

From: [Rick Kotze](#)
To: [planning](#)
Subject: Re: SAPFY2026-0001 Update
Date: Friday, May 8, 2026 8:48:25 AM

To whom it may concern at Garden City planning department:

Hello again,

Thank you for sharing the updated plans for the Heron Commons SAP District.

Many aspects of the development seem well designed, but:

Point 1: I am deeply disappointed in the plans for the RESIDENTIAL EDGE SUBDISTRICT (HCR).

Point 2: I would like to vouch for keeping the Adams street interconnection closed to cars or significantly restrict and slow cars.

Point 1: By planning to build three-story buildings so close to the existing townhomes located on East Thurman Mill drive, you will undermine your stated intent for the HCR in several ways. As described, the HCR will not:

- Ensure that new development is compatible with nearby residential developments
 - The HCR would place a row of tall buildings, probably townhomes, directly adjacent to the existing townhomes. This would have a significant negative impact on the view, privacy, and livability of the existing townhomes and would similarly impact the new townhomes.
- Maintain a residential form that prioritizes privacy
 - I will have a view directly into the bedrooms of the new development, and they will have a view directly into my bedroom.
- Relate sensitively to adjacent homes and contribute positively to the existing residential context.
 - This would be an insensitive design choice and would breed resentment towards the new development.

This is my main point. I do not understand why this design has been chosen for the new development. It seems like an obviously bad idea with significant negative impacts on both the current and new development. What logic led to this decision? IF this were the only location available for the new residential area then I would change my attitude, but given the size of the area to be developed I do not understand why this choice was made. As in my previous email, I urge you to reconsider the location of these buildings - the Southern and Western perimeter of Heron Commons seems to be a much better location due to the commercial and industrial nature of the surrounding developments.

Point 2: As per my previous email, The Adams street connection needs to be designed thoughtfully to ensure that neither of these communities are undermined (objection to car traffic).

Currently, Adams street is blocked off where the ACHD meets the Waterfront District neighborhood. In this quiet corner of our neighborhood, dogs are walked, easter eggs are hunted, water balloons are tossed, and kids learn to rollerblade and play without parental supervision. The Adams street interconnection offers an opportunity for the Waterfront District to meet the new development and not only share this great vibe but expand on it. If at all possible, it would be a boon to both neighborhoods if this interconnection could be limited to bicycles and pedestrians. This should not be problematic as there is no significant need for car traffic between these areas and the current setup works well. If that is not possible then it is

essential that car traffic be adequately slowed and restricted to dissuade all but the most essential traffic from moving through these neighborhoods. Again, I don't believe that there is essential car traffic that needs to pass through here, and I strongly advocate for keeping the intersection closed to cars.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you in more detail.

Best,
[Rick Kotze](#)
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On Thu, 7 May 2026 at 12:10, planning <planning@gardencityidaho.org> wrote:

Hello everyone,

Thank you for your engagement with the proposed SAPFY2026-0001 application. Whether you reached out by email, completed the survey, or participated in a neighborhood meeting, your involvement is truly appreciated. A quick note: if you submitted comments within the past week, they may not yet be reflected in this version of the draft, but they will be considered in the next update.

Linked is the initial working draft of the ordinance for your review: [Initial Working Draft Zoning Ordinance 05052026](#)

Thank you again for your thoughtful participation and continued interest.

What Is Being Proposed

The draft ordinance would create a Specific Area Plan (zoning code), designated as SAP 02. As part of this zoning district, a conceptual Master Plan will also be adopted that provides a high-level framework to guide future redevelopment. This Specific Area Plan will then become the zoning for the subject properties. The name Heron Commons has become a working title that is intended to be a more identifiable designation than SAP-02.

This proposal is designed to create a neighborhood that can grow and evolve over time. By focusing on flexibility instead of rigid requirements, the proposal intends to support development that is financially feasible today while still protecting the adjacent neighborhood and facilitating the framework for future opportunities such as shops, services, gathering places, and a more walkable mixed-use environment.

Master Plan

The Master Plan illustrates:

- The general location of three development subdistricts
- The intended network of public streets and pedestrian and bicycle connections
- River-oriented features, Greenbelt improvements, and flood protection areas

The Master Plan is conceptual in nature. It is not drawn to scale, does not operate as a regulatory site plan, and does not establish fixed locations for buildings, streets, or other improvements. All future development would require separate subdivision and design review approvals that comply with the proposed and other Garden City standards. Any street intended for public motor vehicle use remains subject to Ada County Highway District (ACHD) review and approval.

Public Improvements

Public improvements are required to be delivered incrementally as development occurs.

Flood protection improvements must address existing flood risks and ensure that floodwaters from a FEMA-designated 100-year flood event are contained within the district. These improvements must tie into existing or planned flood protection systems and be designed, constructed, and certified in accordance with FEMA requirements.

Development must also contribute to a connected public circulation system. Public streets and pathways are required to link areas within the district and provide connections to surrounding neighborhoods and the Greenbelt. Walking and bicycling are prioritized.

Boise River Greenbelt and Public Access

The draft ordinance establishes standards to protect and enhance the Greenbelt.

