



Staff Report

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Bill Dean, City Planner
Report: June 12, 2025
Hearing: June 17, 2025
Item: Sandpoint City Code Title 9 Chapter 5 Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities Amendment
Applicant: City Initiated

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

The proposed ordinance amending Sandpoint City Code Title 9 Chapter 5 stems from an effort beginning in 2022 evaluating parking demands in order to arrive at policy and regulations to maximize parking efficiency in the City's Downtown as well as efforts and strategies to support vibrancy and activity in Downtown. The outcome of these efforts are the proposed City of Sandpoint Downtown Parking Management Plan and an ordinance amending sections of the City's zoning code to implement policy contained in the plan. Attached to the staff report is the draft City of Sandpoint Downtown Parking Management Plan (Attachment A) which is scheduled for City Council consideration on June 18, 2025. The parking ordinance has been amended from time to time with the last holistic evaluation and amendments occurring in 2005 and in 2018.

The principal objective of the Code amendment is to implement a change in requirements for off-street parking facilities for residential land uses in Downtown and create an in-lieu payment for such requirements as a means to balance parking capacity with future public parking investments. Accompanying this requirement is an expansion of the parking exempt zone to capture additional lands zoned Commercial A (the zoning for Downtown) in order to further incentivize property investment consistent with the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan).

In addition, staff's efforts resulted in reviewing the ordinance holistically with the additional goals of adding clarity to existing regulations. Resulting from staff's review are several proposed minor amendments throughout the ordinance clarifying requirements for hard surfacing, adequate sight distance measurements, and use of wheel blocks, for example.

One new requirement being proposed stemmed from recent experience evaluating development applications utilizing alleys for access. This ordinance includes requirements that alleys be hard-surfaced when development intensifies the use of the alleys. Additionally, an opportunity to utilize in-lieu payments for required parking outside of the Downtown exempt zone has been included.

Overall, the parking ordinance amendments are a continuation of recent efforts to deregulate parking in the Downtown and throughout the City.

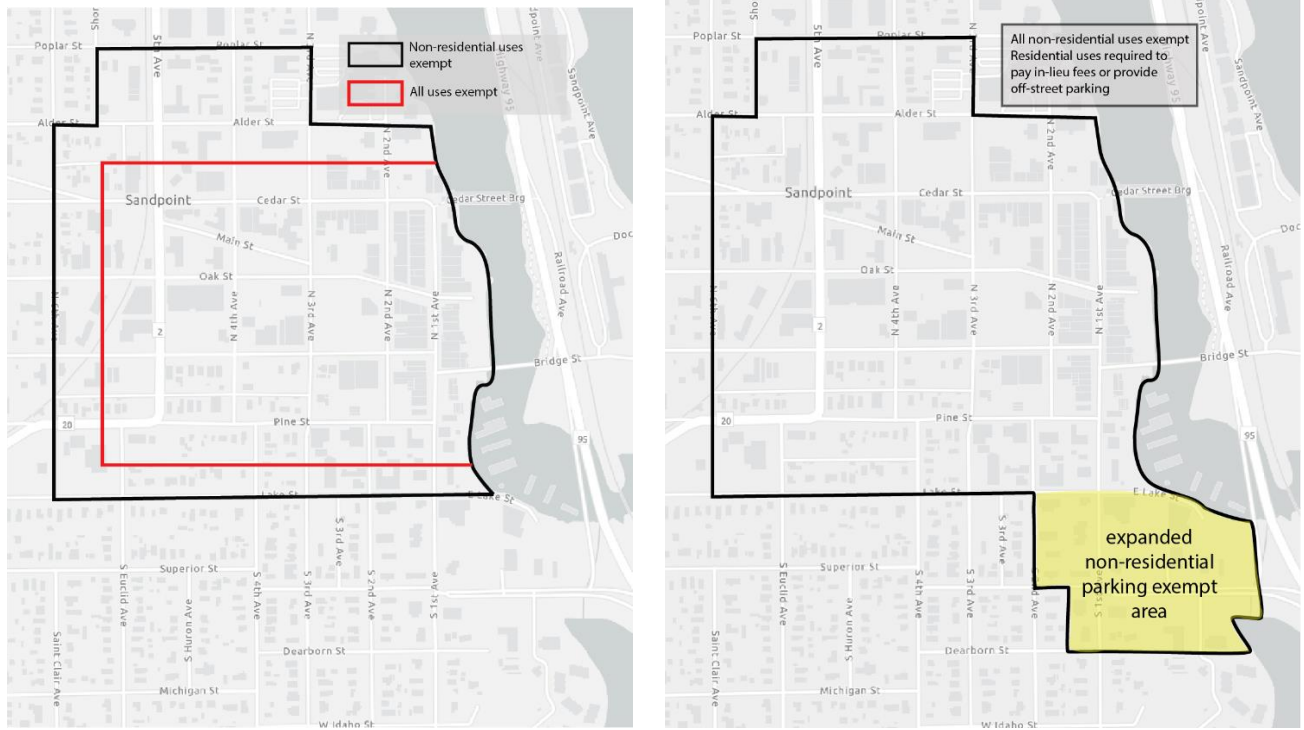


Figure 1: Current parking exempt zones. Figure 2: Proposed expanded non-residential boundary and elimination of residential parking exempt area

2) Relevant Comprehensive Plan Objectives

The City's 2024 Comprehensive Plan contains objectives and policies that serve to guide any proposed code amendment. Consideration and regulations for off-street parking is integral to new development and redevelopment and the Comp Plan provides guidance as follows:

Vision Statement related to vibrant culture, page 18:

The strong sense of pride in the city's history should be honored with robust standards for design, preservation, and development.

Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods should be promoted and enhanced as the cornerstone of Sandpoint's historic charm and small-town feel.

Vision Statement related to sustainable development, page 20:

Sandpoint's natural beauty, open space, and scenic views should be protected through thoughtful development patterns

A mix of land uses and high-quality development that fosters walkable, accessible and enduring neighborhoods should be encouraged

Vision Statement related to a livable community, page 22:

Neighborhoods should be designed with a sense of community and identity, and the scale and character of established neighborhoods respected

Community Character and Design

Goal 1: Character and Identity: Sandpoint's unique identity, character, and sense of place is retained and strengthened.

Policy A: Ensure that all commercial, single-family, and multifamily development respect the town's unique character in architecture, thoughtful density, and in site planning.

Land Use and Growth

Goal 1: Efficient Land Use

Policy A: Incentivize development and redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized properties in the core area of the city through zoning and subdivision code changes.

Policy D: Encourage the provision of housing above ground floor commercial use in downtown and mixed-use areas.

Goal 3: Mixed Use Development

Policy C: Allow an acceptable level of development compactness and density within mixed-use developments to increase opportunities for shared parking facilities, public gathering spaces, accessible services, and less reliance on the automobile for daily mobility.

Goal 4: Quality Places

Policy C: Require building location and site design that emphasize pedestrian orientation and access.

Policy F: Allow shared and other parking solutions to reduce the amount of land devoted to surface parking.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Housing Variety

Policy F: Explore alternatives to parking requirements to encourage a variety of housing types for a broad spectrum of income levels and age groups.

Goal 2: Housing Affordability

Policy A: Identify and resolve barriers that impede the development of workforce housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing

Multimodal Transportation

Goal 3: Vibrant Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown

Policy A: Promote downtown as a pedestrian-oriented district

Policy B: Provide education and outreach to property owners, businesses, and the public about the importance of keeping downtown pedestrian friendly.

Policy C: Continue to explore the construction of a parking structure through a public-private partnership

Jobs & Economic Development

Goal 5: Downtown Vitality

Policy J: Ensure sufficient public parking to enable redevelopment of underutilized properties

In addition, the Comp Plan Appendix A (Implementation) page 3 refers to two specific implementation efforts related to parking:

- Manage limited downtown parking. Complete the parking demand management study and implement recommendations.
- Manage limited downtown parking Explore options for paid parking at City Beach and downtown parking lot

3) Overview of Proposed Amendments

The following is a summary of the proposed amendments to Title 9, Chapter 5 Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities”

