
Written comment for Sandpoint Planning & Zoning Commission public hearing

From Jennifer S <jensudick@gmail.com>

Date Wed 7/9/2025 7:01 PM

To City Planning <cityplanning@sandpointidaho.gov>

 1 attachment (41 KB)

City_Testimony_Sudick_07-09-25.pdf;

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jensudick@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Submitting the attached written testimony in response to the Sandpoint Planning & Zoning Commission Notice of Public Hearing at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 15, 2025, RE: Modification to the Area of Impact for the City of Sandpoint.

Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,
Jennifer Sudick

July 9, 2025

TO: City of Sandpoint Planning & Zoning Commission

**RE: Modification to the Area of Impact for the City of Sandpoint, Public Hearing,
Tuesday, July 15, 2025**

I invite those public officials considering the Modification to the Area of Impact for the City of Sandpoint to drive the dead-end road of Leisure Lane/Serenity Place. Although we are near current City boundaries, our neighborhood, which was established more than two decades ago, is clearly not appropriate for consideration under the proposed City AOI.

The geography, established wells, utilities and large forested plots (1 acre+) of this neighborhood leave me wondering how we fit into City planning. What benefits would this bring with the increased taxes of being a City resident? We are not ripe for further development, as our lots cannot be subdivided, and our homes slope directly up a hillside into a mountain.

I grew up in the City of Sandpoint, and I am disappointed in the City's lack of consultation with residents (to my knowledge, there hasn't been any) or serious consideration of the costs or challenges over any possible tax benefits.

The public tax investment would be too great to needlessly reconfigure complex established systems for City amenities, so what is the City planning for this neighborhood? Residents who are potentially affected by this AOI deserve a clear understanding of why we are being considered, what benefits would be provided by annexation, what the costs are, and how the City and County would enact any changes.

Until then, I have no reason to believe that consideration of our neighborhood for annexation by the City would provide any benefit to the current residents, City taxpayers or to the City. I strongly urge you to reconsider the AOI as was presented to the Bonner County Commissioners and Planning Department on June 16, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of this written statement.



Jennifer Sudick
Resident, The Pines
96 Serenity Place

Dear City of Sandpoint Planning & Zoning Commission:

June 16, 2025

I attended today's Public Hearing in person with the Bonner County Commissioners regarding the updates to the proposed "Area of Impact" (AOI) of the City of Sandpoint. I understand the Commissioners rejected the City's initial AOI proposal today on the basis to revise the AOI based on realistic five-year growth goals. I left the meeting confused because on one hand the City said they have no intention of annexing properties under the revised AOI, however also said that properties included under the AOI are "very likely" to be annexed within the next five years. So, which is it?

My husband and I own a home and property that is included in your original AOI at 439 Vedelwood Drive (Parcel # RP036650030080). We bought our home intentionally to be outside of City limits in rural Bonner County. We want to be left that way. We do not want to be under the City's jurisdiction, we do not want to pay taxes to the City and we do not want to pay for hookup to City water/sewer services. This situation represents massive overreach by the City of Sandpoint.

As the Commissioners have asked you to revise the AOI boundary, we are once again respectfully rejecting any attempt to include our property under the City's revised AOI.

Problems with the City's wastewater/sewage treatment plant were discussed during today's meeting. The treatment plant is in need of a massive overhaul, and this will take taxpayer buy-in and a large amount of resources to improve, not to mention many years. **It is clear the City of Sandpoint's water treatment plant is unable to properly and safely manage additional growth that would be serviced under the revised AOI.**

Given the discussion regarding the state of the current water treatment plant, I am requesting that our property at 439 Vedelwood Drive, Sandpoint ID 83864 (Parcel # RP036650030080) be removed from the revised AOI and inclusion is reassessed at a later date when the situation with the water treatment plant is resolved. It does not make any sense to include our property in the revised AOI if the City is unable to safely manage and treat the water coming from this area.

