

Housing

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Conditions

Sandpoint has a variety of housing choices for its residents, but among most neighborhoods – historic and new – single-family housing is the most prevalent housing choice. In reaction to the dwindling supplies of residential land within city limits, some developers are building multi-family housing (condos, duplexes, and apartment complexes) and innovative and attractive multi-family housing to utilize land more efficiently. Few of these new units are located close to the city center, which limits the potential for reduced vehicular travel among residents of those units. In appropriate areas of the City, some opportunity exists for infill development especially through the creation of ADU's on previously platted lots.

According to the 2000 Census, Sandpoint had a total of 3,168 dwelling units housing approximately 6,800 people. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units increased by 29.2 percent, compared to a population increase of 31.4 percent, largely due to annexation. This indicates that housing may be keeping up with population growth, but the types of housing that are being built may not be what residents can afford. Table 5.1 shows that both Sandpoint and Bonner County's housing supplies are growing at



Figure 5.1 - In recent years, home prices in Sandpoint have risen much faster than local wages, putting home ownership out of reach for many. Addressing this issue is one of the major objectives of the comp plan. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

approximately the same rates and Bonner County's population, between 1990 and 2000, was growing faster than Sandpoint.

The Census also showed a vacancy rate in 2000 of just two percent for homeowners and 7.6 percent for rental units, though both rates increased from 1990 Census numbers. Between 1990 and 2000 there was a slight decrease in the percentage of housing units that were detached single-family homes (from 67 percent to 62 percent), an increase in two to four-unit structures (from 10 percent to 14 percent), and an increase in the number of structures with five units or more (from 10 percent to 15 percent).

A growing concern for Sandpoint residents is the affordability of housing as measured

Table 5.1 – Housing Units and Population

	1990		2000		% Change: 1990-2000	
	Sandpoint	Bonner County	Sandpoint	Bonner County	Sandpoint	Bonner County
Total Housing Units	2,452	15,152	3,168	19,646	29.2	29.7
Total Population	5,203	26,622	6,835	36,835	31.4	38.4

Source: US Census 2000 and 1990

against local wages, i.e., “workforce housing.” The city’s reputation as an outdoors, high quality of life community has made it a more desirable place for the purchase of second and/or seasonal residences, contributing to housing costs. According to the 2000 Census, the majority of renters in Sandpoint pay 30 percent of their income or more to rent. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development indicates that expenditures of more than 30 percent of a family’s income to shelter means they are cost-burdened by such expenses, and have reduced ability to afford other necessities.

Idaho’s 44 counties. The study examined housing affordability across time.

According to the Northwest Job Gap Study (2008), Idaho’s wages have grown the fastest in the Northwest; however, the cost of living has risen two to two and one-half times as much as the rise in wages. In Bonner County, families earning the median household income do not qualify for the “starter home” identified in the UI Housing Affordability Study.

An adequate inventory of affordable housing in Sandpoint is a priority, requiring continued action from the City Council.

Needs

In May 2008, University of Idaho Extension Educators and campus professors completed an Idaho Housing Affordability Study. This study looked at housing prices in each of

Plan Concept

This comprehensive plan calls for some degree of change in the provision of housing in Sandpoint. It calls for the introduction of mixed housing and retail land uses in CA-3B, CA-4, and CA-5 areas. It encourages the

Table 5.2 – Housing Characteristics

Units in Structure	1990				2000			
	Sandpoint		Bonner Co.		Sandpoint		Bonner Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1-unit, detached	1,652	67.4	10,705	70.7	1,970	62.2	13,711	69.8
1-unit, attached	124	5.1	230	1.5	87	2.7	248	1.3
2-4 units	256	10.4	545	3.6	425	13.5	875	4.5
5 or more units	247	10.1	695	4.6	488	15.4	962	4.9
Mobile home, RV and other	182	7.4	2,977	19.6	198	6.3	3,850	19.6

Source: US Census 2000 and 1990



Figure 5.2 - Promoting housing options is one important step in reducing housing expenses. These narrow-lot homes were generally favored by participants, and seen as one of several housing types the plan should encourage. (Image source: Camera exercise participant)

development of attached housing, both for ownership and for rental, in CA-3 areas. The end results are more intensely and efficiently used lands in Sandpoint. Development in this fashion along with energy efficient construction practices, will help to manage the rise in housing costs, and will help control other costs as well, reducing reliance on the auto and, in the case of attached housing, reduce heating and building maintenance costs borne by individual households.

The plan's goals will, however, put adaptive pressures on existing single-family neighborhoods. On-street parking may become more difficult. Edges between existing neighborhoods and areas of more intensity will be managed to ensure the transition between uses and housing types is smooth. Sandpoint

Table 5.3 – Shelter Cost as a Percentage of Income

	Homeowners		Renters	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than 15%	401	29.2	267	20.7
15 to 19%	288	21.0	116	9.0
20 to 24%	203	14.8	160	12.4
25 to 29%	141	10.3	129	10.0
30 to 34%	92	6.7	87	6.7
35% and above	238	17.4	508	39.4
Not computed	8	0.6	22	1.7

Source: US Census, 2000

must establish development regulations that respect the integrity of these neighborhoods while simultaneously encouraging some level of change so they can adapt and grow along with the community over time.

☒ Goal H-1: Housing Variety

Provide a variety of housing types across income levels in Sandpoint.

Policies

- A** Encourage diversity in housing types by permitting detached, duplex, townhouse, stacked flats, ADUs and other types as appropriate in land use districts.
- B** Encourage low to moderate-income housing with development incentives (like density bonuses) or other similar strategies.
- C** Help reduce household transportation costs by locating housing near daily needs.
- D** Blend mixed densities in neighborhoods to provide for income diversity among neighborhood residents while ensuring that the bulk, mass or scale of any individual development does not dominate a street.
- E** Strongly encourage housing above retail in CA-3B, CA-4 and CA-5 districts.

☒ Goal H-2: Existing Neighborhoods

Protect and enhance the charm and comfort of Sandpoint's existing neighborhoods.

Policies

- A** Implement appropriate controls in consideration of transition areas between existing neighborhoods and adjoining CA-3B, CA-4 and CA-5 districts.
- B** Create street environments that would be appropriate for historic single-family neighborhoods.
- C** Encourage small accessory dwelling units throughout Sandpoint.
- D** Encourage the formation of active neighborhood organizations and advocate their participation in the public process.

☒ Goal H-3: New Neighborhoods

Ensure that new neighborhoods provide the same charm and comfort of Sandpoint's historic neighborhoods.

Policies

- A** Cul-de-sacs and other dead-end streets are discouraged, with a preference instead for traditional grid street patterns. Where cul-de-sacs are allowed, they must provide for continuous, non-motorized connections between streets.
- B** Neighborhood services, public open space and parks shall be connected with multimodal paths.
- C** Development shall occur with a safe, appropriate street system in a network that provides easy access but does not allow rapid or high volume traffic to disrupt the neighborhood.
- D** Encourage a variety of housing sizes within a block.