

# LONG RANGE FACILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

## 2018

### Overview

The Board of Trustees charged the administration to develop a new ten year facility plan for the district. This plan, when completed, will be submitted to the Board of Trustees to assist them as the district prepares to provide facilities with quality learning space for students over the next ten years and beyond. A 30 member committee of staff, parents and patrons convened in February to start work on a plan. The committee received student enrollment and demographic information, existing capacities in our schools, and other support information prior to discussions of facility needs and timelines. The 2018 Long Range Facility Plan will replace a plan that was developed in 2008.

### 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 February 8, 2018 and concluded their work on March 1, 2018. 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. This flexibility 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 2008. Specifically, they considered projects that were identified in the previous facility plan that were not completed during the ten year life of the plan. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of recommended projects were completed from 2008 to 2018. The only recommended goal in the 2008 plan that was not completed was related to providing relief to the Frederick Post School building.

The committee also considered information regarding the capacities and functionality of existing buildings, student enrollment data trends, overall population demographic trends, election history and general construction history. The committee reviewed the options for funding the construction of new facilities and remodels of existing facilities as a way to help sequence various projects and to help separate needs versus wants.

The following facility planning recommendations are based on two assumptions: that the Post Falls School District student enrollment will increase during 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 expectation. It also may need to delay proposed projects if the opposite takes place.

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- New Elementary School**

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees take action to construct a new elementary school as soon as reasonably possible. The estimated cost of a new elementary school is \$12,500,000.

### **Rationale**

The committee discussed the one recommendation that was not addressed during the ten year life of the 2008 Long Range Facility Plan; addressing the issues posed by housing both New Vision Alternative High School and the Frederick Post Kindergarten students in the Frederick Post Building. The committee reached a strong consensus that all kindergarten students should be moved into their home elementary schools as soon as reasonably possible. While some of our elementary schools have classrooms available to house kindergarten students, over half do not. The construction of an additional elementary school will not only allow for the kindergarten students to attend their home schools, but it will also create additional classroom space for elementary students throughout the district. The removal of the kindergarten students from the Frederick Post Building will create space for the expansion of New Vision and will relieve the overall infrastructure of the building in numerous ways. The current centralization of the district's kindergarten programming causes transportation and logistical difficulties including the need to shuttle kindergarten students from the home school. We also create significant automobile traffic that the current site and facility is not designed to handle.

Note: The committee discussed the possibility of providing full day kindergarten in the future.

### **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 a new elementary school.
2. The district should embark on a comprehensive communications plan for the community regarding the proposed new elementary school prior to a levy that includes proposed funding this project.
3. Upon successful passage of a funding levy, the district should work with the appropriate architects, staff and patrons/parents to develop the detailed plans for the project completion.
4. If necessary, a committee of parents, patrons and district staff would establish new elementary boundaries to create space in all schools to house the kindergarten students in each elementary school.

## **Recommendation- Remodel Senior Buildings**

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider requesting funding as soon as reasonably possible to upgrade and remodel our senior buildings. The upgrades could include school safety projects such as the reconstruction of various entrances that will help control traffic into and out of our schools built prior to the current heightened school safety climate. The remodels would also include multiple roof update projects, asphalt renewal projects, modernization of exterior fascias, the addition of air conditioning at several schools, the addition of a track at River City Middle School, upgrades of electrical and plumbing in some schools as needed. The funding needed for these efforts could be added to a bond levy for a new elementary school. The estimated cost of the upgrades and remodels is \$7,000,000.

### **Rationale**

The district needs to continue to invest and upgrade our senior buildings to ensure that the students in those buildings have the same learning opportunities as students in some of our newer facilities. Since the “great recession” the district has made a strong effort to maintain and update our senior buildings including providing money in the 2015 bond levy proposal to do some remodeling of both the Frederick Post and Mullan Trail Schools. However, there is a backlog of facility needs that had to be deferred during the economic downturn. There are many needed facility remodel projects that are too large and expensive to fund with the districts yearly budget.

