

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT **2022**

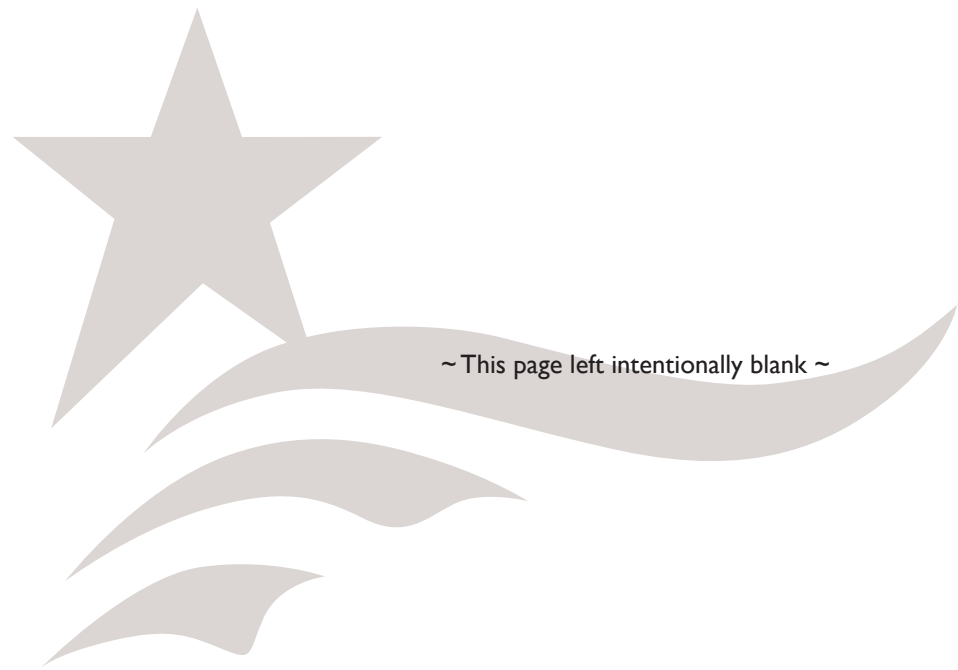
ADDENDUM TO THE CITY OF MERIDIAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted by Resolution # 22-2347
On October 25, 2022



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EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT 2022

**ADDENDUM TO THE CITY OF MERIDIAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN,
BY RESOLUTION No. 22-2347, ON OCTOBER 25, 2022**

Prepared by:

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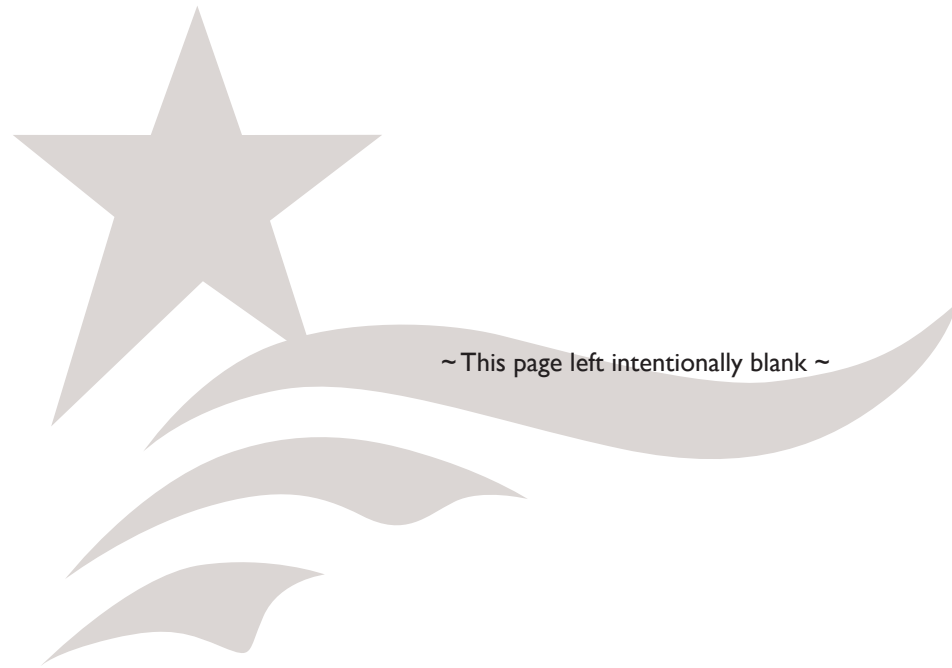


