million to Salt Lake City, Utah Transit Authority, and South Salt Lake City toward completion of a Sugar House Streetcar. The project had been included in the Utah State Transportation Plan, but was not scheduled to be built until at least 2025.
- I worked hard to secure this USDOT grant. For cities like ours (Salt Lake City had 140 miles of streetcars), the return of streetcars brings multiple positive impacts. They provide transportation options that encourage walkability – and decreased dependence on cars. Streetcar is a form of ‘development oriented transit’ that helps cities focus development in neighborhoods like the core of Sugarhouse, where higher density may be desired or inevitable.
- Together, we were able to complete the Streetcar project on time and on schedule. It included addition of a greenway and trail – a key section of the Parleys Canyon-to-Jordan River (PRATT) trail. The “Sugar Hole” was finally filled, and the project has attracted more than \$400 million in new development.
- As the Streetcar was being completed at McLelland Street, the City Council and I agreed on which segments of the Streetcar to pursue next. Two phases were proposed: 1) an extension to the Sugar House Monument, going up to Highland Drive, and then toward 2100 South; and 2) a feasibility study to extend the line north along 1100 East.
- The proposed 1100 East phase drew extensive comment and concern, and is still being studied and deliberated. Some business owners and residents believe a Streetcar on 1100 East could destroy the character of the neighborhood and negatively impact businesses.
- It is important to note that Streetcar, unlike TRAX (light-rail), is a single car – much like a bus on rails, and it moves seamlessly with and in-and-out of traffic. Also like a bus, with appropriate routes and service, streetcars take cars off the road, reducing air pollution and traffic congestion.
- Impacts to small businesses along a streetcar line typically occur only during the brief period of construction – assuming current zoning remains in place. Once construction is complete, evidence from similar projects across the US shows that business along a streetcar route increases significantly.
- The City has applied for a second federal grant to extend the Sugar House Streetcar to the Monument. The project includes additional walkability features aimed at enhancing the character of Sugar House.
- I understand well the challenges associated with the explosive growth facing our Sugar House neighborhood, and concerns about the siting of transit projects like Streetcar. The City is committed to addressing these issues, and working with the neighborhood to preserve its wonderful character while simultaneously ensuring the area benefits from this renewed vibrancy.