

29 December 2021



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Re: DRH21-00511 / Dallas Harris Elementary School

The Barber Valley Neighborhood Association (BVNA) is excited to see plans for Dallas Harris Elementary School move forward to the design approval stage, and we look forward to the day when Barber Valley students begin attending our neighborhood school. BVNA supports this application with the addition of design features to accommodate the following.

We have one community-based comment that we hope you will respond to before planning is finalized. This involves after-hours public access to the school's gymnasium, common and media areas. In previous meetings with the Boise School District, BVNA received assurances that after-hours access to the indoor facility would be incorporated into the building design and achieved through a joint use arrangement with the City of Boise Parks & Recreation Department.

In the project's recent Harris Ranch Review Board (HRRB) application, under "PUBLIC AMENITIES DESCRIPTION," we observed the document makes no mention of the gymnasium. It does, however, discuss after-hours public access to the outdoor play area - and this we very much appreciate. But as noted above, BVNA expects that our neighbors will be afforded after-hours access to the indoor facilities as well through a joint use arrangement with the City of Boise Parks & Recreation Department. We suspect that this omission was likely just an oversight on the application form to the Harris Ranch Review Board and that the current Boise School District/City policies would be no different than for any other school in the District.

Please note that our expectations for the gymnasium are consistent with the "Culture, Education, Arts and History" portion Boise's Comprehensive Plan, which supports joint use of school and city facilities:

- Goal CEA6: Create schools that are safe, accessible, and compatible with their neighborhoods.
 - CEA6.5: JOINT USE OF SCHOOL SITES. Work with the school districts to identify feasible sites to use as shared community centers.
- Goal CEA7: Foster schools as community gathering places.
 - CEA7.1: SCHOOL PLACEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY. Work with the school districts and private schools to reinforce the role of schools as gathering places within existing neighborhoods, and in the location of schools to provide focus and identity in new neighborhoods.

These goals are also outlined in the City of Boise's 2011 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (2015 Update), which further discusses joint use agreements between the School District and the City. Page 1-15 states:

"It is the policy of the Department and Boise School District that joint use of the other's facilities is encouraged. After each organization fulfills its needs and/or obligations for its facilities, each organization grants requested use to the other. Direct costs for use, such as additional janitorial expense, is the only charge by either party."

Page 1-15 of the Plan also states:

“The City has been experiencing a record number of adult teams in City league basketball and, therefore, is highly reliant on the Boise School District for adequate indoor space. As the population expands, the City will need to develop gymnasium space to keep pace with the growth. If the school district adds schools to keep pace with the population growth, the City will request gymnasium space that would accommodate adult basketball in new schools. If the school district does not need to add schools for population growth, the City would need to build gymnasiums to keep pace with growth. The current recommendation, adopted during the last comprehensive plan, calls for 25,000 square feet of indoor space per 50,000 City residents. This would include gymnasiums, performing/visual art studios, and multipurpose rooms used for recreational programs.”

Thank you for your consideration of our feedback. We view after-hours public access of indoor and outdoor facilities at Dallas Harris Elementary School as important health and wellness opportunities for our neighborhood. We hope our expectations for the gymnasium will be reflected in project plans moving forward. Please note we also understand that public access to school facilities, indoor and outdoor, must follow Boise School District and City of Boise health (endemic COVID-19) plans and security protocol considerations. We sincerely appreciate the tremendous efforts on the part of the Boise School District and the City of Boise in making this new school an excellent contribution to our neighborhood and to our network of Boise schools. We look forward to working together as Dallas Harris Elementary School takes shape.

Barber Valley Neighborhood Association Board

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