



# AGENDA REPORT

## City Council Meeting

**TODAY'S DATE:** September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**TO:** Mayor Grimm, Sandpoint City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Director Jason Welker and Public Works Director Holly Ellis

**SUBJECT:** Council Direction Sought: North Boyer Avenue Corridor Design and Traffic Study

### DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

North Boyer Avenue is a 36' curb-to-curb roadway serving as a designated minor arterial and truck route. The corridor currently includes:

- Two 12' travel lanes (northbound and southbound)
- Two striped bicycle lanes (6' each)
- A 10' shared-use pathway on the east side, separated by a 5'4" planting strip

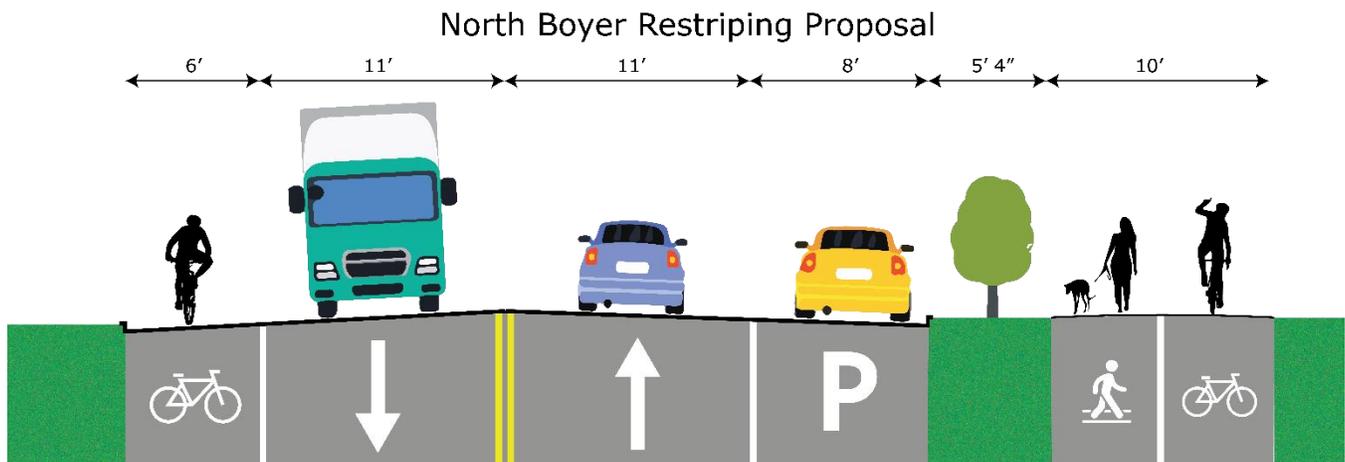
Pending residential development along the North Boyer corridor is expected to add new homes fronting the street between Moscow Street and East Mountain View. As currently configured, this stretch of roadway prioritizes higher-speed vehicle movement and results in a long, inactive street edge. Without intervention, this design risks creating a corridor that disconnects emerging neighborhoods from the surrounding community and diminishes the sense of livability and safety for residents and people traveling the corridor.

Opportunities exist to reorient homes and public space toward North Boyer, creating a more traditional neighborhood frontage with porches, front yards, and daily activity visible from the street. Realizing this type of residential character will require coordinated street design changes that calm traffic speeds and provide on-street parking to serve the new neighborhood.

### PROPOSAL:

At this stage, **staff is not proposing to immediately restripe North Boyer Avenue or lower the posted speed limit.** Instead, we are asking City Council to provide direction on whether these changes should be further evaluated through formal traffic and engineering studies.

The concept under consideration would adjust the corridor between Moscow Street and East Mountain View by narrowing the existing 12-foot travel lanes to 11 feet, introducing a parking lane on the east side, retaining the southbound bike lane, and directing northbound cyclists to the adjacent 10-foot shared-use path. A reduction of the posted speed limit from 35 to 25 miles per hour has also been suggested to reinforce the residential character of the area.



Before any of these modifications can be implemented, a traffic engineering study is required to evaluate their impacts on safety, traffic operations, and multimodal connectivity. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's direction on whether staff should pursue these studies so that a data-driven recommendation can be brought back for Council consideration in the future.

