



## **AGENDA REPORT**

### **City Council Meeting**

**TODAY'S DATE:** June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**TO:** Mayor Grimm, Members of the Sandpoint City Council

**FROM:** Jason Welker, Planning & Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Downtown Parking Management Plan – presentation and adoption

#### **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**

In July 2024, the City of Sandpoint adopted an updated 20-year Comprehensive Plan that outlines a vision for a vibrant, connected, and sustainable downtown. While the plan does not prescribe specific parking policies, it includes several guiding principles and implementation strategies that support the development of a parking management plan. These include:

- A commitment to sustainable transportation and mobility, with policies that promote walkability, bikeability, and the efficient use of land.
- A focus on fiscal responsibility and infrastructure stewardship, encouraging the City to manage existing resources strategically and equitably.
- Support for vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods downtown, which requires balancing growth with adequate access and parking solutions.

The Comprehensive Plan also acknowledges the need to evaluate existing exemptions and develop parking strategies that align with broader community values, particularly in relation to affordability, downtown business vitality, and multimodal access.

These priorities build upon the 2022 Downtown Parking Demand Study, which showed that although overall parking supply is sufficient, utilization is uneven, with certain downtown areas experiencing consistent congestion while others remain underused. The study recommended modernizing Sandpoint's parking approach through demand-based pricing, pass systems, and revised policies for new residential development.

In response to these findings and in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan's broader goals, staff initiated development of the Downtown Parking Management Plan in December 2024. Over the following six months, staff led a robust outreach process and iterative policy refinement effort to produce a plan that supports access, equity, and fiscal sustainability for downtown Sandpoint.

#### **OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS**

Staff undertook an extensive public engagement effort to ensure that business owners, residents, developers, and the broader public were informed and had opportunities to provide feedback throughout the planning process:

- Three presentations and discussions with the Planning & Zoning Commission (January, March, and April 2025), each including public comment, commissioner deliberations, and recommendations resulting in substantial changes to the plan.
- Two presentations to the Parks & Recreation Commission, focusing on recreational user impacts and marina parking implications.
- Presentations to the Sustainability Committee and the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee, focusing on access, equity, and multimodal transportation connections.
- Multiple meetings with stakeholder groups in February and March 2025, including downtown business owners and the Greater Sandpoint Area Chamber of Commerce, both which included targeted, user-specific surveys.
- An online parking survey conducted in February–March 2025, with over 1,800 responses, gauging community satisfaction with the availability and condition of Sandpoint’s public parking facilities, support for pass structures and paid hourly parking, and concerns over equity of access for city and non-city residents.

This extensive engagement ensured the final Parking Management Plan reflects a broad cross-section of community needs and interests, while aligning with City policy goals and fiscal realities.

## **PLAN OVERVIEW AND LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS**

The Downtown Parking Management Plan establishes a framework to ensure that Sandpoint’s downtown parking infrastructure is financially sustainable, equitably managed, and aligned with the City’s goals for a vibrant, accessible, and economically resilient downtown. The plan builds on technical findings from the 2022 Parking Demand Study and policy direction from the 2024 Comprehensive Plan to address both current inefficiencies and future pressures related to parking demand.

### **Core Objectives**

- Improve turnover and utilization in high-demand parking areas;
- Increase equity by shifting the cost burden of parking infrastructure to users, particularly seasonal and non-resident users;
- Create a dedicated revenue stream to fund enforcement, maintenance, and future mobility improvements downtown;
- Support business vitality by improving parking availability for customers and visitors;
- Ensure that new development downtown contributes fairly to the parking system’s long-term sustainability.

### **Key Components**

1. **Tiered Parking Pass Program:** A range of annual pass options will be available to downtown employees, residents, marina slip occupants, Bonner County residents, and City residents. Prices are scaled to reflect level of usage, proximity to impacted zones, and equity considerations.
2. **Paid Hourly Parking in Premium Zones:** Hourly parking rates will be implemented in core downtown off-street and curbside areas, particularly in locations where turnover is critical. A portion of daily free hours will remain available for passholders.
3. **Updated Off-Street Parking Requirements:** Residential development within the current downtown parking exempt boundary will be subject to revised requirements or may opt to pay an in-lieu fee. This ensures downtown growth does not outpace parking availability or shift infrastructure costs to the public.
4. **Use of Revenue and Enforcement:** All administrative and enforcement costs will be paid from revenues generated by passes and hourly parking. In-lieu fees will be deposited into the City’s Parking Improvement Fund for expansion and improvement of public parking infrastructure.

Remaining revenue will be allocated through the City's annual budget process and may support amenities and transportation access within the district where funds are generated.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Implementation of the plan is projected to generate between \$300,000 and \$500,000 annually. This funding ensures the parking system is self-supporting and enables the City to:

- Cover all direct costs of administration and enforcement;
- Invest in signage, striping, and lot maintenance;
- Explore future investments in transit access, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and downtown amenities.

### **Long-Term Management and Sustainability**

By creating a flexible but clearly defined parking policy, the plan reduces dependence on general fund subsidies for parking and introduces mechanisms for adapting to seasonal demand, future growth, and shifts in downtown mobility patterns. It sets the foundation for data-informed adjustments and future policy evolution.

Ultimately, the Parking Management Plan helps Sandpoint proactively manage parking as a shared public asset—balancing access, equity, and fiscal sustainability while supporting the continued success of downtown as a commercial, recreational, and civic destination.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Downtown Parking Management Plan is the result of over six months of data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach. It provides a fair, flexible, and forward-looking strategy that addresses current parking challenges while preparing Sandpoint for future growth.

Staff recommends adoption of the plan as presented and stands ready to support Council in its implementation through future ordinance updates, technology procurement, and budgetary planning.

### **ACTION:**

City Council is asked to consider the Downtown Parking Management Plan for adoption. Staff presents the following options for Council action at tonight's meeting:

1. Adopt the Plan as Presented: Approve the Downtown Parking Management Plan (June 2025) as proposed, allowing staff to proceed with implementation planning, ordinance updates, and budget preparation in alignment with the adopted framework.
2. Reject the Plan: Decline to adopt the Parking Management Plan. This would maintain the current parking policies, including the downtown parking exempt zone and absence of paid parking, and may require the City to seek alternative funding sources for ongoing parking infrastructure needs.
3. Direct Staff to Revise the Plan: Provide feedback to staff on specific areas for revision or clarification and direct staff to bring a revised draft of the plan back to a future Council meeting for consideration and potential adoption.

**WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? N HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? N/A**

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

City of Sandpoint Downtown Parking Management Plan and Appendixes