

City of Bonners Ferry

Comprehensive Plan

April 2023



Acknowledgments

The Community of Bonners Ferry

Thanks to everyone who took time to complete a survey, attend a meeting or an event in support of this process.

City Staff

Dick Staples, Mayor

Lisa Ailport, AICP, City Administrator

Clare Marley, AICP, Contract City Planner

Mike Klaus, PE, City Engineer

Brian Zimmerman, City Police Chief

Dave Winey, City Fire Chief

Andrakay Pluid, City Attorney

City Council

Rick Alonzo, Council President

Ron Smith

Val Thompson

Brion Poston

Planning & Zoning Commission

Chris Rawlings

Sue Larson

Dave Gray

Andy Howe

Darci Price

Advisory Committee

Adam Arthur

Jessica Tingley

Desiree Staples

Shelly Kramer

Jan Bayer

Glenda Poston

Carolyn Testa

Jill Nystrom

Ashley Martinez

Darci Price

Val Thompson

David Sims

Dottie Grey

Funding Support

This planning effort was supported by a grant from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health.

Consultant

SCJ Alliance

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	5
Part 1 – Introduction and Vision	7
1.1 Plan Purpose.....	7
1.2 The Social Determinants of Health	8
1.3 Required Plan Components	9
1.4 Using this Plan: From Vision to Action	10
1.5 Planning Process Summary.....	12
1.6 Community Vision.....	14
1.7 Goal & Policy Framework	15
1.8 Private Property Rights	24
Part 2 – Discovery	25
2.1 Key Findings, Issues and Opportunities.....	26
2.1.1 Community Solidarity.....	26
2.1.2 Housing	27
2.1.3 Open Space, Rural Character & Cost of Service	28
2.1.4 Recreation	29
2.1.5 Transportation	30
2.1.6 Downtown Revitalization	31
2.1.7 Economic Development & Education	32
2.2 Social & Community Context.....	33
2.2.1 History of Bonners Ferry	34
2.2.2 Population	35
2.2.3 Age & Gender	37
2.2.4 Race & Ethnicity	39
2.2.5 Past Planning Efforts	40
2.3 Economic Stability.....	41
2.3.1 Downtown Bonners Ferry	42
2.3.2 Jobs and Industry	42
2.3.3 Income	43
2.3.4 Inflow/Outflow of Employees	43
2.3.5 Broadband Availability	43
2.3.6 Agriculture.....	44
2.4 Education:.....	45
2.4.1 Educational Attainment	46
2.4.2 Schools	46
2.5 Neighborhood and Built Environment	48
2.5.1 Existing Land Uses and Zoning	49

2.5.2 Existing Building Footprints.....	50
2.5.3 Assessed Value Per Acre Analysis	51
2.5.4 Housing	52
2.5.5 Transportation	54
2.5.6 Utilities	55
2.5.7 Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities	56
2.6 Community Health and Safety	57
2.6.1 Natural Resources	58
2.6.2 Hazardous Areas	59
2.6.3 Access to Health Care & Human Services	64
2.6.4 Police.....	65
2.6.5 Fire	65
Part 3 – Implementation	66
3.1 Future Land Uses	67
3.1.1 Future Land Use Categories	68
3.1.2 Future Land Use Map	73
3.2 Implementing Actions Schedule	75
Appendix A – Public Engagement Results	79





Executive Summary

Bonnerr Ferry is located within the Kootenai River Valley as a gateway community to world-class recreation, including the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge and three mountain ranges. It is the county seat and largest city in Boundary County—aptly named for its adjacency to Canada, Washington, and Montana. The rich history, character and development of Bonners Ferry has been shaped by natural features, resources, and individuals over the last century.

Like other amenity-rich communities in the intermountain West, the city draws many annual visitors, but new residents seeking a better quality of life have also been drawn to Bonners Ferry, “Idaho’s most friendly town”.

This revised comprehensive plan for Bonners Ferry acknowledges its history, considers existing conditions, emerging trends, and a desired future based on community preferences and values.

This plan updates the previous 2006 Bonners Ferry Comprehensive Plan. The update process began in January of 2022 and culminated with its adoption by the City Council in April of 2023. This long-range (20+ year) guidance document took shape from a variety of community engagement efforts, research, analysis, and from the work of dedicated community volunteers, city staff, the Bonners Ferry Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council.

The components of this plan are centered around community health, which was supported by a generous grant from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health. This plan recognizes, from an organizational and policy perspective, that health outcomes for a community are inter-related and ultimately inseparable from how a community functions and adapts over time. Change, however, is not always predictable and this plan should therefore be considered a “living document”, which should be reviewed periodically over the course of its horizon as new conditions may emerge.

Engagement efforts included more than 750 responses to a community online survey, nearly 100 visitors to a farmers market feedback booth, a community workshop, fair booth exhibit, open house, and several workshops by

A comprehensive plan is one of the City’s most important documents. It establishes goals and policies for nearly everything the City does and is intimately tied to zoning and other regulations that govern land development throughout the community.



an advisory committee, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. Several key issues emerged from these efforts, which this plan seeks to address through a revised set of policies and actionable steps for implementation. They include:

Maintaining the friendly feel of Bonners Ferry, increasing walkability and overall connectivity, providing more housing choice, enhancing recreational access, and revitalizing downtown—all of which are rooted in creating positive long-term community health outcomes for Bonners Ferry and preserving or enhancing what the community values most about their city, despite any change that may occur over time.



Photo Source: Idaho Tourism



Part 1 – Introduction and Vision

1.1 Plan Purpose

City planning has multiple purposes, not the least of which is to ensure that the community has an active part in deciding how the city looks, functions, and serves the needs of its residents as the future brings change.

This document is intended to help coordinate decision-making across a wide range of topics toward desired outcomes. Specifically, the purposes of this plan are to:

- **Provide Consistent Policy Direction**
All the plan's elements and policy directives, such as for transportation, land use, recreation, housing, and economic development, are intended to work cohesively and comprehensively.
- **Set the Stage for What can be Built Where**
This plan serves as the legal basis for adopting zoning, subdivision, and other regulations and policies shaping a community over time. The plan ensures development decisions are not “made on the fly,” but done in the context of a broader community vision and providing a degree of predictability for property owners, businesses, and residents.
- **Guide Budgeting**
This plan ensures public investments will advance the community's overall vision for the future.
- **Support Grant Applications**
Whether from a private or public source, this document demonstrates how a grant application is supported by the community's long-range plan and community preferences.



Photo Source: Idaho Tourism



- **Provide an Interagency Negotiation Tool**
As the official guidance document for the City of Bonners Ferry, this plan will help in working with other agencies and jurisdictions to realize the community's vision.
- **Meet Statutory Requirements**
Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act (§67-6508) requires that jurisdictions prepare a comprehensive plan which considers "...existing conditions, trends, compatibility of land uses, desirable goals and objectives, or desirable future situations..." for the community.

1.2 The Social Determinants of Health

The "Social Determinants of Health" refer to the conditions in which people are born grow, live, work, and age¹. This plan's priorities revolve around these five determinants, ensuring housing is accessible and that the overall community fabric is considered and designed to improve public health, advance economic prosperity, and build the community's social connections—while preserving and enhancing elements of the built environment defining Bonners Ferry's character. This plan recognizes a Comprehensive Plan's components and land use, transportation, housing, recreation, and economic development policy directives directly influence long-term community health outcomes. These five determinants – explored in further detail in Section 2 of this plan – are:



The Social Determinants of Health

Social and Community Context

A community's future competitiveness depends on its people's relationship with each other and their community.

Economic Stability

A dynamic community economy provides a place for residents to earn good wages, remain employed, and meet basic needs.

¹ Building a Healthy Idaho: Improving the Conditions in Which Idahoans Are Born, Grow, Live, Work, & Age (2020).



Education

High-quality education from early childhood through postsecondary is essential to access jobs. Post secondary education, including universities, colleges, trade, and vocational schools are becoming increasingly important.

Neighborhood & Built Environment

Safe, obtainable housing for a variety of tenures and incomes, neighborhoods promoting physical activity, and access to daily needs can, over the long term, contribute to positive community health outcomes.

Community Health & Safety

Health and safety services, including emergency services, health care facilities, hazardous areas, and environmental characteristics have a direct impact on livability, quality of life, and community health.

1.3 Required Plan Components

Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act (§67-6508) requires 17 components to be included within a jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan. While this plan addresses all required elements, the plan structure is formed around the Social Determinants of Health. *Table 1* below provides a key for where each required component may be referenced:

Table 1 - Plan Component Location Reference

Required Component	Location Reference
Property Rights	1.8
Population	2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4
School Facilities and Transportation	2.4, 2.5.5
Economic Development	1.7, 2.1.7, 2.3
Land Use	2.5, 3.1
Natural Resources	1.7, 2.6.1
Hazardous Areas	1.7, 2.6.2
Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities	2.4.2, 2.5.6, 2.6.4, 2.6.5
Transportation	1.7, 2.1.5, 2.5.5
Recreation	1.7, 2.1.4, 2.5.7
Special Areas or Sites	1.7, 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.2.1
Housing	1.7, 2.1.2, 2.5.4
Community Design	1.7, 2.5, 3.1.1
Agriculture	1.7, 2.1.3, 2.3.6
Implementation	Part 3
National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors	<i>No National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors are within the city or County</i>
Public Airport Facilities	2.5.5



1.4 Using this Plan: From Vision to Action

A Comprehensive Plan provides a legal basis for land-use regulation. Zoning districts must be *in accordance with the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan* (Idaho Code § 67-6511). The plan also provides a comprehensive, coordinated statement of community goals, supported by policies, and implemented through specific actions over time. Additional steps may be essential, including development of implementing studies, plans, simple inventories, or updates to create consistency between the comprehensive plan and regulatory documents (see Figure 1).

The **community vision**—an aspirational, broad-brush summary of community objectives across a range of topics underpins the plan’s goals, objectives, and actions.

- **Goal** – Goals are broad statements indicating a general aim or purpose to be achieved. A goal is a direction setter, an ideal future end, condition, or state toward which planning, and implementation measures are aimed.
- **Policy** – A policy is a topic-specific statement providing guidelines for current and future decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is an extension of a plan’s goals, reflecting topical nuance and providing an assessment of conditions.
- **Action** – Actions are steps envisioned or undertaken to implement plan policy. Actions may include the development of more detailed and localized plans, work to implement policies, formal agreements, regulations, or other strategies.

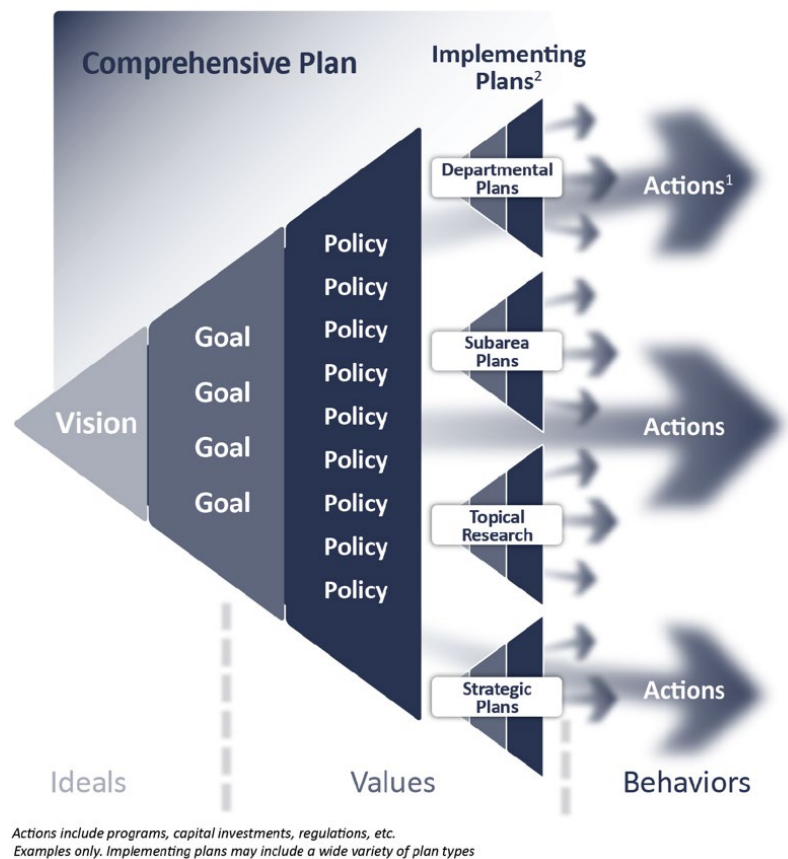


Figure 1 - Vision to Action Diagram



“...maintain the kindness, family friendly, small town atmosphere that makes Bonners Ferry a great home town to be proud of!” —public comment

Photo Source: Idaho Tourism



1.5 Planning Process Summary

The plan update process began in January of 2022 with a community-wide assessment compiling and analyzing Bonners Ferry's existing conditions and historical trends. In tandem with this research effort, the planning team also began conducting orientation interviews with city staff and community leaders to orient the planning team with the community and to orient community members with the plan update effort and process.

The Bonners Ferry Planning and Zoning Commission established an advisory committee early in the process, with members selected based on the degree to which they represent community perspectives and their desire to serve actively and in-depth during the entirety of the process. The essential role of this committee was to advise the consultant team, city staff, and, ultimately, the Commission throughout the planning. The committee vetted data obtained for existing conditions and trends, provided outreach support to the community, and assisted the planning team in drafting the community vision, goals, policies, and desired future land uses within the city and its Area of City Impact (ACI).

The Bonners Ferry Planning and Zoning Commission received regular updates on progress made by the planning team and advisory committee. Following an open house hosted by the planning commission on the plan draft, a public hearing was held before the Commission made a recommendation to the Bonners Ferry City Council. The City Council adopted by resolution, the Comprehensive Plan on April 18, 2023.



Participants at the Farmers Market were given 8 pennies to spend on planning priorities.

Photo Source: Aaron Qualls



Figure 2 - Survey participants were asked to provide a few words they thought described Bonners Ferry

