

IDAHO COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2020-03  
Adopting a Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, the Board of Idaho County Commissioners worked for several months compiling information and crafting a plan to address public concern, while protecting the private property rights of the citizenry; and

WHEREAS, the Board convened a public hearing for the purpose of taking public comment on a proposed Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, public comment was generally favorable to the proposed Comprehensive Plan;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that Idaho County Resolution 2020-01, adopting the Idaho County Comprehensive Plan, attached herein, be adopted and approved.



ADOPTED this 18th day of February, 2020.

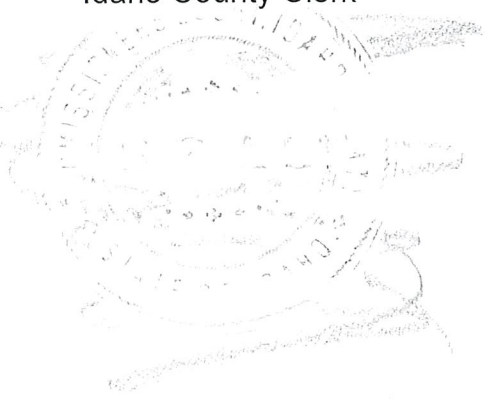
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By:   
R. Skipper Brandt, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Kathy M. Ackerman  
Idaho County Clerk

  
Mark Frei, Commissioner  
  
Denis B. Duman, Commissioner



## IDAHO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Idaho County, Idaho, is a unique place. This plan is written to reflect the rural morals and lifestyle of this community.

Those who call Idaho County home take great pride in the rugged surroundings and work hard to make a living from the forests and farms. Most still retain a friendly neighborliness you'll find in few other places. Above all else, there exists a desire to live with minimal regulations, while enjoying low property taxes.

Those who are contemplating purchasing rural property here or who are considering making the great outdoors of Idaho County home should be aware that life is different here than it is nearly anywhere you may be coming from. This preface is merely to point out some of the differences you can expect so you can make decisions that will help you enjoy all our county has to offer.

Because the county is predominately rural, please remember that the services you may have taken for granted elsewhere are not always available in rural Idaho County. Idaho County does have an extensive network of rural county roads that may be serviced by the County Road and Bridge Department or one of our 12 independent highway districts. However, there ARE some roads that aren't maintained by any public entity. Private drives, some county roads and most subdivision roads, even those dedicated to the public, are not maintained by the County, therefore, property owners should understand that plowing the roads in the winter and repairing them in the spring may be their responsibility.

Winter conditions are extremely hard on roads, both paved and graveled. Idaho County spends a considerable amount each year maintaining its roads, but very often it takes much of the summer just to repair all the damage from the previous winter and spring. Therefore, even when the weather is nice, road conditions often aren't.

Many lots and parcels are accessible only by private road. It's important that property owners are aware of the legal aspects of access. It is possible that you may have to gain access to your property by driving across someone else's property. You should be aware of any easements that may exist on the parcel you are going to acquire and may want to consider having the parcel surveyed prior to purchase. The cost will most likely be added to the purchase price, but at least you'll know exactly what you're buying. Relying on a fence line, a rock or the tree out back is not always prudent.

Trained volunteers provide limited fire protection and emergency medical services in Idaho County, but because of the distances involved and because conditions are not always favorable, response time can be delayed. Fire protection in rural Idaho County should not be assumed. Your property may be protected by a subscription-based fire department, by a tax-based fire protection district or by neighbors helping neighbors. Forest fires are a way of life here, and if you build without being aware of the danger, it's possible you'll come to regret it. In the end your property is your responsibility.

Garbage collection services are not available everywhere in Idaho County. Most cities have curbside pickup. You should check with your city to see if this service is available. If you reside outside the city limits of any city in Idaho County, you will need to transport your garbage to a dumpster/drop off location. Large garbage items must be transported by you to the Transfer Station.

It is always wise to check on the availability of utilities before you put up the down payment. That brook bubbling in your back yard can become a raging torrent during spring thaw. You as the property owner are alone responsible for and insuring against flood damage on your own property. You should know that bodies of water, including flowing streams, that are on your property may be regulated by agencies outside of Idaho County. Some areas of the county have soils unsuitable for the installation of a septic system and leach field. If other options for septic exist, they may be more expensive. The availability of water may necessitate drilling deep, expensive wells. The availability of water should be a primary question before purchasing property.

