Existing Conditions Report 2017

Addendum to the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan, by Resolution No. 18-2060, on February 20, 2018

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Introduction

Review of the Report

In 2010-2011 the City of Meridian updated and reformatted its Comprehensive Plan (the Plan). The primary goal of the revamped Comprehensive Plan was to make it more useful for the community, City staff, and decision makers. One way the Plan became more useful, was to separate out key information about the City’s history, present day conditions, trends, and current initiatives, from policy and future-looking initiatives. This separated information became the Existing Conditions Report, which allowed the Comprehensive Plan to focus on policy moving forward. The Existing Conditions Report is an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

This Existing Conditions Report (Report) provides a framework for future decision making by detailing the current state, specific directions, and actions taken related to each topical area discussed. The Report takes the City’s Mission, Vision, and Values and melds it with the City’s Strategic Plan Initiatives, City department capital improvement plans, and the initiatives in the current Comprehensive Plan. While not policy oriented, this Report is also intended to aid in integrated decision making: i.e., decisions that are made regarding land use policy within Meridian, take into full account existing conditions within Meridian, and the impacts on transportation, housing, and economic strategies that current policies have had.

To compose this report, existing information regarding Meridian and its Area of City Impact was gathered from many resources. This was accomplished by consulting with other agencies, individuals, and resources including existing plans, studies, and other documents. Some materials used in this report were provided directly by City staff, some information was provided by other affected local agencies and their publications, and some of the information was gathered using other resources like the internet. Where needed, City staff contacted key agencies and requested assistance in putting
together this report. This report should be updated every few years, to keep information current and relevant.

**Comprehensive Plan**

Meridian’s first Comprehensive Plan (Plan) was adopted in 1978. That first Plan was developed to meet the requirements of the 1975 Land Use Planning Act of the State of Idaho. During the summer of 1993, citizens representing neighborhood groups, developers, real estate professionals, and public agencies participated in a process to modernize the Comprehensive Plan, and was adopted on December 21, 1993. On November 3, 1998, the City of Meridian issued a request for qualifications to prepare the 2002 City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan. By June 1999, the process of developing Meridian’s 2002 Comprehensive Plan had begun, and was adopted by City Council on August 6, 2002.

A significant amount of growth occurred after the 2002 version of the Comprehensive Plan was enacted. Additionally, new initiatives like sustainability and arts had become important considerations with important financial and quality of life implications, and also needed to be addressed. To ensure that the document continued to remain relevant and to make it more useable, City leaders began a significant overhaul in 2010. Surveys, workshops, steering committees, and social media sites were all forms of public involvement to solicit public input and ensure community support for an updated Plan. The goal was to make the Comprehensive Plan a more useful resource that the general public, developers and decision makers could all help implement in making Meridian’s future the best it can be. The overhauled Comprehensive Plan was adopted on April 19, 2011, and has since been amended several times.
Local Land Use Planning Act

Section 67-6508 of Idaho Code (the Local Land Use Planning Act), requires Comprehensive Plans to consider, at a minimum: previous and existing conditions, trends, desirable goals and objectives, or desirable future situations for 17 planning components. This report provides an informative snapshot of the previous and existing conditions and trends in Meridian, Idaho regarding most of the State-required planning components. These components include: property rights; population; school facilities and transportation; economic development; land use; natural resources; hazardous areas; public services, facilities, and utilities; transportation; recreation; special areas or sites; housing; community design; agriculture; implementation; national interest electric transmission corridors; public airport facilities; and, other components the City has deemed necessary to analyze. However, the desired goals and objectives for each of the 17 planning components are not part of this report. Rather, this existing condition report sets the foundation and background information to base a desirable future plan for the City. Implementation of policy related components are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan itself, and are not part of this report. Those components not addressed in this report are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

History

Originally known as Hunter, after a railroad official along the Oregon Short Line route, the City of Meridian was incorporated in August, 1903. Meridian is one of six cities in Ada County, and is located on the western edge of the Ada-Canyon County border. The City has transformed from a sagebrush-filled mail drop located on the Oregon Trail in the 1880s, to a small fruit orchard center after the turn of the century through the 1930s, to a dairy-based farming community in the 1940s. Its character as a small farming community continued until approximately 1990, when its population was still about 10,000.

Since 1990, Meridian has experienced exponential growth that has changed both its character and appearance. From 1990 to 2010, Meridian’s population grew from approximately 10,000 to 65,000. Despite some slowdowns in housing starts and job creation during the 2008 recession, the population of Meridian continued rapidly increasing to

\[ \text{For a comprehensive review of Meridian's heritage, see Meridian, by Frank Thomason and Polly Ambrose Peterson, Arcadia Publishing, 2010} \]
**FIGURE 1A: Heart of the Valley Shifts to Meridian**

Source: 2017 Population data of Ada and Canyon Counties by COMPASS; map by City of Meridian Planning Division 2017
an estimated population of 98,300 in 2017, according to the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho\(^2\). This makes Meridian the second largest city in Idaho.

With the increase in population, farms and fields have given way to residential and commercial development. Farm vehicles and feed stores have largely disappeared to be replaced with large residential subdivisions and commercial complexes. Today, several large office parks, new bank branches, restaurants, and major retail centers have sprung up throughout Meridian. St. Luke’s has a major hospital located in Meridian, and a variety of medical service companies have come into the City.

To continue to provide elevated levels of service, City Departments and their service capabilities have grown. In 2002, a 30,000 square foot police station was constructed. With the increased growth since 2002, a 4,400 square foot addition and a new 12,700 square foot public safety training center was constructed in 2014. Fire Stations 3, 4 and 5 have all come on-line in the past 20 years. The wastewater treatment facility in northwest Meridian has seen several additions, and it can now treat approximately 10.2 million gallons per day. The City is in the process of completing a major upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility which will increase the treatment capacity to 15 million gallons per day. This project is expected to be completed in 2019. The City currently boasts 255 acres of developed park land and 22 miles of pathways. In 2008 Meridian completed a new three-story city hall building, which consolidated most City services. These are just a sampling of the new and expanded municipal capital improvements made in the recent past.

The transportation network looks substantially different than it did in 1990, or even 10 years ago. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has and continues to widen and re-construct Interstate 84 through the Treasure Valley. Further, over the past 10 years an interchange at Ten Mile Road was completed, and the Meridian Road interchange was rebuilt. New lanes and upgraded intersections were added recently to Eagle Road (SH 55) between Interstate 84 and Ustick Road, with more capacity improvements planned for 2022. Ada County Highway District (ACHD) road improvements, such as Ustick Road widening, Ten Mile roadway widening, and completion of the Downtown Split Corridor project, have helped to relieve congestion, but continued growth continues to put a strain on the transportation system in Meridian. Funding to not only maintain the existing roadways and bridges, but to expand the transportation network, will be critical to lessen the strain a growing community has on the transportation system.

Meridian is the population center of the Treasure Valley; people are evenly distributed in all directions from Meridian, with more than 188,000 people within 5 miles of downtown Meridian (see Figure 1A). Although airports, regional medical centers, cultural events and venues, and other urban services and amenities are all easily accessible, Meridian still values and embraces its agricultural heritage.
Who Lives in Meridian? What Do They Do?

Population, Housing, and Economic Development

This chapter discusses characteristics of Meridian’s demographics including population, gender, race, age, income, education, home ownership, and employment data. As required by Idaho State Statute §67-6508, analysis on Population, Housing and Economic Development components of the Comprehensive Plan are provided below. These three components set the foundation for consideration of other components later in this report.

The primary purpose of the population discussion is to look at past trends, current population totals, and future projections, along with characteristics such as age, race, and gender. Population inventories and forecasts are used to measure the demand for future facilities such as parks, water lines and roads, and for services such as police and fire protection. Forecasts can also be used by businesses to anticipate market demand and to locate service and commercial facilities.

The primary purpose of the Housing element analysis is to evaluate the recent trends in housing and anticipate the future housing needs of the community. Past trends in housing and an inventory of current housing conditions provide specific information on residential use. The report assesses where people live and in what type of dwellings, as well as where they might want to live in the future.

The purpose of the Economic Development analysis of the chapter is to portray the business make-up and to analyze the local economy for strengths and weaknesses. This background information may be used to discuss how Meridian might expand its economic base and target specific industries. Employment trends and forecasts may also be used to determine if there is a need for additional land in particular zoning categories, and the demand for future levels of public services.

“When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people.”
Chinese Proverb
Population and Demographic Characteristics

Historic Counts and Current Estimates

Meridian’s population was fairly stable up to about 1990, when the City had a population of 9,596. However, in the mid-1990s, the City’s population began increasing rapidly, reaching 34,919 residents by 2000, and then more than doubled to 75,092 by 2010. Table 2A tracks historical Census population data. In April of 2017, the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, or COMPASS, estimated the City’s population at 98,300 residents. Table 2B tracks yearly population growth in Meridian, beginning in 2007.

While it did not grow quite as precipitously as Meridian, the two-county region as a whole also experienced considerable growth over the last decade. Ada County grew from 392,365 residents in 2000 to 454,400 in 2017. Similarly, Canyon County grew from 188,923 residents in 2000 to 215,430 in 2017. The City of Meridian grew by 30.9% from 2010 to 2017 while the two-county region grew by 15.2% over the same period.1 According to the US Census Bureau, Meridian was number 13 in the top 15 fastest growing large cities in the U.S., from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016.2

Forecasts

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, or COMPASS, is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Treasure Valley as designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. As part of its Federal mandate, COMPASS prepares and periodically updates a regional long range transportation plan for the area. Part of that process is to monitor population growth and forecast future changes within the region.

Note: 2016 population increase is an anomaly due to change vacancy source.


Table 2A: Historical Census Population, Meridian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Average Annual Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,616</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6,658</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9,596</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>34,919</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>75,092</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2B: Recent Population Growth by Meridian City Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>98,300</td>
<td>6,880</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>91,420</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>91,310</td>
<td>6,070</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>85,240</td>
<td>3,860</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>81,380</td>
<td>3,090</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>78,290</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>76,510</td>
<td>1,418</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>75,092</td>
<td>2,360</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>72,732</td>
<td>3,272</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>69,460</td>
<td>3,648</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>65,812</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See Table 2A for data.


COMPASS estimates that the population of Meridian will increase to 155,283 by 2040, an increase of 51.6% from today. This estimate anticipates that Ada County as a whole will increase to a total 668,932 residents in the same period. The official regional forecast from the 3rd Revision of the Communities in Motion 2040 plan estimates that the population of the two-county region will grow from 658,721 in 2017 to more than 1 million people (1,011,986) in 2040. Table 2C provides 2017 estimates and 2040 forecasts of population and households in select Treasure Valley Demographic Areas. Please note that COMPASS demographic areas do not directly coincide with existing city limit boundaries.

**Age**

Meridian is generally a young community. As shown in Table 2D, the median age of Meridian residents is 34.6 years, which is slightly lower than the Ada County median age of 35.8. Median age is up in Meridian from the 2000 census median age of 30.1, but still below the median age of residents nationwide (37.6). Retired and elderly residents (over the age of 65) make up less of the City’s population, at 10.9%. Table 2E compares the age groups of residents in Meridian between the 1990 Census and 2011-2015 American Community Survey. Young millennials between the ages of 20 and 29 have declined as an overall percent of the population at all increments while the 65 and older age group has increased since 2000.

**Race and Ethnicity**

Table 2F shows the racial and ethnic composition of select subgroups within the Treasure Valley region. For comparison purposes, the table also includes the racial and ethnic characteristics of Idaho and the United States.

Meridian, Ada County and the State of Idaho are less racially and ethnically diverse than the nation as a whole. The majority of residents in Meridian are white (92.7%) and not Hispanic or Latino (91.7%). The exception locally is in Canyon County,
where communities like Nampa have stronger Hispanic or Latino populations (23.2% in 2015), and a higher percentage of residents that are of “Other” racial decent.

Gender

Based on the 2011-2015 American Community Survey data, there are 92.4 males to every 100 females in the City. This equates to a population that is 48.0% male and 52.0% female. The ratio of male-to-female residents is below Ada County, the State of Idaho, and the United States.

Educational Attainment

Meridian as a community has maintained a high level of educational attainment relative to the State of Idaho and US for the last several decades. The percentage of Meridian residents 25 and older with a high school diploma increased from 92.2% in 2000 to 94.7% in the most recent American Community Survey (2011-2015). The percentage of Meridian

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residents from the same age group with a bachelor’s degree or higher increased from 27.1% to 33.3% over the same period, compared to State percentages of 21.7% in 2000 and 25.9% in 2015, and US percentages of 24.4% and 29.8% in the same years, respectively.

Table 2G summarizes the educational attainment of residents for select Treasure Valley jurisdictions, as well as the State and US as a whole.

**Cost of Living**

The Council for Community and Economic Research prepares comparative cost of living data annually for urban areas across the U.S. The results comprise a relative cost of living index for each participating metropolitan area based on expenditure pattern for professional and executive households. The average of all participating localities is the baseline index value of 100, so categorical and composite values can be

### Table 2F: Racial and Ethnic Composition by Jurisdiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Race</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2G: Educational Attainment by Jurisdiction (25 and Older)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade (no diploma)</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school Graduate</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college (no degree)</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent HS Grad or Higher</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Bachelor’s Grad or Higher</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

gauged as a percent of the “norm” or U.S. average based on available data.

The index has certain limitations. For example, it does not calculate variations in tax structure and subsequent burdens from one locality to another. It also does not factor in cost differences between sub-metropolitan area jurisdictions (a single value for housing, for example, is assigned to the entire Boise City-Nampa metro area). Spending patterns for the top income quintile are also not reflective of all metro area residents. Still, the Council for Community and Economic Research Cost of Living Index is the most comprehensive and straightforward annual comparison of different metro areas of which the City is currently aware.

Table 2H lists comparative costs of living for metro areas in the northwest region of the United States. The average of all participating metro areas for both categorical and composite values is 100.

Within the Boise metro area, grocery items (88.7), housing (80.9), and utility categories (84.2) all differ from the rest of the United States. Cost of housing is significantly lower than comparable regions. The overall cost of living in the Boise metro area does not however deviate substantially from the national average, or from most other metro areas shown.

### Income

Meridian is a relatively affluent community with a mean household income greater than that at the County, State, and national levels. Based on the 2001-2015 American Community Survey, Meridian has a higher mean household income than Boise and Nampa. While mean household income did not grow quite as quickly in Meridian as it did nationally from 2000 to 2015, it still remains positive both over the short and long-term.
The State of Idaho is roughly 17% below the national median for household income. Table 2I provides mean household incomes for select Treasure Valley communities and the State of Idaho, relative to the U.S. mean. It also indicates the percent change in mean household income from the 2000 Census, 2010 Census, and the 20011-2015 American Community Survey.

### Poverty

Poverty is determined by using income thresholds for a household of a given size. According to the 2011–2015 American Community Survey, 9.2% of the population in Meridian is considered to be living in poverty. This is considerably lower than the national rate of 15.5%. In general however, poverty levels have increased faster in the Treasure Valley and Idaho than the national average.

As shown in Table 2J, there is a strong correlation between education and poverty. Those without a High School equivalent education are significantly more likely to be living in poverty. Furthermore, this same information shows that at the local, state and national level, the more education one receives, the less likely they are to live below the poverty threshold.

### Housing Characteristics

The City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan supports and encourages a variety of housing types ranging from large single-family detached homes to multi-family dwellings. Future Land Use designations allow the City to integrate a range of residential unit densities, from the very low Rural/Estate Residential to High Density Residential. These land uses and other supportive policies are intended to ensure opportunities exist for a variety of incomes, housing preferences, lifestyles, family sizes, and age groups.
COMPASS monitors regional growth in part by tracking building permit data for each jurisdiction in the Treasure Valley. They publish the results regularly in the Development Monitoring Report (DMR), which provides a wealth of information about residential and commercial building activity in the region.

In Meridian, the growth in housing stock has paralleled the pace of growth in population. As shown in table 2K, in 2000 there were 12,293 total housing units in Meridian, and by 2010, there were 27,993. In 2016 the total increased to 35,355, housing units. Each year since 2008, new residential construction in Meridian has comprised 24.3%, or more, of total residential unit construction, in both Ada and Canyon counties.

Table 2L reports the total number of housing units by jurisdiction, and in the two-county region, in and since 2000.

**Table 2J: Percent of Residents Living in Poverty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>Idaho</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Population in Poverty (2015)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Poverty</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Poverty</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Poverty</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % Poverty Rate Change | | | | | | | |
| 2000 to 2015 | 3.8% | 5.9% | 11.2% | 4.6% | 7.4% | 3.7% | 3.1% |
| 2012 to 2015 | 1.9% | -0.4% | 1.6% | 0.1% | -0.2% | 0.4% | 0.6% |

| Poverty Rate by Education, 25+ (2015) | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 25.6% | 28.7% | 31.7% | 25.8% | 28.5% | 23.8% | 27.5% |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 12.9% | 15.5% | 19.5% | 13.6% | 15.6% | 14.1% | 14.3% |
| Some college, associate’s degree | 5.8% | 10.9% | 15.5% | 9.5% | 12.8% | 11.0% | 10.5% |
| Bachelor’s degree or higher | 3.2% | 5.4% | 5.5% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 5.5% | 4.5% |


**Table 2K: Meridian Housing Units by Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000 (Census)</th>
<th>2010 (Total)</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016 (Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>12,293</td>
<td>27,993</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>1,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27,993</td>
<td></td>
<td>521</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>1,662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: See Table 2L for data.
Meridian’s population is distributed throughout the community primarily in suburban-style developments, comprised of mostly detached single-family housing units. Increasingly however, higher density housing is being constructed throughout the community, particularly near employment areas, major roadways, and regional attractions. As shown in Table 2M, in 2000, 10,464 housing units in Meridian (85.3% of all units) were traditional single-family units. The remaining 1,800 units (14.7% of all units) were multi-family housing units. Based on the 2000 Census and building permit data compiled by COMPASS from 2000 to 2016, there are now 4,218 multi-family housing units in Meridian. This constitutes 12.5% of the City’s 33,693 housing units (not including mobile or manufactured homes). In 1990, 35.4% of the City’s housing units were multi-family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>12,293</td>
<td>27,993</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>35,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>77,850</td>
<td>87,960</td>
<td>5,470</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>94,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle</td>
<td>4,048</td>
<td>7,011</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>9,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden City</td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td>5,439</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>5,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuna</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>5,010</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>5,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>2,116</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>3,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada County Unincorporated</td>
<td>17,261</td>
<td>26,225</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>27,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada County Total</td>
<td>118,516</td>
<td>160,295</td>
<td>15,780</td>
<td>4,813</td>
<td>180,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon County Total</td>
<td>47,965</td>
<td>70,628</td>
<td>4,278</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>76,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>166,481</td>
<td>230,923</td>
<td>20,055</td>
<td>6,583</td>
<td>257,561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As shown in table 2E, the City realizes that an increasingly larger percent of the population is of the 55-plus population group, and that there is an increased need for senior housing opportunities. There is a growing demand for non-single-family detached dwelling units, that are easier to take care of and closer to activities and services.

### Occupancy

In 2000, 85.7% of Meridian’s housing units were owner occupied, with 14.3% being renter occupied. According to the 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nampa</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American Community Survey data, the ratio of housing units occupied by owners to renters in Meridian is 75.7% to 24.3%. This is slightly higher than the 67.3% to 32.7% ratio in Ada County as a whole.

Table 2N also shows vacancy rates at the local, state, and national level in 2000 and 2015. The percentage of vacant housing units is significantly lower locally than State and National averages.

### Persons per Housing Unit

The 2011-2015 American Community Survey reports that there were 2.61 persons per household in Ada County and 2.64 for the nation as a whole. That rate was slightly higher in Meridian, at 2.84 residents per household in 2015. The City of Kuna had the highest rate in the region with 3.10 persons per household. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Garden City averaged only 2.20 persons per household.

### Age of Housing

Fitting for the level of growth in the last two decades, the housing stock in Meridian is collectively newer than in most communities, both locally and statewide. Table 2O shows 53.1% of housing units in Meridian as constructed since 2000, compared to about 30.4% in Ada County as a whole. This percentage of new housing stock in Meridian is more than twice as high as the State average of 24.6% and the national average of 16.5%.

The City of Boise has the oldest housing stock of the Treasure Valley cities. Roughly half of Boise’s housing units (48.8%) were...

---

**Table 2O: Age of Housing Units by Jurisdiction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nampa</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 2P: Value of Housing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>Idaho</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $50,000</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50k to $99k</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100k to $149k</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150k to $199k</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200k to $299k</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300k to $499k</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500k to $999k</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000,000 +</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median (dollars) | 121,200 | 191,000 | 120,700 | 180,200 | 92,200 | 111,900 | 124,700 | 188,800 | 96,300 | 122,200 | 106,300 | 162,900 | 119,600 | 178,600 |

constructed before 1980 (compared to only 9.7% in Meridian). Table 2O provides the age of housing units in select Treasure Valley Communities, statewide, and at the national level.

