

# Bonner County Planning Department

*"Protecting property rights and enhancing property value"*

1500 Highway 2, Suite 208, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

Phone (208) 265-1458

Email: [planning@bonnercountvid.gov](mailto:planning@bonnercountvid.gov) - Web site: [www.bonnercountvid.gov](http://www.bonnercountvid.gov)



## **BONNER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**COMPONENT: PUBLIC AIRPORT FACILITIES**

**ADOPTED UPDATE: APRIL 12, 2023**

---

**Table of Contents**

Introduction .....1

Chapter 1 - Bonner County Public Airports .....3

Bibliography .....7

# Introduction

The Bonner County Comprehensive Plan Transportation component was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on August 15, 2002. Chapter 9 of the component addressed airports in Bonner County giving details of the four public airports and acknowledging private airstrips and heliports throughout the county. The Comprehensive Plan's Implementation component was adopted on August 30, 2005. Section 2.9 of the Implementation component has no goals, objectives nor policies pertaining to airports.

Idaho Senate Bill 1265 effective July 1, 2014, amended Idaho Code Title 21, Chapter 5, Airport Zoning Act, and Title 67, Chapter 65, Local Land Use Planning. The legislation was aimed at requiring more proactive land use compatibility planning around the state's airports by city and county entities through the local comprehensive land use planning process. The new legislation will result in closer collaboration between local zoning authorities, local airport authorities and the Idaho Transportation Department Aeronautics Division (ITD Aero) in the interest of flight and community safety. The main provisions of the new legislation are as follows:

- Identifies; in 67-6502; public airports as essential community facilities that provide safe transportation alternatives and contribute to the economy of the state.
- Requires; in 67-6508; that planning and zoning commissions consider as part of their comprehensive plan, with the assistance of ITD (if requested by the local agency) and the local airport manager (or person in charge of the airport), the current and future needs and community impacts of the airport. Political subdivisions must now include a separate section "q" in their comprehensive plans specifically addressing Public Airport Facilities within their jurisdiction or if impacted by an airport outside their jurisdiction. Component "q" listed in Idaho Code 67-6508 reads as follows:

(q) Public Airport Facilities — An analysis prepared with assistance from the Idaho transportation department division of aeronautics, if requested by the planning and zoning commission, and the manager or person in charge of the local public airport identifying, but not limited to, facility locations, the scope and type of airport operations, existing and future planned airport development and infrastructure needs, and the economic impact to the community.

- Requires; in 67-6509, 67-6512, 67-6515A, and 67-6516; that planning and zoning commissions (and their governing boards) notify the local airport manager (or person in charge) when recommending, adopting, amending, repealing their comprehensive plan. In addition, the notification requirement pertaining to the local airport manager (or person in charge of the airport) applies to other land use actions that require public notice (i.e. Special Use Permits, Conditional Use Permits, Transfer of Development Rights, and Variances) when encroaching on the airport or which may create an aviation hazard.

In 2014 ITD Aero provided the Idaho Airports Land Use Guidelines document for counties and cities to use in determining means of protecting airports from non-compatible land uses and existing adjacent land uses from negative impacts of airports. The document also contains Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) and ITD Aero requirements and guidelines for determining how to ensure safety of aircraft through the critical zones on take-offs and landings.

Title 14 CFR Part 77, Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace, provides the basis for airspace protection requirements at public-use airports at the federal level by identifying and defining critical airspace surfaces around airports.

FAA Grant Assurance #20 states, "Hazard Removal and Mitigation. Airport sponsors will take appropriate action to assure that such terminal airspace as is required to protect instrument and visual operations to the airport will be adequately cleared and protected..."

FAA Grant Assurance #21 states, "It (sponsor) will take appropriate action, to the extent reasonable, including the adoption of zoning laws, to restrict the use of land adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of the airport to activities and purposes compatible with normal airport operations, including landing and takeoff of aircraft."

