

LONG RANGE FACILITY PLAN REVIEW 2008

OVERVIEW

Post Falls School District is in the process of reviewing and revising its entire strategic plan. The Board of Trustees charged the administration to develop and implement a plan to review the district's mission, goals and objectives to ensure they continue to reflect the students', parents', staff's and community's needs and expectations. A significant goal area of the strategic plan is in the area of facility needs. A committee of staff, parents and patrons was developed to review and update the long range facility plan and mesh it with the overall strategic plan. This review process includes a thorough study of the student enrollment trends and overall population demographics as well as a study of construction history and the status of current facilities.

Introduction

Sound planning strategies require that the district develop ten-year Long Range Facility Plans. However, the district has reviewed its Long Range Facility Plan on an average of every four to five years to ensure that the plan is still relevant to changing conditions in the community. The Board of Trustees may require that this plan be reviewed before the ten-year life of the plan ends.

A committee of 30 patrons, parents and staff members was charged with the task of providing the Board of Trustees with recommendations related to the short and long term facility needs that will accommodate the consistent student enrollment growth in the greater Post Falls area. The committee began meeting in May, 2008, and concluded their work in November, 2008. They were asked to identify and sequence future new construction projects, potential remodels and land acquisition. The committee was also asked to provide flexibility within their recommendations that will allow the Board and the district to respond to future conditions related to the timing and composition of levy requests necessary to provide funding for identified facility needs. The recommendations are designed to serve as a general guide to the district related to future facility needs.

The committee reviewed the Long Range Facility Plan developed in 2002. Specifically they considered projects that were identified in the previous facility plan that were not completed between 2002 and 2008. Those projects include an addition to River City Middle School and an auditorium at Post Falls High School.

They also considered information regarding existing facilities capacities and functionality, student enrollment data trends, overall population demographic trends, election history and general construction history. The committee took into account various fiscal issues and other factors that may influence the ability of the district to meet its facility goals.

The following facility planning recommendations are based on two assumptions: that the Post Falls School District student enrollment will increase by 2% to 3% per year for the next decade, and that the community will support construction levy elections to fund identified projects. The district may need to modify the recommendations in regards to timing of construction and projected sequence if these two assumptions do not prove out over time. For example, the district may need to accelerate the facility construction schedule if student enrollment growth exceeds 3%. It also may need to delay proposed projects if the opposite takes place.

The following recommendations are not ordered in reference to importance. For the most part the recommendations are ordered based on when the recommendation will need to be completed. For example, based on the most current demographic information it appears the district will need to first construct the River City Middle School Addition.

The committee and the district administration respectfully submit this plan to the Board of Trustees of the Post Falls School District for its consideration.

Recommendation- River City Middle School Addition

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees proceed with the plans identified in the previous Long Range Plan to add a second story classroom addition and kitchen expansion to the existing River City Middle School. The addition of the classroom addition and kitchen will expand the student capacity from 500 students to 750 students thus relieving student overcrowding. It was the consensus of the committee that this recommendation be acted upon as early as 2010-2011, or when the total district middle school enrollment meets or exceeds 1,325 students.

Rationale

The committee reviewed the recommendation from the Long Range Facility Plan developed in 2002 and agreed that the planning done at that time related to the middle school facility is still valid and relevant. The recommendation in 2002 was to build a “starter” middle school which was defined as being “a school initially built to accommodate 500 students.” The Board of Trustees authorized the administration to develop a detailed plan of a “starter” middle school building that would be designed to accommodate the addition of a second floor with ten classrooms on the west wing. The original design included infrastructure that would accommodate approximately 800 students with the exception of the kitchen facilities. The plan was to expand the kitchen at the time that the classroom addition would be built. The 2008 committee concurs with the 2002 recommendation and the actions of the board to design a middle school that will accommodate the above additions. River City Middle School was constructed in 2003 and opened in 2004. Estimated cost of the project would be \$4,000,000.

Action Plan

- 1 The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation-River City Middle School Addition.
- 2 The district should embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the community regarding the addition.
- 3 If necessary, a committee of parents, patrons and district staff would draw new middle school boundaries based on the middle school enrollment at that time.

Recommendation- Auditorium

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider constructing an auditorium at Post Falls High School. Furthermore, the committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider building the auditorium as soon as possible considering all district facility priorities and the community's economic status. Specifically it is recommended that the Board consider tying the auditorium to the funding measure for the River City Middle School addition delineated in Recommendation- River City Middle School Addition.