Housing Value
The U.S. Census Bureau shows that overall median housing values increased throughout the area between 2000 and 2015. Table 2P summarizes the change.

Table 2Q: Housing Median Sales Price by Meridian MLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Meridian</td>
<td>280,730</td>
<td>277,500</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>198,000</td>
<td>178,860</td>
<td>185,000</td>
<td>215,000</td>
<td>227,950</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>275,000</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Meridian</td>
<td>330,000</td>
<td>370,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>216,125</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>251,900</td>
<td>285,300</td>
<td>265,729</td>
<td>299,950</td>
<td>323,346</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Meridian</td>
<td>255,000</td>
<td>272,500</td>
<td>214,000</td>
<td>169,000</td>
<td>167,500</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>180,533</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>218,500</td>
<td>232,500</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Meridian</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>229,900</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>144,900</td>
<td>166,500</td>
<td>190,500</td>
<td>204,000</td>
<td>221,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 2000, the Meridian median value of an owner-occupied housing unit with a mortgage was $121,200. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates indicate that the median value of owner-occupied housing units with mortgages increased to $191,100, a 57.6% increase in fifteen years. County and State wide, increases were similar at 51.4% and 53.2% respectively. Another more local source of housing data which captures actual selling prices of homes in Meridian is the Intermountain Multiple Listing Service (MLS). MLS tracks trends in the local housing market, and their data may better illustrate current home sale trends. Table 2Q presents the annual average of monthly median sale price for homes in the four Meridian MLS sub-areas. As Table 2Q illustrates, overall median sales prices fell between 2.0% and 4.0% in Meridian between 2006 and 2016. However, since 2011 sale prices have increased between 22.0% and 65.6%. While median home sale price values have fallen slightly over the last 10 years, the five year averages has seen substantial increases.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has determined that any household paying more than 30% of its income for housing is paying an excessive percentage of their income for housing. Historically, 19.2% of Meridian homeowners have spent 30% or more of their household income on their mortgage (2000 Census). According to the 2011-2015

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Below: Single family residence in South Meridian
American Community Survey, this percentage rose to 27.0% of homeowners spending 30% or more of their household income on their mortgage. The same data indicates that in 2000, 40.3% of renters spent 30% or more of their household income on rent, and rose to 49.2% of renters in 2015.

**Housing and Urban Development**

The Meridian Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program includes a number of initiatives to help the underprivileged. The City of Meridian became an Entitlement Community as designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the fall of 2006. With the Entitlement Community designation, the City receives formula funds annually through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Generally, the City receives approximately $350,000 each year for the Program. Planning Division Staff administer the CDBG Program.

The purpose of the CDBG Program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The City funds a variety of activities to meet that end, with several recent examples including:

1. Homeownership assistance
2. Clearance of dilapidated, dangerous, and blighted properties
3. Meridian Food Bank assistance
4. Boys & Girls Club transportation funding
5. Infrastructure design in targeted areas
6. Community amenity improvements such as parks and pathways

The overall direction of the City’s CDBG Program is established by the City Council in the Consolidated Plan, which identifies high-level goals and objectives for the five year interval covered by the Consolidated Plan. Activities the City will undertake are then detailed in annual action plans, which the City prepares and submits to HUD each year. Community input was an important component of the five-year plan, and was scheduled for public hearing in July 2017.

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Economic Development

Meridian seeks to be a vibrant community whose vision is to be the premier city to live, work and raise a family. Fundamental to this vision is a strong and diverse business community that is “Built for Business and Designed for Living.”

With a vibrant and diverse economic environment, Meridian is home to some of the region’s top employers such as Blue Cross of Idaho, Crucial Technology, Food Services of America, Scentsy, United Heritage, and T-Mobile. As home to many high-tech employers, technology investment is increasingly important to the region. Overall, sense of community combined with a low cost of doing business, strong leadership, and a highly educated and dynamic workforce has led to Meridian’s success. Indeed, the Boise Valley and Idaho consistently rank among the best areas in business friendliness, cost of living and overall cost of doing business.

Families want to work where they live and live where they work. To address that need, Mayor Tammy de Weerd has identified growing family wage jobs as one of her top five priorities and is working toward that end. Over the past several years, the Economic Excellence Team along with the Mayor have visited hundreds of business owners to help identify industries and service sectors that would be beneficial to the community and to businesses bottom-line. The focus on value added jobs will be delivered through strategic Business Enterprise Areas. In addition, Meridian’s solid partnership with the educational institutions in our area, creates a solid foundation for success. Companies that provide family wage jobs require educated workers, and Meridian continues to see an expansion of programs offered to create a highly educated workforce.

The City realizes that the 21st century economy requires flexibility. Over the last several decades, Meridian has evolved...
from an economy based primarily on agriculture to one increasingly based on innovation and creativity. The City is striving to strengthen its competitive position by creating an environment and infrastructure where industries can create, respond, and adjust rapidly. Several of the goals, objectives and action items contained in the City’s Comprehensive Plan are meant to improve economic prosperity by ensuring that the economy grows in ways that strengthen industries, retain and create good jobs across a variety of sectors, increase average income, and stimulate economic investment in the community. A strong and diverse economy provides the financial support and stability for Meridian residents that will ensure that public facilities, services, and quality of life are superior.

**Economic Excellence**

The Boise Valley has been discovered and is recognized nationally as a destination to locate business and family. To that end the City has established an Economic Excellence team. Economic Excellence staff can work one-on-one with stakeholders to identify business resources from starting and expanding to relocating a business to Meridian. Staff can assist businesses in all aspects of operating in Meridian, including providing assistance with available property locations, incentives and business programs, City processes and development coordination, and other information. Whether the company is a start-up or a world class corporation, the Economic Excellence staff can help it thrive in today’s economy.

**Economic Development and Infrastructure**

The City recognizes the need for infrastructure to be in place (or readily available) if it is going to attract large employers. Infrastructure needs vary depending on the user, but typically roads, sewer and water, electric utility facilities, as well as easy access to the highways and railroad, are key factors in determining when and where a business chooses to locate or expand. Therefore, the City has taken, and will continue to strive to provide sufficient infrastructure to support all types of businesses. The City has partnered with Idaho Power Company, to plan for possible transmission and substation facilities to accommodate large load requests. The City works with ACHD and ITD to ensure that highways, bridges and intersections are in good repair and can accommodate traffic. The City’s Public Works Department has master plans for sewer main lines and water and wastewater treatment that will eventually accommodate all of the lands within the Area of City Impact. Quality of life is a huge factor when a company is selecting a community to do business. Having good schools, parks and supporting services in place help Meridian rise to the top of the class. Please see the Public Services and Public Utilities
sections of this report for more information on infrastructure and other services.

**Taxes**

Idaho offers one of the lowest overall per capita tax burdens in the West. Taxes are based on a mix of income, sales, and property taxes. The State does not have roll back or transfer tax.

**Labor Force**

As shown in Table 2T, the growth of Meridian’s labor force paralleled population growth over the same period; the labor force grew substantially from 33,035 in 2007 to 45,567 in 2017, a 37.1% increase. It is likely that new employment opportunities were a driving force in population increases in the 1990s and 2000s, which explains this apparent correlation. Conversely, as new residents moved into the area, demand for local goods and services also escalated, which in turn increased the need for more local workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>33,035</td>
<td>32,180</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>45,567</td>
<td>44,104</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>110,663</td>
<td>107,686</td>
<td>2,977</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>123,511</td>
<td>119,656</td>
<td>3,855</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nampa</td>
<td>36,686</td>
<td>35,349</td>
<td>1,337</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>40,443</td>
<td>38,736</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>196,740</td>
<td>191,500</td>
<td>5,240</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>229,736</td>
<td>222,433</td>
<td>7,303</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon</td>
<td>83,264</td>
<td>80,180</td>
<td>3,084</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>95,097</td>
<td>90,979</td>
<td>4,119</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada &amp; Canyon</td>
<td>280,004</td>
<td>271,680</td>
<td>8,324</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>324,833</td>
<td>313,411</td>
<td>11,422</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>754,438</td>
<td>731,235</td>
<td>23,203</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>817,517</td>
<td>785,711</td>
<td>31,806</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2S: Annual Unemployment Rate by Jurisdiction (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>Idaho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 2R: 2017 Idaho Tax Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Use</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Type</th>
<th>Meridian</th>
<th>Boise</th>
<th>Nampa</th>
<th>Ada</th>
<th>Canyon</th>
<th>Idaho</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>% of Jobs</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>% of Jobs</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>% of Jobs</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1,147</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>3,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5,208</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>3,166</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
<td>12,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,832</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>10,068</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>4,195</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>18,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>5,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>4,453</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>13,296</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
<td>4,971</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>23,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4,361</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>1,233</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>8,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3,267</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>5,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>6,585</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>13,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof., scientific, and mgmt., and admin. and waste mgmt. services</td>
<td>4,440</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>14,249</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
<td>25,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</td>
<td>9,899</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>25,842</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>7,458</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
<td>47,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</td>
<td>2,287</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>11,380</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>17,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4,513</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>1,669</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>8,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>6,686</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>12,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Civilian Employment (16+)</td>
<td>37,992</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>109,274</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>35,392</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>199,955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The labor force in the Ada-Canyon two-county region also grew considerably from 2007 to 2017. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that Ada and Canyon counties had a combined labor force of 280,004 in 2007 (83,264 in Canyon and 196,740 in Ada). The labor force grew by 16.0% by 2017 to 324,833 (95,097 in Canyon and 229,736 in Ada).

**Employment**

Unemployment rates in Meridian dipped below 3% in 2007, at the peak of the regional economic and housing boom. As illustrated in Table 2S, Meridian and Ada County in general has typically enjoyed lower unemployment rates than Canyon County and the rest of the State.

As far as general employment is concerned, Meridian's 44,000 jobs in 2017 made up approximately 14% of total jobs region wide. Just over one half of all jobs in Ada County are within the City of Boise.

**Employers**

Some of the largest employers in Meridian today include: St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center, Blue Cross of Idaho, and the West Ada School District. Another major employer, Scentsy, completed their 168,000 square foot corporate headquarters near Downtown Meridian. This building and their larger campus allows for all 840+ Idaho employees to work at the same location and adds to the growing number of companies with headquarters and corporate locations in this community.

Table 2U breaks down Ada County employment by industry. In Meridian, “Education services, and health care, and social assistance” constitute about 26% of all jobs. Around 20% of jobs in Meridian are information, finance, management, and professional services, and an additional 20% are in wholesale, retail, and transportation. Looking across the entire County,
Region, State, and Country, education, health care, and social services occupations are consistently high. The combination of aging baby boomers and health care reforms has increased demand and may draw even more investors to this segment in the near term. With higher rates of college educated citizens than the State or Country (see Table 2G), Meridian is continually becoming an attractive place for companies in need of an educated workforce to locate.

**Trends**

The availability of office space has long been a sought after prospect for Meridian. With The Village at Meridian, the Silverstone Plaza and El Dorado complexes at Eagle Road and Overland Road, and ongoing construction in the Ten Mile Interchange area, Meridian continues to build upon the foundation of established office space. As employment growth continues its climb upward, it is only natural that more office will become available as employers look to expand or relocate. As Table 2V shows, Meridian has grown its commercial office inventory to 3.2 million square feet. Table 2V and 2W compares average asking rates, availability, vacancy, and absorption rates for office and retail space in a number of areas in the Treasure Valley.

**Meridian Chamber of Commerce**

The Meridian Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization, supported by member investment and the committed involvement of leaders in the Meridian business community. The Chamber provides ways to become involved in the community through leadership opportunities, business advocacy, networking, and promotion of individual businesses. The Chamber is in the business of building relationships between business people, and between business, government and the rest of the community, in order to maintain a healthy economy and an excellent quality of life.

**Meridian Development Corporation**

The Meridian Development Corporation (MDC), which oversees several Urban Renewal Districts (URD) was established in 2001 by the Meridian City Council. Although it is an independent agency, MDC functions as the City’s urban renewal agency. The URD are shown in Figure 2B. The Downtown district is loosely bound by Fairview/Cherry to the north, East 4th Street...
FIGURE 2B: Urban Renewal Districts

City of Meridian

Legend

- Urban Renewal Districts
- Schools
- Meridian Parks

June 2017

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2017
to the east, west 4th Street, and I-84 to the south. The Ten Mile District is generally north of the Interstate 84, south of Franklin, east of Ten Mile, and west of Linder, but excludes a large number of areas closer to Linder Road.

In the Downtown District, MDC is charged with stimulating and expanding downtown economic development activities. In 2010, MDC completed Destination: Downtown, a visioning plan focused on developing the downtown core. Destination: Downtown established seven downtown districts, four vision elements: Livability, Mobility, Prosperity, and Sustainability, and addressed implantation and phasing of improvements. The MDC focus is not only on job creation and affordable workforce housing, but also on developing a pedestrian friendly, transit-supported, diverse and balanced downtown environments. The Ten Mile District is strictly focused on supporting previously identified infrastructure improvements, in order to realize the City’s Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan. In both of the Urban Renewal Districts, renewal and development is supported through strategic use of tax increment financing.

**The Core**

Meridian has launched a Health Sciences & Technology Corridor, The Core, in the heart of the Treasure Valley. The corridor is anchored by several business campuses and Idaho State University with curriculum focused on medical/health sciences. Not only achieving Meridian’s motto of being built for business, The Core will also focus on maintaining a healthy community that is designed for living. Developing a corridor of complementary businesses and services geared towards the medical industry and high technology, The Core will provide a one-stop destination for visitors and workforce with all necessary amenities.

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6 See the website at [http://www.thecoreidaho.com](http://www.thecoreidaho.com)
How is the Land in Meridian Developed?

Land Use, Transportation, and Community Design

This chapter discusses characteristics of the land in the City of Meridian and its Area of City Impact (AOCI). As required by Idaho State Statute, analysis on Land Use, Transportation, Public Airport Facilities, and Community Design components of the Comprehensive Plan are provided in this section of the Existing Conditions Report. These components bridge the gap between the previous section (population, demographics, etc.) and the background information and analysis that follows later in the report on other planning components (public services, utilities, recreation, etc.).

This section of the report is organized by outlining past trends and current conditions in each of the four components: land use, transportation, Public Airport Facilities, and community design. This portion of the report also includes a brief analysis of future land uses, transportation trends, and community design principles. This information may be used to track progress and update the Goals, Objectives and Action Items of the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan.

The primary purpose of the Land Use discussion is to look at current zoning and future land uses within existing City limits and the adjacent AOCI. Recent trends in zoning and land use, and the variety of categories and designations are briefly explained here, but are covered in more depth in the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan. Land use inventories are used to forecast the demand for future facilities such as parks, water lines and roads, and for services such as police and fire protection. These past trends and future forecasts can be used by City Departments as well as businesses, developers, and property owners to anticipate market demand when locating or developing public facilities and private projects.

The purpose of the Transportation portion of the chapter is to explain how roads are classified and used in the region; how planning for future facilities is done; and it assesses current trends in transportation. An explanation on funding for transportation projects is provided as well as how roadways are starting to evolve into complete streets. A current inventory of pathways, transit and travel lanes are explained, showing
where additional infrastructure and modal options are necessary. Further, some basic analysis of Public Airport Facilities is provided within the Transportation section.

In the Community Design segment, the City’s design guidelines and standards are discussed and explored for the purpose of showing the reader how they relate back to the vision of the community and implementation of the future land use plan. The community design analysis also evaluates how quality of life and sustainability play into making Meridian a great community to live, work, and raise a family.

**Zoning & Land Use**

Zoning and land use is a physical expression of the community. Identification and analysis of a City’s existing development patterns provides a basis for future land use decisions. Because the City of Meridian has experienced such rapid growth and expansion, it is important to inventory current land uses and then determine how further development should occur. See tables 3A and 3C for acreages of zoning and future land uses.

**Built Environment**

In recent years, land uses in and around Meridian have changed from primarily agricultural to a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. That trend is likely to continue, as land traditionally used for agriculture continues to be developed to support the needs of an ever-growing community.

The pattern of land uses in Meridian is typical of many suburban western U.S. cities. Situated along a rail line, historic Old Town is comprised of primarily one- and two-story commercial structures. Single-family homes with fenced yards and attached garages are the norm for residential lots. Along well-traveled roads and highways, shops, restaurants, and supply stores have developed. Industrial uses are generally located along the railroad and interstate. As Meridian’s population has grown, and as more vehicles traverse area roads, the pattern has intensified. Portions of the City’s northern and eastern boundaries have urbanized adjacent to Eagle and Boise. However, farmland and large-lot County subdivisions still dominate the western and southern edges of the community.

**Residential**

A current zoning map reflects the dominance of residential zoning in Meridian; 71.13% of the land area currently incorporated is zoned residential. These residential neighborhoods are primarily developed at three to five dwelling units per acre, with single-family detached homes. Residential areas also include some duplex units, apartments, single-family attached units, and manufactured homes. Densities within the residential areas range from very low (less than 1 dwelling unit per acre) to high (up to 40 dwellings per acre). While relative to other
communities of similar size around the Country, Meridian lacks diversity and balance in residential form and density; recent development trends have seen a large increase of multi-family units, especially near mixed use commercial and employment centers.

**Commercial**

Commercially zoned lands represent 17.54% of Meridian. Most major intersections in Meridian now contain largely commercial-type zoning and development. Commercial and retail areas are typically along transportation corridors and include everything from small commercial centers and individual businesses to regional malls and commercial/office business parks. Uses include retail, wholesale, service, office, and limited manufacturing. There are five zoning sub-districts within the commercial designation. The General Retail and Service Commercial (C-G) district is the most common, followed by Community Business (C-C) and Neighborhood Business (C-N). Since 2002, two commercial zoning districts, Mixed Employment (M-E) and High Density Employment (H-E), have been added to the available commercial zoning districts in the Unified Development Code. While 118.9 acres of these zoning districts have been annexed, none of these sites have yet developed.

**Office**

Although only 784.9 acres (3.73% of City) are currently zoned for limited office uses (L-O), Meridian enjoys a plethora of office uses that are scattered throughout the commercial districts. A significant amount of the office uses exist as ancillary uses within commercially zoned districts. Office uses are allowed in mixed use and in commercially zoned parts of the City as principally permitted uses. Along arterial roadways, many homes have converted to offices and several professional office complexes have developed. In downtown, near the
Eagle/Overland intersection, and in north Meridian, office uses continue to materialize in response to burgeoning residential neighborhood needs for medical and professional services (e.g. - doctors, dentists, chiropractors, etc.)

**Industrial**

Industrial zoning represents 6.04% of the total land area of the City. The City has two industrial zoning districts: Light Industrial (I-L) and Heavy Industrial (I-H). Industrial uses in the City of Meridian tend to be of the light-industrial variety and are primarily located along the railroad corridor and the Interstate. Industrial areas of the City typically include warehousing, general manufacturing, railroad users, and industrial/office business parks. Today, there are several opportunities for reinvestment in industrially zoned on under-utilized properties. The City, through its economic development initiatives, hopes to expand its job base by attracting new industrial users, particularly clean industry.

**Mixed Use**

Over the past several years, areas planned for mixed use have developed with largely commercial uses. Because of this trend, in 2010 the City amended the mixed use sections of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure diversity in uses for areas planned for mixed use. Similar to the Mixed Employment (M-E) and High Density Employment (H-E) zoning districts, the Traditional Neighborhood – Center (TN-C) and Traditional Neighborhood – Residential (TN-R) zoning districts are relatively new. In 2005, when the City adopted the Unified Development Code (UDC), the TN-C and TN-R districts were added. Today, less than 2% of Meridian is zoned for mixed use.

However, more and more mixed-use developments—projects that include multiple land uses—are being built in Meridian. Often these developments use a variety of the typical zoning districts (e.g. C-G and R-15) to achieve a mix of land uses. Emphasis on the redevelopment of downtown (Old Town) has been a strong priority. The Old Town area is still in a transitional state, from a small rural downtown with little investment, to a growing center with vast potential. With large acreages of commercial and light industrial uses developing along the interstate and other major roadways, reinvestment in Old Town has not kept up with the pace of new development. As the Future Land Uses section will report, aside from residential, mixed-use areas contain the most opportunities for development and re-development in Meridian.
Civic areas include public, quasi-public, and open spaces. They include uses like government facilities, public schools, utilities, libraries, post offices, park and recreational areas, and cemeteries. Parks, schools and other public facilities are spread throughout Meridian in a variety of zoning districts.

Zoning—Land Use Correlation

The City of Meridian maintains a Zoning Map that depicts zoning districts of the City. There are 16 zoning districts listed in the UDC for use within the incorporated limits of the City, as noted in Table 3A. There are a limited number of properties in Meridian that are zoned one designation, but are actually being used for a different purpose. This mismatch occurs for a number of reasons. In some instances, a developer submitted plans a number of years ago and the City approved a zone change but the project never materialized. For example, the City has a number of industrially zoned properties near the downtown that are developed as residences. In other instances, developers made use of previous City codes that allowed up to 20% of a site to be used for uses not otherwise allowed in the district. In north Meridian particularly, there are several developments that are primarily residential, but have a limited amount of existing office or small scale commercial uses within a residential zone.

