



City Council Strategic Planning Workshop Kickoff Discussion Memo

To: Sandpoint City Council

From: Mayor Jeremy Grimm

Subject: Strategic Planning Workshop Kickoff

Purpose: To provide initial support to Council organization and initiation of a Council-led strategic planning effort

Purpose and Intent

I am bringing this item forward to support the City Council's organization and initiation of a strategic planning effort. This memo and the initial workshop are intended to help structure the work, assemble relevant background information, and provide logistical support so the Council can develop its strategic plan efficiently and deliberately.

I want to be clear about my intent. I am deliberately creating space for the Council to develop its own strategic plan. I do not intend to participate in the workshops themselves, and I look forward to the Council's completion and delivery of its plan to the Mayor. Once delivered, I will use the Council's strategic plan to guide administrative execution, departmental priorities, and organizational alignment as capacity and conditions allow.

Council Leadership and Staff Support

- This is a Council-led strategic planning effort.
- My role as Mayor is to ensure staff are organized, responsive, and equipped to support the Council's work.
- City staff have been directed to provide objective background materials, operational and fiscal context, and logistical support.

Proposed Kickoff Workshop Focus

For the initial workshop, I have asked staff to prepare the following:

1. Review of Existing Plans and Goals

A concise review of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the Council's adopted 2022–2027 Strategic Framework, and other master plans or department work plans that may inform priority-setting.

2. Summary of Economic and Fiscal Context

A high-level overview of City revenue constraints, cost drivers, and major capital obligations.



3. Sandpoint Urban Renewal Agency Overview

Background on the Urban Renewal Agency's purpose, authority, district boundaries, existing commitments, and remaining capacity to assist Council in identifying priority projects.

4. Facilitator Goals and Skillset

Council discussion to clarify the desired facilitator experience, including familiarity with Idaho municipal governance, Idaho Code, strategic planning facilitation, neutrality, and expected deliverables.

5. Direction to Staff on Facilitation and Scheduling

Based on Council guidance, staff will engage a facilitator within the budgeted amount and return with a proposed workshop schedule.

Mayor's Long-Range Operating Plan (FY26 Budget) - Current Administrative Framework

The following Long-Range Operating Plan was adopted as part of the FY2026 budget and represents the framework I am currently using to guide day-to-day administration of the City, including direction to department heads, prioritization of capital and operational work programs, budget development, and coordination of organizational resources. It is included in full for transparency and to provide any desired help or a practical starting point for identifying potential refinements as the Council develops its strategic plan. Much of this was influenced by the existing Strategic Plan.

Long-Range Operating Plan

The City of Sandpoint's long-range operational strategy reflects our commitment to sustainable service delivery, strategic reinvestment, and a resilient organization responsive to both current and future community needs. Anchored in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan, this plan outlines anticipated trends, major capital efforts, and operational strategies over the next 5–10 years.

Strategic Vision

Sandpoint is a distinctive, growing community defined by its natural setting, creative culture, and civic pride. Over the next decade, our operations will continue to evolve to meet new service expectations, shifting demographics, and critical infrastructure needs. Our focus is threefold:

- *Delivering high-value, efficient public services*
- *Protecting and reinvesting in public infrastructure*
- *Building long-term fiscal and environmental resilience*



Key Long-Range Operational Objectives

1. Modernize and Sustain Core Infrastructure

- *Complete the design, financing, and phased construction of a new wastewater treatment plant by 2029*
- *Establish and implement a stormwater utility to fund upgrades, system expansion, and ongoing maintenance*
- *Rebuild and maintain essential street, sidewalk, and water system assets through structured capital plans and local tax tools, including consideration of a 2027 Local Option Tax ballot initiative*

2. Enhance Mobility and Transportation Access

- *Revisit and implement the Multimodal Transportation Plan to improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle circulation*
- *Upgrade ADA accessibility across the city's public rights-of-way and facilities*
- *Align new development with integrated transportation and infrastructure planning*

3. Promote Organizational Excellence and Capacity

- *Continue to refine the compensation structure and evaluate staffing needs across all departments*
- *Strengthen leadership development, succession planning, and cross-departmental training programs*
- *Reduce operational fragmentation and increase efficiency through standard operating procedures, performance benchmarks, and accountability metrics*

4. Ensure Fiscal Health and Resilient Revenue Sources

- *Maintain structurally balanced operating budgets while targeting one-time revenues toward capital and strategic reinvestment*
- *Preserve reserve balances for fiscal stability and emergency response*
- *Diversify funding sources by expanding user-based fees, leveraging state and federal grants, and piloting innovative financing tools for infrastructure and community amenities*
- *Recognize that major public-private reinvestment efforts in the downtown and waterfront area will yield long-term tax base growth, while potentially suppressing lodging tax revenues in the short-term during construction disruption*



5. Strengthen Regional Collaboration and Service Delivery

- *Explore shared service models with Bonner County and nearby jurisdictions for fire, water, and emergency response*
- *Participate in regional planning efforts around housing, recreation, and economic development*
- *Support interagency coordination for Sandpoint Airport and regional transportation priorities*

6. Support Livability and Climate Resilience

- *Implement a citywide Sustainability Plan to guide energy use, climate adaptation, and environmental stewardship*
- *Ensure growth aligns with infrastructure capacity and hazard mitigation objectives*
- *Promote downtown and neighborhood reinvestment that supports housing diversity, walkability, and sense of place*

Implementation & Monitoring

This Long-Range Operational Plan will be reviewed annually in alignment with the City's budget process and Strategic Plan updates. Department heads will continue to lead multi-year work planning efforts that inform staffing, capital planning, and policy refinement.

Success will be measured through:

- *Achievement of capital milestones*
- *Resident satisfaction with services*
- *Operational efficiency and staff retention*
- *Growth in sustainable revenue streams and reinvestment outcomes*

Sandpoint's future is one of stewardship, resilience, and bold investment in what matters most: our people, our infrastructure, and our identity as a livable, thriving community.

Closing

My goal with this memo and kickoff meeting is to support the Council's work in a constructive and respectful way. I am grateful for the Council's commitment to this work and for the leadership it represents. Strategic planning requires time, thoughtfulness, and collaboration, and I wish you every success as you move through this process. I look forward to receiving your completed plan and supporting its implementation in a way that best serves Sandpoint and its residents.