

Coalition calls on Salt Lake City to halt effort to create Northpoint warehouse district which will harm residents, Great Salt Lake wetlands and increase pollution

SALT LAKE CITY – Salt Lake City’s Planning Department is proposing creation of a [new warehouse district in the Northpoint area](#) (north east of the airport) which would decimate quality of life for the 60 existing homeowners, harm fragile and critical Great Salt Lake wetlands, and add more pollution from diesel trucks and development.

[On Wednesday, January 11, at 5:30 pm, the Salt Lake City Planning Commission will hear public comment and discuss whether to approve the first of what is expected to be several upzoning petitions from warehouse developers.](#) In an unusual move apparently to appease developers, city staff have asked the Planning Commission to take this action *before* a new master plan for the area has been approved by the city council.

“Salt Lake is in the midst of a serious housing crisis. The Great Salt Lake is shriveling up and facing ecological collapse. Huge warehouse complexes are being overbuilt causing the State to reconsider past development assumptions,” said Dorothy Owen, Chair of the Westpointe Community Council. “So what is Salt Lake City’s response to this situation? Approve the demolition of an entire neighborhood of family homes in order to construct a warehouse district that further exacerbates all of the Inland Port’s negative impacts and then some. The result as described in a recent [Build Salt Lake article](#) is ‘an inherently unsustainable and unwalkable land use—a warehouse and trucking ghetto.’ The only thing worse than this tragic vision is the tortured process by which it was developed.”

Denise Payne, a homeowner in the area says, “Changing the existing AG2 (agriculture) zoning to M1 (warehouse/light manufacturing) would cause displacement of existing residents. Currently the East side of 2200 West is zoned residential and agriculture. How can you expect residents to live with warehouses within 300 feet of their homes? The air, traffic and noise pollution of warehouse development is not compatible with residential living.”

In addition to immediate harm to residents Salt Lake City and neighboring communities will also be harmed by a dramatic increase in diesel truck traffic and the pollution and safety risks associated with that traffic.

"When Brigham Young said, 'This is the place,' I don't think he meant for a massive, ugly, polluting, sea of warehouses," said Dr. Brian Moench, Board Chair of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. "Other states that made the mistake of allowing these massive

distribution warehouses to completely take over entire cities now refer to them as 'diesel death zones.' It's hard to believe that our supposedly environmentally conscious city leaders are willing to turn parts of Salt Lake City into our own diesel death zones."

Finally, the land being targeted for this new warehouse development is adjacent to some of the most important high-functioning wetlands on the south shore of Great Salt Lake which may be the last refuge for hundreds of bird species as Great Salt Lake experiences ecological collapse.

"The Northpoint area that is being proposed for light manufacturing and warehouse zoning and development is immediately adjacent to the duck clubs and some of the last remaining Great Salt Lake wetlands that are still functioning, despite the dire condition of the Lake," said Heather Dove, President of Great Salt Lake Audubon. "It is truly folly to think that these business parks and warehouses with all the trucks that would service them would not have a significant, detrimental impact on these wetlands and the wildlife that relies on them. Birds do not tolerate proximity to human noise and activity. These unwanted and unnecessary warehouses will cause more habitat loss when we have already lost so much around the Lake."

Members of the community concerned with this short sighted and damaging proposal will be speaking at the Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, and are currently circulating a [petition](#) that has over 900 signatures calling on the Mayor and City Council to halt development of a new warehouse district.

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