



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

6015 Glenwood Street □ Garden City, Idaho 83714
Phone (208)472-2921 □ Fax (208)472-2926

SPECIFIC AREA PLAN (SAP) STAFF REPORT

File Number: SAPFY2026 - 0001



AI generated example of development that could occur based on the proposed Heron Commons SAP District code. This rendering shows the Pedestrian Spine with open space running from Adams Street to the Boise River with tiered residential structures adjacent to existing neighborhoods. This is a conceptual rendering only.

Applicant: City of Garden City

City Council September 28, 2026

Prepared by Jenah Thornborrow
(208) 472-2921; planning@gardencityidaho.org

REPORT CONTENT

RECORD DOCUMENTS3

CURRENT DRAFTS.....3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY4

REQUEST4

RECOMMENDATION.....4

DISCUSSION BASED ON RECOMMENDATION5

PROPOSAL 11

 Purpose of a Specific Area Plan (SAP) 12

 This Application 12

 Properties to be Rezoned..... 17

AGENCY COMMENTS4

PUBLIC COMMENT5

 Testimony 6

 Written Comment..... 7

 Survey 9

 Neighborhood Meeting..... 10

WORK SESSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY..... 11

 Joint Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council Work Session 11

 Perspective 11

 Vision..... 11

 Boise River and Greenbelt..... 11

 Open Space- Future Park 12

 Building Height and Transitions..... 12

 Pedestrian Spine 12

 Density, Fiscal Sustainability, *and* Development Feasibility 12

 Adams Street Connection 13

 Regulatory Approach 13

 Planning and Zoning Commission 13

 Design Consultation 13

PROCESS AND DECISION..... 15

General Provisions	15
Decision Process	15
Required Findings	15
Authorities and Actions	16
Ethics and Responsibilities	17
Conflict of Interest and <i>Ex Parte</i> Communication	17
TECHNICAL REVIEW	19
Spot Zoning	19
Comparison to Existing Zoning Entitlements	19
Garden City Code, Title 8, and Idaho State Statute Review	20
Garden City Title 8 Code	20
Idaho Code	24
Plans and Policy Review	25
Other Items Reviewed	25

RECORD DOCUMENTS

The following link is provided to access all record documents: [link to all record documents](#): File SAPFY2026-0001

CURRENT DRAFTS

The following links are provided for convenience and direct review of the current versions of the proposed ordinances, application materials, and comments:

- Application Materials
 - [Application](#)
 - [Ordinance 1071-26](#) (Heron Commons SAP District: Draft 6)
 - [Ordinance 1072-26](#) (zoning map amendment)
- Agency Comments: linked in report section [Agency Comments](#)
- Public Comments: linked in report section [Public Comments](#)
- [Recommendation](#)
- [Draft Decision based on Recommendation](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Council is being asked to consider adoption of the Heron Commons Specific Area Plan (SAP) District, including the SAP zoning ordinance, rezoning of approximately 33.96 acres, and associated findings of fact and conclusions of law. The proposal would establish a new zoning framework to guide the long-term redevelopment of the area into a walkable mixed-use district with housing, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, multimodal transportation connections, public open spaces, and enhanced access to the Boise River and Greenbelt.

Public comments generally focused on building height and neighborhood transitions, traffic and the Adams Street connection, public open space, Greenbelt and river corridor protection, and future implementation of the district.

On September 16, 2026, the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the application with modifications that have been incorporated into the draft ordinance. These changes clarify the public open space calculation requirements and provide additional assurances of neighborhood compatibility with the Waterfront District Subdivision.

REQUEST

Conduct a public hearing and provide a decision regarding the proposed Heron Commons Specific Area Plan (SAP) District, including the Specific Area Plan zoning ordinance, ordinance rezoning properties, and associated findings of fact and conclusions of law.

If approved, provide the first reading, by title only of both ordinances.

RECOMMENDATION

On September 16, 2026, the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of this application.

The Planning and Zoning Commission's deliberations primarily focused on neighborhood compatibility, open space, and a traffic impact study.

The Planning and Zoning Commissioners discussed neighborhood compatibility, noting that clearer expectations for building heights and setbacks adjacent to established residential areas would provide greater predictability for residents while reducing uncertainty regarding future redevelopment potential.

The Commission also discussed the 25% open-space requirement and identified the need for additional clarification to ensure consistent application of the standard, while also seeking to balance the creation of meaningful and usable open space with the need to avoid imposing undue constraints on future redevelopment opportunities.

Traffic impacts were discussed; however, the Commission generally agreed that the decision of whether a traffic study should be required was a policy determination more appropriately made by the City Council.

Following its deliberations, the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the application with modifications to the SAP ordinance. The recommended changes included establishing a residential transition area adjacent to the Waterfront District, requiring either a 15-foot setback with a maximum building height of 45 feet or a 30-foot setback with a maximum building height of 72 feet.

The Commission also recommended clarifying the method used to calculate the 25% open-space requirement to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the standard.

Finally, while traffic-related concerns were acknowledged and forwarded to the City Council for consideration, they were not included as a condition of approval.

DISCUSSION BASED ON RECOMMENDATION

Public Open Space

Concerns were raised regarding how non-qualifying open space is treated when calculating compliance with the public open space requirement. One interpretation of the current language could allow non-qualifying areas to be excluded from the site area used to calculate the minimum requirement, thereby reducing the amount of public open space ultimately provided. It was noted that conversely, the list of non-qualifying areas could be applied so strictly that it creates an undue burden on development, particularly where site constraints limit the availability of land that can qualify as public open space.

Many of the identified non-qualifying areas in Subsection 7 already include exceptions that allow them to count toward the requirement when they are intentionally designed and improved to function as usable public space. As a result, staff has not provided broad changes to the qualifying and non-qualifying open space standards. Currently, the only modification is a limited reduction in restrictiveness for stormwater, drainage, and flood-control areas when those facilities are integrated into and function as usable public open space.

The recommended amendments to **8-8B-5.I. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE-FUTURE PARK** are below in strikethrough. The revisions are intended to clarify that non-qualifying areas do not receive credit toward meeting the open space requirement while maintaining flexibility for spaces that are intentionally designed to provide a meaningful public benefit.

1. Purpose: To implement the Comprehensive Plan's public open space or a public park vision for this location by requiring public or publicly accessible open space within the Heron Commons Specific Area Plan (SAP) District.
2. Intent: To ensure that required public open space is meaningful, usable, and publicly accessible, serving a range of users and functions, rather than consisting of residual or fragmented areas lacking functional or public benefit. Public open space shall be evaluated based on its usability, accessibility, comfort, programming, and public benefit rather than solely on its size.

3. Applicability: The standards of this section apply to all Public Open Space-Future Park areas and other public open spaces required within the Heron Commons SAP District.
4. Minimum Requirement: Each property shall provide Qualified Public Open Space equal to a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the gross total area of the property, unless reduced through a Regulatory Master Plan. ~~Compliance shall be calculated exclusive of areas identified as Non-Qualifying Areas.~~
5. Through an approved Regulatory Master Plan, public open space requirements may be modified in accordance with Subsection 12, Regulatory Master Plan Flexibility, provided the required findings can be made.
6. Qualified Open Space: Qualified open spaces are areas that are permanently available for public use, recreation, gathering, passive enjoyment, or community activity and that are designed and improved for those purposes. The required area shall consist primarily of usable landscaped open areas, plazas, parks, recreation areas, civic gathering spaces, multi-use pathways that are separate from motor vehicle traffic, greenbelt connections, or similar spaces designed for public use and recreation. To qualify toward the minimum public open space requirement, an area shall:
 - A. Be publicly owned or subject to a recorded public access easement benefiting the general public;
 - B. Be open and accessible to the public during hours established by the City or approved through the Regulatory Master Plan;
 - C. Be designed and improved for public use with amenities such as landscaping, seating, plazas, lawns, recreation areas, playgrounds, public art, gathering areas, shade structures, or similar features;
 - D. Be visible and directly accessible from a public street, public pathway, the Primary Pedestrian Spine, or the Boise River Greenbelt;
 - E. Contain at least two public-use amenities such as seating, shade structures, play features, lawns designed for recreation, public art intended for interaction, picnic facilities, exercise features, gathering areas, water features, or similar public-serving improvements; and
 - F. Be of sufficient size and configuration to support meaningful public use. Newly designated, set aside, or provided land between the Boise River and the Boise River Greenbelt through Greenbelt relocation, corridor expansion, setback design, restoration activities, or other approved methods may be counted toward the qualified public open space requirement. Such areas shall be designed and managed to prioritize ecological function and long-term river corridor health. Such areas shall not be reserved for the exclusive use of any individual, tenant, resident, property owner, homeowners association, or private organization.
7. Non-Qualifying Open Space: ~~The following areas shall not count toward required public open space~~ The following areas may be present on a site but shall not be counted toward the minimum Public Open Space/Future Park requirement, except where expressly provided otherwise in this section.

-
- A. Public streets, the Primary Pedestrian Spine, alleys, sidewalks, and vehicular travel lanes except for widened areas specifically designed as plazas, overlooks, gathering spaces, or recreation areas;
 - B. Parking areas and parking maneuvering areas;
 - C. Drive aisles and loading areas;
 - D. Landscape buffers required for screening or setbacks; unless designed to function as usable public space;
 - E. Required setbacks shall not count toward open space requirements unless intentionally designed, improved, and equipped to support meaningful public use and activity;
 - F. Areas consisting primarily of ornamental landscaping, building separation, unused lawn, or circulation space shall not be considered qualified public open space unless they include amenities or design features that support active or passive public use;
 - G. Stormwater detention, retention, drainage, utility, or flood-control facilities, except where such facilities are integrated into ~~and function as~~ usable public open space;
 - H. Private yards, private courtyards, private recreation facilities, or areas restricted to residents, tenants, guests, or customers;
 - I. Areas occupied by buildings or structures, except shade pavilions, gazebos, public restrooms, public art installations, and similar amenities supporting public use.
 - J. Dispersed fragments of property that do not provide an active or passive use.
8. Relationship to Common Open Space: Public open space provided in accordance with this Section shall be provided in lieu of the common open space required by **Section 8-4L, COMMON OPEN SPACE**. Compliance with this Section shall constitute full compliance with the common open space requirements of **Section 8-4L, COMMON OPEN SPACE**.
 9. Implementation: Unless otherwise provided through an approved Regulatory Master Plan, each property shall independently satisfy the minimum public open space requirement established by this Section.
 10. Location and Configuration: Required public open space shall be:
 - A. Located as outdoor or semi-outdoor areas accessible to the public.
 - B. Integrated into the site layout so as to be visible, accessible, and connected to public streets, pathways, or key destinations.
 - C. Situated and arranged to function as prominent and identifiable destinations within the district.
 11. Design Standards: Required open space shall be designed to:
 - A. Be figural space, as defined in this Code;
 - B. Be usable, functional, and cohesive with adjacent development and the surrounding public realm;
 - C. Provide contiguous areas of sufficient size, dimension, and configuration to function as meaningful, usable public amenities;
 - D. Provide a cohesive and unified design that supports its intended use and activity;
 - E. Support meaningful public use through design elements that reinforce comfort, usability, and a sense of place;

- F. Accommodate a variety of users and age groups through features such as seating, shade, play opportunities, gathering areas, accessible routes, passive recreation opportunities, and other amenities that support use by children, families, older adults, and persons with disabilities; and
- G. Public open space must meet the Qualified Open Space requirements of **8-4L COMMON OPEN SPACE**.

