

Safe Routes to School Plan – Lapwai, Idaho

Background

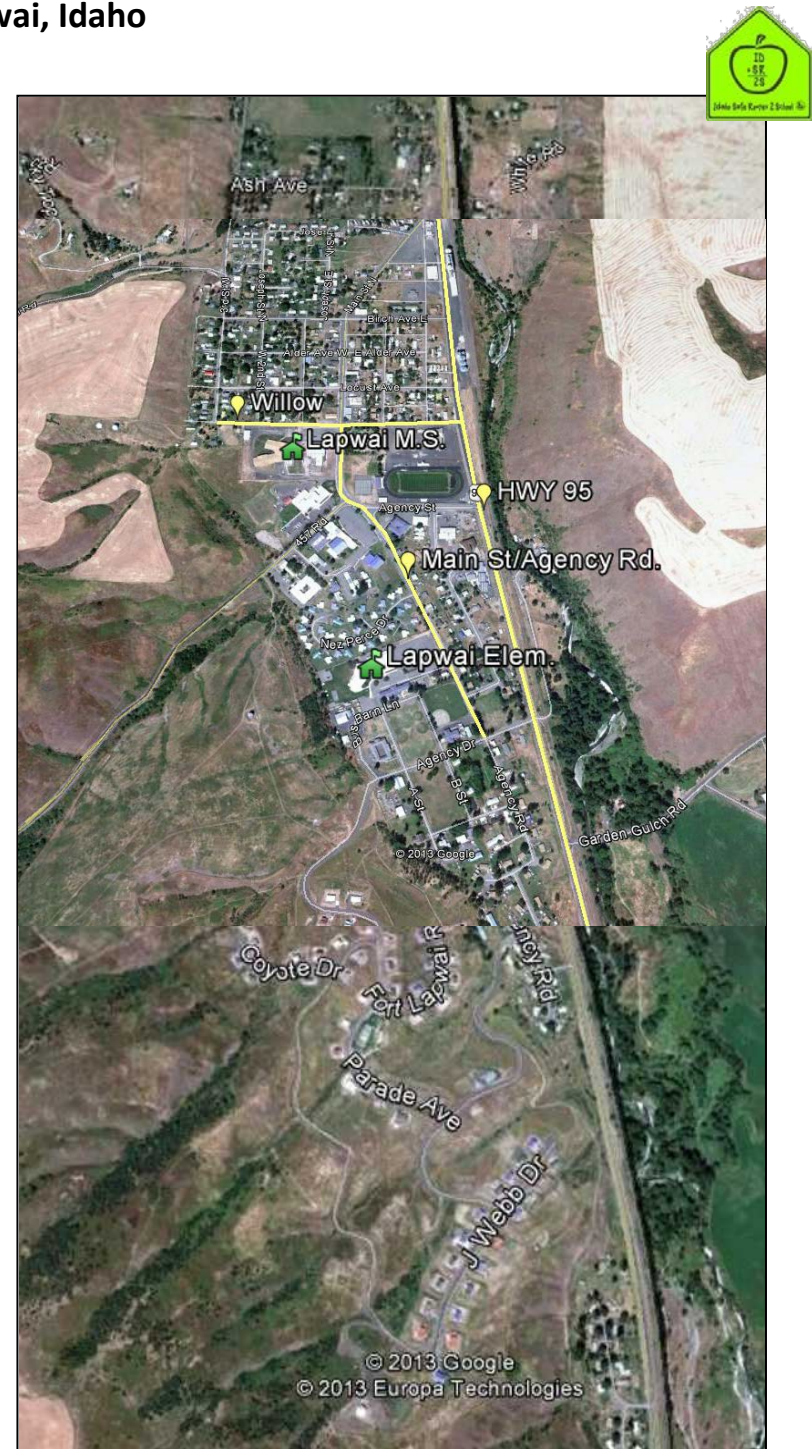
The city of Lapwai, Idaho is nestled along the Highway 95 corridor, approximately 15 miles east of Lewiston in north central Idaho. The city is home to over 1,100 residents and is the seat for the tribal offices of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Within the general city boundaries, four agencies have varying authority over land and transportation facilities: The City of Lapwai, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the School District. Lapwai has a deep cultural history steeped in Native American traditions, as well as those brought by missionaries, settlers, and early explorers to the Idaho region. Today's culture is very strongly oriented around youth sports; high school football, and boys and girls basketball are especially popular.

