



Staff Report

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Erik Brubaker, Associate Planner
Report: July 9, 2025
Hearing: July 15, 2025
Item: PS25-0001: Great Northern Commerce
Applicant: Big Creek Land Company, LLC

Please Note: The Application and all materials related to this request are provided on the City's website at:
www.sandpointidaho.gov/currentprojects

1) Introduction and Background

Big Creek Land Company, LLC is requesting approval of a replat of an existing lot RPS40010010010A consisting of approximately 15.58 acres. The property is located east of Great Northern Road and South of Woodland Drive (Figure 1). Proposed developed access right-of-way (ROW) is off of Woodland Dr. The proposed subdivision seeks to create 21 lots, ranging from approximately 25,678sf to 34,523sf and dedication of 89,884 sf of ROW. According to the applicant, "The Great Northern Commerce Park First Addition Preliminary Subdivision is a proposal for the division of an approximately 15-acre piece of vacant pastureland in the City of Sandpoint into a 21-lot industrial subdivision. The subject property is known as Lot 1, Block 1 of the recently recorded 2-lot short plat known as Great Northern Commerce Park. It is situated southeast of the intersection of Great Northern Road and Woodland Drive, and lies in the northwest quarter of Section 10, Township 57 North, Range 2 West, Boise Meridian, City of Sandpoint, Bonner County, Idaho".

The property is situated within the Industrial General (IG) zone, as are all adjoining properties (Figure 2). All lots will have access and frontage on a proposed public right of way.

Preliminary plats set forth the basic information for the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and City Council to determine if the proposed subdivision complies with the applicable requirements of the Sandpoint City Code and Idaho Statutes. Upon approval of a preliminary plat by City Council (after PZC review), a permit for public infrastructure improvements may be issued and once complete and accepted by the city, a final plat may be approved by City Council and recorded. A final plat is necessary to create and sell new lots and no building permits may be issued prior to the recordation of the final plat.