Those of us who have our homes within this area have an ongoing concern that the City will not listen to the residents of rural Bonner County continue to move forward with its plans to include these properties under the revised AOI. We are very much aware that inclusion of our properties represents significant tax revenue opportunities for the City and motivation for this additional revenue serves as reason to include our properties under the AOI.

Finally, I would also like to express my disappointment during today's presentation that comments from concerned property owners were not presented to the Commissioners. Many of us commented on the open [File AM0006-25](#) with the County and have presented our concerns to the City of Sandpoint as [linked here](#). Additionally, the County had a [google form](#) where it collected public comment and asked for responses of opposed/neutral/in favor of inclusion under the City's AOI. None of the public comments were presented. I am requesting that all of the public comments through today's date are shared with the Commissioners at the next hearing for the AOI so they hear directly from those who are impacted by the AOI. Many of us have jobs

that prevent us from attending County or City meetings in the middle of the workday and comments that are submitted to be part of public comment should be presented.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Ava Lalancette

Joe Henderson

439 Vedelwood Drive, Sandpoint, ID 83864

From: Cori Roark <coriannesong@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 8:17 PM
To: Sandpoint City Clerk's Office <cityclerk@sandpointidaho.gov>
Subject: Area of Impact Boundary Adjustment

Dear Planning and Zoning Commission,

As residents of Gooby Road for nearly 8 years, we would like to express concerns at the glaring government overreach proposed in the Area of City Impact Boundary Adjustment and possible annexation of our property and the neighboring properties around ours.

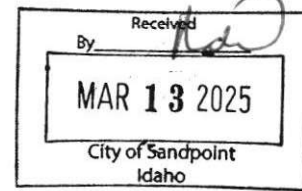
I have attached a letter written by our neighbor, Jeremy Brown, which clearly articulates our exact concerns and sentiments.

We do not support the ACI boundary adjustment. Living outside the city boundary is not an accident for us or anyone around us, it is a calculated choice based on a number of details, including inadequate infrastructure, oppressive code requirements, and taxes. The city of Sandpoint really doesn't have anything to offer us and has shown time and again it's service to tourists over residents.

For these reasons, as well as the ones presented in Neighbor Jeremy Brown's letter, we strongly oppose the ACI boundary adjustment.

Respectfully,
Aaron and Cori Roark

Jeremy Brown & Danielle Daniels
309 Gooby Rd.
Sandpoint, ID 83864
jeremy@northidaho-realestate.com
208-290-6847



March 3, 2025

Sandpoint Planning and Zoning Commission
1123 Lake Street
Sandpoint, ID 83864

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Area of Impact Boundary Adjustment

Dear Sandpoint Planning and Zoning Commission,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed Area of City Impact (ACI) boundary adjustment and any potential annexation of our property and the surrounding area into the City of Sandpoint. While we understand that the city is proposing a reduction in the ACI, we still believe this adjustment is unnecessary and offers no benefit to the residents in the affected area. More importantly, before considering any form of expansion, the city should first focus on addressing its own pressing infrastructure challenges, affordable housing issues, and the environmental impact that further development would have on sensitive wetlands and water quality.

1. The City Lacks the Water and Sewer Capacity for Expansion

According to Idaho Statute 67-6526(4)(a), an Area of Impact should be defined based on anticipated growth, availability of municipal water and sewer services within five years, and other geographic factors. However, the City of Sandpoint is already struggling to maintain and upgrade its existing wastewater treatment plant, which Mayor Jeremy Grimm has referred to as a "time bomb." The facility is well beyond its useful life, with components dating back to the 1940s and 1950s. City officials have acknowledged that the plant is at risk of failure, and the estimated cost for necessary upgrades falls between \$60-\$100 million.

Given these circumstances, expanding the ACI contradicts Idaho law, which requires that the city demonstrate the ability and likelihood of providing essential services within a reasonable timeframe. As Mayor Grimm himself stated, "[The plant is] beyond its useful life," and city staff are forced to keep it running with emergency fixes and outdated equipment. If the city is struggling to maintain its existing water and sewer infrastructure, it makes little sense to extend its jurisdiction into areas that are already self-sufficient.