The district is in a unique position to ask for funding to upgrade our senior buildings and build a new elementary school without greatly impacting the property taxes on district patrons. The district will be retiring the bond levy payments for the construction of Post Falls High School in 2019. In an effort to stabilize and minimize patron property taxes, the district has strategically layered facility debt over time in order to build the necessary buildings to keep up with student enrollment growth. The district has not increased the amount of taxes it raises for the past 5 years. We believe the predictability and consistency of this plan serves our taxpayers better than a roller coaster approach to taxes. This strategy appears to have been effective as measured by strong community support for construction levies over the past twenty years.

Note: There was some discussion about considering raising taxes if necessary to complete the necessary facility updates.

### **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 numerous remodel projects.
2. The district should embark on a comprehensive communication plan for the community regarding the proposed projects prior to a levy that includes proposed funding for the facility updates and remodel projects
3. Upon successful passage of a funding levy, the district should work with the appropriate architects, staff and patrons/parents to develop detailed plans for the project completion.

## **Recommendation- Third Middle School**

The committee recommends that the Board of Trustees consider constructing a third middle school facility at such time that the overall middle school student enrollment meets or exceeds 1,550. The cost of a new middle school facility is approximately \$30,000,000.

### **Rationale**

The district added the 12 classroom second story addition to River City Middle School in 2015. This addition expanded the overall middle school student capacity by 300. However, today's middle school enrollment is 1,350 as compared to total middle school capacity of 1,550. It appears the need for an additional middle school facility will take place prior to the need for a second high school based on several variables (see below high school rationale). The projections indicate that the district may need an additional middle school in three to five years. The cost of an additional middle school could be reduced by building a starter middle school designed to have a significant classroom addition in the future similar to River City Middle School.

### **Action Plan**

1. The Board of Trustees should review this recommendation in 2022, or as needed, to assess whether the recommendation, and especially the timing of a proposed new middle 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 an additional middle school.
3. The district should embark on a comprehensive communication plan for the community regarding the proposed middle 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 middle 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 new middle 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 middle school attendance boundaries.

## **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 1,750 students. The cost to construct a second high school of about 200,000 square feet is approximately \$50,000,000.

## **Rationale**

In 2007, the district added eight additional classrooms to Post Falls High School in order to accommodate student population growth. The addition of those eight classrooms expanded the student capacity from 1,500 to 1,750. The district added an auxiliary gymnasium and a performing arts auditorium in 2016. These additions created multiple teaching spaces for students.

Overall, PFHS enrollment has remained fairly stable since the 2008 Long Range Facility Plan. The current enrollment is approximately 1,550. One of the largest classes of students in the district is 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 next exceptionally large classes are currently 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Relatively smaller classes are enrolled in the current 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

There are several reasons for the stability of the high school enrollment over the past ten years. The student enrollment growth at all levels slowed during the economic downturn starting in 2009. The other major reason for slower than previously anticipated growth is the addition and expansion of options for high school students. For example, over 100 high school students are enrolled in KTEC (Career and Technical School) and are not on our campus for half of the school day. Many students are attending courses at North Idaho College as part of a dual enrollment program.

Considering these factors and the addition of the eight classrooms, an auxiliary gymnasium and a performing arts auditorium, the timeline for constructing a second high school building should not be necessary for at least six to eight years unless the student enrollment growth exceeds expectations.

With these factors in mind, the district needs to plan for the future construction of a second high school. 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 approximately one third at the time of construction.

## **Action Plan**

1. The Board of Trustees should review this recommendation in 2024 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 a 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.

### **Rationale**

The district currently has one middle school site, one elementary site, and one high school site 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 may be able to obtain enough sites to keep up with the need to construct elementary schools.

The minimum site size necessary to construct the school facilities and associated grounds are as follows:

- High School- 40 acres
- Middle School- 20 acres
- Elementary School- 10 acres

Note: 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.

**Superintendent Comment** – A topic that the committee did not discuss was the possibility for the need of an additional new elementary school within the ten year life of this plan. It may be prudent for the district to consider the need for an additional elementary school as part of the Long Range Facility Plan review that should take place at various intervals during the next ten years.