Community Profile

Kootenai County

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1 Introduction

Kootenai County is currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. In support of this long-range planning document, this report articulates past and current characteristics of the community, as well as forecast conditions. It provides an update to the demographics and community data presented in the County's previous Comprehensive Plan document update (2020), and includes key characteristics like population, economic indicators, and housing trends. Data and findings from this report will ultimately be incorporated into the updated Comprehensive Plan document.

Reviewing this data establishes an understanding of where the County has been, where it is now, and where it hopes to go in the future, setting the foundations for Kootenai County's long-range planning efforts. Wherever possible, data for Kootenai County is compared with data from Coeur d'Alene or the state of Idaho as a whole, illuminating how the County compares with emerging trends between the state of Idaho and the County's largest city.

1.1 Setting and History

Kootenai County, Idaho, named after the Kootenai Tribe, encompasses 1,237.8 square miles of land area. It is the 24th largest county in the state by total area and the third most populous. Kootenai County is bordered by Benewah County, Idaho, to the south, by Spokane County, Washington, to the west, by Bonner County, Idaho, to the north, and by Shoshone County, Idaho, to the east. There are several lakes in the county, and Lake Coeur d'Alene is notable, as it is estimated to be over 25 miles in length, with approximately 125 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 220 feet.

The Kootenai County Historic Preservation Plan 2024-2029[1] provides a detailed historical context of the County, organized into eight different development periods. Below is a brief summary of the county's history.

Since time immemorial, the land has been home to the Schitsu'umsh people, including the Coeur d'Alene Lake band, the Coeur d'Alene River band, and the St. Joe River band. A portion of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation overlaps with the boundaries of Kootenai County, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe is one of five members of the Upper Columbia United Tribes, the others of which are the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

Kootenai County was first explored and settled by persons of European ancestry in the early 1800s and was officially established by the State of Idaho on December 22, 1864. The county originally encompassed present-day Kootenai, Boundary, Bonner, and Benewah counties. The county is named

[1] *Add Reference*

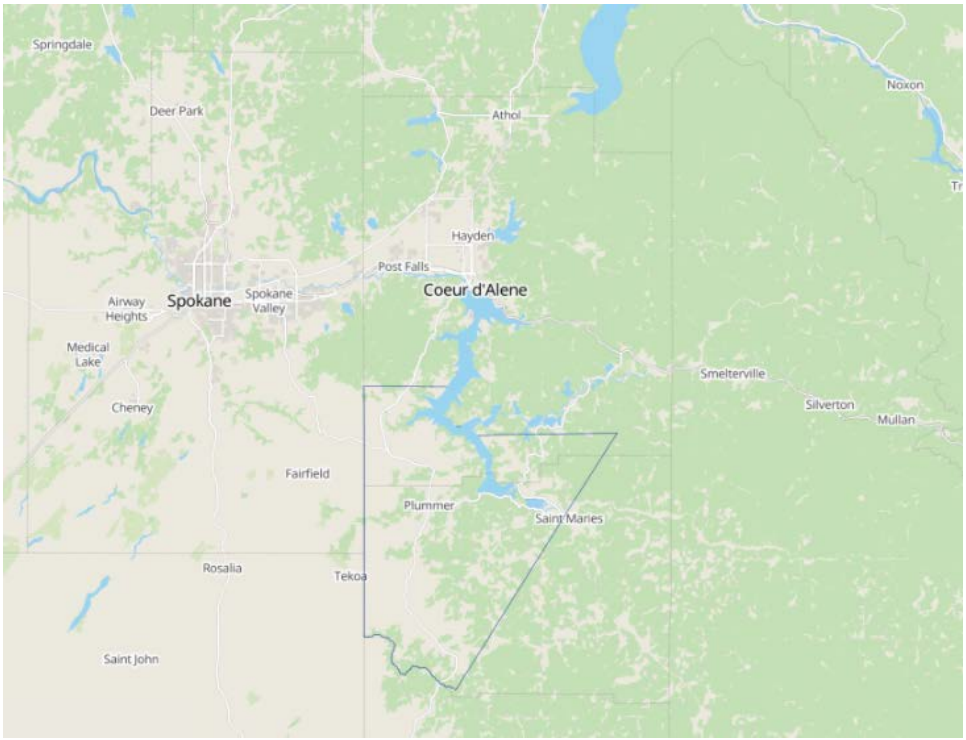
after the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, though the Kootenai Reservation is now located in Boundary County near Bonners Ferry. The county seat and largest city is Coeur d'Alene.

In the early 1880s, Gold was discovered near Prichard, ID, ushering in a period of growth and infrastructure investment to support the mining industry not just for gold deposits but also for lead, silver, and zinc. The natural resources of the area supported the railroad industry, which stretched across the county and into the Spokane area. In 1881, Marcus Wright helped create the town of Rathdrum (originally named Westwood and the original county seat), and Wright was instrumental in developing Kootenai County. He established the Atlas Tie Company in 1909, which was located on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Wright was the first in the region to specialize in cutting ties for railroad use. His mill supported the railroad industry as he secured contracts with most of the major railroads that ran through North Idaho. The county continued to grow and attracted settlers who were drawn by employment opportunities, homesteading, and an abundance of natural resources through the 1900s.

1.2 Special Areas or Sites

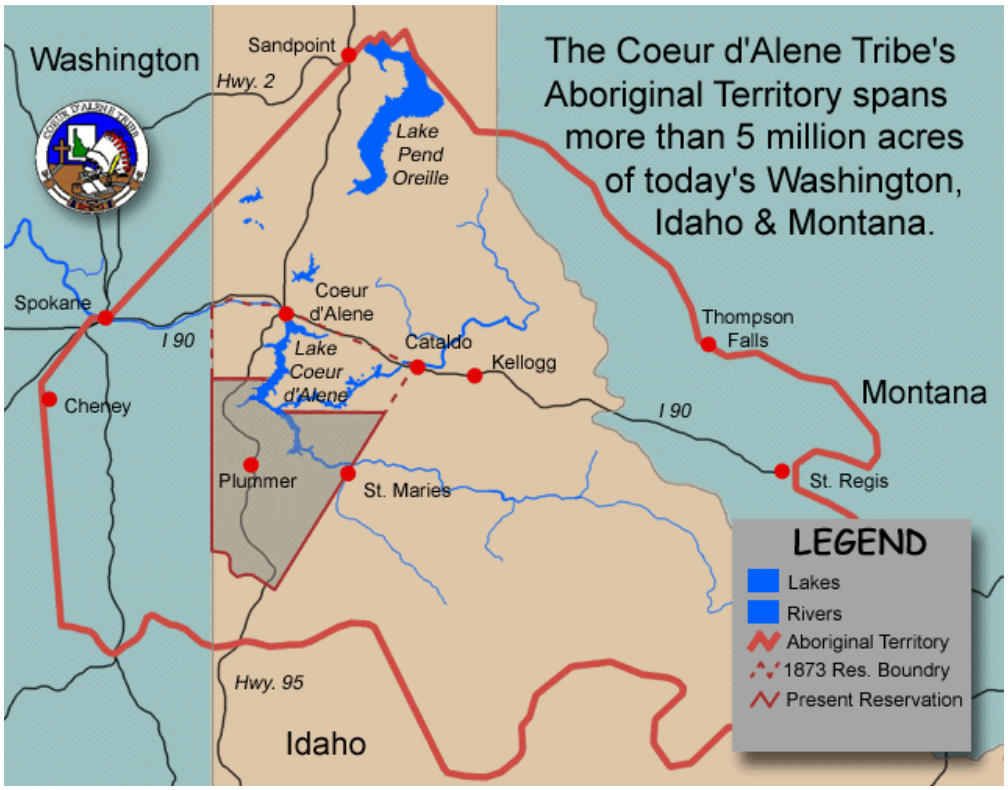
Coeur d'Alene Tribe Reservation

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe was originally named Schitsu'umsh, which means "those who were found here," or "the discovered people." As stated on the Tribe's website, the land "within and beyond" the current spatial boundaries of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation has been the "familiar home" of the Schitsu'umsh people since time immemorial.

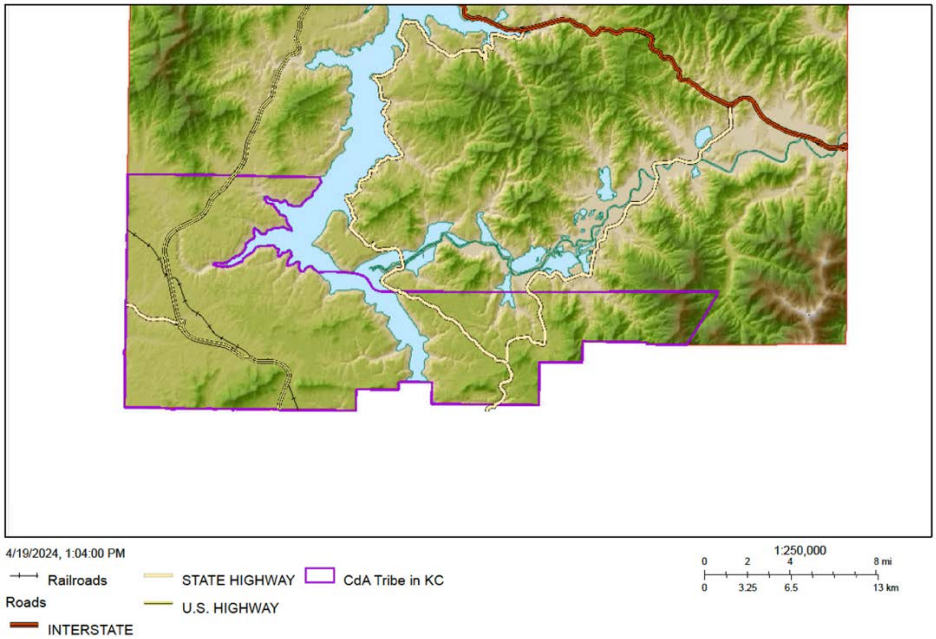


Source: Koordinates

As shown below, a portion of the current Reservation lies within the southern portion of Kootenai County. The first map indicates the Aboriginal Territory, the Reservation boundary of 1873, and the present Reservation boundary. The second map indicates the reservation boundary within the county.



Source: Coeur d'Alene Tribe GIS Data



Source: Kootenai County GIS

Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer

The primary source of drinking water in Kootenai County is the Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. It is part of the larger Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, which was designated as a Sole Source Aquifer by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1978. The Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer was designated as a Sensitive Resource Aquifer by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in 1997 (IDAPA 58.01.11.300.01.a). It is the state's only sensitive resource aquifer and requires the highest level of protection (IDAPA 58.01.11.150.02). The aquifer is a deep layer of rocks and gravel that are saturated with water; it gets recharged through river flow. It is an unconfined aquifer, which means that it does not have a protective layer of clay or rock to prevent pollutants from entering the water near the ground surface.

The Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer covers approximately 200 square miles in Idaho, and is located primarily in Kootenai County, as shown in Figure 4 below. The aquifer is under threat by current growth and development pressures. A study from 2010 projected that the population within the aquifer boundaries will grow to 400,000 people by the year 2060, using an annual average growth rate of 2.3%.[2] Increased development to house and serve additional populations typically affect aquifer water quality. New residential development, for example, may result in an increase in septic systems, fertilizer use, and stormwater quantities which are known causes of increased nitrate levels; those, in turn, can create negative health impacts over the long term.[3] According to a 2015 Trend Analysis conducted by the DEQ, several sampled wells indicated an increasing trend of human-caused constituents that pose a significant threat to drinking water standards.[4]

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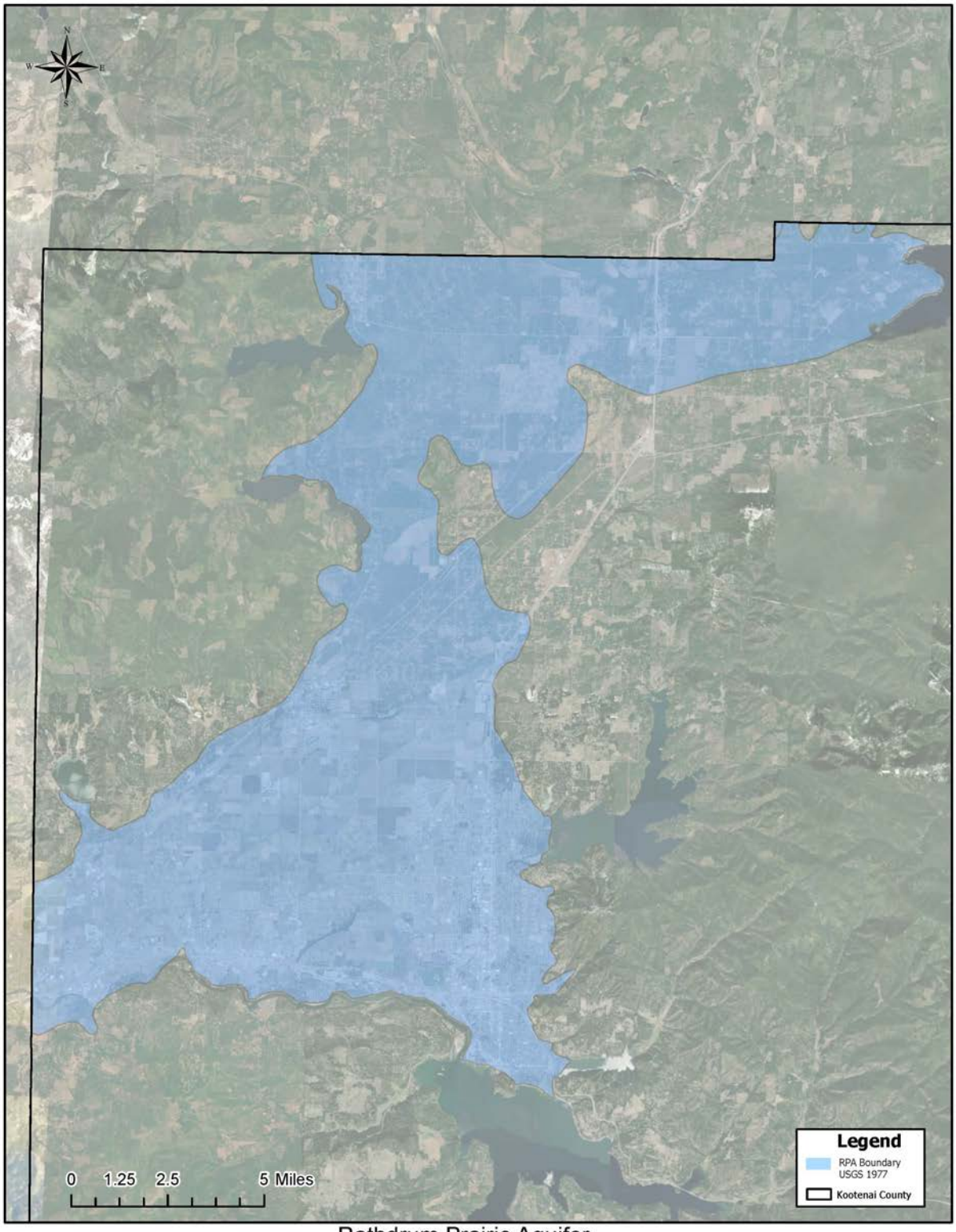
[2] *SPF Water Engineering, LLC, AMEC Earth and Environmental, Idaho Economics (John Church), and Taunton Consulting. 2010. Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Water Demand Projections. Prepared for the Idaho Water Resource Board.*

[3] *The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Atlas 2009 Update:* https://www.spokaneaquifer.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/AquiferAtlas.pdf

[4] *Trend Analysis of Selected Ground Water Constituents of the Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, Kootenai County, Idaho. Ground Water Investigation Report DEQ-CRO-01-15.*



Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer

Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARA)

SARAs are defined as areas overlying the aquifer near surface water bodies that likely exhibit relatively high infiltration rates, shallow depth to water, and/or higher-risk land use types. The Kootenai County Aquifer Protection District[5] contracted with a professional hydrogeologist to delineate SARAs within the Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, which includes recommended protection prioritization (See map below). An online web viewer of the map may be found here: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/391cb9fcf2794f00a3a9e1d6d2b10765/.