The Highway 95 corridor is a vital north-south connection in Idaho and runs generally east of town. The BG&CM Railroad is used on the same corridor by Bountiful Grain and Craig Mountain at Lapwai. Due to the topography of the area, Lapwai is a very linear community with longer north/south roads and relatively shorter east/west roads, however all of the north-south connections are interrupted, except for the highway. The spine of the city is traversed north-south by Main Street on the northern end turning to Agency Road on the southern end. There is also an Agency Street and Agency Drive that run east-west.

Because of the varying jurisdictions within the community we have tried to identify the appropriate jurisdiction for each recommended action. In some cases, especially with the policy recommendations they will only work best if the jurisdictions adopt similar policies or actions. The city of Lapwai is primarily responsible for the transportation system, including sidewalks, pathways and bicycle facilities north of 457 Road and Agency St. while the tribe and BIA are mostly responsible for transportation infrastructure to the south. The school district is responsible for school grounds.

Two of Lapwai's schools were the focus of the Safe Routes to School project. Lapwai Elementary on the southern end of town and Lapwai Middle School near the center of town. Lapwai Elementary School is located along Agency Road, a 24' wide two way street with four-foot sidewalks on the west side from Main St to the school. There are no marked crosswalks on Agency Road.

Lapwai Middle School is co-located with the High School and bordered by Main Street – east, Willow Avenue – north and 457 Road – south. Main Street is 50' wide with a center stripe, on-street parking and a 5.5' attached sidewalk on the west side; tennis courts, a football field and a city park are located east of Main. Willow Ave. is generally 24' of travel space with intermittent gravel shoulders and a 6' attached sidewalk along the school grounds west of Main Street for one-half block. 457 Road is 32' wide with curb, gutter and sidewalk on the south side. There are marked crosswalks on Main Street at Willow Ave. and midblock in front of the school to the city park. There are no marked crosswalks across Main Street south of the park crossing.



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Recommended Infrastructure Improvements

In all of our recommendations we try to offer low cost solutions first before suggesting more complicated and costlier options. Many recommendations are to upgrade pavement markings (paint) and signage, which are used to narrow lanes and alert drivers and can slow speeds. Others are designed to add designated space for pedestrians and bicyclists without major construction when possible. For instance an extruded curb on a shoulder walkway rather than a full sidewalk with curb and gutter is cheaper to build, often the existing paved right-of way is sufficient to accommodate a walkway with only the addition of the extruded curb and it also does not require the extension of an underground storm sewer system. If you want sidewalks separated from the road with a landscape strip they can often be built without storm sewer if the landscape strip is engineered to accept stormwater. (see resources link)

City Recommendations

Main Street from Willow Avenue. to 457 Road/Agency Street

1. There is no sidewalk on the east side of Main St. We recommend adding an extruded curb walkway or a full curb/gutter/ sidewalk, within the existing paved right of way. Move the center stripe east, narrow the travel lanes slightly and still accommodate on-street parking.
2. Build a pathway through the park connecting the new sidewalk to the football field and tennis courts. The football field and tennis courts are community destinations and should be accessible by foot and bike.
3. On the south side of Willow Ave. north of the school, continue the sidewalk to W. 2nd St., or create a walkway by moving the fence and adding an extruded curb. Ideally add trees for shade in a planter strip, add reflector candles at the speed bumps. (See # 1 c. in Tribe/BIA recommendations.) This property is school owned, but it should create efficiencies if completed in partnership as part of Main St. projects.
4. Improve the existing crosswalks on Main St. (at Willow, at the park, at Agency Road) by repainting the existing crosswalks with ladder style pavement markings and making sure that all of the landings are ADA compliant. Ladder style markings are more durable, more visible and have higher compliance rates than the traverse markings currently in use.

457 Road/Agency/Main Street

5. (This project may be a joint one with the city and tribe) This intersection has a large footprint and high turning radii making the crossing distance and related pedestrian exposure time unsafe for students. To improve

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intersection safety add crosswalk markings and appropriate signage (using MUTCD standards) at all three legs of the intersection of Main St./457 Road. Consider a three way stop at 457 Road/ Agency Road/Main St. Complete the safety enhancements with an

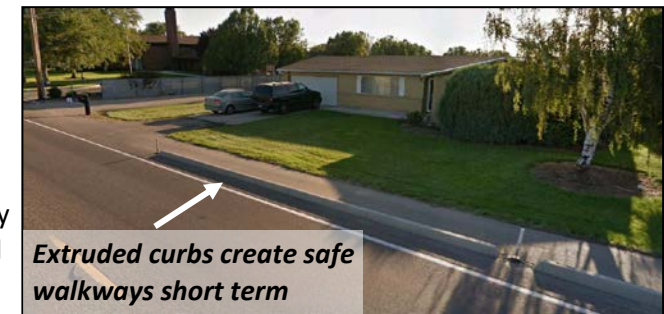
- island on the north side of the 457 Road corner to shorten the radius.
6. Add a sidewalk or extruded curb walkway to the north side of Agency Street along the football field utilizing the on-street parking area. This is a key access point from Highway 95 with no pedestrian or bike facilities.