All private property outside of incorporated cities in Idaho County is zoned multi-use. Thus, businesses may be located throughout the county; some are noisy, some bring increased traffic and dust. Keep in mind that in Idaho County, you have the ability to control your property, just as your soon-to-be neighbor has the ability to control theirs. If you want to zone your neighbor's property, then plan on buying it. If you buy a lot next to a gravel pit you may have a rock crusher coming and make noise and dust. That same rock pit may be used by other citizens exercising their second amendment rights by discharging firearms.

Forestry is an economic mainstay. Over 85 percent of the land base in Idaho County is public and thus managed (or not) by the U.S. Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Lands, the Bureau of Land Management, and/or the Nez Perce Tribe. If you buy a parcel because the trees across the road make for a pretty view, don't be too disappointed if some time in the future, loggers move in and begin turning them into boards and other products. Burning is an integral part of both farming and forestry; fields and slash-piles are burned each year, resulting in a wide-spread smoky haze.

The forests here are beautiful, and they provide a home for many species of wild animal. The area abounds with deer, elk, moose, mountain lion, bear and other creatures. The key word to remember is "wild." Even the most innocent animals, like deer, cross roads and create hazards. Bear enjoy nothing more than a meal and one of the surest sources of food is the trash we set within their reach. If bear can smell it, they'll most likely get it, even if it's in a can or on your back porch. Also, most of the county is open range. This means that you will be responsible for fencing out unwanted animals, including your neighbors' cows, horses, mules, goats, etc., unless you live within a herd district.

Many people come to Idaho County because of its commitment to protect private property rights. While the State of Idaho does require each county adopt a Comprehensive Plan and an ordinance establishing at least one zone, there are no additional restrictions imposed by Idaho

County. Outside the State Electrical, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning and Plumbing codes, there are no additional local building inspections outside city limits. The procedures delineated in the Idaho County Zoning Ordinance are fairly straight-forward and the fees and taxes are lower than nearly any place else. If you plan on dividing your property, please note that Idaho County does have a Subdivision Ordinance.

It is the belief of the Board of County Commissioners that people who buy and build in Idaho County have the right to build the home that best suits them. If the roof caves in under the weight of the snow, they'll know better next time. Conversely, you may build a beautiful home that meets the most stringent building codes, but your next-door neighbor may not. County government will not intercede on your behalf to make your neighbor live up to your standards.

As a county, we believe in the self-direction of the county's citizens to work with their neighbors without the heavy hand of government to resolve issues related to the use of their respective private properties.

The information provided here is by no means complete, nor is it intended to be. It's our goal to provide you food for thought; it's your responsibility to take into consideration the things that are important to you.

While not required by Idaho Code, the Idaho County Board of Commissioners has reviewed those planning components of Idaho Code Section 67-6508 that it believes to be relevant to a comprehensive plan in Idaho County.

**Property Rights** – No provisions of this plan violate private property rights, adversely impact property values or create unnecessary technical limitations on the use of property.

**Population** – Idaho County continues to be sparsely populated with approximately 1.94 citizens per square mile<sup>1</sup> and little to no change in county population is anticipated at this time.

**School Facilities and Transportation** – With a relatively consistent population, changes to Idaho County school capacity and transportation associated with future development are not concerning factors.

**Economic Development** – Idaho County has a median household income of \$40,299 and a per capita 12-month income of \$20,741, with 15.1% of Idaho County citizens at or below poverty level.

The following are business statistics for Idaho County from available federal census data:

Total employer establishments, 2016	467
Total employment, 2016	3,529
Total annual payroll, 2016	\$143,420,000

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<sup>1</sup> Based on July 1, 2018 census data: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/idahocountyidaho>

Total employment, percent change, 2015-2016	2.6%
Total non-employer establishments, 2016	1,232
All firms, 2012	1,574
Men owned firms, 2012	707
Women owned firms, 2012	307
Minority-owned firms, 2012	40
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	1,467
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	222
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	1,174
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2013-2017	49.7%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2013-2017	50.0%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012	\$12,008,000
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012	\$48,828,000
Total manufacturers' shipments, 2012	\$161,250,000
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012	\$54,074,000
Total retail sales, 2012	\$94,767,000
Total retail sales per capita, 2012(c)	\$5,811

**Land Use** – Private property landowners in Idaho County are best equipped to determine how to apply their private property to its best use. An analysis of natural land types, existing land covers and uses, and the intrinsic suitability of lands for uses such as agriculture, forestry, mineral exploration and extraction, preservation, recreation, housing, commerce, industry, and public facilities is not necessary.

**Natural Resources** – A detailed analysis of Idaho County's natural resources can be found in the Idaho County Natural Resource Plan.

