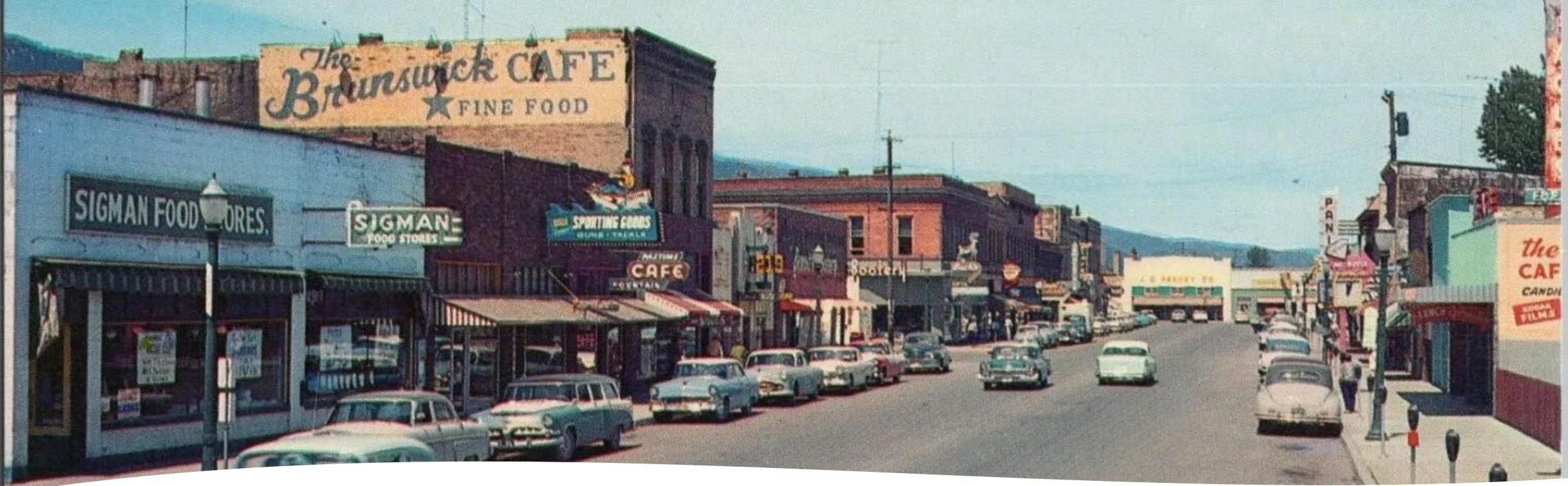


An aerial photograph of downtown Sandpoint, Idaho, in the 1960s. The image shows a dense cluster of commercial buildings, many with flat roofs, and numerous cars parked in lots and along the streets. A river is visible in the upper left, and a bridge spans it in the background. The overall scene depicts a bustling small-town center.

Managing Sandpoint's Public Parking: A Responsible and Equitable Approach

Presented by: Jason Welker
Planning & Community Development Director
City of Sandpoint

Photo: Sandpoint in the 1960's, when most downtown public parking was paid parking



Why are We Talking about bringing Paid Parking back to Downtown Sandpoint?

Status quo is NOT serving locals

- City-owned lots are 100% full during peak season
- Lack of time limits + free off-street parking = no availability for area residents and priority users at City Lot, Sand Creek, City Beach, and Windbag Marina
- Failing infrastructure imposes costs on local taxpayers
- Tourists and visitors do not contribute to costs of maintenance and repairs
- Most downtown parking was historically paid parking, providing sustainable funding and assuring availability of spaces

What about the proposed City Beach Hotel?

- The parking management plan and paid parking policy are unrelated to the proposed City Beach hotel.
- The hotel is required to provide **145 off-street parking stalls** based on the results of a **City-required parking demand study**.
- The paid parking policy was developed independently as a result of Sandpoint's **2022 Downtown Parking Study and 2024 Comprehensive Plan**, both which identified the need for a parking management plan.
- The **City retains full control** over public parking lots, and paid parking is about **improving access and funding infrastructure, not benefiting private development**.
- The hotel project does not reduce public parking supply; rather, it is **subject to existing City parking requirements in City Code**.