12. Regulatory Master Plan Flexibility

- A. Public open space obligations may be allocated, transferred, consolidated, grouped, reduced, distributed, or otherwise satisfied among one or more properties and ownerships within the Heron Commons SAP District. The Regulatory Master Plan shall identify the public open space obligation assigned to each participating property and the location where such obligation will be satisfied.
- B. An approved Regulatory Master Plan may establish mechanisms for the allocation, transfer, reimbursement, cost-sharing, maintenance, funding, and long-term management of required public open space among participating property owners.
- C. In lieu of providing public open space on an individual property, a Regulatory Master Plan may allow satisfaction of all or a portion of an open space obligation through contribution toward public open space located elsewhere within the SAP District, provided the resulting public open space is superior in location, usability, accessibility, and public benefit.
- D. The amount of open space required on individual properties may be reduced below twenty-five percent (25%) where:
 - 1. The resulting public open space provides a higher level of usability, activity, and community benefit;
 - 2. The resulting public open space is consolidated into destination-quality spaces emphasizing gathering, recreation, and public activity; and
 - 3. The overall public open space system continues to achieve the purpose and intent of this section.

Neighborhood Compatibility

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended the addition of a transition standard for development adjacent to the Waterfront District Subdivision. The recommendation would require either:

- A minimum fifteen-foot (15') setback with a maximum building height of forty-five feet (45'); or
- A minimum thirty-foot (30') setback to allow building heights up to seventy-two feet (72').

As stated, the proposed amendment effectively establishes a forty-five-foot (45') height limitation within the area located between fifteen feet (15') and thirty feet (30') from the Waterfront District Subdivision.

The corresponding added provisions to **8-8B-5.3. SETBACKS** and **8-8B-5.4. HEIGHT** include:

- Adjacent Residential (A shared property boundary with any residential use or any common lot of the Waterfront District Subdivision legally established prior to date of the adoption of the ordinance): Minimum of fifteen (15') feet.
- Structures between fifteen feet (15') and thirty feet (30') from the shared Adjacent Residential property line shall not exceed forty-five feet (45') in height.

The added provisions extend this setback to residential units that may be outside of the Waterfront District. This extends the protections to a slightly increased setback or reduced heights adjacent to E. Heron Park Street as well as to a mobile home park located at 309 E. 39th Street.

The following provision remains in the draft code and was not recommended for removal by the Planning and Zoning Commission:

These minimum setbacks shall apply to all property lines adjoining the SAP District boundary. In certain instances, in order to meet the findings that the development is compatible with the Boise River Greenbelt and adjacent neighborhoods, increased setbacks may be necessary. The need for increased setbacks shall be evaluated based on the height and intensity of the proposed development and its potential impacts on adjacent existing uses and properties.

This existing standard provides the City with the ability to require additional setbacks where necessary to address site-specific compatibility concerns.

Corresponding to the setback provision, Staff recommends adding an additional a height compatibility standard that provides greater flexibility in addressing site-specific impacts. This provision is not in the current draft ordinance as it was not specifically recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

4.C. (pg. 42) Compliance with the maximum height standards of this Code does not guarantee that the maximum height will be appropriate for a particular site. Where necessary to achieve compatibility with adjacent properties, a lower building height may be required based on an evaluation of the proposed development, applicable mitigating measures, and the development's potential impacts on adjacent uses and properties.

Adams Street Bicycle Connectivity Requirement (pg.22)

Based on public testimony, it may not be clear that the location of the Adams Street Bicycle Connectivity Requirement is intended to be flexible. To clarify this intent, additional language could be added to the purpose statement as follows:

Purpose: Provide a dedicated, direct, safe, comfortable, and continuous public bicycle connection linking the existing collector roadway segment of E. Adams Street located west of 37th Street to the local roadway segment of E. Adams Street intersecting with E. 36th Street. The location and alignment of the connection are flexible and are not required to follow any specific route, provided the connection achieves the purpose of this section and remains direct, safe, and continuous. The required connection shall not be eliminated. The Boise River Greenbelt shall not constitute, or serve as, the required connection

The Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation does not include this additional clarifying language; therefore, it is not currently included in the draft ordinance.

Traffic Study

Since the early stages of this process, members of the public have requested a traffic impact study. The Planning and Zoning Commission acknowledged the public's desire for a traffic impact study. However, the Commission did not recommend requiring a traffic impact study as part of the SAP process and instead deferred to the City Council regarding whether additional traffic analysis would be appropriate.

To date, a traffic impact study has not been prepared because the City has not concluded that the proposed Specific Area Plan results in a material increase in development entitlement relative to existing zoning, as discussed in the "[Comparison to Existing Zoning Entitlements](#) " section, and no specific development proposal is currently under review.

This approach differs from SAPFY2023-0001 (Residence at River Club), where a specific development proposal accompanied the Specific Area Plan application and allowed transportation impacts to be evaluated based on a known project. The only other Specific Area Plan previously processed by the City, SAPFY2019-1, encompassing the area generally bounded by 35th Street, 33rd Street, Chinden Boulevard, and the Boise River, was approved without a traffic impact study.

In addition, this proposal is not limited to a singular property owner. Development under this SAP proposal, like most zoning districts, will likely occur over time. During that time, roadway conditions, traffic volumes, land use patterns, technologies, and other factors may change significantly, potentially reducing the usefulness of a traffic study.

An additional challenge is that any traffic analysis prepared at this stage would be based on numerous assumptions. This application does not propose specific development densities, building intensities, site layouts, or end uses. Without those details, any attempt to quantify future traffic impacts would be largely speculative and would require selecting development scenarios that may or may not ultimately occur.

As a result, any traffic analysis prepared at this stage would likely encompass a broad range of potential outcomes rather than provide a reliable prediction of future conditions. Depending on the assumptions selected regarding future land uses, development intensity, site design, and timing, the resulting estimates could vary significantly and may be misunderstood as forecasts of future conditions despite being based on assumptions that may ultimately prove inaccurate. Because neither specific uses nor specific development intensities are proposed as part of this application, the likelihood of producing a traffic analysis that accurately reflects, or even closely approximates, future conditions is unlikely. Accordingly, any conclusions drawn from such an analysis should be understood as hypothetical rather than predictive.

Moreover, it is notable that significant roadway widening or construction of new roadways in the immediate area may be challenging and could require substantial right-of-way acquisition. Such

improvements would be difficult and costly to implement in established areas where development already exists along the affected corridors. These conditions result in economic realities that reduce the probability of public roadway widening or right of way acquisitions. As a result, existing roadway capacity may ultimately influence the scale and intensity of development that can occur within the area, rather than future development dictating roadway improvements.

Transportation impacts can be evaluated more accurately when specific development proposals are submitted. Future development proposals will be subject to review by the Ada County Highway District (ACHD). If a proposed development is determined to generate traffic of more than a defined threshold, ACHD will require additional analysis, mitigation measures, roadway improvements, access modifications, or conditions as part of the development approval process that would be borne by the developer and augment the roadway infrastructure. While this does not provide a definitive assessment of future traffic impacts at this time, it does provide a safeguard to ensure that significant transportation impacts are analyzed and, where necessary, mitigated as development occurs.

Understanding the public's desire to have more information, one way to evaluate potential future impacts is to examine the remaining capacity of the existing roadway network rather than attempting to estimate impacts from an unidentified development proposal. For that reason, staff has reached out to ACHD, which has recently been working on design concepts for Adams Street, to request current traffic volume and roadway capacity information, if available, for Adams Street, 36th Street, and 37th Street. If such information is available, it may provide an indication of roughly how much additional development could occur adjacent to the existing roadway system before roadway capacity levels are reached.

Due to the timing of this request, any information received from ACHD will likely need to be submitted as a late exhibit in order to be included in the public record.

Additional potential language to the recommended findings, **GCC 8-6B-6: SPECIFIC AREA PLAN: REQUIRED FINDINGS** finding # 3, has been highlighted in the document, which states:

Any transportation impact study prepared at this stage would necessarily rely on assumptions regarding future land uses, development intensity, phasing, timing, and site design that may never occur. Consequently, the predictive value of such an analysis would be limited, and its conclusions would be hypothetical rather than predictive of future transportation conditions.

PROPOSAL

This application is for a Specific Area Plan per Garden City Code 8-7A-2 Definition of Terms:

Specific Area Plan Project Ordinance (SAPPO): Any city-approved specific area plan that is adopted by ordinance as a separate chapter in Garden City Development Code.

Specific Area Plan District (SAPD): Following the adoption of a SAPPO, the zoning map identification of the particular property on the zoning map as a specific area plan district such as,

e.g., SAPD-1.

Specific Area Plan: The concept plan for a property, including a narrative and illustrations meeting the application requirements of Garden City Code 8-7B-1. I (Master Plan), plus the proposed unique permitted, conditional, and prohibited land uses, and the form standards for land within the SAP.

Purpose of a Specific Area Plan (SAP)

Establishing a specific area plan district (SAPD) for a property provides a means to create zoning regulations and a master plan for unique areas and developments where a different zoning district may not achieve desired results.