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction **1-1**

- Review of the Report 1-1
- Comprehensive Plan 1-3
- History 1-4

The People **2-1**

- Population, Housing, and Economic Development 2-1
- Population and Demographic Characteristics 2-2
- Housing Characteristics 2-14
- Housing and Urban Development 2-18
- Economic Development 2-20

Community Development **3-1**

- Land Use, Transportation, and Community Design 3-1
- Land Ownership 3-2
- Zoning & Land Use 3-3
- Future Land Uses 3-4
- Area of City Impact 3-6
- Special Planning Areas 3-7
- Transportation 3-8
- Linking Transportation and Land Use 3-14
- Transportation Choice 3-14
- Community Design 3-18

Services Provided **4-1**

- Public Services 4-1
- Municipal Government, City Hall 4-1
- Public Works 4-7
- Public Safety 4-12

- Recreation, Parks, and Pathways 4-19
- Solid Waste 4-23
- Education 4-26
- Libraries 4-30
- Public Utilities 4-30

Physical and Cultural Features **5-1**

- Natural, Special, Historic, & Agricultural Resources 5-1
- Sustainability 5-7
- Hazardous Areas 5-8

Summary **6-1**

FIGURES

Introduction 1-1

- Figure 1A. Heart of the Valley 1-2

The People 2-1

- Figure 2A. Population Change per Decade 2-2
- Figure 2B. Population Growth 2-2
- Figure 2C. Aggregated Population Change 2-3
- Figure 2D. Comparison of Ages by Area 2-4
- Figure 2E. Change in Population Groups, Interval 2-5
- Figure 2F. Change in Median Age 2-5
- Figure 2G. Change in Population Groups, Total 2-5
- Figure 2H. Change in Median Age, Aggregated 2-5
- Figure 2I. Racial and Ethnicity Change 2-6
- Figure 2J. Racial and Ethnicity Composite 2-6
- Figure 2K. Comparison of Ages by Gender 2-7
- Figure 2L. Change in Attainment 2-8
- Figure 2M. Change in Attainment by Gender 2-8
- Figure 2N. Comparison of Attainment by Area 2-8
- Figure 2O. Attainment by Gender Comparison 2-8
- Figure 2P. Change in Cost of Living for Boise, ID (Metro) . 2-10
- Figure 2Q. Mean Income by Area 2-12
- Figure 2R. Change in Mean Income, 2014 to 2020 2-12
- Figure 2S. Poverty Rate by Year and Area 2-13
- Figure 2T. Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment 2-13
- Figure 2U. Comparison of Housing Unit Types 2-15
- Figure 2V. Housing Costs as a % of Income by Type 2-16
- Figure 2W. Change in Housing Cost as a % of Income by Type 2-16
- Figure 2X. Median Sales Price, Ada County 2-17
- Figure 2Y. Median Sales Price and Total Change by Area . 2-17
- Figure 2Z. Urban Renewal Districts 2-23

- Figure 2AA. Change in Establishments by Total 2-24
- Figure 2AB. Change in Establishments by % 2-24
- Figure 2AC. Change in Employment Age Groups 2-26
- Figure 2AD. Change in Employment Income Groups 2-26
- Figure 2AE. Change in Meridian Unemployment Rate . . . 2-28
- Figure 2AF. Origin of Meridian Establishment Employees . 2-29
- Figure 2AG. Change in Employment Age Groups 2-31
- Figure 2AH. Change in Employment Income Groups 2-31
- Figure 2AI. Meridian Employment to Meridian Labor Force Comparison 2-32
- Figure 2AJ. Destination of Meridian Labor Force 2-34

Community Development 3-1

- Figure 3A. Comparison of Private to Non-private Land Area 3-2
- Figure 3B. Meridian Area of City Impact (AOCI) 3-6
- Figure 3C. Functional Classification 3-9
- Figure 3D. Roadway Traffic Activity 3-11

Services Provided 4-1

- Figure 4A. Meridian Fire District and Service Areas 4-17
- Figure 4B. Change in Enrollment Groups as a % of Whole 4-27
- Figure 4C. Enrollment Compared to City Population 4-27
- Figure 4D. West Ada School Enrollment Boundaries, 2021-2022 4-29
- Figure 4E. Existing Idaho Power Infrastructure 4-32