Land Ownership

Land in the City and our Area of City Impact is controlled by a mix of private and public ownerships, with a large majority of the land (almost 95%) being held privately. The remaining 5% is

### Table 3A: Current Acreages of Zoning District in Meridian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential (subtotal)</td>
<td>14,963.0</td>
<td>71.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Density (R-2)</td>
<td>306.2</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Low-Density (R-4)</td>
<td>8,457.5</td>
<td>40.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Density (R-8)</td>
<td>5,296.8</td>
<td>25.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium High-Density (R-15)</td>
<td>710.7</td>
<td>3.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Density (R-40)</td>
<td>191.9</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (subtotal)</td>
<td>3,690.6</td>
<td>17.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Business (C-N)</td>
<td>181.7</td>
<td>0.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Business (C-C)</td>
<td>608.3</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Retail and Service Commercial (C-G)</td>
<td>2,781.7</td>
<td>13.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Employment (M-E)</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Employment (H-E)</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office (subtotal)</td>
<td>784.9</td>
<td>3.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Subtotal Limited Office (L-O)</td>
<td>784.9</td>
<td>3.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial (subtotal)</td>
<td>1,271.5</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial (I-L)</td>
<td>1,271.5</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Industrial (I-H)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Neighborhood/Mixed Use (subtotal)</td>
<td>325.8</td>
<td>1.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town (O-T)</td>
<td>136.5</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Neighborhood Center (TN-C)</td>
<td>105.9</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Neighborhood Residential (TN-R)</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,035.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, March 2017
owned by West Ada School District, utility-related companies, the State of Idaho, the Federal Government, Ada County, the Ada County Highway District, the City of Meridian, and other local government entities including the Meridian Cemetery Maintenance District and others. The amount of privately owned land in Meridian is substantial when compared to the County as a whole, where Ada County parcel records show that over 45%, of the total land area is federally owned. Table 3B summarizes non-private land ownership within the Area of City Impact.

**Future Land Uses**

Today, the City of Meridian has over 21,000 acres within its municipal boundaries. At full build out, Meridian is anticipated to incorporate approximately 39,000 acres. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) portrays locations for the various land use types. The FLUM’s primary purpose is to define and map future land uses so that development occurs in the direction and manner most desired by Meridian’s stakeholders. The FLUM works in conjunction with the text of the Comprehensive Plan, city code, and the various policies of the City. However, the FLUM is not a zoning map and differs in that it describes the character and type of the use that is desired in the future, and not necessarily what currently exists. Over time, however, the FLUM has also evolved to depict where some existing land uses do exist. For example, existing schools, parks, fire stations and other civic and private uses are depicted on the FLUM.

The FLUM depicts a built-out Meridian that is very diverse in residential densities, commercial and industrial land uses, and public/quasi-public opportunities. While the FLUM depicts many types of land use designations, they can be broadly divided into nine basic categories:

**Table 3B: Non-Private Land Ownership in AOCI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>% of AOCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Ada School District</td>
<td>803.65</td>
<td>2.058%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Meridian</td>
<td>749.26</td>
<td>1.919%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local (subtotal)</td>
<td>82.76</td>
<td>0.212%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nampa &amp; Meridian Irrigation District</td>
<td>38.27</td>
<td>0.098%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian Cemetery District</td>
<td>30.62</td>
<td>0.078%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian Library District</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>0.018%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Irrigation District</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.010%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview Joint Cemetery District</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.003%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Joint Fire Protect District</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.003%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian Development Corporation</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.002%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers Irrigation District</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County (subtotal)</td>
<td>98.24</td>
<td>0.252%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada County Highway District</td>
<td>58.74</td>
<td>0.150%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Ada Recreation District</td>
<td>25.09</td>
<td>0.064%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada County</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>0.037%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (subtotal)</td>
<td>89.66</td>
<td>0.230%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho State Police</td>
<td>46.87</td>
<td>0.120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho Department of Transportation</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>0.060%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho State University</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>0.027%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Idaho</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>0.023%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal (subtotal)</td>
<td>70.53</td>
<td>0.181%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Reclamation</td>
<td>67.49</td>
<td>0.173%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Postal Service</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.008%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities (subtotal)</td>
<td>90.76</td>
<td>0.233%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermountain Gas</td>
<td>64.01</td>
<td>0.164%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho Power Company</td>
<td>21.96</td>
<td>0.056%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Pipeline</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.011%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century Link</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.001%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Water</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.001%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal of Non-private Land Ownership</td>
<td>1,985.06</td>
<td>5.083%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total City AOCI</td>
<td>39,052.00</td>
<td>100.000%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, June 2017
Rural / Estate Residential: This is a unique land use designation that allows for the preservation of agricultural uses and ancillary development of single-family homes on large parcels, where City services like sewer and water may or may not be provided.

Residential: These areas are intended to provide a variety of housing types. Uses include a range of densities varying from large estate lots to multi-family homes.

Commercial: These areas are intended to provide a full-range of commercial and retail services for area residents and visitors.

Office: These areas provide opportunities for low-impact business areas including: personal and professional offices, technology and resource centers.

Employment: These land uses designations, for use primarily within the Ten Mile Interchange specific area plan (see section on Specific Area Plans), are intended to support a variety of office and manufacturing uses of varying intensity, along with supporting and complimentary secondary uses.

Industrial: These areas are designated to allow a range of industrial uses to support industrial and commercial activities. Uses may include warehouses, storage units, light and heavy industry such as manufacturing and processing.

Old Town: This area includes the historic downtown and the core community activity center, and is a unique type of Mixed Use. A wide variety of land uses are encouraged and envisioned in Old Town.

Mixed Use: These areas incorporate a variety of different, but complimentary and compatible land uses together. These areas are typically situated in highly visible or transitioning areas of the City, and vary in intensity and allowed uses. Most future commercial and office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use (LU)</th>
<th>Total Area</th>
<th>Annexed</th>
<th>Not Annexed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>% of AOCI</td>
<td>Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1,966.8</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>26,533.1</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>13,500.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1,517.2</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1,413.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>359.5</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>308.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>661.7</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>282.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>954.8</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>608.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town</td>
<td>335.9</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>335.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use</td>
<td>5,076.6</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>2,968.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic &amp; Utility</td>
<td>1,645.7</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1,359.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, June 2017

Note: See Table 3C for data.
uses are anticipated to occur within these mixed use areas, along with some higher density and transitional residential uses.

» Civic and Utility: These areas preserve and protect municipal, state, and Federal lands for use as parks, schools, and other public uses.

Table 3C breaks down the total Meridian build out area (in acres) by each of the land use groups previously described. The table differentiates between properties on the FLUM that are currently annexed and those that have not yet been annexed into the City. By far, Meridian is planning for residential to use more of the land area than any other designation; 67.9% of the FLUM shows a residential land use designation. This affords the City an opportunity to promote both very low density housing units and some very high density developments throughout the City. The rest of the anticipated land uses are fairly evenly distributed, with Mixed Use being the next highest land use designation at approximately 13.0% and 13.9% including the Old Town future land use.

For detailed descriptions of each specific land use, see Chapter 3 of the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan.

Specific Area Plans

In addition to the general citywide land use designations, plans have also been developed for specific areas of the City. These Specific Area Plans provide additional narrative and specific detail into how development should occur within these areas.

Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan
A specific plan has been developed for approximately 2,800 acres bordered roughly by Linder Road to the east, McDermott Road to the west, the Union Pacific Railroad line to the north, and ½-mile south of Overland Road on the south. The Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan is an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan and provides information on land use, the roadway network, and design guidelines specific to the Ten Mile Interchange area.

Destination Downtown (Urban Renewal)
The Destination Downtown specific area plan outlines a vision and marketing strategy for strengthening downtown Meridian’s role in the community. The planning area for Destination Downtown encompasses not only the historic areas of downtown, but also the entire urban renewal area extending from Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane to Interstate 84.
A community-building development group, CRSA was hired by the Meridian Development Corporation (MDC) in 2009 to help define a vision for Downtown Meridian. The outcome of the public visioning process were several distinct districts, with anticipated uses varying from offices and retail, to entertainment and lodging, restaurants, open space, and variety of residential uses. Pedestrian amenities are emphasized throughout the study area. Public and private investment to ensure that Old Town becomes a centralized activity center with public, cultural, and recreational structures is encouraged. The City’s Community Development Department has and is working with MDC to link the Destination Downtown plan with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plans, and development policies.

**Fields District**

The City has identified one other area for developing a specific plan. The Fields District is located in the northwest corner of the City’s Area of City Impact and is tentatively bound along the Ada/Canyon County line, Chinden Boulevard, McDermott Road, and Ustick Road. The City has been engaged in research and feasibility studies in this area, and in the near future may initiate a public participation plan leading to a detailed specific area plan.

**Area of City Impact**

In accord with section 67-6526 of Idaho Code, an Area of City Impact (AOCI) has been established for Meridian (see Figure 3A). The City’s AOCI is the future planning area for the City, where annexation and development in Meridian is anticipated. Although all these properties are not yet incorporated, planning responsibilities for these lands rest with the City of Meridian.

The City’s AOCI is negotiated with Ada County, pursuant to the Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA). Within the City’s AOCI, unincorporated properties are governed by Ada County for

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**FIGURE 3A: MERIDIAN’S AREA OF CITY IMPACT**

Legend
- Area of Impact
- City Limits

City of Meridian

March 2017

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2017.
day-to-day administration of zoning matters. However, the County uses the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan and the negotiated agreement in the administration of those duties. Ada County has applied a Rural Urban Transition (RUT) zoning district to most of the properties within the City’s AOIC. The RUT zone allows five-acre-lots, single-family residential development, as well as agricultural-related uses and a range of conditional uses. To request something other than the RUT zoning, the developer must request urban services from the City of Meridian. Such services include sanitary sewer, water, fire, police, parks, transportation, and libraries. The City (with rare exception) will not provide such services unless the property annexes into the City. All County development applications within the AOIC are reviewed by the City of Meridian for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable City policies.

The importance of cooperating with Ada County is imperative to successful, long-term land use, transportation, and utility planning (such as water and sewer). There are very significant financial implications for not doing so. As such, the City of Meridian is committed to fulfilling the terms of its Area of City Impact Agreement with Ada County.

**Transportation**

Today, Meridian’s transportation network is primarily composed of roadways that are designed for moving cars and trucks. There is also however a local network of pathways and sidewalks, and an ever increasing amount of bicycle facilities located throughout the City. There is not a fixed-line mass transit service in Meridian. There are park-and-ride lots in the City, dial-a-ride services for seniors and persons with disabilities, as well as inter-county bus routes that make several runs on
the weekdays between Nampa-Caldwell and Meridian-Boise. Although the rail corridor through Meridian has a long and rich history, and still moves freight, the corridor is largely underutilized today. The future does however hold promise for expanded modes of transport and new types of service.

The transportation system into and through Meridian is key to both local and regional commerce and mobility. With Meridian located in the center of the Treasure Valley and along a major east-west interstate connecting the Pacific Northwest to the Inter-Mountain West, moving people, goods and services is critical to maintaining a high quality of life and economic vitality. Congestion adds time and money to commutes, costs businesses time and money, degrades air quality, and creates social burdens. As this chapter explains, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Ada County Highway District (ACHD), the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and Valley Regional Transit (VRT) are the key transportation agencies that the City works with to maintain and improve transportation in and around Meridian.

Because Meridian does not have authority over any roadways, the City relies on other agencies to provide the necessary funding for roadway infrastructure and its maintenance. Meridian’s major transportation challenge is to work with the transportation agencies in the region to meet the existing need for adequate transportation service, while planning for and accommodating the next wave of growth in a way that will maximize efficiency. Poorly planned growth leads to worsening traffic problems, and increased traffic congestion may deter potential employers from locating or expanding.

In addition to managing future traffic needs, much of the transportation infrastructure already developed will require maintenance and rehabilitation. Ensuring adequate funding for maintenance of roads, while still adding capacity, will be a critical issue in the near future.

Roadway Authority
The City does not have any authority to plan, build or maintain public roadways. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has authority over the highways and interstate system in Meridian: I-84, SH-69, SH-55 and US 20-26. The Ada County Highways District (ACHD) owns and maintains all of the public, non-ITD roads in Ada County. The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is charged with air quality conformity and maintaining the long-range transportation plan for Ada and Canyon counties. Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties. City staff and elected officials serve...
on several transportation agency groups, committees, and boards. Although the City does not have authority, it spends a considerable amount of time and effort to work with ACHD, ITD, COMPASS, and VRT to plan for the needs of the community and ensure that the transportation agencies make decisions that are in the best interest of the City.

**Transportation Commission**

In addition to many workgroups, regional advisory committees, and other transportation agency based groups, in which City staff participates, the City has also established a nine-member Transportation Commission that deals with transportation and traffic safety–related issues. The Commission is made up of nine voting members and six non-voting ex-officio members. Members on the Commission are made up of Meridian citizens, business owners or employees, and transportation professionals with technical expertise and/or education. In aggregate, the Commission provides a broad, city-wide perspective on transportation issues. Appointments to the Commission are made by the Mayor with City Council approval.

The Meridian Transportation Commission’s primary responsibilities include making recommendations to the City Council on traffic safety and transportation matters that are brought before them either by City Staff, a transportation agency or a member of the public. The Commission annually compiles a list of the highest priority roadway, intersection and pedestrian improvement projects in Meridian. Other recommendations regarding transportation issues are regularly sent to the Mayor and City Council for consideration. With Valley Regional Transit (VRT) staff assistance, the Commission has historically worked on a public transportation plan for Meridian. The Commission also discusses issues like speed limits, meeting the needs of the traveling public, and safe routes to schools. The Transportation Commission generally meets the first Monday of each month at City Hall.

**Roadway Network**

As shown in Table 3D, Meridian has almost 600 centerline miles of roadway today, including state highways and the interstate.

Meridian’s roadways are described in terms of a hierarchy of streets, known as a functional classification system. This system, which is jointly used by the ITD, ACHD, COMPASS, and the City, classifies roads and highways into three classifications: arterials, collectors, and local streets (which includes private streets). The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials describe functional classification as a process that involves grouping roadways into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide.

Principal arterials facilitate statewide and interstate transport, involve longer trip lengths, carry high volumes of traffic, and should have a minimal number of access points and limited on-street parking. Roadway widths typically vary from two to five lanes wide, but can be as wide as seven lanes, with detached sidewalks on each side and bicycle lanes, within
FIGURE 3B: 2040 PLANNING FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP

Legend
- County Line
- Meridian Area of Impact

Functional Classification
- Interstate
- Expressway
- Prop Expressedway
- Principal Arterial
- Prop Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Prop Minor Arterial

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2017
approximately 100 feet of right-of-way. Roads may serve as a separator for incompatible land uses.

Minor arterials provide long-distance access, mainly within the state and region, and frequently contain two to five travel lanes, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. These include medium traffic volume streets to and from other arterials and the freeway. They collect traffic from less significant roadways and distribute traffic and are intended to minimize access conflicts. These arterials may also be section line roads.

As shown in Figure 3B, most arterials in Meridian are on section lines, in one mile intervals north-south and east-west. The notable exceptions are Pine Avenue and Main Street downtown. A number of the arterial roadways in Meridian are currently two-lane roadways; with the rapid growth over the past ten years, arterial roadways are transitioning into three-, five-, and seven-lane roadways.

**Interstates, State Highways and Arterials**

Meridian has three State Highways that traverse through it. A fourth, State Highway 16 (SH 16), is planned as a freeway/expressway to someday traverse the western edge of the City. The southern portion of Meridian is bisected from the northern part of town by Interstate 84 (I-84).

There are four (principal arterial) state highways that have a significant influence on the transportation system and therefore deserve special attention:

- **US 20-26/Chinden Boulevard:** US 20-26, also known as Chinden Boulevard, runs along the northern edge of the City. This highway serves as the north boundary of Meridian’s Area of City Impact east of Linder Road and bisects the Area of City Impact west of Linder Road. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is currently studying corridor, between I-84 in Caldwell and Eagle Road in Boise. The purpose of the study is to identify roadway improvements and determine the need for future right-of-way. The roadway is expected to be first widened to four lanes, and eventually to six lanes wide at build-out of the City. The City believes this roadway needs to be protected from multiple access points and preserved as a high capacity corridor (see the US 20-26 Access Management Plan.) The City of Meridian has ordinances and development standards that preserve the highway as a major regional transportation facility, connecting the cities of Nampa, Caldwell, Star, Meridian, Eagle and Boise. The City supports beautification.
and appropriate sound mitigation measures along the Chinden Boulevard corridor.

» State Highway 16 (future extension): In 2014, SH 16 was constructed as an expressway across the Boise River, from State Highway 44 in Eagle to US 20-26 in Ada County. Phase II, the extension of State Highway 16 from US 20-26 to I-84 is the next critical step to providing regional mobility for citizens from north Ada County and Gem County to I-84 and south Ada County. The section of SH 16 between US 20-26 and I-84 is currently unfunded.

» State Highway 55/Eagle Road: State Highway 55 (SH 55), also known as Eagle Road, connects Meridian with the cities of Boise to the east and Eagle to the north. Eagle Road is the most heavily traveled non-interstate roadway in the State of Idaho. Recent improvements to Eagle Road include widening, safety medians, additional lighting, intersection improvements and landscaping consistent with the ITD Eagle Road Corridor Study. Additional widening improvements are still planned, and the City will continue to pursue additional enhancements to reduce congestion and improve usability and safety for all modes of travel.

» State Highway 69/Meridian Road: State Highway 69 (SH 69), also known as Meridian Road, connects Meridian with Kuna to the south. Although SH 69/Meridian Road is on a section line, and is designated as an arterial throughout Meridian, it varies in form and function. Meridian Road is designated as a minor arterial from Chinden Boulevard, south to Cherry Lane, where it changes in designation to a principal arterial. For the next two miles, between Cherry Lane and I-84, Meridian Road, goes through downtown and is owned and maintained by ACHD. At I-84, Meridian Road becomes State Highway 69 and is a State of Idaho-maintained facility. Meridian Road/SH 69 varies in street section and speed throughout the City, but not in its importance to the transportation network. The City of Meridian has ordinances and development standards that preserve Meridian Road through downtown and south of the Interstate.

Collectors

Collectors serve as key transportation routes and link local roads with other collectors or arterials. Typically, they provide direct
Collectors are designed to carry higher volumes of traffic and (often seamlessly) connect one arterial to another through a given mile. Collectors typically have right-of-way widths between 57 and 88 feet, and may have on-street parking. Examples of current collector roadways are: Central Drive, Long Lake Way, and Chateau Drive.

Collectors are typically constructed by private developers at the time of construction of a subdivision. They may or may not connect through an entire mile section as a classified collector, but in conjunction with local streets, they should connect from one arterial to another. Collector roads were the subject of an Ada County Highway District-funded study by J-U-B Engineers in August 2001. The City of Meridian supports and will apply the following conclusions of that study:

- **Intersection Spacing:** Intersections of collector roads and arterial roads should be located at or near the ½ mile point within any given section.
- **Alignment:** Collectors should extend in an essentially straight line for 200 feet to 400 feet from an intersection. Beyond that point the alignment is flexible.
- **Discontinuity Between Sections:** Collectors should not be in a straight alignment for more than two miles to prevent their use as de facto arterials.
- **Planning Documents:** The City uses the ACHD Livable Street Design Guide and Master Street Map when reviewing development applications for collector design and cross-section.

**Local Streets**

Local streets serve to provide direct access to abutting residential and commercial areas and should be for local traffic movement. Generally, they are two lanes wide with parking and sidewalks, and have a right-of-way width of approximately 50 feet. Through traffic is discouraged. Approximately 71% of streets in Meridian are classified as local streets.

**Entryway Corridors**

The City has designated several entryway corridors that lead into and out of the community. As a gateway to the City, the principle is to protect and strengthen the visual appearance of the roadway corridor for those entering. Entryway corridors...
are depicted on the Future Land Use Map and explained in the text of the Comprehensive Plan. Generally, entryway corridors require additional landscaping along key arterial roadways.

**Travel Times and Commuting**

As shown in Table 3E, the average commute time in 2012 for those living in Meridian is 20.2 minutes. This is just slightly longer than the average commute time for all Ada County residents. However, the average commute time in Meridian is less than the surrounding communities of Eagle, Kuna and Star.