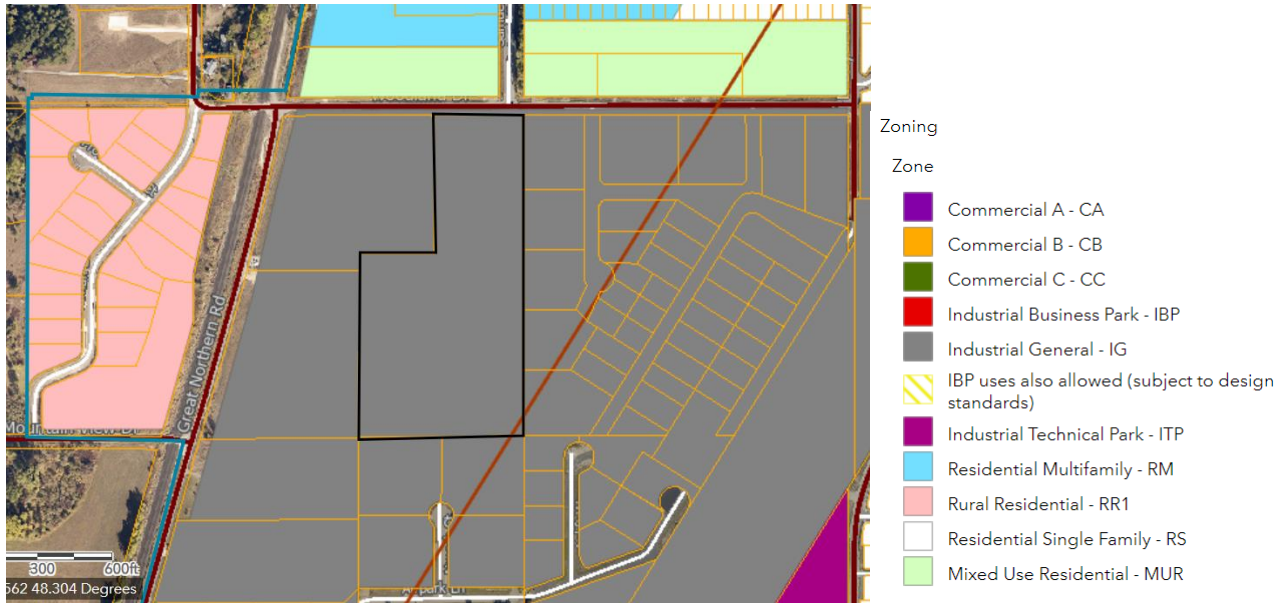


Figure 1 - Zoning Map

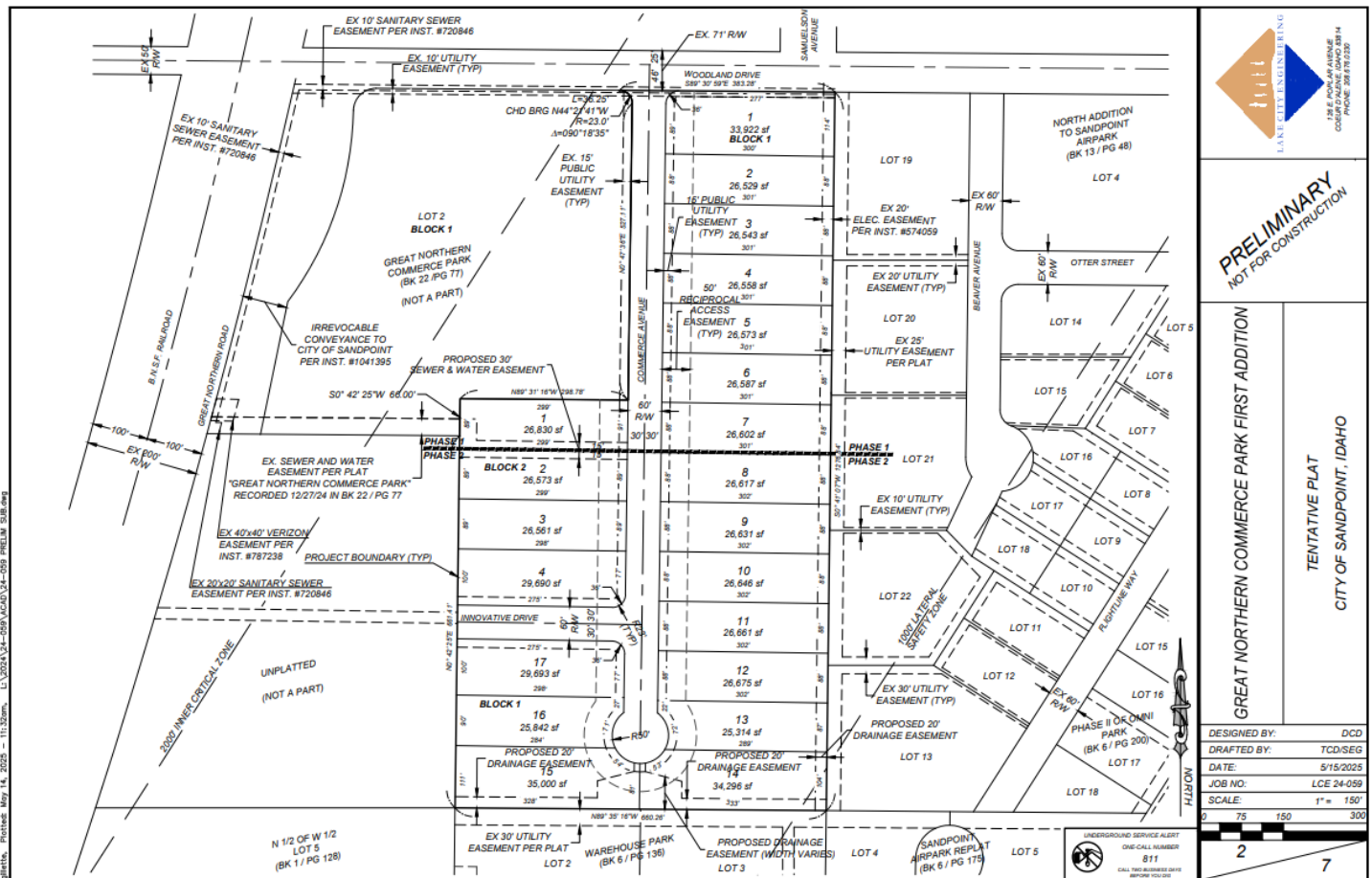


Figure 2 - Preliminary Plat

2) Agency Comments

Per Idaho Code and Sandpoint City Code, all applicable jurisdictions and agencies have been notified of the proposal including, but not limited to:

| REVIEWING DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES: | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| City of Sandpoint | Local Agencies & Districts | State & Federal | Bonner County | Other |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire Marshal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Engineer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent Highway District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pend Oreille School District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Panhandle Health District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City of Dover <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City of Ponderay | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Idaho Dept. of Lands <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Idaho Transportation Dept. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USACE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Idaho Dept. of Water Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveyor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandpoint Airport <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bonner County EMS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avista Utilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northern Lights <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utility and Service Providers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BNSF Railroad |
| X = Request for review/comments sent to department or agency. | | | | |