Rationale

The current high school building was designed to add an approximately 600 seat performing arts auditorium to the west of the current stage. The committee agreed that a comprehensive high school program for over 1,500 students must include programs, classes and presentations that can only be effectively delivered in an auditorium environment. Drama, instrumental music and vocal music classes are just a few of the curricular offerings that need an appropriate venue to perform. The auditorium would be used for class meetings, lectures and other presentations as well. As always, the facility should be made available to the larger community when the school is not using it. The project is estimated to cost \$2,200,000.

Action Plan

- 1 The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation- Auditorium.
- 2 The district should embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the community regarding the proposed auditorium prior to a levy that includes proposed funding this project.
- 3 Upon successful passage of a funding levy that includes an auditorium, the district should work with the appropriate architects, staff and patrons/parents to develop the detailed plans for the project completion.

Recommendation- Auxiliary Gymnasium

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider constructing an auxiliary gymnasium at Post Falls High School. Furthermore, the committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider building the gymnasium as soon as possible, considering all district facility priorities and the community's economic status. The gymnasium should be designed to handle physical education classes and should be a multiple use facility. A small number of bleacher seats should be included for smaller extracurricular activities such as freshman basketball or volleyball. It is recommended that the Board of Trustees consider tying the auxiliary gymnasium to the funding measure for the River City Middle School addition delineated in Recommendation- River City Middle School Addition.

Rationale

The district added significant student capacity to Post Falls High School with the addition of the eight classrooms on the east side of the building. The additional classrooms will provide instruction space to accommodate up to 1,750 students. The original high school non-classroom infrastructure was designed to effectively handle only 1,600 students. Post Falls High School has approximately 1,600 students this year. The existing infrastructure is at capacity or beyond. The district could consider constructing an auxiliary gymnasium on the southwest side of the school.

Currently, the health and physical education departments do not have sufficient space to conduct all of the classes that should be offered. The school currently is using all available physical education spaces for classes including the Arena, both mezzanines, the wrestling room and the commons area. There is a particular need to add fitness classes in an effort to help with the national child obesity epidemic. An auxiliary gymnasium would eliminate the current overcrowding in the one existing gym and would allow the district to add necessary classes to accommodate additional students and to provide more fitness opportunities for children. The cost of an auxiliary gym on the west side of the current gym would be approximately \$2,250,000. An 8,000 square foot gym would not include the extensive spectator seating and infrastructure that exists in the current performance gym.

Action Plan

1. The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation- Auxiliary Gymnasium.
2. The district should embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the community regarding the proposed gymnasium prior to a levy that includes proposed funding this project.

3. Upon successful passage of a funding levy that includes a second gymnasium, the district should work with the appropriate architects, staff and patrons/parents to develop the detailed plans for the project completion.
4. Develop ways to replace any parking space lost due to the construction of a second gymnasium.

Recommendation- New Elementary School

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider constructing an additional elementary school when the total district elementary enrollment meets or exceeds 2,600 students. Based on current student enrollment projections, a new elementary school should be available for student occupation in the fall of 2016.

Rationale

The district opened West Ridge Elementary School in the fall of 2008. West Ridge Elementary School has a student capacity of 500 students. The district was able to relieve major overcrowding issues at Seltice Elementary School and Prairie View Elementary School. The district has room for approximately 300 additional elementary students. There is room for growth that would delay the building of a new elementary school for many years. However, this recommendation may need to be modified if the district is unable to deal with short term enrollment issues at the Frederick Post Kindergarten School and New Vision Alternative High School in the Frederick Post Education Center in an acceptable fashion. A new elementary school is estimated to cost \$10,000,000

Action Plan

1. The Board of Trustees should review this recommendation in 2014 or as needed to assess whether the recommendation and especially the timing of a proposed additional elementary is still on target.
2. The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation-New Elementary School.
3. The district should embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the community regarding the proposed additional elementary school prior to a levy that includes proposed funding for this project.
4. Prior to a levy election to seek voter approval for the funding of an additional elementary school, the district should develop an educational specification committee comprised of patrons, parents, staff and technical consultants whose task is to establish basic plans for school.