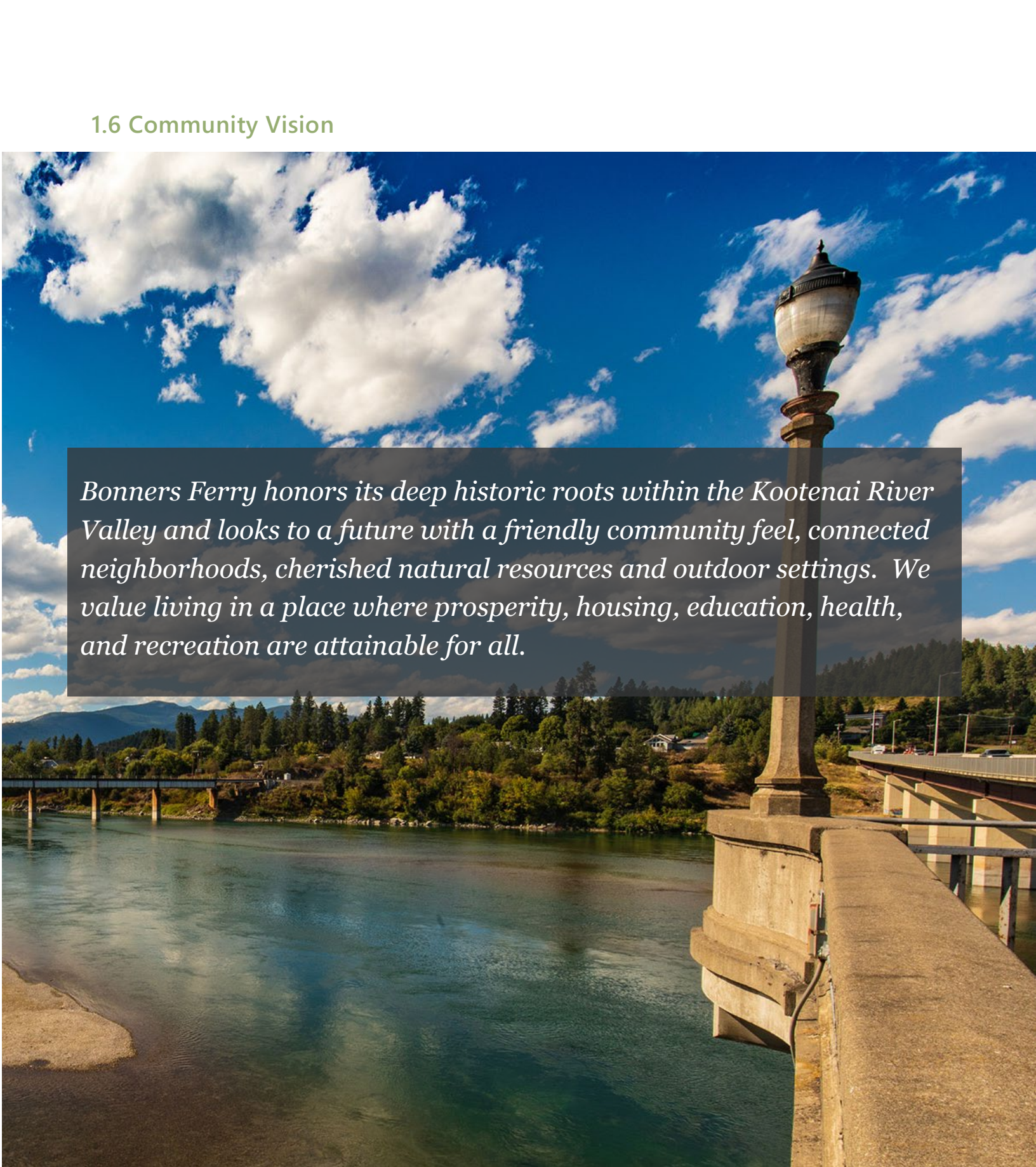


Table 2 - Public Engagement Activity Summary

Timing	Engagement Activity
Jan – Mar, 2022	Orientation Interviews The planning consultants conducted 11 orientation interviews with residents, business owners, and representatives from various civic organizations to establish an initial understanding of relevant issues and to orient community members to the process.
Feb 17, 2022	Kickoff Meeting A plan kickoff meeting was held jointly with the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission to go over the planning process and schedule.
Feb, 2022 - Ongoing	Project Webpage and Digital Outreach Consultants created a web page on the Bonners Ferry site that included a tentative engagement calendar, outline of the planning process and general information. The page was updated as engagement results were accumulated through the process. An e-newsletter system and social media also were utilized to keep the community informed about upcoming engagement activities.
Mar 23, 2022 May 4, 2022 Sept 21, 2022 Nov 17, 2022 Jan 19, 2023	Advisory Committee Meetings An “ad-hoc” advisory committee was appointed by the Planning and Zoning Commission to provide recommendations to the commission on the plan’s elements, including the community vision goals, policies, and future land uses.
May 19, 2022 Oct 26, 2022 Nov 17, 2022 Jan 19, 2023	Planning Commission Meetings Updates were and feedback from the commission was provided at regular intervals through the process. In some cases, these meetings were also attended by the advisory committee.
June 4, 2022	Farmers Market Booth The planning team set up a booth at the Farmers Market in Downtown Bonners Ferry and provided an existing conditions info graphic, interactive plan focus area map, as well as a “mini-poll” and “penny poll” for feedback on planning priorities. The mini-poll received 67 responses and the penny poll had 89 participants (See Appendix A).
June 4, 2022	Community Workshop Following the Farmers market, a community workshop was hosted. There were 14 participants in total who split up into smaller groups and provided input on key community issues and how to prioritize addressing them.
Aug, 2022	Online Survey An online survey was released to the community seeking verification of the community vision drafted by the advisory committee, along with various potential policy recommendations based off prior engagement results. The survey received 751 responses, total.
Aug, 2022	Boundary County Fair Booth An informational booth that had self-service interactive components was set up at the Boundary County Fairgrounds through the duration of the Fair. The primary goal of the booth was to garner awareness of the planning process and the online survey.
Feb 16, 2023	Planning Commission, Advisory Committee, & City Council Joint Workshop The Planning Commission hosted a joint meeting with the City Council and Advisory Committee to present the draft plan.
Mar 1, 2023	Planning Commission Open House & Public Hearing The Planning Commission hosted an open house where the public was invited to review the plan prior to a public hearing that followed. After taking testimony and deliberating, the commission unanimously recommended adoption of the plan by the City Council.
Apr, 2023	City Council Adoption



1.6 Community Vision



Bonn timers Ferry honors its deep historic roots within the Kootenai River Valley and looks to a future with a friendly community feel, connected neighborhoods, cherished natural resources and outdoor settings. We value living in a place where prosperity, housing, education, health, and recreation are attainable for all.

Photo Source: Stock



1.7 Goal & Policy Framework

The policy framework for Bonners Ferry is rooted in data analysis and community feedback—including through interviews, input received at local events, and a community survey garnering more than 750 responses (30% identifying as residing inside city limits and 70% outside city limits). Each goal and policy have corresponding references to one of 11 topic areas—each having one or more direct relationships to a goal or policy. The goals and policies also contain a key for their relationship to the social determinants of health. This plan’s implementation chapter (*Part 3*) contains a separate table of potential actions created to implement policy and achieve community goals.

Social Determinants of Health Framework Key:

SOC	<i>Social and Community Context</i>
ECON	<i>Economic Stability</i>
EDU	<i>Education</i>
N&BE	<i>Neighborhood & Built Environment</i>
H&S	<i>Community Health & Safety</i>

GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
1. Protect and enhance the welcoming and friendly feel of Bonners Ferry.	✓					✓				SOC
A. Nurture the tight-knit sense of community that Bonners Ferry residents feel for their city.	✓									SOC
B. Encourage and support citizen involvement with City boards, commissions, and civic organizations.	✓									SOC
C. Work with community partners to encourage, enhance and celebrate the history, arts, and spirit of Bonners Ferry, supporting the development of community facilities, programs, and events.	✓					✓				SOC, EDU
D. Maintain transparency, accountability, and opportunity for public input for local government planning and decision-making.						✓				SOC, N&BE



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
2. Maintain and improve the small-town scale, charm, and natural beauty of Bonners Ferry.	✓	✓	✓	✓						SOC
A. Require infill development of vacant or underutilized properties to respect the scale and character of the surrounding area through clear development standards and/or processes.	✓	✓	✓			✓				SOC, N&BE
B. Maintain development regulations that encourage or require an interconnected street grid with small blocks in residential neighborhoods.	✓		✓	✓						SOC, N&BE
C. Through site planning and development regulation updates, ensure new development is supported by sufficient usable open space.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				SOC, N&BE
D. Incentivize and/or require a pedestrian oriented development pattern for new development and redevelopment.	✓		✓	✓						SOC, N&BE, H&S
3. Enhance attainable housing opportunities for residents of all ages, incomes and abilities while protecting the character of established neighborhoods.	✓	✓	✓				✓			SOC, N&BE, ECON
A. Provide opportunities for a variety of housing options that encourage or require quality design which fits within the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods.	✓	✓	✓							SOC, N&BE
B. Maintain dialog with local housing agencies, employers, health care workers, schools, and essential public services to meet the housing needs of Bonners Ferry's workforce.		✓	✓				✓			SOC, H&S, ECON
C. Encourage maintenance of housing in an attractive, safe, and sanitary condition.	✓		✓							SOC, H&S



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
4. Protect cherished scenic, recreational, and natural resources in the surrounding area for present and future generations while ensuring fiscal resiliency in the provision of services.		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ECON, SOC
A. Maintain coordination with Boundary County to ensure protection of those areas within the Area of City Impact (ACI) through land use standards deemed critical for preserving timber and agricultural lands.		✓					✓	✓		ECON
B. Encourage any new growth to occur in city limits where infrastructure and services are available or may be made available.						✓				N&BE
C. Encourage clustering of units in new residential development for service delivery efficiency and preservation of open space.	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	N&BE
D. Support regional trail and pathway efforts.					✓		✓	✓	✓	ECON, H&S
5. Provide publicly accessible scenic and recreational amenities along the Kootenai River.	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	N&BE, ECON
A. Work with landowners, funding partners, agencies, organizations, the Kootenai Tribe, and community stakeholders to create or support scenic and recreational amenities along the Kootenai River.	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	N&BE, ECON, H&S
B. Incentivize private investment in public amenities along the Kootenai River.	✓			✓	✓					N&BE, SOC, H&S
C. Consider the economic value to the city and region through increasing recreational and scenic amenities along the Kootenai River, and the	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	N&BE , SOC, ECON, H&S



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
protection of natural features and riparian/aquatic habitat.										
6. Create usable, safe, and comfortable travel routes for non-drivers throughout the city, including for seniors and children.	✓			✓	✓					N&BE, SOC, H&S
A. Ensure new development provides usable, safe, and comfortable connections for non-drivers of all ages and abilities.	✓			✓						N&BE, SOC, H&S
B. Maintain a catalog of issue areas identified as barriers to active transportation in support of prioritization and funding opportunities.	✓			✓	✓					N&BE, SOC, H&S
C. Coordinate with the Idaho Transportation Department in support of multiple safe walking and bicycling crossings on Highway 95.	✓			✓						N&BE, SOC, H&S
D. Support directional signage and wayfinding efforts for all modes of travel at key decision points to primary destinations within the city.	✓			✓						N&BE, SOC
E. Recognize the long-term public health outcomes and recreational value of features supporting walking and cycling.	✓			✓	✓					N&BE, SOC, H&S
F. Encourage development patterns providing suitably scaled, daily needs services within walking distance of residential areas.	✓	✓	✓	✓						N&BE, SOC
7. Increase connectivity and safety for all modes of travel, while decreasing vehicular congestion, especially on US-95.	✓			✓						N&BE, H&S
A. Ensure new development address increased needs for transportation infrastructure during platting and/or through developer agreements.	✓			✓						N&BE
B. Continue to expand intra- and inter-neighborhood connections, addressing the safety	✓			✓						N&BE



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
of Highway 95 for all modes of travel at side street intersections.										
C. Ensure transportation planning efforts align with future land use planning and for quality pedestrian and bicycle travel.		✓		✓						N&BE
D. Implement, as funding is made available or opportunities arise, the projects identified in the 2019 City of Bonners Ferry Transportation Plan in context with the adopted future land use map.		✓		✓						N&BE
E. Avoid the creation of dead-end streets from new development and pursue opportunities for connections, even if only for non-motorized travel.	✓			✓						N&BE
8. Further the creation of a welcoming, walkable, and inviting corridor along Highway 95.	✓			✓						N&BE
A. Work with the Idaho Transportation Department to further provide and enhance safe crossings along Highway 95 and to consider design treatments to slow vehicle travel to be more compatible with pedestrian and bicycle use.	✓			✓						N&BE
B. As funds become available and in partnership with the Idaho Transportation Department, invest in landscaping, city gateway features, and/or other aesthetic treatments within the existing right-of-way of Highway 95.	✓			✓						N&BE
C. Ensure new development along Highway 95 provides sufficient landscaping treatments and that site plans provide a comfortable and inviting feel for pedestrians.	✓			✓						N&BE



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
9. Realize the full potential of historic downtown Bonners Ferry as the city center for dining, shopping, and community events.	✓						✓		✓	SOC, N&BE, ECON
A. Incentivize private investment into existing downtown buildings.	✓						✓			N&BE, ECON
B. Support downtown partners in the promotion of arts, entertainment, and community events downtown.	✓						✓			SOC, ECON, N&BE
C. Encourage the preservation and/or rehabilitation of significant historical, archaeological, and architectural sites and structures in the downtown and throughout the city.	✓								✓	SOC, N&BE
D. Encourage new housing in and near downtown.			✓				✓			SOC, N&BE
10. Protect livability and the health of Bonners Ferry residents by maintaining clean air, soils, and water quality by minimizing pollution, including light and noise pollution.		✓						✓		N&BE, H&S
A. Cooperate with regulatory agencies, including but not limited to Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to identify and abate known environmental quality issues within the city.								✓		H&S
B. Maintain and update regulations, including zoning standards, to ensure allowed industrial and commercial uses are of appropriate intensity and located such that the quality of life of Bonners Ferry residents is not jeopardized.		✓						✓		N&BE, H&S
C. Maintain development regulations to ensure lighting from new development does not	✓		✓							N&BE, H&S



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
jeopardize the quality of life or health of Bonners Ferry residents.										
D. Ensure development activities employ best management practices for stormwater management and treatment to protect groundwater quality and overall health and safety.								✓		N&BE, H&S
11. Maintain and improve the provision of high-quality, affordable, and efficient community services.						✓				N&BE, H&S
A. Maintain development standards, fees, and regulations that support and sustain related services and infrastructure without placing undue burden on existing property owners.						✓				N&BE
B. Maintain city services and infrastructure on-pace with growth.				✓		✓				
C. Decisions regarding annexation should consider the fiscal impacts of the provision of services and align with capital facility planning including transportation facilities, parks, utilities, and emergency services.						✓				N&BE, H&S
D. Monitor the need for emergency service access, response, and facilities as new growth occurs.						✓				H&S
12. Provide and support parks and recreational opportunities for Bonners Ferry residents year-round and on-pace with growth.				✓	✓					SOC, N&BE, H&S
A. Coordinate parks and recreation planning with multi-modal transportation planning, recognizing the community health benefits of features that support walking and biking.				✓	✓					N&BE, H&S



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
B. Develop strategies and partnerships to ensure the youth of Bonners Ferry have low-cost and readily accessible recreational opportunities year-round.				✓	✓	✓				SOC, H&S
C. Maintain City-owned, affordable recreational amenities and programming for residents, including the city-owned pool and golf course.				✓	✓	✓				SOC, N&BE, H&S
13. Grow and sustain a balanced, resilient economy for Bonners Ferry, providing community prosperity and fiscal health.		✓			✓		✓			ECON, EDU
A. Encourage land use patterns that provide opportunity and maintain a sufficient tax base for the provision of city services.							✓			ECON
B. Through ongoing collaboration with schools, employers, appropriate agencies, and the county, facilitate or provide more workforce training opportunities.						✓	✓			ECON, EDU
C. Recognize the economic value of recreation to the city and region.					✓		✓			ECON, N&BE
D. Support new and existing local businesses through clear, predictable, and appropriate regulations.		✓					✓			ECON, N&BE
E. Continue support of legacy natural resource industries of the region including agriculture and timber.		✓					✓			ECON
F. Maintain collaboration with the Boundary Economic Development Council in support of business retention and attraction efforts and to maintain a skilled workforce.						✓	✓			ECON, EDU
G. Support existing or planned educational facilities from early childhood education through post-secondary by coordinating on master planning for the provision of city services and facilities.		✓		✓		✓				ECON, EDU



GOALS AND POLICIES	COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN	LAND USE	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	RECREATION	PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES & UTILITIES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL RESOURCES & HAZARDOUS AREAS	SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
H. Promote the arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors of Bonners Ferry.					✓		✓		✓	SOC, ECON
14. Maintain and enhance community safety and resiliency.						✓		✓		H&S
A. Ensure new development will be supported by emergency services.						✓				H&S
B. Collaborate with Boundary County to identify, respond, and mitigate natural and manmade disasters and medical emergencies and to inform the public of impacts from potential disasters.						✓		✓		H&S
C. In coordination with the County, identify strategies to reduce the risk of wildfire within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).		✓				✓		✓		H&S
D. Coordinate with relevant agencies and jurisdictions for Myrtle Creek Watershed protection and management.						✓		✓		H&S
E. Continue to evaluate and update floodplain protection measures and emergency responses, including river dike stability, flood risks, flood damage prevention codes, and evacuation plans.		✓				✓		✓		H&S
F. Assure safe, durable buildings are developed through adoption and enforcement of life/safety codes to address natural and manmade risks such as fire, earthquake, wind, flooding, and slope stability.			✓			✓				N&BE, H&S
G. Evaluate mudslide risks and develop alternate transportation routes and responses for unstable slopes that could affect the city's main transportation corridor in the event of slope failures.						✓		✓		N&BE, H&S



1.8 Private Property Rights

The City of Bonners Ferry supports and respects private property rights. As such, the policies and actions identified by this plan must follow due process in evaluation and adoption of any implementing regulations. Principally, implementing regulations must not create a “regulatory taking”, which is *a regulatory or administrative action resulting in deprivation of private property that is the subject of such action, whether such deprivation is total or partial, permanent, or temporary, in violation of the state or federal constitution* (Idaho Code §67-8001). The Idaho attorney general provides a checklist² for evaluation which provides the following criteria:

- 1) Does the Regulation or Action Result in Either a Permanent or Temporary Physical Occupation of Private Property?
- 2) (a) Does the Regulation or Action Require a Property Owner to Either Dedicate a Portion of Property or to Grant an Easement?
(b) If Yes, is There a “Nexus and Rough Proportionality” Between the Property that the Government Demands and the Impacts of the Property Use Being Regulated?
- 3) Does the Regulation or Action Require the Owner to Expend Funds to Address Items That Lack a “Rough Proportionality” to the Social Costs of the Proposed Use of Property?
- 4) Does the Regulation Deprive the Owner of All Economically Viable Uses of the Property?
- 5) Does the Regulation Have a Significant Impact on the Landowner’s Economic Interest?
- 6) Does the Regulation Deny a Fundamental Attribute of Ownership?

² Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines: <https://www.ag.idaho.gov/content/uploads/2018/04/RegulatoryTakings.pdf>



Part 2 – Discovery



“...we need to continue to grow, but we need to do it responsibly. Our area is beautiful and most of us love to live here because it is a nice small town.” —public comment

Photo Source: Lisa Ailport



2.1 Key Findings, Issues and Opportunities

These key findings, issues and opportunities emerged primarily through engagement efforts and represent a summary of running themes within this plan. Although not intended to be an exhaustive list of all components of this plan, they are, in essence, what “stood out” as most important to the community and have direct relationship to many of the plan’s goals, policies, and actions.

2.1.1 Community Solidarity

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
Several comments by individuals at the farmers market, through orientation interviews, and the online survey indicated concerns about the rapid pace of growth and retaining the small town, friendly nature of Bonners Ferry. Community cohesion can play a key role in community health and is perceived as somewhat under threat.	Growth pressures can raise fears of losing community solidarity. If lost, this can have a direct impact on overall community health. Known as the “Roseto Effect,” areas with cohesive community relationships can prolong life and reduce chronic illness, particularly with regards to heart disease ³ .	The city can take the lead, along with local businesses and organizations, to encourage citizen involvement, provide meaningful and authentic engagement, and by supporting local events to maintain community cohesion despite any growth that may occur. The city can also foster, through land use, transportation and community design decisions, opportunities that allow for and encourage places for residents to experience their community.

³ Egolf B, Lasker J, Wolf S, Potvin L. The Roseto effect: a 50-year comparison of mortality rates. Am J Public Health. 1992 Aug;82(8):1089-92. doi: 10.2105/ajph.82.8.1089. PMID: 1636828; PMCID: PMC1695733.



2.1.2 Housing

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
<p>Rising land costs and the lack of housing options for a variety of incomes in Bonners Ferry is a key issue and is regarded as a barrier to economic development and retaining key sector employees such as for education and health care. Approximately one third of households in Bonners Ferry are considered cost burdened by HUD standards and nearly 70% of the housing stock in Bonners Ferry is exclusively single-family homes. Residents acknowledge that housing attainability and affordability is a critical issue to address but also desire to maintain the highly valued small-town charm and character of their neighborhoods and city.</p>	<p>High housing costs relative to wages earned can place limits on economic development efforts, may displace long-time residents, and force families to make financial choices that could threaten their stability and health. Those with chronic housing instability are more likely to suffer poor physical and mental health, putting additional strain on existing health care services⁴.</p>	<p>Through revisions of zoning and development standards, the city can take steps in allowing for more variety of housing types while ensuring that they are not out of scale or character within existing neighborhoods. Smaller, more affordable units may better serve the city's senior population and provide additional opportunity for housing local workers.</p>

⁴ "Housing And Health: An Overview Of The Literature, " Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, June 7, 2018. DOI: 10.1377/hpb20180313.396577



2.1.3 Open Space, Rural Character & Cost of Service

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
The surrounding beauty, open spaces, recreational opportunities, and rural character of the surrounding area is why many have chosen to live or return to Bonners Ferry. There is strong support among the community to protect these characteristics and maintain a fiscally sound city.	Growth pressures within the region could pose a threat to surrounding natural areas and working lands that can have negative impacts on a broad array of issues, including fiscal, economic, as well as overall quality of life and community health. If growth is not accommodated within the city, development may happen in surrounding areas that could put additional strain on service costs with less city tax base to support them. Working agricultural and forest lands may also be jeopardized and risks from wildfire within the Urban Wildland Interface increased ⁵ . Additionally, a growing body of research indicates that a lack of access to nature can have negative effects on childhood development. Should scenic and surrounding natural environments be reduced, physical and emotional health could be diminished over the long term ⁶ .	The city can work to allow and incentivize appropriately designed and scaled growth within existing city limits through policy and revisions to zoning and development standards while also ensuring any new growth may be supported by existing city services through appropriate standards and fee schedules. The city can also coordinate with landowners, various organizations, and Boundary County to identify common goals for the surrounding area and how best to implement them.

⁵ Planning for Wildfire in the Wildland-Urban Interface: A Resource Guide for Idaho Communities; Stephen R. Miller, Thomas Wuerzer, Jaap Vos, Eric Lindquist, Molly Mowery, Tyre Holfeltz, Brian Stephens & Alexander Grad (2016)

⁶ Louv, R. (2008). Last child in the woods: saving our children from nature -deficit disorder. Updated and expanded. Chapel Hill, N.C., Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.



2.1.4 Recreation

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
Respondents to engagement efforts strongly weighted access to recreation as a priority within and around the city. Amenities along the Kootenai River such as pathways were a particular focus point. More walking and biking trails generally are strongly supported as well as a desire for an indoor recreation center for all ages as an affordable opportunity to recreate all year long.	The Kootenai River is central to the city's identity and represents an unrealized opportunity for public recreational opportunities. Community members demonstrated a strong desire for river walks and more recreational walking trails generally within or adjacent to the city. Many community members also voiced concern about the lack of recreational opportunities for youth – particularly during winter months. Proximity to recreational amenities such as trails, parks and indoor recreation facilities corresponds to increased physical activity, less stress, and less risk of obesity among youth and adults ⁷ .	Existing partnerships and emerging development opportunities adjacent to the Kootenai River present a timely opportunity to collaborate on creating more trail related or other recreational amenities along its banks. Additional trail and pathway opportunities within or close to town may also be realized as new development occurs, planning efforts realized, and projects funded. Enhancing opportunities for outdoor recreational may also create economic growth through tourism and business attraction ⁸ . Additional partnerships may also be explored to further youth access to recreation year-round.

⁷ "Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness", NRPA, <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-on-health-and-wellness/>

⁸ "How Outdoor Recreation Supports Rural Economic Development", Megan Lawson, Ph.D., (2019), <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/outdoor-recreation/>



2.1.5 Transportation

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
Non-motorized transportation options and connected neighborhoods are seen as key areas for improvement in Bonners Ferry both for new development and within existing established neighborhoods. Vehicular congestion for left turns onto Hwy 95 was often cited by many as a frustration. The lack of connections within neighborhoods and the lack of safe crossing opportunities along the highway are seen to exacerbate this issue and inhibit non-motorized transportation.	The lack of comfortable, safe, and convenient connections between neighborhoods, to schools, parks, across Hwy 95 and to commercial areas may inhibit the desire to walk or bike. Residents may therefore exclusively use auto travel even for short trips that may exacerbate congestion along Hwy 95 at peak times. For those who cannot drive, such as children or some seniors, options are more limited. The built environment can have a profound effect on travel mode choice or viability which in turn, can have long term health impacts. Those who live in walkable communities where there are short distances and safe, comfortable routes to key destinations such as stores, parks, or trails, tend to walk more. Walking regularly is also well documented to reduce risks of diabetes and obesity, ⁹ which have both seen an upward trend in Boundary County ¹⁰ .	The city should continue collaborating with ITD on ensuring improvements along Hwy 95 consider all modes of travel, particularly with respect to safe and convenient crossings, as well as aesthetic treatments along ITD right-of-way. Investment by Urban Renewal for furthering improved pedestrian use and street connections, generally also represent an opportunity as reflected in existing renewal plans. The city can also work to ensure land uses and development design further goals around travel for non-drivers. Finally, the city may also explore various funding to ensure more vulnerable populations such as children and seniors are able to walk or bike to key destinations.

⁹ Jackson R. & Sinclair S. (2012). Designing healthy communities (1st ed.). Jossey-Bass.

¹⁰ Panhandle Health District (2018). Community Health Needs Assessment.



2.1.6 Downtown Revitalization

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
<p>A constant theme throughout engagement efforts revolved around the downtown. Frustration about vacancies and unkept buildings were hot topics for many who participated. Generally, respondents would like more activity and reasons to be in the historic downtown, with the majority supporting the further promotion of downtown arts, entertainment, and events.</p>	<p>Despite the tremendous potential of Downtown Bonners Ferry to be a regional destination for shopping, dining, entertainment, and events, many vacancies exist, and several buildings need upgrades.</p>	<p>The city and its partners can incentive private investment downtown in variety of ways, including though exploring direct incentive programs for building upgrades, investment in the public realm, and through allowance of housing infill within or close to downtown in support of existing and new businesses. Local event promotion, the arts, recreational offerings, and historic preservation are additional efforts that, through time, may make downtown a primary destination for residents and visitors alike.</p>



2.1.7 Economic Development & Education

Findings	Issues	Opportunities
Education is perceived as an essential need for the community of Bonners Ferry and in particular, workforce training. 70% agreed or strongly agreed that more workforce training should be provided. Survey comments regarded economic development as an important priority generally and correlated with issues identified around both housing and education. Strong support was also indicated for existing small businesses within the city.	A strong local and diverse economy is essential for the overall wellbeing of a community. A skilled workforce is critical for retaining and attracting businesses that may also lead to improved incomes where families are enabled to make healthier choices for their families, improve living conditions and afford health care ¹¹ . Currently, however, there are very few post secondary or workforce training offerings within the city of Bonners Ferry and medium income is considerably lower within the city relative to the County.	The city and various partners, including schools, and the Boundary Economic Development Council may coordinate on ways to improve workforce educational offerings along with small business innovation and support. The city may also provide opportunities through land use and zoning to support existing small businesses and provide opportunity for new business while also ensuring use intensity does not diminish quality of life—a key economic development strategy.

¹¹ Building a Healthy Idaho: Improving the Conditions in Which Idahoans Are Born, Grow, Live, Work, & Age (2020).



2.2 Social & Community Context

A community's future competitiveness is dependent on its people's relationship with each other and their community. This section provides a brief history of Bonners Ferry, provides population projections, and outlines previous community planning efforts.



Photo Source: Aaron Qualls

Opportunities:

- *Citizen Involvement*
- *Local Event Support*
- *Historic Preservation*
- *Community Gathering Spaces*



2.2.1 History of Bonners Ferry

Prior to the arrival of western prospectors seeking gold in the mid 1800's, bands of the Ktunaxa (or Kootenai) Nation occupied territories along the Kootenai River in parts of Montana, Idaho, and British Columbia. The Kootenai River is an important resource for the tribe, which now owns approximately 2,500 acres of reservation land in the county. Tribal land ownership essentially began following the "War of 1974" when tribal representatives successfully gained recognition and the additional services needed to serve members suffering from poor health outcomes were provided.¹²

The "Ferry" from which the city gets its name, was first created in 1864 by Edward Bonner. The ferry provided access across the Kootenai River to gold discoveries in the East Kootenays of British Columbia. The community of Bonners Ferry began to flourish as a supply hub for mining and timber in the 1800s as the "Midge" steamer began service for passengers and freight between Bonners Ferry and British Columbia in 1883. The Great Northern Railroad was built in 1892 and the Spokane International and Kootenai Valley Railroad lines soon followed. The first bridge across the Kootenai at Bonners Ferry was built in 1905 (now Highway 95), followed by the Spokane International Rail Bridge in 1906.¹³



Original Ferry in Bonners Ferry
Photo Source: Boundary County Historic Society

Bonners Ferry was formally established in 1893 and continued to grow, supported primarily by timber and agriculture, which remain important economic sectors today. Bonners Ferry's downtown, originally built on stilts because of flooding before the Libby Dam was constructed in the early 1970s, contains a mix of historic buildings adjacent to Highway 95 and the river. Two of the 5 known properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are downtown. Across Highway 95 from Downtown Bonners Ferry is The Kootenai River Inn Casino and Spa. It was opened by the Tribe in 1986.

Today, Bonners Ferry has also drawn many new residents seeking a better quality of life. Like other amenity-rich communities, the arrival of new residents has placed significant strains on the housing market, affecting all aspects of life for residents and businesses of the city.

¹² Indian County Today (2018), <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-kootenai-tribe-of-idaho/> / Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (2022), <https://www.npaihb.org/member-tribes/kootenai-tribe/#:~:text=The%20Kootenai%20Reservation%20was%20first,on%20a%202%2C695%20acre%20reservation.>

¹³ Bob Gunter (2022), <https://www.sandpoint.com/community/bonners-ferry.php>



2.2.2 Population

According to census data, Boundary County experienced an average annual growth of 1.0% between 2010 and 2020. Idaho Dept of Labor (IDOL) forecasts an annual 1.1% regional growth across Northern Idaho. Applied to Boundary County, this growth rate equates to a projected population of 15,190 in the County by 2042.

Household Size

Ninety-two percent of Bonners Ferry's housing units are occupied by the city's 2,520 people. This creates an average household size of 2.32 people, which is slightly less than the Boundary County average of 2.53 people per household. This relatively small household size indicates, as confirmed through public engagement efforts, that the city has drawn many older residents and retirees.

Historical Census Data

Based solely on historical census data, Bonners Ferry has not kept pace with growth rates at the County level. Census data shows an average annual growth of 0.3% between 2010 and 2020—decreasing slightly in size by 23 people between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The data also shows an unexplained spike in 2013. Per the Census Bureau, the data for that year is based off a sample from the American Community Survey (ACS), so there is a degree of uncertainty.

Population Projections

In projecting a high, medium, and low forecast through 2042, other dynamics have been considered. Potential development discussions suggest another 300-400 units may soon be planned within the city. Regional and national migration trends to rural areas accelerated following the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the proliferation of broadband internet in the County. These factors have made remote work viable for many. Just in 2021 alone, the median selling price of homes in Boundary County increased from \$342,000 in 2020 to over \$400,000 in 2021/22¹⁴, indicating high demand in the region.

Considering historical and emerging trends, a 0.6% annual growth is the low population projection, a 1.1% annual growth is the medium projection, and a 1.4% annual growth rate is the high projection. The low projection averages the historical county growth rate with the city's historical growth rate. The medium projection assumes the city will grow at the same historical rate of the County. Finally, the high projection relies exclusively on pending development which, if realized, would yield approximately 350 new units when multiplied by the 2.32 average household size of Bonners Ferry.

¹⁴ Dealing with growth in Bonner, Boundary Counties. Raphael Barta (2021).



Table 3: Low, Medium, High Projections

	2020	2042 Low (City/County Av.)	2042 Med (County Rate)	2042 High (350 New Units)
Population	2520	2895	3110	3332
Population Change	-	375	590	812
Percent Growth from 2020	-	14.9%	23.4%	32.2%
Annual Growth Rate	-	0.6%	1.1%	1.4%

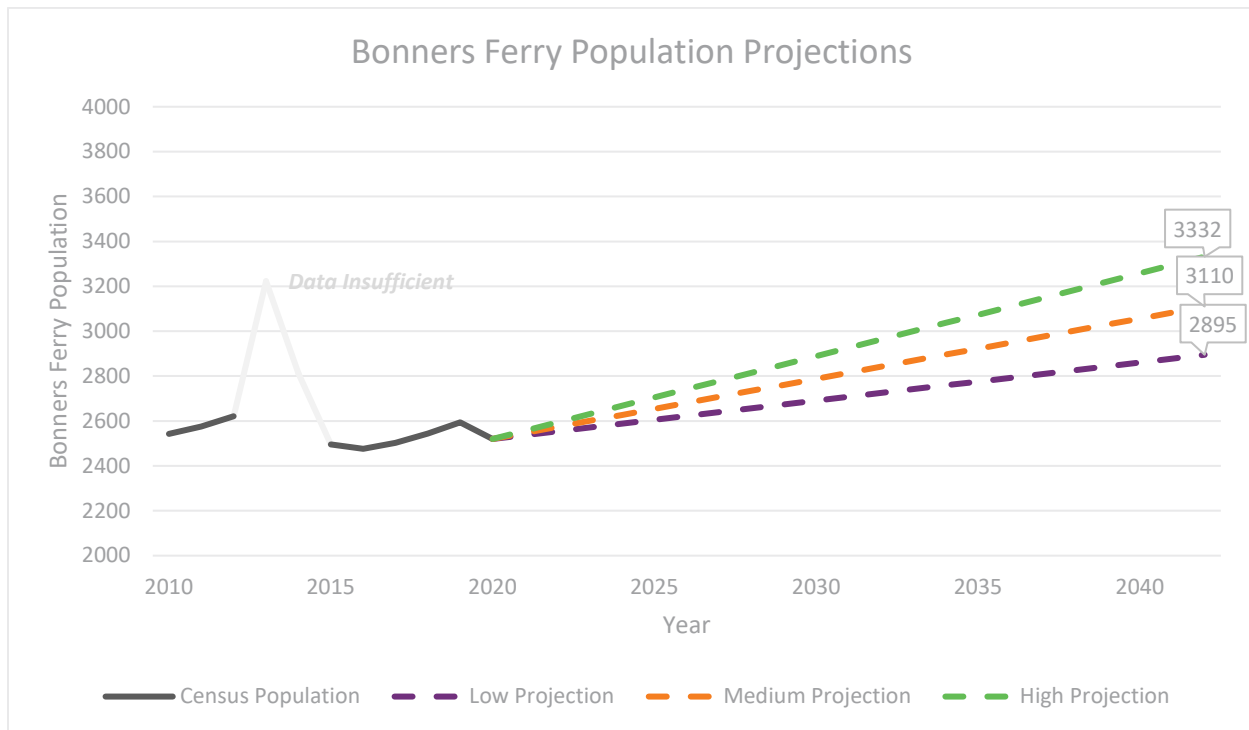


Figure 3 - Low, Medium and High Population Projections

These low, medium, and high population projections for Bonners Ferry indicate the potential range of additional population the City may expect by 2042. The low projection would add about 375 residents (14.9% total growth), the medium projection would add 590 residents (23.4% total growth), and the high projection would add 812 residents (32.2% total growth) to the 2020 Census numbers. This indicates Bonners Ferry may expect a population of between 2,895 and 3,332 by 2042. The unexplained population spike in 2013 is assumed to be an error in the census data received.