State Grant Assurance #23 states, "The Sponsor should have compatible land use and height zoning for the airport to prevent incompatible land uses and the creation or establishment of structures or objects of natural growth which would constitute hazards or obstructions to aircraft operating to, from, on, or in the vicinity of the subject airport."

# Chapter 1 - Bonner County Public Airports

There are currently four public-use airports in Bonner County. According to the FAA and ITD Aero, a public-use airport is open to and for public use without prior permission, and without restrictions within the physical capacities of available facilities. Two of the four public-use airports in the county are owned and operated by Bonner County: Sandpoint and Priest River. Both airports are also eligible for and receive airport improvement grants from the FAA and ITD Aero. The other airports, Cavanaugh Bay and Priest Lake are owned by ITD Aero and the United States Forest Service (USFS) respectively.

Bonner County has developed master plans for both the Priest River and Sandpoint airports. The master plans provide details for most of the analyses required by Idaho Code 67-6508(q). (See the current airport master plans at <https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/departments/airport>)

The airstrip at Cavanaugh Bay is operated by ITD Aero, is categorized as a Community airstrip and is a general aviation airport open to the public. The US Forest Service maintains the airstrip at Priest Lake, categorized as a Developed airstrip, across State Highway 57 from the Priest Lake Ranger District office and is also open to the public. There are no master plans for either of these airports but the same airspace protection rules and guidelines apply.

Protection of airspace at all four public airports can be ensured by controlling the height of buildings, structure, towers and other objects in a manner consistent with 14 CFR Part 77, Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace. At each of the four airports the flight paths at each end of the runways pass over private properties. At Priest River and Sandpoint the north approaches pass over private properties in unincorporated areas. At Cavanaugh Bay both north and south approaches pass over private properties as well as Idaho Department of Lands property. At the Priest Lake airstrip the south approach passes over some private properties as well as US Forest Service lands.

Part 77 defines the critical airspace for visual runways servicing small aircraft (12,500 pound maximum take-off weight) as an imaginary approach surface starting at the ends of the runways (primary surfaces) extending along the runway's centerline a distance of 5000 feet at a 20:1 gradient and with a width at the upper end of the gradient of 1250 feet. The 20:1 gradient for 5000 feet results in an approach surface altitude of 250 feet above the surface elevation at the airport's primary surface. All four public airports in Bonner County need to have this amount of protection of airspace approaches.

Both the Sandpoint and Priest River airports are entirely within the corporate limits of the cities of Sandpoint and Priest River, respectively. The master plans for both the Priest River and Sandpoint airports describe the scope and type of airport operations and existing and future airport development and infrastructure needs. The master plans describe various runway protection zones both perpendicular from the runway centerlines and laterally from the ends of the runways. At both Priest River and Sandpoint the only unincorporated county areas lie north of the existing runways.





*Figure 1 Sandpoint airport showing 5000 feet of critical zone north into the unincorporated area*

The FAA and Idaho standards for critical zones require 5000 feet off the ends of runways to be kept free from structures or vegetation intruding into the flight path for the runways. Land use proposals



on parcels within the approach surfaces proposing development at a certain height above the ground or within a certain proximity to the airport are required per Part 77 to submit FAA Form 7460-1 to the FAA for determination that such development will not adversely impact airspace or the safety of aircraft operators.



*Figure 2 Priest River Airport showing 5000 feet of critical zone north into the unincorporated area*