The High Cost of Free Parking

- “Free parking isn’t free” – taxpayers cover maintenance, plowing, resurfacing, and upgrades.
- Unmanaged free parking leads to **overuse, lack of availability, and congestion.**
- Paid parking improves turnover, ensures spaces are available, and provides funding for infrastructure.
- Cities across the U.S. have successfully used paid parking to **enhance public access, not restrict it.**

Top photo: Sandpoint City Lot today, where parking has been free since 2016. Estimated annual cost to Sandpoint taxpayers = **\$69,575.**

Bottom photo: Sandpoint City Lot circa 2013, when paid parking provided revenues for parking lot maintenance and operations.





The State of Sandpoint's Parking Infrastructure

- **505 off-street parking stalls** in five city-owned lots.
- **1,097 on-street parking stalls** downtown, including timed and unlimited spaces.
- **Deferred maintenance:** Pavement, striping, lighting, and landscaping need urgent investment.
- Without funding, facilities will continue to deteriorate, negatively impacting residents.





Key findings from 2022 Parking Study

14

of off-street parking stalls available at City Lot, City Beach lot, Sand Creek lot, Dock Street lot, and Pend Oreille Bay Trails lot at weekend peak hour, out of 505. 97% occupancy

525

of on-street parking stalls available in downtown Sandpoint at weekend peak hour, out of 1,078 total. 51% occupancy

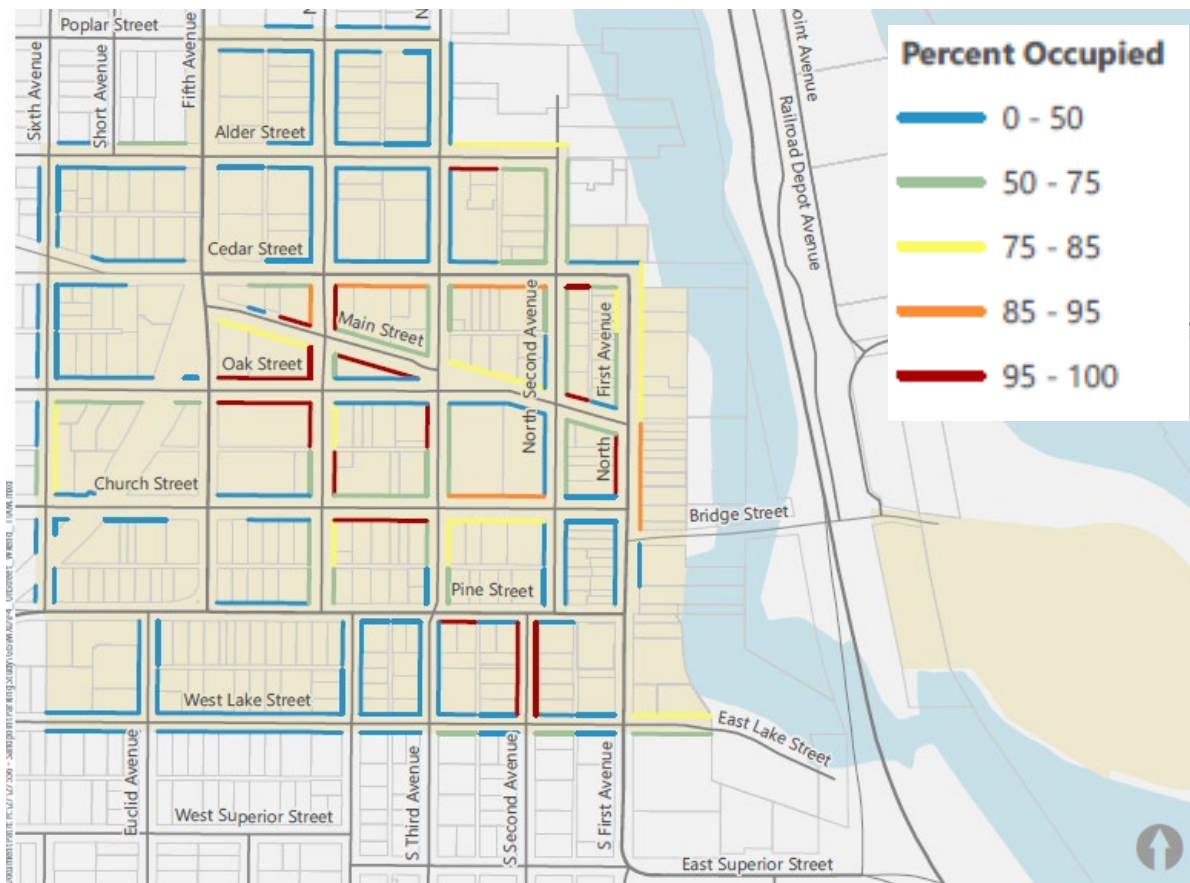
Goal of an Effective Parking Management Plan