2.2.3 Age & Gender

Bonnors Ferry has a slightly higher percentage of male residents than female residents. The 2019 ACS estimates show the age categories with the highest populations in Bonners Ferry: 45-54 years (15.4%), 65-74 years (14.9%), 25-34 years (11.8%). There is also a high number of people under 5 years of age (9.1%). The median age in Bonners Ferry is 44.8, slightly older than Boundary County's median age of 43.5. About one-fifth (21%) of the population is under 18 and another one-fifth (20.3%) is age 65 or older.

Table 4: Gender

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	1343	51.8
Female	1251	48.2

Table 5: Age Group

Age	Estimate	Percent
Under 5 years	236	9.1
5 to 9 years	103	4
10 to 14 years	140	5.4
15 to 19 years	146	5.6
20 to 24 years	134	5.2
25 to 34 years	306	11.8
35 to 44 years	234	9
45 to 54 years	399	15.4
55 to 59 years	179	6.9
60 to 64 years	190	7.3
65 to 74 years	386	14.9
75 to 84 years	95	3.7
85 years and over	46	1.8



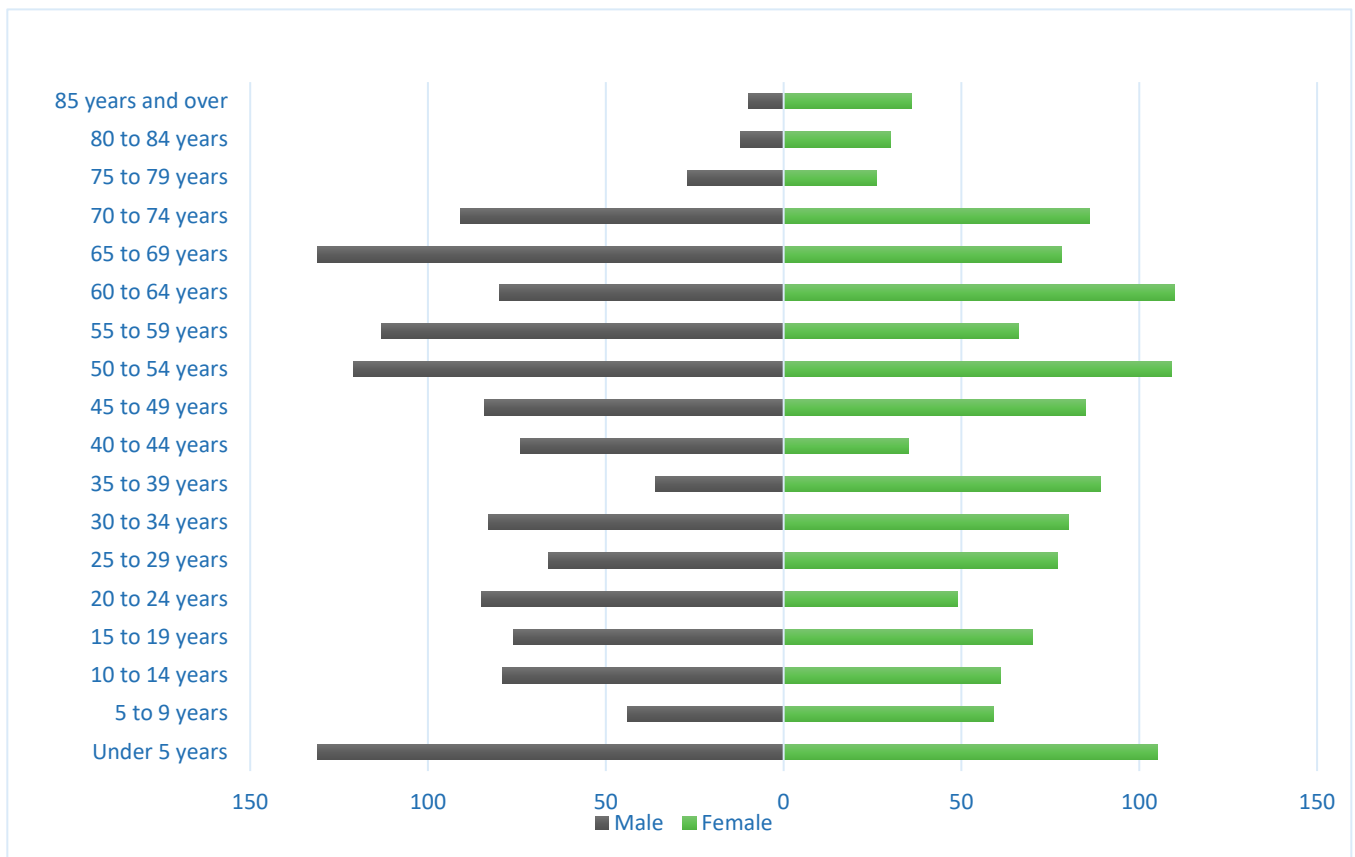


Figure 4: Population Pyramid

The population pyramid in Figure 4 shows how age categories broken down by gender.

2.2.4 Race & Ethnicity

More than 90% of the Bonners Ferry population is White. About 6% are two or more races. Fewer than 1% of the population are Black or African American, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. About 1% are American Indian and Alaskan Native and about 1.5% are some other race. Approximately 5% of the population is Hispanic or Latino.

Table 6: Race

• Race	• Population	• Percentage
• White alone	• 2280	• 90.5%
• Black or African American alone	• 10	• 0.4%
• American Indian and Alaska Native alone	• 26	• 1.0%
• Asian alone	• 9	• 0.4%
• Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	• 3	• 0.1%
• Some Other Race alone	• 37	• 1.5%
• Population of two or more races	• 155	• 6.2%
• Total	• 2,520	• 100.0%

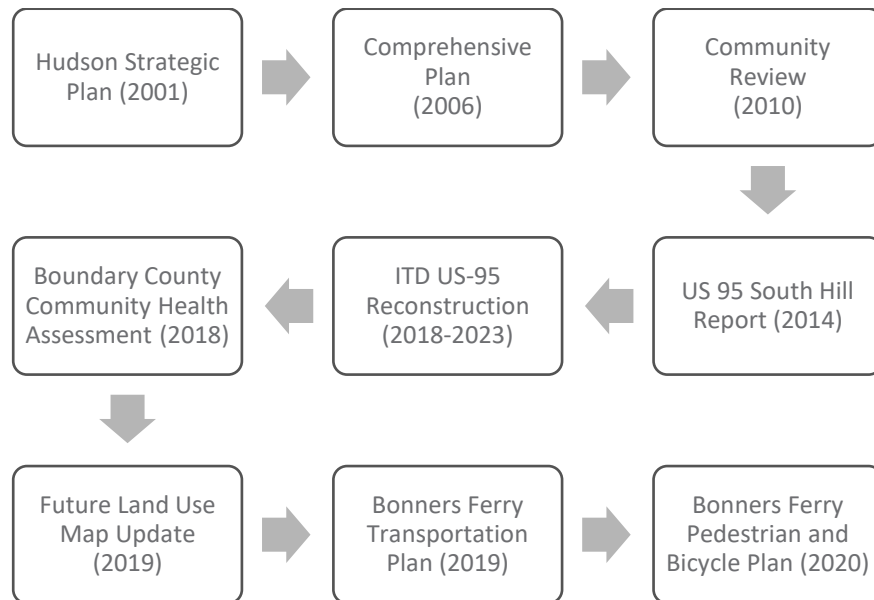
Table 7: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Population	Percentage
Hispanic or Latino	125	5%
Not Hispanic or Latino:	2395	95%



2.2.5 Past Planning Efforts

This plan updates the existing 2006 Comprehensive Plan, folding in elements of and references to more recent planning efforts. Below is a general timeline of past planning efforts:



The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has initiated several highway-related improvements from the southern commercial areas along Highway 95 to the downtown core, which also includes bike and pedestrian facilities. The city made recent progress addressing multimodal connectivity through its 2020 Bike and Pedestrian plan and its 2019 Transportation Plan, following the US 95 South Hill Report. These documents are considered in the context of future land uses, along with the impacts on the health and well-being of Bonnerrys Ferry residents.

2.3 Economic Stability

A dynamic community economy provides a place for residents to earn good wages, remain employed, and meet basic needs. This section contains basic economic information about supporting industries, inflow and outflow of employees, and income ranges.



Opportunities:

- *Workforce Training*
- *Downtown Collaboration & Investment*
- *Fostering Innovation*
- *Housing Choice*
- *Small Business Support*
- *Working Lands Protection*
- *Outdoor Recreation*



2.3.1 Downtown Bonners Ferry

The heart of Bonners Ferry is its traditional downtown, located on the south side of the Kootenai River and across Highway 95 from the Kootenai River Inn and Casino. The city has made recent progress in preserving the traditional and walkable fabric of the built environment downtown by deregulating off-street parking and providing an underpass from the casino. The city recently added “parklets” downtown, where local shops or restaurants may provide additional seating in business adjacent on-street parking spaces.

Still, vacancies and blight remain in the downtown area which were cited by many through engagement efforts as a planning priority for Bonners Ferry. Engagement efforts for this plan update showed very strong support for revitalization efforts downtown and for small local businesses broadly within the city. When asked if the city and downtown partners should work together to better promote arts entertainment and community events downtown, 42% agreed and 29% strongly agreed. Most respondents also stated that they would visit downtown more if there was more investment made into existing buildings. Several goals, policies (*see Part 1*) and actions (*see Part 3*) in this plan are aimed to protect the historic character of downtown Bonners Ferry and to enhance economic vibrancy and investment downtown.



The recent allowance of “parklets” in downtown is an innovative example of how the city may support downtown businesses.
Photo Source: Aaron Qualls

2.3.2 Jobs and Industry

Bonners Ferry-based businesses and industries provide approximately 1,700 total jobs per 2019 Census estimates. Although Bonners Ferry has about one-fifth of the population of the County, the city offers space for over half of the jobs in the County (approximately 3,323 jobs)¹⁵. Bonners Ferry is therefore essential to the countywide economy.

The largest industries in Bonners Ferry include the following:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (23%)
- Retail Trade (18%)
- Accommodation and Food Service (15%)
- Public Administration (13%)
- Educational Services (8.2%)

¹⁵ <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

All other industries account for fewer than 5% of the total jobs in Bonners Ferry. Countywide, the same top five industries are significant. Other industries that stand out as top employers include Manufacturing (13%), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (9%), and Construction (8%).

2.3.3 Income

The median household income in Bonners Ferry per 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates was \$32,000. This median income is significantly lower than Boundary County's median household income of \$43,423. The relatively low Area Median Income (AMI) of households within Bonners Ferry is likely, to a degree, affected by a lower-than-average household size—indicative of a retirement community with single person households. From 2019 Census data sources, household income is distributed as follows:

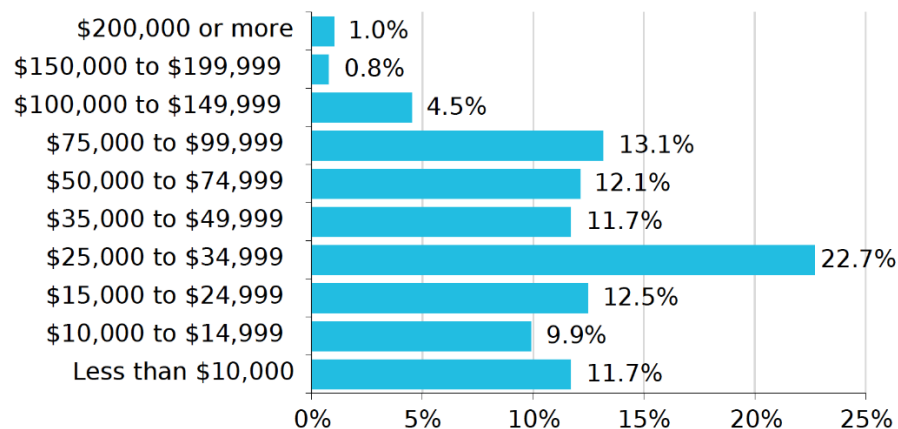


Figure 5 - Household Income Distribution of Bonners Ferry (2019)

2.3.4 Inflow/Outflow of Employees

Bonners Ferry sees a net gain of about 172 people (708 IN minus 536 OUT) commuting into the city limits daily for work. The available data indicates that 150 people that work in Bonners Ferry also live in the city limits. 82% of the jobs in the city are held by non-residents. The data also indicates how vital the city is to the economy of the surrounding region. It is important to note that this data can be somewhat skewed by larger employers with a corporate address outside of the area. The overall trend, however, may be indicative that most who work in the city do not reside within the city, either by choice or necessity.

2.3.5 Broadband Availability

Despite its remote geography, Bonners Ferry has many options for broadband connectivity (over 25 Mbps connection speeds) that enables video conferencing and video streaming¹⁶. Although very high speeds do not compare to some other areas of the State, remote work in the city has become viable. High speed connectivity will likely continue to draw more residents who are able and willing to work remotely.

¹⁶ Broadband Now (<https://broadbandnow.com/Idaho/Bonners-Ferry?zip=83805>)



2.3.6 Agriculture



“I want to keep Bonners Ferry a small town and don't want to see all of our fields filled with homes.” —public comment

Protecting agricultural lands within the region maintains rural character but also provides for long term viability for a significant sector of the regional economy. Photo Source: Idaho Tourism

Agriculture is a significant contributor to the economy in the surrounding area of Bonners Ferry and the region. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting account for 8.5% of the jobs within the County. The production of canola, wheat, and barley account for over half of the agricultural output in the region. Livestock production accounts for a smaller percentage but remains significant. To protect rural character and agricultural lands with the greater area, this plan envisions that new growth be accommodated to a greater extent within existing city limits, as opposed to outlying areas.



2.4 Education:

High-quality education from early childhood through postsecondary is essential to access jobs. Post-secondary education, including universities, colleges, trade, and vocational schools are becoming increasingly important.



Photo Source: Boundary County School District 101

Opportunities:

- *Workforce Training*
- *Broadband Availability*
- *School Facility Master Planning*



2.4.1 Educational Attainment

Based on the most recent American Community Survey Data available, the educational attainment of Bonners Ferry closely resembles that of the County. About 40% of City residents have graduated high school and pursued no further education. Approximately one-fourth of the population of Bonners Ferry holds a higher-education degree, and another quarter has acquired some college education without obtaining a degree. Approximately 8% of the population has not graduated from high school.

Table 8: Educational Attainment

	Bonners Ferry Estimate	Bonners Ferry Percent	Boundary County Percent
Population 25 years and over	1835	100%	100%
Less than 9th grade	24	1.3%	3.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	118	6.4%	4.7%
High school graduate (GED)	738	40.2%	42.7%
Some college, no degree	489	26.6%	22.5%
Associate's degree	115	6.3%	6.8%
Bachelor's degree	216	11.8%	13.3%
Graduate or professional degree	135	7.4%	6.5%

2.4.2 Schools

Boundary County School District serves Boundary County with three school locations in the City of Bonners Ferry:

- Valley View Elementary
- Bonners Ferry Middle School
- Bonners Ferry High School

There are two additional elementary schools within the district, but outside of the city. The two schools are Naples Elementary and Mount Hall Elementary. There were 1,302 students enrolled in the district in 2021, down slightly from 1,397 students in 2020 and 1,370 students in 2019. Adult education is offered at Bonners Ferry High School through North Idaho College (NIC). NIC also offers some post-secondary education courses approximately 30 miles to the south in Sandpoint, ID.

The graduation rate for the Boundary County School district in 2020 was 85.6%, up from 74.1% in 2019 and 78% in 2018. The district's per pupil expenditures in 2020 was \$9,403. This was higher than the statewide average of \$8,361.

Aging school facilities and lack of funding for structural and other needed improvements are a concern. Valley View Elementary is identified by the district as at risk of catastrophic failure. Should students need to be relocated to other areas or schools while funding is identified and improvements made,



transportation modes and routes during peak hours may be significantly affected, along with current student service offerings. Broadband connectivity for many students in the district, primarily those who live outside of the city, is limited.

