

Sustainability Peer Towns – Comparison Matrix

Town	Population (approx.)	Key Features
Sandpoint, ID	~10,400 (2024 est.)	Lake Pend Oreille; Schweitzer Mountain Resort; diverse economy (tourism, light manufacturing, forest products).
Nelson, BC	~11,700	On Kootenay Lake; Whitewater Ski Resort; vibrant arts culture, tourism & second homes.
Whitefish, MT	~8,400	Whitefish Mountain Resort; gateway to Glacier NP; lake + resort town.
Sun Valley / Blaine Co., ID	~16k (valley); ~25k county	Sun Valley ski area; upscale tourism; strong non-resident base.
Truckee, CA	~17k	Near Donner Lake & Truckee River; Tahoe ski resorts; large seasonal visitor base.

Sandpoint Takeaways

- 1. Regional collaboration is valuable, but target the right partners.** Bonner County is unlikely to participate given current politics, so focus on partnerships with Ponderay, Dover, and Kootenai — towns that share Sandpoint’s challenges and can pool resources.
- 2. Start with a clear, phased plan.** Nelson & Whitefish show strong CAP structures that Sandpoint can adapt at a city or multi-city scale.
- 3. Include housing in sustainability.** Workforce housing is essential for community resilience and environmental goals.
- 4. Match ambition to local capacity.** Truckee and Blaine County have big budgets and staff; Sandpoint should scale goals to fit available resources and seek grants/partners.
- 5. Prioritize visitor management and infrastructure.** Peer towns integrate tourism, conservation, and transportation planning to protect community character and natural resources.

Sustainability Work	Similarities to Sandpoint	Differences
Starting sustainability journey.	—	—
Nelson Next Climate Plan • Path to 2040 Sustainability Strategy	Similar scale; lake + ski area; tourism & non-primary homes.	Operates under BC policies, more mature planning framework.
Whitefish Climate Action Plan • Sustainable Tourism Plan	Close size; ski/lake tourism; second-home pressure.	Gateway to NP increases visitors; CAP since 2018.
5B CAN / Blaine Co. Climate Action Plan	Tourism-driven; housing/service strain; Idaho context.	Larger budget & philanthropic support; formal regional collab.
Truckee Climate Action Plan • Truckee 2040 General Plan	Tourism + second homes; lake/river recreation.	Bigger town; closer to metros; larger budgets.

Challenges & Strengths

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Strengths: Integrated planning; active-transport focus. **Challenges:** Funding capacity for implementation.

Strengths: Practical CAP, tourism mgmt. **Challenges:** Funding actions; housing affordability.

Strengths: Regional model; shared goals. **Challenges:** Some solutions resource-heavy.

Strengths: CAP integrated w/ general plan; clear targets.

Challenges: Ambitious funding & staff needs.