14↑

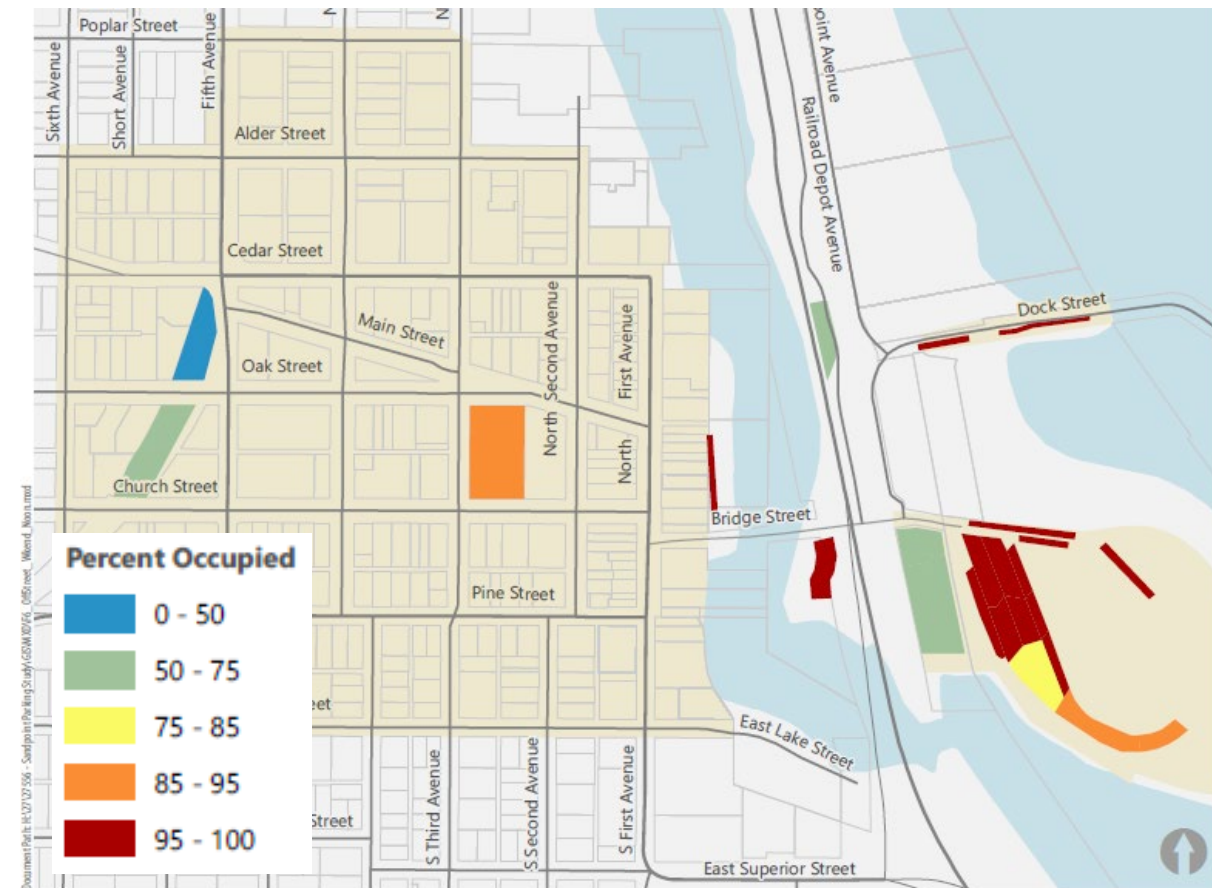
Increase # of stalls in off-street parking facilities available to local and area resident passholders by incentivizing tourists and visitors to use abundantly available on-street stalls.