At the time of this report draft, the city has received five (5) agency responses to the application, all of which are attached to this report. Any additional comments received will be forwarded to the PZC and City Council.

Staff response to comments:

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) responded with “no comment”. Northern Lights (NLI) expressed willingness to serve the project with three phase or single phase power and noted that they will be servicing the adjacent Amazon facility. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) did not respond to the City directly on the application. However, the applicant had submitted required applications to the FAA who in turn terminated a preliminary request for an Aeronautical Study due to the fact that no proposed buildings are a part of this subdivision process. Such applications to FAA would be required at a later phase when buildings are proposed. BNSF Railroad submitted a copy of a “Final Field Diagnostic Notes”. Whereas no specific requirement of the development application was requested or required in the BNSF comment, city staff are in regular contact with BNSF through the capital improvement project for Great Northern Rd which provides continued opportunity for coordination, including understanding additional requirements as needed for that capital improvement project.

Preliminary Plat Requirements

Title 10, Chapter 1 establishes the subdivision and new development standards and regulations for preliminary plats. *Section §10-1-C1 through 12* establishes the required elements to be shown on a proposed preliminary plat.

Findings: All relevant requirements of *§10-1-C* are generally present on the revised preliminary plat and/or within the application materials.

More specifically, *Section §10-1-1-C3. Lot Dimensions: The dimensions of all lots and subdivisions and re-subdivisions of lots shall be shown. All lots shall be sufficiently wide and deep to permit full conformity with the zoning regulations. Per §9-4-3 Table 2, the Industrial General – IG zoning district; new lots are required to be 1 acre or larger with the exception found in Note 1. Parcels within an integrated development may vary from the minimum lot size and dimensions, with recordation of cross easements to guarantee access and common maintenance of all parking and landscape areas.*

Findings: The minimum lot size in the IG zone district is one-acre, unless the parcels are within an integrated development, with recordation of cross easements to guarantee access and common maintenance of all parking and landscape areas, in which case the lots may vary from the minimum lot size and dimensions. This proposed subdivision includes access and maintenance easements for the parking and landscaped areas, satisfying the requirement. A 50'-wide Reciprocal Access and Maintenance Easement has been added as shown on the revised drawings submitted on 4/25/25. Project is compliant on the condition that the subject developer provides CCR's that address common maintenance of parking and landscaped areas prior to recording of the Plat, (See Condition 1).

Section §10-1-1C10 states: Wetlands: If the subject property is located within or partially within wetlands or the floodplain, wetlands must be shown on the preliminary plat. A copy of the application for flood hazard or wetlands development permit shall be submitted along with the preliminary plat for concurrent review by the commission or hearing examiner.

Findings: Pursuant to the wetland determination and conclusion in the wetlands letter dated May, 7th, 2021. Staff finds that no wetlands are required to be shown on the subject plat and a copy of a wetlands development permit is not required. Further, The May 7, 2021 Wetland Letter Report prepared by Tom Duebendorfer for the Litehouse Property on Woodland Drive states the following determination: "Since wetland hydrology was lacking, none of the property would be considered wetland. It is possible however, in severe rainfall / precipitation events in very wet years, that some surface hydrology could be present — however the soils did not demonstrate clear reducing conditions (in most cases). The entire region has been significantly developed and it is possible that ditches, or re-routing of surface waters throughout the vicinity have altered the former "natural" state of hydrology. Even if some very small areas could be ponded for short duration, there did not appear to be any hydrologic connections with off-site "Waters of the US", and hence any potential wetland areas (if present) would likely be considered "isolated" by the Corps, and hence not regulated". He went on to conclude there are no wetlands on the Litehouse Property, parent property to the subject preliminary plat.