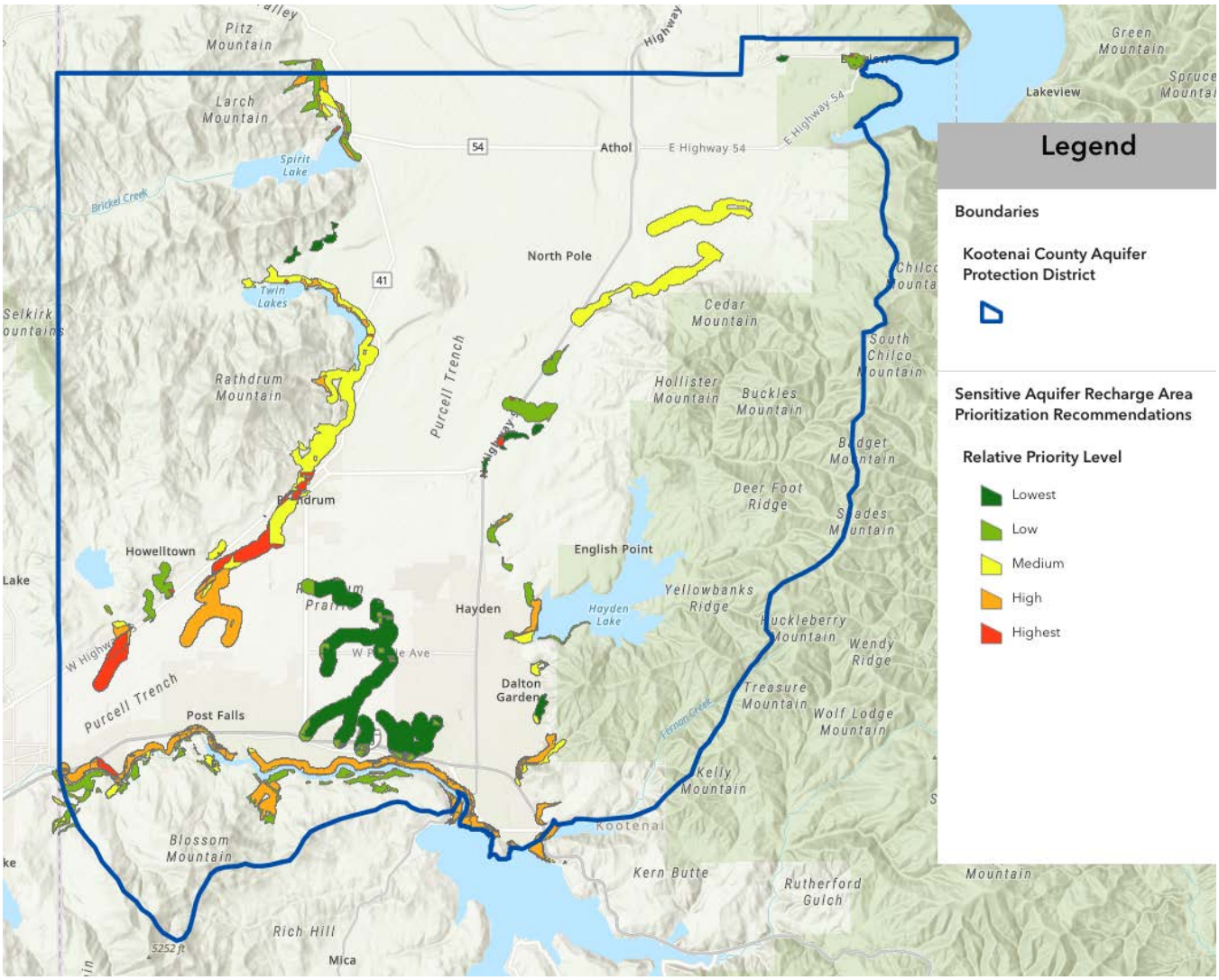


Figure 1 - Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area Prioritization Recommendations

[5] https://www.kcgov.us/336/Aquifer-Protection-Board

Historic Sites

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in Idaho lists 45 historic designations within Kootenai County boundaries. The properties in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are determined to be significant to American post-settlement history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Notable designations, per the Kootenai County Historic Preservation Plan, include the Sherman Park Addition Historic District in Coeur d'Alene, the Harrison Commercial Historic District in the City of Harrison, the Lake Pend Oreille Lime and Cement Industry Historic District in Bayview (extending into Bonner County), and the Spirit Lake Historic District in the City of Spirit Lake.

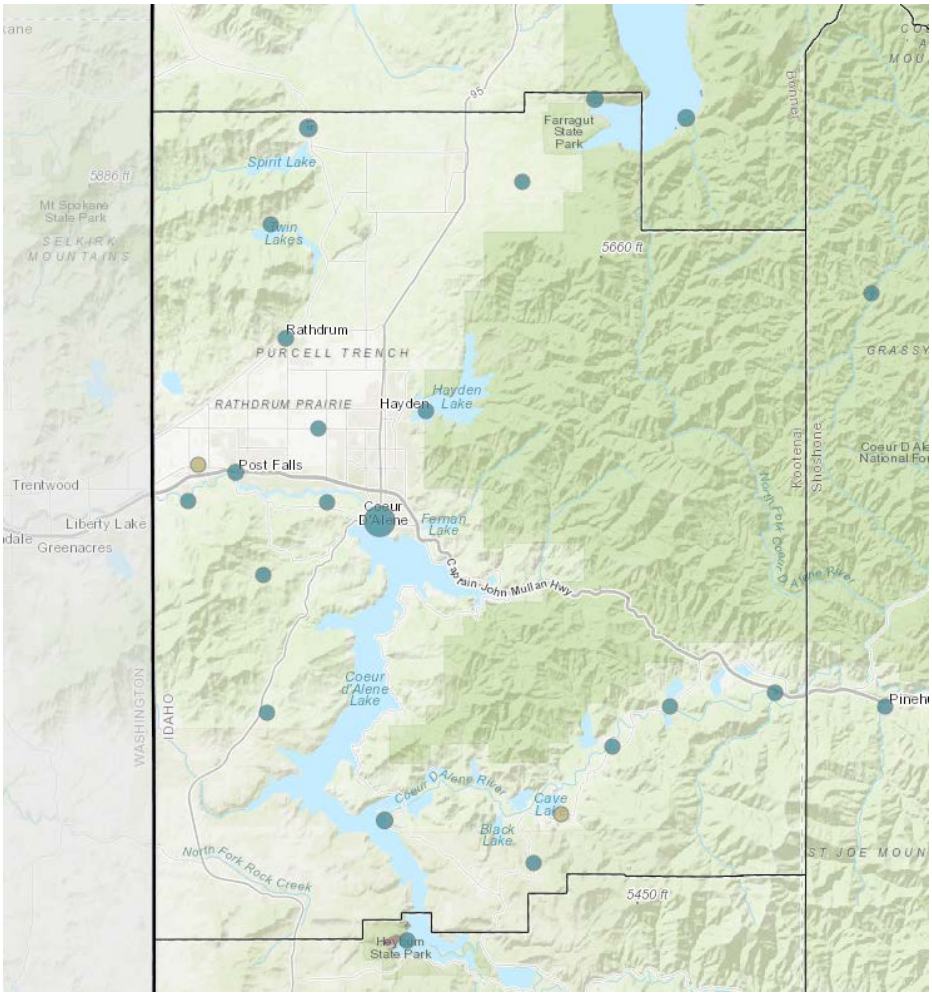


Figure 2 – National Register of Historic Places in Idaho

Historic Preservation Efforts

The Kootenai County Historic Preservation Commission was created in 1985 with the passage of Kootenai County Ordinance 81 as allowed by Idaho Code Section 67-4601. The stated mission of the Commission, per the 2024-2029 Kootenai County Historic Preservation Plan is:

> *To identify, document, and preserve the county's significant history and archaeology resources and foster connections between the people of Kootenai County and the places that tell our stories.*

Toward this end, the plan provides recommendations and actions to achieve the following goals:

- *Create and maintain a publicly available website containing historic preservation guidance, financial resources, educational resources, and an inventory database.*
- *Build community awareness and investment in historic preservation and cultural heritage.*
- *Identify and assess cultural resources and mitigate risks to historic and cultural resources.*

1.3 Hazardous Areas

Hazzard Risk Rankings - AHMP

The 2020 Kootenai County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP)[6] "…identifies hazards affecting Kootenai County and the county's vulnerabilities. It also provides a countywide strategy of mitigation projects to reduce future disaster losses." The risk rating for each hazard identified in the AHMP summary table below was determined by multiplying the hazard probability factor by the sum of the weighted factors for people exposed, property damaged, property exposed, damage to the economy, and potential for catastrophe.

Figure 3 - Final Hazard Risk Ranking (Table 17-7, AHMP, 2020)

Hazard Event	Probability Factor	Sum of Weighted Impact Factors	Total (Probability x Impact)
Wildfire	3	24	72
Winter Weather (Blizzard, Snowstorm, Ice Storm)	3	20	60
Flooding	3	18	54
Windstorm	3	17	51
Earthquake	2	23	46
Cyber Disruption/Attack	3	13	39
Power Failure	3	11	33
Hail	2	15	30
Extreme Cold and Wind Chill	3	10	30
Pandemic	2	15	30
Hazardous Materials Incident	2	15	30
Structural Fire	3	9	27
Landslide	3	9	27
Drought	2	12	24
Terrorism/Active Shooter	1	24	24
Lightning	3	7	21
Civil Unrest	1	21	21
Volcanic Ash Fall	1	21	21
Tornado	2	10	20
Radiological Materials Exposure	1	18	18
Infestation	3	5	15
Infrastructure Failure	1	14	14
Dam/Levee Failure	1	13	13
Invasive Species	3	4	12
Pipeline Incidents	1	12	12
Extreme Heat	1	10	10
Avalanche	1	7	7

[6] https://www.kcsheriff.com/192/Hazard-Mitigation-Planning

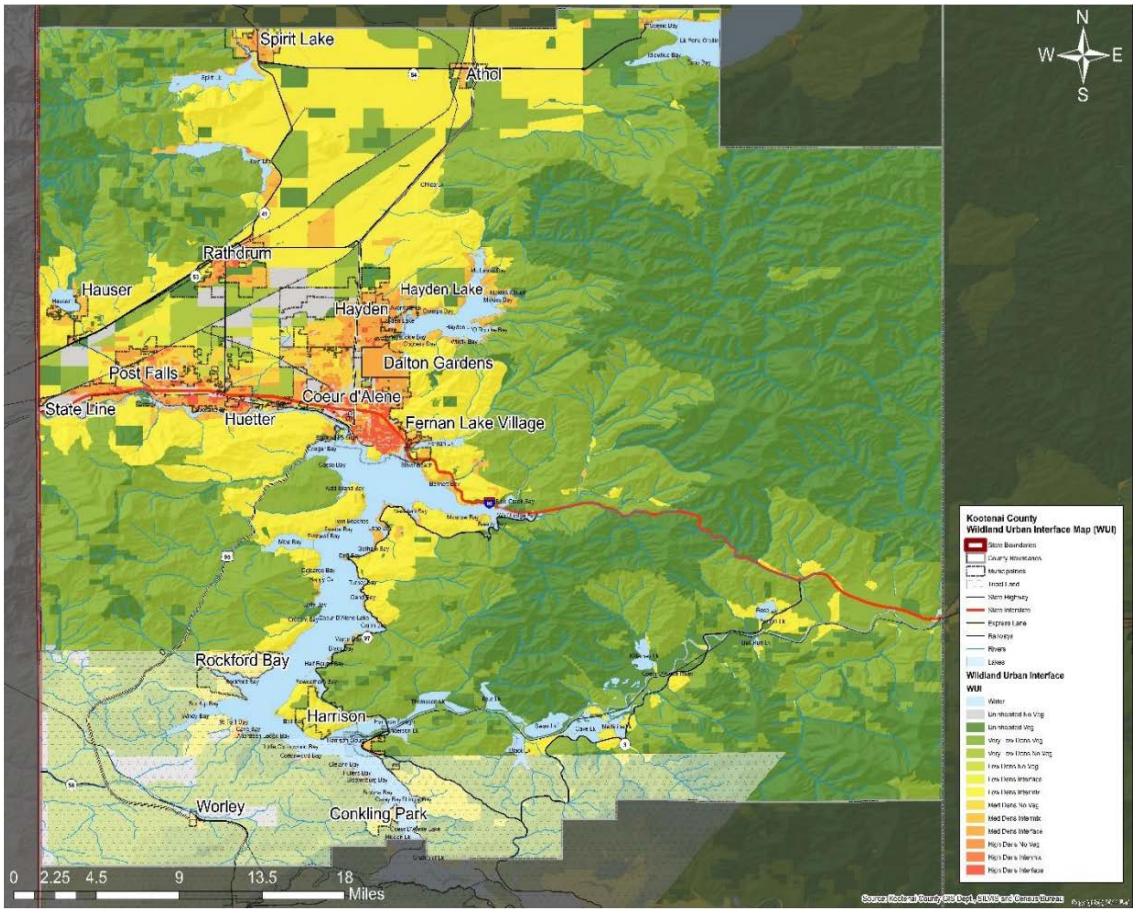
Wildfire Risk

Wildfires—uncontrolled fires that occur on undeveloped land and require fire suppression—are most often caused by humans, either intentionally or accidentally. The Kootenai County 2021 Community Wildfire Protection Plan states that the "magnitude and severity of any wildfire depends on weather and human activity." Several factors influence the ability to contain fires before they spread:

- Amount of recent precipitation
- Wind speed
- Fuel load (weight or volume)
- Accessibility to the fire
- Accessibility to nearby water sources
- Response time

Kootenai County's risk of wildfires is between the low-moderate to moderate-high range, according to the Kootenai County 2021 Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Below, is the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map which indicates vulnerability to wildfire. Virtually all of the county is within the WUI except cities' downtown cores.

The 2020 Forest Action Plan provided by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) highlights that the threat of uncharacteristic wildfires has grown due to climate change, forest health decline, human activity, and accumulated fuels. These facts are especially critical in Kootenai County due to its extensive WUI zones.



Source: Kootenai County 2021 Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The county and its communities have identified projects and mitigation actions to reduce risks, as described in the Kootenai County 2021 Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Several initiatives have been implemented to mitigate hazard fuels in the region.

The Idaho Shared Stewardship Project (December 2018) has identified a 2-million-acre priority landscape within North Idaho that is associated with both Bonner Conty, Kootenai County, and the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The project involves coordination with willing landowners to define and implement cross boundary projects and seeks to build a holistic approach to reducing threats of wildfires while also improving the health of forests, rangelands, and watersheds[7].

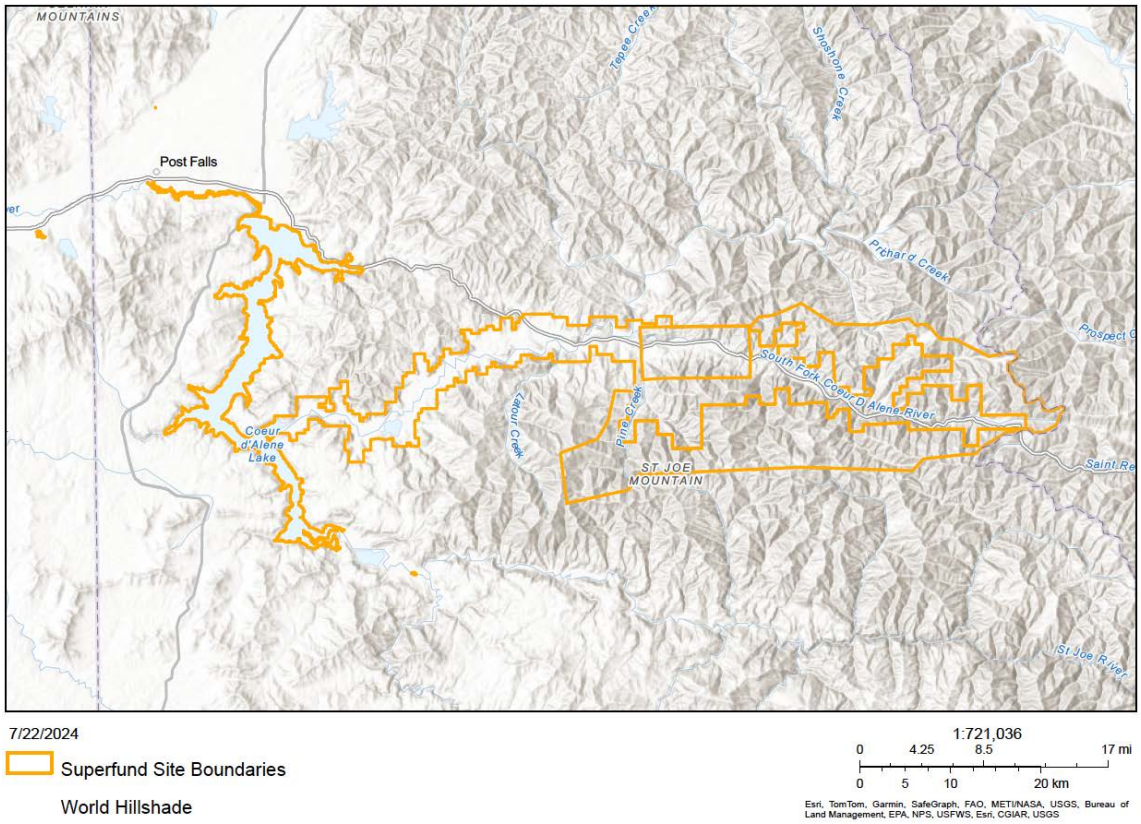
[7] https://www.idl.idaho.gov/about-forestry/shared-stewardship/

Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex Superfund Site

The widespread contamination generated by the mining activities within the Silver Valley and the documented evidence of human health impacts and ecological damage led to the region's labeling in 1983 as one of the largest and most complex hazardous waste sites in the United States[8].

The Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex Superfund Facility (Site) was originally listed on the Federal Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) priority list in 1983 including populated, industrial, and undeveloped areas in a 21 square mile area in Shoshone County known as the "Bunker Hill Box." The US Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality have been managing the remedial response actions on the Site since that time. In 2002, the remainder of Coeur d' Alene (CDA) Basin where contamination has come to be present, was added to the Superfund Site, including the Lower CDA River Drainage from the Kootenai/Shoshone County Line to the mouth of the CDA River at Harrison, CDA Lake and the Spokane River Drainage into downtown Spokane, Washington.

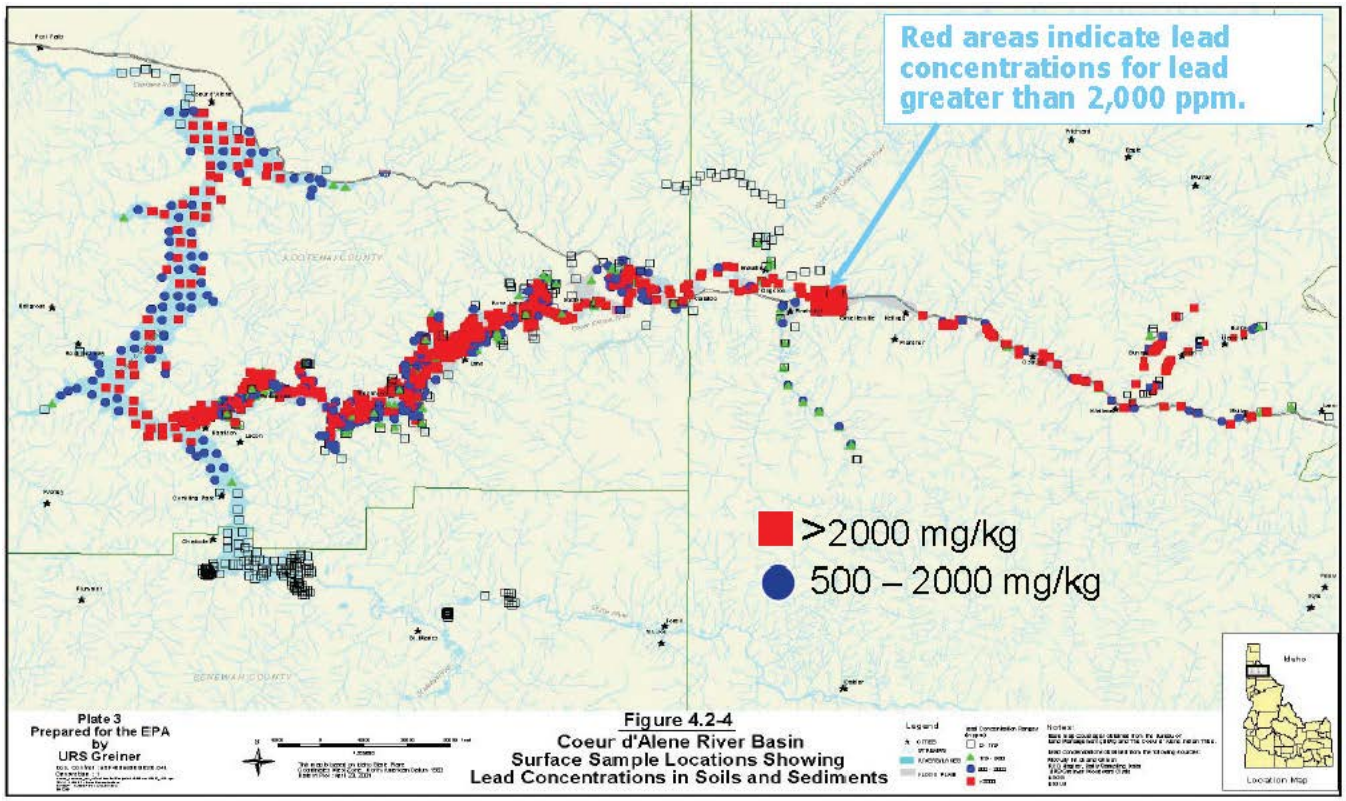
Figure 4 - Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex Superfund Site



[8] *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. The Future of Water Quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/26620.*

Kootenai County CERCLA remedial actions and cleanup activities were selected for the Lower Basin from the county line to the mouth of the main CDA River at Harrison. The Lower Basin wetlands and the bed and banks of the CDA River are highly contaminated with sediment containing various levels of heavy metal contamination—some deposits more than thirty feet deep. The actions include remediating mining and milling heavy metal-contaminated sediment deposited on residential and commercial properties and roads under the jurisdiction of the East Side Highway District using the Basin Property Remediation Program in the CERCLA action. Hundreds of properties in the Lower Basin portion of the Site in Kootenai County have been remediated, and the program continues. Thousands of acres of contaminated wetlands and the bed and banks of the river contaminated with heavy metal mining waste are also being addressed to protect public health, wildlife, fish, and waterfowl.

Figure 5 - Nature and extent of sediments with significant concentrations of lead in the CDA River basin and Lake.



Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2022).

The remedial process in the Lower Basin includes an Institutional Controls Program (ICP) to control the release and mitigation of contamination. The ICP is established in Idaho Title 39 Health and Safety, Chapter 68 – ICP for the Bunker Hill Superfund Site. The ICP has specific requirements concerning the development, construction, and maintenance of lands within the ICP Administrative Boundary that

impact landowners, Real Estate businesses, lending agencies, contractors, and government agencies working in the Lower Basin.

Although CDA Lake and the Spokane River do not currently have a selected remedy in the 2002 CERCLA expansion, they are a part of the designated Superfund Site (*See Figure 5*). The State of Idaho and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe developed a Lake Management Plan (LMP)[9] in 2009 to address contamination problems, especially for the Lake, which is estimated to contain about 75 million tons of heavy metal-contaminated sediment on the bottom.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe has since asserted that the LMP is not sufficient to protect the lake, and in 2021, Governor Little established the Coeur d'Alene Lake Advisory Committee and directed $2 million for projects that reduce phosphorus and improve water quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake.[10]

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) was selected by the Advisory Committee to conduct the third-party review and, in 2022, published "The Future of Water Quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake"[11], which considered lake water quality trends from 2010-2021. An additional $31 million from the American Rescue Plan Act funds have since been funded to further the Leading Idaho effort. Key observations, findings, and recommendations of the NAS report include the following:

- Annual inputs of metals and nutrients from the Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe Rivers into Lake Coeur d'Alene have declined since ~2010.
- Little is known about nutrient inputs from the lake's smaller tributaries.
- Over the past decade, metals have been declining in most regions of the lake, and phosphorus levels appear to have stabilized and may be beginning to fall, but they remain at approximately double the level from the 1990s.
- If the future equals the recent past, then the lake will meet water quality standards ~50% of the time within the next decade for all places except the deeper waters in the lake's Southern Pool (primarily Tribal Waters where the Tribe has authority for setting water quality standards and enhancing and protecting water quality)
- Climate change and regional development pressures are risks that could slow and/or reverse progress made.
- Monitoring should continue, and additional attention should be paid to the lake's rapidly growing nearshore regions and ecological changes.

[9] https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/11122

[10] https://www.deq.idaho.gov/leading-idaho-and-the-coeur-dalene-lake/

[11] *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. The Future of Water Quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.* https://doi.org/10.17226/26620

- The risk profile of exposure of the people living, working, and recreating on the lake needs to be updated, particularly for lead (which, at the time of this report, is currently underway).

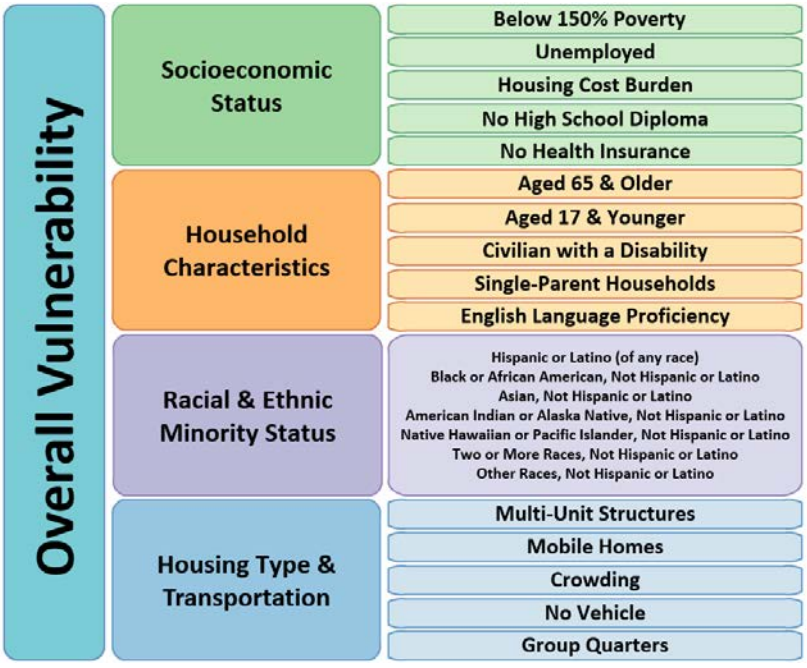
Other Hazards

The 2020 Kootenai County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan identified a series of natural hazards that could impact the planning area and selected those which presented the greatest concern for assessment. The mitigation plan addresses the following hazards:

- Avalanche
- Dam/Levee Failure
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Landslide
- Lightning
- Windstorm
- Hail
- Tornado
- Winter Weather
- Extreme Cold/Wind Chill
- Extreme Heat
- Volcanic Ash Fall
- Wildfire

The plan provides a countywide strategy to reduce future disaster losses through mitigation projects. It was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 10, and it meets the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations Section 201.6 (44 C.F.R. § 201.6).

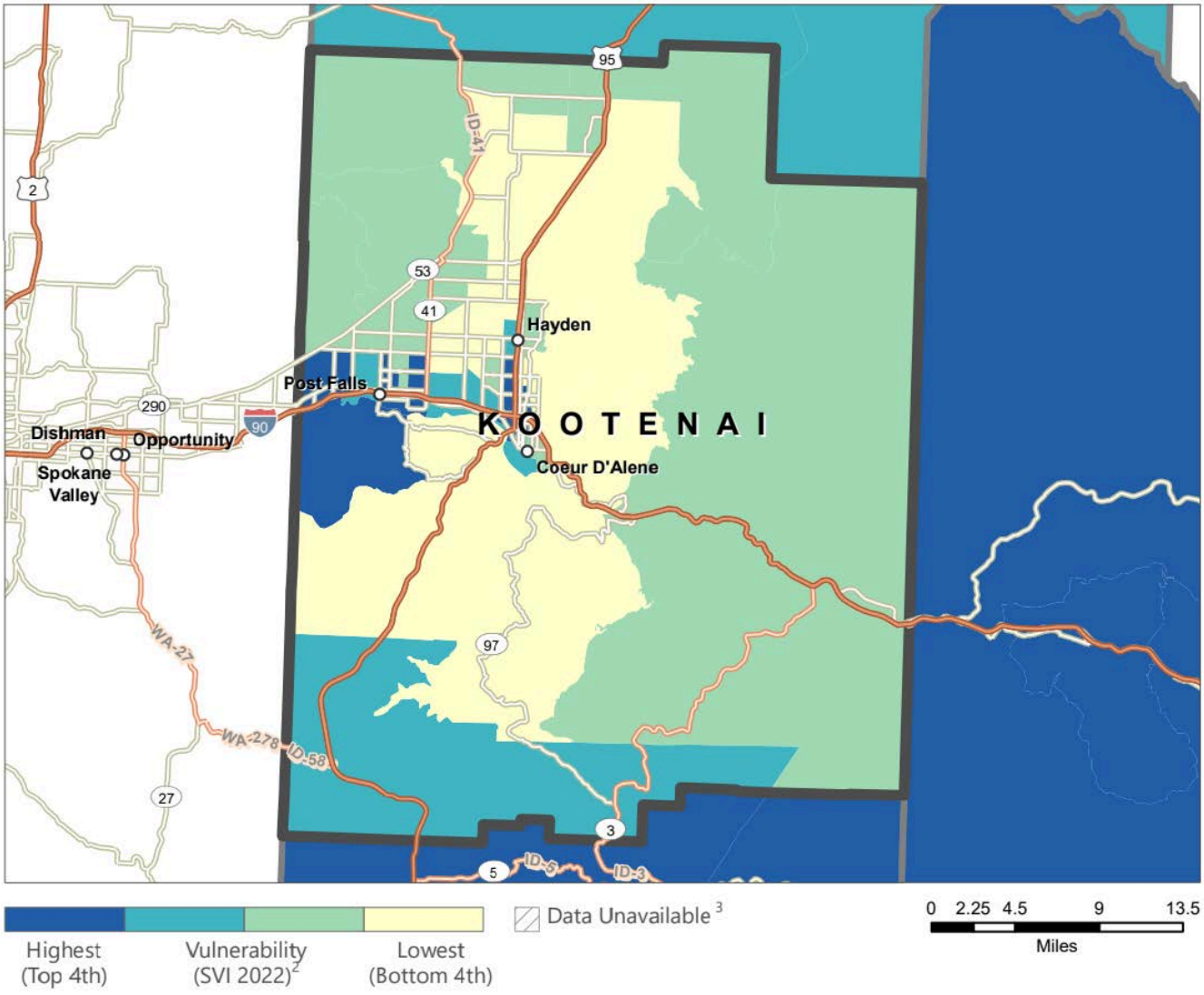
Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)



Social vulnerability refers to the demographic and socioeconomic factors (such as poverty, lack of access to transportation, and crowded housing) that adversely affect communities that encounter hazards and other community-level stressors. These stressors can include natural or human-caused disasters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Social Vulnerability Index (CDC/ATSDR SVI or SVI) is a place-based index, database, and mapping application designed to identify and quantify communities experiencing social vulnerability. The Geospatial Research, Analysis & Services Program (GRASP)

maintains the CDC/ATSDR SVI to help public health officials and local planners better prepare for and respond to emergency events with the goal of decreasing human suffering, economic loss, and health inequities.[12]Below is the overall social vulnerability rating by census tract within Kootenai County according to data sources and ranking criteria from the CDC/ATSDR/GRASP, and the U.S. Census Bureau (2022). The complete data sheet may be viewed here:

https://svi.cdc.gov/Documents/CountyMaps/2022/Idaho/Idaho2022_Kootenai%20County.pdf



[12] *https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html*

2 Community Characteristics

The following sections summarize the existing conditions within Kootenai County, including demographics and population trends, economic indicators, and housing trends, which will ultimately inform the County's current Comprehensive Plan update effort. Data sources used include U.S. Census Decennial Data, U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates, KMPO 2025 – 2050 Future Growth Projections, and Idaho State Department of Labor (ISDL) housing data and population estimates.

