

Transcribed Comments

"Goal and Policy Workshop"

Oct. 11, 2007, Sandpoint Community Hall, 6:00-8:30 pm



The following are transcribed comments by participants written during the main exercise at the Goal and Policy Workshop held October 11, 2007. Attendees reviewed individual worksheets, ranking each of 25 draft policies as "Bad Idea", "Don't Know", "Good Idea", or "Don't Care". The worksheet included goals and policies covering plan topics including land use, transportation, housing, and parks and recreation. The draft vision was printed on the back of each worksheet with a comments page attached for policy suggestions or comments about policies provided. The transcribed comments below are from the attached sheet. Results from the ratings portion of the exercise are available separately.

Goal & Policy Notes

- *"I feel we also have to talk about city services such as planning for a hospital, convention center, and parking. Feel that Boyer, Division should be used more in future. Feel need more parks in downtown with higher density and children. Find a way on Boyer to get train tracks below or above road."*
- *"It is difficult to honestly answer some of these since I adamantly disagree with your drafted comp plan map. In general I would support the description of CAs. What is the process for revising draft map? You have literally cut up the 6th Ave neighborhood with three or four different designations."*
- *"New growth/comp plan/land use/etc. ... should reflect the following from the previous page. Sandpoint: recreation, a larger perspective, transportation diversity, mixed use is good, beauty and character, recreation = success/change = success. Safe by design. Diverse housing for a diverse community. Essentially, this is Sandpoint, as I believe it was, is and should be. The question then becomes how do we retain these qualities w/out destroying the ACL, and allowing for reasonable growth. How do we mandate/encourage 'real' Sandpoint in the face of economic trends? Are we creating a 'Disneyland' theme town? Is that what we want, is it sustainable? Is it affordable? Our ability to solve the housing issues is the elephant in the room. Commercial sprawl will not be the problem in Sandpoint ... Bonner County, yes, but not in Sandpoint. Creating diversity of housing types, incomes will maintain the historical character of Sandpoint. 10,000 (square foot) single family lots degrade this every day. Housing goal should read - 'Provide housing to all income levels in Sandpoint.' Transport Goals - be clear they are not design standards, but goals (or are they?) specifically, numbers three and four (in walkable communities). Parks and Recreation, only number two seems feasible. Under Land Use, numbers one, two and three are critical. Under Housing, item one, where will these uses be allowed?"*
- *"1. Make Sandpoint a 'walking and bicycling town.' 2. Locate employee parking outside city core to leave more parking for visitors/shoppers/tourists. 3. Good idea to bring housing to the city core. 4. Good idea to have several satellite commercial districts to spread out basic needs. 5. Facilitate bicycling with bike lanes, trails and bike parking. 6. Work with county and attached cities (Dover, Ponderay, and Kootenai)."*
- *"Housing - higher density is inevitable and desirable for some. Segregating the higher density from other neighborhoods doesn't seem desirable. Segregating lower/mid income is not a good idea. Blending works best for all. Transportation - less emphasis on the auto and parking - more creativity around shuttles, bikes, pedestrians. If we build parking lots, they will come, especially if the parking is free. Sandpoint is too small to support retail areas outside the downtown core. I would rather see the emphasis on making downtown attractive and usable by residents. Dispersing the retail could leave the downtown full of tourist shops - and the community is lost. If safe walking and cycling corridors are created, then more people will walk or ride. Add restricted and/or costly parking, and the shift will happen. Perhaps finding the dollars for*

good mass transit before it is too late would be advantageous. Sandpoint could be known for its system – like San Francisco.”