Physical and Cultural Features 5-1

- Figure 5A. Soils in the Meridian Area 5-3
- Figure 5B. Agricultural Tax Exempt Land in Meridian 5-4

- Figure 5C. Prime Farmland by Jurisdiction.....5-6
- Figure 5D. Gas Transmission in Meridian5-9
- Figure 5E. Floodplains in Meridian..... 5-12

Summary **6-1**

TABLES

Introduction 1-1

The People 2-1

- Table 2A. Historical Census Population, Meridian 2-2
- Table 2B. Communities in Motion 2050 Vision Forecast . . . 2-3
- Table 2C. Age by Place 2-4
- Table 2D. Meridian Population Groups Over Time 2-4
- Table 2E. Racial and Ethnic Composition by Jurisdiction. . . 2-6
- Table 2F. Gender by Age Groups 2-7
- Table 2G. Educational Attainment by Jurisdiction and Gender (25 and older) 2-9
- Table 2H. Comparative Cost of Living Index, Council for Community and Economic Research. 2-11
- Table 2I. Household Income by Jurisdiction. 2-12
- Table 2J. Percent of Residents Living in Poverty. 2-13
- Table 2K. Total Meridian Housing Units by Year 2-15
- Table 2L. Persons per Housing Unit. 2-15
- Table 2M. Housing Costs as a % of Household Income . . 2-16
- Table 2N. Median Rental Costs. 2-17
- Table 2O. Home Sale Values in Ada County and Meridian 2-18
- Table 2P. Meridian Establishments by Supersector 2-25
- Table 2Q. Employment: Meridian Jobs by Sector, Age, and Income 2-27
- Table 2R. Labor Force: Meridian Resident Jobs by Sector, Age, and Income 2-30
- Table 2S. Meridian Commercial Vacancy 2-33

Community Development 3-1

- Table 3A. Non-private Parcel Ownership in the AOCL 3-2
- Table 3B. Roadway Miles by Classification. 3-10

- Table 3C. Average Commute Time. 3-12

Services Provided 4-1

- Table 4A. Meridian Water Consumption - Potable Water Irrigation Impacts 4-8
- Table 4B. Historical Sewer Service Accounts 4-10
- Table 4C. Meridian Police Department Calls for Service . . 4-13
- Table 4D. Crime Estimation in Idaho Report: Year 2020. . . 4-13
- Table 4E. Prescription Drugs Recovered: 2018 to 2021 . . . 4-14
- Table 4F. Meridian Fire Department Apparatus Response 4-16
- Table 4G. City of Meridian, Public Park Acreage 4-20
- Table 4H. Solid Waste Collection (Tons) 4-24
- Table 4I. Historical Fall Enrollment, West Ada School District 4-28
- Table 4J. Idaho Power Substations in Meridian. 4-31

Physical and Cultural Features 5-1

- Table 5A. Agricultural Land by Exemption 5-5
- Table 5B. Agricultural Land by % Overall Area 5-5
- Table 5C. National Register-Listed Historical Resources . . . 5-6

Summary 6-1

INTRODUCTION

Review of the Report

In 2010 the City of Meridian revamped it's Comprehensive Plan. The primary goal of this process 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 continues to be an addendum in the current Comprehensive Plan (Plan).

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Below: The Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine held its Inagural Commencement on May 13, 2022.