Willow Avenue/Main Street to Birch

7. The paint marking the crosswalks has faded and lost its effectiveness. We recommend restriping the intersections with ladder style crosswalk markings to add durability, visibility and higher compliance rates.

Main Street – Birch Avenue and Highway 95-

8. Adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities on Main St. from Birch Ave. to Highway 95 will provide a vital link from the schools to the north side of



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Lapwai and has potential to serve pedestrians and bicyclists well.

- a. Short term stripe two 10' lanes, and two 7 foot parking lanes to the east side of the roadway. Use remaining 4' on west as walkway protected by an extruded curb. (see picture previous page)
- b. For the long-term plan a pathway on the west side of Main St. between Highway 95 and Birch Ave. (Only two properties currently use this area with parked vehicles or landscaping, and on-street parking would still be accommodated.) Design the pathway either as shoulder extension protected from the roadway with an extruded curb or as a separated pathway with a landscape strip. We recommend that it be 10' wide, it could be narrowed a few feet directly in front of residences if needed.

Willow Avenue, Locust Avenue and Birch Avenue from Highway 95 to W 3rd St., W 3rd St. from Willow Avenue to Birch – Locust and Birch Avenues are 36' wide and connect east/west from Highway 95 to W 3rd St. with no pedestrian or bicycle facilities. W 3rd St. is a western north/south connection.

9. We recommend building an extruded curb walkway on the south side of Willow Ave. from Main St. to Highway 95. This will complete pedestrian facilities from W 2nd St. to the highway, define entrances (curb cuts) into the parking north of the football field and provide a safe walking area from the highway and from residences along E 2nd Street to school.
10. Locust Ave. has a sidewalk on the north side near Main St. We recommend cleaning and repairing that sidewalk and developing a plan to extend it both east and west as funding becomes available.
11. Birch Ave. and W 3rd St. have no pedestrian facilities. There are commercial uses and front-on housing with well developed landscaping. In the short term we recommend striping fog lines 8' from the pavement edge on each side to define the on-street parking area and visually narrow the travel lanes. Long term you should determine how to serve pedestrians either through sidewalks or a pathway.
12. W 3rd St. north of Birch is one of two north/south connections on the north side of town. It has a very narrow pavement without improved shoulders. We recommend adding an extended shoulder or asphalt pathway parallel to the roadway from Birch to Ash St. Other shorter pathways, perhaps connecting Ash Avenue to Joseph Street should also be considered.

Tribes/BIA Recommendations

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Agency Road between Agency Drive and Agency Street

1. Agency Road is a vital road for walking and bicycling students. The road spans south of the schools in Lapwai, gives a local parallel route to Highway 95, and accesses numerous community facilities. This section of road has two travel lanes approximately 12' wide, with an intermittent shoulder on one side, and a 4'-5' elevated sidewalk on the other. Several improvements can be made that are affective and not cost prohibitive.
 - a. We recommend striping a fog line on the edge of the pavement 11' from the center line. This will define the travel area, visually narrow the roadway and remind residents to park off the pavement.
 - b. The sidewalk is in some disrepair, but mostly it has been allowed to be overgrown by vegetation. We recommend cleaning the sidewalk to reclaim its full width and repairing/extending sections that need it.
 - c. Speeding has prompted the installation of speed bumps. Without curb and gutter these have been avoided by driving around them. We recommend adding vertical candles at the road edge near the bumps (see example) and signing them.



Existing speed bump on Agency Rd.

Adding candles and signs may make the speed bumps more effective.



- d. Add crossings on Agency Rd. at Nez Perce Dr., at the school entrance and at Allen St. to allow access

to the sidewalk from the east side of the roadway. Those crossings should use ladder markings and meet MUTCD sign standards.

Agency Drive and Agency Road-

2. Due to the connection with Highway 95 and the subdivision on the bluff, we recommend striping a four-leg ladder style crosswalk at the Agency Drive/Agency Road intersection with to heighten driver awareness and to connect sidewalk segments, which will promote their use.