The overall percentage of residents in Bonners Ferry with a Bachelor's degree or higher is 19.2%. Although not necessarily atypical for a remote rural area, it is significantly lower than the State of Idaho overall estimate of 28.7%.

Engagement efforts for this plan update indicated very strong support for more workforce training opportunities. When asked if the city, along with schools, employers, appropriate agencies, and the county, should work together to help facilitate or provide more workforce training opportunities, 27% strongly agreed and 43% agreed.



2.5 Neighborhood and Built Environment

Safe, obtainable housing for a variety of tenures and incomes, as well as neighborhoods that promote physical activity and access to daily needs can, over the long term, contribute to positive community health outcomes. Community character, municipal budgets, transportation, and economic development are all impacted by how and where a community builds to accommodate growth. This section contains existing land uses & zoning, housing characteristics, a value per acre analysis, and an overview of transportation and utilities.



Photo Source: Ian Poellet

Opportunities:

- *A Variety of Housing Types*
- *Protection of Neighborhood Character*
- *Recreation Access*
- *A Walkable and Bikeable Community*
- *Fiscally Sound and Serviceable Development*



2.5.1 Existing Land Uses and Zoning

Neighborhoods and districts of Bonners Ferry are somewhat defined by unique natural features, such as the Kootenai River and the variations of topography within the city. The downtown and older neighborhoods such as “South Hill” (often characterized as “Presidential Streets”) are more typical of pre-World War II development patterns where a more traditional “grid” street pattern exists with smaller blocks, smaller lots, and more moderate densities.

Newer areas to the north and south tend to exhibit a more contemporary development pattern. The pattern is more auto oriented in nature, with larger blocks, cul-de-sac development, and lower density. Based on orientation interviews conducted, infrastructure investments and highway improvements to the north and south of city limits are seen as a potential threat to business viability within the city and in particular, the downtown.

The City of Bonners Ferry currently has the following seven zoning districts that this plan envisions changes to per the goals, policies, and implementation section of this plan:

- Residential AA District
- Residential A District
- Residential B District
- Commercial District
- Industrial District
- Medical District
- Downtown District

Broadly within the city, existing residential zoning accounts for 58.8% (859 acres), industrial areas account for 21.6% (316 acres) and commercial areas encompass 19.6% (286 acres). Height within all current zones is limited to 35 feet, and the existing lot size minimums within residential zones of 5000 square feet are consistent with the existing development pattern of the older neighborhoods.

Multifamily (3 units or more) is currently allowed only within the Commercial and Downtown districts. Duplexes are currently allowed in all but the Residential AA and Industrial districts. Recently, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) have been permitted in all zones except Industrial. Certain lower impact, non-residential uses may be allowed in various residential zones only by issuance of a Special Use Permit or within an approved planned unit development. Such uses include barber shops, offices, churches, schools, medical clinics, and pet care.

The revised future land use map (*See Part 3 - Implementation*), in correlation with the goals and policies of this plan (*see Part 1*) envisions more variety of housing types within residential areas, less intense industrial uses, and other areas of neighborhood compatible mixed uses.



2.5.2 Existing Building Footprints

The map shown in Figure 6 shows existing building footprints within existing city limits. As shown, the largest undeveloped areas within the city with present or nearby services include locations in north Bonners Ferry (currently zoned Residential B), the former mill site to the west of downtown (currently zoned Industrial but envisioned in this plan as master planned mixed use – see Part 3), and the fairgrounds. The map also highlights how development patterns have changed over time in Bonners Ferry. The downtown and older neighborhoods are characterized by shorter blocks, moderate densities, and a traditional grid street pattern as compared to newer areas of town that are more spread out with fewer existing street connections.

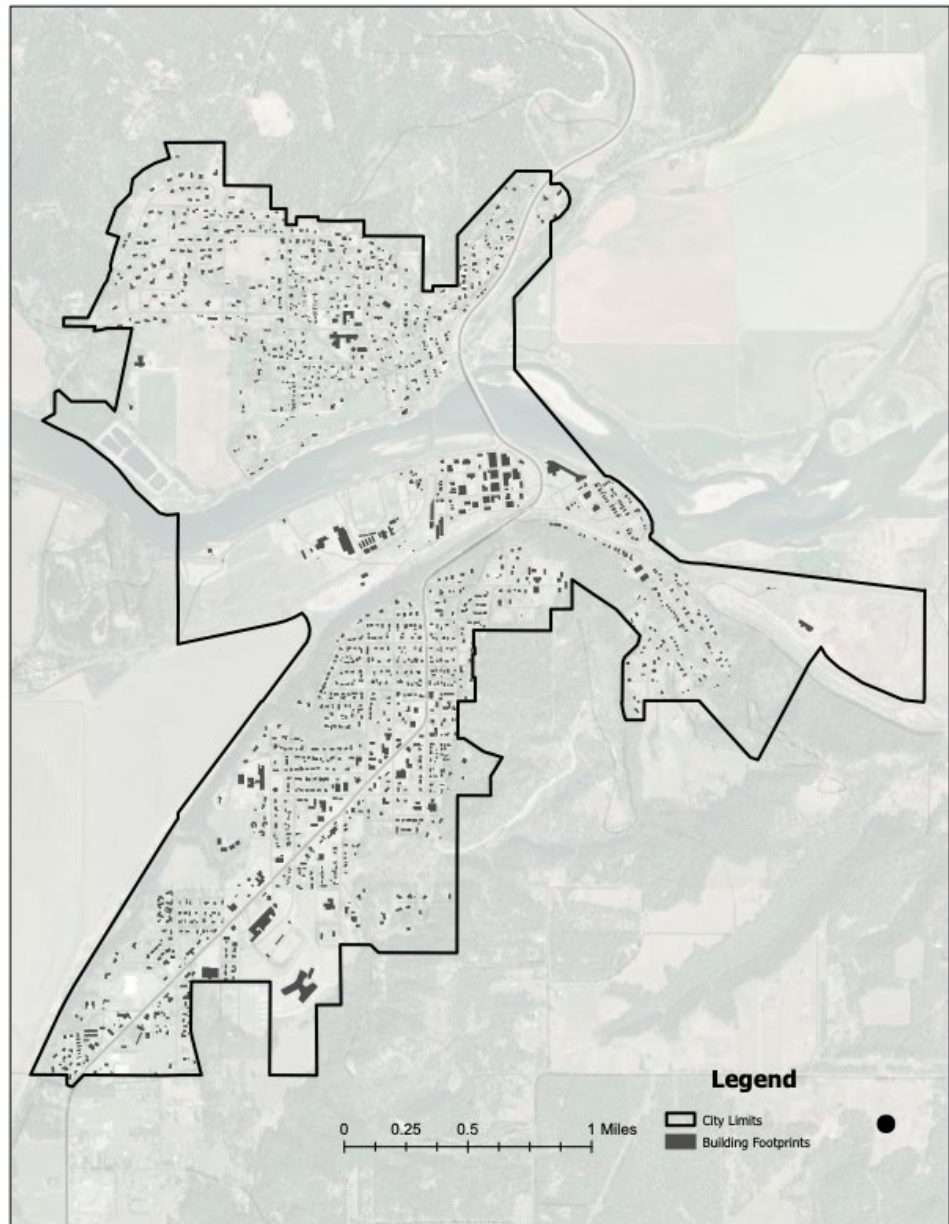


Figure 6 - Existing Buildings in City Limits

2.5.3 Assessed Value Per Acre Analysis

Generally, within rural communities of Idaho where most sales tax revenue is allocated by the State based on population, property taxes are often the greatest source of revenue for maintaining infrastructure and services. Property taxes fund streets, parks and recreation, schools, emergency services and utilities. Efficiency in land consumption is therefore an important consideration for the future land use envisioned in Part 3. Although tax revenue in absolute numbers may vary, the assessed value per acre analysis below (*Figure 7*) indicates where value is generated most as compared to the amount of land used. Somewhat analogous to miles per gallon for vehicles, the examination helps to indicate how certain development patterns are supported (or not) by property tax revenue.

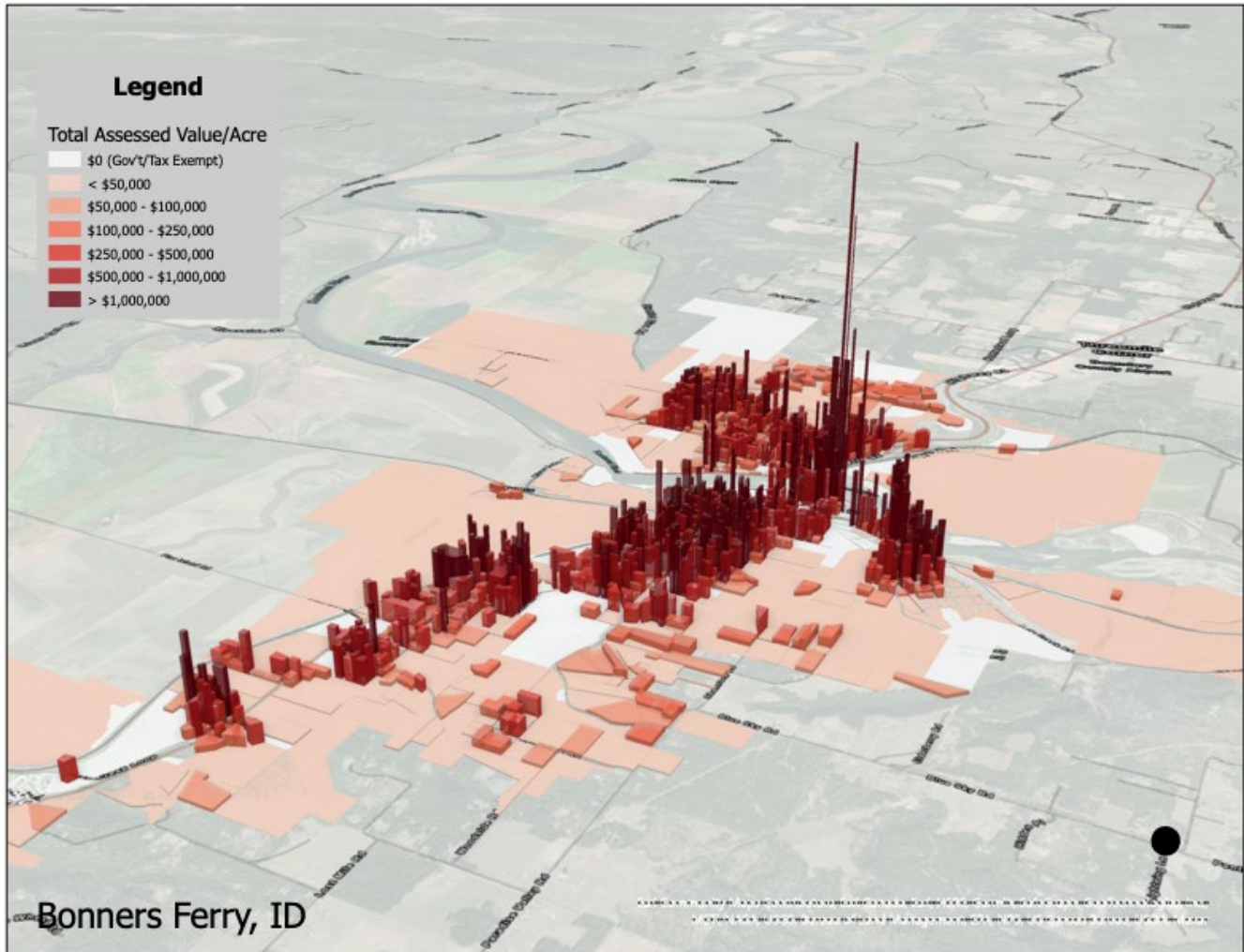


Figure 7 - Assessed Value per Acre in Bonners Ferry (Source: Boundary County 2020 Assessor Data)

The analysis indicates the downtown and the older neighborhoods of Bonners Ferry (characterized by smaller lots and shorter blocks) produce the most taxable value per acre than newer areas to the north and south.

2.5.4 Housing

According to 2019 5-year estimates from the census, there are approximately 1,283 total units in Bonners Ferry, with 70% of them that are a single unit (single family). A total of 23% of units are multi-unit (2-or more), and 8% of the housing stock is comprised of mobile homes.

Survey responses indicated moderate support for further allowance of smaller scale, medium density housing types within the city which may include accessory dwelling units, small apartment buildings, or cottage-style developments, as examples. Commonly referred to “Missing Middle Housing,” smaller units that are appropriately designed and integrated within existing and new neighborhoods may help bridge the affordability gap identified by community data and public outreach efforts.

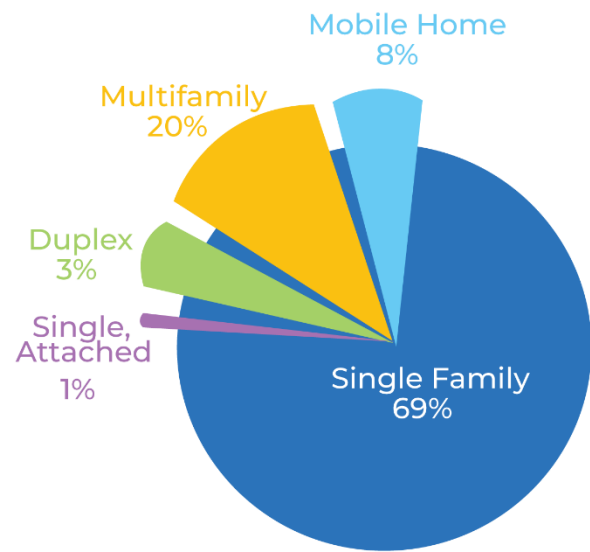


Figure 8 – Existing Housing by Type within City Limits



Figure 9 - Missing Middle Housing Conceptual Rendering, Source: Opticos Design, Inc.

Tenure

Excluding a vacancy rate within the city of approximately 9%, out of those occupied units, 39% are rentals and 61% are occupied by the owner. Boundary County has a much lower portion of rental units, only making up 23% of all County housing units.

Table 9: Housing Occupancy

	Bonnors Ferry #	Bonnors Ferry %	Boundary County %
Owner-occupied	716	61.1%	76.7%
Renter-occupied	456	38.9%	23.3%

Affordability

According to 2019 ACS estimates, the median rent in Bonners Ferry was \$477 per month, and \$613 per month for Boundary County. It should be noted, however, that based on community member interviews and a review of rentals currently available in the area, prices for homes and rentals have continued to surge in the past year. Availability of both homes and rentals is low at the time of this report. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as “housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.”

In Bonners Ferry, nearly one-third (30.5%) of rental households spend more than 30% of their household income on rent. Almost half (48.5%) of owner-occupied households with mortgages spend more 30% of their household income on housing costs¹⁷, and even 15% of owner-occupied households *without* mortgages spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs.

In all, this means about 31% of all households in Bonners Ferry are not considered affordable by HUD standards.

Table 10: Housing Affordability

Occupied Housing Unit Type	Bonnors Ferry #	>30% of HH Income on Housing Costs
Owner w/ Mortgage	410	199
Owner w/out Mortgage	306	45

¹⁷ Housing costs may include rent, mortgage, insurance, utilities, etc. Transportation costs are typically not included but may also contribute to overall affordability.



Paying Rent	401	121
No Rent Paid	55	No data
Total Households	1172	365

Despite a significant portion of households in Bonners Ferry that are not considered affordable, according to the 2018 Community Health Assessment from Panhandle Health, Boundary County has the lowest rate for North Idaho for HUD-assisted housing units per 10,000 at 42.5¹⁸. The number of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing units within the county, as of 2014, is 32¹⁹. For comparison, neighboring Bonner County to the south has a total of 382 LIHTC units. Also, according to the 2017 health assessment, Boundary County had the highest cost of living in all categories (shelter, transportation, food, health care and utilities) than other counties in North Idaho.

2.5.5 Transportation

Within city limits, several transportation modal types exist, including public transit, rail, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and van pools. Additionally, Boundary County Airport is located 2 miles north of the city center. Regional truck and heavy vehicle traffic is generated primarily along Hwy 95 by private enterprise and the school district.

Bonners Ferry has recently adopted plans for improving multi-modal connections throughout the city. In partnership with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), many improvements have been implemented as part of the multi-year Hwy 95 Reconstruction Project.

Orientation interviews and survey feedback indicate a growing congestion concern from various side streets along Hwy 95 due to vehicular left-turn movements. Certain projects recommended in the 2019 Bonners Ferry Transportation plan are intended to provide more local connections within neighborhoods, which may significantly reduce the number of local trips currently taken on Hwy 95.



Figure 10 - High Priority Crossing Opportunity on Hwy95/2 identified in the 2020 Bonners Ferry Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

¹⁸ HUD offers help to apartment owners by offering reduced rent to low-income tenants, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Source: 2018 Community Health Assessment, Panhandle Health District.