- *“Please review the drawing. I believe with or without a byway, Sandpoint needs an arterial. This proposed arterial enlarges the downtown walking core. Pine can now be crossed. The drawing is the existing border between commercial and residential. Roundabouts need to be used in Sandpoint. Fifth and Cedar could have a roundabout.”*
- *“We need more bike paths everywhere. Pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Mark crosswalks better. Keep them painted, not faded. Install blinking lights at crosswalks everywhere. Lots of people drive through. Lots of people talking on cell phones don’t pay attention. Danger to pedestrians and bikes. Consider elder-friendly not just youth-friendly. Need more lake access parks/points/paths. This is a recreation town. Need maintenance in existing parks now! Plan for better conditions, and keep it so. Sandpoint neighborhoods and trees! Make downtown retail attractive.”*
- *“As we are building and developing it is our responsibility to build green whenever possible – as the world is moving more and more in that direction – lets only build once, not build something again when we need to move toward using sustainable resources. If we area going to subsidize, lets do it for agencies motivated to build creatively and green. Public transportation and bike/walking paths to encourage less cars in town. More public access to lake. A train between Spokane and Sandpoint to reduce traffic, less cars. Density in downtown areas. In CA-4 and CA-5, increase height but not in historical neighborhoods – retain historic buildings! Plant trees!”*
- *“My VIP (Very Important Policy) list: Encourage provision of housing above ground floor retail in districts CA-3, CA-4 and CA-5. Find new parks. Walk and bike friendly. Parking needed.”*
- *“Housing and development: I believe that the City of Sandpoint (officials and citizens) should be very involved in developing the CP mill site. It would be a shame and probably a disaster to sit back and let it happen when the site is sold. This piece of land is a diamond in the rough. The city could take a pro-active role by deciding how the site is developed and then pursue the development. Ideally, it would be a mix of retail (not big box retail) and housing. With the identified need of future population growth, this site could provide 100’s of housing units, with a mix of small to medium-size housing. Parks and Recreation: The city should be proactive in acquiring land within the city and within its projected growth area. It is easier and cheaper to get this land before it is developed.”*
- *“Transportation – use of flex cars and trucks to decrease number of vehicles on roads. Encourage pedestrians and bike use in town – block off corridor in town like in Boulder. Use small buses to provide cross-town rides to decrease city driving. Provide lots for shared rides, i.e., bulletin board for rides to Spokane airport. Increase traffic flow with on demand traffic lights, use of rotaries in key areas. Housing – limit square feet of future houses in house size and lot size. Provide housing for service providers and teachers. Recreation – make policies fit vision. Sustainability, green growth.”*
- *“Institute a program like in Paris, France with good bicycles available throughout the city core. Free for first half-hour, card activated unlock. Available at free parking areas on fringe of downtown. Light industrial, commercial in border zone between airport and U of I. Build west bypass to get through traffic from both Hwy 2 and Hwy 95 out of downtown. Would allow easy access to industrial and light industrial on west side of airport. Save our lake front! Decrease downtown traffic buildup with multiple roundabouts – nicely landscaped.”*
- *“Land use (density) must coordinate with parks and recreation to ensure residents of small urban places have expansive areas to escape to. Transportation: Downtown storefront/building massing requirement is unclear. Minimizing Sand Creek bypass’s drawdown of downtown traffic is crucial to the survival of downtown. The bypass will kill downtown anyway. Affordable housing needs to be subsidized. Builders and developers are moving in for the kill. Smaller homes are more profitable by the foot, but they want*

everyone else to make dollar concessions. Your statement of vision needs serious editing. Sandpoint is a literate, educated town."

- *"Where are the 'pole dancing clubs' going? Seriously, transportation, i.e. bus, shuttles, etc. locations ... we need to identify potential 'paths' for mass transit within the city."*
- *"I like the idea of having a small/medium grocery store/service hub near Division and Highway 2. As a Northshore Drive resident, I could walk to nearby services and so could other south Sandpoint residents (CA-4). I like sidewalks walking paths. I like mixed use housing above all retail. Require minimum percentage of low/middle incomes. I like adding green space/access to recreation."*
- *"Add more facilities to parks so use can increase. Do not mix housing densities within a neighborhood. Do not increase building heights in CA-3 as defined. This area encroaches too much on CA-1 and larger parcel homes. Do not increase density in CA-1, CA-2, or CA-3. We don't want Sandpoint to be San Francisco. We need all CA-2 and CA-3 areas that are shown to have the size and densities indicated. Need more bike lanes – especially on larger arterials. Also need more bike/pedestrian-only paths. Parking garages in CA-4 and CA-5 are a must. Make them visually appealing though."*
- *"Take into consideration school capacity when adding new housing. Builders should fund the increase – new development should include planning for sewers, lighting, school, road maintenance, etc. Property value increases of \$100,000 per year are not sustainable."*
- *"Need to get bypass completed to free up the downtown area to make Sandpoint a real walking town. Need height limit increased downtown and include residences (lofts, etc.) above retail and office."*
- *"Work with local partnerships to keep costs low for parks and recreation use (affordable for low income families). Work with regional planning groups to limit the number of big box stores in the region and encourage/keep our local businesses and economy. Along with a convention center, encourage the creation of a hostel for visitors on a budget and more hotel and B&B alternatives to encourage visitors and tourism. 'Yes' to bike paths. I've visited large and small cities where bike paths have been a great success. Encourage flexibility with regard to housing in industrial and light industrial areas – e.g., allow artist studios where artists and crafts people can live next to or above their work spaces. Please look at the actual resource capacity of our area (health and human services, waste treatment, water, etc) and share that information with the community."*
- *"The city needs to be aware of the impact of policies on the price of real estate. Each impact fee, whether paid by the developer or builder, causes a significant increase in the retail/commercial market. Possible development (rather than subsidizing) could help reduce housing costs."*
- *"Possibility of moving the airport to another location to facilitate more housing – a housing village in that area it now occupies. Moving it further out would free up prime city property, moving it either south or north of Sandpoint. Create a model sustainable urban village unlike any other found in this country at the space once occupied by the airport."*
- *"Include sustainable development as a requirement for future development – in general terms this is not hard to define. Have a sustainable development position in the planning, building and public works, etc. departments. Require green building codes. Support locally-produced food and energy. Set policies that reduce our water, waste and energy footprint. Support community forestry and food systems. Develop a citizen's vision for Sandpoint 2030 and then locate a comprehensive plan to support that. See – transition town of re-localization initiatives. Mixed use of land. Sandpoint (not the government alone) as a whole should be a net producer of energy, food and building materials."*
- *"Alternative-oriented infrastructure. Infrastructure to set policies for resource usage to keep the environment in the forefront of concern, and to use natural resource areas (in such a way as to) leave them cleaner than when they started. Waste-development - fully considering waste products and turning all*