As current users of city water, we experience these issues firsthand. We frequently deal with extremely low water pressure and have had several instances where our water has completely shut off. Because of these recurring problems, we plan to drill a well on our property in the near future to ensure we have a reliable water source. With these ongoing challenges, how can the city justify expanding when it's struggling to provide basic services to its existing residents?

2. Environmental Concerns: Wetlands, Water Quality, and Runoff Issues

Idaho law (67-6526(4)(a)(ii)) requires that geographic factors be considered when modifying an Area of Impact. The ACI includes a significant amount of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas, many of which play a crucial role in maintaining water quality and preventing flooding. The Sandpoint Comprehensive Plan itself

emphasizes the importance of protecting open spaces, wildlife corridors, and water quality as part of responsible future planning.

In our immediate neighborhood, we experience substantial spring runoff, which already impacts local properties. Further development in these rural areas would only add to pollution and strain the natural landscape, increasing the risk of water contamination and flooding. Given that the city is already dealing with a failing wastewater treatment plant, any additional development would further stress a system that is barely holding together. Without proper infrastructure in place, expansion into these sensitive areas poses a serious environmental risk that contradicts responsible planning practices outlined in Idaho law.

3. The Proposed Area Is Already Developed with Adequate Water and Septic Systems

Idaho Statute 67-6526(4)(b) states that an Area of Impact should not exceed areas that are very likely to be annexed within five years. The area under consideration is already developed with private wells and septic systems, meaning there is no need for city water and sewer services.

Additionally, if residents are not required to connect to city utilities, what exactly is the purpose of this expansion? If we are required to connect, that would force us to abandon existing water and septic systems in favor of costly city services, placing an unnecessary financial burden on property owners. This is especially concerning given the rising cost of living and the current struggles many families are already facing. It would make more sense for the city to focus on improving infrastructure and helping with housing affordability rather than expanding into areas that don't need or want city services.

The City's own planning documents acknowledge that much of the land in the current ACI boundary is predominantly low-density and rural, with large lots, farms, and existing developments that do not align with the city's growth model. The idea that these areas "could reasonably be served by the city within 5-10 years" seems unrealistic given Sandpoint's ongoing infrastructure challenges.

4. The City Should Prioritize Infrastructure and Affordable Housing, Not Expansion

According to Idaho Statute 67-6526(1)(b), Areas of Impact should not be used to stop growth but should also be planned based on the ability of a city to provide services. If city officials are truly concerned about community growth, then they should focus on solving the affordability crisis before considering expansion.

Instead of focusing on adjusting or expanding the Area of Impact, city officials should prioritize:

- Fixing existing infrastructure so that water and sewer systems meet the needs of current residents.
- Improving road conditions and public services.
- Creating policies that promote affordable housing solutions rather than expanding into areas that don't need or want city oversight.

5. No Justification for Expansion Under Idaho Statute 67-6526

Idaho law requires that Areas of Impact be designated based on a city's ability to realistically annex and provide services in the near future (67-6526(4)(b)). However, given Sandpoint's current infrastructure struggles, the city is in no position to expand.

The city has already acknowledged that much of the ACI consists of rural residential areas that do not fit within its urban development model. If there is no clear path for annexation and no pressing need for city services, then this adjustment and potential future annexation serves no practical purpose.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Bonner County Board of Commissioners to reconsider the necessity of any future annexation. The City of Sandpoint should focus on fixing its failing wastewater treatment plant, improving infrastructure, and addressing housing affordability before considering any territorial expansion. Even then, we have no interest in being annexed, as it provides no benefit to us or our family.

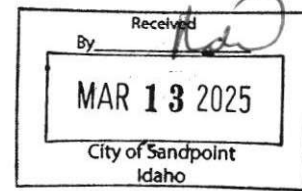
We appreciate your time and consideration of our concerns. Please include us in any further communications regarding this proposal, and we look forward to participating in any public discussions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Brown", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Jeremy Brown & Danielle Daniels
309 Gooby Rd.
Sandpoint, ID 83864
208-290-6847

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