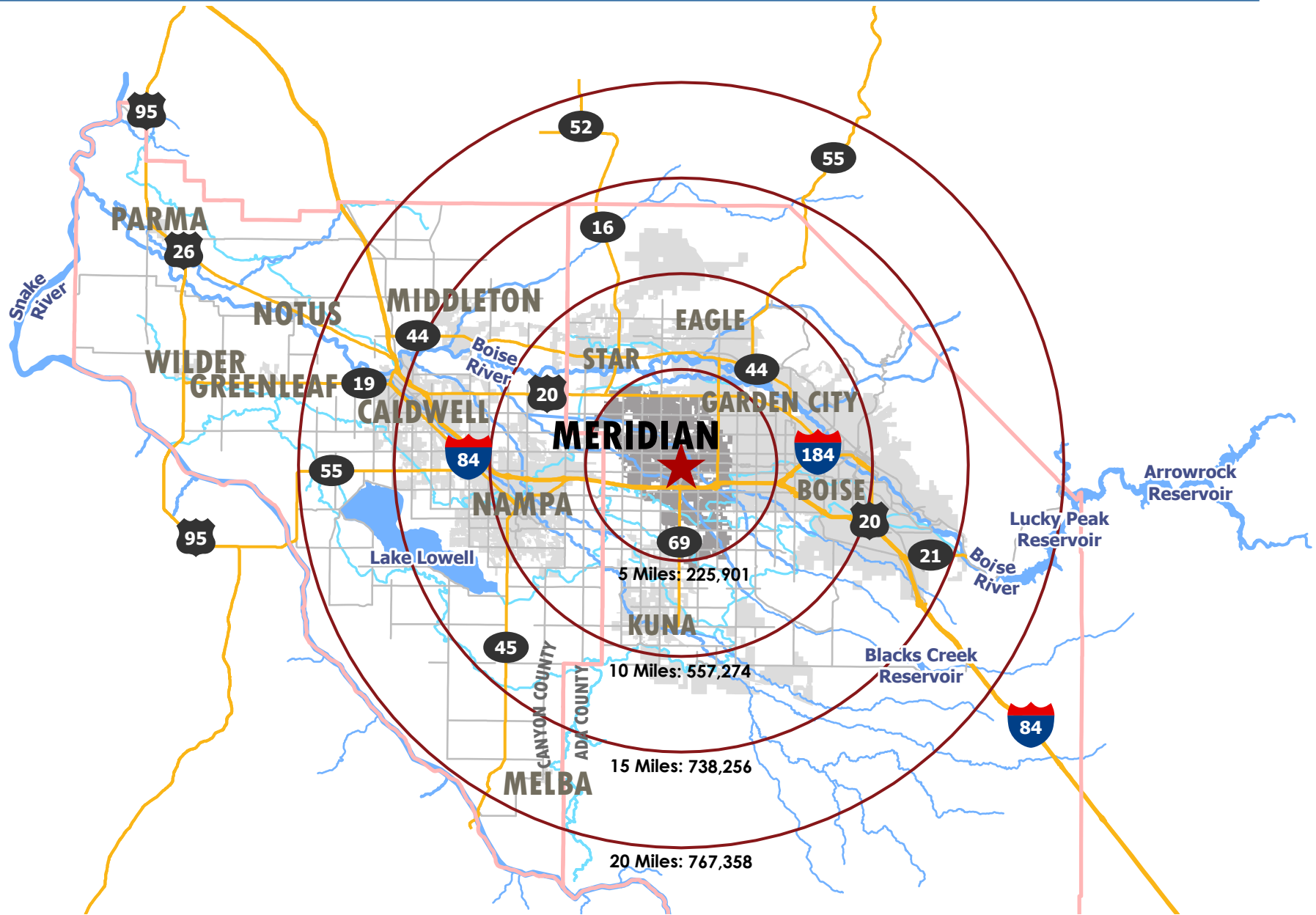
This Existing Conditions Report (Report) provides a framework for future decision making by detailing the current state, specific directions, and actions taken related to each topical area discussed. The Report takes the City's Mission, Vision, and Values and melds it with the City's Strategic Plan Initiatives, 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.

A good plan is like a road map: it shows the final destination and usually the best way to get there.”
- H. Stanley Judd



To compose this report, information regarding Meridian and its Area of City Impact was gathered from many resources. This effort was accomplished by consulting with other agencies, individuals, and resources including existing plans, studies, and other documents. 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.

Figure 1A. Heart of the Valley



Source: City of Meridian Planning Division 2022



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Above: Agricultural land near US-20/26 and SH-16 in north-west Meridian.

Comprehensive Plan

Meridian's first Comprehensive 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. The Comprehensive Plan received major updates in 1993, 2002, and 2010. In 2017, the Meridian City Council directed staff to begin work on a new Plan, and on December 17th, 2019 the current Plan was adopted. This Plan received an extensive amount of public involvement, and is available online.

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 the policy elements are addressed in the full Comprehensive Plan itself, and are not part of this report. Those components not addressed in this report are addressed in the full Comprehensive Plan.



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 Above: The historic Clara home on Main Street.

Below: The Pine Street Schoolhouse



History¹

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. 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, the City has a number of large employment centers, bank branches, restaurants, medical centers, and several major retail centers including a major lifestyle center, the Village at Meridian.

