

Dear City Council,

I am completing a Masters in Urban Planning and preparing to begin my PhD. After seeing plans for a bridge over our Main Street, I became concerned about the impact such a design decision would have on our downtown. I did research on skybridges for nearly a year and wrote a lengthy report on my findings. After speaking about my research at a Planning Commission hearing, I was advised by the three opposing votes to be sure and send my research on to you for your review.

I have given this report as well as a presentation on why the skybridge is at odds with the intent of the founding fathers of Salt Lake City to several key leaders in our community. I am including the report and the powerpoint presentation in this email as well.

The most important thing we can do to build community within our city is provide for the connection people are able to make to each other. More importantly, with this focus we are looking through the lens provided to us by our founding fathers and making our decisions based on the framework of creating a place where everyone belongs and feels connected.

Providing people with the opportunity to be together in ways that build those connections, encouraging life on the street (especially Main Street), and drawing people naturally to the temple are all very important elements to consider if we hope to honor our heritage and the original intent of those who built this city.

It is the center and edges and corners of developments that create the transition zones where people build community in their cities. Careful attention to the details happening in these places is so important. To overlook the opportunities to provide connections in these places, or to undermine the potential for community building at streetside is a mistake. Choosing to "step over" city life is a choice that weakens a city.

Salt Lake City is home to a worldwide church with a worldwide membership and is visited by millions of those people each year. In a growing multi-cultural city, we have the solemn duty and obligation to consider how the development choices we make in our city--especially in our downtown--do or do not build community and provide for the health and well-being of the people. All the people.

Skybridges are an outdated and inferior design. Is this what we want to communicate to the world and to our children? In their poverty the pioneers settled the valley and built temples of majesty. That is the standard we should follow. Salt Lake City is a special and distinctive city. We deserve special and distinctive architecture. If we must absolutely have a bridge, it should be spectacular. It should be an attraction people would travel to see, not just a way to get across the street from the second floor.

Our Main Street, our people, our children, our founding fathers, deserve better.

I hope you will read my work before you meet to make your final decision.

Sincerely,

Kathleen J. Hill