![Diagram of trip distribution by time of day](image)


The time of day people travel has a significant impact on not only commute times but also on planning for transportation infrastructure. The highest portion of trips in Ada County occurs during the morning and late-afternoon rush hours. Therefore, demand on roadways leads to congestion during these peak times. This congestion often causes more people to look at alternative times to travel, and when available, alternative modes of transportation. In Ada County, the “rush hour” is only about two hours per day with peaks between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. (see Figure 3C). Spreading out the distribution of trips would make more efficient use of the transportation infrastructure already in place. Policies like staggered work hours or non-traditional work schedules, could be designed by businesses to encourage travel outside
of the normal rush hour. Today, most work schedules are the traditional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Transportation Funding Plans

**Long-Range Plans**

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) maintains the region’s long range transportation plan, Communities in Motion (CIM), which contains the regionally significant corridors in Ada, Canyon, Elmore, Boise, Gem and Payette counties. COMPASS does transportation modeling for the region and uses traffic forecasts to not only anticipate where roadway projects are needed but also to monitor air quality standards and to provide development activity reports.

The COMPASS Board, which is composed of local elected officials and special interest organizations, is charged with making decisions about transportation and related air quality planning, primarily through CIM. The 2040 version of the long-range plan was adopted by the COMPASS Board in 2014. The Federal government requires CIM to be updated at least every four years. The plan addresses anticipated transportation issues over the next 20 years, evaluates how projected population and economic growth and development patterns will impact current transportation facilities, and considers funding and expenditures for future transportation needs. CIM seeks to strike a balance between roadway expansion, maintenance and other transportation alternatives, such as transit, carpooling, bicycling, walking, and transportation demand management. The Ada County Highway District (ACHD) also has a long-range transportation plan, called the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), for Ada County. The ACHD CIP lists arterial roadways that are eligible to use impact fee dollars that are generated within the County. The ACHD CIP is fiscally constrained with a 20 year horizon.

**Short-Range Plans**

In addition to long-range plans, ITD and ACHD have near-term transportation plans. The ITD’s Transportation Investment Program (ITIP) contains about five years of projects and is typically updated annually by the ITD Board, with input from other agencies (like COMPASS) and the public. The projects in COMPASS’s CIM are used to draft the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) which feeds into the ITIP. The TIP shows how Federal transportation funds will be used to finance projects including: roadways, bridges, highway safety, public transportation, maintenance projects like overlays (i.e., new layers of paving), and even airports and air quality projects.

The ACHD near-term funding program is called the Integrated Five Year Work Plan (IFYWP). This plan is usually adopted in the summer of each year by the ACHD Board of Commissioners. The IFYWP primarily contains both maintenance and capital projects for roadways, intersections, bridges and pedestrian facilities, and is meant to coincide with the overall budget adoption process. Projects in the IFYWP are prioritized primarily on safety, congestion and other cost-benefit and programmatic criteria. Each year the City of Meridian sends a list of priority projects to ITD, COMPASS and ACHD for consideration as the ITIP, TIP and IFYWP are adopted (see below for more information).
Funding

Funding for roadways in Meridian, and throughout Ada County, is provided through taxes and fees. Most of the money for roadway maintenance and new capital projects are provided via the gas tax, vehicle registration fees, Highway User Funds, development impact fees, and property taxes. In 2005, the ITD recommended that a new program, GARVEE (Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle) bonds, be used to fund six transportation corridors throughout the state. Three of the six corridors: I-84, Caldwell to Meridian; I-84, Orchard to Isaacs Canyon; and, Idaho 16, I-84 to Emmett, are in the Treasure Valley. To date, approximately $1 billion in GARVEE bonds have been authorized by the Legislature. GARVEE funds were used to widen I-84, build a new interchange at I-84 and Ten Mile Road, and reconstruct the Meridian Road Interchange. To keep up with demand, other funding options, like a local option sales tax, an increase to the gas tax and/or establishing economic development zones, have been discussed by the Legislature, but have not been approved. New funding mechanisms will most likely be needed to keep up with the demand for both maintenance and expansion of the necessary transportation infrastructure in the Valley.

Meridian’s Priority Roadway Projects

Each year the City Council, at the recommendation of the City’s Transportation Commission, sends a list of high priority transportation projects to ITD, ACHD, and COMPASS. The projects in the priority list include state facilities (highways and interchanges), ACHD roadways and intersections, and key pedestrian projects. In 2017, some of the top priority projects were: Linder Road, Franklin to Pine (road widening); Pine Avenue, Meridian to Locust Grove (road widening); Locust Grove Road, Victory to Overland (road widening); Fairview/Locust Grove (intersection), Linder Road Overpass of I-84, Chinden Boulevard widening; and pedestrian sidewalks in downtown.

Linking Transportation and Land Use

The relationship between housing, transportation, and the environment is becoming more evident every day. Changes to one impact the others, and there are very real financial and quality of life implications for decisions. In June 2009, a partnership between HUD, DOT and EPA was established to encourage livable and sustainable communities. This Federal-level partnership and policies have set the stage for what is being worked on locally.

To better connect transportation planning and land use decisions, ACHD and the cities in Ada County have compiled
the Transportation and Land Use Integration Plan (TLIP). This plan, initiated in 2007 and adopted in 2009, envisions livable streets for the future. The goal is to create a roadway network that balances the needs of all roadway users—motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, transit and people with disabilities—with streets that complement the built environment. Because a one-size-fits-all program for roadway construction does not respond to the land use needs of the community, the City and ACHD have agreed to work more closely to join together the land use plans of the City with the transportation plans of the District. There are four tools that ACHD and the City use to implement TLIP: the Complete Streets Policy, the Livable Streets Design Guide, a Cost Share Policy, and a Master Street Map.

**Complete Streets Policy**

The primary purpose of the ACHD Complete Streets Policy is to ensure that streets, bridges, and transit stops within Ada County are designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so that pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and people of all ages and abilities can travel safely and independently on and along public streets. In the past, for example, ACHD primarily constructed five-lane arterial streets with attached sidewalk, no bike lanes, and no concern for the abutting land uses. The Complete Streets Policy balances all users’ needs and sets the foundation for land use agencies to partner with ACHD to create user-friendly corridors that meet the needs of the traveling public as well as the goals of comprehensive and specific area plans. The Complete Streets Policy is contained in Section 3100 of the ACHD Policy Manual.

**Cost Share Policy**

A tool in the TLIP repository is the ACHD Cost Share Policy. The Cost Share Policy maintains flexibility within the roadway design process, establishes a consistent set of transportation elements that ACHD will be responsible for, and allows partnering agencies an opportunity to participate in creating a “complete” street section. This policy allows partnering agencies to work with ACHD to design, construct and fund non-transportation elements as part of ACHD’s road improvement projects. Many times the City requests features like detached sidewalks with landscaping or multi-use pathways to improve pedestrian safety and enhance community aesthetics along specific roadways. The Cost Share Policy allows a partnering agency to enter into an agreement with ACHD to ensure appropriate improvements are included for all users, in road projects.

**Master Street Map**

In January of 2010, ACHD adopted a Master Street Map for Ada County. This map is another TLIP planning tool that works in conjunction with city comprehensive plans. The Map creates a vision for future roadway characteristics based on land use plans and transportation goals. The Master Street Map provides the guide for arterial right-of-way needs, collector street locations and design, regional mobility corridor locations and design, and other specific roadway features desired throughout the City and its Area of City Impact. The Master Street Map designates location, function, and typology for roadways, and specifies the number of travel lanes and right-of-way needed for each collector and arterial in Meridian. Meridian supports the Master Street Map through adoption by reference in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The information contained on the Master Street Map is used by both ACHD and the City when roadway projects are beginning the design process, and in the development review process.

**Livable Streets Design Guide**

The final tool in the TLIP toolbox is the Livable Streets Design Guide. The Guide sets the design parameters for roadways in Ada County. After referencing the Master Street Map to see what type of roadway is planned, a developer, agency staff,
2.8 STREET DESIGN: RESIDENTIAL ARTERIAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Element</th>
<th>Typical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design/Operating Speed</td>
<td>35 mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Travel Lanes (per direction)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Lane Dimensions</td>
<td>11'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Turn Lane Dimensions</td>
<td>11'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Turn Lanes</td>
<td>Allowed for heavy turning movements or heavy truck traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medians</td>
<td>11', to be substituted with turn lanes at intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Openings</td>
<td>for cross streets only when medians used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Lanes</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Street Parking</td>
<td>Permitted, not typical, but possible 7' parallel when used (includes gutter pan width)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>curb and gutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer Area</td>
<td>6' (see clear zone and buffer zone below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk</td>
<td>5' minimum recommended (see walk zone dimension below; frontage zone allows shy area from sidewalk as needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersection Control</td>
<td>signals or stops (stops on cross streets only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Standards</td>
<td>vehicle/roadway only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pedestrian Zone

This is an illustrative legend to explain how the pedestrian zone is broken down. The colors do not indicate color-based surface treatments.

- **Clear zone:** 2'
- **Buffer Zone:** 4'
- **Walk Zone:** 5' minimum recommended
- **Frontage Zone:** 2' for utility placement and buffer from walls

The landscaping and enhanced pedestrian zone treatments depicted in the cross-sections depend on future funding and future maintenance by a developer or local jurisdiction. These costs are not borne by ACHD. Street trees placed in six (6)-foot buffer (combined Clear and Buffer Zones) require root barriers; or, city/county/developer can provide additional two (2) feet of right-of-way — see ACHD Tree Planting Policy.

or the general public can go to the Guide to see what elements are specifically envisioned for any arterial and collector roadway. Based on the City’s land use components contained in the Comprehensive Plan, pathway locations on the Master Pathway Plan and ACHD’s needs for capacity, the Livable Streets Design Guide illustrates what each street typology should look like. There are customized cross sections within the Guide for access, the pedestrian zone, parking, transit, bicycles, buffers, travel lanes and landscaping. Figure 3D depicts an example roadway typology from the Livable Streets Design Guide.

**Mobility Management**

Mobility management is a concept that focuses on using all available resources to augment and advance mobility for all people. Several strategies are typically used to meet the needs of citizens from all walks of life. In 2009, COMPASS, through a Federal grant, developed the Mobility Management Development Guidebook to help local governments establish partnerships and collaborate to provide the most efficient transportation system. The guidebook is a resource manual of best practices that incorporates transit access, mobility enhancements, and site and road design. The Guidebook includes a checklist for local governments, developers, and others to incorporate access and mobility into land use decisions. The Guidebook also explores how providing mode choices helps to serve all roadway users.

**Roadways to Bikeways**

In May 2009, a long-range master plan for bicycle facilities in Ada County was adopted by the ACHD Commission. The Roadways to Bikeways Plan provides a broad vision, policy, and goals and objectives for how the ACHD can facilitate and improve conditions for bicycling in Ada County. The Plan designates dedicated bicycle facilities within a quarter-mile from 95% of Ada County residents; it will connect all parts of the County. The adopted bicycle master plan guides future investments in the bicycle system on roadways: to enhance and expand the existing on-street bikeway network, fill-in gaps, address constrained areas, provide for greater local and regional connectivity and encourage more bicycling. The Plan also provides basis for signed, shared roadways, bicycle boulevard designations, and a variety of programs and policies to allow and promote safe, efficient, and convenient bicycle travel. The ACHD is looking to update the Roadways to Bikeways Plan in 2017. In 2012, ACHD adopted the Downtown Meridian Neighborhood Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, which identifies safety and connectivity needs within the downtown area. Within Meridian, there are currently 77 miles of bike routes. The ACHD Bicycle Resources website provides maps of existing routes, lists of upcoming bicycle projects, and links to bicycle planning efforts.

**Pathway System and Sidewalks**

The Meridian Pathways Master Plan is a guide for pathway development over the next 20 to 50 years. The Plan proposes an extensive pathway network stemming from the existing creeks, canals and other drainage or irrigation laterals within and around the City of Meridian. The Plan includes an inventory of existing pathways and micro-pathways, as well as a comprehensive network of future pathways that will connect residents to schools, parks, businesses, neighborhoods, and various recreation and entertainment destinations.

The City of Meridian currently maintains nine pathways, including the Fothergill Pathway, the Bear Creek Pathway, the Blackstone Pathway, the Locust Grove Pathway, the H.R. Bud Porter Pathway, the Diane & Winston Moore Pathway, the Five Mile Creek Pathway from Pine to Badley, the Jackson Drain ...
Connection, and the Lochsa Falls/Paramount Pathway. Today, these pathways primarily serve as a recreational amenity, but they are also used for commuters going to and from work and school. The Pathways Master Plan includes detailed maps and design standards for future pathways in the City.

As an offshoot of the Meridian Pathways Master Plan, the City also finalized a Rail with Trail Action Plan in early 2010. The Action Plan takes a closer look at the Union Pacific Rail Corridor, presents a conceptual alignment for a multi-use pathway paralleling the tracks from McDermott Road to Eagle Road, and proposes strategies for implementation of the future facility. In 2014, the City received a Transportation Alternatives Projects (TAP) grant to study the trail/arterial crossings near the railroad tracks. In 2016, COMPASS formed a Rails with Trails Workgroup that is looking at developing a continuous regional pathway within the rail corridor, connecting Meridian to Nampa and Boise. Additional local and federal grant money is being pursued for design and construction of the trail.

ACHD has a dedicated pool of funds for projects that expand and enhance a safe, efficient, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle network for all residents of Ada County. These pedestrian and bicycle projects are known as Community Programs. ACHD currently offers a Community Programs application for pedestrian and traffic calming projects which gives citizens, neighborhood associations, and land use agencies the ability to apply for projects. A target of 5% of the annual Integrated Five Year Work Plan capital funds are typically dedicated to Community Programs, which equates to approximately $1.5 - $2 million per year. In addition, half of the local vehicle registration fee money goes toward Community Programs each year.

Through public outreach programs, the community has previously highlighted the need for more quality parks, recreation programs, pathways, and other public amenities. The Treasure
Valley Futures Program Community Outreach emphasized the community’s interest in more pedestrian linkages and enhanced design standards. The City is interested in making these linkages when opportunities present themselves. The City’s Unified Development Code requires sidewalks and micro-pathways be installed with new subdivisions. Through ACHD’s Community Programs, a group of select community members have identified gaps in the pedestrian pathway and sidewalk system. These gaps now await improvement.

Transit

Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties. Annually, the City contributes to an inter-county transit service that runs between Nampa-Caldwell and Meridian-Boise. Park-and-ride lots serve as the primary stop for the inter-county bus. VRT does not currently provide a fixed-line bus service in Meridian. Since late 2016, a demand-response service geared towards getting seniors and persons with disabilities to services and activities has been in operation. This Lifestyle Service shuttles individuals around Meridian and is operated by Harvest Transit, with oversight by VRT (Go-Ride). The City is currently working with VRT to design and then implement a fixed-line bus system.

Two City Council members serve on the VRT Board which establishes policy and guides the strategic priorities for public transportation. VRT has an approved plan to develop a regional public transportation system in the Treasure Valley. The plan, called ValleyConnect, calls for bus services in all cities in Ada and Canyon counties.

Commuteride and Carpools

ACHD operates a Commuteride vanpool service in Ada County where each van accommodates 11 to 14 people. The Commuteride program provides ride matching services that connect commuters with similar home and work locations and schedules. Similarly, Commuteride helps businesses plan a customized vanpool service for businesses and their employees. Commuteride Carpool and Vanpool Service is a cooperative effort between ACHD, VRT, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
Park-and-Ride Lots

Park-and-ride lots are a service provided by ACHD. The lots offer a place for commuters to park and collectively ride to work in a prearranged carpool or vanpool. Existing park-and-ride lots are located at Gem Street between Main Street and Meridian Road; Overland Road and SH 69 (Country Terrace); Overland Road and Eagle Road (Rackham Way); Overland Road and Ten Mile Road; and at St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center (Eagle Road/I-84). To assist potential users, these lots are marked with green and white directional signs. The City anticipates that additional park-and-ride lots will be necessary in the future and will coordinate with ACHD on siting these future lots as development demands.

Public Airport Facilities

The City of Meridian does not have an airport within the City limits or Area of City Impact, nor does it plan to site or develop an airport. However, the Boise Airport (BOI) provides passenger and freight service to the citizens and local businesses. BOI is the only public, general aviation and commercial airport located within Ada County. The airport is located approximately ten miles east of Meridian off I-84. BOI serves over three million passengers annually. It is also home to the Idaho Air National Guard and the National Interagency Fire Center. There are also airports just west of Meridian, including the Nampa Airport (MAN) and Caldwell Industrial Airport (EUL), providing professional pilots, businessmen, corporate, industrial and recreational aircraft owners aviation options.

Rail

The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) owned Boise Cutoff spur rail line runs east–west and bisects the City between Cherry Lane and Franklin Road. In 2009, the Boise Valley Railroad began operation along the spur line to provide freight movement to industrial customers. Today, WATCO Companies has a long-term lease with UPPR to operate the Cutoff in Meridian.

In 2009, a preliminary study was completed by the region’s planning organization (COMPASS) to determine the feasibility of a regional high capacity mass transit line. The High Priority Corridor Study identified the Boise Cutoff as the primary candidate for a future transit line. A future multi-use pathway (rail with trail) is also in the planning stages along the rail line. Meridian’s current Comprehensive Plan and the land uses along this corridor reflect the anticipated multi-modal uses along the rail corridor.
Community Design

Community design tends to focus on elements of the natural and built environment that contribute value to living, working and playing in the community. One could make an argument that all of the components in this report should be analyzed in this section. It is true that most all of the other components (land use, transportation, housing, etc.) factor into community design. However, for the purposes of this report, community design includes analysis primarily on design review, sustainability, livability, healthy initiatives, and arts and community events. These terms are all inter-related and are very subjective; the terms often mean different things and/or are more or less important to different people and groups. The goal of this section of the report is to explain how the community has come together to define what community design means and frame how it works in Meridian. As the City moves forward with the Comprehensive Plan policies, it will use this framework to analyze and develop potential strategies for the City.

The inherent goal of community design is to improve on the livability and quality of life for not only current, but also future generations of Meridian residents. In this section of the report, a description of the current policies, initiatives and programs that contribute to community design and quality of life are presented. Like the other elements analyzed in this report, the components of this chapter directly shape the look, feel and function of the community known as Meridian.

A large portion of this section of the report is dedicated to the City’s design review process. Design review is a process that applies design review procedures, guidelines, and standards for the review of outdoor projects and physical development. Design review examines the physical and functional relationships of the various components of development and works in tandem with adopted zoning codes and use standards.

Community design also involves preserving and enhancing unique and extraordinarily valuable areas of the City. Basically, community design provides a means to maintain the unique characteristics of the City, and to improve the built environment for today and tomorrow.

This section also addresses livability and sustainability. In Meridian, livability and sustainability go hand-in-hand with a healthy community, including physical, social, and mental health. Arts, community events, and celebrations all play a role in making Meridian livable. A truly healthy community is one that is sustainable long-term, working with its current
residents to define what elements are key to providing a high quality of life today and for future generations.

When the 2002 version of the Comprehensive Plan was developed, citizen groups met to discuss issues and concerns regarding community character. Issues related to development included infilling or increasing density within the city limits and preserving habitats and natural areas. These issues will be addressed later in the report. Many stakeholders thought that particular areas within the City were under-used and that perhaps, these should be the first areas considered for redevelopment rather than farmlands/green fields. Many felt that the City under-utilizes areas already disturbed by development. Residents were also sensitive to preserving open space within urban areas; they felt that by identifying these areas and natural resource areas such as wetlands, riparian areas, and wildlife areas, the City could achieve a balance of open space and new development. Planting more trees and designing a community garden were also discussed. These elements relate directly to community design and creating a high quality of life.

As part of the overall planning process for the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, a sub-committee was established to discuss community design and special sites. This sub-committee identified a number of issues and concerns that focused on design standards, zoning, and the implementation of the current Comprehensive Plan. Standards of specific concern related to gateways and community signage. Citizens suggested establishing a unified sign and gateway theme for the community. Also, they expressed concern regarding the protection of existing special sites like waterways and historic buildings. These concerns form the foundation for the goals, objectives, and action items contained in the Comprehensive Plan.
Administrative Design Review

In 2007, the City Council determined it was in the best interest of the City to discuss implementing citywide design review. City Planning staff established a design review steering committee to guide them in crafting the program. Members of the design review steering committee, representing various professions from the development community, volunteered numerous hours and offered their expertise, insight, and experience to assist City staff in drafting this process.

Administrative design review is intended to promote and establish community character and economic stability by ensuring that urban design and architectural principles adhere to community established goals. Design review is also intended to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens by enhancing property values; protecting the natural environment; promoting community pride; protecting historical resources; preserving the aesthetic qualities which contribute to a City’s character; and promoting the economic vitality of the community by preserving and creating well-designed commercial and residential developments.