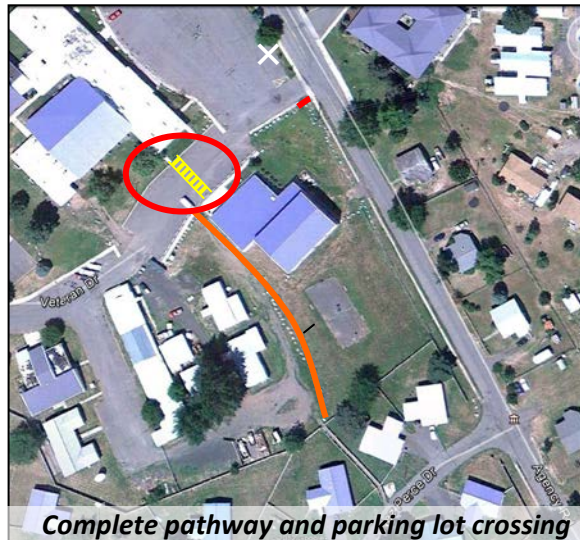
Parade Avenue from "A" Street intersection

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- 52 homes are located on a small bluff southwest of the city center. The road is a narrow rural two lane road without lane markings or a shoulder space. To improve walking and bicycling conditions for students living in the subdivision, consider a pathway on a paved additional shoulder along the west side of Parade Avenue. The pathway/shoulder should reach up the hill to approximately the first street light, and ideally beyond the street light to the Red Tail intersection. An alternative to this approach could be to formalize the existing pathway traveling up the hill near intersection with Bus Barn Lane by utilizing compacted gravel or asphalt and lighting if needed.
- Lower the speed limit on all legs of intersection of Parade Ave, Agency Dr, and Bus Barn Lane.

Pathway to Boys and Girls Club/Tribal offices

- There is currently an informal pathway at the end of the paved pathway through the BIA development (Nez Perce Dr.) It travels behind a storage building and has no lighting. We recommend paving and lighting the pathway to connect to the Boys and Girls Club.
- Alternately or in addition complete the connections between the sidewalk on Agency Rd. and the one in front of the Boys and Girls Club.
- In addition we recommend striping a walkway across the parking area from the Boys and Girls Club to the tribal offices.



School District Recommendations

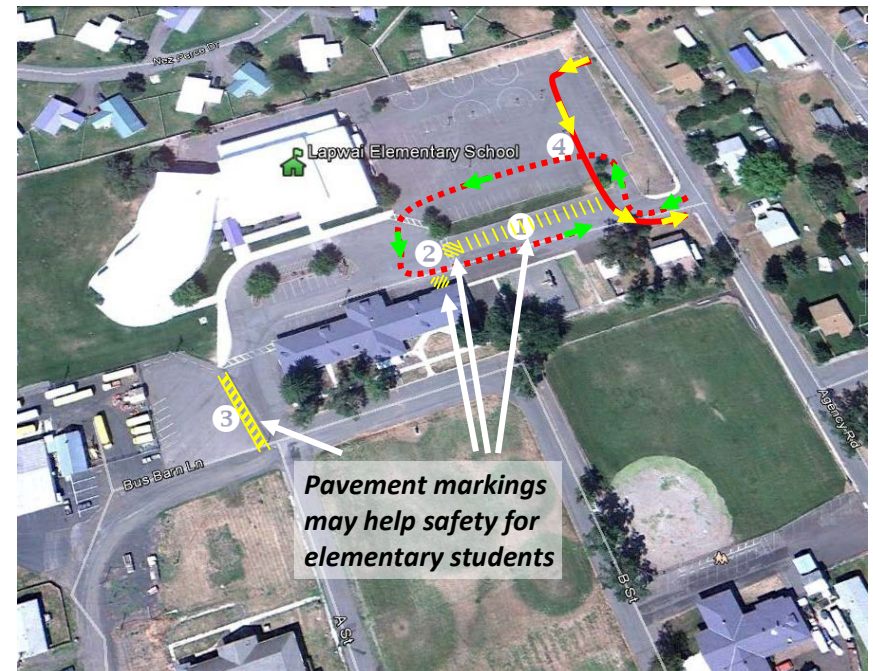
To improve access and visibility in front of the school on the east

- Stripe front-in parking on the northern side of the entrance drive between Agency Road and the school for faculty only.

- Add a hatched area at the western edge of the new front-in parking to provide visibility for the walkway from the south. Add hatched pavement markings on the end parking space in front of the cafeteria building so walkway is visible to drivers.
- Add pavement markings from the end of the sidewalk on A St at Bus Barn Lane connecting to the sidewalk in front of the school to define the designated walking area between them.
- Ask parents to use a parking lot loop only for drop off and pick-up. There are two alternative loops, the current one (depicted with dashed red line/green arrows) or one that could be instituted with a new curb cut on the northern end of the parking lot (red line/yellow arrows)

"B" Street

- Consider extending existing sidewalks across the grounds of the school district building from Agency Drive to Bus Barn Lane.