¹⁹ Created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the LIHTC program gives State and local LIHTC-allocating agencies the equivalent of approximately \$8 billion in annual budget authority to issue tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households. Source: <https://www.huduser.gov/> / 2018 Community Health Assessment, Panhandle Health District.

Public Transit

The Selkirks-Pend Oreille Transit (SPOT) bus service operates through a joint powers agreement serving the cities of Dover, Sandpoint, Kootenai, Ponderay, and Bonners Ferry. SPOT represents the first public transit system to serve the City of Bonners Ferry, providing access to health care services, shopping, recreation, and other basic needs.

Rail

Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) are the two rail lines operating within the City of Bonners Ferry, which are used exclusively for the movement of goods. There is no passenger service or stations within or near the city. The closest passenger rail availability is 30 miles away within the City of Sandpoint. According to the 2019 Bonners Ferry Transportation Plan, the two at-grade crossings within the City (at Riverside Street and at Plaza Street) have been recommended for improvements and are likely grant eligible. Community feedback indicated that the city may consider determining the feasibility of implementing “quiet zones,” which are upgraded rail crossings that do not require trains to sound their horns.

Boundary County Airport

Although located outside of city limits and the area of city impact, the Boundary County Airport has seen persistent growth. Currently, commercial service is not provided but the airport does provide hangars for corporate aircraft and a variety of aviation-related activities.

2.5.6 Utilities

Electricity

The City of Bonners Ferry Electric Department is a municipal electric utility governed by the Bonners Ferry City Council and owned by the city since the 1920s. The city serves just over 2,400 customers, and sells around 64,000-megawatt hours per year, with an annual budget of just under \$5 million per year. The electric department has four linemen, two power plant operators, and an electrician.

The city owns and operates the Moyie Hydroelectric project northeast of the city, which generates approximately 1/3 of its customers’ electricity requirements. The remainder of the power is purchased from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The power system owned by the city also consists of overhead transmission lines and a distribution system consisting of overhead and underground power lines. There are no National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors within the County.

Water and Sewer

The City’s primary source of drinking water is from Myrtle Creek. The Kootenai River is used as a backup source, and the city has recently constructed a new well that can be used to supplement the system when needed. The city is interconnected with Cabinet Mountains Water District as an emergency back-up source.

The water treatment plant utilizes two clarifiers and two rapid sand filters to treat the surface water from Myrtle Creek and the Kootenai River. The City’s treated water storage consists of six water tanks that store a combined volume of approximately 1.7 million gallons.



The City's wastewater is treated in a four-cell lagoon system on the north side of the Kootenai River. A total of eight pump stations deliver wastewater to the lagoon system from the city service area.

2.5.7 Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities

Within City limits, the streets department manages all city owned park facilities, including Memorial Park, the Georgia Mae Plaza, the City Swimming Pool, and the Visitor Center. In partnership with 9B Trails and Boundary County Parks and Recreation, a grant was received to provide additional ADA-approved walking and biking trails at Riverside County Park, which is currently undeveloped and located on the North Side of the bridge. Public engagement efforts indicated a very strong preference for additional trails and other amenities along the Kootenai River within city limits and other areas along the Kootenai nearby.

Bonn timers Ferry is located along the International Selkirk Loop, a 280-mile-long scenic highway in the U.S. The loop connects Idaho, Washington, and the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Outside of the City, many recreational opportunities exist hiking and wildlife viewing. Located just west of the city is the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge, which is a popular destination for residents and visitors. Local non-profit 9B Trails has been developing various public non-motorized trails within the County. The City of Bonners Ferry owns and manages the 9-hole Mirror Lake Golf Course located about 1 mile south of the city limits.



Photo Source: Idaho Tourism

Mirror Lake Golf Course, Photo Source: stock



2.6 Community Health and Safety

This section provides an overview health and safety services within Bonners Ferry, including emergency services, health care facilities, hazardous areas, and environmental characteristics.



Photo Source: Stampede Lake Studio

Opportunities:

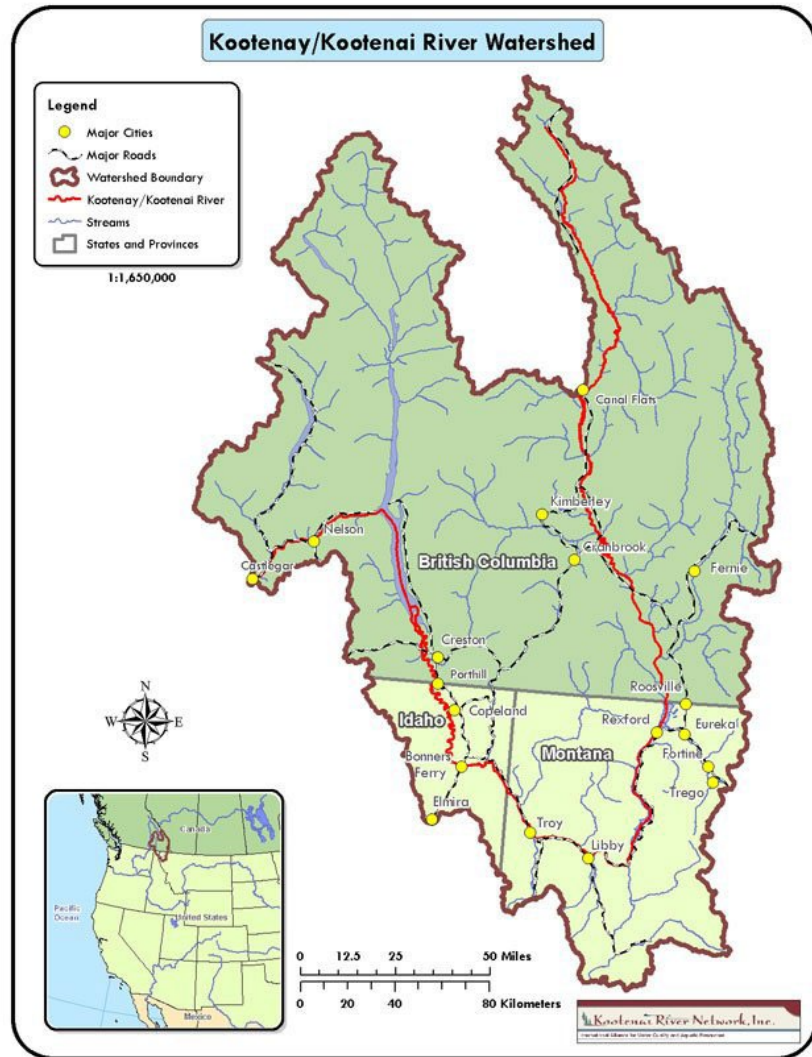
- *Planning for Wildfire*
- *Access to Healthcare*
- *Community Safety and Resiliency*
- *Watershed Protection*
- *Maintaining clean air, soils, and water quality*



2.6.1 Natural Resources

Kootanay/Kootenai River Watershed

Bonniers Ferry is located within the Kootanay/Kootenai River Watershed. The watershed encompasses approximately 18,000 square miles and includes areas of British Columbia and Montana. The Kootenai River originates in British Columbia north of the Kootenay National Park and flows 485 miles through Montana and Idaho. The watershed plays a crucial economic role to Bonners Ferry and the broader region including forest products, hydroelectric energy production, and agriculture²⁰.



²⁰ Source: <https://kootenairivernetwork.org/>

2.6.2 Hazardous Areas

The 2016 All hazards Mitigation Plan for Boundary County identifies the following hazards that may pose the greatest threat to people and structures:

- 1) Major Fire – Wildland and/or Urban
- 2) Landslides and Erosion
- 3) Severe Winter Storm
- 4) Flooding
- 5) Earthquakes

Also acknowledged below is the transportation of hazardous materials through the city and any known waste remediation sites, according to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ).

Boundary County has begun the process to update the 2016 plan, which formally kicked off in December of 2021.

Fire

Wildfires have increased regionally within North Idaho and are often started from human activities. From 2010-2020, there have been 5 wildfire incidents in Boundary County according to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System Idaho Fire Map (*Figure 11*). More recently in 2022, and as this plan was in development, the Kootenai River Complex Fire encompassed approximately 25,402 acres. The wildland-urban interface (*WUI – Figure 12*) is the area where human development borders or intermingles with forestland or other wildlands.

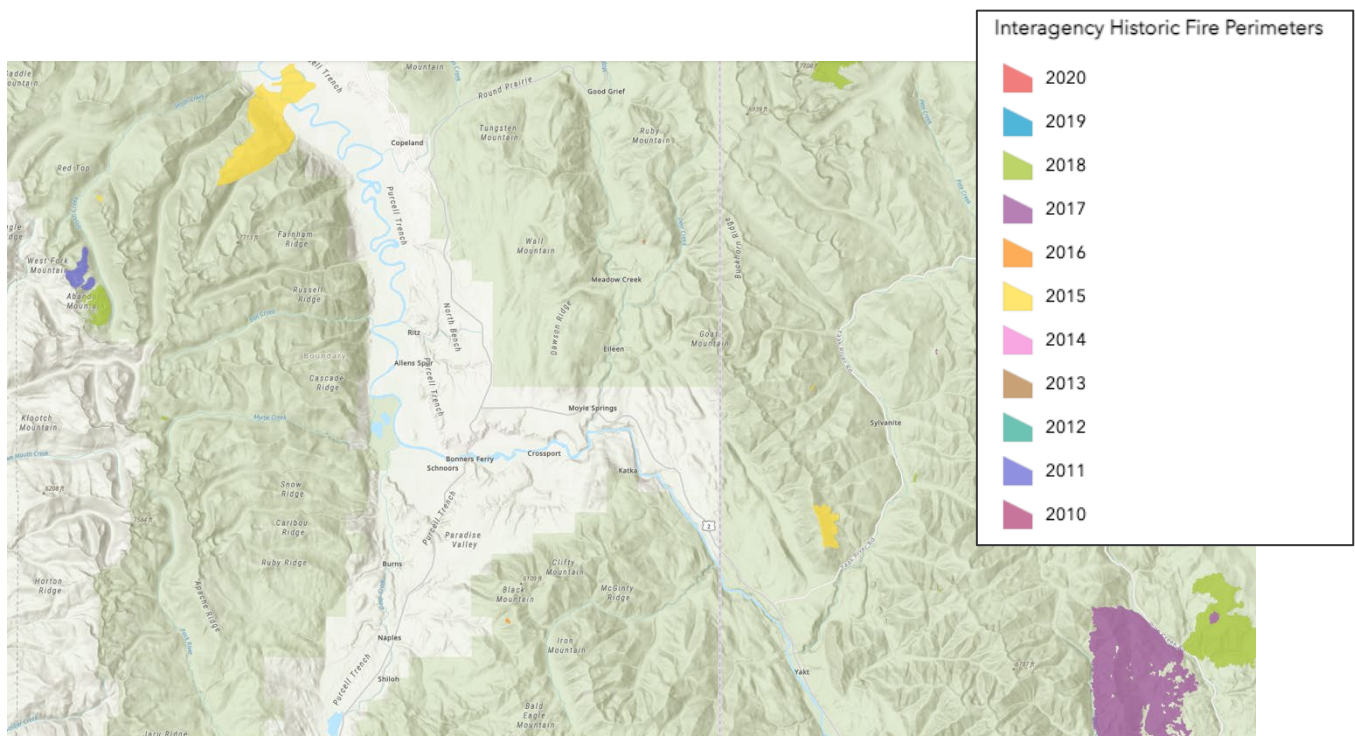


Figure 11 - Historic Fire Perimeters 2010-2020

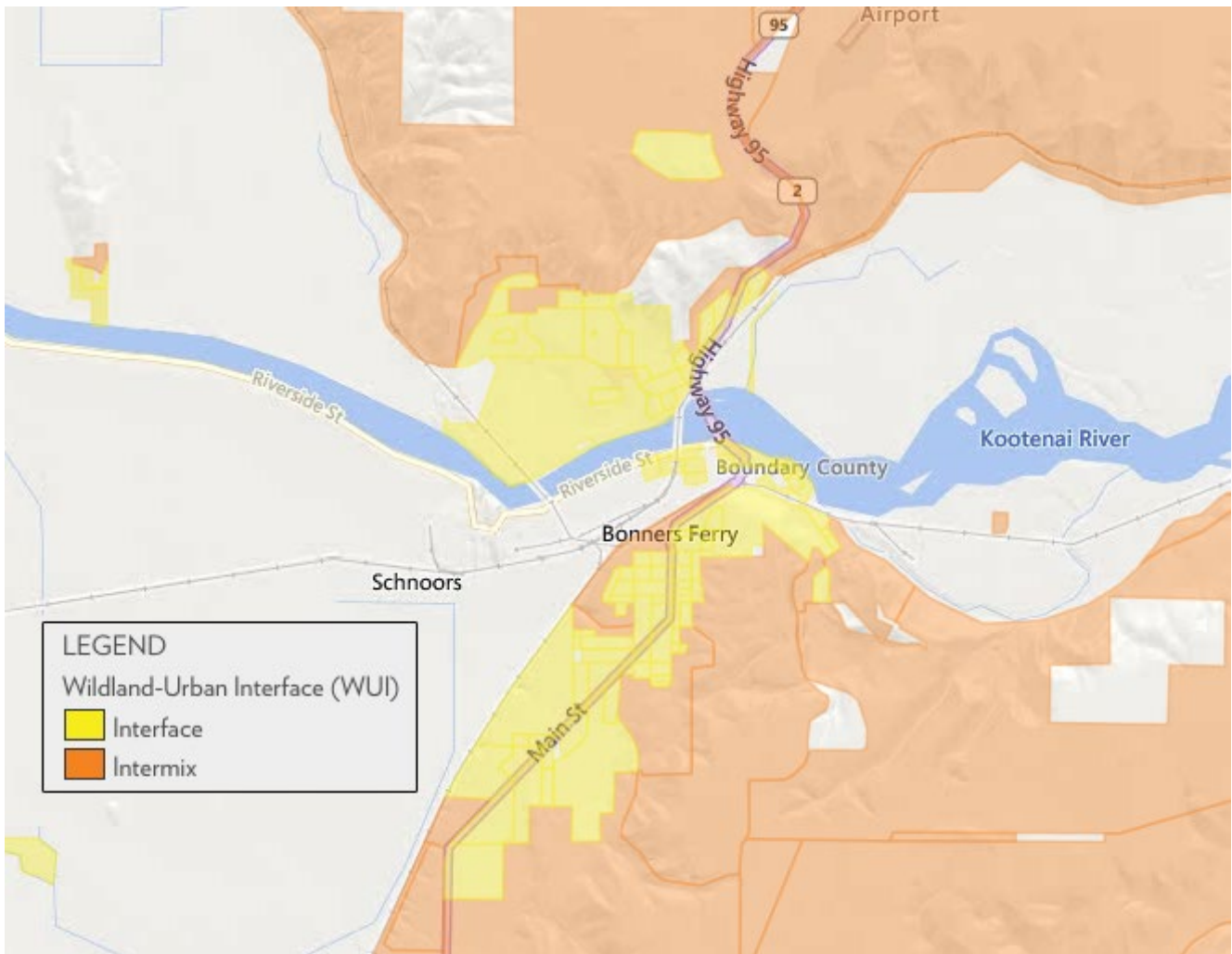


Figure 12 - Wildland-Urban Interface (Source: SILVIS Labs, 2010)

The WUI is defined both in terms of the “interface,” or the area where development is clustered adjoining wildlands, and the “intermix,” or the area where development is interspersed with wildlands²¹.

²¹ American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service, QuickNotes (ISSN 2169-1940) No.69 (2017)

Landslides and Erosion

Bonniers Ferry contains a variety of slopes within city limits. The most common causes of landslides are precipitation and human activities. Over the last 100 years, most of the landslides in the County have occurred on steep slopes adjacent to roads, with reduced or removed vegetation due to road construction or wildfire²².

Severe Winter Storm

Weather incidents such as high winds, heavy snow, or ice may cause downed power lines, road and school closures, and similar incidents. On the average, these events occur more than once a year. Costs in direct losses are usually not high from these incidents, but they are disruptive to the businesses and lives of residents. Effects can be significant if the condition is long lasting and/or covers a wide area¹⁴.

Flooding

Before the Libby Dam was constructed in the early 1970s, flooding was of much greater risk to a larger number of areas within the city. Dikes were also constructed prior from 1917 through the 1940s to restrict natural flooding from the Kootenai River. Some areas within the City and Area of City Impact, however, are still susceptible to flooding typically during the later winter or early spring²³. Figure 14 shows the current flood zones, according to City GIS records.