waste into usable products so there is no waste. Develop biological waste treatment systems. Food – produce as much locally as possible, decrease need for relying on outside sources and transport. Water – all water usage (should) leave the lake and groundwater at a cleaner output than it was originally input into the system. Developing alternative water filtering systems such as constructed wetlands or biological treatment, not dumping sewage into the lake. Energy – use a mixture of alternative energy sources. Even if we need to grow, we need to be doubly aware of maintaining the quality of our environment by really thinking of alternatives to traditional infrastructure systems.”

- *“I love the idea of having Sandpoint be known as a green community. The best solution to future potential parking problems is to truly be a green community. We need to go beyond being a walking town - we need to be a biking, carpooling, telecommuting town in which people consolidate their trips and use public transportation and park and rides. One group mentioned having parking outside city limits, with shuttles, trams, etc. to get people to town. A good system like this could work! I like the description of Sandpoint as ‘local, non-corporate, and culturally rich,’ as is stated in the vision. I’m glad to see all the references to keeping the character of the town. To be a biking town requires bike paths and other infrastructure.”*
- *“Diverse housing style/types as well as price points is crucial to our town. Housing policies number one and three.”*
- *“It’s worth it to plan transportation (systems) to support cyclists and pedestrians at the expense of convenience for cars. Eventually people will realize it’s easier to bike or walk than to drive. Eventually, the town will attract new residents who are willing to minimize use of their cars and folks who have to drive everywhere will move elsewhere. If this plan is to work, won’t we need the support of the real estate community? They seem right now to be in the process of recruiting new residents who wouldn’t want to live in this Sandpoint we’re planning. They are advertising for folks who want large, luxury houses on land with views. Will they help us recruit people who want to live in the town we’re planning?”*
- *“Streets and transportation – make some downtown streets blocked from automobiles and made into walkways, with parking garages on peripheral streets.”*
- *“Population growth will include a huge proportion of elderly with highly specialized needs. Walking should be sheltered and safe. Transportation as developed should be very easily available to the elderly. Doctors’ offices, drug stores, easy, inexpensive grocery stores, day-care centers all need to be considered in all stages of planning. Places to sit and rest with pleasant views and signs easily read by people with failing vision. Motion – walking, riding, etc. are necessary to consider, but also consider the need to stop – sit – and enjoy. You can’t stop and smell the roses if there are no roses to smell. The spring blossoms at the parking lot are an incomparable joy.”*
- *“I strongly believe in (not ranked by importance): Low-cost housing, particularly for natives of Idaho; protection of lake Pend Oreille; the herbicide poisoning needs to stop in favor of environmentally-friendly alternatives (such as harvesting) before Sandpoint loses one of its most precious assets. Public transit such as busses, shuttles and trains to facilitate transportation within Sandpoint (particularly Schweitzer to downtown) and to surrounding areas of Ponderay, Bonners Ferry, Coeur d’Alene, Spokane ...”*
- *“Einstein said ‘If we keep doing what we’re doing, we keep getting what we’ve been getting.’ It’s not sustainable folks. Suggestion: So the city and county can more easily assess and so we can all know, mail every county resident a questionnaire (w/ return envelope) one question: ‘Sandpoint and surrounding area – how would you really like it to be?’ Encourage people to assume nothing, but just pretend / imagine as they’d really like it, regardless of ‘possibilities’ and ‘projected’ anything! Also encourage - not sweat the details, but focus on ‘overall feeling.’ Ask everyone how we’d like it, then we’ll know! Also, hey, work on mass transit – shuttles, buses, trains. Start saying ‘no’ to developers ... oh my!”*
- *“I feel that we have been led by the nose through these questions. Most are common sense. Others provided direct input to end up with desired results. The leading questions. Show us how you propose to do what?”*

Does ITD work with you? What did 'exchange rights with foothills folk' mean? Where does affordable housing go?"