Each SAPD includes its own nontransferable set of zoning regulations. The regulations may include design guidelines, site plans, infrastructure plans, phasing plans, and other elements. The type of uses, form standards, location and amount of development, and design criteria for a particular property shall be established by adopting the SAPD into the Development Code by specific area plan project ordinance (SAPPO).

The goal of the Specific Area Plan tool is to ensure the orderly planning and development of land, by requiring new development to:

1. Implement the goals and objectives of the city's comprehensive plan, as amended, including the future land use map, the land use designations, and the land use goals and policies, if applicable.
2. Contribute to the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the city.
3. Develop in a manner that is highly respectful of the natural setting, that is at a human scale and ensures neighborhood compatibility.
4. Provide for a safe and comfortable integrated transportation system that prioritizes a pedestrian-bicyclist environment and mass transit and reduces vehicular trips.
5. Result in a contribution of amenities to the community including maintaining public access to the Boise River and recreational facilities.
6. Designate and protect open site areas in perpetuity.
7. Provide for a mix of uses, including housing types.
8. If necessary, plan for the coordinated and phased construction of infrastructure, including public facilities and transportation system components.
9. Remain consistent with the intent of the Garden City Development Code.

This Application

This application proposes adoption of the Heron Commons Specific Area Plan (SAP) District pursuant to Garden City Code 8-7A-2.

The proposed SAP would create a new zoning district, and rezone approximately 33.96 acres. Once adopted, the SAP ordinance would become the governing zoning framework for the subject properties.

The district is intended to support the long-term evolution of a walkable, mid-urban, mixed-use environment that includes housing, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, public gathering

spaces, multimodal transportation connections, public open space, and enhanced access to the Boise River and Greenbelt.

The ordinance combines objective development standards with a Regulatory Master Plan process. This approach establishes clear expectations regarding land use, public infrastructure, connectivity, open space, neighborhood compatibility, and environmental stewardship while allowing flexibility to respond to site-specific conditions and future redevelopment opportunities.

Key components of the proposal include:

- A Mid-Urban Mixed-Use development pattern that supports a mix of residential and non-residential uses.
- Enhanced public access, open space, and river corridor protections.
- A connected network of streets, pathways, bicycle facilities, and emergency access routes.
- A Primary Pedestrian Spine linking Adams Street to the Boise River Greenbelt.
- Development standards addressing building height, setbacks, neighborhood transitions, and Greenbelt compatibility.
- Flood protection, irrigation, and infrastructure requirements necessary to support long-term redevelopment.
- Phasing and implementation provisions to ensure public improvements are constructed and maintained as redevelopment occurs.

Regulatory Master Plan

The ordinance incorporates both prescriptive and performance-based standards. Prescriptive standards provide a clear and predictable path to compliance, while the Regulatory Master Plan process allows flexibility to accommodate changing market conditions, innovative approaches, and site-specific opportunities and constraints. This framework recognizes that the district's vision will be implemented over time and that multiple approaches may achieve the desired outcomes.

Properties greater than one acre must obtain approval of a Regulatory Master Plan prior to development. When parcels under common ownership are considered collectively, only five ownership groupings within the district contain less than one acre and are therefore not automatically subject to the Regulatory Master Plan requirement. These smaller properties may either participate in a Regulatory Master Plan or develop in accordance with the district's prescriptive development standards.

The district vision is intended to be achieved at the scale of the overall SAP District rather than by requiring each individual development phase or project to independently provide a complete mix of uses. Development may occur incrementally and may be primarily residential, nonresidential, or mixed-use in character. However, the Regulatory Master Plan must demonstrate that the overall development pattern, public realm, transportation network, infrastructure, and land use framework support the long-term establishment of the district's intended Mid Urban Mixed-Use character.

To achieve this vision, the ordinance establishes clear district objectives, infrastructure requirements, and development expectations while allowing alternative approaches through the

Regulatory Master Plan process when an applicant demonstrates that the proposed alternative achieves the purpose, intent, and objectives of the applicable standard to an equal or greater degree.

Because the Regulatory Master Plan relies on performance-based review, the ordinance's purpose statements, intent language, findings, and approval criteria play a critical role in determining whether alternative approaches are consistent with the vision and objectives of the SAP District. While prescriptive standards are generally more straightforward to administer, the Regulatory Master Plan process provides a structured mechanism for balancing flexibility with consistency and ensuring that individual development decisions contribute to the district's long-term Mid Urban Mixed-Use vision.

The Regulatory Master Plan is reviewed through the Administrative with Notice process.

Mid-Urban Mixed-Use

Rather than establishing a specific density requirement, the ordinance requires applicants to demonstrate through the Regulatory Master Plan how development will contribute to a Mid Urban Mixed-Use environment consistent with the district's purpose and intent.

Requirements include:

- Sites greater than one acre must provide evidence of a plan demonstrating how the property will contribute to a mid-urban mixed-use neighborhood.
- Sites less than one acre must provide either:
 - A mix of residential and nonresidential uses;
 - Entirely nonresidential development; or
 - A minimum residential density of 15 dwelling units per acre.

Connectivity and Circulation Network

The ordinance requires an integrated network of public streets, multimodal pathways, and circulation facilities supporting pedestrian, bicycle, emergency service, and vehicle movement throughout the district. Required improvements include connections to the Greenbelt, the Thurman Mill Canal pathway, and other facilities necessary to provide safe and connected multimodal access.

Connectivity is primarily achieved through maximum block length standards, which allow flexibility in the placement of streets and pathways while ensuring a well-connected circulation network.

To enhance bicycle connectivity, the ordinance requires a bicycle connection between the SAP District and Adams Street. The connection may but is not required to pass through 317 E. 37th Street.

The ordinance also requires a redundant emergency access connection to the Waterfront District Subdivision. This connection may but is not required to pass through 317 E. 37th Street and may be waived by North Ada County Fire and Rescue if appropriate.

The City has requested clarification from ACHD regarding whether the connection may be limited to pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access. ACHD has indicated that SAP adoption could provide the basis for future consideration of removing the connection requirement through amendments to ACHD maps and policies, subject to Commission approval.

Notwithstanding, because Adams Street is under Ada County Highway District jurisdiction, any connection remains subject to ACHD review and approval. Recognizing neighborhood concerns, the ordinance discourages creation of a new vehicular connection and provides that any future connection should serve local traffic rather than function as a cut-through route, thereby helping protect the Waterfront District neighborhood.

Primary Pedestrian Spine

The ordinance establishes a Primary Pedestrian Spine as a required public accessway connecting the Boise River Greenbelt to Adams Street. The Spine is intended to serve as a key organizing feature of the district, supporting pedestrian activity, gathering spaces, and future mixed-use development.

Buildings adjacent to the Spine must be designed to accommodate future adaptation to mixed-use or non-residential uses through design features that support long-term flexibility and conversion.

River Corridor & Greenbelt

The ordinance requires flood protection improvements that comply with applicable FEMA requirements and address existing flood risks.

The Greenbelt adjacency standards proposed within the Heron Commons SAP District are the most restrictive standards for development adjacent to the Greenbelt anywhere in the city. The ordinance requires that at least 60 percent of the area within 25 feet of the Greenbelt travelway remain publicly accessible and be designed in a park-like manner. It also requires public access connections to the Greenbelt at intervals of no more than 300 feet, ensuring meaningful public access and creating an interconnected open space network along the corridor. Additional Greenbelt adjacency standards apply to all properties located within 60 feet of the Greenbelt, regulating permitted uses, building design, and site development in this sensitive area.

The ordinance further clarifies that these standards do not reduce or supersede existing setback requirements, including the required 70-foot setback from the Boise River Ordinary High-Water Mark and the 15-foot setback required along the remainder of the Greenbelt. Uses that may contribute to the privatization of the Greenbelt corridor, such as single-family residential development, require a conditional use permit, while certain uses that could detract from the public's use and enjoyment of the Greenbelt are prohibited. Collectively, these provisions establish a level of Greenbelt protection, public access, and river corridor stewardship that exceeds that required elsewhere in the city while preserving the environmental, scenic, and recreational qualities of the Boise River and Greenbelt corridor.

Public Space Framework

The ordinance requires public or publicly accessible open space while allowing flexibility through the Regulatory Master Plan process regarding its location, configuration, and distribution.

Rather than requiring all public space to be located along the Greenbelt, the ordinance allows open space to be distributed throughout the district to improve usability and accessibility.

Neighborhood Compatibility

A Regulatory Master Plan must demonstrate compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods. Compatibility may be achieved through one or more design techniques, including building height, setbacks, stepbacks, open space, land use transitions, building orientation, privacy measures, and landscaping.

The ordinance intentionally uses performance-based standards rather than prescribing a single solution.

Setbacks

Minimum setbacks for outside the district are:

- Front setback: 5 feet
- Rear setback: 5 feet
- Side setback: 3 feet
- Adjacent Residential: 15 feet

The ordinance also identifies that increased setbacks may be necessary to ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods and the Boise River Greenbelt based on building height, development intensity, and potential impacts.

Building Height

- Structures adjacent to the Greenbelt must be limited to two stories or incorporate upper-story stepbacks.
- Structures within 30' of the Waterfront District Subdivision or other existing residences are limited to 45' in height.
- Other structures are allowed to be 72' + an additional 8 feet of height, for a maximum of 80 feet, for buildings incorporating ground-floor nonresidential uses. This allowance accommodates taller ground-floor commercial spaces and architectural screening. It will not be allowed in all instances, such as a residential only development.
- Development rights of up to two stories may be transferred within the district, allowing reduced height in sensitive locations to be offset by additional height elsewhere where more appropriate. This approach is intended to encourage lower building profiles near existing neighborhoods and the Greenbelt while maintaining development flexibility.

Irrigation

Landscape, park, open space, and streetscape irrigation must utilize irrigation water when reasonably available. Potable water may only be used when irrigation service is unavailable or inadequate.

Phasing and Implementation

Required public improvements must be constructed or financially secured concurrent with development. Improvements include public streets, pathways, flood protection infrastructure, public open space, and Greenbelt access facilities.

The ordinance also requires long-term maintenance mechanisms and public access easements to ensure the continued operation and public use of required improvements.