Earthquakes

The Purcell Trench Fault (north portion – see *Figure 13*) runs north-south just to the west of the City of Bonners Ferry. Based on historical records and current information from the 2014 USGS Seismic Hazard Map for Idaho, earthquake risk is relatively low in Boundary County. The primary risk comes from earthquakes that may occur along nearby fault lines elsewhere in Idaho or in Montana.



Figure 13 - North Purcell Trench fault

²² 2016 Boundary County All Hazards Mitigation Plan

²³ Bonners Ferry 2006 Comprehensive Plan

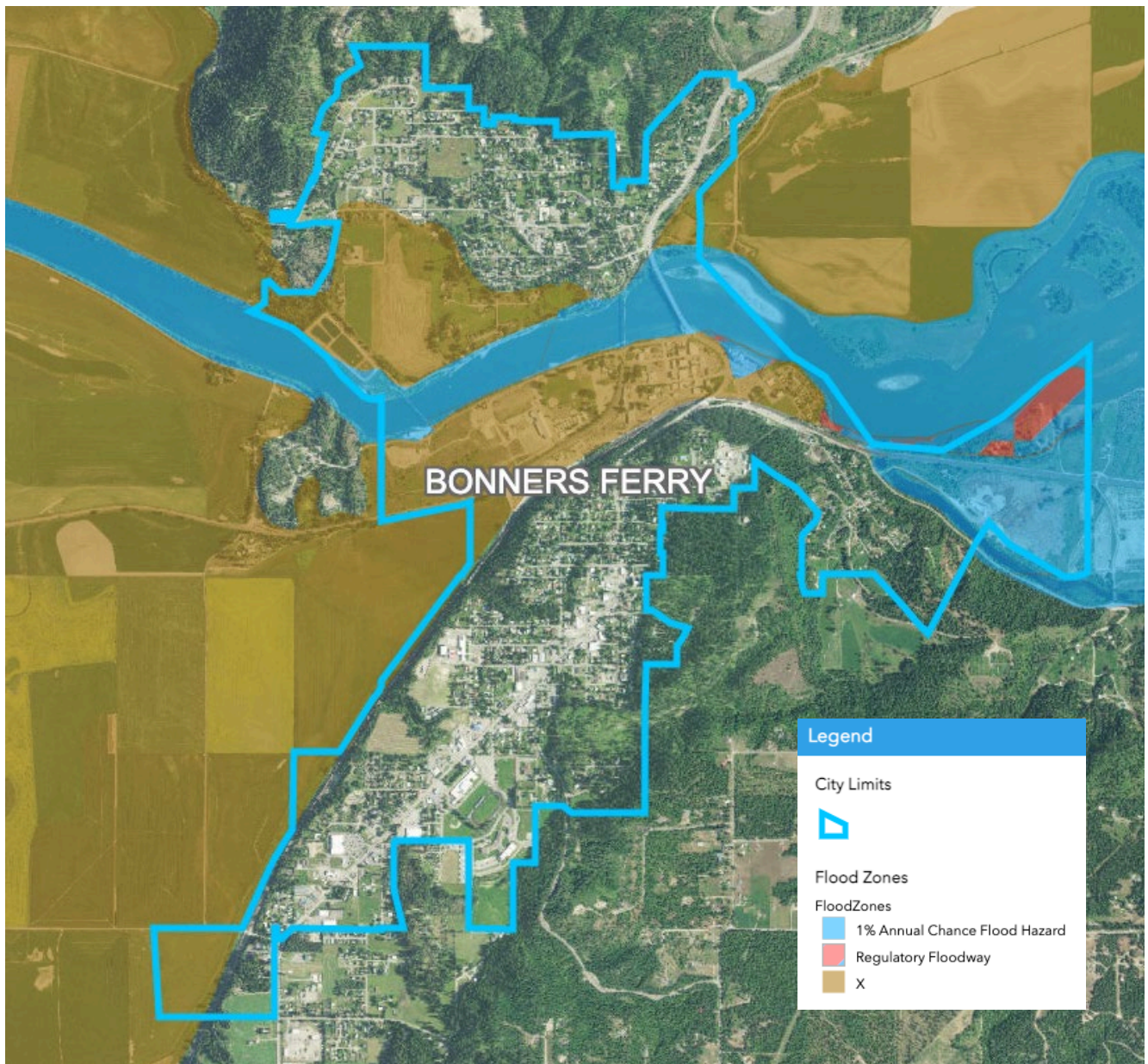


Figure 14 - Flood Zones

Hazardous Material Transport

Although quantities and exact materials are not fully known, hazardous material transport through the City of Bonners Ferry occurs by rail and by truck, primarily on Hwy 95.

Waste Remediation Sites

According to the IDEQ Waste Management and Remediation Division Facility Mapper²⁴, there are no known brownfields within the city limits of Bonners Ferry. The facility mapper does indicate, however, various other sites that have been or may need some remediation. In Bonners Ferry, the facility mapper indicates the presence of underground storage tanks (with some reported as leaking), and some properties that may contain by-products of manufacturing processes, discarded commercial products, or unused chemicals such as cleaning fluids or pesticides.

²⁴ <https://idaho.terradox.com/>



2.6.3 Access to Health Care & Human Services

The largest health care and human services facilities for the city and broader region include:

- Boundary Community Hospital
- Kaniksu Health Services
- Panhandle Health District 1

The high cost of living for many residents is evident by the PHD county-wide 2018 Community Health Assessment (CHA), in which 16% of respondents in Boundary County stated that they needed to cut a meal at least once a month due to insufficient money or food—twice as high compared to the neighboring county of Bonner to the South.

Obesity and diabetes have also been on the rise according to 2017 data and relative to other counties within District 1 of PHD. When survey respondents were asked in the past seven days how many days they exercised for at least 30 minutes, Boundary County had a significantly higher answer of “none” out of all the five counties in Idaho.

Demand on health care services is expected to grow with new residents moving to the area. As demographic shifts continue to occur within the city and the broader health care service area to a more aged population, additional specialty care will also be needed, along with assisted care facilities. The Boundary County Hospital building is currently 68 years old and is due for several upgrades. Ambulance service is somewhat limited with essentially one way in and one way out. Land and housing costs have also put additional strain on obtaining and/or retaining health care professionals.

Mental health and substance abuse have also been identified as key health priorities by the CHA. No current mental health facility exists within the City or County.



2.6.4 Police

The Bonners Ferry Police Department has a total of four fulltime officers, one police sergeant, a police chief, and an assistant chief. Data obtained for Boundary County from the Idaho State police department indicates that Countywide, drugs and narcotics represent the steepest rise in reported offenses from 2019 to 2020 (see Table 11). According to local police records, the synthetic opioid Fentanyl has seen a recent rise in use within the area.

Over the past 5 years, total crime offenses recorded by the Bonners Ferry Police Department have risen somewhat after a dip in 2018.

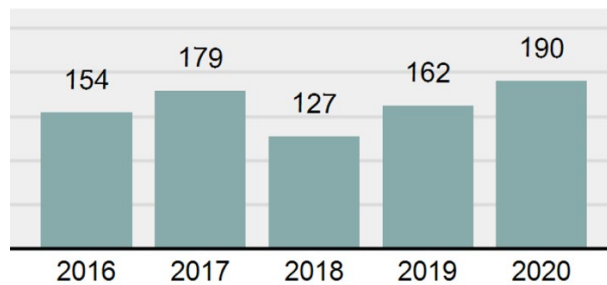


Figure 15 - Bonners Ferry Total Offenses 5-year trend
(Source: Bonners Ferry Police Dept.)

2.6.5 Fire

The City Fire Department is a volunteer department with two fire stations. Station #1 is the primary station, located downtown at 7137 First Street. Station #2 is located on the south hill at 6316 McCall Street. No fire station exists north of the Hwy 95 Bridge.

Table 11 - Bonners Ferry Offenses in 2020 (Source: Bonners Ferry Police Dept.)

Group "A" Offenses	Offenses		Arrests	
	# Reported	# Cleared	Adult	Juvenile
Murder	1	1	1	0
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	0	0
Rape	1	0	0	0
Sodomy	1	0	0	0
Sexual Assault w/Obj	0	0	0	0
Fondling	2	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	9	7	7	0
Simple Assault	25	16	5	1
Intimidation	0	0	0	0
Kidnapping	1	1	1	0
Incest	0	0	0	0
Statutory Rape	0	0	0	0
Human Trafficking, Commercial Sex Acts	0	0	0	0
Human Trafficking, Involuntary Servitude	0	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0	0
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	2	0	0	1
Larceny/Theft Offenses	16	5	3	0
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	0	0
Destruction Of Property	9	2	1	1
Counterfeiting/Forgery	1	0	0	0
Fraud Offenses	0	0	0	0
Embezzlement	0	0	0	0
Extortion/Blackmail	0	0	0	0
Bribery	0	0	0	0
Stolen Property Offenses	3	3	3	0
Drug/Narcotic Violations	73	64	52	1
Drug Equipment Violations	46	41	4	0
Gambling Offenses	0	0	0	0
Pornography/Obscene Material	0	0	0	0
Prostitution Offenses	0	0	0	0
Weapons Law Violations	0	0	0	0
Animal Cruelty	0	0	0	0
Total Group "A"	190	140	77	4

Group "B" Arrests	Arrests	
	Adult	Juvenile
Bad Checks	0	0
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations	0	0
Disorderly Conduct	0	0
DUI	35	2
Drunkenness	0	0
Family Offenses, Nonviolent	0	0
Liquor Law Violations	2	1
Peeping Tom	0	0
Trespass of Real Property	2	0
All Other Offenses	19	0
Total Group "B"	58	3



Part 3 – Implementation



Bonners Ferry Bridge, Spanning Kootenai River, Photo Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division



3.1 Future Land Uses

The Future Land Use map component, in concert with the goals and policies (see Part 1) serves as a legal basis for enacting zoning regulations. Any amendments to zoning shall occur only “after considering the comprehensive plan.” Idaho Code §67-6511(2)(b).

The future land use categories and associated map contain ten land use classifications. While some of these mapped areas are a response to existing development patterns, others envision the opportunity for some change over time. Some of the more notable changes envisioned for Bonners Ferry are:

- Additional, appropriately scaled, and designed, housing types are envisioned within existing and new neighborhoods.
- Certain existing residential areas, particularly along the highway and some existing general commercial areas are envisioned as low impact and pedestrian friendly neighborhood commercial and mixed use.
- The former mill site along the river is reconsidered for a master planned, mixed use area with additional public amenities along the Kootenai River.
- Other industrial areas are retained but the intensity of remaining industrial areas is reduced.

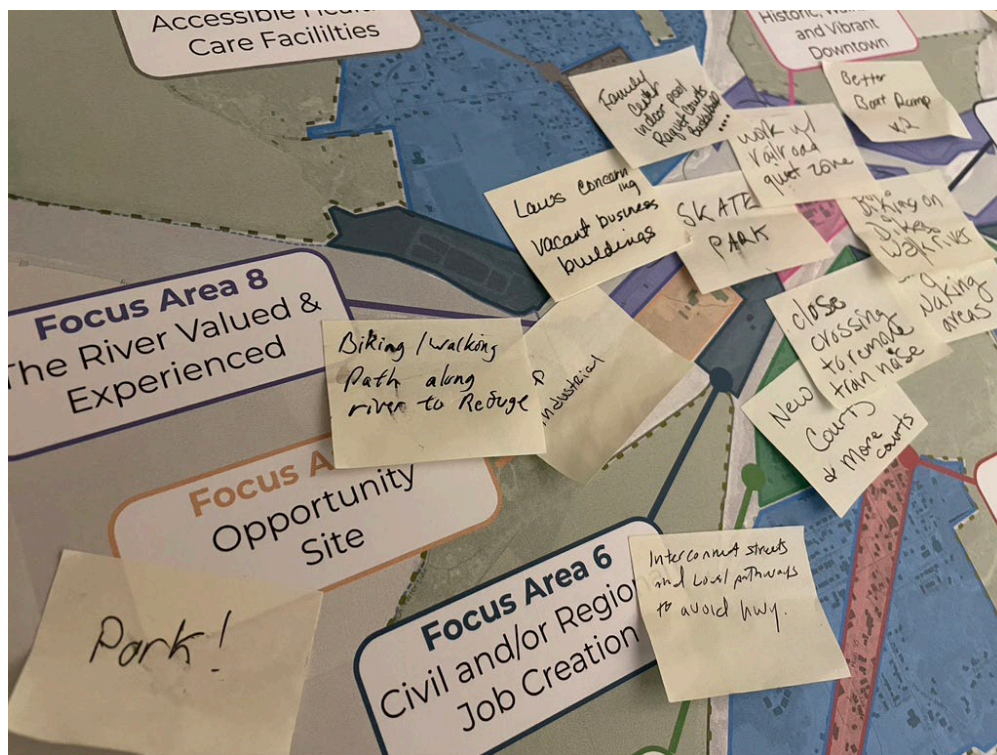


Figure 16 - Participants at the Farmers Market and the Fairgrounds were invited to place "sticky notes" on a focus area map

3.1.1 Future Land Use Categories

The following categories describe typical future uses and desired outcomes. For residential areas, approximate maximum densities are indicated. Existing Implementing zones are provided below each description, where available. It should be noted, however, that existing zoning boundaries may warrant future modifications, along with other amending language to implement the overall future land use vision for Bonners Ferry.

Residential Single Family

- Characterized by single-family residential and accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Up to approximately 10 units per acre (including ADUs) of net density
- Moderate to larger sized residential lots
- Connected and walkable grid or modified grid street pattern
- Character of older, historic neighborhoods preserved
- Schools, parks, and churches, and home occupations also typical of these areas

Existing Implementing Zone: Residential AA District

Residential Low Density

- Characterized by single-family residential, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and duplexes with appropriate scaled cottage style (detached multi-family) developments also considered
- Up to approximately 10 units per acre (including ADUs) of net density
- Moderate sized residential lots
- Connected and walkable grid or modified grid street pattern
- Character of older, historic neighborhoods preserved
- Schools, parks, churches, and home occupations also typical of these areas

Existing Implementing Zones: Residential B District for certain areas



Residential Medium Density

- Characterized by a variety of moderately scaled housing types, including:
 - Single-family homes
 - Accessory dwelling units
 - Duplexes
 - Smaller scaled multi-family development
 - Cottage style (detached multi-family) developments
- Up to approximately 16 units per acre of net residential density
- Small to moderate sized residential lots
- Connected and walkable grid or modified grid street pattern
- New development respects the scale and character of existing neighborhoods
- Schools, parks, churches, and nursing homes also typical of these areas

Existing Implementing Zones: Residential A and B Districts.

Neighborhood Transition

- Characterized by a variety of moderately scaled housing types and low impact, neighborhood compatible commercial—providing for small business opportunity and walkability.
- The street pattern should provide for safe and comfortable connections and routes for walking and biking to these areas.
- Housing types, density and uses envisioned for these areas include those within the Residential Medium Density areas.
- Additional low-impact, pedestrian friendly commercial uses are also envisioned for these areas which may include small retail establishments, offices, cafes, and similar. Such uses should incorporate features that mitigate impacts to surrounding residences and respect the scale of character of the neighborhoods they serve.

Existing Implementing Zone: None. New district to be established. In the interim, the existing Conditional Use Permit Process may be utilized for implementation within these areas.



Masterplan Mixed Use

- The masterplan mixed use area is intended to provide a revised vision for the former industrial mill site.
- A variety of housing types and low impact neighborhood compatible retail and/or dining use may be considered through a planned development which may be phased over time.
- Public recreational amenities and access, particularly along the Kootenai River shall be a focal point for consideration for redevelopment. New development in this area is strongly encouraged to provide for or enhance connections to or along the river.
- Transportation access to and within subsequent development should be carefully considered and accommodating to a variety of travel modes. Careful consideration should be given the wider transportation system within the city. Pedestrian and bicycle connections both within any proposed development and to other areas of significance should be strongly encouraged or required. In support of a vibrant downtown, comfortable and safe pedestrian / bicycle access to the downtown should also be integrated into any proposed redevelopment plans.

***Existing Implementing Zone:** None. However, the existing Planned Unit Development ordinance may potentially be utilized to implement, absent a designated zone prior to any development proposed.*

General Commercial & Mixed Use

- Characterized by a broad mix of retail, general service, professional office, school facilities, multifamily development, and mixed use (commercial and multi-family).
- Design and landscaping standards, particularly along the highway, are important to reinforce a welcoming feel into Bonners Ferry and to encourage pedestrian oriented development.
- Safe and comfortable connections to surrounding neighborhoods for all mode types, including vehicular, pedestrian and by bicycle are important considerations for new or expanded development in these areas.
- Where mixed uses are proposed, commercial should be encouraged on ground floor, street facing areas to further enhance walkability and safety.

