

Summary of Public and Written Comments on Proposed Parking Management Plan for City Beach, Sandpoint

Note: *The following was generated from AI with the following prompt: “Summarize the accumulated notes from public comments and written comments received on the proposed Parking Management Plan for the City of Sandpoint, pasted below. Organize the comments into some key themes with recommendations for improvement to the proposed policy.”*

AI Response:

The feedback received on the proposed parking management plan for City Beach reveals several key themes of concern, support, and recommendations for improvement. Below is an organized summary of the main points.

Key Themes and Concerns

1. Hotel and Overflow Parking Impact

- Many residents are frustrated that the in-lieu parking arrangement for the new hotel allowed it to provide fewer parking spaces than originally planned.
- Concerns that hotel guests will use City Beach parking instead, limiting access for residents.
- Suggestion that overnight parking should be restricted to prevent hotel patrons from monopolizing spaces.
- Recommendation: Require the hotel to build more parking or implement a dedicated valet service to keep their guests from using City Beach parking.

2. Length of Free Parking Period

- The proposed 2-hour free limit is widely criticized as too short, especially for families with children and those spending a full day at the beach.
- Many suggest extending free parking for residents to 3-4 hours.
- Recommendation: Increase free parking time for locals, particularly Sandpoint residents.

3. Equity for Sandpoint and Bonner County Residents

- Many Bonner County residents feel alienated by the distinction between City of Sandpoint residents and county residents.
- There is strong support for allowing all Bonner County residents to access an affordable pass, possibly linked to license plates.
- Suggestion to adopt a three-tiered system:

- Free or low-cost passes for Sandpoint residents
- Slightly higher fee for Bonner County residents
- Higher hourly/daily fees for out-of-state visitors.
- Recommendation: Adjust pricing to be more inclusive of county residents while maintaining higher fees for out-of-state users.

4. Boat and Marina Parking Issues

- Concerns about lack of designated parking for boat trailers and marina slip holders.
- Concern that parking fees will push boaters to use Memorial Field instead, creating congestion in nearby residential neighborhoods.
- Recommendation: Implement boat launch fees at both City boat launches and a paid parking fee schedule that charges vehicles with trailers rates reflective of their impact on availability of parking for other park guests.

5. Implementation of Parking Technology and Payment Options

- Many support using License Plate Recognition (LPR) technology to allow residents free access while charging non-residents.
- Support for app-based parking payments, digital permits, and pay-on-exit systems.
- Concern over potential congestion caused by gates, kiosks, and fumbling with credit cards at entrances.
- Recommendation: Implement LPR technology for seamless access and online permit purchases for locals.

6. Seasonal vs. Year-Round Parking Fees

- Multiple comments suggest that parking fees should only apply during peak summer months.
- Recommendation: Consider free or reduced fees during the off-season (October–April).

7. Traffic and Congestion Concerns

- Some worry about increased congestion due to payment systems and reduced parking availability.
- Suggestions to provide a free shuttle service from outer parking areas to reduce demand for prime spaces.
- Recommendation: Explore shuttle services and minimize congestion caused by new payment systems.

8. Revenue Use and Transparency

- Many residents want clarity on where parking revenue will go—some suggest it should fund waterfront improvements or a parking structure.

- Concerns that selling public parking assets (like the downtown lot) could be a mistake.
 - Recommendation: Clearly communicate how revenue will be reinvested, such as for maintenance or new facilities.
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Recommendations for Policy Improvements

1. **Extend Free Parking for Locals:** Increase free parking for Sandpoint and Bonner County residents to at least 3-4 hours.
 2. **Tiered Pricing Structure:**
 - Sandpoint residents: Free or low-cost annual pass.
 - Bonner County residents: Slightly higher annual fee.
 - Non-residents: Higher daily or hourly rates.
 3. **Implement Digital Parking Solutions:** Use LPR for seamless resident access and online/app-based payments for visitors.
 4. **Address Hotel Parking Concerns:** Require the hotel to build additional parking or implement a valet system to avoid spillover into public lots.
 5. **Designate Separate Boat/Trailer Parking:** Move trailer parking off-site to avoid congestion at City Beach.
 6. **Consider Seasonal Fee Structures:** Charge for parking only during peak season (summer months).
 7. **Improve Public Communication:** Clearly outline how revenue from paid parking will be used to benefit public spaces.
 8. **Explore Alternative Transportation Solutions:** Implement a shuttle system or promote alternative parking areas to reduce congestion.
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Conclusion

The majority of public feedback indicates opposition to a rigid paid parking structure that does not account for local access needs. Residents strongly support a system that:

- Prioritizes access for locals (both city and county).
- Charges higher fees for non-residents.
- Provides flexibility in terms of parking duration and seasonality.
- Ensures the hotel's parking obligations are fully met.

By adjusting the policy based on these recommendations, the City of Sandpoint can balance revenue generation with fair and equitable access to City Beach for both residents and visitors.