2.1 Population

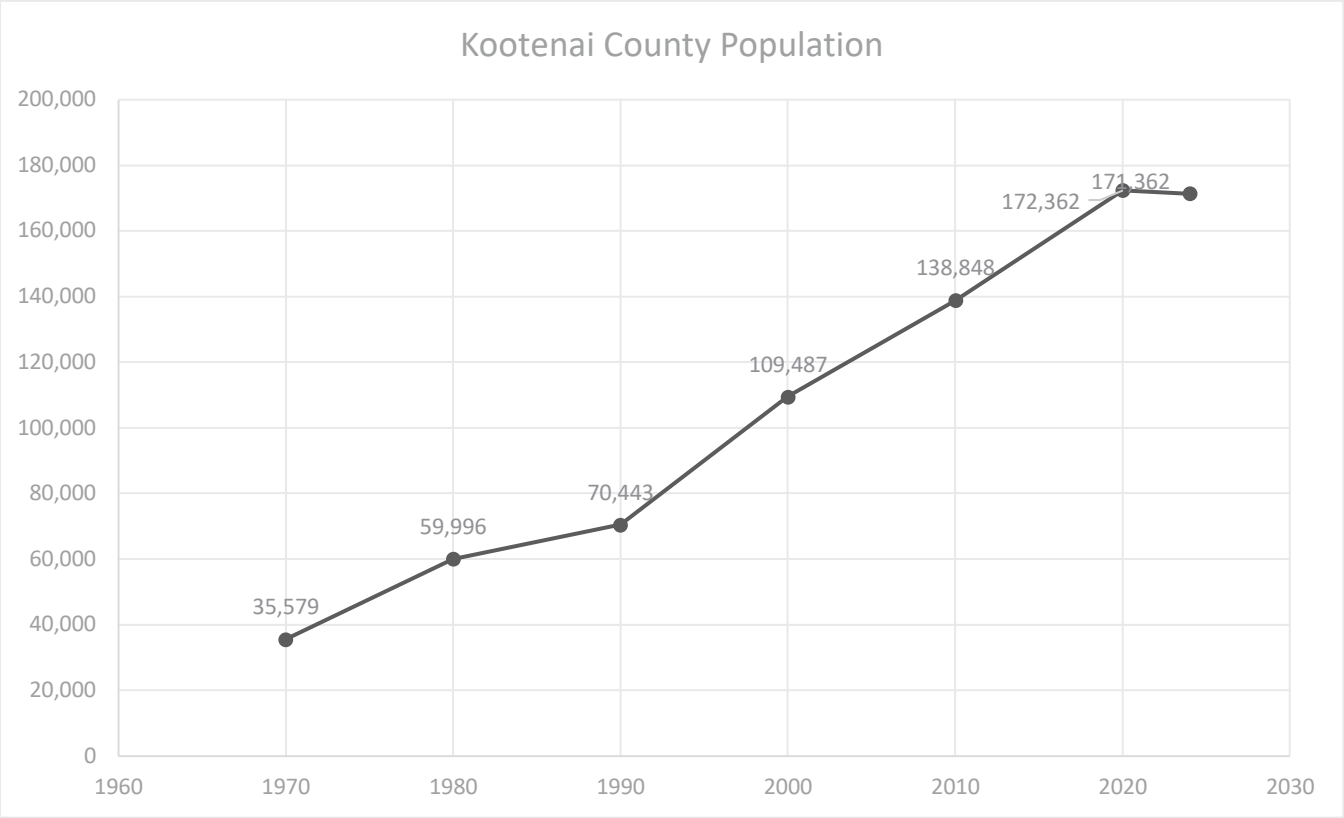
Idaho's Department of Labor issues annual population estimates for all counties in Idaho, which are considered to be the state's official population counts for long-range planning purposes. These annual estimates are based on the most recent decennial Census counts. Idaho Department of Labor's official 2024 population estimates published in January of 2026, indicate Kootenai County had a population of 181,996 to .[13] The 2024 Census population estimate for the state of Idaho as a whole is 1,934,262 ; Kootenai County accounts for approximately 9.% of the state's population.

[13] *https://lmi.idaho.gov/census/*

Historic Population Trends

Figure 6 illustrates Kootenai County's historic population with a population projection using U.S. Census data numbers from 2000 through 2020, while Figure 7 on the next page illustrates Kootenai County's population as a percentage of the state's population over the same time. Kootenai County's share of Idaho's population has continued to increase from 5% each year since 1970 to doubling its original share in 2020, and accounting for around 10.5% of the state's population. This indicates that Kootenai's County's population has grown at an increasingly exponential rate. From 2020 to 2022, Kootenai County's share of the state's population grew slightly from 8.8% to 9.3% – indicating that the county has continued to grow at a faster rate in recent years.

Figure 6: Kootenai County Historic Population, 1970-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data

Figure 7: Percent of County Population

Year	Kootenai County Population	Idaho Population	% of County's Population of Idaho
1970	35,579	713,015	5.0%
1980	59,996	944,127	6.4%
1990	70,443	1,006,749	7.0%
2000	109,487	1,293,953	8.5%
2010	138,848	1,567,582	8.9%
2020	172,362	1,839,117	9.3%
2021	179,789	1,904,537	9.4%
2022	183,578	1,938,996	9.4%
2023			
2024	194,575	2,080,283	9.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's ACS 5-Year Estimates, 89.0% of the Kootenai County population is white, as compared to 91.9% in Coeur d'Alene overall and 91.9% in Idaho. About 5.1% of Kootenai County's residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, a ratio slightly lower than that of the city of Coeur d'Alene (5.5%) and the state (13.0%). Figure 8 presents race and ethnicity as a percentage of Kootenai County's overall population, as compared to those of Coeur d'Alene and the state of Idaho.

Figure 8: Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Population		
	Coeur d'Alene	Kootenai County	Idaho
White alone *	88.5%	89.0%	82.1%
Black or African American alone *	0.4%	0.3%	0.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone *	1.0%	1.1%	1.4%
Asian alone *	1.1%	0.8%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone *	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%
Some other race alone *	1.5%	1.4%	5.6%
Two or more races	7.3%	7.3%	8.3%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race) **	5.5%	5.1%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, DP1. (*) Includes persons reporting only one race; (**) Those of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race, so are also included in applicable race categories

Age and Gender

The median age in Kootenai County is 40.7 years, which is older than that of the state (36.9 years) and the city of Coeur d'Alene overall (39.3 years). About 12.1% of Kootenai County's population is under the age of 10, and 19.4% is age 65 or older. 9 illustrates Kootenai County's age distribution as compared to that of Coeur d'Alene and Idaho.

Figure 9: Age Distribution

Age Group	Percentage of Population		
	Coeur d'Alene	Kootenai County	Idaho
Under 5 years	3.9%	5.6%	6.1%
5 to 14 years	14.0%	12.9%	14.1%
15 to 24 years	11.9%	11.6%	14.5%
25 to 34 years	14.7%	12.6%	12.9%
35 to 44 years	15.2%	12.9%	12.9%
45 to 54 years	10.3%	11.6%	11.3%
55 to 64 years	10.6%	13.5%	11.9%
65 years and over	19.5%	19.4%	16.2%
Median age (years)	**39.3**	**40.7**	**36.9**

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP05

Figure 10 on the next page is a population pyramid for Kootenai County, illustrating the breakdown of Kootenai County's population by age group and sex. Kootenai County's population net of in- and out-migration is in a decline overall; this differential varies by age group, however, as shown in the following statistics:

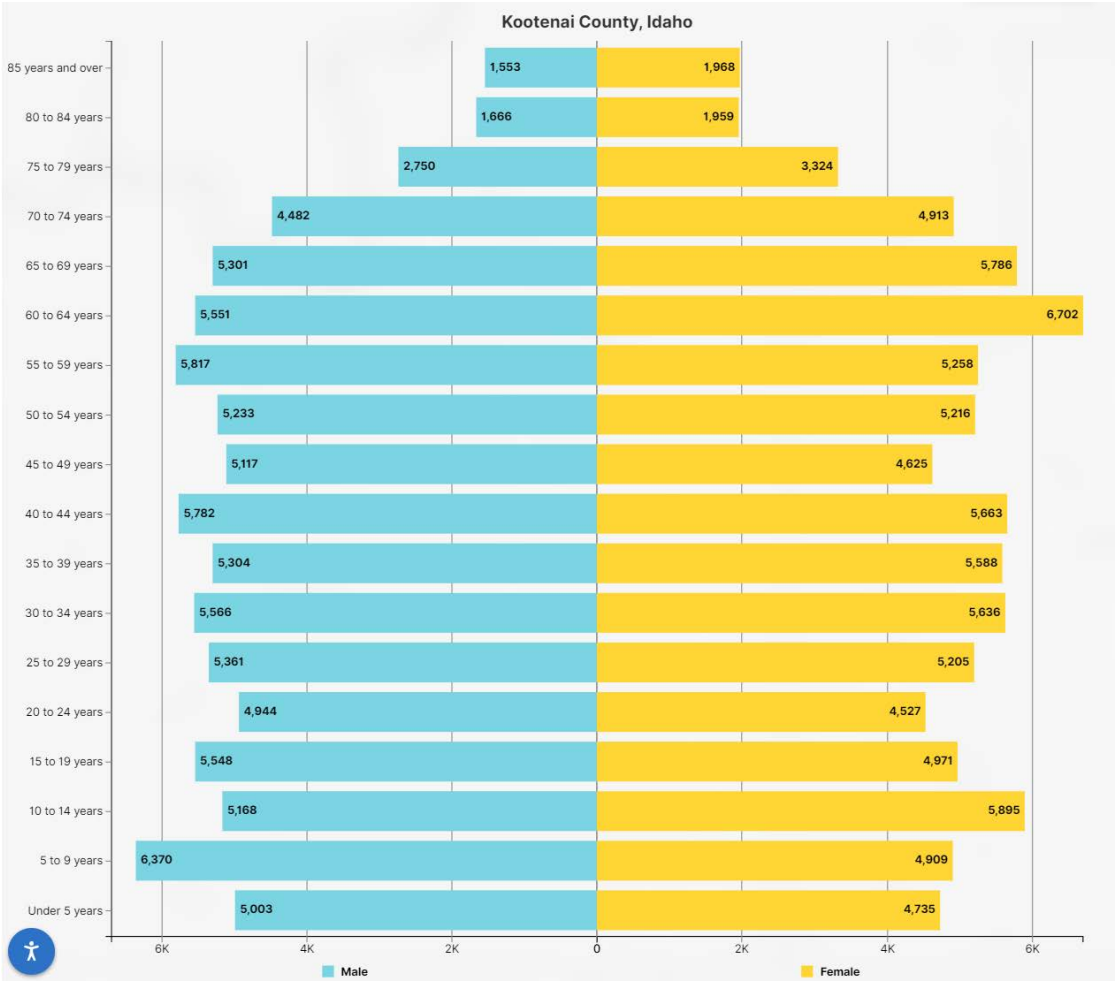
- The 0-15 years population only accounts for 18.5% of Kootenai County's population versus Idaho at 20.02%.
- The median age of Kootenai County is age 40.7 versus Coeur d'Alene at age 39.3 and age 36.9 in Idaho.

- Ages 55 and older in Kootenai County account for 32.9%, almost 1 in 3 people of the population, versus Coeur d'Alene at age 31% and Idaho at 18.3%.

The population pyramid is relatively stable but shows signs of declining birth rates, which could indicate a shift of balance of young people relative to the total county population. This, in turn, could affect the economy in different ways, such as the creation of noticeable age gaps from workers leaving minimum wage jobs to higher paying jobs, and the continuation of the current trend toward higher rates of middle and older age groups in Kootenai County, including retirees. Gaps in the workforce could be filled by young people or could be replaced by automation in the near future. Other interesting statistics of note are as follows:

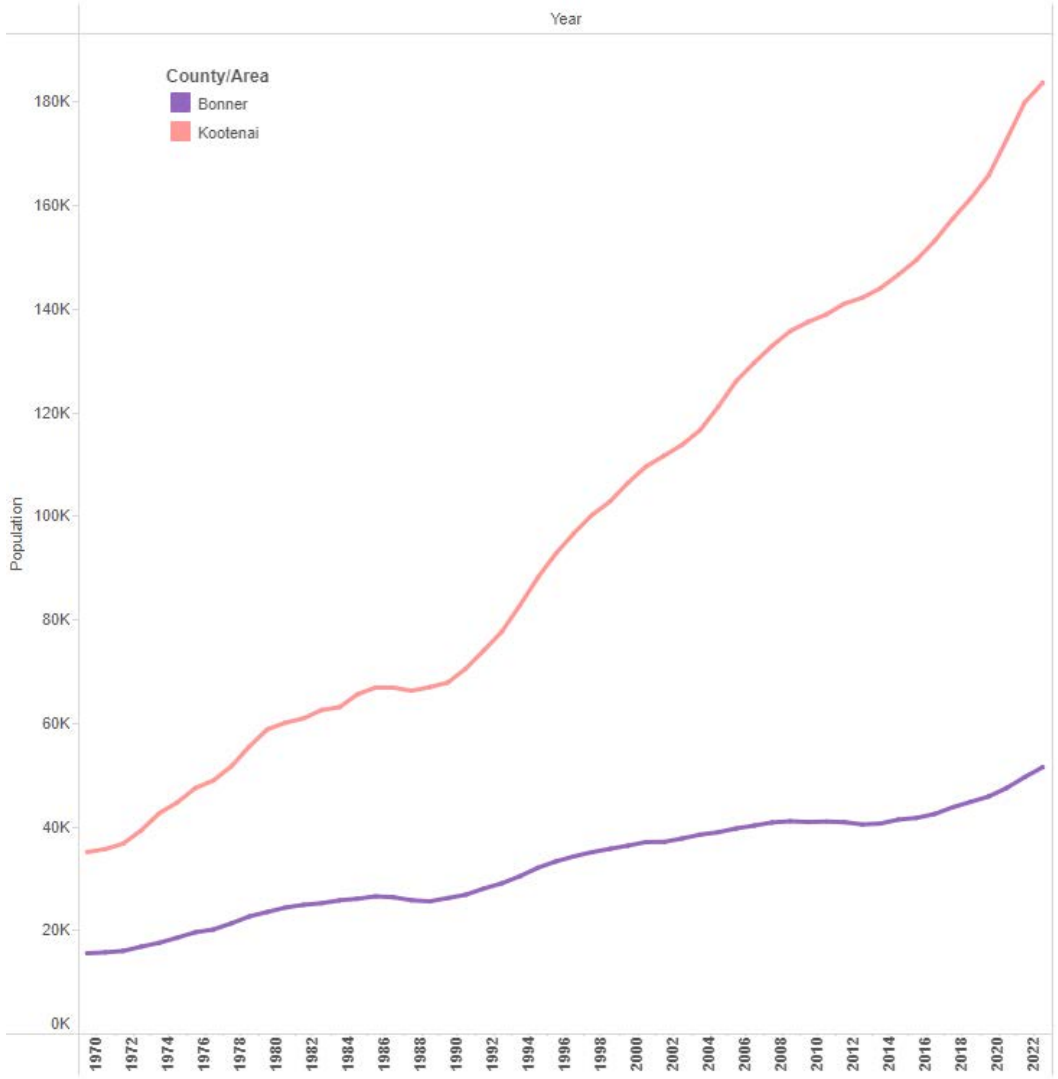
- Kootenai County's age group data from 0 to 24 years olds represent 30%, while the city of Coeur d'Alene is represented by 27.5% and Idaho is represented by 34.7% of the age groups.
- The age groups of 25 to 54 years olds in Kootenai County are represented at 37.1%, while Coeur d'Alene has 41.3% a greater percentage and the state has the same percentage of Kootenai County at 37.1%.
- The age groups of 55 to 65 and older in Kootenai County represent 32.9%, while Coeur d'Alene has 31%, and Idaho has a lower percentage at 28.3% for the same age groups.
- For the Kootenai County age groups between 60 and 64, the female population is noticeably higher than the male population.