The Architectural Standards Manual

The Architectural Standards Manual (ASM) and administrative design review process establish development standards to encourage quality building design. In combination with the Unified Development code and the Comprehensive Plan, the City has established a set of guiding principles and standards that encourage and allow for creativity while maintaining a baseline level of effort. The ASM establishes expectations for proposed development based on the type of structure and zoning designation in which it will be located. These standards were developed to address the following:
1. Cohesive Design

2. Building Scale

3. Building Form

4. Architectural Elements

5. Materials

6. Signs and Lighting

In addition to providing the City with a planning tool that uses standards to address the functional and aesthetic qualities and characteristics of development, the ASM lays the foundation for growth and development to create attractive, lasting, and quality-built environments that contribute to the progression of Meridian as a livable community.

Standards vs. Guidelines

Standards vary in the amount of detail and specificity that a community employs. Some communities provide general guidelines for design that allow some autonomy on the part of the developer and designer. The City of Meridian’s Architectural Standards Manual provides standards to limit subjectivity and streamline the review process, but there is some inherent flexibility and a method for alternatives through a process called Design Standards Exceptions. This process provides flexibility, supports innovation, and promotes creativity within the community, but maintains the baseline level of effort to both protect private investment and the community vision. The ASM also provides a large number of example photos to lessen ambiguity. Eliminating guesswork promotes efficiency but still allows for unique projects to be created.

Entryway Corridors

Meridian has designated several arterial roadways as entryway corridors or gateways into the City. Generally, entryway corridors require additional landscaping along major arterial roadways that lead into and out of Meridian. These gateways have a significant effect on visitors first impression of the City, making them especially important for not only landscaping but also building, parking lot, and public space designs.

Signs

Signs are necessary not only for wayfinding, but also for advertising, marketing and community character purposes. Like landscaping in entryway corridors, signs can impress upon visitors a community’s character. Signs should not be a distraction to motorists or pedestrians, or otherwise present a safety hazard by interfering with line-of-sight, blocking traffic control devices, or hampering traffic flow. Likewise, signs should enhance the aesthetics of the community by complimenting building designs and landscaping. Signs should provide assistance to the public and business owners in locating businesses, gathering places, roadways and other attractions. Meridian has taken a hard look at sign regulations to ensure there is balance between safety, advertising, communication, architectural elements, aesthetics, and free speech.

Sustainability

The fundamentals of sustainability within local government center on creating balanced solutions; solutions that deliver services at levels citizens expect in an environmentally and socially responsible way; and ensuring the best economic choice in the long term. These fundamentals interact in the process of balancing the needs of protecting and enhancing our economy, our natural environment and our community’s built environment today and for future generations.
Meridian’s popularity as a prime location to build a business and raise a family has required the City to rise to the challenge of providing services at a new level of demand. Commercial and residential developers seek out Meridian because it is “livable.” Yet, with growing demand for services, the City is challenged to maintain its well-touted “livability” factor.

Over the last decade, the City of Meridian has incorporated sustainability concepts in a variety of projects including energy conservation projects; establishing a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment and reclamation facility; and creating Environmental Programs within the Public Works Department. “Sustainability and Environmental Awareness” is a stated priority issue of City leadership and will be a dynamic aspect of how future service, programs and projects are understood, created and implemented.

Land Use and Transportation Planning

As part of its planning process, the City promotes areas of mixed-use development that bring shopping, services and recreation opportunities within walking distance of dwellings. Mixed-use developments are envisioned to provide the necessary density of homes to support bus and transit programs. Through this type of planning, automobile trips will be reduced along with their emissions.

The City of Meridian continues to promote transportation alternatives. For many years, the City has required that developers install segments of the multi-use pathway system as subdivisions are built. The Master Pathways Plan designates routes for multiple use pathways throughout the City. These pathways are intended for non-motorized usage. Sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes directly adjacent to roadways provide a link between pathways or between a pathway and a destination. People who choose to ride or walk rather than drive are typically replacing short automobile trips, which contribute disproportionately high amounts of pollutant emissions. Since bicycling and walking do not pollute, require no external energy source, and use land efficiently, they effectively move people from one place to another without adverse environmental impacts—they are sustainable forms of transportation.

Siting, Design and Construction

The design, construction, and operation of buildings impact the environment. In 1998 the U.S. Green Building Council developed a set of standards for environmentally sustainable design, construction and operation of buildings. These standards are formalized in certifying a building as LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) Gold, Silver or Platinum rating. The Portico office building achieved a LEED Gold rating.
Energy and Environmental Design). LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

As an example of Meridian’s efforts to be good stewards of the environment and to set a positive example, City Hall was constructed with LEED certification in mind. Among other benefits, Idaho Power Company has calculated City Hall’s annual energy savings to be the equivalent of providing power to 56 homes for an entire year.

**Energy**

In February 2009, the United States Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Included in the Act was the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program which appropriated funds to be used by states, local governments, and tribes for implementing energy conservation strategies and projects. The goal of the EECBG program was to reduce total energy use, reduce greenhouse gas emission and improve energy efficiency in transportation, building, and other sectors.

Through the EECBG, Meridian was awarded $608,000.00 in 2009 for energy efficiency projects. A portion of the funds were used to prepare long and short term energy strategies for the City for increasing efficiency in city and public facilities, thereby reducing City operating costs and reducing greenhouse gases. Funds also went to a variety of constructed improvements, including replacing older less efficient pumps with blowers at the water treatment plant, replacing Main Street lights between Franklin Road and I-84 with more energy efficient bulbs, and upgrading other lighting fixtures at facilities throughout the City.

**Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Reduction**

The City of Meridian has begun and completed a number of efforts to reduce and limit the impact of City operations on air quality in the Treasure Valley. The City has done this by working with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), supporting valley-wide initiatives, implementing City policies, evaluating land use applications, and by City departments and contracted entities using best management practices. The
following are some of the actions the City has been involved in, or is currently implementing:

1. **Town Hall Meetings on Business Emissions**: The City has worked with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Idaho Small Business Development Center to give presentations to local businesses on strategies for them to reduce their emissions.

2. **Clean Air Zone Idaho**: The City of Meridian is a member of the Clean Air Zone Idaho program. This program encourages citizens to avoid idling and “Turn off your engine” while waiting in City parking lots. These signs are placed at all City facilities. This program improves air quality by reducing vehicle emissions.

3. **Telecommute to work**: The City has instituted a VPN, or virtual private network, that allows city workers to telecommute. The VPN provides remote access to the network, file, and servers through a secure connection, allowing certain employees to perform their work from home or other locations when needed. Every trip eliminated from the City’s roadways improves its overall air quality by eliminating vehicle emissions.

4. **Radio Read Meters**: The City of Meridian’s Public Works Department staff utilizes radio read meter technology and in-vehicle mounted computers to transmit and access information in an effort to reduce trips to and from the field and office. This technology not only reduces fuel costs but also pollutant emissions.

5. **On-line Business**: The City of Meridian has expanded the amount of business that can be conducted with the City on its website. The City recognizes that every transaction that can be done online is a potential trip off the road.

6. **Biogas**: The City installed biogas conditioning equipment at the Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, to treat the methane-rich biogas so that it can be used to provide heat to the digesters and wastewater treatment plant buildings. The Public Works Department diverts and utilizes the biogas generated from the anaerobic digesters as an alternative fuel amendment (in lieu of combusting natural gas) in a few of the wastewater treatment plant’s boilers. The use of biogas as the heating source for the digestion process saves the City up to $5,000 per month during winter operations.

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Below: Reclaimed water system at the Meridian Wastewater Treatment Plant
Wastewater Treatment, Reclamation and Reuse

The Public Works Department Wastewater Division operates and maintains a centralized wastewater resource recovery facility. This facility is located in northwest Meridian, near the Ustick and Ten Mile intersection. With a vision for sustainability, Meridian became the first city in Idaho to be issued a Citywide Class A Recycled Water Permit in 2009. This permit signified a change in how the City uses existing and finite water resources available in the Treasure Valley Aquifer System. The City is now using highly treated, or recycled water, instead of irrigation water at select City parks, the Ten Mile Interchange Landscaping, a commercial car wash, and other open spaces. This conserves ground water and reduces discharge flows into the Boise River. As Meridian is located in an arid climate, recycled water is a "drought-proof" water supply that reduces demand on municipal supply, frees up agricultural water for agricultural uses, and lowers effluent flow to the Boise River. The City of Meridian Wastewater Division regularly investigates areas for resource recovery and sustainability.

Preservation and Restoration of Natural Resources

A vast majority of Meridian's natural watercourses have been altered by irrigation users. Many residents no longer recognize these creeks and watercourses as natural resources. While Meridian residents and visitors are often denied access and potential benefits from these watercourses and associated floodplains, these same watercourses do provide critical irrigation water delivery.

In recent years, there have been renewed efforts to study additional restoration opportunities to improve and reestablish some of the historical and natural conditions of waterways. The City has held conversations on how to better educate the general public about the importance of these waterways for natural conservation, regulatory needs, and for the history of the irrigation districts that support agricultural industry.

During the summer of 2009, the City’s Public Works Department, with the assistance of volunteers and members of the Idaho Youth Conservation Corps, oversaw Meridian’s first stream restoration project along the Five Mile Creek near Locust Grove Road and Franklin Road. Restoration targeted a 700-linear-foot stretch of the creek. The work helped reshape this portion of the creek to a more natural condition and preserve the floodplain from development. The project was paid for by wetlands mitigation funds from the Idaho Transportation Department. The City plans for more projects like the Five Mile Creek restoration in the future.

Solid Waste

Republic Services is the solid waste collection contractor for the City of Meridian. Republic is dedicated to providing reliable and innovative recycling and waste reduction programs to the City. See Chapter 4, Solid Waste, for more information on recycling efforts.

Livability and Quality of Life

As explained at the beginning of the Community Design section, livability and quality of life are hard terms to explain and measure. Benchmarks, or metrics for measuring livability, are difficult to describe. Often places that are livable have the “it” factor. They are the most sought after places to live. For the purposes of this report, livability and quality of life refer to the environmental and social quality of an area as perceived by its residents. Community livability is about creating neighborhoods that are safe, vibrant, attractive, affordable, accessible, cohesive, and full of character. A few key factors that primarily contribute to livability within a community are: health, personal security, overall cleanliness, quality and quantity of social interaction.
opportunities, entertainment, aesthetics, and existing unique cultural and natural resources. Livability is largely affected by conditions in the public realm—places where people naturally interact with each other and their community—like parks, streets and sidewalks, and other community gathering places. Livability is important because it can maintain or increase property values and business activity, and it can improve public health and safety.

New urbanism (sometimes referred to as Smart Growth and/or Neotraditional Design) is a land use strategy striving to enhance quality of life. New urbanism has gained traction over the past several years, and some of the design elements of New Urbanism are included as part of the City of Meridian’s planning documents. Essentially, new urbanism is a land use management strategy that is based on making a community more livable by providing walkable, connected, mixed-use, diverse, sustainable, high-quality neighborhoods that provide a variety of transportation options for everyone.

Although there are no statistical data on Meridian’s livability today, one could argue that Meridian’s popularity indicates that many of the livability factors are present in most areas of Meridian. This is not to imply that the City should not explore ways to improve our neighborhoods and make them even more livable.

**Healthy Initiatives**

The impact of the built environment on public health continues to be explored by many organizations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines a healthy community as: “A community that is continuously creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing...
to their maximum potential.” The City realizes that it is at the local level that it is imperative to take a proactive approach in addressing the link between the built environment and health.

By 2040 nearly 50% of the U.S. population will be over the age of 65 or under the age 18. Therefore the livable and sustainable community of the future must have physical and social features that benefit people of all ages. When a wide range of needs is addressed, family and individuals have the opportunity to stay and thrive in their communities as they age. Multi-generational planning also builds community. Rather than creating and encouraging social, income, or age-segregating neighborhoods of the past, the City hopes to foster diverse multi-generational neighborhoods that accommodate different lifestyles and stages which contribute to sustainable communities. The City encourages a mix of not only housing options, but also amenities and opportunities for interaction across generations. Today, Meridian does not have a plan to address aging and multi-generational needs. Through better understanding physical and social needs, building consensus, and developing new shared strategies that link the generations and build more inclusive and sustainable communities, the City can facilitate the creation of neighborhoods that are truly vibrant and healthy.

Central District Health Department (CDHD) reviews development applications and sends comments and conditions back to the City, related to any potential public health issues. CDHD has adopted a policy to further smart growth and sustainable development in southwest Idaho. Not surprisingly, the objective of the policy is to support land development and building decisions that promote improved public health. CDHD recognizes that the built environment has an impact on public health, with links to obesity, diabetes, and asthma, to name a few. This cooperative partnership between the City of Meridian and CDHD is not new, but what is new are some of the policies and principles these agencies are jointly trying to implement.

Safe Walking Routes

A healthy community is one that has good connectivity between residential areas and community gathering places, like schools. As part of the development review process, the City regularly requires developers to install sidewalk, micro-pathways and multi-use pathways that connect to school sites, public spaces, and nearby neighborhood serving uses. The West Ada School District has walk zone maps for their schools which can be found on their website.

1 http://www.westada.org/Page/13875
The City and the School District annually partner to compile a list of high priority pedestrian projects for ACHD’s Community Programs. The list of priority projects is based on concerns City staff and School District employees hear from parents and others in the community. Efforts to improve safety, like the YMCA’s Safe Routes to School program, have been around for years. The City supports the YMCA, through COMPASS dues and programming. Safe Routes coordinators go to elementary and middle schools in Meridian and educate children on things like bicycle and pedestrian safety. This fun, interactive, educational program has been well received throughout the community.

**Day Care**

Accessible, affordable and quality before- and after-school child care is a necessary component of creating a livable community. A robust local system of child care and early education programs has social, economic and environmental benefits for children, families and the community as a whole. In 2013 69.9% of mothers with children under the age of 18 held jobs, and 57.3% of mothers with children under 1 year old held jobs. By providing child care service that is affordable and close (or within) residential areas, child care can contribute to the local economy by supporting parents and local employers. Since 1997, the American Planning Association (APA) has recognized that child care is a critical component of livable communities. As such, APA advocates for including child care policies within local planning. Local planning policies play an important role in ensuring adequate child care in a community. Creating policies, identifying local resources and working with developers and community partners, the City hopes to have a more proactive and positive influence on the child care programs being provided in the future.

*A robust local system of child care and early education programs has social, economic and environmental benefits for children, families and the community as a whole.*

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Youth Programs

Meridian prides itself on being a unique city with an abundance of choices that support our commitment to maintaining a safe and caring community and strive to be a place young people feel accepted, respected, and connected. Our city government and civic leaders are extremely pro-active in engaging youth in nearly every aspect of community life, including community service and opportunities to provide a youth perspective in policy making, advocacy, and issues of importance to young people.

As the home to many families of all shares and sizes, Meridian's mission is to be a premier city to live, work and raise a family. Meridian has received recognition from several national award programs and publications. These honors include being selected by 24/7 Wall Street – USA Today as the “Number One Place to Live in America”, Family Circle Magazine as one of their “Top 10 Best Cities for Families,” by Money Magazine as one of its “100 Best Places to Live,” and by America’s Promise Alliance and ING as one of the nation’s “100 Best Communities for Young People.”

The City of Meridian has developed and maintains several initiatives and organizations focused specifically on youth.

The Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) is a teen organization that gives a “voice” to our teens and opportunities for them to shape our future. Youth Council members, in graded 9 through 12, meet with the Mayor and other advisors twice a month to discuss issues and ideas of interest to the youth of Meridian. They are actively involved in many community service projects and events, and with several volunteer and advocacy activities they plan themselves. Events they have planned and participated in have focused on issues important
to them as diverse as suicide prevention, seatbelt use, texting while driving, smoking and nicotine use, and hunger.

Through the City of Meridian’s Youth on Commissions Program, high school students apply and are appointed to seats on City commissions, committees, coalitions, and task forces which serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council. These include the Parks and Recreation Commission, Transportation Commission, Mayor’s Anti-Drug Coalition, Meridian Arts Commission, Historical Preservation Commission, and the Solid Waste Advisory Commission.

To promote advanced education, the City annually offers up to four $1,000 City of Meridian Scholarships to graduating seniors who will be attending accredited colleges or vocational programs. These scholarships are awarded to successful applicants who demonstrate evidence of leadership potential through their community involvement, as well as volunteerism, school activities, or work experience. Additional consideration is given to applicants who have completed the Meridian Police Department’s Alive at 25 safe driving courses.

Alive at 25 is a free defensive driving class taught several times a month by Meridian Police officers with the goal of lowering auto accidents involving teens and young adults, ages 14 – 24. Through interactive media segments, workbook exercises, class discussions and role playing, this four-hour course helps young drivers develop convictions and strategies that will keep them safer on the road.

Younger children in Meridian also have opportunities to engage with City government. For a number of years, the Mayor has invited presidents and CEOs of local companies to not just sponsor a book but to also join her in co-hosting the Mayor’s and CEO’s Kids Book Club. Each month during the school year, students in grades 3, 4, and 5 gather to discuss a pre-selected book with Mayor Tammy and each respective month’s “leader-reader.” The goal is to impart on our youth the importance of being a good reader, as well as the pure enjoyment to be found through reading a good book. Students who actively participate get to keep the hardcover books they are provided with, therefore building their own home libraries with high-quality books. To further promote reading and literacy, a Little Free Library is to be placed in Meridian City Hall’s outdoor plaza, serving as a free all-hours community book exchange for children and adults alike.

Meridian’s Parks and Recreation Department maintains 20 city parks, which feature child-friendly amenities such as playground equipment; ball fields; basketball, tennis, pickle ball, bocce
and volleyball courts; Frisbee golf cages; game tables; splash pads; horseshoe pits; and skateboard ramps. The department also offers a variety of enrichment programs, classes, and day camps for children and teens, primarily offered at the Meridian Community Center the City owns and maintains, located in Old Town Meridian adjacent to the Centennial Park.

Apart from programs and organizations offered through the City of Meridian, local children and teens have access to the Meridian Boys and Girls Club and the Meridian Homecourt. The Meridian Boys and Girls Club offers several programs, including after school and summer sessions for school-aged children. The Meridian Homecourt serves Meridian residents and is a sports complex featuring regulation sizes courts for volleyball, basketball, and other spots. The Boys and Girls Club recently expanded their center in downtown Meridian. The Treasure Valley YMCA is also in the early construction phase of their next facility in South Meridian.

**Senior Programs**

On the other end of the age spectrum, older adults must interact with the built environment in ways that reflect their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Although they may have more time after retirement to enjoy parks and other recreational activities, conditions such as chronic diseases and limited vision may limit mobility. Providing accessible and suitable housing options that are easily accessible to community destinations are key to allowing older adults to remain independent, active and engaged with the community. Housing for seniors that is integrated into the fabric of the community is becoming increasingly important as the Baby Boom Generation enters retirement.

In the early 1960s a group of seniors started meeting at the old Occident Club once a month for potlucks and cards. It became apparent that Meridian Seniors needed a place to call their own and they began to raise money with various fund raising events. The Meridian Senior Center is now a non-profit community center that enhances the lives of its members through traditional activities.

In May 2012, the Meridian Senior Center built a new 13,800 square-foot facility known as “The Center at the Park” in Meridian at Julius M. Kleiner Park, near Fairview Avenue and Eagle Road. The new center was made possible by a generous land and building donation from the Julius M. Kleiner Family Trust. The new center includes a main dining area for daily lunches with two state-of-the-art kitchens, complete with the latest equipment, an arts and crafts room, a cards and game room, and multiple social areas.
room, a health screening room, an indoor walking track, and office space. Activities offered at the center include bingo, pinochle, billiards, art, quilting, dance and yoga classes. The center also provides some specialized activities and events, such as, attorney visits, feet care, and blood pressure and blood sugar testing. The facility is open to Meridian residents and those that live in the surrounding community. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Kleiner Park Center is the place to be for seniors in the community.

Success Stories

Healthy behavior is a combination of knowledge, practices and attitudes that together contribute to motivate actions regarding health. The City of Meridian can learn from other communities’ success in creating and promoting programs that encourage a healthy and vibrant community. Some of these success stories include programs and projects that incorporate things like community gardens, sharing of resources (e.g. – vehicles and parking lots), cooperatives where local goods, services and wares can be sold or traded, branch libraries, and additional policies that encourage socially and environmentally conscious design and construction projects. The City strives to better understand the impact of neighborhood design on residents’ ability to be physically active, the impacts of development on natural systems, and the effects of community design on overall community health. By taking actions that promote and preserve good health, Meridian should be a community that sustains well into the future.
Arts, Entertainment and Community Events

Meridian Arts Commission

Meridian envisions a vibrant arts and entertainment scene that integrates the arts experience into everyday life and enhances the spirit of the City. The Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) was created in 2006, and since then it has provided the community with visual, performing, and musical arts opportunities throughout the year.

Through the Art in Public Spaces collection, Meridian City Hall integrates visual art into its functional spaces on hallway walls in the building. City Hall also has dedicated space in which art is the function: Initial Point Gallery, located on the third floor. MAC curates and installs monthly art exhibits in Initial Point Gallery, featuring the work of Treasure Valley artists, and schedules an opening reception for each show, many of which include performances by local musicians.