5. Prior to a levy election to seek voter approval for the funding of an additional elementary school, the district should develop a committee of parents, patrons and staff to discuss whether the placement of kindergarten students should be in the students' home school or in a separate facility that could be the new building or another existing facility.
6. Upon successful passage of a funding levy the district should establish a committee of patrons, parents and staff members to assist with the development of new elementary school student attendance boundaries.

Recommendation- Frederick Post Education Center

The committee recommends that the district consider the administrative options related to resolving future overcrowding at the Frederick Post Education Center, listed below, only if necessary. They would include, but are not limited to, the following solutions:

- Move kindergartners to elementary schools. At such time that the Frederick Post facility can no longer accommodate all of the kindergarten students, it's feasible that the district could move some kindergarteners into available classrooms at existing elementary schools.
- Move New Vision High School to an alternative location. The district could pursue renting or purchasing an existing building or constructing a new building. Costs would be variable depending on the solution selected. New Vision currently occupies approximately 10,000 square feet in the Frederick Post Education Center.
- Provide relief to existing student attendance issues in the Frederick Post Building by utilizing the future Boys and Girls Club facility that is planned to be constructed directly across the street from the Frederick Post Education Center. The district has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Boys and Girls Club related to the use of the facility when they are not using it for after school programs. The 18,000 square foot facility will have classrooms, a technology lab, a commons area and a gym. The entire Frederick Post building is 26,000 square feet.

Rationale

The Frederick Post Kindergarten School and New Vision Alternative High School are fully utilizing the Frederick Post Education Center. Four portable classrooms have been added to the facility in recent years. The Frederick Post Kindergarten has 460 students enrolled, and New Vision High School has 100 students enrolled. Both schools have reached their capacity. County wide census information indicates that the trend is to have fewer school-aged children enroll in schools over the next few years. If this trend does not materialize in Post Falls School District, the district may have to take immediate steps to relieve overcrowding at the Frederick Post Education Center.

Action Plan

1. The committee requests that the district administration and the Board of Trustees closely monitor student enrollment numbers in both the kindergarten and alternative school programs.
2. The district should explore all of the above options regarding their viability and functionality.
3. The district should modify Recommendation-New Elementary School if necessary to provide adequate housing for all elementary students.
4. The district should continue to update the Frederick Post Education Center. The district should update the window system throughout the building to help with heating and cooling, aesthetics and functionality. Also, the district should upgrade the electrical system to allow for additional technology and functionality, and explore ways to upgrade restroom facilities. If the district determines that the cost is too high to complete these and other upgrades to the building out of existing district revenues, in particular lottery funds, then the district should consider adding additional dollars to the levy proposal scheduled to fund Recommendation- River City Middle School Addition for this purpose.

Recommendation- Second High School

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider constructing a second high school facility at such time that the enrollment at Post Falls High School meets or exceeds 1,800 students. Based on the current student enrollment projections, a second high school should be opened by the 2015 school year.

Rationale

In 2007 the district added eight additional classrooms to Post Falls High School in order to accommodate student population growth. The existing Long Range Facility Plan recommended that the district consider adding those classrooms in 2011. The addition of those eight classrooms expanded the student capacity from 1,500 to 1,750. The largest classes in the district are currently enrolled at Post Falls High School. Current enrollment numbers indicate that smaller classes will be entering Post Falls High School over the next several years. The incoming freshman class for next year is the smallest class in the district. Considering these factors and the addition of the eight classrooms, the timeline for constructing a second high school building should not be necessary for at least five to seven years unless the student enrollment growth averages over two percent.

With these factors in mind, the district needs to plan for the future construction of a second high school. To construct a second high school of about 200,000 square feet

would cost at least \$40,000,000. It would be possible to build a 140,000 square foot “starter” high school for about 1,000 students designed for future additions similar to River City Middle School. That would reduce the cost by at least one third at the time of construction.

Action Plan

1. The Board of Trustees should review this recommendation in 2014 or as needed to assess whether the recommendation, and especially the timing of a proposed second high school, is still on target.
2. The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation- Second High School.
3. The district should embark on a comprehensive communication plan for the community regarding the proposed second high school prior to a levy that includes proposed funding for this project.
4. Prior to a levy election to seek voter approval for the funding of a second high school, the district should develop an educational specification committee comprised of patrons, parents, staff and technical consultants whose task would be to establish basic plans for the second high school.
5. Upon successful passage of a funding levy the district should establish a committee of patrons, parents and staff members to assist with the development of new high school attendance boundaries.