General Recommendation

Lower the speed limit on Highway 95 through town and provide a protected bike/pedestrian shoulder or pathway on the west side of the highway. There have been pedestrian fatalities on this portion of the highway and there are no facilities to reach town on foot from the housing to the north or south.

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Policy Recommendations

Joint City/Tribe/School District Recommendations

1. Require sidewalk or multi-use pathway that meets standards in all new development. Allowing development without sidewalks has created a need to retrofit those areas. Requiring those in all future development will prevent that backlog from growing and create safer conditions for residents of the new developments. (City/Tribe/BIA)
2. Consider not allowing cul-de-sacs except for reasons of topography; adopt short maximum cul-de-sac and block length; adopt a connectivity standard. The historic parts of town are well connected with short blocks and a high density of intersections. This type of pattern encourages pedestrian and bicycle use and creates safer conditions for all users, including drivers. New parts of town contain many dead ends and cul-de-sacs, creating longer distances, discouraging walking and biking and creating less safe conditions for all users. A sample of connectivity standards is available in the resources Determine measurements that suit Lapwai best and adopt them. This will create certainty for development and encourage walking and biking.

3. Consider a project to develop housing styles and development patterns that reflect the rich culture of the tribe. Traditional patterns should be used to serve pedestrian connections between uses. See article on Puyallup Longhouse:



Puyallup Longhouse housing development

<http://www.usgbc.org/projects/puyallup-longhouse> and

New Paradigms in Tribal Housing at:

http://www.huduser.org/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_061713.html

4. Develop formal policy and process to meet regularly, collaborate on policy and facility planning and share facilities as a means to make most efficient use of tax dollars. Formalizing will allow all parties to define their roles and responsibilities more fully.

City Recommendations

1. Consider updating zoning standards in downtown area with model mixed use zone. Intensifying the uses in downtown which is relatively walkable from all parts of town will encourage safer better pedestrian and bicycle access to needed destinations in lieu of adding or intensifying highway adjacent destinations. (See *resource link at end*)
2. As the comprehensive plan is updated detail both farmland and open spaces that should be preserved and adopt policies encouraging development inside currently developed areas where infrastructure is readily available, where the destinations are close by and where short walking and biking distances and connections encourage these activities.
3. Prioritize sidewalk and other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements identified in the conditions inventory in Capital Improvement Plans and other budgeting activities.

Tribe/BIA Recommendations

1. Consider adopting policies that encourage regular routine physical activity (such as walking and biking) and recognize the important health benefits these activities provide.
2. Review policies and ordinances for opportunities to encourage walking and biking as routine activity.

School District Recommendations

1. Adopt a general board policy promoting healthy living and regular physical activity
2. Add language to the School Wellness Policy to recognize the benefits of physical activity
 - a. Support walking and biking to school as physical activity
 - b. Recognize academic benefits for physically active students
3. Add language to the transportation policy to support active transportation when it can be made safe for students to walk and bike, and support for a Safe Routes to School Program. (See *Addendum C*)

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Non-Infrastructure Recommendations

Conditions Inventory, Community Clean-up Day, etc.

1. Keep conditions inventory up-to-date as improvements are completed.
2. Inform citizens of their responsibilities as property owners to ensure sidewalks are at least clear of overgrowth and debris.
3. Hold a spring clean-up day to uncover and clean-up existing sidewalks (utilize environmental club to help.)
4. Use annual survey findings to continually help identify the locations for needed crossings on local streets. In addition surveys can inform the city where sharrows or other pavement markings may be useful on local streets as walking and bicycling rates increase.

Events

5. Hold a Walk to School Day and annual Bike Rodeo to encourage walking and biking. The city and tribe should participate and support the event with public safety involvement such as emergency vehicle escorts and participation by tribal city and school district community leaders.

Note: information about holding events is included in the resources link

Addendum:

On our last visit we learned that there are plans for a housing development south of the city limits near Sweetwater. If this development goes forward we urge a proactive conversation with ITD about providing a safe highway crossing and pedestrian route from the development into town as soon as possible.

We also recommend that the development itself adopt the connectivity and sidewalk standards that we have set forth in the recommendations above and that it is built with sidewalks and in a well connected pattern that encourages walking and biking.



Resources: Model and sample policies and other tools are available at: <http://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/index.php/resources/> – go to Best Practices

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