MAC encourages youth to take part in the arts by partnering with Treasure Valley Youth Theater, a Meridian company. The inaugural performance was “Peter Pan, Jr.,” presented in March 2014, to rave reviews. In the summer, MAC presents Concerts on Broadway, a popular free outdoor concert series on the steps of City Hall. MAC also hosts an art show in conjunction with Dairy Days and an annual Art Week.

Major public art pieces such, “Under the Sun and Dreaming,” by C. J. Rench, have been installed in downtown Meridian. All together there are three pieces of art along the Main Street corridor along with several traffic box art wraps. Local artists Amber Conger, Stephanie Inman, Ken McCall, and more have permanent public art installations throughout Meridian and in many of our parks. MAC also has a traffic box community art project, which allows a number of artists to have their 2D work featured on vinyl wraps throughout the city.

Meridian History Center and Heritage Programs

The Meridian History Center is a volunteer-operated education center and office located on the first floor of City Hall. These volunteers are members of the Meridian Historical Society. They maintain, display and archive records, photographs, and memorabilia relating to Meridian’s rich history.

In the late 1980s, the City established the Historic Preservation Commission to preserve the character and fabric of historically significant areas and structures within the City of Meridian, and to honor and preserve its rich heritage for future generations.
The Historic Preservation Commission consists of six members serving three-year terms. At least two appointed members have professional training or experience in the disciplines of architecture, history, architectural history, urban planning, archaeology, engineering, law or other historic preservation related disciplines.

Meridian remains true to its identity by remembering its past while looking towards the future. In addition to having a history center and art gallery located inside Meridian City Hall, monuments in Generations Plaza, along Meridian Road, and in the City Hall Plaza pay tribute in words and photos to Meridian’s earliest settlers, Meridian’s evolving history, and past City leaders.

**Community Events**

The community celebrates several traditional annual events including Dairy Days Celebration, Chili Cook-Off, Firefighter’s Salmon BBQ, Concerts on Broadway Series, Family Fourth of July Extravaganza, National Night Out, Free Family Fishing Day, Trunk or Treat, and Winterland Parade and a Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration. Attendance at these community celebrations shows how engaged and important these events are to the business community and citizens.

The visual arts, performing arts, community events, and Meridian’s heritage are integral components of the community’s identity. As this section reports, the culture in Meridian is distinct and alive, giving it a rich quality of life. The sense of community is evident in many celebrations and events, neighborhoods, and public institutions.
What Services are Provided in Meridian?

Public Services

This chapter discusses the characteristics of public utilities, facilities and other services provided in the Meridian area. As required by State Statute, schools, recreation, and other public services, facilities and utility components of the Comprehensive Plan are analyzed here. As part of the public services section, the report also outlines the way the City is governed, including its various boards and commissions.

The City itself has several departments, each responsible for providing specific services. This chapter will not only detail which services each City Department provides, but also services that are provided and managed by other jurisdictions, agencies or service providers. A current inventory of infrastructure like parks and pathways, fire stations, schools, and other public services are explained.

This chapter also reports how non-private service and utility providers are meeting needs today and how they plan on meeting future demand for services. Other services, like transportation, youth programs, and senior activities (see Chapter 3) were explained previously in this report and are not duplicated here.

Municipal Government, City Hall

Meridian City Hall is a three-story 100,000 square-foot building located in downtown that serves as the hub of Meridian’s municipal government. City Hall currently houses most City departments serving as a convenient “one-stop-shop” for citizens seeking services including:

1. City Clerk’s Office: The City Clerk’s Office provides support and administrative services to the Mayor and City Council, all operating departments, and the public, while maintaining for the City an essential, formal link with citizens, area businesses, other jurisdictions and a wide variety of public agencies.

2. Community Development: The Community Development Department is comprised of three divisions, including: Building Services, Land Development Services, and Planning. Building Services is responsible for activities associated with structural, fire, electrical, mechanical
and plumbing permits for residential, commercial and industrial projects. Land Development Services is responsible for plan review and coordination with the Public Works Department, to ensure that new developments are properly serviced by utilities like sewer, water and drainage. The Planning Division is divided into two groups: Current Planning and Comprehensive Planning. Current Planning is primarily responsible for processing development applications and assisting property owners and developers through the land use permitting and entitlement process, and over-the-counter inquiries. Comprehensive Planning is involved with long-range and specific area plans, transportation planning, community development, and administration of the Community Development Block Grant program.

3. Public Works: The Public Works Department consists of five divisions: Administration, Engineering, Business Operations, Water, and Wastewater. The mission of Public Works is to anticipate, plan and provide exemplary public services and facilities that support the needs of a growing community in an efficient, customer-focused and financially responsible manner. Public Works cooperates with other agencies such as the Ada County Highway District to coordinate efforts on utility work and transportation services. More discussion on the Public Works Department occurs later in this chapter.

4. Finance/Purchasing/Billing: The Finance Department is the general business management arm of city government, providing specific financial and accounting services for elected officials, City employees, and the citizens of Meridian. Basic services of the Finance Department include: budgeting, financial analysis and reporting, utility billing, accounts payable, purchasing and payroll, monitoring state and city rules and regulations, and maintenance of sound internal controls. The mission of Purchasing is to provide contract management, and procurement services through competitive public bidding to obtain maximum value for the tax dollar and to provide service to all City of Meridian departments and the public in a timely, courteous and ethical manner.

5. Parks and Recreation Department: The Parks and Recreation Department’s mission is to enhance the community’s quality of life by providing well-designed and properly maintained parks and recreational opportunities for all citizens. More discussion on the Parks and Recreation Department occurs later in this chapter.

6. Fire Department: The Fire Department’s mission is to protect and enhance the community through professionalism and compassion. More discussion on the Fire Department and the services it provides occurs later in this chapter.

7. Human Resources: Human Resources assists all City departments in determining staffing needs and coordinates recruitment to fill those needs. Recruitment efforts include working closely with the Directors of each department within the City to post and advertise open positions, processing and reviewing applications, scheduling and conducting interviews, tracking the
process of all applicants, and providing information on the progress to interested parties.

8. City Attorney’s Office: The City Attorney’s Office provides leadership to the City and works as a strategic business partner with managers and employees to help the City achieve its mission, goals and objectives. The City Attorney’s Office proactively seeks to understand and meet the needs of its customers, elected officials, and employees of the City by providing expertise, direction, support, and training in the areas of law while ensuring a safe, fair, and legally-compliant work environment.

9. Mayor’s Office: The Mayor’s Office focus is on becoming the Star of the New West, transforming Meridian into a 21st century city. Meridian is uniquely conducive to supporting a broad array of business activities while maintaining the high quality lifestyle and focus on family so greatly valued. Fulfilling the needs of businesses and families begins with having a safe and caring community that provides quality education, family-wage jobs, cutting-edge health care, diverse housing options, a trained workforce, and an abundance of recreation, shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities. Meridian seeks to be a vibrant community whose vision is to be the premier city to live, work and raise a family. The Mayor’s Offices’ main commitment is to help neighbors realize this vision.

The City of Meridian’s mission is: “We love Meridian; it’s our town and our mission is to cultivate a vibrant community by delivering superior service through committed, equipped employees dedicated to the stewardship of our community’s resources.” Meridian delivers quality service, planning, and fiscal responsibility with open spaces, strong partnerships, and various educational opportunities. Culture, unique business, venture, and an abundant choice of jobs make Meridian not just a destination, but a lifestyle.
Mayor and City Council

Meridian uses the Mayor-Council form of local government. In Meridian, the Council, which includes the Mayor, possesses both legislative and executive authority. The City Council adopts codes that govern the City in addition to applicable state and federal law. The Council also deals with property acquisition, serves on regional commissions and boards, and must approve of mayoral nominations. The Council also exercises primary control over the municipal budget.

The Mayor and a representative from each of the six council seats are elected by the citizens, each term consisting of four years. Elections for City Council are held every two years with three of the six seats up for election. Mayoral elections are held every four years.

Commissions, Committees and Boards

Citizen involvement is an essential ingredient for strong local government. The City of Meridian promotes citizen involvement by inviting residents to serve on a variety of boards, commissions, and committees designed to assist City leaders in information gathering and deliberative processes. Some of the volunteer boards and commission in Meridian are:

1. Parks & Recreation Commission: This all volunteer commission focuses its efforts on park planning, capital improvements, pathways, policies, recreation programs, and budget. The Parks & Recreation Commission makes policy recommendations to the City Council as they relate to the parks system. The Commission is composed of at least five, and up to nine members that are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. Each member serves a three-year term with no maximum on number of years of service.

Citizen involvement is an essential ingredient for strong local government. The City of Meridian promotes citizen involvement by inviting residents to serve on a variety of boards, commissions, and committees designed to assist City leaders in information gathering and deliberative processes.
2. Planning & Zoning Commission: This all volunteer commission advises the City Council on planning policies and goals, development projects and issues related to land use, zoning, transportation, and housing issues, as framed by Meridian's Comprehensive Plan. There are five members of the Planning & Zoning Commission. Each member is appointed by the Mayor, with confirmation by the Council. Terms for Commissioner are six years, with no maximum.

3. Meridian Arts Commission: This all volunteer commission works on arts/cultural policy and promotes public awareness and participation in the arts. The purpose of this advisory commission is to highlight the City’s rich cultural resources, enhance the City’s aesthetic environment, and promote the development of economic, educational, recreation, and tourism opportunities within the city through the advancement of publicly accessible arts. The Commission consists of a minimum of five members and no more than nine members at any time. Each commissioner serves a term of three years, except for the youth member that serves a one-year term. One member of the City Council serves as a liaison and ex-officio member of the Commission.

4. Historical Preservation Commission: The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) works to preserve the character and fabric of historically significant areas and structures within the City of Meridian to honor and preserve its rich heritage for future generations. The HPC is advisory to the City Council and submits an annual report regarding the Commission’s activities and accomplishments. There are currently six volunteer members on the HPC,
appointed by the Mayor with confirmation from the City Council. Terms of office for the HPC are 3-years.

5. Transportation Commission: The Transportation Commission researches and makes recommendations to the City Council related to traffic safety issues, pedestrian and bicyclist concerns, speed limits, public transportation, and priority transportation projects. The Commission provides a forum for cooperation, coordination, and communication between the City, other governmental agencies, and citizens and organizations concerned with the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This Commission is made up of nine voting and six ex-officio members which include: West Ada School District, ACHD, COMPASS, ITD, VRT and a City Councilor. Transportation Commission members are comprised of four citizens, three business owners/employees, and two members with some technical/educational expertise in transportation. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and City Council by resolution.

6. Impact Fee Advisory Committee: This Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the City Council regarding existing and proposed impact fees and fee structures to help ensure that growth pays its own way. This is an ad-hoc committee established by the Mayor and City Council.

7. Solid Waste Advisory Commission: This Commission’s purpose is to propose and recommend to the Mayor and the City Council any new or amended rules, regulations, policies, and fees relating to the orderly and efficient administration of the City’s fully-automated solid waste collection system. The Commission consists of a minimum of five members but not more than nine members serving a term of 3 years. Appointed members are selected from: one Utilities Billing Manager or designee, one Director of Public Works or designee, one City Attorney or designee, and at least three but not more than five local citizens.

In addition to the groups listed above, other organizations like the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, the Mayor’s Faith Ambassador Council, and the Mayor’s Anti-Drug Coalition allow citizens to be actively involved in serving various needs throughout the community.
Public Works

Water and Sewer

The City of Meridian owns and operates a domestic water system, sewage collection system, and a wastewater resource recovery facility (WRRF) serving the residents of Meridian.

The Water Division provides customer service and operates and maintains public wells, the distribution system, and reservoirs. The Wastewater Division provides customer service and operates and maintains the collection system, lift stations, and the wastewater treatment plant.

Unlike most communities outside of Ada County, the City of Meridian Public Works Department does not have jurisdiction over roads and highways within the City. City staff works in conjunction with ACHD projects to design improvements in coordination with road construction. The City saves money on pipe installation by removing the need to restore pavement and pay for traffic control. This also minimizes inconvenience to the travelling public. Public Works does not have jurisdiction over pressurized irrigation systems or irrigation canals either.

Water Division

Supply and Distribution

The Meridian water system consists of a large network of deep wells, booster pump stations, reservoirs and over 545 miles of six-inch to 16-inch pipe line. Twenty-three wells, ranging in capacity from 500 to 2,500 gallons per minute (gpm), are located throughout the City with a combined capacity of about 50 million gallons per day (mgd). Water storage consists of one 500,000 gallon water tower located near the Meridian

Left: View of the Meridian water tower from below
Speedway, and two two-million gallon reservoirs- one near Meridian and Ustick Roads, and one near Locust Grove and Victory Roads. The capacity of existing wells is approximately 50 million gallons per day (mgd).

Wells and reservoirs are linked via a telemetric Supervisory Controls and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to a central computer at the Water Division. This system controls reservoir levels, well on-off cycles, and pressure set points. Several wells are equipped with standby generators in the event of power failure.

Based on 2016 water use records, Meridian used 3.4 billion gallons of drinking water for its 33,000 household and commercial service connections (98,000 population), which is approximately 9.3 million gallons of water each day. While all subdivisions constructed after 1993 were required to install pressurized irrigation systems using non-potable water, significant irrigation demands exist from residential neighborhoods that were constructed prior to that time. As shown in Table 4A, winter water demand in the City is about 160 million gallons/month while summertime demand is 450 million gallons/month. Summer irrigation activity increases demand by 290 million gallons/month. In order to keep up with water demand, the City has constructed, on average, one new well per year. Expansion of the City water system is largely dictated by growth patterns.

The City maintains a simulation for modeling water impacts. The computer simulation allows Public Works to conduct water modeling as new development applications are proposed and are built. The model also helps staff to identify priority areas for both new development in the City as well as segments of the existing water distribution system that are approaching capacity. Capital improvements can then be prioritized to upgrade and extend lines that are projected to reach capacity.

### Table 4A: Meridian Water Consumption - Domestic Well Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Well Impacts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Average</td>
<td>160 million gal/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Average</td>
<td>450 million gal/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Irrigation Activity (ground water):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Demand (over winter)</td>
<td>290 million gal/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Conservation</td>
<td>1.2 billion gal/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Meridian Public Works Department, May 2017
Water main replacements are necessary to replace aging infrastructure in the Water Distribution system. Replacement projects are identified in a variety of methods, most commonly through modeling, sampling, maintenance, and repair programs. Through analysis of the distribution system and related water quality and flows the Water Division and Public Works technical staff identify areas in need of improvement and replacement. Capital funds are utilized to design and construct water infrastructure replacements identified throughout the City.

Wastewater Division

Sewer Collection

The first sewer mains for the City’s collection system were constructed nearly 100 years ago. Much of the initial sewer installed in the prior to the 1980’s was constructed of concrete and clay pipe. However, the majority of the collection system expansion occurred after PVC became the preferred pipe material. The current system is comprised of approximately 425 miles of gravity sewer mains and 6 miles of force mains. This infrastructure currently serves a population of approximately 100,000 people and includes about 1,500 commercial connections and about 33,000 residential connections (Fiscal Year 2016). The collection system includes twelve lift stations, three of which are privately owned.

The City maintains a simulation for modeling sewer impacts. The computer simulation allows Public Works to conduct sewer modeling as new development applications are proposed and are built. The model helps staff identify priority areas for development in the City as well as segments of the existing sewage collection system that are approaching capacity. Capital improvements can then be prioritized to upgrade the lines that are projected to reach capacity.
Sewer main replacements are necessary to replace aging infrastructure in the sewer collection system. Replacement projects are identified in a variety of methods, most commonly through the sewer TV and cleaning program and thorough analysis of the collection system by the Wastewater Division and Public Works technical staff. Capital funds are utilized to design and construct sewer infrastructure replacements identified throughout the City, including replacements of the sewer collection system infrastructure in the downtown sewer corridor.

Sewer Treatment

The present wastewater resource recovery facility (WRRF) began operation in 1979 with a rated capacity of 2.8 mgd. The WRRF consists of primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment followed by disinfection. Treated effluent is discharged to Five Mile Creek. The City continues to upgrade the facility following its Facility Plan and 5 year Capital Improvement Plan. The estimated design capacity at the plant today is approximately 10.2 mgd as approved by the Department of Environmental Quality. The City is in the process of completing a major upgrade to the wastewater resource recovery facility which will increase the treatment capacity to 15 million gallons per day. This project is expected to be completed in 2019. An update to the wastewater resource recovery facility plan was completed in 2012, and the City is currently in the process of updating this document again. The results of the facility plan will be used to develop the capital improvement plan for the WRRF and guide the future studies, improvements, and expansions at the plant for the next several years.

The City received a reissued NPDES Wastewater discharge permit in June of 2017. This permit includes very low nutrient limits on phosphorus and ammonia which will precipitate significant capital investment into upgrades at the wastewater

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Accounts</th>
<th>Annual Increase (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>23,245</td>
<td>14.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>24,287</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>24,857</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>25,364</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26,054</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>26,620</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>27,361</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>28,357</td>
<td>3.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>29,279</td>
<td>3.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>30,628</td>
<td>4.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>31,922</td>
<td>4.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Meridian Public Works, June 2017
resource recovery facility. Numerous sampling and monitoring requirements for the effluent, Five Mile Creek, and the Boise River are also mandated.

All proposed septic systems in the Meridian area are reviewed and approved by Central District Health. Approval is based on characteristics such as distance to groundwater and soil suitability. Today, there are relatively few active septic systems within the corporate boundaries of the City. A vast majority of dwellings in Meridian are connected to the City’s sewer system.

The demand for new sewer service accounts has continued to increase every year since 2006, as shown in Table 4B.

Below: Reclaimed water system utilizes purple pipes to distinguish from potable water pipes

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**Industrial Pretreatment**

The Industrial Pretreatment Program is responsible for execution of an industrial pretreatment program which monitors and regulates industrial and commercial wastewater discharges in the public sanitary sewer system. The pretreatment program is an integral part of the wastewater treatment process providing protection from potentially hazardous discharges. The City currently has minor industrial users such as restaurants and car washes. The City does not have any significant categorical industrial users.

**Class A Recycled Water**

The City of Meridian maintains its Class A Recycled Water program to produce and distribute recycled water for a variety of uses. Recycled water is a highly treated water resource generated at the City’s municipal wastewater resource recovery facility that meets standards for Class A reuse, as established by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The City has been producing Class A recycled water since 2009 for uses such as irrigating landscaping at the Ten Mile Interchange, some City parks, and the treatment plant site, toilet flushing, as well as a commercial car wash.

**Support Services**

The Public Works Department is also composed of support services including Engineering, Business Operations, Environmental Programs, Asset Management, and Capital Construction Inspection. These services support operation of the water and wastewater facilities, and utility planning guidance. Additionally, they provide administration, rate analysis, engineering and utility coordination, floodplain administration, environmental programs, and other special projects as assigned by the Mayor and City Council.
Stormwater

In October 1999, the Environmental Protection Agency promulgated final Phase II of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Regulations. These regulations affect, among others, small municipal separate storm sewer systems located in urbanized areas. Ada County as a whole is listed as an urbanized area in Appendix 6 of the final rule. Although the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) is responsible for all public street stormwater runoff, the City of Meridian is required to comply with EPA Construction General Permit requirements for its capital projects.

The primary impact to the City is that NPDES permits and corresponding stormwater pollution prevention measures are required during the construction of City capital improvements where ground disturbing activities exceed one acre. As a result, Meridian requires that all City-owned capital improvement projects provide and implement either an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP), or Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
Public Safety

Police Department

With the rapid rate of growth, one would expect an increase in the number of crimes occurring in Meridian. This has been slow to occur for the City of Meridian. The City takes great pride in the crime rate when compared to the dramatic increase in population. The rate of criminal offenses has remained lower than the national and state averages for several years. Table 4C provides a breakdown of crime rates at the local, state, and national level by crime type in 2015. The rate of violent and property crimes in Meridian is remaining low despite the fact that the City has grown so quickly.

In 2016, the Meridian Police Department received 52,216 calls for service. This is a decrease of 0.5% from 2015, when calls for service were 51,947. Even though the calls for service have decreased slightly, the population growth continues to increase for the City of Meridian. The Meridian Police Department wants to continue to ensure we have enough sworn officers to ensure a safe and livable community and so requested a staffing study of the agency in 2016. A Staffing and Resource Analysis review was completed for the Police Department’s patrol and traffic services. The review included the development of a police allocation model to determine the number of officers required to deliver patrol and traffic services, and to forecast future needs based on anticipated change in population and housing. The analysis suggests the addition of officers, school resource officers, neighborhood contact officers, and support staff. These new officers assist the Meridian Police Department in maintaining respectable crime rates as well as an impressive clearance rates despite all the growth in the City.