Properties to be Rezoned

1) Property Owners:

- a) Lowe Damion
- b) East Thirty Seventh Street LLC
- c) Garden City Willow Reed LLC
- d) Hernandez Richard J
- e) Anderson Family Trust 4-17-2020
- f) Bobp Mary Ellen & William David Revocable Trust 2-18-09
- g) Hernandez Wendy
- h) Hernandez Fabie
- i) Anderson Stephen J
- j) Erickson Patricia
- k) Wheeler Loren R & Dana C Trust 09/20/2024
- l) S4 Enterprises LLC
- m) Ada County Highway District
- n) Hyslop Dakota Bryan
- o) Milanez Javier
- p) Ada Distributing Co Inc

2) Property Description:

- a) Street Addresses: 220; 221; 301; 305; 317 **E. 37th Street**; 215; 300; 304; 308; 300; 306; 310; 311 **E. 38th Street**; 3700; 3775; 3799; 3800; 3807; 3824; 3825; 3832; 3833; 3845, S1005120600 (Bare Land) **N. Adams Street**; 3825; 3831; 3845 **N Reed Street**.

b) Ada County Tax Parcel Number(s):

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| i) R2734502585 | x) R3459000022 | xix) S1005141700 |
| ii) R3459000061 | xi) R2734502617 | xx) R2734520174 |
| iii) R3459000035 | xii) R2734502627 | xxi) S1005141650 |
| iv) R2734502610 | xiii) R3459000051 | xxii) R2734520190 |
| v) R2734502623 | xiv) R2734502631 | xxiii) R2734520390 |
| vi) R3459000049 | xv) R2734502590 | xxiv) S1005141695 |
| vii) R2734502637 | xvi) R2734502617 | xxv) S1005120600 |
| viii) R3459000012 | xvii) R2734502575 | xxvi) R2734520200 |
| ix) R2734502575 | xviii) R2734520441 | xxvii) R2734520430 |

a. Described by the Ada County Assessor's Office as:

- i) NW 195' LOT 14 & NW 195' OF NE 25' LOT 13 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1

- ii) LOT 6 BLK 1 EXC R/W DEE HARDIN SUB #0060B
- iii) LOT 3 EXC NWLY 84' BLK 1 DEE HARDIN SUB #0030-B
- iv) LOT 15 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 1
- v) PAR #2623 POR LOTS 16-17 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB 1 #2621B
- vi) PAR #0049 POR LTS 3 & 4 BLK 1 DEE HARDIN SUB #0048-B
- vii) PAR #2637 POR LTS 16 & 17 BL 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1 #2635-B
- viii) PAR #0012 POR LOT 01 BLK 01 DEE HARDIN SUB #0011-B
- ix) LOT 12 & SW 75' LOT 13 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 1 #2580-S
- x) PAR #0022 POR LOT 02 BLK 01 DEE HARDIN SUB #0021-B
- xi) PAR #2617 OF LOTS 16-17 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1 #2615B
- xii) PAR #2627 POR LOTS 16-17 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1 #2625B
- xiii) LOT 5 BLK 1 EXC R/W DEE HARDIN SUB #0050B
- xiv) PAR #2631 OF LOTS 16-17 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1 #2630B
- xv) SE 105' LOT 14 & SE 105' NE 25' LOT 13 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1
- xvi) PAR #2617 OF LOTS 16-17 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB #1 #2615B
- xvii) LOT 12 & SW 75' LOT 13 BLK 8 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 1 #2580-S
- xviii) LOTS 22 & 23 BLK 12 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3
- xix) PAR #1700 @ CTR NE4 SEC 5 3N 2E #141690-B
- xx) LOTS 20 & 21 BLK 11 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3 #0172 0178 C
- xxi) PAR #1650 OF S2NE4 SEC 5 3N 2E #9115156
- xxii) LOT 22 BLK 11 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3 #8827750
- xxiii) LOT 12 BLK 12 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3 #9213674
- xxiv) PAR #1695 IN CTR POR NE4 SEC 5 3N 2E & OF BLK 12 FAIRVIEW ACRES #3 R/S 9143
- xxv) PAR #0600 OF W2NE4 SEC 05 3N 2E
- xxvi) LOT 23 BLK 11 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3
- xxvii) PAR #0430 NW POR LOTS 20 & 21 BLK 12 FAIRVIEW ACRES SUB NO 3

2) Property Size: 33.96 acres

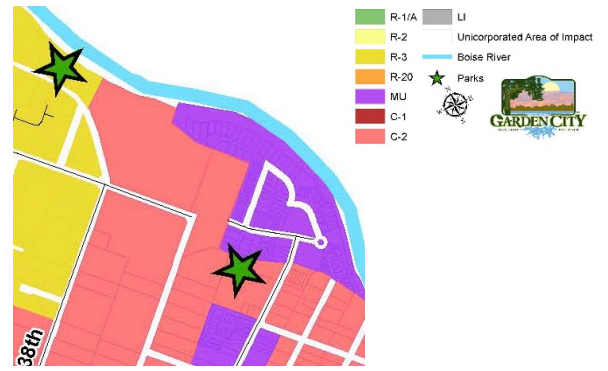
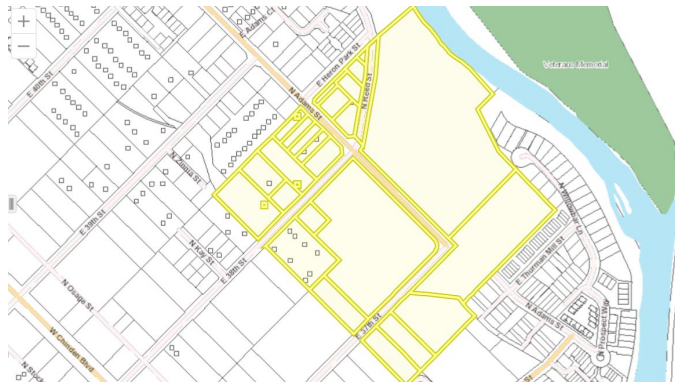
3) Legal Lot of Record: To be determined

4) Zoning District: R-3 Medium Density Residential & C-2 General Commercial

5) Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Designations:

- a. Future Planning Area
- b. Mixed Use Commercial
- c. Main Street Corridor
- d. Mixed Use Residential
- e. Future Park/ Open Space

6) Neighborhood: The property is bounded by the Boise River, generally to the north, and adjacent to properties zoned R-3, C-2, and M. A map of the subject properties are highlighted below in yellow, and a neighborhood zoning map is provided.



AGENCY COMMENTS

Per Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA) and Garden City Code, notice of this application was provided to agencies with jurisdiction or an interest in the proposal. The notice for this application was sent to over 100 individuals representing a wide variety of agencies. The notice informed agencies of the nature of the request and invited review and comment. In addition to the agency notice, the city has proactively asked questions of ACHD in addition to this agency notice.

The following agency comments were provided:

Agency	Comment Link	Summary
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality	04272026	No Comments regarding project
ACHD	05222026 Letter to ACHD 07142026 (included here for context) 07162026	• ACHD will not provide land use information as part of a surplus property sale; land use review is considered buyer due diligence. • The City's Specific Area Plan (SAP) may be adopted before ACHD begins reviewing any roadway connection changes. • Confirmation that the Adams Street stub street was required through Waterfront District approvals. • The Adams Street connection is currently shown on ACHD's Master Street Map (MSM). • Any removal or modification of the planned Adams Street connection would require ACHD Commission review and approval. • City adoption of the SAP would provide the basis for ACHD to consider a modification to the MSM. • ACHD policy generally requires existing stub streets to be extended when adjacent properties redevelop. • The purpose of the stub street policy is to support emergency access, maintenance operations, and overall transportation system connectivity. • ACHD staff will evaluate potential options that meet the intent of the policy while supporting the City's desire for a more limited connection. • If a vehicular connection is ultimately required, ACHD can use traffic-calming and design

		measures to address speed, neighborhood livability, and multimodal safety concerns. • ACHD expressed willingness to work with the City on design solutions if a connection moves forward. • A connection limited to bicycle, pedestrian, and emergency access, without general motor vehicle traffic, would generally not fall under ACHD jurisdiction.
Garden City Engineer	08112026 08132026	With redevelopment, the city requires storm water to be retained on-site. Any discharge to the Boise River would be eliminated. Text suggestions for the floodplain requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Testimony September 16, 2026

Public testimony focused on concerns related to neighborhood compatibility with the Waterfront District Subdivision, greenbelt interface, and transportation network.

Questions were raised regarding the interpretation of ordinance requirements for open space calculations, the protection of riverfront parkland, and potential constraining of the greenbelt corridor. Testimony also highlighted concerns about building height, setbacks, transitional design elements, the need for additional emergency access, bicycle connectivity through the Waterfront District Subdivision, housing affordability, and the adequacy of regulatory and public oversight.

Several speakers emphasized the need for a comprehensive traffic study, citing concerns about traffic impacts, the Adams Street connection, and circulation within the Waterfront District Subdivision to ensure adequate access and multiple exit routes.

Testimony also addressed potential constraints on future commercial development, the impacts of upzoning, and concerns regarding the accuracy of the public record. It was further noted that increased land values could support community amenities, transportation improvement partnerships, and future mobility opportunities.

Public Testimony July 15, 2026

There were nine individuals who provided oral public testimony and two additional individuals provided written comment during the July 15, 2026, Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing.

Public testimony focused on development intensity, neighborhood compatibility, traffic, and the proposed Adams Street connection. Commenters raised concerns about building height, density,

setbacks, privacy impacts to adjacent neighborhoods, and the need for a traffic impact study and clearer development standards.

Several speakers opposed a full vehicular extension of Adams Street, generally supporting bicycle, pedestrian, and emergency-only access. Additional comments addressed Greenbelt tree preservation and irrigation, potential impacts to wildlife, concerns about the pace of the process and adequacy of public notice, and questions regarding property owner participation and overall support for the proposal.

Testimony During May 20, 2026, Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing

There were five individuals who provided public testimony during the May 20, 2026, Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing.

Public testimony focused on concerns regarding project pacing, compatibility with adjacent residences, and the Adams Connection. Several commenters felt the timeline was expedited and recommended a slower process. Most emphasized protecting the river and Greenbelt, describing the project as a long-term, legacy opportunity. Height and scale were key issues for three individuals, with a preference for lower, two-story development and compatibility with nearby one-story homes. One referenced the 40-foot limit in the Waterfront District.

Additional comments included requests for more visuals, reconsideration of the five-year review period of the Adams Street Connection, and recognition that evolving technology may impact future uses and future parking needs.