Recommendation- Land Acquisition

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees seek property suitable for school sites within the various sections of the district boundaries with a general consideration of providing neighborhood schools and a geographical balance for schools at all levels. If necessary, the district should consider attaching an additional amount of funding to future facility levies for the purpose of purchasing land that could be used for the construction of a future school. Specifically, the district should continue to work to obtain a site for a second high school as soon as possible.

Rationale

The district currently has one middle school site and two elementary sites available for future construction. The district has had the support of the City of Post Falls regarding the requirement that developers provide the district mitigation for the impact that a housing development may have on student enrollment. Historically the mitigation has been delivered to the district in the form of ten acres of land. Specifically, large developments have provided the district with an elementary school site (10 acres minimum) within their housing development. With the city’s continued support, the district should be able to obtain enough sites to keep up with the need to construct elementary schools.

The most pressing need for the district is to obtain a second high school site. At least 45-50 acres is required for the construction of a comprehensive high school for 1,200+ students, the associated parking lot and physical education fields. The district currently has funds set aside from a facility levy passed in the spring of 2006 that can be used for the purchase of a high school site. Overall, the committee believes school site acquisition is an on-going process that needs to extend well beyond the ten years of this facility plan.

Action Plan

1. The district should continue to develop a comprehensive site review with the purpose of identifying potential school sites for purchase or trade. This review could include information on areas of residential growth and plans for city expansion.
2. As the district acquires property, it would develop a plan for optimal placement of future schools. The district should consider the proximity of “feeder” schools to each other.
3. The district should continue to work with the City of Post Falls regarding the donation of land as a form of mitigation for the impact of future housing developments on student enrollment.
4. The district should consider the possibility of selling or trading unused property for other needed district sites that are the most suitable for construction of future schools.

Recommendation- Kootenai County Professional Technical High School

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees continue to work with the Lakeland and Coeur d’Alene School Districts, the business community and North Idaho College to construct a Professional Technical High School in a central location to be used by high school students from all three districts. However, the committee urges the district to use caution regarding the timing and cost of such a facility so as not to jeopardize the successful completion of the other recommendations of this document.

Rationale

Post Falls School District has been working with the Coeur d’Alene and Lakeland School Districts, North Idaho College and key representatives of the county business community to develop and construct a centralized professional technical school. The school would serve juniors and seniors from all three school districts and be available for use by North Idaho College students as well.

This facility would house professional technical programming that is currently not available to Kootenai County students primarily because of the costs of the laboratory and the equipment necessary to provide the instruction. An example of a program that would be housed in this facility would be automotive repair. Currently none of the local school districts have an automotive facility or program. While there is a limited opportunity for some high school students to attend an automotive program through North Idaho College, the facility is extremely limited and will not be able to serve the demand for their students or for ours. Other programs being considered for the facility include health services, hospitality, welding, machining and construction trades to name a few.

The structure being considered would be approximately 50,000 square feet in size and is estimated to cost \$11,250,000. An additional \$7,000,000 would be needed for specialized equipment. The committee is exploring all avenues available for funding the construction of the Professional Technical School including grants, donations, etc. However, the districts have already formed a Cooperative Service Agency that has the legal status to run a bond levy to construct such a facility if necessary. The entire county would be asked to fund the project. If a facility levy is necessary to fund part or all of the structure, current law requires all three districts to run concurrent levy elections requiring a supermajority in all three districts. A committee, led by leaders of the business community, has been able to secure 20 acres of land that is available to construct the facility.

Action Plan

1. The committee would request that the Board of Trustees consider the recommendation and establish a timeline regarding a possible levy election to fund Recommendation- Kootenai County Professional Technical High School.
2. The district should work with the Lakeland and Coeur d'Alene School Districts to embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the county regarding the need for the joint Professional Technical School.
3. The district should develop detailed plans regarding the programming and consequently the facility to support the programs as soon as possible.
4. The district should consider using existing Kootenai County facilities to further develop a professional technical school as a short term solution prior to such time as a stand alone facility can be built on the identified 20 acres.
5. The districts should include North Idaho College in all conversations regarding the development of this project. It is the plan that the facility be utilized by North Idaho College students at times that it is not being used by the high school students. Also, the college intends to build its own professional technical facilities adjacent to the professional technical high school, so the overall planning becomes even more important as a way to leverage precious resources.