Figure 10: Kootenai County Population Pyramid



Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, S0101Figure 11 is a graph of population growth over time for Kootenai County and Bonner County, illustrating noticeably different population trends between these abutting counties. Kootenai County's population has increased at an exponential rate with an average rate of 33% increase every 10 years, while Bonner County had a less steady growth rate increase at an average rate of 22% over the same period. The population growth graph indicates that Kootenai County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

Figure 11: Population Growth for Kootenai County and Bonner County, 1969-2022



Source: U.S. Census Population Estimates

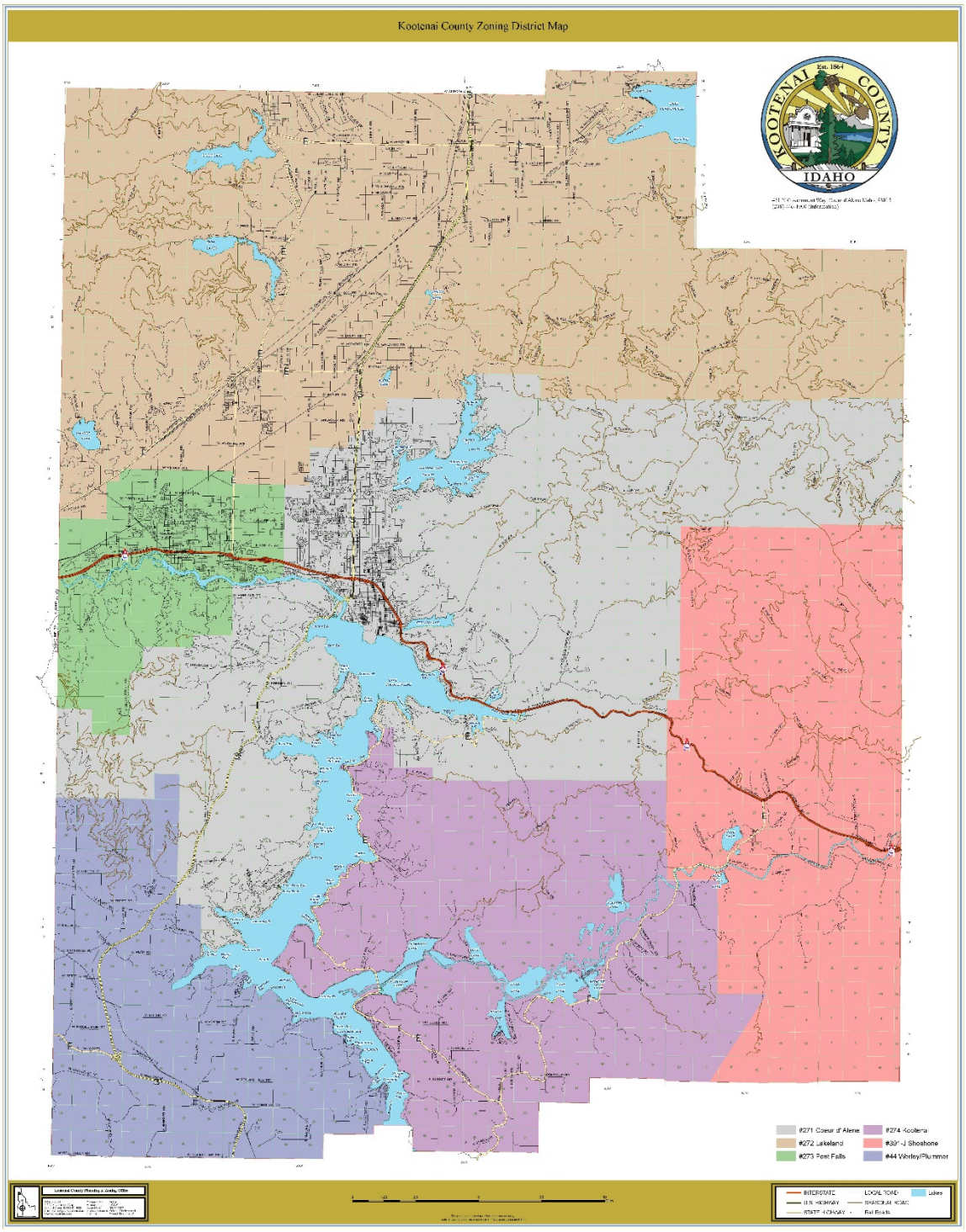
Education

Kootenai County contains six school districts and 43 schools operated by these districts (Coeur d'Alene School District #271, Lakeland Joint School District #272, Post Falls School District #273, Kootenai Joint School District #274, Kellogg Joint School District #391, and Plummer-Worley Joint School District #44),[14] with each operating schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through high school. The county's total 2023 spring public school enrollment was 21,675 students.[15] Kootenai County's school district geographical coverage is shown in Figure 12.

[14] Canyon Elementary School in the Kellogg Joint School District is located in Kootenai County. Kellogg Middle School and Kellogg High School are located in Shoshone County. All schools in the Plummer-Worley Joint School District are located in Benewah County.

[15] Idaho State Department of Education, https://idahoschools.org/districts

Figure 12: School Districts in Kootenai County



In addition, there are six public charter schools and numerous private schools serving students in Kootenai County. The county offers opportunities for technical and workforce training as well. The Kootenai County Technical Education Campus in Rathdrum serves as a high school extension to provide professional development and training. North Idaho College (NIC) in Coeur d'Alene offers programs for associate degrees, academic certificates, career and technical education, adult education, and a customized training option. The NIC Workforce Training Center in Post Falls provides on-the-job apprenticeship programs and certification programs in business and professional development, computers and technology, health care, emergency services, trades, and industry.

Educational attainment for Kootenai County's population, as presented in Figure 13, indicates the highest level of education an individual has attained. Therefore, those persons who have graduated from high school include not only those listed in the high school graduate category but also those with a higher level of educational attainment such as those with associate or college degrees. In Kootenai County, 37.9% of the residents attained a college, graduate, or professional degree, compared with 40.6% of Coeur d'Alene residents and 40.2% of Idaho residents.

Figure 13: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Percentage of Population 25 Years and Over			
	Coeur d'Alene	Kootenai County	Idaho	United States
Less than 9th grade	1.6%	1.8%	3.2%	4.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4.6%	4.7%	5.3%	6.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.4%	27.1%	26.3%	26.4%
Some college, no degree	26.8%	28.5%	25.0%	19.7%
Associate degree	13.1%	11.2%	9.9%	8.7%
Bachelor's degree	16.8%	17.8%	20.2%	20.9%
Graduate or professional degree	10.7%	8.9%	10.1%	13.4%

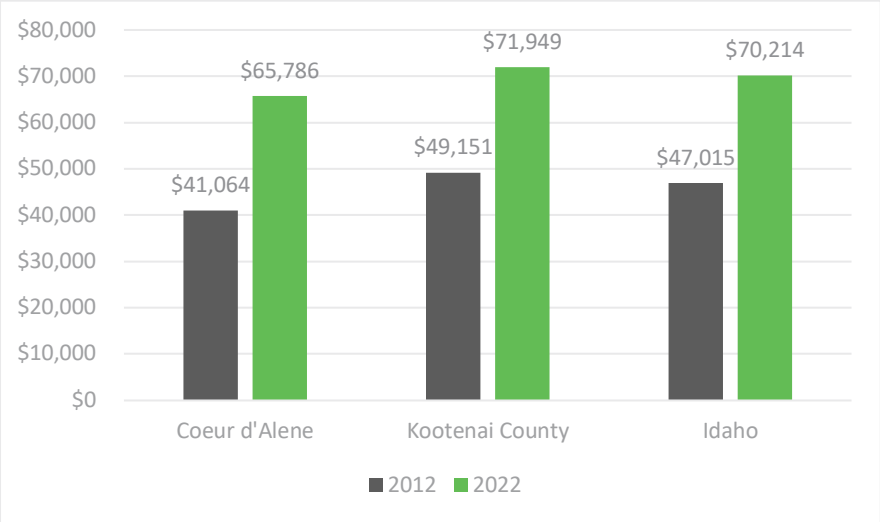
Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, S1501

2.2 Economic Indicators

Income and Wages

As shown in Figure 14, households in Kootenai County have a median annual income of $71,949, which is more than that of Coeur d'Alene at $65,786 and Idaho at $70,214. Additionally, while the state's median household income rose approximately 49% between 2012 and 2022, Coeur d'Alene increased by 60% over the same period, while the median household income in Kootenai County increased by 46%.

Figure 14: Median Household Income

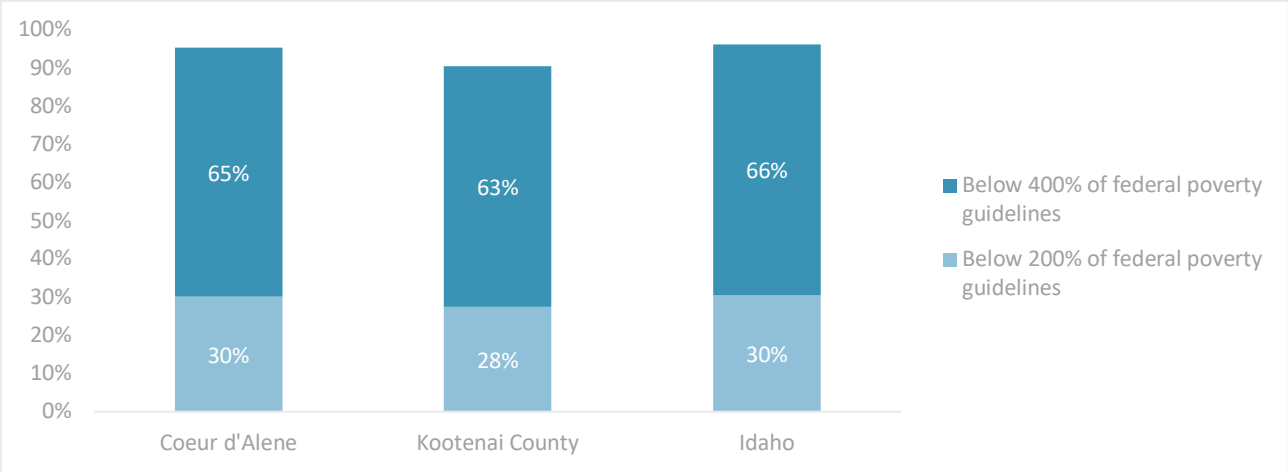


Source: ACS 2012 and 2022 5-Year Estimates, S1901

Poverty and Unemployment

The federal poverty guidelines are an economic measure to determine the income level for households to qualify for certain federal benefits and programs, such as Medicaid, food stamps, family and planning services, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and National School Lunch Program. The poverty threshold defines what poverty is and provides statistics on the number of Americans who live in poverty. Per the ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, as shown in Figure 15, approximately 28% of Kootenai County residents lived below 200% of the federal poverty level, which is considered to be significant poverty, compared with 30% both in Coeur d'Alene and Idaho. In other words, 28% of Kootenai County residents earned less than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, and 63% earned less than 400%. As an example of what this means: a household of four in 2022 would earn less than $55,500 to be considered living below the 200% federal poverty guidelines and would earn less than $111,000 to be considered living below the 400% federal poverty guidelines.

Figure 15: Share of Population Below 400% of Federal Poverty Guidelines



Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, S1701

In Kootenai County, the demographic with the largest percentage of people living in poverty is American Indian and Alaskan Native alone (28.3%), followed by those identifying as two more races (16.5%), and Black or African American alone (11.4%).

According to the ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, the unemployment rate for Kootenai County was 3.1% compared to 1.9% in Coeur d'Alene and 3.7% for Idaho.

Workforce Profile

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's tool, OnTheMap, Kootenai County had approximately 67,751 total jobs in 2021, which accounted for about 8.8% of the 773,963 total jobs in the state. An estimated 47.9% of Kootenai County residents were employed outside of the county. Among jobs within the county, 28.4% were held by residents who commuted in from elsewhere in the region.

The largest industries in terms of the number of jobs held by workers in Kootenai County businesses are:

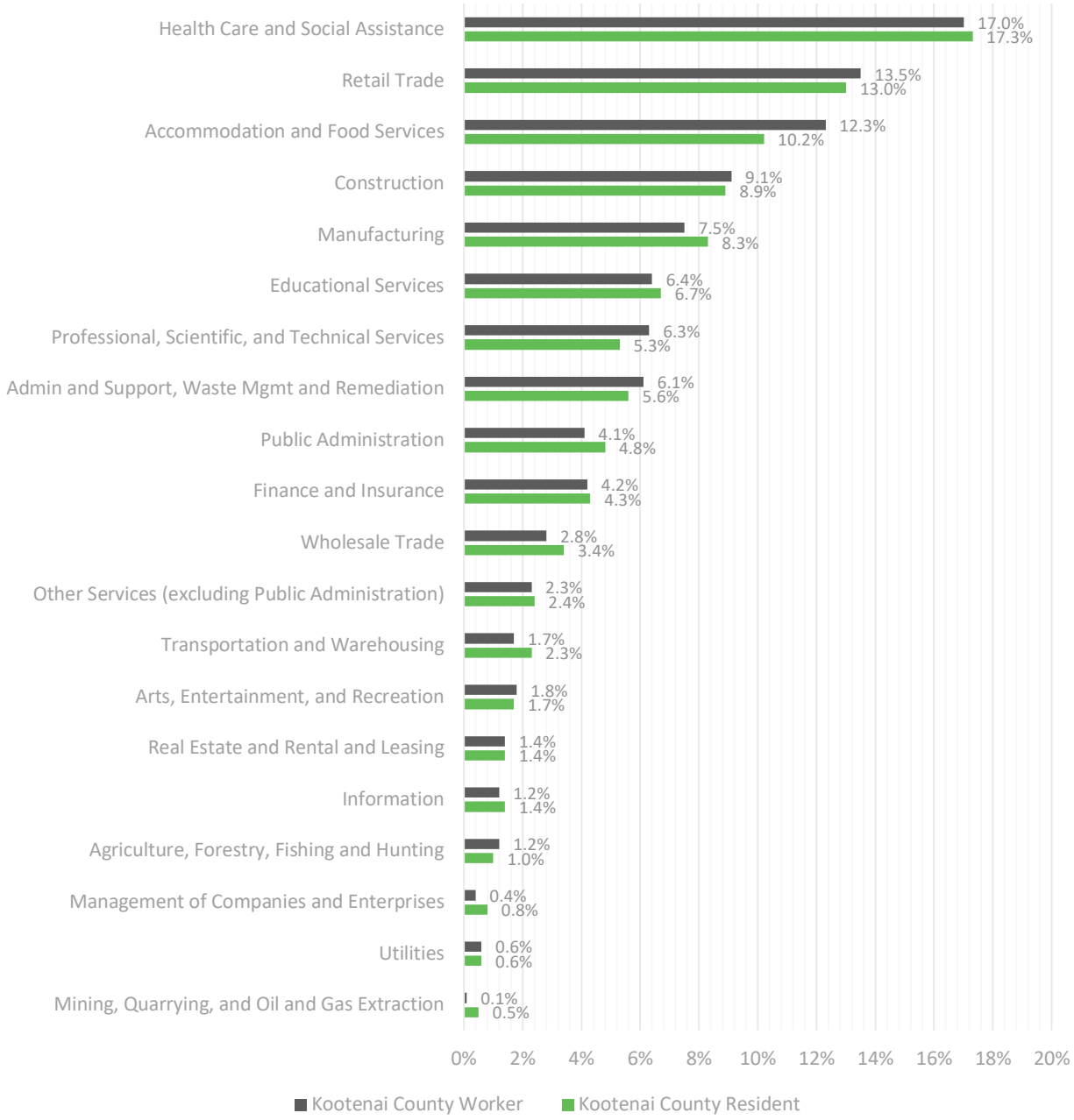
- Health Care and Social Assistance – 11,515 jobs (17.0%)
- Retail Trade – 9,146 (13.5%)
- Accommodation and Food Services – 8,339 (12.3%)
- Construction – 6,175 (9.1%)
- Manufacturing – 5,113 (7.5%)

The largest industries in terms of the number of jobs held by Kootenai County residents (which are both inside and outside of county limits) are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance – 12,448 jobs (17.3%)
- Retail Trade – 9,347 (13.0%)
- Accommodation and Food Services – 7,326 (10.2%)
- Construction – 6,389 (8.9%)
- Manufacturing – 5,991 (8.3%)

Figure 16 shows the distribution of jobs by industry for those working inside of Kootenai County, as well as for Kootenai County residents working inside and outside of the county. Health care and social assistance is the biggest industry for all workers.

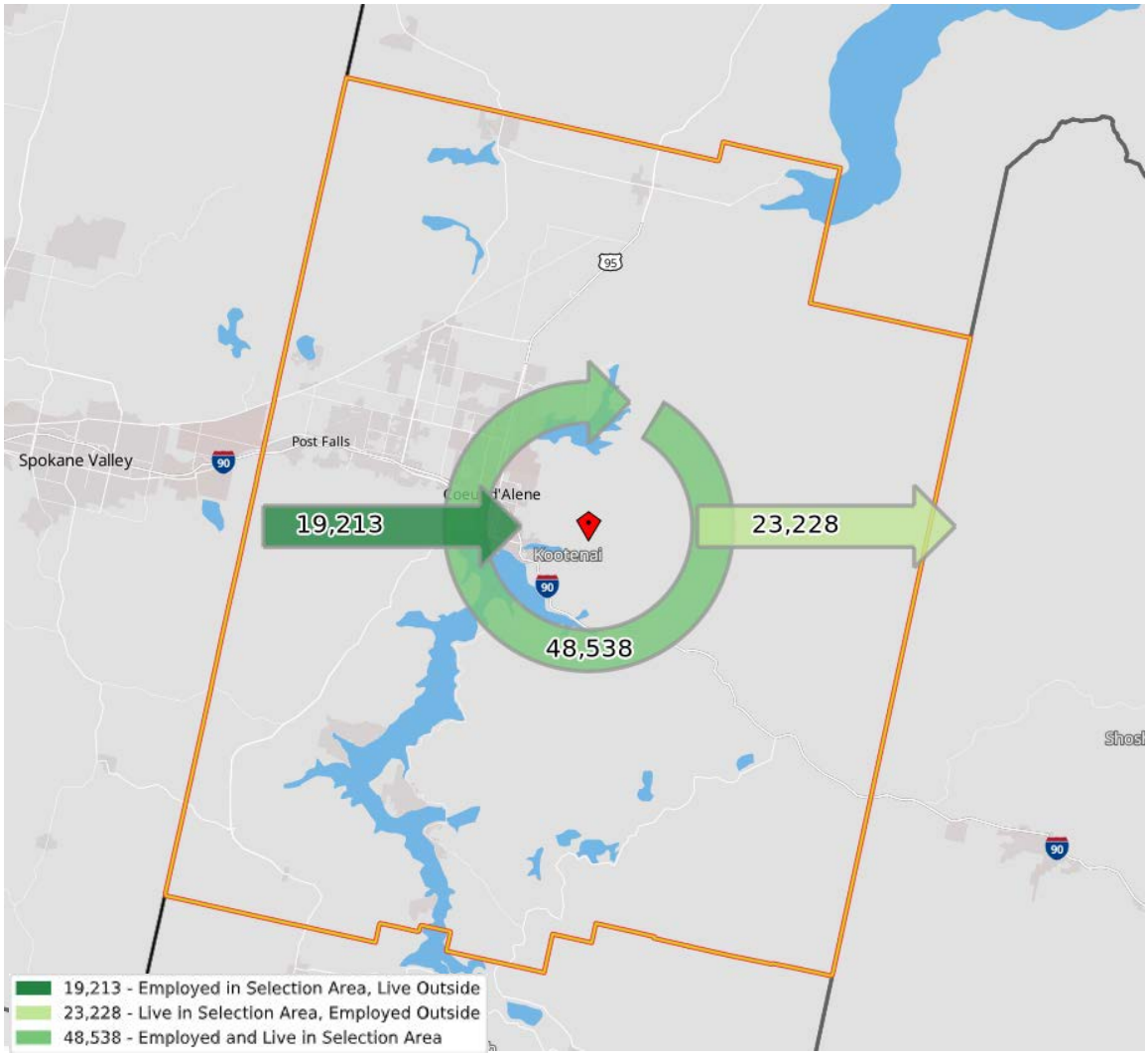
Figure 16: Employment by Industry



Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2021

As shown in Figure 17, an estimated 48,538 of the 67,751 jobs located within Kootenai County were held by people who also live in the county; the other 19,213 jobs were filled by employees who commute into the county. It is estimated that 23,228 of the county's residents travel outside Kootenai County for work.