To continue to provide elevated levels of service, City Departments and their service capabilities have grown. In 2021 a new two-story Police and Fire training center was constructed; this new facility includes an indoor scenario village with residential and commercial storefronts. The Meridian City Council also approved a new police substation in South Meridian in 2021, immediately next to Discovery Park, along with a new fire station, and another fire substation in North Meridian near Discovery High School. These are to begin construction in 2022. The wastewater resource recovery facility in northwest Meridian has seen several additions, and it can now treat

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¹ For a comprehensive review of Meridian's heritage, see Meridian, by Frank Thomason and Polly Ambrose Peterson, Arcadia Publishing, 2010



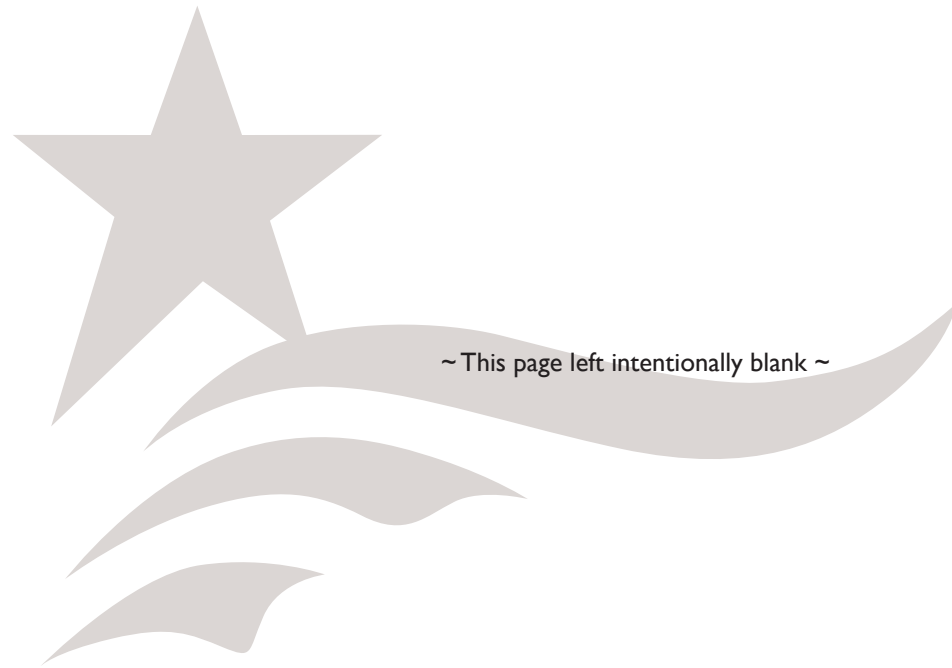
Above: The iconic Meridian water tower, near Main Street.

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 2026. Parks have also expanded, with 3 new parks since 2017.

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. 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

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 225,901 people within 5 miles of downtown Meridian (see Figure 1A). Airports, regional medical centers, cultural events and venues, and other urban services and amenities are all easily accessible.



THE PEOPLE

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.

.....
Below: View of homes from across the pond at Fuller Park.



The primary purpose of the Population and Demographic Characteristics element is to look at past trends that may help to understand future needs and projections. Population inventories and forecasts are used to measure the demand for future facilities such as parks, water supply wells 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 Characteristics element is to evaluate the recent trends in residential dwellings. 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.

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

The purpose of the Economic Development analysis of the chapter is to portray the business make-up and to evaluate 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 specific zoning categories, as well as the demand for future levels of public services.

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, more than doubling by 2000, and then doubling again by 2010. The 2020 decennial population was the biggest increase ever for the City, increasing by more than 42,000 people since 2010 and reaching a population total of 117,635. Table 2A tracks historical Census population data. In April of 2022, the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, or COMPASS, estimated the City's population at 133,470 residents.

Table 2A. Historical Census Population, Meridian

Year	Total Population	Population Change	Average Annual % Increase	10 Year % Increase
1940	1,465	N/A	N/A	N/A
1950	1,810	345	2.4%	23.5%
1960	2,081	271	1.5%	15.0%
1970	2,616	535	2.6%	25.7%
1980	6,658	4,042	15.5%	154.5%
1990	9,596	2,938	4.4%	44.1%
2000	34,919	25,323	26.4%	263.9%
2010	75,092	40,173	11.5%	115.0%
2020	117,635	42,543	5.7%	56.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, via Idaho Department of Labor, Communication & Research. "City Population Data 1940-2020." Retrieved on February 8, 2022 from <https://lmi.idaho.gov/census>.