- 1) 9-5-1 General Provisions: clarifying language on ordinance applicability, clarifying language on approval authority for Parking Demand (reduction) Analyses, new requirement that residential development within “exempt area” has to provide parking or pay an in-lieu fee, expansion of “exempt area” to include properties at City’s entrance along Superior that are zoned Commercial A (revised text and map of area).
- 2) 9-5-2 Location of Parking Facilities: no proposed changes.
- 3) 9-5-3 Shared Parking Reduction: clarifying language on approval authority for a Parking Demand (reduction) Analysis. Clarifies that the approval authority for the permit sought has the authority to approve the analysis. For example, if a Conditional Use Permit is sought, the PZC would be enabled to review and approved (or not) the analysis. If the permit sought is a staff-level permit, the Director would be enabled to review and approved (or not) the analysis.
- 4) 9-5-4 Access and Maneuvering Area: clarity on what is exempt from the requirements to move in a forward direction in a parking facility. The zoning ordinance does not refer to units per acre except for here, so the reference to the amount of development exempt from the access and maneuvering standards has been re-stated in number of total units (6 or fewer), which is unambiguous.
- 5) 9-5-5 Minimum Distance and Setbacks: removal of a standard that is widely violated. It is common for property owners in residential areas to park vehicles adjacent to the side property lines, instead of adhering to the required 5-foot setback. One alternative to striking this provision could be to allow parking within 5-feet of a side property line, but not the front property line. The other amendment establishes a clear standard as opposed to the current standard which is “a reasonable distance”, which can lead to confusion.
- 6) 9-5-6 Surfacing: adds a definition of “hard surfacing” with ability for City Engineer to establish a set of alternatives to asphalt and concrete as they are presented and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Adds a requirement that alleys must be paved when development of more than a duplex with an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is accessed off the alley.
- 7) 9-5-7 Maintenance: clarifies that the City is not responsible for alley maintenance.
- 8) 9-5-8 Lighting: adds reference to applicable Sandpoint City Codes related to outdoor lighting.
- 9) 9-5-9 Wheel Blocks: clarifies when wheel blocks are required and adds specific performance standards to avoid cars from encroaching onto sidewalks rendering them more difficult for pedestrian use.
- 10) 9-5-10 Signs: no proposed changes.
- 11) 9-5-11 Striping: updating standard to remove double striping requirement which is not commonly used.
- 12) 9-5-12 Screening and/or Landscaping: updated language throughout to remove conflicting terminology (e.g. sparking stall -space; parking lot – facility – area).
- 13) 9-5-13 Accessible Parking Spaces: no proposed changes.
- 14) 9-5-14 Design and Dimensional Standards: relocated bicycle parking requirements to 9-15-15 and replaced the images dimensioning parking facilities with clearer, easy to read images.
- 15) 9-5-15 Minimum and Maximum Surface Parking Space Requirements: added new parking requirements for residential land uses within the “Exempt Area” to require off-street parking per 1000 square feet of development instead of per unit or bedroom. This shift incentivizes smaller units and requires larger units to contribute more parking or pay larger in-lieu fees.
- 16) 9-5-16 Parking Credits: clarifies where back-up space for motorcycles is required to be located.
- 17) 9-5-17 Loading Areas: no proposed changes.
- 18) 9-5-18 In Lieu Parking Fees: clarifies where in-lieu fees may be utilized. Existing ordinance refers to a “defined in-lieu area”, yet no area is defined. This amendment adds clarity that in lieu fees can be paid by residential and non-residential land outside the “exempt area”, and that in-lieu fees can be paid by residential uses within the “exempt area”. Non-residential remains exempt from off-street parking requirements including the payment of in-lieu fees in the “exempt” area. Re-directs the fee amount to be paid to a City Council resolution instead of the zoning ordinance furthering the City’s efforts to consolidate all City fees into a Master Fee Schedule.

Clarifying the City’s off-street parking requirements adds to the transparency and predictability of the development process. Related to the expansion of the “exempt area”, benefits of increasing the size of the area under fewer development regulations can contribute to further revitalization, including:

- Allowing the tax base for the City to expand (less parking=more developed real estate at higher tax rate).
- Enables historic preservation efforts, and traditional development patterns which are impossible to achieve with stringent required off-street parking requirements.
- Additional off-street parking inhibits small business and mixed-use development; inhibits vibrancy achieved when buildings are connected or separated by very small gaps, as is the traditional Downtown Sandpoint development pattern.
- Induces demand to utilize a currently under-utilized resource of existing surface parking in City lots and along City streets.

The public noticing for this proposed ordinance occurred prior to drafting proposed changes to the portion of the Zoning Code that contains the definitions, Section 9-1-3. Amendments to the definitions section of the code are necessary for clarity in implementation. Accordingly, it is anticipated a public hearing will be noticed for July 8, 2025 before the Planning and Zoning Commission to evaluate those proposed amendments.

4) Off Stret Parking and Loading Facilities Amendment History

2022	Kittleson and Associates completes update to 2016 Downtown parking management plan
2024	City adopts new Comprehensive Plan which includes specific reference to continued Downtown revitalization, and real estate development consistent with historic development patterns.
January 1, 2025	Draft Downtown Parking Management Plan presented to PZC
April 15, 2015	Update to Draft Downtown Parking Management Plan presented to PZC
May 6, 2025	Draft Proposed Amendments to Title 9 Chapter 5 of Sandpoint City Code (Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities) presented to PZC
June 17, 2025	PZC Public Hearing on Draft Proposed Amendments to Title 9 Chapter 5 of Sandpoint City Code (Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities)
July 8, 2025	Anticipated PZC Pubic Hearing on Draft Proposed Changes to Title 9 Chapter 1 (Definitions) to compliment Title 9 Chapter 5 amendments
August 6, 2025	City Council Public Hearing on Draft Proposed Ordinances amending both 9-1-3 (Definitions) and 9-5 (Off-Street Parking and Loading Facilities)

5) Planning Commission Action

On legislative matters, including rulemaking such as amendments to the zoning ordinance, the Planning and Zoning Commission act in an advisory capacity to the City Council. The action of the Planning and Zoning Commission can include the following:

Recommend City Council adopt the ordinance as drafted

Recommend City Council adopt the ordinance after making changes

Direct staff to revise the ordinance before taking action

Recommend City Council Deny the ordinance.

6) Attachments

1. Redline Version of Draft Proposed Amendments to Sandpoint City Code Title 9 Chapter 5
2. Clean Version of Redline Version of Draft Proposed Amendments to Sandpoint City Code Title 9 Chapter 5
3. Parking Management Plan 2025 with Appendixes