85% target occupancy

“A parking system is generally considered to be at its **effective capacity** when occupancy reaches or exceeds **85%** in the peak hour. When more than 85% of stalls are occupied, **patrons or other users may be discouraged from visiting local land uses** or may **add to area congestion** by circling the area in search of available spaces.” – *City of Sandpoint Parking Study, November 2022*



Summer Weekend Occupancy, on-street – 11am



Summer Weekend Occupancy in City Lots – 12pm

Chart 4: Off-Street Parking Occupancy – Waterfront Area

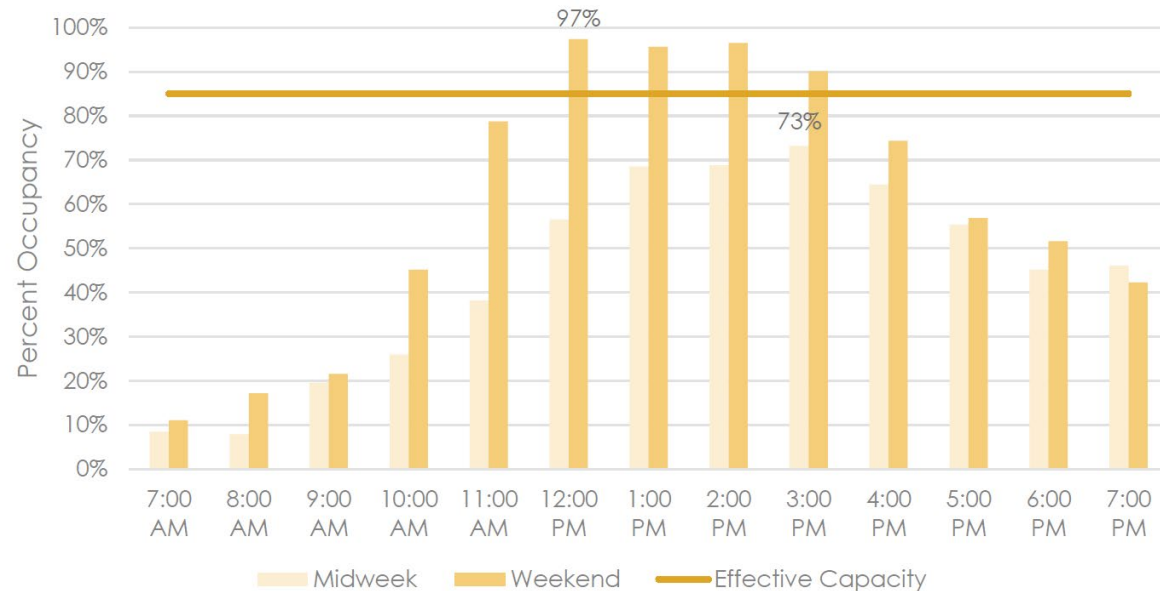
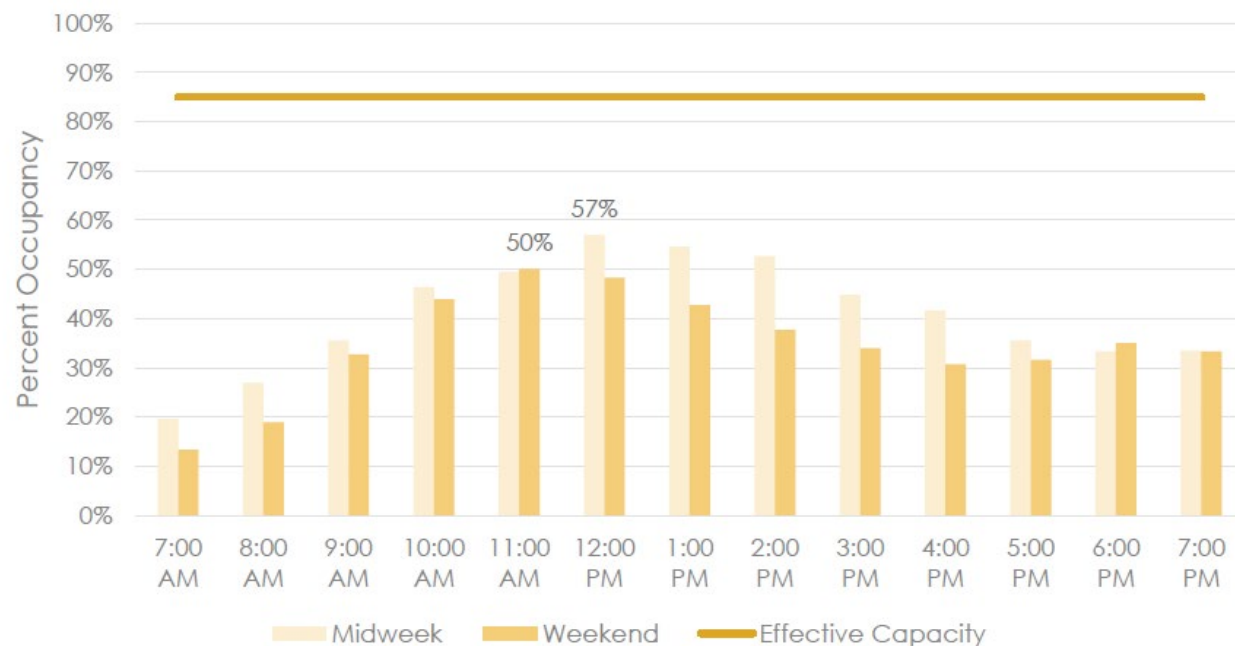


