

Bonner County Planning Department

"Protecting property rights and enhancing property value"

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BONNER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

COMPONENT: SCHOOL FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

ADOPTED UPDATE – MARCH 22, 2023

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Introduction

The School Facilities and Transportation component of the plan is to provide an analysis of public school capacity and transportation considerations associated with future development. The gist of analyzing the public school capacity is to ensure that school facilities are adequate for the present and anticipated future student population at each school facility.

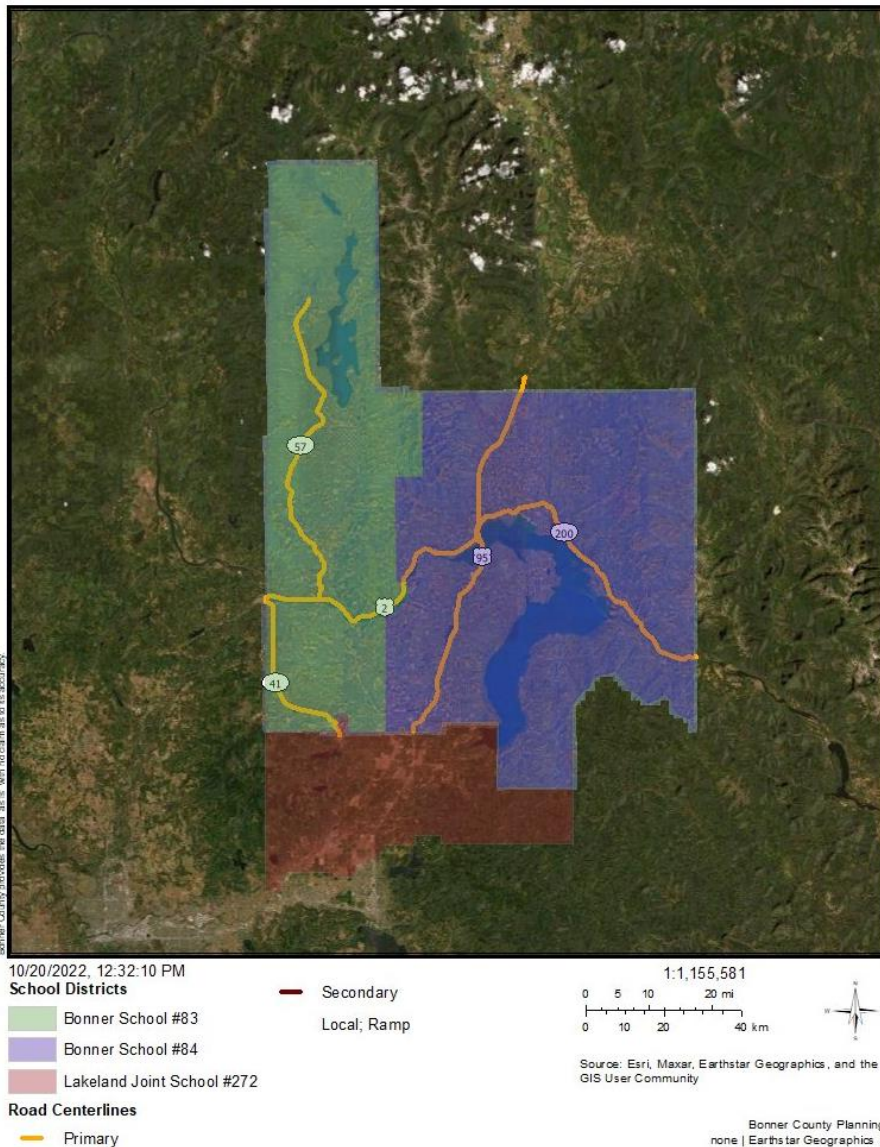
The School Facilities and Transportation component in the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan was most recently adopted by the Bonner County Board of Commissioners on March 13, 2013. The component shows data provided by the public school Districts regarding District student population over four decades and, for 2012, shows student population versus school facility capacity. The enrollment data shows an increase over time but each year the Districts use the previous year's enrollment as the starting point for classroom planning.

Student enrollment as of September, 2022, and each school facility's capacities as reported by each school District are shown below. Also shown are attendance zone maps for Lake Pend Oreille and Lakeland Combined School districts.