Figure 17: Commuting Patterns in Kootenai County



Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2021

2.3 Housing

Household Size

According to ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, the average size for owner-occupied households in Kootenai County was 2.61 persons, while the average size for renter-occupied households was 2.41. The total number of housing units in the county was estimated to be 63,146 in 2012 and 75,686 in 2022, an increase of 12,540 units (19.3%) over that decade. Figure 18 presents Kootenai County's average household sizes in comparison to those of Coeur d'Alene and Idaho.

Figure 18: Average Household Size

Year	Coeur d'Alene	Kootenai County	Idaho
Owner-Occupied	2.39	2.61	2.75
Renter-Occupied	2.26	2.41	2.47

Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Housing Occupancy

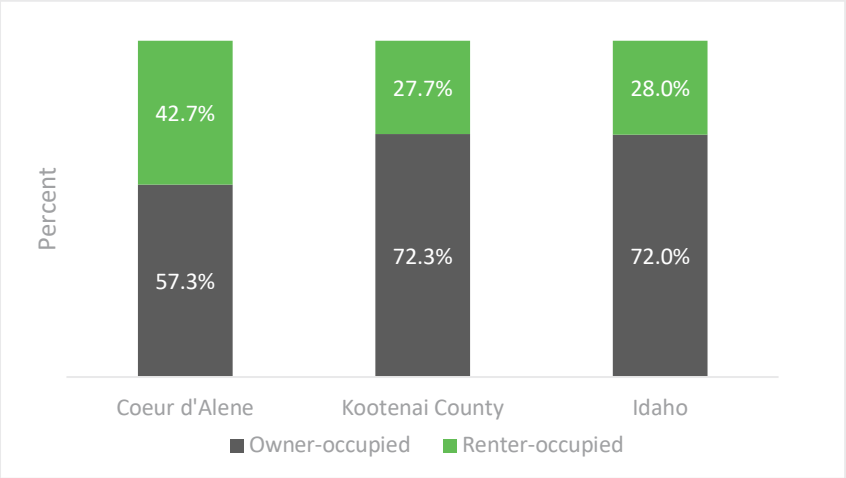
Figure 19 shows the percentage of occupied and vacant households, while Figure 20 on the next page shows the percentage of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied units, in Kootenai County as compared to Coeur d'Alene and Idaho. The percentage of occupied housing units in Kootenai County has increased over the last decade from 87.7% to 88.5%, indicating Kootenai County's housing construction is keeping up with population growth trends. Of Kootenai County's occupied units, 72.3% are owner-occupied while 27.7% are occupied by renters.

Figure 19: Housing Occupancy

	2012				2022			
	Kootenai County		Coeur d'Alene	Idaho	Kootenai County		Coeur d'Alene	Idaho
	# of units	Percentage of total housing units			# of units	Percentage of total housing units		
Occupied	55,351	87.7%	91.9%	86.6%	67,002	88.5%	93.1%	89.0%
Vacant	7,795	12.3%	8.1%	13.4%	8,684	11.5%	6.9%	11.0%
Total Units	63,146	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	75,686	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ACS 2012 and 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Figure 20: Percentage of Owner- vs. Renter-Occupied Units

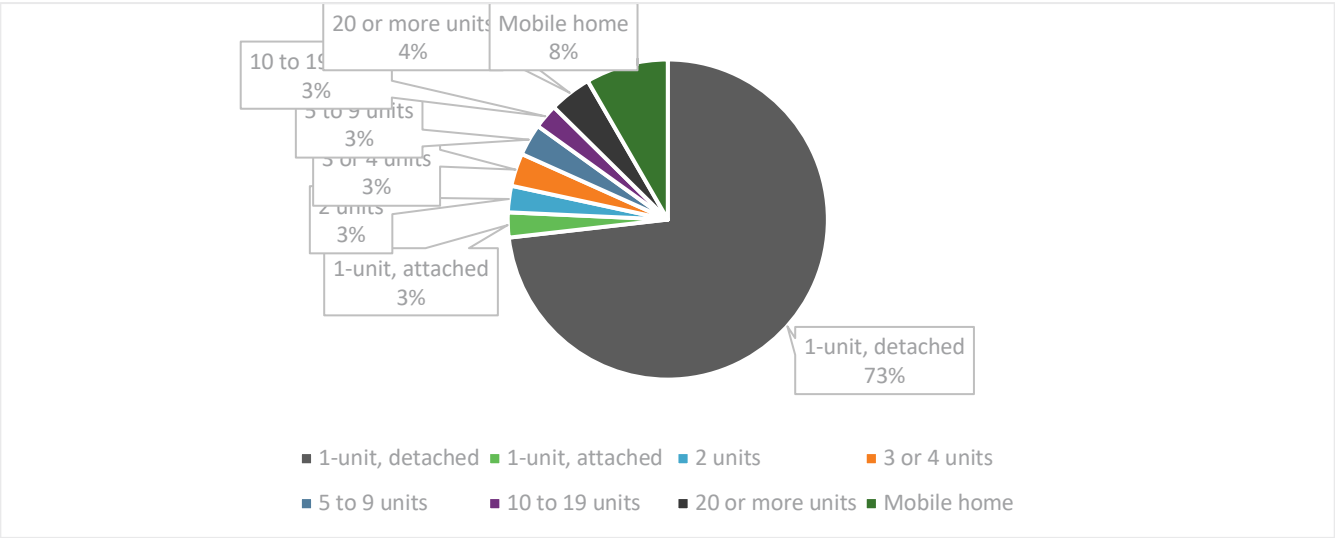


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2020 5-Year Estimates

Housing Types

A breakdown of Kootenai County's housing units by type is shown in Figure 21. Detached single-family units are by far the most prevalent housing type in Kootenai County, accounting for 73.0% of the county's existing housing stock. This percentage has increased slightly over the last decade from 71.7% in 2012. The high share of single-family housing in Kootenai County is more than Coeur d'Alene (60.4%) and the state (72.6%). Multifamily homes comprise 13.3% of the housing stock in Kootenai County, two-family/duplex homes account for 2.7%, and mobile homes account for 8.3%.

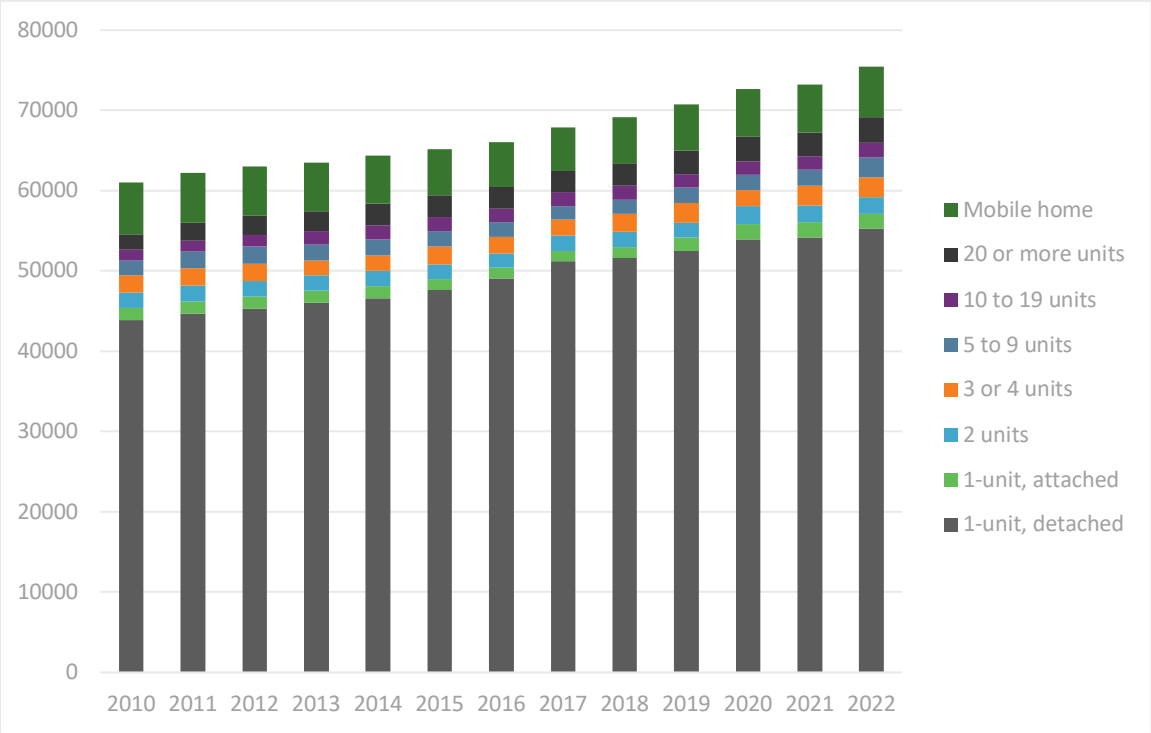
Figure 21: Kootenai County Existing Housing Units by Type



Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Figure 22 shows the change in the number of housing units between 2010 and 2022. While the total number of units for each housing type remained relatively consistent between that time, multifamily complexes with 5 to 9 units, 10 to 19 units, and 20 or more units all increased slightly.

Figure 22: Housing Units in Kootenai County, 2010-2022



Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Age of Housing Stock

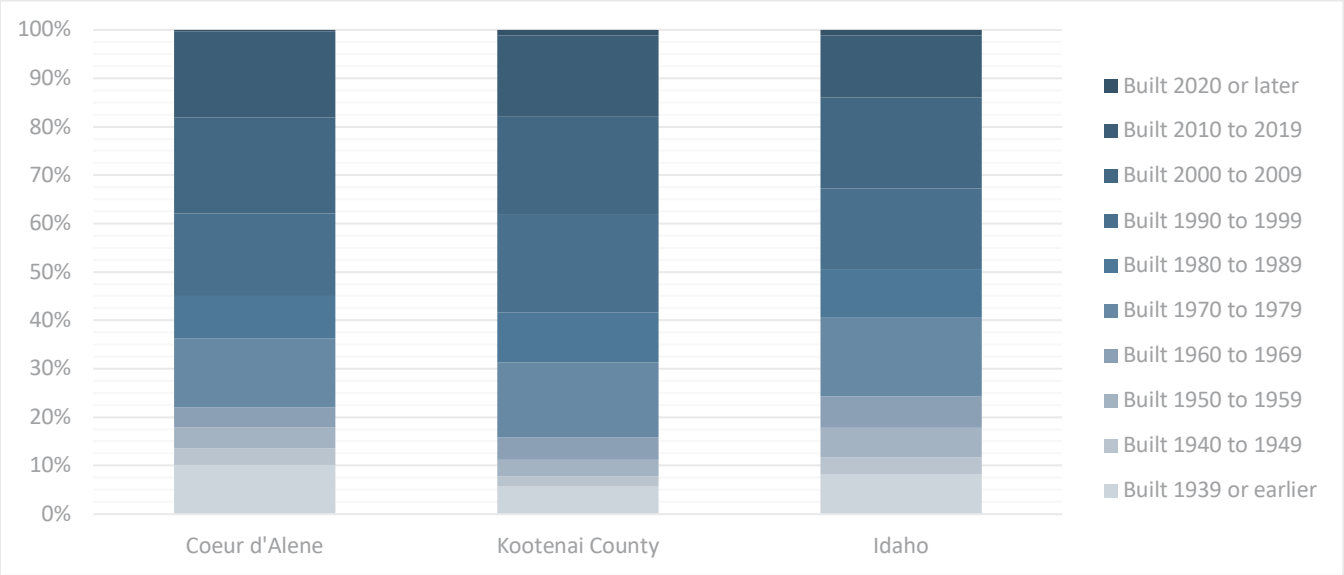
As shown in Figure 23, approximately 18% of Kootenai County's existing housing stock has been constructed in the years since 2010. By comparison, 18.1% of the housing stock in Coeur d'Alene and 13.9% of that in the state as a whole was constructed after 2010.

It is important to understand the breakdown of Kootenai County's housing stock in comparison to its largest city and the state overall. Approximately 7.8% of Kootenai County's existing housing stock was constructed prior to 1950. By comparison, 13.6% of the housing stock in Coeur d'Alene and 11.8% of that in Idaho was constructed before 1950. The most housing construction in Kootenai County took place between the years of 1990 to 2009, which accounts for 40.4% of the county's existing housing stock.

It is important to note that many factors should be considered when understanding the vitality of housing stock (age, material of housing, type, maintenance, building codes, etc.). If not properly maintained, housing over 60 years old will typically need repairs and restoration to continue to function

and meet the needs of its inhabitants. This data indicates that much of Kootenai County's housing stock is new and maintaining pace with population growth.

Figure 23: Existing Housing Stock by Year of Construction



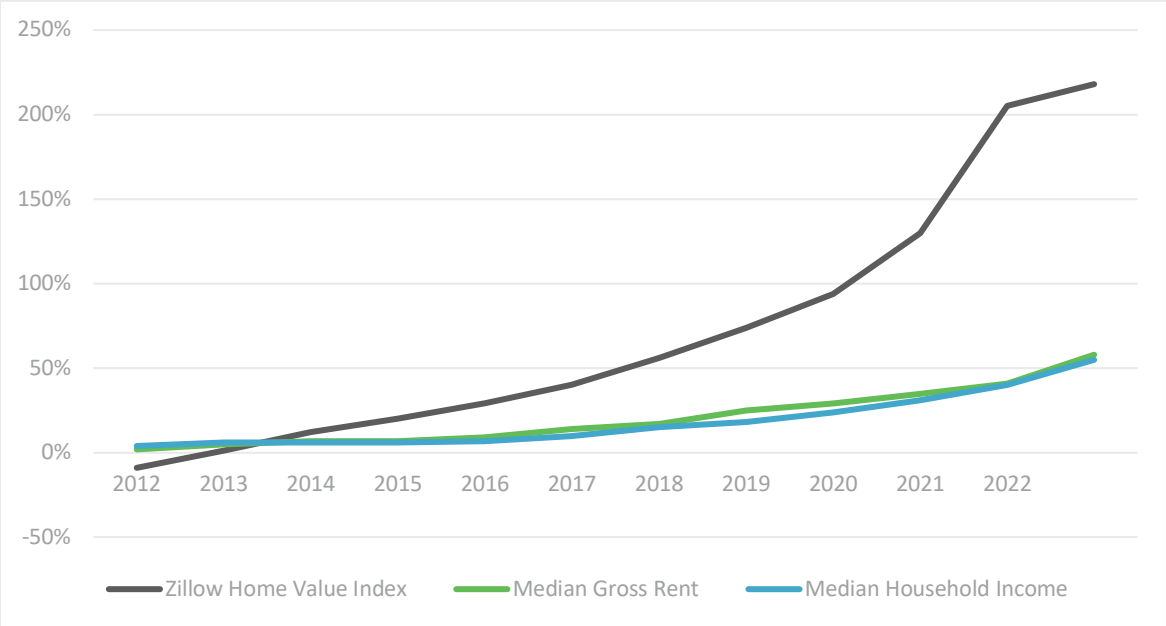
Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04

Housing Costs

As shown in Figure 23 in the "Percentage of Owner- vs. Renter-Occupied Units" section above, approximately 27.7% of Kootenai County's occupied housing units are rentals and 72.3% are occupied by the owner. The state has a slightly higher percentage of rental units, making up 28.0% of all occupied housing units.