Title §10-1-3: Establishes requirement for improvements to public infrastructure. *Section §10-1-5* requires connection to city water and sewer mains, *Section §10-1-6* establishes the specific requirements for the design and construction of streets and *Section §10-1-C7* establishes the general requirements for other required utilities and improvements.

Findings: The draft preliminary plat, and preliminary improvement plans generally show compliance with the required development standards. The subdivision will include a water main extension, sewer main extension, and stormwater infrastructure. The proposed right of way width of 60 feet meets city standard for a local street. Before construction of any utilities or street infrastructure within the proposed right of way, final improvement plans, stamped by a professional engineer and marked "released for construction" shall be submitted for review and approval by the City Engineer, and a separate public infrastructure permit will be required to be issued by the City Engineer.

Section §10-1-6.A.2 requires conformance with the adopted transportation plan.

Findings: The proposed subdivision complies with the Multimodal Transportation Plan (MTMP). There are no capital projects identified in the MTMP for this property.

Section §10-1-6.A.5 eight hundred feet (800') in length may be required to have one crosswalk not less than ten feet (10') in width, situated near the center of the block.

Findings: This project complies because the distance along Commerce Avenue between the intersection of Woodland Drive and Innovative Drive is approximately 950 feet, and a mid-block crossing will be required at the driveway entrance to the "Project Bulldog" (Amazon) property to the west, approximately 470 feet south of Woodland Drive, as stipulated in the conditions of approval.

Section §10-1-6.A.6 Street Arrangement: The arrangement of streets in new subdivisions or other development shall make provision for the direct continuation of the principal existing streets in adjoining subdivisions (or their proper projection where adjoining property is not subdivided) insofar as they may be necessary for public requirements.

Findings: The subject proposal does not provide circulation to the east or south as opportunities are limited based on existing neighboring developments. The North addition to Sandpoint Airpark, to the east of the subject property, was developed with private streets and gated access for the purpose of controlling airport access, and looping the proposed street to the east would require right of way dedication through private property not associated with the proposed development. The industrial property to the south would similarly require right of way dedication on neighboring private property to connect to the existing cul-de-sac at Airpark Court. The project meets the requirement for connectivity because a stub has been provided on the western side of the proposed plat, providing opportunity for further connection to Great Northern Rd. (See Conditions 3 & 6).

The possibility for greater connectivity may exist at the southern edge of the property. As noted above, the development pattern to the south provides very limited opportunity for connectivity to this development. However, the drainage easement could be amended to also include public access in the event that development intensifies on the parcels to the south and such development is willing to provide the connectivity via a public access easement across their property. Such public access easement for future pathway connection to the south or southwest of the subdivision to accommodate potential for future bike and pedestrian circulation, recreation and nature connection would better further the city's connectivity policies, yet is not required. Additionally, consideration for such an easement has to take into account the principal function of this area is for storm drain management.

Section §10-1-6.B Parks, Playgrounds, School Sites: In subdividing property, due consideration shall be given to the provision of suitable sites for parks, playgrounds and schools.

Findings: The subject proposal is an industrial park and is proposing a substantial treelined planting strip on internal and external rights-of-way. The Bicycle Priority Network (Figure 16) of the MMTP shows a Multi-use path along Woodland Dr. and along Great Northern which parallels this project. The project complies because it furthers the policies of creating connections throughout the city, including between employment centers and parks and pathways. The proposed project is designed to match the adjacent, recently constructed street section to the east with sidewalk and planting strip. It is apparent that the multi-use path connection will need future consideration of alignments.

As mentioned above, as a major North South oriented Right-of-Way is proposed with GN Commerce, Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider an ingress egress/public access easement to accompany the drainage easement along the southern property line to accommodate potential future pathway connection.

Section §10-1-6.C Street Trees: Street trees shall be planted (at least one every twenty-five feet (25')) in accordance with a city approved plan. All proposed trees shall be from the city's currently approved tree list.

Findings: Street trees are shown on the preliminary improvement plans. Final planting locations and landscape plan details will be per final Construction Plans to allow for utilities, vision triangles, pedestrian ramps, light poles, etc. (See Condition 2).

Section §10-1-7 establishes the general requirements for other required utilities improvements and protections such as stormwater and erosion control.

Findings: The preliminary improvement plans, dated 6/10/2025, prepared by Lake City Engineering, generally conform to the requirements of §10-1-7.