Figure 1. Bonner County School Districts

Bonner County School Districts

- Lake Pend Oreille 84
- West Bonner 83
- Lakeland Combined 272



Chapter 1 - Lake Pend Oreille School District 84 (LPOSD)

In 2018, LPOSD contracted Longwell & Trapp Architects and Coleman Engineering to conduct a facilities study. The study found that certain facilities need to be replaced or substantially expanded.

“We recommend Washington Elementary, Northside Elementary and Lake Pend Oreille High School be replaced with new building. This will be more cost effective than remodeling the current buildings. Clark Fork Jr/Sr. High School needs an addition to replace the small industrial arts and shop facility along with remodeling to accommodate the current teaching program. Sandpoint Middle School can be remodeled and additions constructed to accommodate facility and educational needs. Southside Elementary needs structural repairs to the gymnasium roof and remodeling to extend its useful life.”

School	School Capacity	Current Enrollment
Farmin Stidwell Elementary	488	482
Hope Elementary	143	115
Kootenai Elementary	346	341
Northside Elementary	137	192
Sagle Elementary	352	282
Southside Elementary	163	177
Washington Elementary	306	301
Sandpoint Middle	652	521
Clark Fork Jr./ Sr. High	294	115
Sandpoint High	1212	1096
Lake Pend Oreille High	73	88

*Capacity based on Teater Consulting 2015 Exhibit 4-7

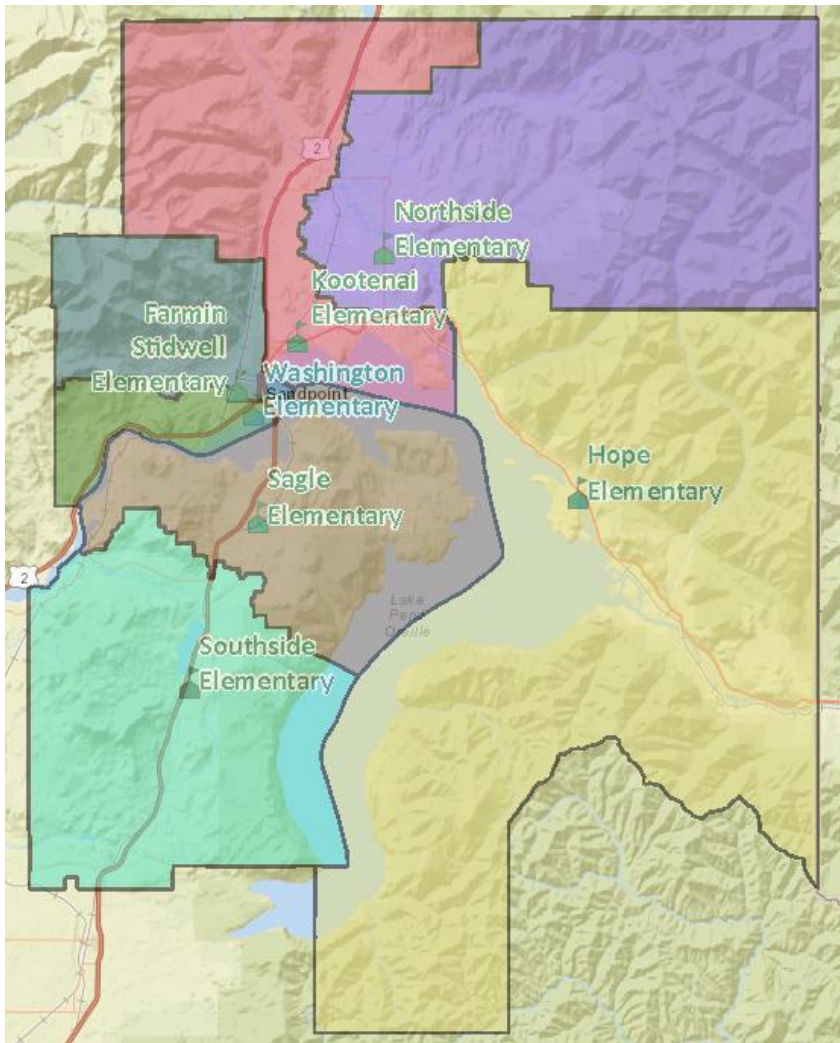
Enrollment as of 9/9/2022

The table shows that at the start of the 2022-2023 school year LPOSD has three elementary schools with student populations approaching the facilities’ capacities. The District has two elementary schools and one high school that have student populations beyond those facilities’ capacities.