Housing affordability is generally determined by comparing the cost of housing in a selected area to income levels in the same area. Like much of the state and country, the cost of housing in Kootenai County has increased in recent years, and incomes have not kept pace with housing costs. When compared to a 2010 baseline, as shown in Figure 24e, median household incomes have increased 55%. However, rental costs have increased by 58% in that same time, and the cost to purchase a house has increased by a staggering 218%. Additionally, recent post-pandemic trends indicate rapidly increasing rents throughout Idaho, and these are not yet reflected in census data.

Figure 24: Change in Rent, Home Prices, and Income in Kootenai County, 2012-2022



Source: ACS 2010-2022 5-Year Estimates, Tables S2503, DP04; Zillow

Rents are more difficult to track than housing prices, particularly for a wide range of the county's geographies. Census data on rental costs is both delayed and self-reported, and large real estate websites do not track rents at a granular level for smaller communities. However, the Census data shown above can provide a window into larger trends.

Cost-Burdened Households

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a measurement of "cost burden" to determine which subset of a community's residents are most in need of housing support or most at risk of displacement or housing hardship. A household is "cost-burdened" if they are spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs (including rent and utilities).[16]

In Kootenai County, 51.8% of rental households spend more than 30% of their household income on rent, while 23.1% of owner-occupied households spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. In all, this means about 30.7% of households in Kootenai County are considered cost-burdened by HUD standards.

[16] *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm*

2.4 Land Use

Examining Kootenai County's existing zoning and land uses is helpful in understanding how the county can accommodate its anticipated population growth over the next 20 years.

Existing Zoning

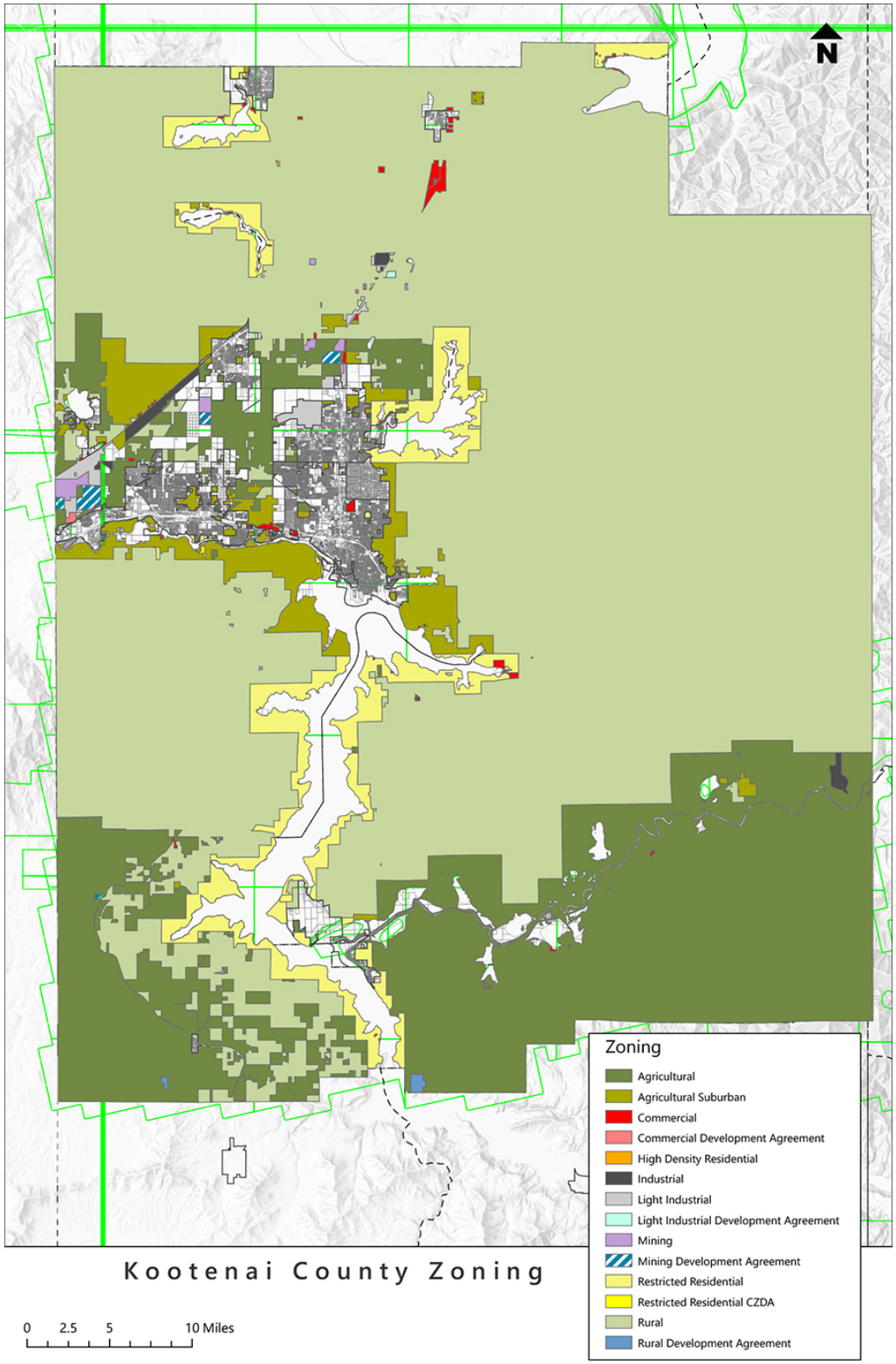
Kootenai County's zoning code contains five residential zones, along with commercial, mining, light industrial, and industrial zones. General descriptions of what is allowed in each zone can be found in Figure 25, and a map of Kootenai County's existing zoning is shown in Figure 26.

Figure 25: Zoning in Kootenai County

Zone	Description	Dwelling Unit (DU) Density
Agriculture	The Agricultural Zone is designated for rural residential uses and uses related to farming, agriculture, forestry, silviculture, aquaculture, and other similar uses.	Minimum Lot size of 5 acres One single-family dwelling Or one two-family dwelling. One accessory dwelling
Rural	The Rural Zone is designated for rural residential uses and uses related to agricultural pursuits, including farming and forestry.	Minimum Lot size of 5 acres One single-family dwelling Or one two-family dwelling. One accessory dwelling Within reservation, minimum lot size of 10 acres
Agricultural Suburban	The Agricultural Suburban Zone is designated for residential and small-scale agricultural uses.	Minimum Lot size of 2 acres One single-family dwelling Or one two-family dwelling. One accessory dwelling Within Aquifer and not connected to sewer system: one unit per 5 acres Within reservation, minimum lot size of 10 acres
Restricted Residential	The Restricted Residential Zone is designated for residential use that is, or is expected to become, housing that contains one or two units. Uses are generally limited to residential. This is also the zone which predominates along the shorelines of the County's lakes, generally coinciding with the "Shoreline" land use designation in the current Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.	Minimum parcel size of 8,250 sf One single-family dwelling per acre. One accessory dwelling unit Within Aquifer and not connected to sewer system: one unit per 5 acres
High Density Residential	The High Density Residential Zone is designated for high-density residential uses, including multi-unit dwellings, manufactured home units on individual lots, or manufactured home parks. The predominant housing types are manufactured homes and apartments.	One dwelling unit per 3,000 sf Multi-family dwellings on parcels not less than 6000 sf One accessory dwelling

		Within Aquifer and not connected to sewer system: one unit per 5 acres
Commercial	The Commercial Zone is designated for wholesale and retail sales and services.	Mixed Use and Residential uses include single-family, two-family, and multiple-family dwellings (3,000 per DU)
Mining	The Mining Zone is designated for excavation and processing materials secured from the earth.	One residential structure as caretaker's quarters
Light Industrial	The Light Industrial Zone is designated for manufacturing and processing of a non-nuisance character. The purpose is to encourage the development of manufacturing and wholesale businesses that are clean, quiet, and free of noise, odor, dust, and smoke.	No residential uses allowed
Industrial	The Industrial Zone is designated for manufacturing and processing of all types.	No residential uses allowed

Figure 26: Existing Zoning Map



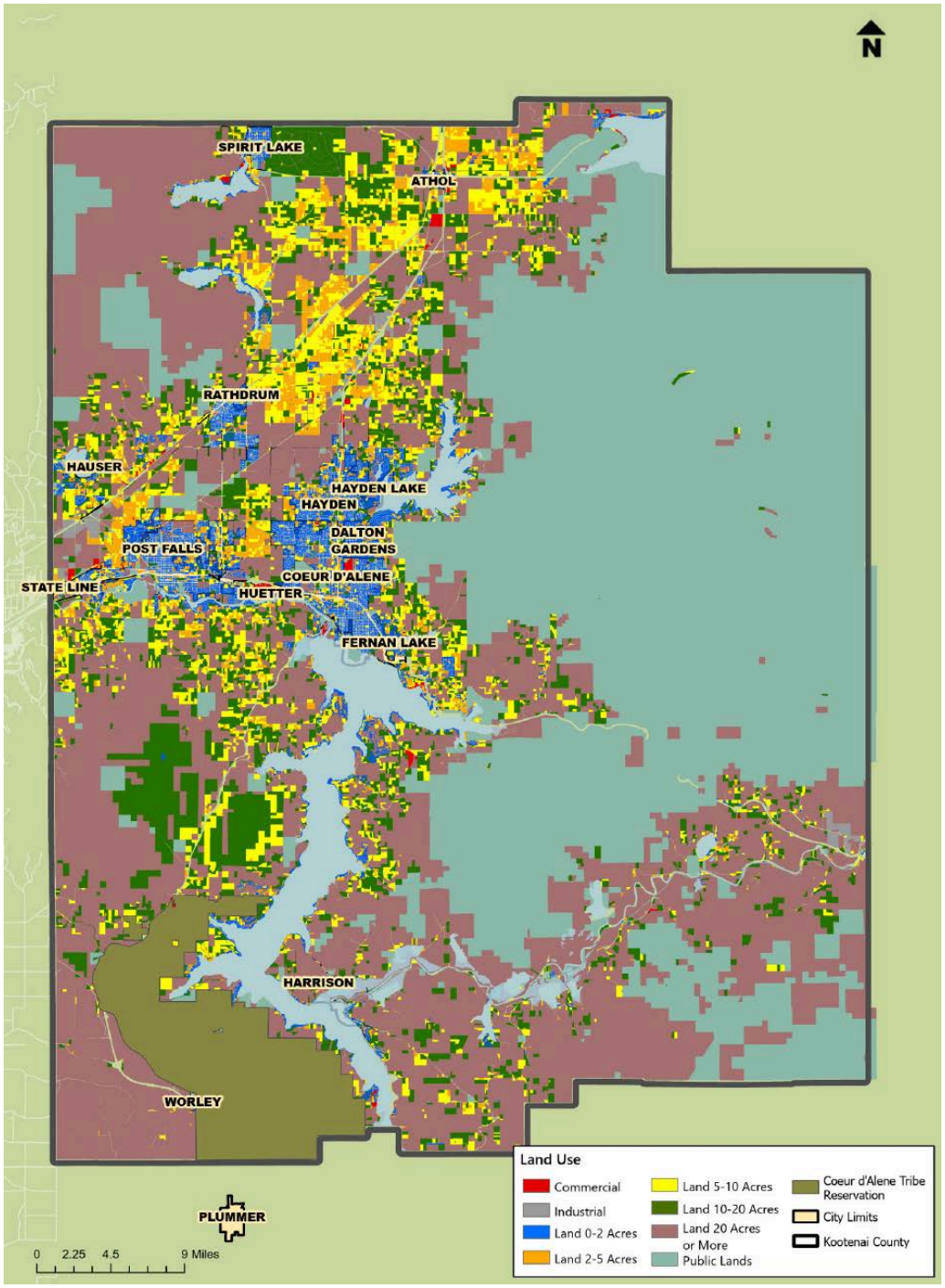
Existing Land Areas Quantified.

Kootenai County includes about 1,230 square miles of land as shown below. Another 70 square miles of the county is water. A breakdown estimate of the land uses, based on commercial/Industrial zoning, parcel size, public lands (federal, state, and local), and Tribal reservation land is shown in Figure 27 and mapped in Figure 28.

Figure 27: Existing Land Uses in Kootenai County

Land Use	Approx. Acres	% of Total Acreage
Cities	28,571	3.67%
Commercial	1,398	0.18%
Industrial	2,556	0.33%
Land 0-2 acres	12,826	1.65%
Land 2-5 Acres	22,029	2.83%
Land 5-10 Acres	43,350	5.57%
Land 10-20 acres	63,003	8.10%
Land 20+ acres	273,186	35.12%
Public Lands	293,842	37.77%
Coeur d'Alene Reservation	37,220	4.78%
Total	**777,982**	**100.00%**

Figure 28: Existing Land Area Map



Visualizing Potential Growth

The following pages contain conceptual renderings that seek to visualize maximum buildout under current zoning within the County's jurisdiction. The renderings involved analyzing Kootenai County zoning regulations and parcel sizes to determine the maximum allowable residential density for each parcel. Using zoning regulations and parcel information, the housing capacity of each parcel was calculated by applying the relevant zoning density standards, resulting in an assigned value indicating the potential number of residential units per parcel.

The analysis removed publicly owned land, Coeur D'Alene Tribal reservation land, and all parcels with a known slope of 40% or greater. The analysis also did not include areas within existing city limits or the potential for any annexation by cities. No other potential development constraints (i.e., water availability, septic availability, access constraints, market factors, etc.) have been accounted for. To represent the resulting capacity spatially, a point generation process was used, creating points within each parcel corresponding to the calculated housing capacity. These points were distributed across the parcels to visually depict the potential for future maximum build-out under the current zoning regulations.

The resulting dataset was integrated into a 3D viewer in ArcPro, where the generated points were symbolized as 3D icons representing potential future housing units. To give a clear comparison, the existing buildout was also rendered in the same manner. By utilizing existing address point data from the county, this dataset was overlaid onto the same 3D map, to provide a direct comparison between existing development and the potential future development capacity under current zoning regulations.

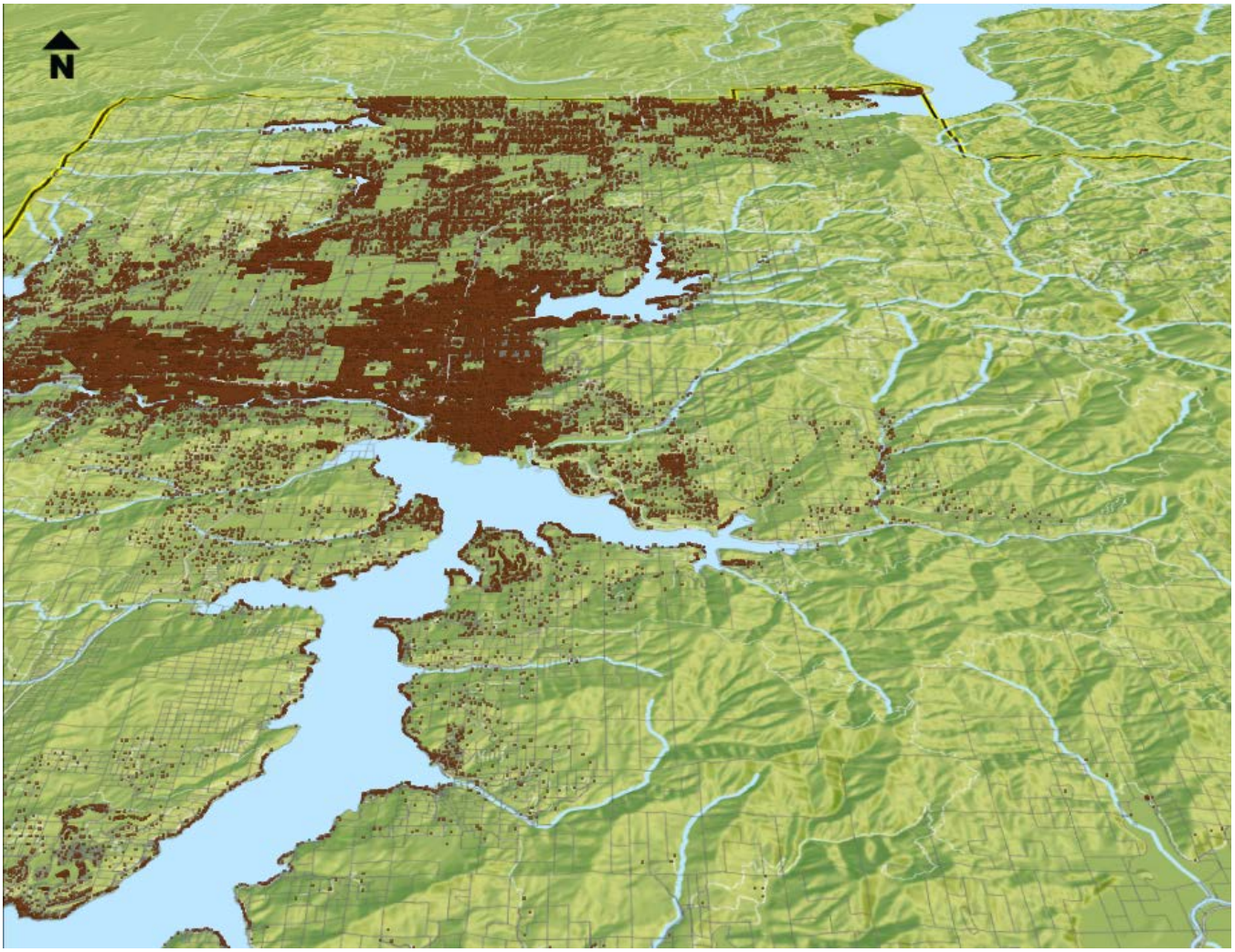


Figure 29 - Existing Development (Address Points) Visualized.