Staff Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

Concerns have been raised regarding whether the City has been sufficiently transparent about stakeholder involvement in the development of this proposal. Staff affirms that all written communications, correspondence, and supporting documentation have been included in the public record.

In developing the proposal, staff relied on a variety of resources, including professional planning literature, regulatory and technical documents, professional experience, stakeholder input, development professionals, public testimony, and decision maker work session and discussions.

Early in the process, staff met with representatives of Alquist to discuss redevelopment constraints and implementation considerations associated with an initial working draft of the proposal. More recently staff met with David Wali. The discussions were high-level in nature and did not result in specific amendments to the draft ordinance.

As the Adams Connection has been a controversial matter, staff has had a brief verbal discussion with Ryan Head, Director of ACHD in addition to the documentation in the record, confirming understanding of the written documentation.

Following July 15, 2026, hearing, staff met with representatives of the Waterfront District, including Nancy Baskin, Curt Fransen, and Rod Linja, to discuss concerns raised during the review process

and potential revisions to the draft proposal. Those discussions informed a number of the amendments presented in the ordinance revisions submitted for review. Additional revisions resulted from one-on-one meetings with Planning and Zoning Commissioners, professional comments received during the review process, legal review, and public testimony.

Staff met with members of the City of Garden City legal team. In addition, staff communicated with decision-makers regarding the proposal and applicable procedural matters.

Staff has also engaged in occasional one-on-one conversations with members of the public. These discussions were generally limited to answering questions, clarifying the process, and receiving public feedback regarding the proposal.

While staff is not subject to *ex parte* restrictions applicable to decision-makers, staff encourages any decision-maker who has engaged in discussions regarding this matter to disclose those communications on the record, consistent with the *ex parte* discussion contained elsewhere in this report. Staff is not aware of any written communications related to the development of this proposal that have not been included in the record.

Written Comment

Garden City written comments to be considered for the record are required nine days in advance. That notwithstanding, written comments that were received as of September 8, 2026, at 6:00 pm are summarized here, and will be considered to be a part of the record unless otherwise directed by the Planning and Zoning Commission during the public hearing.

Written comments reflect both support for redevelopment of the site and targeted concerns regarding how the ordinance would be implemented.

Public comments generally focused on five primary themes: connectivity and traffic, compatibility with existing neighborhoods, public open space and river access, district implementation and oversight, and the overall vision for the district.

The most frequently discussed issue was the proposed Adams Street connection. Several residents of the Waterfront District expressed concern that a vehicular connection could introduce cut-through traffic, speeding, safety issues, parking conflicts, and additional neighborhood impacts. Many commenters supported bicycle, pedestrian, and emergency access connections while opposing a general-purpose vehicular connection. Some comments acknowledged and supported later revisions to the draft ordinance that limited or discouraged motor vehicle access while retaining pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

A second recurring concern involved building height, massing, setbacks, and transitions adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods. Commenters expressed concerns that taller buildings located near the Waterfront District could negatively affect privacy, views, sunlight access, neighborhood character, and overall livability. Several individuals requested stronger and more objective standards governing setbacks, stepbacks, building height transitions, and the location of

service functions near residential properties. Others supported additional density and redevelopment but emphasized the importance of creating a gradual transition between new development and existing homes.

A third major theme involved public open space, Greenbelt access, and the Boise River corridor. Many commenters supported preserving and expanding public access to the river, enhancing the Greenbelt experience, and creating meaningful open space within the development area. Several comments requested that open space be concentrated near the riverfront, that river corridor protections be strengthened, and that redevelopment incorporate environmental stewardship, habitat protection, and additional landscaping and tree canopy.

Comments also addressed implementation and governance of the district. Some commenters expressed concern that future development decisions could occur through the Regulatory Master Plan process with limited public review and requested additional transparency, public participation opportunities, and oversight of future approvals. Others emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility within the ordinance to respond to changing market conditions while ensuring predictable outcomes and compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

Overall, many commenters expressed support for redeveloping the ACHD site as a walkable mixed-use district that provides housing, employment opportunities, public spaces, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. While specific concerns varied, comments generally sought additional safeguards related to traffic management, neighborhood compatibility, public open space, river corridor protection, and implementation procedures to ensure the district evolves in a manner consistent with community and Comprehensive Plan goals.

The below links provide the written comments in their entirety.

- [Joe Jaszewski 04102026](#)
- [Michelle Burkes 05072026](#)
- [Rick Kotze 05082026](#)
- [Dave and Gwen Twyver 05072026](#)
- [Dave and Gwen Twyver 05082026](#)
- [Curt Fransen 05152026](#)
- [Julie Jenkins 05222026](#)
- [Jon Wardle 06172026](#)
- [Curt Fransen 07142026](#)
- [Curt Fransen Rod Linja Nancy Baskin 08072026](#)
- [Thomas Baskin 08102026](#)
- [Rod Linja 08102026](#)
- [Rod Linja 08102026 2](#)
- [Curt Fransen Rod Linja 08102026 & Supplemental 08102026](#)
- [Bob Taunton 08112026](#)
- [Emily Dawson 08172026](#)
- [Nick Jezierny 08182026](#)
- [Curt Fransen 09032026](#)

-
- [Annabeth Elliot 09032026](#)
 - [Thomas Baskin 09032026](#)
 - [Theresa Fox 09042026](#)
 - [Theresa Fox 09042026 2](#)
 - [Fransen 09042026](#)
 - [Annabeth Elliot 09042026](#)
 - [Chris Honcik 09042026](#)
 - [Mary Stallings 09042026](#)
 - [Leah Kelsey 09042026](#)
 - [Michael Heckler Sandra Shaw 09062028](#)
 - [Julie Compton 09062026](#)
 - [Julie Compton 09062026 2](#)
 - [Rod Linja 09062026](#)
 - [Rod Linja 09062026 2](#)
 - [Nancy and Tom Baskin 09062026](#)
 - [Nancy and Tom Baskin 09062026 2](#)
 - [Nancy Baskin 09072026](#)
 - [Nancy Baskin 09072026 2](#)
 - [Rod Linja 09072026](#)
 - [Ken Pyle 09082026](#)
 - [Bill Mullane 09082026](#)
 - [Norma Schafer 09092026](#)
 - [Al and Anna Schneider 09092026](#)
 - [Curt Fransen 09162026](#) (in conjunction with oral testimony)

Survey

A survey was conducted beginning April 1, 2026, and responses were reviewed on May 12, 2026. A total of 65 responses were received. The survey responses are linked here: [Survey responses as of May 12, 2026.](#)

Survey input emphasized a desire for a publicly accessible, river-oriented place with strong open space, environmental stewardship, and community gathering opportunities. Respondents expressed interest in a setting that balances a calm, nature-focused experience with an active mix of uses, including small scale retail, recreational amenities, and community serving spaces. Public access to the Boise River and Greenbelt, trails and connections, and open space near the river were repeatedly identified as top priorities, along with amenities such as walking and biking paths, seating areas, and passive recreation.

Participants supported a mix of housing and neighborhood serving commercial uses, particularly smaller scale retail and services that contribute to daily activity without overwhelming the area. There was also interest in civic, cultural, and recreational uses that reinforce the site as a community destination rather than a purely residential or commercial area.

Several areas of concern and potential controversy emerged. Building height and development intensity, particularly near existing neighborhoods and the river, were identified as sensitive issues.

Respondents emphasized the importance of maintaining compatibility through height limits, buffering, and careful design. Traffic and parking impacts were also noted as concerns.

There was clear opposition to more intensive or incompatible uses, such as large-scale retail, industrial uses, warehouses, and large parking facilities. Nighttime uses produced mixed responses, suggesting they may be appropriate in limited or carefully managed contexts.

Overall, survey responses indicate support for a balanced approach that prioritizes public access, open space, and environmental quality while allowing a thoughtful mix of uses. The primary tension is between creating an active, economically viable mixed-use district and preserving the river corridor, neighborhood compatibility, and a sense of openness and accessibility.

Neighborhood Meeting

A neighborhood meeting was held on April 22, 2026, as required by code to inform and gather input prior to application submittal. A more detailed link to the discussion is linked: [Neighborhood Meeting Summary](#).

Discussion focused on the scope of the Specific Area Plan, redevelopment expectations, and potential impacts. Participants asked why the plan includes properties beyond the ACHD site. Staff explained that including adjacent properties allows for coordinated planning, cohesive zoning, and the creation of a unified destination over time. It was clarified that the SAP does not compel redevelopment of existing uses but would apply when properties redevelop.

Traffic and circulation were key topics. Participants requested that a traffic analysis be required. The adoption of the ordinance itself does not trigger a traffic study, as it does not increase overall development potential compared to existing zoning, nor does it propose specific development or uses. Notwithstanding, traffic studies may be required at the time of future development applications based on specific proposals.

Comments regarding the Adams Street connection focused primarily on concerns with cut-through traffic and neighborhood impacts. Most commenters supported limiting or prohibiting vehicle access, with one comment expressing opposition to any connection, including bicycles and pedestrians. In response, the draft ordinance prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle use and limits vehicular access to support local circulation rather than through traffic. The connection also functions as an alternative route to help relieve congestion on the Greenbelt. The ordinance includes design approaches to discourage cut through traffic, as well as a post implementation evaluation period that would allow for modification or closure of the connection if bicycle traffic or other operational issues become problematic.

Participants also raised concerns about building heights and transitions, particularly along the western edge adjacent to existing residences. While this has been incorporated into the draft ordinance, it is a component not supported by the Design Consultants.

Additional discussion topics included Greenbelt setbacks, congestion, tree preservation, irrigation requirements, property values, and the potential for public open space. Staff clarified that

Greenbelt setbacks follow existing code, that tree mitigation is required but tree removal is allowed, and that the City cannot purchase the property for park use but can require publicly accessible open space through zoning and development processes.

Overall, the neighborhood meeting identified key issues related to traffic, connectivity, building scale, and neighborhood compatibility, many of which informed the development of the draft ordinance.

WORK SESSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Joint Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council Work Session

On June 17, 2026, the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council held a joint work session to discuss the vision, objectives, and regulatory approach for the proposed Heron Commons Specific Area Plan. The purpose of the work session was to provide policy direction and improve alignment regarding the future development of the district.