Each of the District’s seven elementary schools has an attendance zone. Parents may petition to have their children attend an elementary school in a different attendance zone but for the most part students attend the elementary school serving the zone in which they live. As the enrollment table shows, 1096 students are enrolled at Sandpoint High School and 88 are enrolled at the Lake Pend Oreille High School. These students are from all over the District, both cities and unincorporated area except for the east and south ends of the District from which 115 students are enrolled in the Clark Fork Jr/Sr High School.

LPOSD 84 School Attendance Zones

Within the area served by LPOSD there are hundreds of parcels of land that can be developed residentially thus generating more students with the need to attend public schools. It is up to the District to determine if land use actions (building permit, subdivision, zone change or planned unit development) creates sufficient impact on school facilities and to suggest mitigation measures for the county decision makers to consider.



Chapter 2 - West Bonner School District 83 (WBSD)

The table shows that WBSD has one elementary school and one junior high school approaching the facilities’ capacities. The District has one elementary school beyond the facility’s capacity. Students are enrolled in the school facility nearest where they live, therefore, Priest Lake Elementary serves the Priest Lake area as far south as the Gleason Mcabee Road area. Priest River Elementary serves the area south of Gleason-Mcabee Road along State Highway 57 and west and east along US Highway 2. Idaho Hill Elementary serves the south portion of the District from Oldtown to the Kootenai County line. Priest River Lamanna High School and Priest River Junior High School serve the entire District’s public student population.

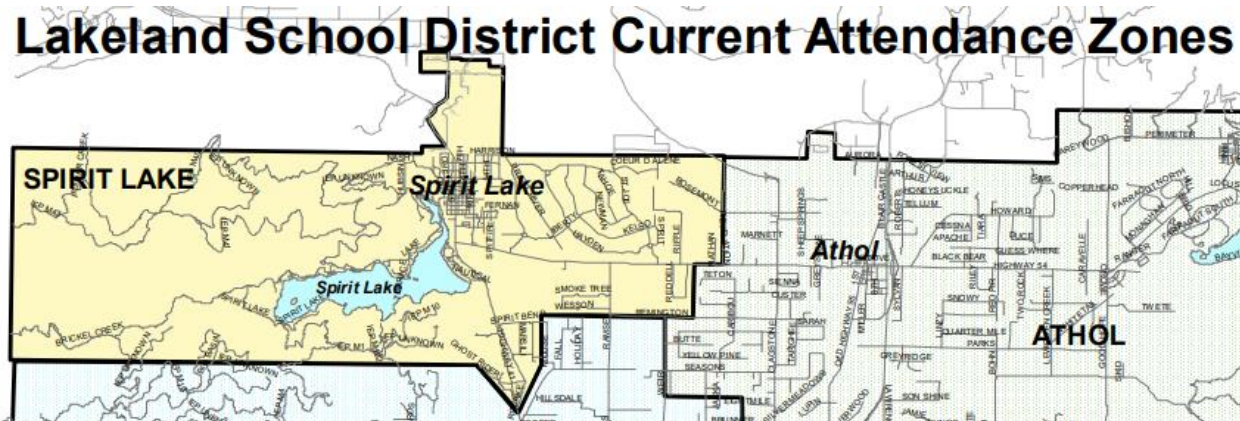
27- September-22 Student Enrollment and Building Capacities

School	Current Enrollment	Student Maximum Enrollment	Student
Priest River Lamanna High	320	487	
Priest River Elementary School	435	445	
Priest River Junior High	190	200	
Idaho Hill Elementary	158	140	
Priest Lake Elementary	64	100	

Within the area served by West Bonner School District there are hundreds of parcels of land that can be developed residentially thus generating more students with the need to attend public schools. It is up to the District to determine if land use actions (building permit, subdivision, zone change or planned unit development) creates sufficient impact on school facilities to warrant mitigation.