Population Change

The following charts reference information in Table 2A.

Figure 2A. Population Change per Decade

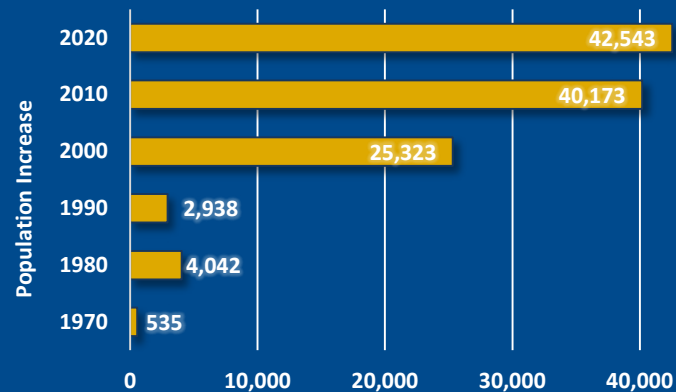


Figure 2B. Population Growth

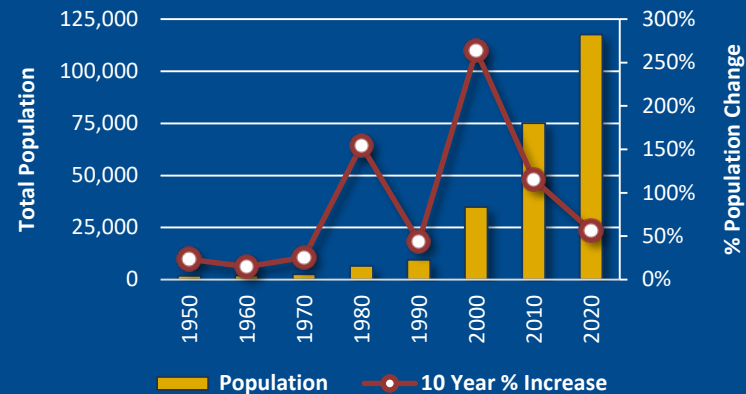
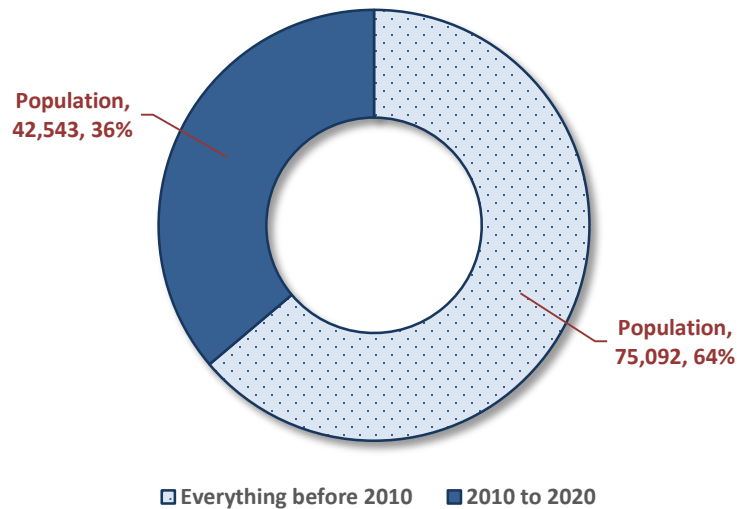


Figure 2C. Aggregated Population Change



Note: Graph depicts the significant growth between 2010 and 2020, more than a 1/3 of the overall population total, and compares it to everything that came before. See table 2A for data/source.

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 2010 to 532,710 in 2022. Similarly, Canyon County grew from 188,923 residents in 2010 to 249,720 in 2022. Meridian accounted for 41.6% of Ada County’s overall growth between 2010 and 2022, and 29.0% of the two-county region.¹

Forecasts

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, or COMPASS, is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for

¹ COMPASS, COMPASS Demographic Advisory Workgroup Memo for April 18, 2022, “Historic Population Estimates by City Limits.” Retrieved on April 11, 2022 from <https://www.compassidaho.org/people/boardmeetings.htm>.