The width of the Greenbelt corridor may not be reduced. Any reconstructed Greenbelt pathway must provide a minimum paved width of twelve feet. Public access along the Greenbelt must be maintained during construction activities. Lighting near the Greenbelt must minimize impacts to the river and comply with applicable dark sky standards.

Public pedestrian and bicycle accessways are required at intervals of no more than 300 feet. These accessways must be ADA compliant and are intended to provide frequent, visible, and direct connections between the Greenbelt, public streets, and on-site public spaces. These connections also support potential future activation of adjacent development.

Adams Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection

Adams Street currently dead ends within the Heron Commons SAP District. Long-standing planning documents adopted by both the City of Garden City and ACHD anticipate completion of this connection. The adjacent Waterfront District subdivision was constructed with a stub to Adams Street in clear expectation that the connection would occur. Currently, only a single parcel within the SAP District separates the two existing street segments.

The City has heard concerns from the surrounding neighborhood regarding potential traffic impacts, particularly vehicular cut-through traffic. At the same time, the City consistently receives public comments regarding congestion and user conflicts on the Boise River Greenbelt near this location. Adopted City planning policies encourage the identification of secondary bicycle routes to relieve Greenbelt congestion and reduce conflicts during peak use periods.

The proposed Adams Street connection is designed to prioritize non-motorized travel. It provides a safe and direct route for pedestrians and bicyclists between surrounding neighborhoods, the Heron Commons district, and the Greenbelt, while also providing an alternate route that helps reduce congestion on the Greenbelt by allowing cyclists to access the 36th Street bridge without using the Greenbelt.

The design of the connection is intended to discourage vehicular cut-through traffic through traffic calming measures. Any motor vehicle access would be limited and clearly subordinate to pedestrian and bicycle movement while still allowing reasonable access to the development.

In response to concerns about bicycle traffic and overall circulation on Adams Street, the ordinance includes a post-implementation evaluation period. This allows time for development and travel patterns to stabilize and provides a structured, performance-based process to evaluate how the connection is functioning. If documented safety or operational issues arise and cannot be mitigated, the ordinance establishes a clear public process to modify, restrict, or, if warranted, close the connection.

Please note that because Adams Street is owned and operated by ACHD, any connection

design or motor vehicle restriction is contingent upon ACHD approval.

Key Public Spaces and Connections

We heard you loud and clear. Most of you would like to see a destination location with mixed uses. To support this and strengthen the connection to the river, a primary public pedestrian spine connecting Adams Street to the Greenbelt is required and must remain permanently open to the public. The pedestrian spine serves as a central organizing element for the district and is intended to support walking, gathering, and active building frontages. Depending on final approvals, it may function as a pedestrian-only corridor or as a low-speed shared space.

Buildings along the Primary Pedestrian Spine are intended to be designed to accommodate future transition to commercial or mixed-use uses, particularly at the ground floor. Rather than requiring immediate commercial occupancy, the ordinance focuses on simple design features that allow spaces to evolve over time as demand grows. This approach helps reduce initial development costs and vacancies while preserving long-term flexibility.

The ordinance also requires a continuous public multi-use pathway along the Thurman Mill Canal. This pathway supports long-term pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and allows for future extensions to adjacent properties as redevelopment occurs.

Development Areas and Building Limits

Development within the SAP District is organized into three subdistricts, each with standards tailored to its location and transition needs.

The **Public Interface Subdistrict**, located closest to the Boise River and Greenbelt, is primarily focused on publicly accessible open space. Development coverage is limited to 40 percent. Building heights are generally limited to two stories, with height increases allowed only in exchange for additional publicly accessible open space. Permitted uses are intended to be public or semi-public in nature.

Additionally, development within the floodplain must be carefully managed to reduce risk and ensure that floodwaters from a FEMA-designated 100-year flood event are safely contained.

By prioritizing publicly accessible open space, particularly adjacent to the Greenbelt, the proposed code reinforces the river corridor as a shared community asset, enhances opportunities for gathering and recreation, and creates a resilient, adaptable landscape that can respond to future flood conditions while remaining open and welcoming to the public.

The **Residential Edge Subdistrict** provides a transition to existing neighborhoods and limits building height to three stories to maintain compatibility. Adaptive design expectations are intentionally limited in this area to reduce cost and maintain neighborhood scale.

The **Mixed Use Core Subdistrict** forms the central portion of Heron Commons and allows a mix of residential, commercial, cultural, and civic uses. Buildings are generally allowed up to six stories. To maintain appropriate scale and transitions, buildings located adjacent to Heron Park Street, the Public Interface Subdistrict, or the Residential Edge Subdistrict are limited to a maximum height of four stories. This subdistrict is expected to evolve over time to include a greater mix of commercial and civic uses as demand increases, supported by building designs that can adapt to changing needs.

Phasing, Implementation, and Public Benefit Delivery

The ordinance includes phasing and implementation provisions to ensure public benefits are delivered in a coordinated and timely manner.

Required streets, pathways, flood protection improvements, and public access facilities must be constructed or financially secured in conjunction with development. Larger phases of development are tied to completion of key public infrastructure.

Permanent public access easements are required to ensure ongoing public use of streets, pathways, and open spaces. Long-term maintenance responsibilities must be established through recorded agreements to ensure continued safety, function, and public access.

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