Sandpoint City Code Title 9 is the city's zoning ordinance. Chapter 9-3 regulates land uses, setbacks, lot size, public street frontage, and may also contain certain design standards for resulting development with the Industrial General (IG) Zone.

Findings: The proposed lots as dimensioned on the preliminary plat meet the lot size and frontage requirements and any future land uses and buildings will be regulated through the zoning and/or building permit processes for compliance with all applicable standards of Sandpoint City Code Title 9 (Zoning).

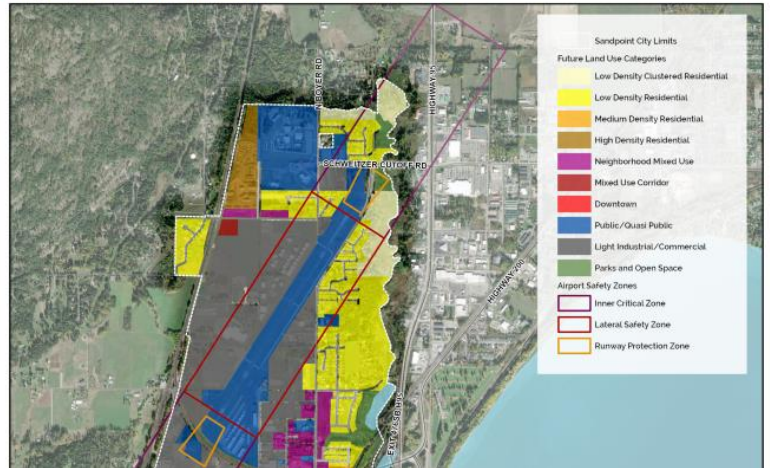
Conformance with existing plans, policies, and regulations

A. Comprehensive Plan

This project was reviewed for compatibility with policies, goals, and objectives of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

The City Comprehensive Plan contains a statement on Page 44 related to Light Industrial development as follows: "Light Industrial uses include warehouses, mini-storage, storage yards, and auto-repair shops that do not generate pedestrian traffic and are located throughout the city, but primarily adjacent to major streets or highways. Industrial land uses are located primarily north of Walnut Street and west of Boyer and include areas adjacent to the airport and railroad corridor. These areas are important job creators and balance the community's reliance on hospitality business. Some portions of the city's industrial lands have been classified as "brownfields" and will require remediation from contamination from previous uses before redevelopment can occur." Further, the Comprehensive Plan contains the following Goal 3E in the Land Use and Growth chapter (page 53): Ensure an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land for a diversified mix of commercial and industrial uses to maintain a diverse economy. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan contains a Multimodal Transportation Chapter, including Goal 2, policy E (Page 75) which states: "Develop the region's system of trails and paths to support a well-connected region, enhancing inter-and intra-community connectivity and access". This chapter additionally contains the following policy A under Goal 7 (page 77): With new development projects, encourage the design and construction of local streets to improve multimodal connectivity and safety and encourage well-connected, grid type street patterns.

Map 4. Future Land Use Map



Findings: The proposed development meets the applicability standard for the following reasons: The development site is located west of Boyer and north of Walnut street near the airport and the railroad corridor. The property is zoned Industrial General providing for a range of land uses, including distribution and warehousing to further the objectives of job's creation and diversifying the economy. The street pattern shows connectivity to the west and north accounting for the limitations of the existing development pattern to the east and south.

B. Multimodal Transportation Master Plan

City Code, Title 10, Section 6 requires conformance with the Transportation Plan and provides that streets shall be designed in accordance with the development standards of the city of Sandpoint. The Multimodal Transportation Master Plan (MTMP) adopted in 2021 provides vision, goals, and objectives against which developments can be evaluated. The Urban Area Transportation Plan (UATP) serves as the current standards, specific to access management and traffic analysis. The relevant goals, objectives and standards for which a subdivision should be evaluated are noted below, with staff review noted in the Findings Section.