Table 2B. Communities in Motion 2050 Vision Forecast

Area of City Impact	2022 Pop Estimate	2050 Pop Forecast	Pop Change	% Pop Change
Meridian	133,470	192,540	59,070	44.26%
Boise	243,570	314,520	70,950	29.13%
Nampa	109,120	168,140	59,020	54.09%
Ada County	532,710	715,820	183,110	34.37%
Canyon County	249,720	359,180	109,460	43.83%
Regional Total	782,430	1,075,000	292,570	37.39%

Note: Area of City Impact (AOI) boundaries are larger than existing City limit boundaries. 2022 estimates reflect current city limits, whereas 2050 forecast include all populations within an AOI.

Source: COMPASS, COMPASS Board Memo for February 28, 2022, “Communities in Motion 2050 Vision, Forecasted Growth.” Retrieved on February 18, 2022 and COMPASS Board Memo for April 18, 2022, “2022 Population Estimates.” Retrieved on April 18, 2022, both from <https://www.compassidaho.org/people/boardmeetings.htm>

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 region. Part of that process is to monitor population growth and forecast future changes within the region.

COMPASS estimates that the population of Meridian will increase to 192,540 by 2050, an increase of 55.5% from 2020. The regional forecast adopted by the COMPASS Board for the Communities in Motion 2050 regional long-range transportation plan estimates that the population of the two-county region will grow from 726,080 in 2020 to 1,075,000 people in 2050. Table 2B provides 2022 estimates and 2050 forecasts of population in select Treasure Valley Demographic Areas.

Table 2C. Age by Place

Age (Years)	Meridian	Ada	Idaho	U.S.
0 to 9	14.4%	13.6%	15.4%	11.9%
10 to 19	16.2%	14.5%	15.8%	14.2%
20 to 29	12.2%	13.4%	13.7%	13.2%
30 to 39	14.3%	13.1%	13.3%	14.8%
40 to 49	13.7%	11.8%	11.9%	13.1%
50 to 64	16.8%	18.0%	16.2%	18.3%
65 +	12.4%	15.8%	13.8%	14.4%
2014 Median Age (years)				
	34.1	35.5	35.2	37.4
2020 Median Age (years)				
	35.9	37.2	36.6	38.2
Change				
	1.8	1.7	1.4	0.8

Notes: Margin of error results in values slightly greater or less than 100%.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (17 March 2022).

Age

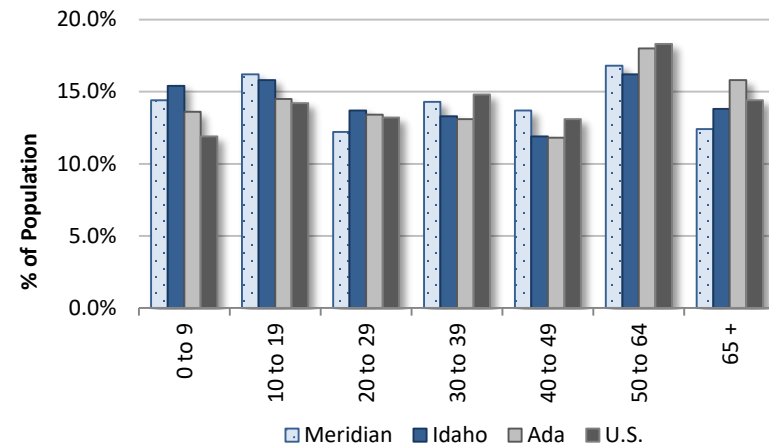
The average age of a Meridian resident has been steadily increasing over the last 30 years. Median age is up from the 1990 Census of 29.8 to 30.1 in 2000, 32.5 in 2010, and 36.2 in the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimate. The change in Meridian’s median age is higher than Ada County, the State of Idaho, and the United States. Since 2000, the 0 to 9 population has decreased by 5.2% of the overall, while the 50 to 64 has increased by 7.4% and the 65 and older group has increased by 7.2%. Because the overall population is growing so rapidly, groups are not shrinking in total, some are just increasing faster than others. See Table 2C and 2D for comparisons over time.