**Hazardous Areas** – A detailed analysis of Idaho County's known hazards can be found in the Idaho County, Idaho Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities** – The citizens of Idaho County have formed, funded and staffed rural fire districts, a rural electric cooperative and water and sewer districts. The county's densely populated areas/cities have their own planning and zoning ordinances.

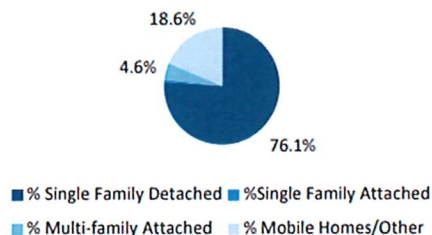
**Transportation** – Idaho County has twelve (12) independent highway districts and an Idaho County Road and Bridge Department, operating within their own geographical jurisdictions within the county, that work with private landowners and with governmental agencies, including the Idaho Department of Transportation, on transportation and road issues in the county.

**Recreation** – Idaho County has a commitment to enhancing safe and enjoyable recreational experiences on the waters, in the parks and upon the trails of Idaho County. A detailed analysis of Idaho County’s recreational resources can be found in the Idaho County Natural Resource Plan.

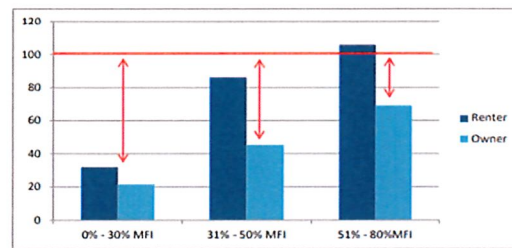
**Special Areas or Sites** – Idaho County has a Historic Preservation Commission the purpose of which is to preserve and enhance cultural and historic sites throughout Idaho County and to increase awareness of the value of historic preservation to citizens and local businesses. The Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission has published a guide that identifies Idaho County properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, the Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission has developed an Idaho County Historic Preservation Plan which outlines the essential components for a viable preservation program as an integral part of Idaho County’s community planning.

## Housing <sup>2</sup>

**Total Housing Units: 8,653**



**Housing Gap of Affordable and Available Units per 100 Households**



### Housing Affordability

	Cost-burdened Renters			Cost-burdened Homeowners		
	0% - 30% HAMFI	30% - 50% HAMFI	50% - 80% HAMFI	0% - 30% HAMFI	30% - 50% HAMFI	50% - 80% HAMFI
Small Family Household	29	40	25	90	55	105
Large Family Household	4	4	25	14	14	10
Elderly Household	55	95	20	225	194	180

Idaho County has adopted a Subdivision Ordinance that provides guidelines for the development of any new subdivisions in the county. The county relies on the policies and guidelines promulgated by the State of Idaho and implemented by Public Health North Central District for the private disposal of sewage, the Idaho Department of Water Resources for water well permitting and the county’s independent highway districts for approval of approaches and roads within their districts. Some subdivisions in Idaho County have adopted covenants and restrictions that are not enforced by the county.

**Agriculture** – Agriculture has historically been and is currently a major cornerstone for the economy of Idaho County. As of 2017, Idaho County has 708 distinct farm operations, operating

<sup>2</sup> Data from <https://www.idahohousing.com/documents/2018-idaho-county-level-housing-demographic-data.pdf>

on 537,438 acres, raising over 26,000 head of cattle and generating \$43,676,000 in yearly commodity sales. This plan is designed to empower each producer with the ability to use their agricultural land for its highest potential.

**Implementation** – This plan shall be implemented by the adoption of an Idaho County Zoning Ordinance.

**Public Airport Facilities** – Idaho County has public airport facilities in Cottonwood, Grangeville, Kamiah, Elk City and Kooskia along with many backcountry landing strips serving the needs of the private aviation community, the U.S. Forest Service and other governmental agencies. The airport managers and associated Airport Development Authorities focus on airport maintenance and plan for future needs for each airport, with oversight from the Idaho Department of Aeronautics. At this time, there is not a foreseeable need for considerable future expansion for any of the county's public airports.

After careful analysis and thought, recognizing Idaho County's low population and large area, resulting in a person to land ratio of 1.94 persons per square mile, the Idaho County Board of Commissioners declares that our Comprehensive Plan shall give priority to the protection of private property interests, the safety of persons living in and visiting Idaho County, and the economic well-being of its communities, through the implementation and enforcement of the Idaho County Zoning Ordinance.

Idaho County is what America was!