- *"Although some policies weren't represented here, I'd like to comment on the necessity to have infrastructure to support density. Move our sewer plant away from the lake – make that a usable waterfront park!"*
- *"The athletic/recreational facilities at the new high school/university site sit between the two campuses to allow joint (and community) use. There should be emphasis on indoor facilities."*
- *"More sidewalks in high traffic areas. More family fun restaurants and ice cream shops. Ideal if they are located in or near downtown. Improvements and enhancements to Sandpoint entry points – especially coming in through Dover and Highway 2. Weeds, run-down buildings and a lack of focal point gives our town a diminished look (shabby). New 'Welcome to Sandpoint' signs with sculpture art (much like Cd'A) would be a nice enhancement. Increased bike trails out to Ponderay. Creation of a more central community center with classes, dances/events, youth programs, place for clubs to meet. More dollars to the schools for aesthetic improvements, support in technology (websites and technical training for faculty and students), updated classrooms, updated exteriors."*
- *"'Keep it real' - get rid of this; the market will define 'real.'"*
- *"Object to CA-3 classification east of south 1st to Condo Del Sol property. Should remain Residential 'A'. Also object to waterfront CA-3 classification on waterfront at end of south 1st to the east."*
- *"The city areas to increase density in the core. We need a strategic plan to accommodate easier biking and walking in the core. Public transportation needs to be addressed in the future. I also believe the traffic solutions proposed by (name illegible) should be embraced for local traffic."*
- *"Try not to let established neighborhoods that have been here for years. High density will create a large property value to decline."*
- *"(Land use section) policy 1 - Increased density would ruin many neighborhoods, but could help some downgraded areas. (Land use section, policy 3) - hard to limit; 7,000 sq. ft. is not huge – create open space and need less parks. Transportation policy 2 - Automobiles are still our main mode of transport. Housing item 1 - respect residential zoning, do not drive residents out to gated communities. Housing policy 2 - depends on their findings. Housing policy 3 - do not subsidize – this raises taxes; fees to other types. Housing policy 4 - we have income diversity in most areas now – keep current zones – it still works. Parks policy 3. - I think we can walk more than five minutes."*
- *"Make paths and sidewalks pleasant to use, away from mass automobile traffic. CA-3 in South Sandpoint should stop at Condo Del Sol. Use proposed zoning to dictate housing. Do not degrade with gray language. Do not degrade existing mature residential by drastically changing zoning. Example of bad CA-5 on lake. Stop on north side of lake. Do not like idea of much commercial in CA-3. CUP? Keep it in CA-4 and 5."*
- *"Sustainability is a better term than green. I know the first couple of meetings included this term but sustainability is easier to define and I think it will be more durable. Economic development needs more language about the light industrial areas at the airport and put emphasis on building commercial industrial base to balance tax base and community. In the language section about policy we need strong language about the needs of the elderly. In 2027, 65+ will be our largest demographic. I would strongly suggest a separate paragraph under each section, like transportation, accessibility public facilities, safety, etc. General comment – majority of participants do not understand comp plan process i.e. – if you change a comp plan designation you're razing neighborhoods and businesses rather than the actuality of only affecting new development. Concerning ACI and Affordable/Workforce Housing: Affordable/workforce housing is driven by the cost of land. With the stated emphasis of lower density in ACI and develop/infill within existing city boundaries now, it is going to be difficult and/or impossible to get land costs low enough to be affordable"*

(lots \$30-\$50k) on property that has already been subdivided. I believe this target can be more easily achieved in subdividing large pieces of land into smaller ones. These activities would need to take place in the ACI, through a process of annexation, provision of city services and the creation of higher density, smaller, lower cost lots. The economics of land use have to be considered in creating true affordable/workforce housing. Without it, you only create lower priced housing options, not affordable."

- *"More important than accommodating through traffic is deciding the maximum number of lanes that fit our community. I recommend three lanes. Accommodated traffic will grow, increase, until the accommodating mentality says, 'widen the roads.' The more vehicle lanes, the less safe cyclists and pedestrians are, and the more short trips are driven. Increased density should make transit a viable alternative to more autos parked downtown. Folks resist paying for parking, making structures tough to finance. We need housing for everyone. Need ADA accessible facilities, public and private."*