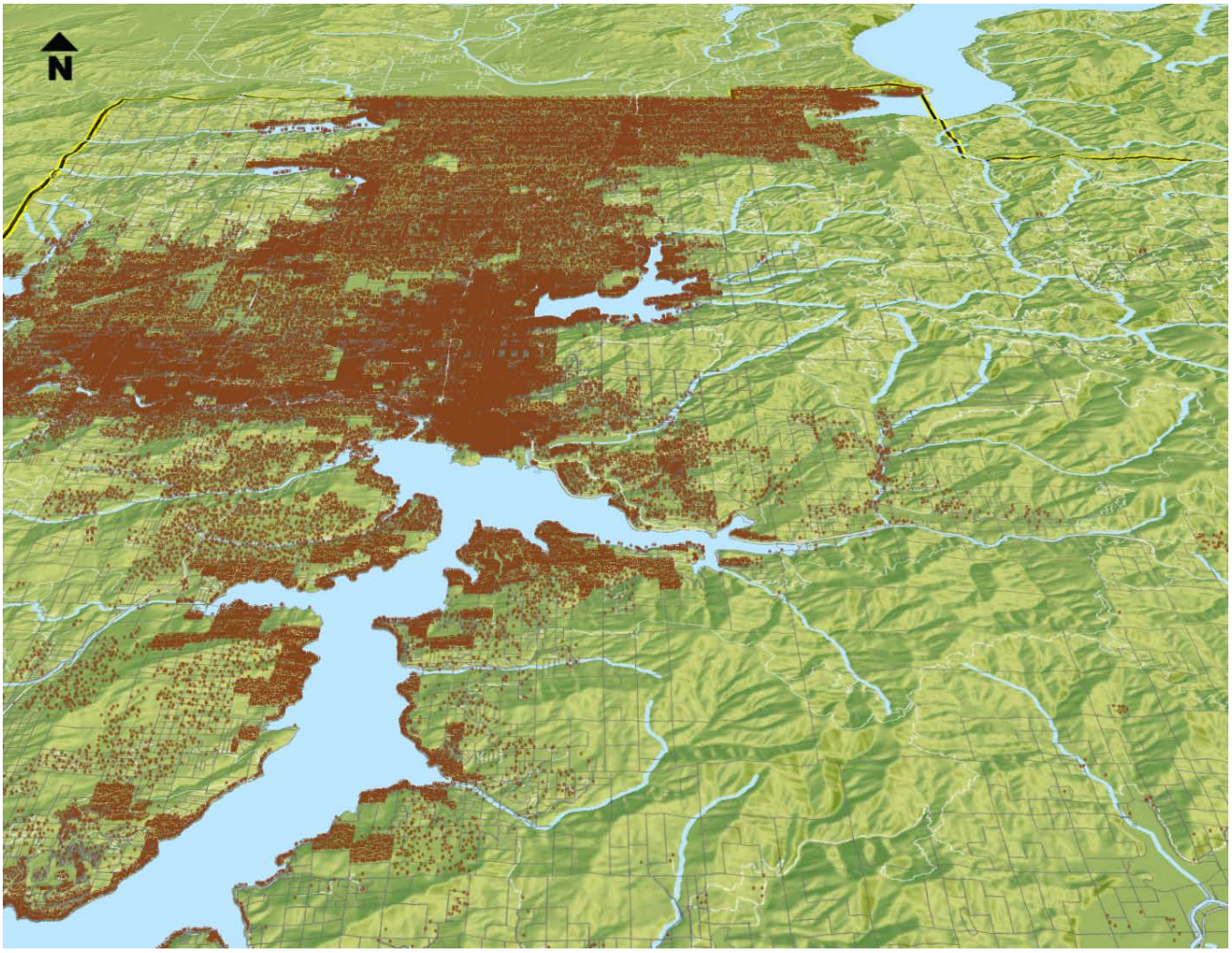


Figure 30 - Potential Future Development (Under Existing County Zoning) Visualized

Cost of Community Services

In 1997 and again in 2017, a *cost of community services* study was conducted in Kootenai County along with the counties of Bonneville, Canyon, and Cassia[17]. The purpose of the study was to aid policymakers on land use by providing estimates of long-term fiscal impacts for different land use types. Specifically, the study analyzed commercial, residential, and agricultural land uses to determine the amount of tax revenue they generated relative to the cost of tax revenue they required to serve. The findings for each county were similar and consistent with other studies conducted for other counties in various parts of the country. The study found that while commercial and agricultural properties produced more tax revenue than they received in services, residential properties received more in services than they paid in revenue.

In Kootenai, the results from the study concluded that:

- **Residential** properties received between **$1.10 and $1.16** in services for every $1.00 contributed through taxes.
- **Commercial** properties received between **$0.53 and $0.64** in services for every $1.00 contributed.
- **Agricultural** properties received between **$0.39 and $0.42** in services for every $1.00 contributed.

Projected 2025 Revenue and Expenditures

Below is a summary of the projected revenues and expenditures for 2025[18], equaling $131,814,612.

Projected Revenues		**Projected Expenditures**	
State Funds & Fees	$61,663,084	Personnel	$89,982,110
Fund Balance Use	$7,770,971	Operations	$36,006,377
Property Tax	$61,539,845	Capital Projects	$5,826,125
Grant Funded Personnel	$750,712		

[17] *Walburger, BYU-Idaho (2017)*
https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sessioninfo/2019/interim/191021_ptwg_COCS%20Research%20Paper%20Walburger.pdf

[18] *https://www.kcgov.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/3036*

2.5 Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Kootenai County owns 35 recreational properties totaling approximately 172.3 acres in size. The Parks and Waterways Department manages several other properties owned by other public agencies, including the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation. With only 3 developed parks owned by the county, most maintained public recreational properties are small waterfront sites dedicated primarily to boat moorage or boat launches. Many waterfront areas are constrained to boat users due to a lack of access by other means. As Idaho's largest marine access provider of any other county in the state, boat registration and launch fees account for most of the revenue received by the department, which is utilized for ongoing maintenance and, when feasible, to match grants for improvements. Some recreational properties arecurrently undeveloped, and while some county-owned properties (or portions thereof) may be suitable for recreational use, no formal master plan has been created to fully assess all park assets and identify demand, needs, and opportunities. The County also owns and maintains portions of the North Idaho Centennial Trail, which currently extends from the Idaho/Washington border through Coeur d'Alene to Higgins Point at the end of Coeur d'Alene Lake

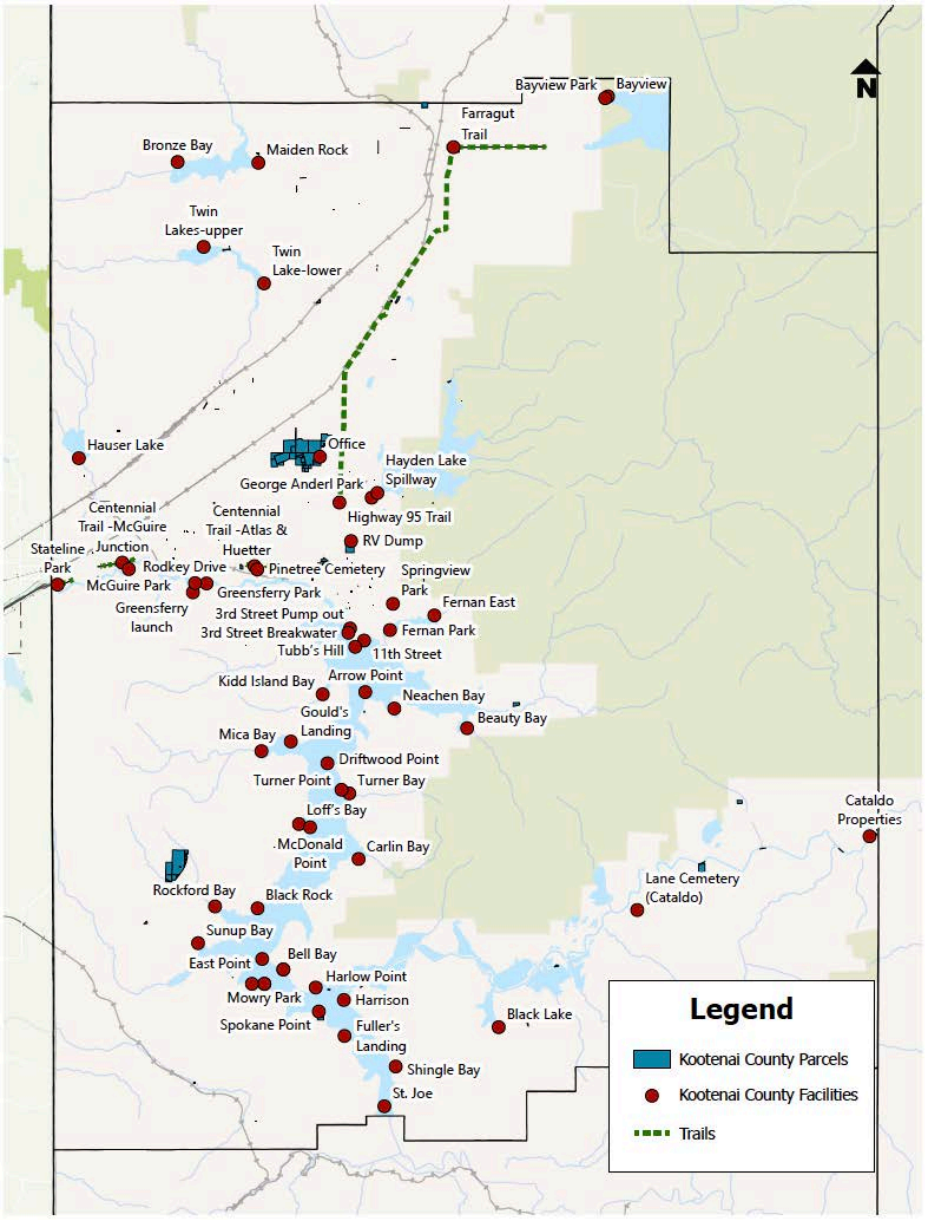


Figure 31 - County Maintained Recreational Assets and County Owned Parcels

Drive. Additionally, the County maintains 12 miles of class 1 asphalt trail, which parallels Highway 95 from Hayden to Athol.

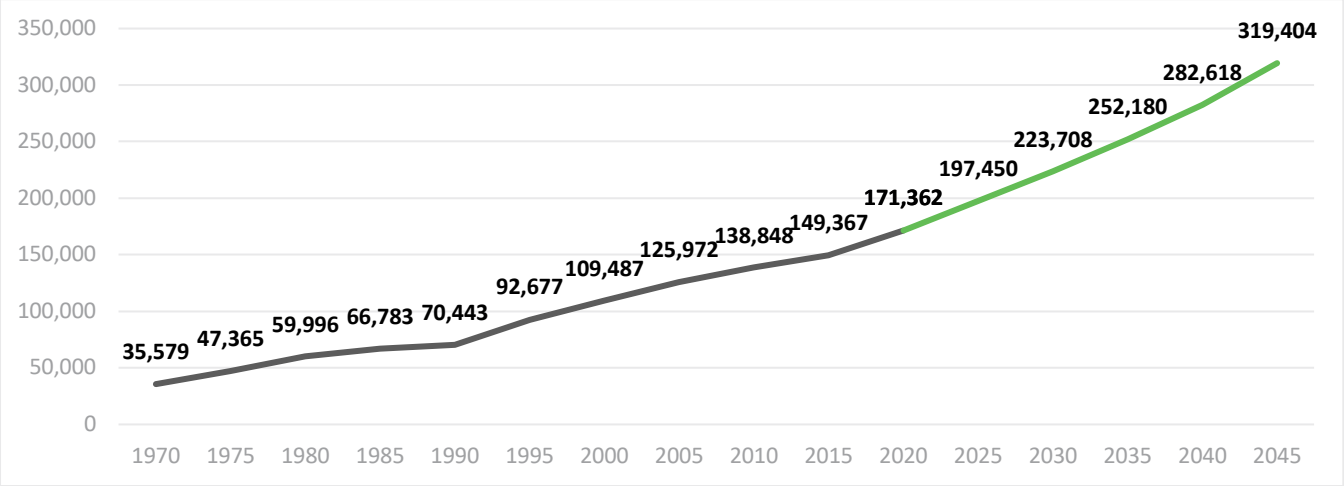
3 Forecast Conditions

3.1 Population Projection

A population growth trend line was developed by the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO) using growth rates calculated from the average annual rates of growth from 1990-2020, for an average annual growth rate of 2.5%. The projected trend line is shown in Figure 32 alongside the historical population data for context.

The projected growth rate would add 148,042 residents (86.4% of Kootenai County's current population) over the next 20 years, for a projected population of 319,404 by 2045[19].

Figure 32: Kootenai County's Historic and Projected Population Growth, 1970-2045



Source: KMPO 2020-2045 Future Growth Projections

3.2 Projection of Housing Need

As established previously in this report, Kootenai County's current average household size is 2.51 people per occupied housing unit. At this household size, and assuming the projected population growth rate presented in the previous section, Kootenai County will need a total of 124,679 housing units by 2045 – an additional 48,993 units over its current count of 75,686.

[19] *KMPO 2020 - 2045 Future Growth Projections (9/14/22) https://www.kmpo.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/KMPO-Growth-Projections-2020_2045-Final-9-8-22.pdf*

4 Findings and Conclusions

- Kootenai County has seen a **consistent population growth** over the past 50 years, and it has recently seen a **faster increase in population** over the 2010-2020 period. Its growth has largely kept pace with the state, although it grew at a faster rate over the last decade.
- The population of Kootenai County is projected to increase by **148,042 people by 2045 to a population of 319,414**, which is 86% more than its 2020 population.
- Kootenai County has a significantly higher median age than Coeur d'Alene and the state of Idaho.
- Kootenai County jobs are **largely filled by residents** – of the county's 67,751 jobs, nearly 72% are filled by employees who are also residents of the county. An estimated 47.9% of Kootenai County's residents commute out of the county for work.
- The majority of industries in Kootenai County are health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food service, construction, and manufacturing.
- The unemployment rate in Kootenai County is 3.1%.
- The median household income in Kootenai County is **$71,949**, which is higher than both that of Coeur d'Alene and Idaho as a whole.
- An estimated 28% of the county's population falls below the poverty level.
- As of 2022, about 31% of households in Kootenai County were cost-burdened, a percentage which is most likely higher now, meaning there is a **major need for more affordable housing**.
- Kootenai County's housing stock is primarily comprised of single-unit detached homes, which make up 73% of all housing units.
- Most of the housing stock in Kootenai County was built between 1970 and 2019.
- The gross median rent in Kootenai County has increased from $768 per month in 2010 to $1,216 per month in 2022, an overall increase of 58%. This amount is most likely significantly higher now.
- According to Zillow estimates, the average home price in 2020 was around $395,361, and in 2023, it was $540,753 – a **37% increase in three years**.
- If the housing market maintains its projection, owning a home will continue to be unaffordable for most Kootenai County residents.
- With a population projection of 319,414, Kootenai County (including within cities) is expected to need an additional 48,993 housing units by 2045 if the average household size remains the same.
- Wildfire, according to the 2020 All Hazzard Mitigation Plan, represents the **greatest known hazard risk in terms of probability and severity**.
- The future of **water quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake is under continued threat** due to past mining practices in the Silver Valley and existing nutrient load into the lake—which may increase with more development pressure, along with other factors.