Chart 1: On-Street Parking Occupancy – Downtown Sandpoint



Key Findings from the 2022 Parking Study

- High occupancy rates in **off-street lots at peak times (97%)**.
- Excess capacity in **on-street parking (max occupancy only 51%)**
- **No turnover enforcement** in off-street lots means spaces are occupied for long periods, limiting availability.
- Recommendation: Implement a paid parking system for off-street parking to **better allocate spaces**.



The Cost of Maintaining Sandpoint's “Free” Off-street Parking

- **Annual maintenance & replacement cost per stall: \$575** (snow plowing, sweeping, crack sealing, sealcoating, striping, lighting, stormwater management)
 - **Total annual cost for all 505 stalls: \$290,375**
 - Without a funding mechanism, these costs fall on **local taxpayers** through the general fund.
- Example:** City plans to resurface and restripe City Lot in spring 2025. Cost to taxpayers is estimated at \$400,000*, or \$3,305 per stall.*
- Paid parking revenue ensures **users contribute to maintenance, not just taxpayers.**

*That's over \$40 per Sandpoint resident to resurface a parking lot that is usually too full for most residents to ever find a spot to park in.

“Free” Parking = Subsidized Parking

Who pays?

Sandpoint taxpayers

Who benefits?

Bonner County residents and out
of county tourists and visitors

How much?