Final, Adopted May 5, 2021

41

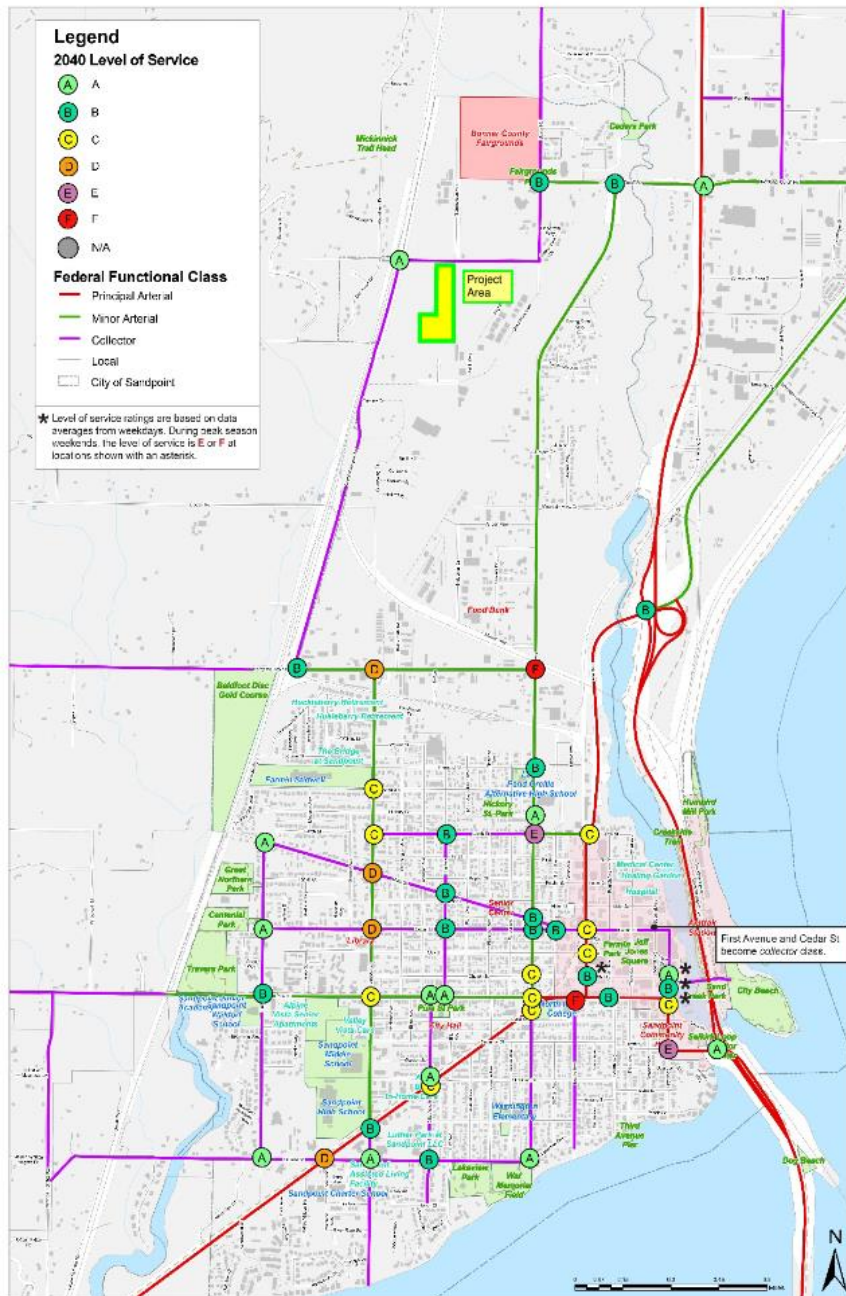


Figure 6 Existing Street Classifications and Intersection Levels of Service (2018/2020)



SANDPOINT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN



MTMP Goal 1. Provide a balanced approach to mobility. Objectives:

Improve and enhance safety and traffic circulation and preserve an acceptable level of service (LOS) at intersections; strive to maintain a LOS of D or better for peak hour traffic at intersections on City streets.
Limit the number of approaches onto collectors and arterials in order to minimize safety conflicts between modes and preserve the function of the multimodal corridor.
Continue to require compliance with roadway access management standards as part of land use application approval process.

Findings: The subdivision application is requesting that Streets “A and B” be dedicated as 60’ public right-of-way.

MTMP Goal 2. Provide a walkable and bikeable network throughout the community. Objectives:

- Continue to enhance the walkability and bike-ability of not only Downtown, but also the entire community and improve walking and bicycling routes throughout the community.
- Continue to require development proposals to provide complete streets in a manner consistent with design standards, as applicable.