***Existing Implementing Zone:** Commercial District*



Downtown

- The downtown area is the cultural and historic center of Bonners Ferry. Special considerations for preserving character and encouraging vibrancy warrant a special designation for this area.
- Within the downtown, pedestrians are given priority to maintain and further a safe, comfortable, and interesting area to explore and shop. The public realm of the downtown supports this vision through pedestrian oriented streetscapes that integrate lighting, landscaping, art, wayfinding and other pedestrian-focused amenities.
- Building renovation where the traditional, historic character of downtown is retained or enhanced is strongly encouraged.
- Typical uses within the downtown primarily include small scale retail, dining, and entertainment. Civic uses and office space are also present. Where multifamily residential is provided, street-facing ground-floors of buildings are reserved primarily for storefront use to further downtown vibrancy.

Existing Implementing Zone: Downtown

Medical Commercial

- This area supports and encourages a variety of medical, health care and emergency response uses, including higher intensity medical facilities such as hospitals, ambulance service, along with clinics, medical offices, and residential care facilities.
- Emergency access to and within this area is a high priority for maintenance and improvement over time.
- Residential use may also be considered in this area in support of housing for health care workers.

Existing Implementing zone: Medical District

Industrial & Public

- Industrial areas are reserved for job creation opportunities and for certain city or county facilities. Uses in this area therefore include municipal wastewater treatment, the county fairgrounds and light to medium industrial use.
- Typical industrial uses may be assembly or manufacturing but does not include operational intensity that may jeopardize the quality of life for surrounding residents. Industrial uses within these areas therefore do not generate excessive noise, pollution, or odors.

Existing Implementing zone: Industrial

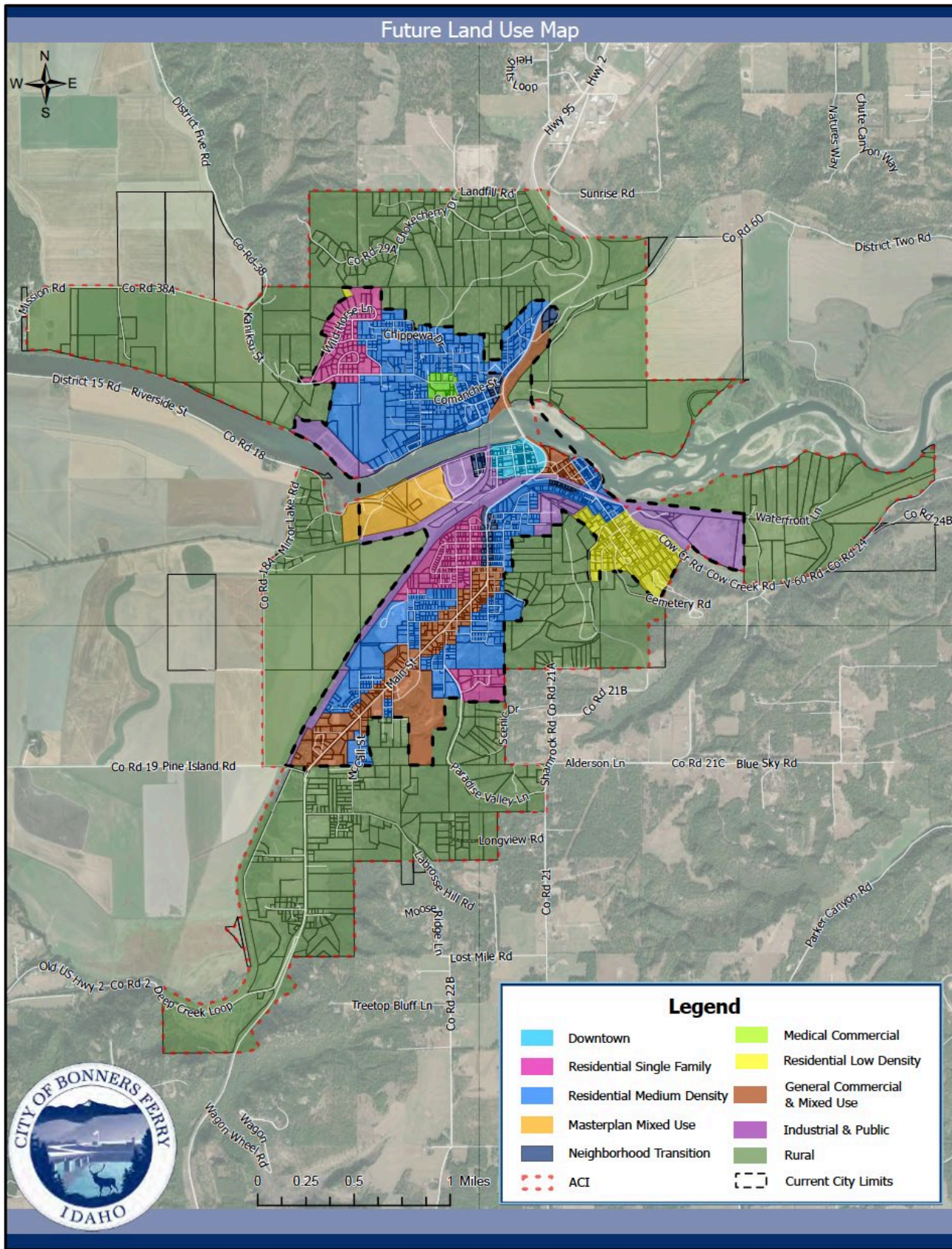


Rural

- Rural areas are predominantly located within the city's Area of City Impact (ACI) and are envisioned for preservation of working lands, recreational opportunities and for scenic vistas.
- New growth is primarily encouraged within city limits to preserve the surrounding rural character and ensure efficient delivery of services. Where development does occur outside city limits, it is strongly encouraged that wildfire risk and ways to mitigate risk are considered. Clustered developments where open space is preserved in the rural designated areas is encouraged.



3.1.2 Future Land Use Map



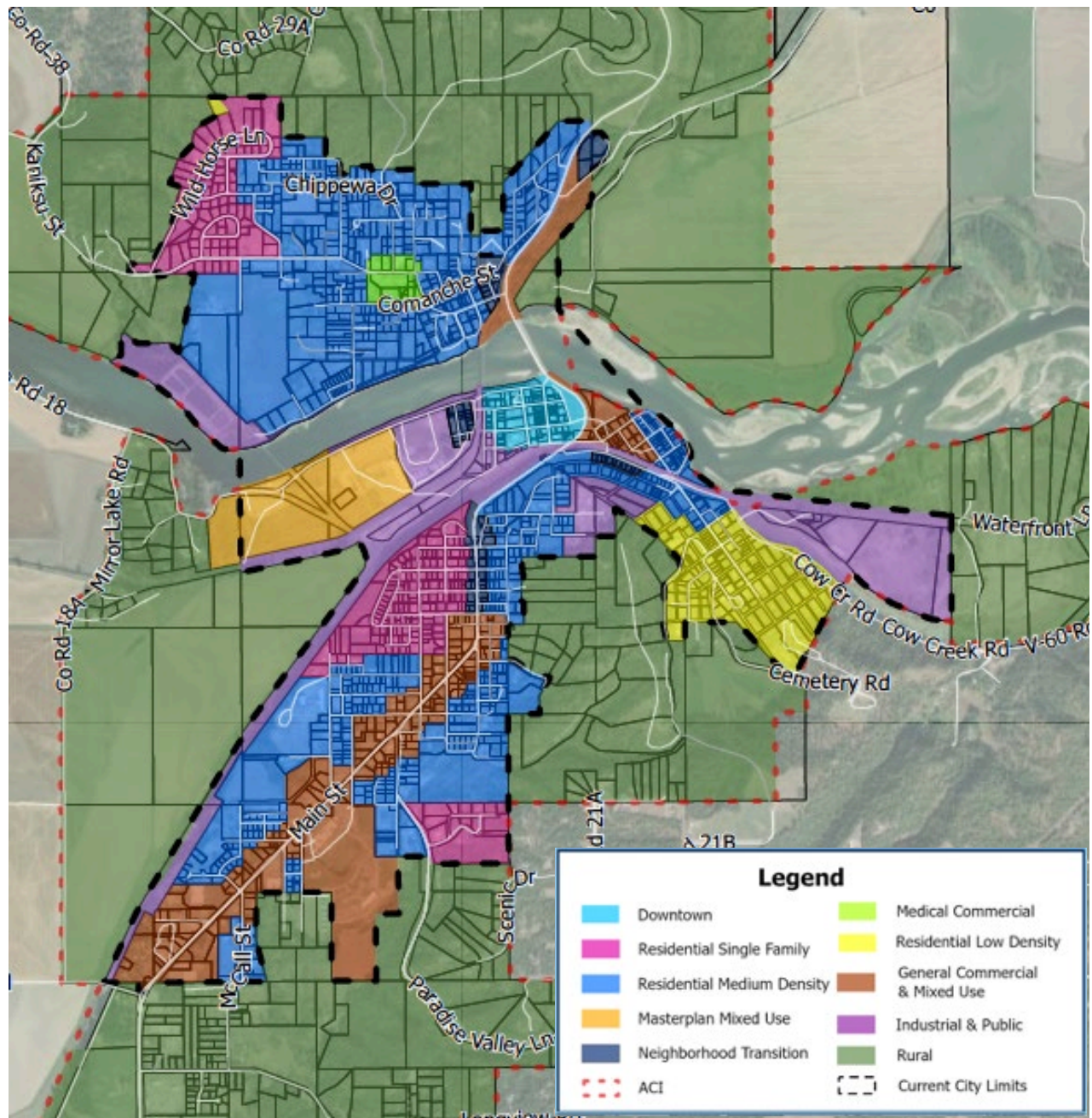


Figure 17 - Future Land Use Detail Map within City Limits

3.2 Implementing Actions Schedule

Actors Key:

CC = City Council | PZ = Planning and Zoning Commission | URA = Urban Renewal Agency | CS = City Staff | CTY = County | EDC = Boundary Economic Development Council | HA = Housing Agency | ITD = Idaho Transportation Department | TBD = Too Be Determined
Based on Partners or Workgroup Established

	CORRESPONDING POLICIES	KEY ACTORS	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE
<p>1. Maintain and update city code in accordance with adopted Comprehensive Plan policies and the Future Land Use Map—principally, the city’s zoning map, uses, standards and subdivision regulations, addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The provision of appropriately scaled housing types within residential areas. b. Design standards for new development to ensure compatibility within existing neighborhoods. c. Block lengths and road standards to provide for multi-modal and accessible intra-neighborhood connections. d. Requirements or incentives for the provision of usable open space and pedestrian oriented amenities. e. Local economic opportunity and the protection of health, safety, and welfare. f. Appropriate types and locations of industrial uses. g. New and updated zoning districts to implement land use policy. 	<p>2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4B, 4C, 5B, 6A, 6E, 6F, 7A, 8C, 9A, 10B, 10C, 11A, 13A, 13D, 14A</p>	PZ, CC	0-5 Years
<p>2. Leverage the Wayfinding and Directional Signage Section of the 2020 Bonners Ferry Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to identify, map, prioritize and seek funding opportunities for wayfinding and directional signage at key decision points.</p>	6D, 6C	PZ, CC	0-5 Years
<p>3. Create an Annexation Policy to account for fiscal impact considerations, public infrastructure analysis, and a review of all services and utilities needed to serve when annexations are proposed.</p>	4A, 4B, 4C, 13A, 13E, 14A	PZ, CC	0-5 Years
<p>4. Work with housing partners and grant funders to create a housing rehabilitation fund.</p>	3B, 3C	CS, HA	0-5 Years
<p>5. Develop progress and performance measures to evaluate the comprehensive plan’s success and guide its adaptation as conditions change over time.</p>	1B, 1D	CS, PZ	0-5 Years



3.2 Implementing Actions Schedule

Actors Key:

CC = City Council | PZ = Planning and Zoning Commission | URA = Urban Renewal Agency | CS = City Staff | CTY = County | EDC = Boundary Economic Development Council | HA = Housing Agency | ITD = Idaho Transportation Department | TBD = Too Be Determined Based on Partners or Workgroup Established

	CORRESPONDING POLICIES	KEY ACTORS	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE
6. Invest in infrastructure improvements within city limits where they are found to be deficient or non-existent and/or where dangerous conditions for motorists and pedestrians are evident.	6B, 7B, 7C, 7D, 8A, 8B, 11B, 11D	URA	5-10 Years
7. Develop a facade improvement program and identify potential funding sources to reward or incentivize exterior improvements to buildings downtown.	9A, 9C	PZ, CC	5-10 Years
8. Review, update, and expand upon previous downtown revitalization plans.	9A, 9B, 9C	PZ, CC, URA	5-10 Years
9. Develop design standards and development requirements, as well as incentive mechanisms, for the downtown area that requires and/or rewards a high-quality public realm.	6A, 6D, 6E, 9A	PZ, CC	5-10 Years
10. Build on previous efforts and create a Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pathways within and immediately surrounding Bonners Ferry b. Local parks and facility needs c. Opportunities for river walks and public access along the Kootenai d. Recreational programming 	4D, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6D, 6E, 12A, 12B, 12C, 13C	PZ, CC	5-20 Years
11. Work with the broader regional community, funding partners, recreational organizations, and relevant agencies to prepare a robust feasibility study for an indoor recreation center that may be supported over the long term.	12B, 12C, 13C	CS, CC	10-20 Years
12. Develop a trails master plan and improvement program in collaboration with property owners.	4D, 5A, 5B, 5C, 12A, 13C	CS, URA	10-20 Years



3.2 Implementing Actions Schedule

Actors Key:

CC = City Council | PZ = Planning and Zoning Commission | URA = Urban Renewal Agency | CS = City Staff | CTY = County | EDC = Boundary Economic Development Council | HA = Housing Agency | ITD = Idaho Transportation Department | TBD = Too Be Determined
Based on Partners or Workgroup Established

	CORRESPONDING POLICIES	KEY ACTORS	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE
13. Review and update, as necessary, the Area of City Impact (ACI) Agreement to ensure collaborative planning within the ACI.	4A, 4B, 4C, 13A, 13E	PZ, CC, CTY	10-20 Years
14. Obtain funding to plan for and mitigate wildfire risk in collaboration with Boundary County.	14B, 14C	PZ, CC, CTY	10-20 Years / Ongoing
15. Form a working group of downtown businesses and partners to identify and prioritize downtown revitalization efforts.	1C, 9A, 9B, 9C	CS	Ongoing
16. Apply for the Idaho Main Street Program for support in identifying, coordinating, and implementing downtown revitalization efforts.	1C, 89A, 89B, 9C	CS, CC	Ongoing
17. In partnership with the Boundary County Historical Society and the Idaho State Historical Society, develop eligibility as a Certified Local Government in support of historic preservation and funding opportunities.	9C	CS, PZ, CC	Ongoing
18. Work with landowners to identify structures, sites, and landscapes for historic recognition and/or protection.	9A, 9C	TBD	Ongoing
19. Form a working group of local artists, local businesses, and local organizations, to work with the Idaho Commission on the Arts or others to determine viability of a public art program.	9B, 13H	CS	Ongoing
20. Collaborate with the Boundary Economic Development Council to identify priority economic development actions.	13A, 13B, 13C, 13D, 13E, 13F	EDC	Ongoing



3.2 Implementing Actions Schedule

Actors Key:

CC = City Council | PZ = Planning and Zoning Commission | URA = Urban Renewal Agency | CS = City Staff | CTY = County | EDC = Boundary Economic Development Council | HA = Housing Agency | ITD = Idaho Transportation Department | TBD = Too Be Determined
Based on Partners or Workgroup Established

	CORRESPONDING POLICIES	KEY ACTORS	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE
21. Maintain and revise, as needed, the City's online presence to ensure transparency, accessibility and opportunity for public engagement while adhering to any established city branding guidelines.	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 13D	CS	Ongoing
22. Pursue grant funding, such as Safe Routes to School, Transportation Alternatives, Child Pedestrian Safety and Federal Lands Access Programs for bicycling and walking improvements.	6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 7B, 7D	CS, CC	Ongoing
23. Negotiate with responsible parties to create identified priority connections within existing neighborhoods.	6B,	CS, URA	Ongoing
24. Review the City's ADA Accessibility Transition Plan that identifies ADA gaps and recommends a timetable and priorities for improvements.	6B, 6C, 6E, 7B, 7D	CS, CC	Ongoing
25. In cooperation with the Idaho Transportation Department, periodically review conditions and potential alternatives for decreasing wait times for vehicular left-turn movements onto US 95.	6C, 6D, 7B, 7C, 7D 8A	CC, ITD	Ongoing
26. Prepare a street tree plan and planting program.	8B	CS, ITD	Ongoing





Appendix A – Public Engagement Results

The following public engagement activity results are included:

- August 2022 Community Survey Results
- June 4, 2022, Farmers Market Mini Poll and Penny Poll Results
- June 4, 2022, Public Workshop
- August 2022 Fair Booth Exhibit



