

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 5th grade students. Relatively smaller classes are enrolled in the current 6th, 7th and 8th 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.

Overview of Long Range Facility Review Committee Topics

This document is designed to provide a brief overview of the topics to be discussed by the Long Range Facility Review Committee. This list should not limit discussion of other necessary topics, but it is designed to provide a jump start to the committee's work scheduled to start on October 11, 6:00 p.m. at River City Middle School.

Future Elementary School/s: This updated demographic/student enrollment information provided to the committee will help them determine if the recommendations from the 2018 plan remain relevant. With the opening of Treaty Rock Elementary, all of the elementary schools currently have adequate space. (However, it may be necessary to adjust boundaries to balance elementary school enrollment.) The district has 2,766 elementary students (kindergarten through 5th grade) enrolled and elementary school total capacity of 3,730.

Ageing Schools: The Post Falls School District is in a unique situation in that half of the school buildings are 45+ years old, and the other half are relatively “new” (30 years old or newer). In 2022, Ameresco Corp completed a facility condition assessment of all district buildings.

- **Mullan Trail** – constructed in 1957. Mullan Trail has been remodeled and added onto multiple times. It has served as a high school, middle school, and now an elementary school.
 - Considerations:
 - Demolish Mullan Trail Elementary and construct a new building on the land owned by the district off of Chase and Bodine adjacent to the Crown Pointe development. (This would require the district to rezone all district elementary schools.) The current Mullan Trail land would be used for the expansion of our transportation facility.
 - Renovate Mullan Trail if the cost of renovation does not surpass the cost of a new building.
 - Continue to maintain Mullan Trail to the best of our ability.
- **Ponderosa** – constructed in 1977 (open concept)
 - Considerations:
 - Construct a new Ponderosa Elementary on the existing land, and when the building is complete, demolish the existing building.
 - Renovate Ponderosa if the cost of renovation does not surpass the cost of a new building.
 - Continue to maintain Ponderosa to the best of our ability.
- **Seltice** - constructed in 1973 (open concept). Partition walls were recently added to the school to denote classroom spaces.
- **The Frederick Post Building** - constructed in 1951. Frederick Post is the oldest building in the district. It served as an elementary school, the central office, a centralized kindergarten, and an alternative high school. Currently, Frederick Post houses both New Vision Alternative High School and the district’s developmental pre-school. Because both of these programs are relatively small, the building is not over-taxed at this time.
 - Considerations:

- Leave the existing programs in the building and continue to maintain it as long as possible.
 - Look into the possibility of leasing an existing building to house New Vision and consider moving the developmental pre-school into an elementary school (if space allows).
 - Retrofit the building back into a central office/ IT headquarters until a new facility can be built on the site located behind Prairie View where the current Food Service building is being constructed.
 - Demolish the building and sell the land.
- **Post Falls Middle School** - constructed in 1967. Originally built as a high school, this building has undergone multiple additions/ upgrades. When the “new” high school opened in 2000, this building became the middle school. Currently, the front of the building is under construction to create a secure vestibule. Depending on enrollment trends into the future, this building may need to be maintained as long as possible. At this time, it is not feasible to close this building as there is no place to put students. There is the possibility of a new middle school building on the land currently owned by the district.

Considerations from the 2018 LRFPP which have not yet come to fruition:

Second High School: In 2008, the district added 8 classrooms to the existing 200,000 square foot Post Falls High School facility in order to accommodate anticipated student growth. The addition of those eight classrooms (35,000 square feet) expanded the student capacity from 1,500 to 1,750. In 2015-16 the district added a Performing Arts Auditorium, an auxiliary gymnasium, and a weight room to enhance student programming and “complete” the build out. Post Falls High School enrollment remained fairly stable until 2021 when the enrollment jumped to over 1,700 students. Since then, enrollment has adjusted and remains somewhat stable with 1,550 – 1,600 students. The district owns approximately 64 acres near the corner of McGuire and Prairie Avenue which is slated to be the location of a second high school. The current enrollment is approximately 1,635.

Third Middle School: The district added the 12 classroom second story addition to River City Middle School in 2015. This addition expanded the overall middle school capacity to 1,550. Current middle school enrollment is 1,362. Interestingly, the 2022 district-wide secondary enrollment saw a decrease of 110 students. The 2023 school year began with middle school enrollment mostly flat.

Land Acquisition: Since the 2018 revision, the district has purchased an additional 72 acres of land. The land is located north of the Crown Pointe subdivision at Chase and Bodine and extends to Hayden Avenue. This site could be used for both a middle and elementary school. The committee should consider if future land acquisition is still a priority.

2023 Long Range Facility Review Committee - Recommendations

In October of 2023, a group of 13 individuals met on two different evenings to review progress made from the 2018 Long Range Facility plan and discuss/recommend any changes moving forward.

Ameresco presented their facility assessment to the group. Accomplishments from the 2018 plan: Treaty Rock Elementary was built and opened in 2020. Included in that bond was money to upgrade senior buildings and complete River City's track (prior to the completion RCMS students were being bussed to PFMS, with over 200 participants between the two schools, there was an access and safety issue. Upgrades included HVAC projects (cooling buildings), roof repair/ replacement, and asphalt projects.

The review committee was tasked with determining if the remaining items on the plan were still relevant. Their recommendations follow:

Build a second high school: The committee recommended moving the "trigger" enrollment number from 1750 to 1800, so there is a definite need.

Third middle school: The committee was divided on the "trigger" enrollment number. One group was comfortable with the 1550 enrollment of both schools. Two other groups suggested moving the threshold to 1400. Current middle school enrollment sits at 1362. This information will be shared with the board, and there will be no recommendation for a middle level bond from the superintendent at this time as both middle schools have empty classrooms.

Land Acquisition: The district currently owns 64 acres near the corner of Prairie and McGuire and another 72 acres off of Chase and Bodine. The Coeur Terre development group has verbally promised the district a 10 acre parcel on the east side of Hwy 41. The committee felt the district has plenty of land west of Hwy 41, and if developers are willing to donate land, the district will happily accept it. There was agreement the district should be cognizant of land needs east of Hwy 41.