Perspective

The importance of planning for future generations rather than solely responding to current development conditions was emphasized. The district was discussed as an opportunity to establish a lasting mixed-use neighborhood that could influence broader growth patterns within Garden City. Discussion generally focused on achieving long term outcomes and community objectives rather than prescribing a single development solution.

Vision

There was concurrence with the vision, and alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. Discussion focused on the potential for the area to serve as a recognizable focal point and community gathering place connected to future riverfront improvements.

Boise River and Greenbelt

Participants agreed that the Boise River and Greenbelt are defining features of the district and should remain a primary organizing element of future development. Discussion emphasized preserving and enhancing the public character of the Greenbelt, increasing public access opportunities, and ensuring that adjacent development contributes positively to the river corridor experience. Particular attention was given to maintaining a lower scale of development adjacent to the Greenbelt through building height limitations and transition requirements.

Participants also discussed development patterns that could create pressure to privatize areas intended to function as public space, including ground floor residential uses directly adjacent to the Greenbelt. While concerns regarding the potential privatization of the Greenbelt edge remained, there was discussion regarding whether a prohibition on ground floor residential uses was necessary. The general direction was to discourage such uses rather than prohibit them outright.

Open Space- Future Park

Participants emphasized the importance of creating meaningful public spaces that provide lasting community value rather than simply meeting minimum acreage requirements.

Building Height and Transitions

A range of perspectives was expressed regarding building height. Some participants favored a removal of height limitations to preserve flexibility and development feasibility, while others supported a maximum height generally in the range of six to eight stories. There was broader agreement that transitions adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods and the Boise River Greenbelt should be thoughtfully addressed. Discussion also acknowledged the importance of maintaining protection for the Greenbelt and nearby residential properties while avoiding overly prescriptive design requirements.

Pedestrian Spine

The draft ordinance envisions the Pedestrian Spine as a walkable public space that connects the Boise River Greenbelt to the broader community while serving as a focal point for public gathering, activity, and future mixed-use development. The concept of the Pedestrian Spine as a key organizing element of the district received general support.

Discussion acknowledged that market conditions may not initially support commercial development along the entire Pedestrian Spine. Participants generally supported allowing the corridor to evolve into a more active mixed-use destination over time rather than creating conditions that could result in long term vacancies. To address this reality, the draft ordinance includes provisions intended to ensure that structures along the Spine are designed to accommodate future conversion from primarily residential uses to mixed use or nonresidential uses as density, activity levels, and market demand increase.

The concept of designing buildings for future adaptability received broad support. However, a concern was raised that some of the proposed adaptive design requirements may be overly prescriptive. Participants generally supported the objective of ensuring future flexibility and commercial readiness while encouraging continued refinement of the specific standards used to achieve that outcome.

Density, Fiscal Sustainability, and Development Feasibility

Discussions focused on the relationship between density, mixed use development, economic vitality, and long-term fiscal sustainability. Participants noted that, due to limited vehicular traffic, site visibility, and circulation constraints, higher residential densities are necessary to support commercial uses, and the vision set forth by the Comprehensive Plan as a mixed-use destination. The staff report included an analysis which estimated that a density of approximately 50 dwelling units per acre may be needed to support the desired mix of uses. Comparable developments within the region were also reviewed to provide context for the proposed development intensity.

Development feasibility was also discussed in relation to the costs associated with floodplain improvements, public infrastructure, and other required investments. Staff noted that implementation tools outside the ordinance may be available to help offset these costs. Examples included the City's ongoing floodplain improvement efforts and the potential future establishment

of a small urban renewal district following the sunset of the Riverfront East Urban Renewal District. Such tools could help fund or reimburse eligible public improvements, including floodplain infrastructure, public streets, and public open space improvements.

Adams Street Connection

The proposed Adams Street connection was a significant topic of discussion. Participants reviewed the historical context of prior approvals that anticipated an extension of Adams Street to provide emergency access, support fire and life safety requirements, and improve transportation connectivity within the area.

Discussion included the potential transportation benefits of a connection, including improved access to the signalized intersection at 36th Street and Chinden Boulevard and the role a connection could play in supporting the long-term viability of a mixed use district. ACHD had indicated that transportation needs and any potential connection should be evaluated through future development applications and supporting traffic studies.

The majority of participants expressed a preference for maintaining existing traffic patterns and prohibiting additional vehicular connectivity through the site. There was general support for the City engaging ACHD to determine whether a commitment could be obtained to privatize the road and remove the requirement for a full vehicular connection, as part of the implementation of the Specific Area Plan.

Regulatory Approach

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the balance between prescriptive standards and flexibility. Some participants expressed concern that highly prescriptive regulations could restrict the ability to respond to site specific conditions, market realities, and future opportunities. Others noted that more specific standards can provide greater predictability and certainty for the public, developers, and future decision makers. Discussion generally supported a framework that establishes clear expectations while allowing flexibility when the overall vision and objectives of the district are achieved.

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on May 20, 2026, the matter was continued to a date certain of July 15, 2026. The Planning and Zoning Commission requested a joint work session with the City Council. On July 15, 2026 the Planning and Zoning Commission continued the hearing to a date certain of September 16, 2026, to provide ample time for written comments. A recommendation was made on September 16, 2026.

Design Consultation

On May 4, 2026, there was a brief Design Consultation where the following matters were discussed, and incorporated into the second version of the proposed ordinance, Option A:

- Added strategies to achieve low design speeds in pedestrian spine.
- Clarified building height in relation to number of stories.
- Specified that only fully above-grade stories are counted as a story.
- Added adaptive reuse considerations.

-
- Added parking reduction allowances.
 - Refined design requirements to maintain intent while reducing costs.
 - Clarified that required HCPI open space must be usable and publicly accessible, and cannot include parking or vehicular circulation areas.
 - Strengthened standards for the pedestrian spine, canal pathway, and Greenbelt connections, including maintaining the canal as an open water feature.
 - Refined active frontage requirements with measurable standards emphasizing observable human activity.
 - Improved structured parking standards to better integrate with the public realm.
 - Added privacy and compatibility standards for adjacent residential areas, including building orientation and landscape buffering.
 - Clarified the Development Allocation Plan (DAP), including the relationship between open space, development intensity, and height bonuses.
 - General code cleanup for improved organization, consistency, and clarity throughout.

During the May 18, 2026, Design Review consultation:

The consulting team reviewed both Option A and Option B and expressed concern that Option B, as currently drafted, is overly open-ended and may lack sufficient legal enforceability. To address this, the consultants recommend a hybrid approach that combines clear, objective standards with the flexibility to accommodate alternative proposals that meet or exceed the intent of the regulations.

They recommend incorporating a Regulatory Master Plan requirement to establish a structured framework for development while still allowing for adaptability over time. In addition, they suggest adding language that clearly allows for flexibility, ensuring that alternative approaches can be approved when they achieve equal or better outcomes.

The consultants also provided additional input related to design standards and allowable uses to strengthen the overall framework and support high quality development. Finally, they recommend deleting the HCRE subdistrict and instead using the approach outlined in Option B to address adjacency to residential uses in a more effective manner.

PROCESS AND DECISION

General Provisions

This application is processed by GCC 8-6A-7 Public Hearing.

Decision Process

The following decision processes are required for the project as governed by GCC Table 8-6A-1.

Decision		Design Review Consultants Consultation	Recommendation Authority	Decision Authority
Specific Plan	Area	Required	Planning and Zoning Commission	City Council

After hearing the evidence and considering the application, the decision maker shall make their decision. The decision maker shall report the facts upon which it based its conclusion, the ordinance and standards used in evaluating the application, the actions, if any, that the applicant could take to obtain a permit, and whether a permit is granted, granted with conditions, or denied. The decision maker shall make its findings and decision no later than by the next regular scheduled meeting.

Required Findings

The decision maker must decide that the following findings are compliant with written reasoned statements to approve a Specific Area Plan:

1. The SAP application, as conditioned, is consistent with the city comprehensive plan, as amended, including the future land use map and the land use planning area guidelines and land use designations, if applicable.
2. The SAP application, as conditioned, meets the minimum requirements of this chapter [GCC Title 8 chapter 6].
3. The SAP application promotes the orderly planning and development of land, as set forth in the purpose of this process.
4. The SAP application will create a district that is identifiable as a distinct area of the city with a distinguishing character.
5. The SAP application has been noticed and a public hearing held in accordance with this code [GCC Title 8].
6. The SAP application complies with all city zoning regulations and codes in effect at the time of the SAP application.

If an application does not meet one or more of the criteria above, the application shall be denied, and the reason the application does not meet the finding or findings shall be in writing.

Inherent in the application is the rezoning of a property and a development code amendment. While the following findings may not be required, staff suggest that the decision also include a review of the findings for a rezone and development code amendment. These findings are below:

Development Code Amendment Findings 8-6B-5 D.

1. The text amendment complies with the applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan;
2. The text amendment shall not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare; and
3. The text amendment shall not result in an adverse impact upon the delivery of services by any political subdivision providing public services within the city.

Rezone Required Findings 8-6B-10 F.

1. The zoning map amendment complies with the applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan;
2. The zoning map amendment complies with the regulations outlined for the proposed district, specifically the purpose statement;
3. The zoning map amendment shall not be materially detrimental to, or impacts can be mitigated that affect, the public health, safety, and welfare or impacts;
4. The zoning map amendment shall not result in an adverse impact upon the delivery of services by any political subdivision providing public services within the city including, but not limited to, school districts; and
5. The annexation of land, if proposed, is in the best interest of the city and complies with the procedures as set forth in Idaho Code section [50-222](#).

Authorities and Actions

Pursuant to Garden City Code [Table 8-6A-1 Authorities and Processes](#), the Design Consultant and Planning and Zoning Commission are recommending authorities and the City Council is the final decision maker for the requested application.

Design Review Consultation

This application is required to be reviewed by the Design Review Consultant(s). Their recommendations are provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the Planning and Zoning Commission review.

Recommendation

The Planning and Zoning Commission may take one of the following actions:

1. Recommend that the City Council grant the application as applied;
2. Recommend that the City Council grant the application with conditions as drafted or as amended;

3. Recommend that the City Council deny the application; or
4. Continue the decision.

The recommendations of the Planning and Zoning Commission do not constitute a final decision on the application. Their recommendations cannot be appealed, as they will be heard by the City Council. The City Council is the final decision maker for this application.