Chapter 3 - Lakeland Combined School District 272

Lakeland School District Current Attendance Zones



The Lakeland Combined School District 272 annexed two relatively small areas in southern Bonner County over a decade ago. Public school students living in Sections 29, 30, 31 and 32, Township 54 North, Range 4 West attend Spirit Lake Elementary and Timberlake Middle and Senior High Schools. Public school students living Section 32, Township 54 North, Range 3 West attend Athol Elementary and Timberlake Middle and Senior High Schools. Both areas are zoned Rural with 5 acre minimum lot size with much of areas having homes on the lots and parcels. The area in Range 3 West consists of 22 lots or parcels of which 6 are 10 acres in size and 2 of the 5 acre parcels are vacant according to county assessor's records. The area in Range 4 West has some 90 residential lots or parcels of which approximately 15 are not developed with a home, according to county assessor's records. If all the lots or parcels presently without homes were developed into homesites based on the lot or parcel sizes approximately 38 additional homes could be built. The 2020 Decennial Census found that for all of Bonner County the average family has 2.92 persons. The census also found that 15% of Bonner County families are children between the ages of 5 and 17. Using these statistics it is estimated that if all the land in the two Bonner County areas of the Lakeland Combined School District were fully developed into residences there could be a student increase of 17 students that could attend Lakeland Combined School District facilities. It is up to the District to determine if land use actions (building permit, subdivision, zone change or planned unit development) creates sufficient impact on school facilities to warrant mitigation.

Chapter 4 - School Funding

Public school facilities in Idaho are to be paid for using the endowment fund set in place by Article IX of the Idaho Constitution. The topic of school facility and operation funding has been an important topic for decades. School Districts 83 and 84 in Bonner County have had to rely for many decades on school bond issues, paid off by property tax levies, to fund school facilities as well as maintenance and operations in addition to the allocation of the school endowment funds, grants and gifts.

In 1992 the Idaho Legislature enacted Chapter 82 of Title 67 which enables counties and cities to develop a system of development impact fees to provide an equitable program for planning and financing public facilities needed to serve new growth and development. Section 8204(24) provides the definition of "public facilities" however, the list does not include public school facilities, therefore, impact fees cannot be developed for public school facilities or school transportation.

School facility capacity is based primarily on the number of students each facility can reasonably hold without overcrowding. Every student enrolled uses up part of that capacity, not just new students enrolling at that school. Each school district has to determine how to deal with insufficient facility capacity. The county requests comments from the school districts on proposed land use actions (subdivisions, zone changes or planned unit developments) to determine any impacts of on school facilities and recommend mitigation measures for the county decision makers to consider. Typical land use actions in Bonner County consist of a small number of new lots or even single building location permits. Such small land use actions may have an incremental impact on school facilities but of such minute size there is no easy to determine mitigation measure. If a land use action of large acreage were to be proposed in Bonner County there could be grounds to offset the impact of additional student enrollment in a District that has over-capacity facilities by dedicating a parcel or lot of land to the District. In the past such large land use actions as Stoneridge or Clagstone Meadows were on track to dedicate land for siting of new elementary schools but those potential developments did not occur.

Chapter 5 - School Transportation

Each of the three public school districts serving Bonner County residents provides their own fleet of school buses for transporting students to and from elementary, middle/junior and senior high schools. All busing regulations for the School Districts come from SISBO-- Standards for Idaho School Buses and Operations. The standards require busing of students residing one and one-half miles or more from the schools unless it is determined that the walking route within the one and one-half mile distance is unsafe. For unsafe situations the SISBO uses a seven item scoring sheet for determining eligibility for Safety Busing within the one and one-half mile distance.

Due to various circumstances, parents may decide to transport their students to and from school themselves rather than by school district busing. As an example, at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year the LPOSD average student ridership to each rural elementary school is as follows.

Bus Ridership Daily Counts AVG	Enrollment
Sagle Elementary – 131	283
Southside – 97	177
Northside – 98	191
Hope – 73	115

Ridership to the Middle School and High Schools in the LPOSD is as follows:

Daily Ridership SHS 170 SMS 187 CFHS 20 LPO 14

In lieu payments may be made for passengers living in the non-transportation zone upon filing the appropriate application. The non-transportation zone is any area more than one- and one-half miles from either a school or established bus stop, within the district's boundaries (Idaho Code 33-1503).

All public school districts follow the SISBO regulations for busing and walking. It is the school district's responsibility to determine bus and walking routes, bus stops and safety measures and to work with developers on bus stop locations and walking routes.

Chapter 6 - Subarea Plans regarding School Facilities and Transportation

The county formed five subarea committees to gather input for various areas to determine local goals.

Subarea committee emphasis, as well as public input during workshops, was to minimize adverse impacts on educational facilities by encouraging coordination between developers and the school District and to involve the school District in proactive reviews of development applications to determine particular school needs and concerns. In addition, the issue was raised about the need to consider the long term consequences of land use proposals on school facilities. These goals can be met by informing the appropriate school district of proposed land use actions and requesting comments from the district on the impacts of the development and any recommended mitigation measures for the county decision makers to consider.