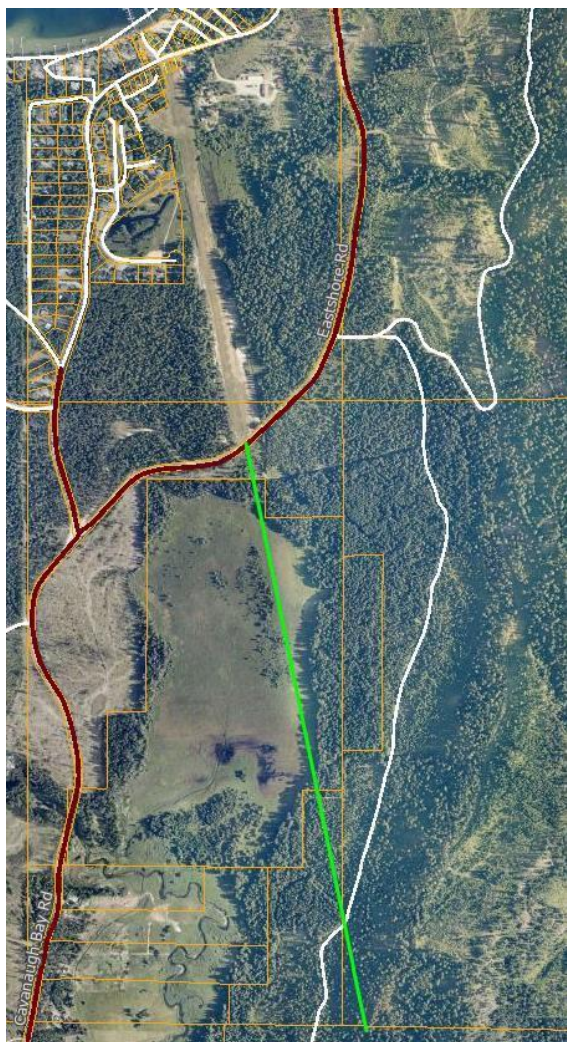


Figure 3 Cavannaugh Bay airstrip showing 5000 feet of critical area into private properties

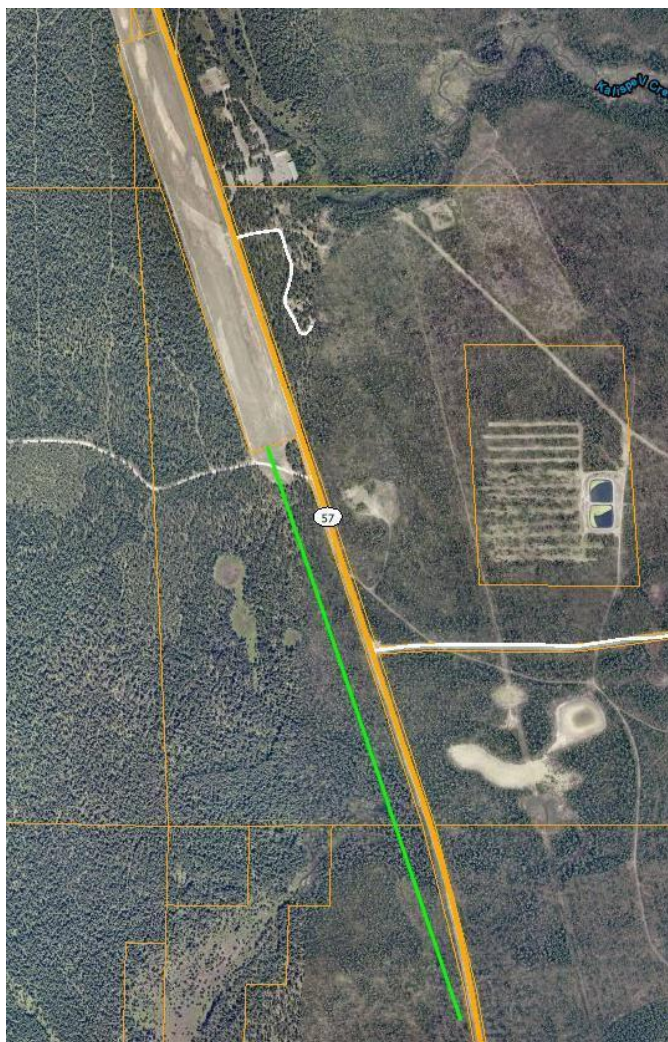


Figure 4 Priest Lake airstrip showing 5000 feet of critical area into private properties



## **Bibliography**

Bonner County Revised Code, Title 12. Sandpoint, Idaho: Bonner County.

Larry Wasden, Idaho Attorney General. Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines. Guidelines, Boise: Idaho Attorney General's Office, 2012.