Findings: Great Northern is planned for expansion with the addition of a 12-foot Shared Use Path in the vicinity of this project.

MTMP Goal 4. Support a resilient, livable and sustainable multimodal system. Objectives:

- Consider the long-term functionality and maintenance obligations when developing right-of-way design standards and through the subdivision approval process.
- Require compliance with adopted street design standards.

Findings: The preliminary plat includes the dedication of Streets “A and B” as a public right-of-way.

MTMP Goal 8. Proactively plan for an increase in demands Objectives:

- Continue to implement requirements for traffic analyses and mitigation measures resulting from private development and changes in use.
- With new development projects, encourage the design and construction of local streets to improve multimodal connectivity and safety; encourage well-connected, grid type street patterns with new development.

Findings: A traffic impact analysis was completed and is attached to this report. City Code 10-1-6-A-18 requires that “Development contributing three hundred (300) or more vehicle trips per day to the city street system shall require a traffic impact analysis.”

The traffic impact analysis conclusions show that after the proposed trips from this project are added to the network, all analyzed intersections operate at level of service D or above, with the exception of the intersection of Baldy and Division, which is currently operating below minimum level of service, and will continue to operate below level of service in the future with or without the proposed project, without addition of signalization to the intersection.

3) Urban Area Transportation Plan

Chapter 7 - Transportation Master Plan

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive plan for the transportation system within the Urban Area. The Urban Transportation Plan covers all the transportation modes that exist and are interconnected throughout and expected to exist in the combined ACI’s.

Appendix E - Developer Packet

Provides a checklist for ensuring design coherence with urban area development standards.

Findings: The proposed subdivision, and any required improvements as part of a future construction agreement, will generally be in compliance with the Urban Area Transportation Plan because the plat has been conditioned to conform to the regulations contained in the Urban Area Transportation Plan (Note Conditions of Approval 2, 3, & 4).

Appendix G - Access Management Policy

Access management is the proactive management of vehicular access points to land parcels adjacent to all manner of roadways to promote safe and efficient use of the transportation system. This local policy is consistent with national engineering best practices.

Approach Location: Approaches shall be located so as not to create undue interference with, or hazard to, the free movement of normal street or pedestrian traffic, or cause areas of congestion.

Approach Spacing: Spacing standards limit the number of driveways on a roadway by mandating a minimum separation distance between driveways. This reduces the potential for collisions as motorists enter or exit the roadway and encourages joint access, where appropriate.

Table G-4 provides the Minimum Intersection and Approach Spacing Requirements, specifying that driveways on a collector street shall be a minimum of 150' apart and on Local (residential) streets allows for access to each lot. The UATP also provides that the spacing between intersections shall be no less than 250'.

Findings: All elements applicable to the preliminary plat appear to conform with Appendix G as no new intersections nor access points are being proposed. Any future driveway on Great Northern Road will be reviewed and approved in accordance with these standards and the prior to the issuance of a building permit.

4) Preliminary Plat Procedures

10-1-8: Approvals:

Plats, except short plats, shall be approved subject to the following procedure:

A. The preliminary plats shall be set for public hearing before the planning commission or a hearing examiner only after all required documents have been received and fees paid. Notice of the public hearing shall be sent to the property owners within three hundred feet (300') of the development. Preliminary plats shall also be reviewed by the pedestrian advisory committee. A hearing examiner may be used to conduct public hearings when directed by the city council.

Findings: All necessary documents have been received and requisite fees have been paid. Project was reviewed by the pedestrian advisory committee, and at the May 8, 2025 meeting, the committee voted to recommend the following:

- Require curb ramps in both directions at south side of corner of Woodland and new N/S road.
Staff response: *This has not been included as recommended condition of approval. The preliminary improvement plans show a crosswalk across Commerce Avenue at the Woodland intersection. Staff does not recommend a pedestrian crossing across Woodland at this time, because of the existing roadside ditch on the north side of Woodland. The City would be encouraging sight-impaired users to cross a roadway with no refuge on the other side.*
- Require curb ramps in both directions at two internal T intersections, with the ability to cross the N/S and E/W streets with ramps at the corner and across the street without a corner.
Staff response: *This has not been included as recommended condition of approval. There are not two internal T intersections, only one. The new intersection at Commerce Avenue and Innovative Drive will include crosswalks in both directions as shown on the preliminary improvement plans.*
- Require a 5' planting strip/snow storage between roadway and sidewalk.
Staff response: *This has not been included as recommended condition of approval. Road geometry for new city streets is not determined by committees, it is specified by council-adopted standards. The Urban Area*

Transportation Plan includes typical street sections which staff uses as guidance to determine the road geometry of new streets. As shown on the preliminary improvement plans, both new internal streets will include a 5.5' wide planting strip between the back of curb and the front of the sidewalk.