City Council Decision

The City Council may take one of the following actions:

1. Sustain the recommendation;
2. Modify the recommendation;
3. Reject the recommendations; or
4. Remand the application to a recommending body for additional proceedings and findings.

Reconsideration and Judicial Review

A reconsideration request may be made within 14 days of the formal decision being rendered by the City Council. This will be considered the day that the City Council formally acts on the decision document. This date may differ from the date that the written decision document is provided to the applicant.

If a reconsideration is not requested within 14 days, the decision will be final. If a reconsideration is requested, and granted, the final decision will be that of the reconsideration request.

Final decisions are subject to a 28-day right to judicial review pursuant to The Idaho Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 65 Title 67 Idaho Code. A takings analysis pursuant to Idaho Code may be requested on final decisions.

Ethics and Responsibilities

Conflict of Interest and *Ex Parte* Communication

Decision makers are requested to provide full disclosure conflict of interest, or *ex parte* communications.

Conflict of interest means any decision or formal recommendation by a person acting in a capacity as a public official, the effect of which would be to the private pecuniary benefit of the person or a member of the person's household, or a business with which the person or a member of the person's household is associated, with some exceptions as outlined starting on page 5 of the [2024, Office of the attorney General Idaho Ethics in Government Manual](#). A conflict of interest would result in the decision maker recusing themselves from deciding or making a formal recommendation on the application. Similarly, staff with a conflict of interest will not administer an application with which they have a conflict of interest.

An *ex parte* communication is a written or oral communication made without proper notice and not on the public record regarding a substantive issue in a pending matter between an interested party and a decision maker on a quasi-judicial matter. *Ex parte* contact in a quasi-judicial matter can be cured if meaningful disclosure is made. The timeframe, matter, and with whom the contact was

made should be disclosed. It is requested that any decision maker provide an accounting of discussions or viewings of the property that have occurred since the filing of the application. The limitations on *ex parte* contacts are directed at decision-makers. Communications with agency staff are not considered improper. Pages 551-559 of the linked [November 23, 2024, Givens Pursley Land Use Handbook](#) discusses *ex parte*.

TECHNICAL REVIEW

Spot Zoning

Anytime there is a zoning map change, the city must evaluate the rezone for spot zoning. Illegal spot zoning is a change in zoning of a property to provide benefits to that particular property that is not allotted to surrounding properties and is also not in compliance and accord with the comprehensive plan. Pages 53-57 of the linked [November 16, 2022, Givens Pursley Land Use Handbook](#) describes the legal parameters of spot zoning in more detail.

The Heron Common SAP District has been drafted intending to directly correspond to the Comprehensive Plan.

Comparison to Existing Zoning Entitlements

Whether the proposed Heron Commons SAP District constitutes an upzone or a downzone is more nuanced than the project's vision statements alone might indicate.

Some members of the public reasonably perceive the SAP as increasing development intensity because it envisions a "Mid Urban Mixed Use" neighborhood, a regional destination, and a mix of residential, commercial, office, civic, and entertainment uses. The SAP also contains uses that may be associated with a more active urban environment, such as lodging, entertainment, eating and drinking establishments, outdoor gathering spaces, and employment-generating uses. However, many of these uses are already permitted, either by right or through conditional approval, within the existing R-3 and C-2 zoning districts. The SAP also does not generally preclude lower-intensity uses currently allowed under the R-3 and C-2 districts such as single-family dwellings. Similarly, mixed-use development is not unique to the SAP, as the existing R-3 and C-2 districts already require a mix of uses under certain circumstances pursuant to §8-2B-4 of the Garden City Code. Accordingly, the SAP's land use framework does not, by itself, clearly establish a greater development entitlement than currently exists.

Conversely, the SAP introduces a number of requirements that may constrain development when compared to existing zoning. These include additional public open space obligations, flood protection requirements, public access and pathway improvements, Greenbelt-oriented design standards, and a requirement for larger properties to obtain approval of a Regulatory Master Plan prior to development. Properties adjacent to the Boise River Greenbelt are subject to additional restrictions intended to preserve public access and activate the river corridor. Furthermore, while the current R-3 district allows residential densities of up to 35 dwelling units per acre and the C-2 district does not establish a maximum residential density, the SAP imposes additional development standards, including height limitations and transition requirements that may reduce development potential on some properties. Collectively, these requirements may reduce developable area or otherwise limit the ability to fully utilize property when compared to existing zoning.

On balance, the SAP modifies the form, design, and organization of future development more significantly than it expands development entitlement. While the SAP promotes a more

coordinated urban development pattern and a distinct vision for the area, the existing R-3 and C-2 zoning districts already permit substantial density, a broad range of residential and nonresidential uses, and greater flexibility with respect to building height. As a result, the record does not clearly support characterizing the proposal as an upzone. Rather, the SAP establishes a more prescriptive regulatory framework intended to achieve specific urban design, public space, and connectivity objectives, while imposing additional requirements and constraints that are not present under the current zoning designations.

Garden City Code, Title 8, and Idaho State Statute Review

The below is an analysis of applicable provisions of the Garden City Development Code, Title 8, and Idaho Code.

Garden City Title 8 Code		
Code Section	Compliance	Analysis/ Discussion
Title 8, Chapter 1: General Regulations		
8-1A-4 Applicability		The regulations of Garden City Code, Title 8 Development Code of the City, shall apply and govern development and use of all properties within the corporate limits of the city.
Title 8, Chapter 2: Base Zoning District Regulations		
8-2A-1 Base Zoning Districts Established	No Compliance Concerns Identified	Specific Area Plan is a base zoning district established.
8-2A-2 Official Zoning Map	No Compliance Concerns Identified	The official zoning map will be updated if this application is approved.
8-2A-3 Zoning of Annexed Land	Not Applicable	This application is not in conjunction with an application for the annexation of lands into Garden City.
Title 8, Chapter 6, Article A: Administration		
8-6A-3 General Application Process	No Compliance Concerns Identified	The application was reviewed and considered complete within 30 days of submittal, a notice of application acceptance was issued to the applicant, and staff started processing the application.
8-6A-4 Required	No Compliance	A compliance statement, neighborhood map, master plan, and address verification were included or addressed through the staff report and analysis.

Application Information	Concerns Identified	Application waivers requested pursuant to 8-6A-4A: • A preliminary title report • Site plan • Topographic survey • Natural hazards and resource analysis, • Documentation of dedications and easements A full review of the proposal is possible without these documents. They can be reviewed in conjunction with future applications.
8-6A-7 Public Hearing Process	No Compliance Concerns Identified	This application is following the public hearing process as identified for the Specific Area Plan.
8-6B-6 Specific Area Plan Applicability	No Compliance Concerns Identified	An SAP may be utilized anywhere within the city on properties that would benefit from a master plan and phasing approach. An SAP application is encouraged for the development or redevelopment of properties defined in the comprehensive plan as TOD activity nodes, or as neighborhood destination activity nodes, or as future planning areas. An SAP application shall be required prior to the development or redevelopment of properties defined in the comprehensive plan as future planning areas that are not incorporated into the city on or before February 8, 2021. The subject area is an Activity Node: Neighborhood Destination designation in the Comprehensive Plan. Code encourages but does not require an SAP to be utilized for the development of the subject property.
8-6B-6 Specific Area Plan General Provisions	Compliant as Conditioned Conditions regarding recommended code changes and master site plan considerations have been incorporated into the draft decision document.	1. Approval of an SAP application will constitute approval of a master plan meeting the elements of section 8-7B-1.I, which establishes a framework to guide all future development within the area defined by the SAP application. 2. Development applications may be filed in conjunction with an SAP application; however, no construction shall commence on any component of an approved SAP application except upon receipt of design review, conditional use, variance, or subdivision approval consistent with the adopted SAPPO. 3. All development within an approved SAP application site shall be regulated by applicable provisions of this title and other code provisions in effect at the time the SAP application is submitted and certified as complete by the city, except as modified by the adopted SAPPO. Development applications may be processed

		concurrently and include, but are not limited to, design review, conditional use, variance, and/or subdivision. Omission of criteria from the SAPPO that are found elsewhere in the development code are not considered a conflict between the SAPPO and the development code. 4. Specific Area Plan Application Components: a. The SAP application shall be comprehensive enough to adequately guide the development or redevelopment of a property to achieve the vision of the proposed SAP district. b. The SAP application shall identify street cross section design (excluding ACHD and ITD adopted street sections), road alignments, setbacks, interface with the adjacent neighborhood, allowed, conditionally allowed, and prohibited uses, and general mix of uses and provide a general utility plan. c. The SAP application shall identify: (1) Setbacks, setback exceptions, lot coverage, and height. (2) Density. (3) Uses that are permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited. If any uses are different than section <u>8-7A-1</u> defined uses, the definition of such uses shall be provided. d. The SAP application should adhere to the general design standards concepts in Garden City Code specifically related to the development interface with street and public realms and street trees. e. The seventy-foot (70') minimum setback to the ordinary high-water mark of the Boise River cannot be amended. f. The provisions of the development code of Garden City such as, but not limited to, relating to drainage and floodplain, shall govern all standards and/or processes that are not specifically identified, set forth, or modified by the SAP application. g. If there is a conflict between other provisions of the development code of Garden City and the adopted SAPPO regulations, the SAPPO regulations shall govern. 5. Design criteria shall repeat the standards of chapter 8-4 of this title in the SAP application unless there are proposed SAP application standards that would contradict existing city standards. The following SAP application components may be different than what is contained in existing city code, but shall be included in the SAP application:
--	--	--

		a. Parking and off-street loading provisions required number and allowable sizes; and b. Design criteria including but not limited to: (1) Architectural guidelines. (2) Transportation and connectivity. (3) Sign provisions. (4) Landscaping and tree protection; and (5) Open space.
8-6B-6 Specific Area Plan Procedures	No Compliance Concerns Identified	1. The required Neighborhood Meeting was held on April 22, 2026. A preapplication conference with the planning official is required for the applicant to become acquainted with the SAP application procedures (this was not done as this is a city-initiated project). 2. Application: The SAP application shall be submitted in accordance with article A, "General Provisions," of this chapter. 3. Public Hearings: Public hearings shall be held on the SAP application as set forth in article A, "General Provisions," of this chapter. 4. Official Zoning Map: Upon approval of the SAP application, the official zoning map of Garden City shall be amended showing the affected property zoned as an SAPD zone. 5. Development Code: Upon approval of the SAP application, this title shall be updated to include the SAPPO. 6. Development applications shall be administered as required by section 8-6A-2, Table 8-6A-1, Authorities and Processes. 7. Amendments: A previously adopted SAPD zone may be amended at any time and may be amended simultaneously with the processing of a development application. Amendments that include the following will follow the procedures for a development code amendment: a. Changes that would modify or reallocate the allowable building height, allowed uses, mix of uses, or density of a development; or b. Changes that would substantially alter the function, use and enjoyment or amount of land dedicated to open space, amenities, trails, natural areas, or public facilities; or

		c. Modify any other aspect of the SAPD zone that would significantly change the overall character of the SAPD zone; or d. A series of minor amendments that cumulatively change the overall character of the SAPD zone; or e. A change or series of changes that would change the character of the interface of the SAPD zone with the surrounding neighborhood; or f. Any change that the planning official deems a major change to the intended nature of the SAPD zone. 8. Design Review Amendments: Amendments that include the following will be reviewed by the design review consultant(s): a. Modifications to the layout and design elements, such as design guidelines, landscaping, and amenities, which do not modify SAPD zone regulations or the phasing plan; or b. Modifications to the infrastructure plan are not tied to the phasing plan.
--	--	--