~\$75 per household per year

The Proposed Paid Parking Policy

- Applies to **off-street parking lots only** (not curbside parking) + Dock Street stalls (Windbag marina parking). ITD lots not included.
- **\$2 per hour base rate** with dynamic pricing in high-demand lots (City Beach, Sand Creek, Dock Street).
- **Daily max:** \$16 at most lots, \$20 at Dock Street.
- **Affordable passes for residents:** \$10/year for 2 hours of free parking per visit.
- **Equitable non-resident rates:** \$20/year
- **Revenue generated: \$300,000+ annually**, covering maintenance and improvement costs



Parking Passes

Pass Type	Cost	Eligibility	Benefits
Resident Annual Pass	\$15	City residents	3 hours free parking per visit for a single car at City Lot, Sand Creek Lot, PO Bay Trail Lot, and Dock Street, 4 hour free parking at City Beach lot.
Non-Resident Annual Pass	\$30	Non-City residents	2 hours free parking per visit at all lots for a single car
Downtown Business Pass	\$250	Commercial A district businesses	Unlimited parking at all lots for a single car
Marina Slip Occupant Pass	\$150	Windbag or City Beach slip occupants	Unlimited parking at Dock Street and City Beach lots
Downtown resident parking pass	\$350	Residents of the Commercial A district	Unlimited on-street and off-street parking downtown
Boat Launch fee (Idaho State resident)	\$10/launch	Idaho state residents	City Beach and Memorial Field boat launches
Boat Launch fee (Out-of-state resident)	\$15/launch	Out-of-state residents	City Beach and Memorial Field boat launches
Boat launch season pass (Idaho State resident)	\$50	Idaho state residents	City Beach and Memorial Field boat launches
Boat launch season pass (Out-of-state resident)	\$100	Out-of-state residents	City Beach and Memorial Field boat launches

Non-pass holders pay \$2 per hour at all city-owned lots, \$3 during peak season at waterfront lots (Memorial Day – Labor Day)

Ensuring Fair Access for Residents

- **Local residents can purchase a low-cost pass** that allows for **free short-term parking**.
- **Downtown business and employee passes** available for convenient all-day parking.
- Marina slip holders and full-time downtown residents can access special parking permits.
- Paid parking will primarily **generate revenue from non-residents**, shifting the financial burden away from taxpayers.





Dispelling Myths About Paid Parking

MYTH: “Paid parking restricts access to City Beach.”

FACT: Paid parking ensures availability by managing demand, making it easier for locals to park.

MYTH: “This is just a revenue grab.”

FACT: Revenues collected can be put towards maintaining and improving public parking infrastructure and the amenities it serves.

MYTH: “The City is privatizing public parking.”

FACT: The City retains full ownership and control; revenue benefits public infrastructure only.

The Alternative?

Higher Taxes or Continued Neglect

- Without a revenue source, the city must choose between:
 - **Diverting funds from other infrastructure projects and essential services.**
 - **Increasing local taxes to pay for parking maintenance.**
 - **Allowing facilities to further deteriorate, negatively impacting residents.**
- Paid parking ensures **tourists and non-residents** contribute to infrastructure they use.



The Benefits of a Paid Parking System

- Improves parking availability and turnover for area residents and businesses.
 - Generates stable, dedicated funding for maintenance and upgrades.
 - Reduces congestion by discouraging unnecessary long-term parking.
- Supports Sandpoint's long-term economic vitality by ensuring well-maintained infrastructure.
- Supports objectives from 2024 Comp Plan: *“Enhance access to businesses, shops, restaurants, and other destinations through parking management solutions ensuring convenient, accessible parking areas for cars and bicycles.”*

- Chapter 6 “Multimodal Transportation” Goal 1.A.

Next Steps

- **Community engagement:** Resident survey on parking convenience and funding options. Presentations to Parks & Rec, Ped/Bike, and Sustainability Committees w/ public comment
- **City Council:** After further refinement of policy based on public input, bring to Council for consideration.
- **Implementation plan:** Seek technology solution, phased rollout with clear communication to residents and visitors.
- **Ongoing monitoring:** Regular assessments to optimize pricing and accessibility.

Top photo: Paid parking on First Avenue in the 1950s

Bottom photo: Paid parking on First Avenue in the 1980s. Sandpoint has only had free street and off-street parking downtown in the last two decades.



Questions & Discussion

- Questions and feedback from P&Z Commissioners
- Public comment
- City staff available for follow-up inquiries and clarifications.