- After construction on any lot, which will include driveway cut, ensure sidewalk still meets all city standards and require repair if not.

Staff response: *This has not been included as recommended condition of approval. City Code section 7-3-10 already specifies requirements for construction, repair, or replacement of sidewalk at the time of building permit.*

- Require buildings have direct connections to sidewalks, not in driveways.

Staff response: *this has not been included as recommended condition of approval, because it's already a requirement of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) that public buildings provide accessible connections from the entrance to the public sidewalk.*

- Require bicycle parking at each building, convenient to main entrance (or inside for employees) not allowing parked bikes to intrude on pedestrian access.

Staff response: *This has not been included as recommended condition of approval. Title 10, which specifies requirements for proposed subdivisions, does not include provisions for required parking for individual building sites, for either vehicles or bicycles. City Code 9-5 addresses requirements for off-street parking for vehicles and bicycles, and is determined at the time of building permit or site plan permit application.*

Preliminary plats also require site posting and newspaper public notice prior to public hearing.

Findings: Project is compliant because notice has been posted at the site 7 days in advance of the hearing and a summary has been provided in the official newspaper of general circulation 21 days prior to the hearing date.

5) Recommended Conditions of Approval

Based upon the requirements of City Code relative to preliminary plats and other evidence and testimony in the public record, the following conditions of approval are provided for inclusion in a motion to approve the PS25-0001:

1. Prior to approval of any Final Plat the developer shall provide CCR's that address common maintenance of parking and landscaped areas to the satisfaction of the City Planner.
2. Final planting locations, tree type, and landscape plan details in final Construction Plans shall be to the satisfaction of the City Forrester.
3. Prior to construction of any utilities or street infrastructure within the proposed right of way, final improvement plans, stamped by a professional engineer and marked "released for construction" shall be submitted for review and approval by the City Engineer, and a separate public infrastructure permit shall be issued by the City Engineer, meeting the requirements of Title 10, Chapter 1.
4. Prior to construction of the proposed pressure sewer main shown on the preliminary improvement plans, the applicant shall obtain approval of the plans from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. Qualified Licensed Professional Engineer review (QLPE) through the City of Sandpoint is not allowed for pressure sewer mains.
5. Prior to approval of any Final Plat, revise plans and Plat to reflect that the streets of the North Addition to Sandpoint Airpark (to the east) are private and not Public R-O-W.
6. Prior to approval of any Final Plat, a mid-block crossing shall be installed at the driveway entrance to the "Project Bulldog" property to the west, approximately 470 feet south of Woodland Drive to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.

6) Action

In accordance with SCC 10-1-8 (B), Following public hearing, the planning commission shall make a recommendation to the city council to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the preliminary plat, explaining the reasons for their decision. Any variance from any city standard must be considered at this stage. Should the planning commission be unable to make a decision, the matter may be tabled or forwarded to the city council without recommendation.

7) Application History

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 2/20/2025 | Application submittal |
| 4/03/2025 | Application complete |
| 5/8/2025 | Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee |
| 6/16/2025 | P&Z hearing notice published/mailed to property owners within 300 feet and sent to agencies |
| 7/7/2025 | P&Z hearing notice posted on-site |
| 7/15/2025 | Planning and Zoning Commission hearing |

8) Attachments

1. Application materials including:
 - A. Revised Application Form
 - B. Owner Authorization
 - C. Narrative
 - D. Deeds
 - E. Wetland Report
 - F. Revised Preliminary Plat
 - G. Revised Preliminary Improvement Plans
2. Referenced Documents
 - A. MMTP Excerpts from Appendix A
 - B. MMTP Appendix B – Complete Streets Policy
3. Noticing Documents
 - A. Notice of Planning & Zoning Public Hearing – 6.16.2025
4. Agency Comments Received