Idaho Code

Idaho Code 67-6511	No Compliance Concerns Identified	The Local Land Use Planning Act requires that zoning ordinance including zoning districts: Establish procedures that regulate development. Provide clear and objective standards. Be evaluated by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Commission must consider the delivery of services and provide for a regulatory takings analysis. Be compliant with the Comprehensive Plan.
Idaho Code 67-6519	No Compliance Concerns Identified	Garden City Code and procedures for the application granting process are consistent with The Local Land Use Planning Act Application Granting Process. Whenever a governing board or zoning or planning and zoning commission grants or denies an application, it shall specify: (a) The ordinance and standards used in evaluating the application; (b) The reasons for approval or denial; and

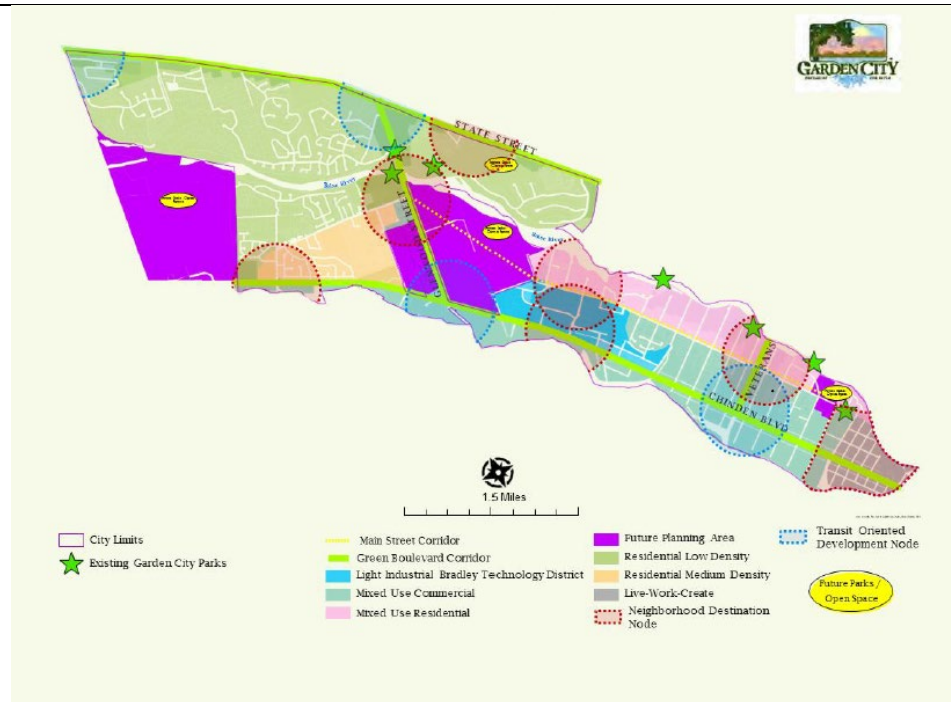
		(c) The actions, if any, that the applicant could take to obtain approval. Every final decision rendered shall provide or be accompanied by notice to the applicant regarding the applicant's right to request a regulatory taking analysis pursuant to section 67-8003, Idaho Code. An applicant denied an application or aggrieved by a final decision concerning matters identified in section 67-6521(1)(a), Idaho Code, may within twenty-eight (28) days after all remedies have been exhausted under local ordinance seek judicial review under the procedures provided by chapter 52, title 67, Idaho Code.
--	--	---

Plans and Policy Review

The below is an analysis of applicable policies and plans.

Other Items Reviewed	
Plan/Policy	Discussion/ Analysis
Garden City Comprehensive Plan	Idaho Code 67-6511 notes that after considering the comprehensive plan and other evidence gathered through the public hearing process, ordinance amendments may be adopted or rejected, so as not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. Subsequently, an application need not satisfy every aspirational goal of the comprehensive plan, so long as it is not in direct conflict with specific provisions of the comprehensive plan.¹ LAND USE This application contains five future land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan: a) Future Planning Area b) Mixed Use Residential c) Mixed Use Commercial d) Main Street e) Future Park/ Open Space

¹ See [2023 Givens Pursley Land Use Handbook; page 41, with specifics beginning on page 46](#) for further discussion.



These designations are defined as:

MIXED USE RESIDENTIAL: The mixed-use residential area is north of Adams/ Alworth Street. This designation allows for residential and commercial uses in a form and scale that is residential in character and design. A mix of residential; small scale office and retail; and public and semi-public uses are appropriate in this district. Regulations for this area should focus on form more than use, with a maximum height of two stories.

MIXED USE COMMERCIAL: The mixed-use commercial designation is for the area south of Adams Street. The intent of this designation is to create an area for mixed uses, including residential, office, retail, and small scale industrial, that are more urban in character than in the mixed-use residential area. Three-story buildings and 40%- 60% lot coverage, with aggregated open spaces for pocket parks should guide the development pattern in this area.

MAIN STREET CORRIDOR: Create a “Main Street” corridor as a principal street with a mix and concentration of uses along Adams/ Alworth Street with an alignment through a redeveloped Idaho Expo site connecting with the Activity Node at Glenwood and Marigold Streets. The corridor should have additional activity nodes along the street that connect the main street to the arterial roadways and/or the Boise River. The activity nodes should be limited to not dilute their function as a center. The focus of development should be on minimum front yard setbacks, parking on the street and behind buildings, and pedestrian amenities. The center of the activity nodes on the Main Street

	corridor should be integrated vertically with more height at the principle main street intersection of the node. FUTURE PLANNING AREA: Future Planning Areas have been identified for large parcels of vacant or under-developed land including the area west of the city within the Area of City Impact; the area around the Idaho Expo Center, including the Idaho Department of Transportation (ITD) District 3 Headquarters; and the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) property at 37th and Adams. This designation is intended to identify these areas for further master plan or site-specific planning efforts. The large size of these areas provides a unique opportunity for master planning with consideration for a mix of uses and residential housing types; street, sidewalk and bicycle networks and connectivity; spaces for public uses including parks, open spaces, plazas; and infrastructure improvements including water and sewer. Each of the designated Future Planning Areas presents unique opportunities and challenges that should be considered in the area's master planning. ACHD Site: * Opportunity to open additional access and river frontage to the public. * Regeneration of the existing operations and maintenance yard along the river to the highest and best use. * Challenge in creating higher intensity use of the site that transitions and is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. EXISTING PARKS AND PROPOSED GREEN SPACE AND/OR PARKS: Areas that are devoted to green spaces including golf courses, open spaces, and park uses, or are proposed for green spaces are shown on the Land Use Map. Green spaces contribute to the health and well-being of the community. Existing parks should be preserved. The location shown on the map of future green spaces is just an approximation, and the design of future spaces should be well integrated into the development plan for the property, surrounding context, with maximum opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle access. While the proposal contemplates greater development intensity than described in certain future land use designation narratives, staff finds the proposal remains consistent with the broader goals, vision, and Future Planning Area designation. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES This application is supported by the following Goals and Objectives: Goals • 1 Nurture the City • 2 Improve the City Image
--	---

- 6 Diversity in Housing
- 10 Plan for the Future
- 11 Serve the City
- 12 Evolve as a Destination

Objectives and Action Steps

- Amend the Land Use Code to improve the quality of development design through new land-use districts; zoning standards; and design regulations and review process.
- Create a premier destination place to live, work, and recreate.
- Encourage new and distinctive neighborhoods.
- Encourage high quality design and landscaping, including the use of water features, in new development.
- Explore the opportunities to create distinctive neighborhoods by defining the unique attributes of the individual neighborhood, the incentives needed to encourage those characteristics, and the design, architecture, and development standards to guide future development.
- Create a vision for the design of all streets and highways consistent with the city's urban setting.
- Include the pedestrian zone in the highway right-of-way to satisfy the City's Development Code requirements for open space.
- Create public gathering places at multiple locations throughout the city.
- Beautiful and landscape.
- Encourage the use of non-potable water sources that are available to new development, including the installation of pressurized irrigation systems where appropriate.
- Beautify streets, sidewalks and gateways with landscaping, trees, and public art.
- Continue to require sidewalks and landscaping in all new development, and in major alterations and re-use of existing commercial sites.
- Allow relocation of canals and drains where appropriate. Require mitigation of the impacts that closing water systems have on the groundwater and habitat.
- Create pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections.
- Provide a transition in the height and scale of development that is compatible with the existing surrounding neighborhoods.
- Support a positive business environment.
- Create a premier destination for work, recreation, entertainment, culture, and commerce.
- Market the city to smaller businesses and support a positive environment for entrepreneurial businesses.

Garden City Sidewalk Policy	This will be reviewed with the reviews of the development as it is proposed.
Garden City Street Light Policy	This will be reviewed with the reviews of the development as it is proposed.
Garden City Transportation Needs List	The proposed Heron Commons SAP District is consistent with adopted planning and transportation policies. The Transportation Needs List identifies key connectivity improvements in this area, including the extension of Reed Street, the connection of Adams Street, recognition of the Thurman Mill Canal as a pedestrian corridor, and the role of 38th Street as a primary route for connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to the Greenbelt.