Hiring new officers also requires training and with the Public Safety Training Center, the Police Department is able to provide local on-site training for officers. Additionally, this facility allows the Police Department to host a variety of trainings which include an Advanced Academy, Incident Command System and Emergency Operations training, Women in Command, and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement trainings. These courses provided low cost trainings for the department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Violent crime</th>
<th>Property crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>91,077</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Idaho</td>
<td>1,654,930</td>
<td>3,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>321,418,820</td>
<td>1,231,566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FBI, UCR Table 8, 4
members and are attended by students from various Public Safety Agencies throughout the Treasure Valley. Hosting these types of classes is a cost savings for the Police Department and reduces out-of-state travel.

The Police Department also administers and supports several special programs including:

1. MADC – Meridian Mayor’s Anti-Drug Coalition is run from the Police Department and works collaboratively with a multitude of sectors of our community for drug education, and prevention by dealing with environmental strategies to reduce the amount of illegal drug use and drug abuse in our community.

2. National Night Out - This event builds community policing for the City of Meridian, while collaborating with local homeowners and businesses to ensure that we continue to be a safe place to live, work, and raise a family. Our Officers along with Meridian Fire and elected officials attend over 30 National Night Out events each year meeting with over 2,500 citizens. This is an opportunity for Our Officers to visit our neighborhoods in a fun, educational way.

3. Meridian Police Athletic League – The Meridian PAL is a non-profit youth recreation sports organization which is an activity program for children aged 3 to 14 that offers opportunities for youth to play with friends, develop leadership skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Meridian PAL offers baseball, flag football, and soccer which are among the best youth sports programs offered in the area.

4. Public Safety Academy – The City of Meridian’s Public Safety Academy is very unique in that the Meridian Police and Fire Department’s collaborate to build an academy, educating our community in an engaging and interactive way. Community members experience different components of our agencies to further build Police and Fire advocacy in the City of Meridian.

5. Bike Patrol – The Bike Patrol Team covers many areas throughout the City. The team responds to calls occurring throughout the summer in downtown Meridian, at the local parks, and at The Village.
6. Neighborhood Watch – The Neighborhood Watch is a very effective crime prevention program, bringing citizens together with law enforcement to deter crime and further teach community members the tools and resources available to them to be vigilant about crime prevention. Additionally, the Meridian Police Department also began supporting the online neighborhood networking program, NextDoor.com in 2014, to better connect with residential areas and to help keep residents connected with each other.

7. Prescription Drug Drop Off – The Prescription Drug Drop Off is a program where old or unwanted prescription or over-the-counter medications can be disposed of properly. The Police Department has collected over 13,780 pounds since October 2009.

Fire Department

The Meridian Fire Department was formed in 1908 and consisted of only volunteers for many years. The Meridian Rural Fire District was organized in the early 1950s. The two departments decided in the 1970s to combine forces and house their fire equipment in one station located in the center of town. The Meridian Fire Department hired its first full-time employee in 1977 serving as a Fire Marshall for the two districts. The Fire Marshall was the only full-time employee until 1991 when the first paid firefighter was hired. The Meridian Fire Department has quickly transformed from a primarily all-volunteer department into a combination department with 61 full-time firefighters.

As shown on Figure 4B, Meridian Fire has grown to five Fire Stations strategically located throughout the Meridian area. In 2005, a Fire Education Safety Center was constructed off of Locust Grove Road and is staffed by two Public Educators (one full time, 1 part time). In 2007, a state of the art training tower was built onto Station 1, providing numerous training opportunities for Fire personnel. Today, the Fire Department plans on having a total of 11 fire stations throughout the City at full build-out.

The Fire Department is managed by a team of professionals that includes a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief of Prevention, Deputy Chief of Operations, Division Chief of Training, Division Chief of Planning, three Battalion Chiefs, two Training Captains, two Fire Inspectors, two specialists in Public Safety & Education, and three Administrative Support Staff. The Meridian Fire Department responds to emergency calls in a 54 square mile jurisdiction, serving a population in excess of 108,000 residents.

The Meridian Fire Department responds to emergency calls in a 54 square mile jurisdiction, serving a population in excess of 108,000 residents. In 2016, Meridian firefighters responded to 6,275 calls for service.

**Recreation, Parks and Pathways**

**Parks and Recreation Department**

The City of Meridian, Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining public open spaces and for providing a quality system of parks and recreation facilities and positive leisure opportunities available to all persons in the community. The Department is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the pathways system and the urban forest. This parks and recreation system consists of 387 acres of parkland, 255 acres of developed parks, and 132 acres of undeveloped land. The system is made up of 19 parks (not including Lakeview Golf Course): three undeveloped sites, just less than 22 miles of pathways, the Homecourt facility, and a community center. Additionally, Parks and Recreation offers a variety of recreational programs, adult sports leagues, special events, and handles shelter/field reservations and temporary use permits.
The City of Meridian completed the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in December of 2015. The Master Plan provides a guideline for recreation development. After analyzing the Findings that resulted from the master planning process, including the Key Issues Matrix, a summary of all research, the qualitative and quantitative data, the GRASP® Level of Service analyses, and input assembled for the Master Plan, a variety of recommendations emerged to provide guidance in consideration of how to improve parks, recreation, and pathway opportunities in the City of Meridian. The recommendations describe ways to enhance the level of service and the quality of life with improvement through organizational efficiencies, financial opportunities, improved programming and service delivery, and maintenance and improvements to facilities and amenities.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan also updated the Meridian Pathways Master Plan ( Adopted in 2007 and previously amended in January of 2010) and serves as a tool to further aid in the implementation of that plan. It does not suggest any significant changes to proposed expansion of the pathway system as outlined in the original plan, but rather seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Quantify the impacts of pathway system expansion in terms of cost for ongoing maintenance, given the significant proposed increase to pathway mileage at plan build-out.

2. Establish guidelines for what portion of the pathway system is appropriate and sustainable for the City to maintain.

3. Establish City priorities for near-term pathway implementation that will have the greatest impact on connectivity.

4. Propose changes to existing policy that will facilitate ongoing expansion and designate maintenance responsibilities so as to meet the needs of the City, the development community, and other stakeholders.

The City of Meridian currently has an adopted Level of Service that is three acres of developed park land per 1,000 persons with a goal of increasing to a Level of Service Standard of four acres/1,000 persons by 2040. With recent rapid population growth, the current (2017) Level of Service is 2.6 acres per 1,000 persons, based on the most recent population estimates of 98,300. However, the department has 150 acres of undeveloped park land that once developed will raise the
Level of Service toward the goal. Current park construction projects are projected to raise the Level of Service back to the three acres/1,000 level over the next two years. The Parks and Recreation Department intends to work with the development community and other organizations whenever possible to create partnerships and bring additional parks to reality.

Finally, based on feedback from focus group participants and the community survey results from the master planning process, there is a demand for indoor recreation space. The Department’s recent acquisition in 2016 of the Homecourt gym facility from the YMCA will help to address those needs.

**Western Ada Recreation District**

There is a public park in Meridian that is not owned and maintained by the City. At 22 acres, Fuller Park, which is owned and operated by the Western Ada Recreation District, contains amenities, such as baseball fields, a fishing pond, playground areas, picnic shelters, restrooms, an open play area, a walking path, and off-street parking. Residents of Meridian also have access to a pool during the summer located in Storey Park. The pool facility at Storey Park is owned and operated by the Western Ada Recreation District.

**Solid Waste**

The City of Meridian contracts its refuse and recycling services through an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services (Agreement). Republic Services continues to perform under the terms and conditions of the Agreement and has demonstrated its commitment to providing reliable solid waste collection; innovative, effective recycling and waste reduction programs; quality customer service; valuable public outreach and education efforts; and strong community involvement to Meridian residents and businesses.

**Residential Services**

By the end of FY2016, there were 30,194 active residential trash accounts in Meridian with 26,228 of those participating in the residential recycling program. Collectively, Meridian residents threw away 39,046 tons of trash, with the average Meridian household disposing of 220 pounds of trash per month. This

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name, Facility, and Size</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian Settlers Park</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Creek Park</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes Park</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storey Park</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tully Park</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Street Park</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion Park</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chateau Park</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon Harris Park</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance Park</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasons Park</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial Park</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox Monument</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station #4 Park</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Hall Plaza</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generations Plaza</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Meridian Parks and Recreation Department, 2017.
Note: For a complete list of park amenities and features, see the Parks and Recreation website at [http://www.meridiancity.org/parks/](http://www.meridiancity.org/parks/)

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1 For more information on Solid Waste services in Meridian, see the Republic Services website at [https://www.republicservices.com/locations/idaho/meridian](https://www.republicservices.com/locations/idaho/meridian). Data from the FY2016 Republic Services Annual Report.
was an increase from 215 pounds/household/month in FY2015. The recycling program captured 4,558 tons in FY2016, with the average Meridian household recycling 29.67 pounds of materials per month.

Meridian residents continue to participate in Republic Services’ “grass only” subscription based recycling program that began in 2013. This subscription based program allows customers to order a special grass cart (green with tan lid) for $7.95/month. Grass collection occurs weekly on trash day from April through October, but the cart has year round benefits, including: leaf recycling in November and overflow trash from December through March.

The Meridian Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection site continues to be the busiest mobile collection site in Ada County. In FY2016, 5,840 vehicles delivered 116 tons of hazardous waste to the Meridian mobile site. The cost of this program is included in monthly residential trash rates.

**Commercial and Industrial Collection**

Republic Services provides collection to each commercial business in Meridian at least once a week. Commercial trash is taken to the Republic Services transfer station, consolidated with other trash, and taken to the Ada County Landfill. In FY2016 commercial trucks collected 21,244 tons of trash from Meridian businesses. Of the 1,145 Meridian businesses, 456 have active recycle containers on site. Items that can be recycled in the commercial recycling program are identical to the materials residents recycle. Commercial recycling totaled 1,435 tons in FY2016.

Roll off services are provided on request to both permanent and temporary accounts. Industrial service includes compactors or roll off boxes in a variety of sizes. Industrial trash increased

**TABLE 4E: Solid Waste Collection (Tons)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2015 Waste</th>
<th>2016 Waste</th>
<th>’15-’16 Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
<td>36,798</td>
<td>39,046</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycle</td>
<td>4,349</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass Only</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>19,020</td>
<td>21,244</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycle</td>
<td>24,327</td>
<td>27,624</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Recycling</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

throughout the year with an annual total of 27,624 tons. Republic Services also offers an industrial recycling service, which diverts several materials from the landfill for recycling via roll off hauls from customer sites. Recycled Materials include: wood, yard trimmings, appliances, plastics, and cardboard/paper. In FY2016, 2,139 industrial tons were recycled.

Other Services
Republic Services offers other special collection events throughout the year including Spring Clean Up, Fall Leaf Collection, Holiday Clean Up, Christmas Tree Pick Up, and Rake-Up Meridian. In 2016 Republic Services partnered with the Solid Waste Advisory Commission to develop Hand in Hand We Recycle! This innovative program provides opportunity for households without recycle service (such as those in apartment complexes) to participate by dropping off separated recyclable materials at the mobile collection site.

Donated Services
A total of $115,157 was donated in contractor provided services during FY2016, per Republic Services’ Agreement with the City. Donation values are based on contracted commercial rates in the City of Meridian, plus any additional temporary services. Commercial rates include; cost of removal, disposal, and container rental. In addition to services, Meridian Parks and Recreation have free access to the Transfer Station and Meridian Code Enforcement is authorized to call in abandoned items such as; appliances, furniture, and other bulky waste.

Transfer Station Collection
Located at 2130 W. Franklin Road, Republic Services’ transfer station accepts waste from commercial trucks, residential trucks, roll off trucks, mini roll off trucks, public vehicles, and local businesses. The waste collected at the transfer station is consolidated and taken to the Ada County Landfill for disposal. In FY2016, the Meridian Transfer Station (MTS) collected 155,543 tons of material. This was a large increase due in part to the temporary closer of the Boise Transfer Station, which was then diverted to MTS.
**Education**

**West Ada School District**

Public school facilities in the City of Meridian are operated by West Ada School District (formerly Joint School District No.2). Enrollment data about the school district are for the entire district, an area larger than the City of Meridian and its Area of City Impact. West Ada School District serves the cities of Meridian, Star and Eagle, western and southwestern portions of Boise, part of Garden City and the unincorporated areas of Ada County that lie between these municipalities. In total, there are 32 elementary schools, 11 middle schools (2 of which are alternative middle schools and one a magnet middle school), 6 comprehensive high schools, 3 alternative high schools, 2 charter high schools, and 2 magnet high schools throughout the district.

**Enrollment**

Not including the Pre-Kindergartners or Kidnergartners, there were 14,547 elementary-age children enrolled in West Ada School District at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. There were 9,110 middle school children enrolled in the school district.
Table 4F: Historical Fall Enrollment, West Ada School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Pre-K</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>8th</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>11th</th>
<th>12th</th>
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<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>38,521</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2,753</td>
<td>2,676</td>
<td>2,853</td>
<td>2,951</td>
<td>3,075</td>
<td>2,992</td>
<td>2,987</td>
<td>3,033</td>
<td>3,090</td>
<td>3,043</td>
<td>2,955</td>
<td>2,974</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>37,756</td>
<td>280</td>
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<td>2,779</td>
<td>2,917</td>
<td>3,032</td>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>2,942</td>
<td>2,922</td>
<td>2,995</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>3,148</td>
<td>2,974</td>
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<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>37,491</td>
<td>221</td>
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<td>2,981</td>
<td>2,884</td>
<td>2,953</td>
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<td>2,657</td>
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<td>2011-2012</td>
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<td>2,713</td>
<td>2,806</td>
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<td>2,930</td>
<td>2,868</td>
<td>2,874</td>
<td>2,911</td>
<td>2,918</td>
<td>2,795</td>
<td>2,913</td>
<td>2,766</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>35,933</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2,722</td>
<td>2,852</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>2,843</td>
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<td>2,896</td>
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<td>3,056</td>
<td>2,528</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>35,322</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>2,849</td>
<td>2,839</td>
<td>2,803</td>
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<td>2,830</td>
<td>2,509</td>
<td>2,399</td>
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<td>2,799</td>
<td>2,762</td>
<td>2,681</td>
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<td>2,677</td>
<td>2,476</td>
<td>2,414</td>
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<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>33,432</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2,629</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>2,628</td>
<td>2,478</td>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>2,543</td>
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<td>2,583</td>
<td>2,491</td>
<td>2,289</td>
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<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>30,582</td>
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<td>2,446</td>
<td>2,537</td>
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<td>2,259</td>
<td>2,517</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>2,306</td>
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<td>2,361</td>
<td>2,237</td>
<td>2,162</td>
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<td>2,322</td>
<td>2,146</td>
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<td>2003-2004</td>
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<td>1,987</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>2,103</td>
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<td>2,197</td>
<td>2,104</td>
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<td>2,070</td>
<td>1,958</td>
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<td>2,189</td>
<td>1,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
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<td>2,007</td>
<td>1,886</td>
<td>1,977</td>
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<td>2,024</td>
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<td>2000-2001</td>
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<td>1,846</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>2,007</td>
<td>1,832</td>
<td>1,911</td>
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<td>1,954</td>
<td>1,791</td>
<td>1,612</td>
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<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>22,820</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1,847</td>
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<td>1,830</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>1,767</td>
<td>1,834</td>
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<td>1,861</td>
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<td>1,561</td>
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<td>1998-1999</td>
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<td>1,743</td>
<td>1,688</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>1,698</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>1,482</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>20,788</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>1,656</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>1,549</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>1,680</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>1,475</td>
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<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>19,624</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1,456</td>
<td>1,658</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>1,543</td>
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<td>1,682</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>1,321</td>
<td>1,177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


District at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. High school enrollment at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, for grades 9 through 12, was 11,811 students. Table 4G shows historical student enrollment in West Ada School District, which has doubled over the last 20 years.

Land acquisition for future school sites within West Ada School District are based upon the following acreage standards:

- Elementary Schools 10-12 acres;
- Middle Schools 40 acres; and
- High Schools 55 acres.

As shown on the City’s Future Land Use Map (Appendix D), about one elementary school is projected within each square mile of the City.

Bus Transportation

School bus transportation in West Ada School District is a cooperative effort involving transportation staff, schools, parents, students, and the community. The West Ada School District contracts with Cascade Transportation Company to operate and shuttle students. The District bus facility is located 2

2 For more information on busing, see the West Ada School District’s FAQ at https://www.westada.org/Page/13866.
on Franklin Road, between Linder and Ten Mile Roads in Meridian. To reduce the need for safety busing, the district works with ACHD and City staff to develop safe routes to school. Through this collaborative effort, projects are identified with school boundaries, walk zones and safety busing in mind.

**Elementary Schools**

Traditional elementary schools include kindergarten through grade five. Most of the elementary schools in the district have a traditional school year calendar, but there are several which operate on a modified calendar. The district operates 32 elementary schools, each strategically located through the 384 square mile district. These schools typically range in size from 350 to 750 students. The buildings vary in age, with the oldest being 59 years old and the newest having opened in 2016.

**Middle Schools**

Middle schools include 6th through 8th graders. Like most of the elementary schools, the middle schools have a traditional school year calendar. The district’s 11 middle schools serve as a bridge for pre-adolescents as they move from elementary

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**Change in Enrollment with City Population**

![Graph showing change in enrollment with city population](image)

*Note: See Table 2B and 4F for data.*
to high school. Academic emphasis is placed on refinement of basic skills through instruction in traditional subjects such as language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. The curriculum in middle school is expanded to include more opportunities to pursue the fine arts and other elective choices.

High Schools
All of the district’s 13 high schools offer a full academic program with courses in basic skills and college-preparatory skills. Central Academy, Meridian Academy and Eagle Academy, the district’s alternative high schools, provide opportunities for at-risk students. Meridian, Centennial, Eagle, Mountain View and Rocky Mountain High Schools are all 5-A classification for athletic competition and other competitive programs such as music, drama, and debate. Renaissance High School and Idaho Fine Arts Academy are both Schools of Choice. Renaissance utilizes a lottery application system and the Idaho Fine Arts Academy an audition application.

Charter and Magnet Programs
In addition to traditional scholastic opportunities, West Ada School District offers a variety of Charter and Magnet schools to accommodate, encourage, and challenge all students. Magnet schools are available at all levels and include:

The Arts: Chief Joseph School of the Arts, Christine Donnell School of the Arts, Eagle Elementary School of the Arts, Gateway School of Language and Culture, and Pioneer School of the Arts.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education: Galileo K-8, Summerwind STEM Academy (K-5), Eliza Hart Spalding STEM Academy (K-5), and Barbara Morgan STEM Academy (K-5). STEM programs have also been expanded at all middle and high schools.

Other Magnets: Gateway School of Languages and Culture, and Renaissance High School. Renaissance has a fully recognized International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Students complete their Associates degrees while completing their high school diplomas. Strong partnerships with Idaho State University and the College of Western Idaho formed the foundation of this program.

Private Education Opportunities
In addition to the public school system, Meridian has several private schools opportunities. These facilities cater to all children of all ages, from pre-school through high school. Some of the larger private schools in Meridian are: Cole Valley Christian, Challenger School, and The Ambrose School. There are several other, smaller private schools in Meridian as well.

Continuing Education
The City has a solid partnership with the education institutions in Meridian, primarily West Ada School District, and Idaho State University (ISU) who opened the doors to ISU-Meridian in the fall of 2009. Students at ISU specialize in Law and Leadership, Research and Medical Arts, and International Studies. The City has been working with ISU to not only strengthen educational programs but to create partnerships with the private sector. The ISU President’s Southwestern Idaho Advisory Council on Health
Science Education and Economic Excellence focuses on specific business and research opportunities. This Council of business and educational leaders helps prepare ISU to expand health science education opportunities and support the efforts of The CORE.

Other colleges and universities in the Meridian area include (main campus location in parenthesis): Boise State University (Boise), University of Idaho Extension (Boise), College of Western Idaho (Nampa), College of Idaho (Caldwell), Northwest Nazarene University (Nampa), Stevens-Henager College (Boise), Carrington College (Boise), and Treasure Valley Community College (Ontario, OR).

Libraries
Separate from the City, is the Meridian Library District. The mission of the Meridian Library District is to support the community by enriching lives, igniting curiosity, and cultivating connections. The Library District currently has two traditional libraries, one in the Silverstone Business Campus and the main library branch on Cherry Lane. The library also operates unBound, a technology lab on Main Street and Broadway Ave. In an ongoing commitment to offer services to the entire community, Meridian Library operates its bookmobile 7 days a week at locations throughout the District.