#### **POLICY CONSISTENCY:**

- **Complete Streets Policy (2010):** Directs the City to design streets to meet the needs of all users and explicitly calls for inclusion of on-street parking, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian buffers where supported by adjacent land uses.
- **Multimodal Transportation Master Plan (2021):** Emphasizes balancing safety, livability, and access across all modes, and supports reallocation of space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and parking in contexts where residential development is expanding.
- **Urban Area Transportation Plan (2024):** Calls for managing truck and through traffic while enhancing neighborhood safety and multimodal access.
- **Comprehensive Plan Goals:** The 2024 Comprehensive Plan directs the City to “encourage a portion of new housing development to emulate historical neighborhoods, including a variety of housing, alleys, and traditional gridded blocks,” and to “develop a safe, appropriate street system network that provides easy access for all modes but does not allow rapid or high-volume traffic to disrupt the new neighborhood”.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

North Boyer Avenue is currently a designated truck route, and the proposal would narrow its travel lanes from 12 feet to 11 feet. While this represents a change from existing practice, 11-foot lanes remain consistent with national and state-level design guidance for arterials, particularly in contexts where lower speeds are desired. For example, the Idaho Transportation Department's publication, “*Practical Solutions for Highway Design*,” in discussing lane widths (Chapter 3.1, p. 5) says,

*“Although 12 ft. lane widths are desirable on both rural and urban roadways, there are circumstances where narrower lane widths can be used. In areas with pedestrian crossings, right of way constraints or [where] existing development become stringent controls, the use of 10 or 11 ft. lanes may be acceptable.”*

Importantly, the combination of narrower lanes and the introduction of on-street parking will naturally calm traffic by signaling to drivers that they are entering a residential corridor. This design-based approach to speed reduction is generally more effective and sustainable than relying on enforcement alone. In other words, simply lowering the posted speed limit from 35 to 25 miles per hour without

making accompanying design changes would place a much heavier burden on police enforcement to achieve compliance. By contrast, physical cues like narrower lanes and parked vehicles create a self-enforcing environment that slows traffic, reduces crash risk, and aligns driver behavior with the intended residential character of the corridor.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that City Council direct staff to initiate the necessary traffic and engineering studies to evaluate potential changes to North Boyer Avenue between Moscow Street and E. Mountain View. These studies would determine whether narrowing travel lanes, adding on-street parking, directing northbound bicycles to the existing shared-use path, and reducing the posted speed limit are recommended in this corridor.

**ACTION:**

City Council has the following options:

1. Direct staff to pursue traffic and engineering studies to evaluate potential restriping, on-street parking, and a reduced speed limit on North Boyer Avenue.
2. Decline to pursue studies at this time, maintaining the existing roadway configuration.
3. Request modifications to the concept (such as different cross-section elements or limits of study) before directing staff to proceed.

**WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? Y HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? Y**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Appendix A: Comprehensive Plan Policy Consistency
- City of Sandpoint 2010 Complete Street Policy

**Appendix A. Comprehensive Plan Policy Consistency**

Comprehensive Plan Objective / Policy	How the North Boyer Proposal Supports It
<b><i>“Encourage a portion of new housing development to emulate historical neighborhoods, including a variety of housing, alleys, and traditional gridded blocks.”</i></b>	Orienting residential development to front North Boyer will replicate Sandpoint’s traditional street-facing design pattern and avoids the isolation of a walled subdivision.
<b><i>“Develop a safe, appropriate street system network that provides easy access for all modes but does not allow rapid or high-volume traffic to disrupt the new neighborhood.”</i></b>	Narrowing travel lanes and adding on-street parking calms traffic and supports a balanced, multimodal corridor suited to residential use.
<b><i>“The charm and comfort of Sandpoint’s existing neighborhoods are protected and enhanced... improve and expand pedestrian infrastructure.”</i></b>	Calmer traffic, front yards oriented to the street, and parked cars as buffers enhance pedestrian safety and comfort along North Boyer.
<b><i>“Our neighborhoods are more than housing. Sandpoint’s neighborhood character is also defined by our parks, trails, urban forest, and historic areas... Walkability and sidewalks connecting neighborhoods... are priority neighborhood infrastructure.”</i></b>	Preserves connectivity between the subdivision, the shared-use path, and the broader community, supporting walkability and neighborhood integration.
<b><i>“Promote streetscapes and public spaces that are engaging, functional, accessible, safe, and attractive.”</i></b>	Streetscape improvements (narrow lanes, on-street parking, reduced speeds) create an attractive, people-oriented corridor rather than a high-speed arterial.
<b><i>“Require building location and site design that emphasize pedestrian orientation and access.”</i></b>	Orienting homes toward North Boyer provides pedestrian-oriented frontages and strengthens the public realm.
<b><i>“The location and balance of land uses and densities should... support a multimodal transportation network... and integrate development with existing and planned infrastructure.”</i></b>	The proposal integrates new residential development with existing multimodal infrastructure (the shared-use path and bike lanes) and strengthens neighborhood connectivity.