Public Utilities
Electricity
Idaho Power Company is an electric utility engaged in the generation, transmission, distribution, sale and purchase of electric energy. Idaho Power provides electrical services throughout the City of Meridian and the Area of City Impact. Idaho Power is a public service company regulated by the Idaho Public Utility Commission, the Oregon Public Utility Commission and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Power is predominantly supplied by 17 hydroelectric generation facilities on the Snake River system. Power is also supplied through a shared ownership of three coal-fired generation plants located in Wyoming, Montana and Oregon. Additional generation is provided through Idaho Power’s ownership of three natural gas-fired generation plants. Idaho Power’s headquarters are in Boise, Idaho. They have an employee base of approximately 2,000 people.

\[\text{For more information, see the Meridian Library District's website at http://www.mld.org/}.\]

Today, Idaho Power serves a 24,000 square-mile service area and roughly 1,000,000 people in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. As of May 2017, Idaho Power serviced approximately 42,500 residential and general business customers within the City of Meridian limits. With 17 low-cost hydroelectric power plants as the core of its generation portfolio, Idaho Power’s 530,000 residential, business and agricultural customers pay some of the nation’s lowest prices for electricity.

Idaho Power facilities currently located in the Meridian area include transmission lines and seven stations, one located at the intersection of Locust Grove and McMillan Roads; the second located at Black Cat Road and Franklin Road; the third located near the intersection of Franklin Road and E. 2nd Street; the fourth near the intersection of Ten Mile and Ustick Roads; the fifth near the intersection of Stoddard and Overland Roads, the sixth located at the intersection of W. Franklin Rd. and Cloverdale Rd., and the seventh located in the area of S. Eagle Rd. and Amity Rd. Figure 4D depicts the general location of electric utility facilities of a voltage of 69,000 volts or greater. Typically, public streets and road rights-of-way serve as corridors for electric facilities. Transmission lines are usually located on road rights-of-way or private easements that Idaho Power Company acquires from property owners. Additional transmission lines and substations will be necessary in the future in order to service Meridian’s growing needs. Designation of the locations of future electric utility facilities shown in Figure 4D applies to a general utility corridor area rather than to a specific site.

Idaho Power takes a proactive stance in the planning process and is committed to strengthening communication with Meridian so that both the City’s and Idaho Power’s goals can be mutually recognized and implemented. In December 2012, Idaho Power completed the Eastern Treasure Valley Electric Plan. The plan involved a Citizen Advisory Committee to assist Idaho Power in the placement of potential future locations for transmission lines and stations. Idaho Power employs a three-part strategy: responsible planning, responsible development and protection of resources, and responsible energy use, which ensures they approach the current and future demands thoughtfully. Wise use of energy helps ensure fair priced and reliably electricity today and tomorrow.

Communications

Centurylink provides basic telephone service and CableOne provides cable T.V. service, within the City of Meridian and its Area of City Impact. Both companies provide internet services. Several telecommunications companies offer wireless and
FIGURE 4D: EXISTING IDAHO POWER LINES/STATIONS NEAR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

cellular phone service and other providers offer internet and T.V. service through other wireless means. Portions of the City have been equipped with fiber-optics.

**Gas**

Intermountain Gas Company is the sole provider of natural gas in southern Idaho, including Meridian. There are dual, high-pressure, natural gas pipelines that bisect the southwest part of the Area of City Impact. These pipelines and the associated easement are discussed further in the Hazardous Areas section of this report.

**Irrigation**

Irrigation water in Meridian is supplied by a series of irrigation canals and laterals diverted from the Boise River. Three main canals serve the City and its Area of City Impact: New York Canal, Ridenbaugh Canal, and Settlers’ Canal. Maintenance and operation of the New York Canal and its laterals is performed by the Boise Project Board of Control, under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. Both the Board of Control and the Bureau of Reclamation review rights-of-way, easements, road crossings, relocation of facilities, utility crossings, and other related matters for the New York Canal. Water rights associated with the New York Canal are administered by the Nampa and Meridian Irrigation District (NMID). The NMID is also responsible for maintenance and operation of the Ridenbaugh Canal and its laterals and administration of associated water rights. Settlers’ Canal is operated and maintained by Settlers’ Irrigation District, while its laterals are maintained by the water users. Settlers’ Irrigation District is responsible for administration of water rights associated with Settlers’ Canal.
What are the Physical and Cultural Features of Meridian?

As required by Idaho State Statute, this section of the report includes a discussion of Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors, Agriculture, and Special Sites and Historic Resources. These physical, cultural, historical and natural resources (and obstacles) form the basis of the community and affect growth and development.

Analysis of the City’s natural resources includes climate, air quality, geology, hydrology, soils, and vegetation. Special sites, including community landmarks and natural features that are important to the community are then identified in this section. Agriculture has both natural/physical and social/cultural impacts on the community and is addressed next, followed by Historic Resources representing Meridian’s heritage. Hazardous areas, those that could pose a threat or danger to the community if not properly administered, are addressed right before concluding this section. The last couple of paragraphs concern National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors.

Natural, Special, Historic, & Agricultural Resources

Community Concerns

When the 2002 version of the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan was composed, citizen groups were formed to discuss issues and concerns regarding natural resources and community character. The following is a brief synopsis of some of those concerns, which have also been reinforced in recent years, and are included as goals within the current City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan.

Meridian residents tend to value their natural resources and are interested in preserving and protecting them while recognizing a need for growth and development. Water quality/pollution, canal tiling and piping of ditches, noise pollution, air quality, floodplains, connectivity, density, neighborhood services, natural habitat, agricultural preservation, and open space preservation were the top concerns expressed.

As growth continues, increased pressures are placed on natural resources. Productive agricultural soils, vegetation, and waterways are all valuable resources that the residents of Meridian enjoy and want to preserve. While development is expected within the Area of City Impact, a maze of monotonous development is not desired, either. City leaders and citizens
focus on trying to balance open spaces and Meridian’s agricultural heritage with development and growth. Development in Meridian which expresses concerns and appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of the physical environment should be encouraged. Meridian has seen much of its natural resources change over the years from agricultural open spaces to a growing city. Growth projected for Meridian emphasizes the need for attention to Meridian’s character, specifically its natural and historic resources. Providing and protecting unique sites and resources will assure continuance of the quality of life that the residents have come to know and expect.

Natural Resources

Climate

The City of Meridian and surrounding area is favored by a mild, arid climate. While summer hot periods rarely last longer than a few days, temperatures of 100°F or higher occur nearly every year. July is the average warmest month, with the average temperature of 75.8°F. January is the average coolest month with an average temperature of 31.3°F. The normal precipitation pattern in the Meridian area shows a December winter average of 1.34 inches of precipitation and a very pronounced summer low of about 0.30 inches in August. Meridian has a United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zone designation of 7a, with some areas of 6b. Meridian’s elevation is approximately 2,600 feet above sea level.

Air Quality

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) regularly monitors air pollutant levels in Ada County. During the 1970s and early 1980s the County experienced violations of the national standards for carbon monoxide (CO) and Particulate Matter (PM10). As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the area as nonattainment for these two pollutants. Ada County, however, has not experienced any violations of the national standards for CO since 1986. In 1999, EPA removed Ada County’s designation of nonattainment for PM10. In 2001, IDEQ submitted a Maintenance Plan for CO that can help the progress of the area into attainment, and in 2002 a maintenance plan for PM10.


As a result of efforts to restrict CO and PM10 pollutant sources, Northern Ada County is currently classified as a Maintenance Area for CO and PM10. Automobile and area source emissions are the two major sources of CO. The main sources of PM10 are fugitive road dust and agriculture. For more information on Air Quality, see the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality website.

Geology

The Meridian area lies within the Snake River and Boise River Plains. Geology consists of a series of volcanic lava flows interbedded with soil layers. Most outcrops within a few miles of Meridian expose black basalt lava flows on the Snake River Plain. Significant geologic areas include the Snake River and its tributary, the Boise River, plus the Idaho Batholith.

Generally, geology-related issues in the region involve the basalts of the Snake River Plain or the windblown silt and sand that covers the basalt. The windblown material on the plain in the Meridian area supports some of the best farmland in southwest Idaho, but its properties can create problems for construction. Large structures placed directly on this material rather than on engineered foundations may settle because of compaction or the spreading of the unconsolidated material.

Hydrology

The hydrology of the area is affected by local agricultural and development practices. Surface water within the Area of City Impact includes the Boise River and several perennial and intermittent creeks, plus an extensive network of canals, laterals and drains. These surface water features contribute to a complex and robustly recharged aquifer system. Groundwater is currently the only source of potable water for the City. Water meeting EPA safe drinking water standards is readily accessible, however, aesthetic contaminants, such as iron and manganese are present and must be avoided or treated. The primary regulated contaminant of concern for Meridian is uranium, which occurs naturally in shallow aquifer units. Although treatment is possible, the City’s strategy for dealing with this contaminant is to avoid it by drilling test wells and completing production wells at other depths. Twenty-three wells ranging from 160 to 800 feet deep are located throughout the City to provide drinking water to residents.

Soils

An understanding of soil properties makes it possible to predict suitability or limitations for present and future uses. In some cases, limited soil absorption for a domestic septic
tank, combined with a high seasonable water table, limits the capacity of the soil to absorb and filter additional liquid being discharged by a drainfield. The probable result is usually contamination of groundwater supplies. Soils that are shallow or water-saturated do not have adequate volume to absorb and filter sewage effluent. Figure 5A shows common soil types in the Meridian area.

Vegetation

Trees provide shade and wildlife habitat, reduce heat island effects, reduce soil erosion, and improve air quality. Throughout the Meridian area are natural tree and shrub corridors, usually along the creeks and drains. Not only do these vegetation resources provide aesthetic values and recreation opportunities, they are also critical for wildlife, allowing for the migration of species between developed areas. Without these riparian zone corridors and the ability to move through them, many species would not have habitat areas large enough to support them. Protection and preservation of natural vegetation along all creeks and drains within the Meridian area assures that residents are able to continue viewing wildlife and natural scenery, while preserving a valuable natural resource. There are no forests in Meridian, but outside of the riparian zones previously mentioned, portions of the City are heavily planted with trees and shrubs. Parks and subdivisions contribute to the recreational and aesthetic values of the City, and enhance the appearance of urban areas as they are typically densely landscaped.

Agriculture

Much farmland in the Meridian area has, or is being converted into, urban development. However, there are still some prime agricultural lands in production within Meridian’s Area of City Impact. For the purposes of this report, prime farmland is defined...
as land that has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fossil fuels, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor and with minimal soil erosion, while also having access to irrigation water. Figure 5B shows the irrigated agricultural land, meadows, and dry grazing land in Meridian.

While rapid growth has converted 24,243 acres of agricultural lands into roads, houses, and shopping centers over the past 50 years, there is still 8,505 acres of undeveloped land with soils considered to be prime farmland (if irrigated) within Meridian’s Area of City Impact (AOCI). Within this area, 6,725 acres of this prime farmland are in active use (irrigated), and there is an additional 6,788 acres of open space that is not prime farmland, but could be used for other agricultural uses. With a rich history built on agriculture, Meridian would like to preserve some of its rural character, protect opportunities for local produce, maintain and expand diversity in employment opportunities, and preserve a variety of housing and lifestyle choices, such as living on working agricultural land or open space.

South Meridian

In 2008, Meridian in cooperation with Ada County began the process of evaluating current and future land uses in South Meridian. This study area, loosely defined between I-84, Kuna, Boise, and the Ada-Canyon County line, was eventually adopted into the Meridian Area of City Impact. While the process clearly identified which city that County residents and stakeholders

Table 5A: Agricultural Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Within Meridian Area of City Impact (AOCI)</th>
<th>2014 (Acres)</th>
<th>2017 (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Area</td>
<td>39,627.01</td>
<td>39,535.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Developed</td>
<td>22,971.36</td>
<td>24,242.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed Since 1960</td>
<td>21,867.16</td>
<td>23,138.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development on Prime Farmland (If irrigated)</td>
<td>17,359.67</td>
<td>18,382.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Remaining Undeveloped Land</td>
<td>16,655.66</td>
<td>15,293.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Prime Farmland</td>
<td>7,542.94</td>
<td>6,725.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Prime Farmland (If Irrigated)</td>
<td>9,527.98</td>
<td>8,505.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Not Prime Farmland</td>
<td>7,127.68</td>
<td>6,787.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2017. Note: Development status determined by existing City limits, Roadway right-of-way, County subdivisions, and pending development applications as of June, 2017. Agricultural exempt properties (determined by State tax codes, 2017) were subtracted from City limits and County subdivisions.

Note: See Table 5A for data. Prime farmland assumes irrigated soils.
most identified with, either Meridian or Kuna, no land uses were selected and the entire area was instead designated as a Future Planning and Referral Area, to be determined later. In 2012, through a second round of public outreach and planning efforts, the City worked with stakeholders to identify future land uses for this area. An “ultra-low” density future land use designation was developed as part of this process.

This new land use, Rural/estate Residential, is intended to protect rural lifestyles, while allowing for small ranchettes and rural neighborhoods, such as clustered developments. Clustered developments consist of a small neighborhood of homes developed in relatively close proximity, to reduce utility costs, and are surrounded by open space or integrated with community farming areas. These types of developments can help transition to nearby urban projects and also protect larger agricultural uses into the future.

Fields District

At the time of this report, the Fields District, a study area in the northwest corner of Meridian, is being evaluated for agricultural and bioscience related opportunities through private, public-private, and public-public initiatives. This study is evaluating available land, local and state policies, market demand, partnership, capital needs, and human resources for a variety of unique economic development and marketing initiatives not only in northwest Meridian, but the in Treasure Valley as a whole. Some of the outcomes from this process may involve identifying and preserving for agricultural related land uses, tourism, education, economic development, clustered subdivisions, and/or food security.
Special Sites and Historic Resources

Historic Resources

Meridian has a unique, storied history. Preservation of that history is important because of the richness and meaning that it adds to the lives of its residents and the link it provides between the past and future. As development has increased, however, rural historic resources throughout the region have disappeared.

Historic preservation in Idaho began in 1881 with the creation of the Historic Society of Idaho Pioneers. In 1907, the Idaho State Historical Society, a state agency serving several preservation functions, was formed. Preservation efforts in Idaho began in earnest in 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. As shown in Table 5B, there are several Meridian properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to these properties, Ada County has identified a number of architectural resources found within the Area of City Impact.

Historic commercial buildings recorded within the City reflect its important agricultural heritage. They include grain elevators, a feed mill, a wagon shop, a cheese factory, and a number of shops. Historic public buildings include a public library, Meridian Rural High School, and a municipal pumping station, all constructed prior to 1923. The history of town settlement is also reflected in the many private historic residences that have been recorded.

Outside the City Core, but within the Area of City Impact, architectural resources include historic farmsteads, residences, hay derricks, irrigation facilities, and schools. Some of these, such as the White Cross School/Hamming Farmstead, are no longer present due to road widening and residential development. A study of historical irrigation in Ada County recorded a number of agricultural features within Meridian’s Area of City Impact. These include the Ridenbaugh Canal Check Dam and associated structures, the Ten Mile Check/Weir structures, the Sundell Lateral Lava Rock Check, and various Settler’s (Lemp) Canal features.

No Geological sites or monuments have been identified in Meridian, nor are there any Native American sites recorded within Meridian’s Area of City Impact. However, the Five Mile Creek is noted in Ada County’s 2006 Historic Preservation Plan as a potential site for archaeological exploration. Crossing of this facility requires a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers which triggers a site investigation for historic and cultural resources.

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Table 5B: National Register-Listed Historical Resources, Meridian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register #</th>
<th>Resource Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5001599</td>
<td>Bell, R.H. and Jessie, House</td>
<td>137 E. Pine St.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001600</td>
<td>Hill, Clara, House</td>
<td>1123 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82000210</td>
<td>Hunt, E. F., House</td>
<td>49 E. State St.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82000223</td>
<td>Meridian Exchange Bank</td>
<td>109 E. 2nd St.</td>
<td>Removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000122</td>
<td>Mittleider Farmstead Historic District</td>
<td>575 Rumpel Ln.</td>
<td>Removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000905</td>
<td>Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co.</td>
<td>815 N. Main St.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82000227</td>
<td>Neal, Halbert F. and Grace, House</td>
<td>101 W. Pine St.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96001506</td>
<td>Tolleth House</td>
<td>134 E. State Ave.</td>
<td>Exists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Hazardous Areas

Besides floodplains, some heavy industry located primarily near the rail corridor, and gas stations scattered throughout the community, there are few other hazards or hazardous areas that are noteworthy in the Meridian area. Without large industrial complexes, an airport, petroleum tank farms and other uses which tend to generate safety and pollution concerns, the City of Meridian is relatively free of hazardous areas which plague larger metropolitan areas. As more development occurs however, safety and hazardous areas will likely increase from more service stations, increased traffic, and storage and conveyance of hazardous chemicals associated with certain businesses. While federal regulations provide protection to a degree, as development increases, so will the potential for spills, accidents, and fires.

Natural Gas Pipeline

As shown in Figure 5C, there is a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that runs through the northwest and southwest areas of Meridian. This pipeline operates at a maximum pressure of 850 PSIG and carries only natural gas. There is typically a 75-foot wide easement that is associated with the pipeline. Coupled with the gas transmission pipeline, there is an existing liquefied natural gas plant located in the northwest part of the Area of City Impact, at 4014 N. Can-Ada Road. Liquefied natural gas is gas that has been converted temporarily to liquid form for ease of storage or transport; liquefied natural gas takes up about 1/600th the volume of natural gas in the gaseous state. It is odorless, colorless, non-toxic and non-corrosive. Hazards include flammability, freezing and asphyxiation. The City and the gas company have certain restrictions and specific provisions when developing on or around the gas pipeline.
State Highways

State Highways are typically posted for higher-speeds and are considered by many in the community to be hazardous. There are four ITD roadways that currently traverse through Meridian: Interstate 84, SH 55 (Eagle Road), U.S. 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard), and SH 69 (Meridian Road). Many of the accidents that occur in Meridian are along State Highways. The City has worked, and will continue to work with ITD, ACHD and COMPASS on improving safety along State Highways for motorists and pedestrians. Some of the safety projects that the City would like to see include: additional pedestrian facilities, intersection improvements, and improved access management.

Weeds

There are vast and far reaching economic and environmental impacts of invasive weeds. Idaho has about 800 of the nation’s 2,000 weed species present, most of which are alien to the state. Noxious weeds overwhelm native plant communities and disturbed areas, spreading steadily year by year. Importing natural controls is not possible for all weeds, and may take many years and significant financial resources to introduce natural controls. Therefore, it is important to educate and implement aspects of weed management. Prevention and inspection are the most economical management system for reducing the rate of noxious weed spread.

Floodplains

The City of Meridian is a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and regulates development in flood prone areas. Although located in the high desert, over 24 miles of intermittent and year-round streams are found within Meridian’s Area of City Impact. These streams are unique because they also serve an irrigation purpose. These dual-purpose waterways have been channelized and widened to allow them to carry large flows in the event of a canal failure. Even though the streams have been modified four streams have associated Special Flood Hazard Areas. Flood events have occurred in the early spring when rain and rapid snowmelt combine. Meridian has experienced such flooding events in 1963 and 1982.

As a participating community in the NFIP, Meridian establishes Floodplain Overlay Districts and regulates all development in the Districts through permits. Development includes activities such as grading, filling, building structures, and even storage of materials. The purpose of floodplain management is to protect life-safety, guide development in the flood-prone areas that is consistent with the requirements for the conveyance of...
flood flows, and minimize the expense and inconveniences to the individual property owners and the general public caused by flooding.

Meridian currently maintains good standing in the NFIP by meeting or exceeding minimum floodplain development standards. Additionally, Meridian is a member of the Community Rating System (CRS). This is an NFIP program that rewards communities that adopt standards above minimum requirements. The CRS also provides residents discounts on flood insurance premiums.

National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors

During the 2007 Idaho State legislative session, the Local Land Use Planning Act was amended to require that Comprehensive Plans incorporate an additional element to address National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has been tasked with identifying national corridors.

Designating a National Corridor does not constitute a recommendation or a proposal to build additional transmission facilities; it simply serves to spotlight the congestion or constraints adversely affecting consumers in an area. The DOE issued two draft National Corridor designations; one in the Northeastern States and one in the Southwestern States. The State of Idaho is indirectly affected as several transmission facilities either cross the state or emanate from the state toward the congested area. Idaho Power has provided maps illustrating their current and proposed facilities within the Meridian Area of City Impact and the Treasure Valley. Should the Idaho State Public Utilities Commission notify the County of other federally mandated corridors, the Comprehensive Plan and this report will need to be updated.

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2017.
Summary

This report is a companion to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, last adopted in April of 2011, and most recently amended October 2016. By separating relevant information about the City’s history, present day conditions, trends, and current strategic plan for its future, the Existing Conditions Report 2014 allows the Comprehensive Plan to be a clear and concise vision document. By understanding what Meridian’s resources are, its history, and some of its recent initiatives, this document serves to identify planning, policy, and services which should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. In this regard, the Existing Conditions Report is not only a valuable planning and decision making tool, but a means to measure progress.

The source documentation for this report is largely composed of material which, with time, changes. Given that, the Existing Conditions Report is a living document, and as sufficient time has passed or significant changes occur within the City, updates will be made to retain its relevance as a companion document to the Comprehensive Plan. It is envisioned that this report will be updated approximately every three years.