Table 2D. Meridian Population Groups Over Time

Age	1990	2000	2010	2020
0 to 9	19.6%	21.5%	19.6%	14.4%
10 to 19	14.8%	14.2%	16.0%	16.2%
20 to 29	15.9%	14.1%	10.7%	12.1%
30 to 39	19.4%	20.3%	16.5%	14.4%
40 to 49	10.7%	13.3%	14.4%	13.7%
50 to 64	9.3%	10.1%	14.0%	16.7%
65 +	10.3%	6.4%	9.0%	12.4%
Median Age				
	29.8	30.1	32.5	35.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population, “General Population Characteristics, Idaho”. Accessed on February 22, 2022 from <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications>. 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census, Redistricting Data (Table P2 and P8); generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov. 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101; generated by City of Meridian using data.census.gov.

Figure 2D. Comparison of Ages by Area



Note: See table 2C for data/source.

Age and Changes Over Time

The following charts reference information in Table 2D.

Figure 2E. Change in Population Groups, Interval

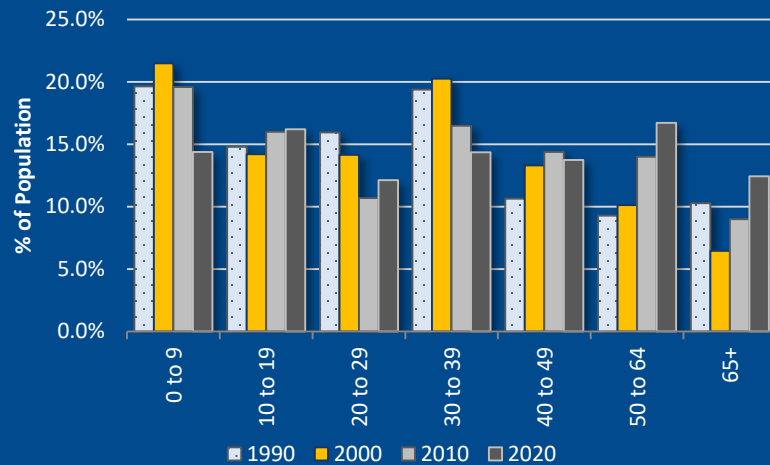


Figure 2F. Change in Median Age

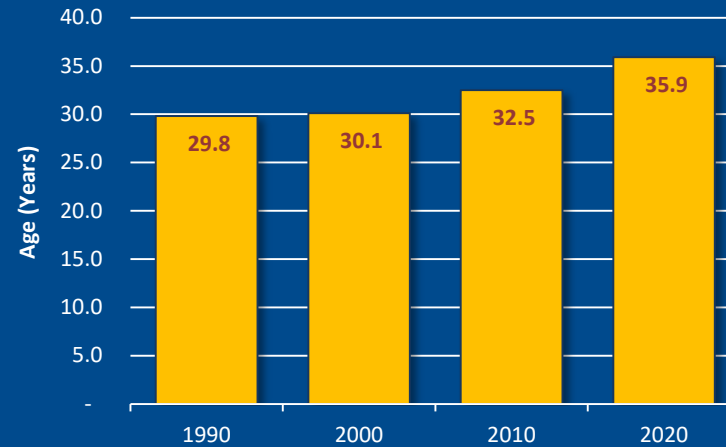


Figure 2G. Change in Population Groups, Total

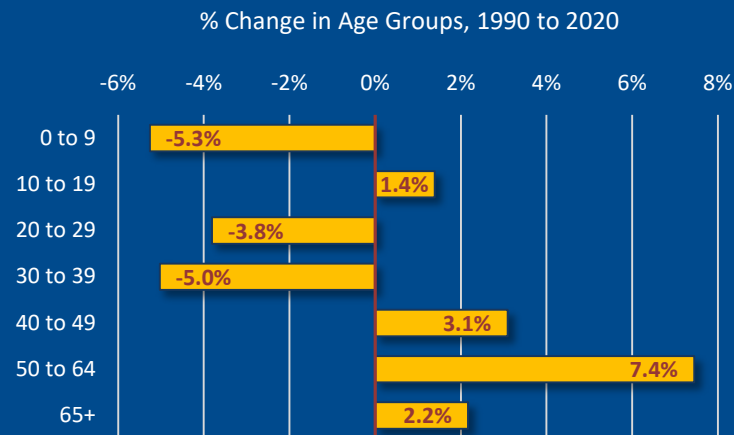


Figure 2H. Change in Median Age, Aggregated

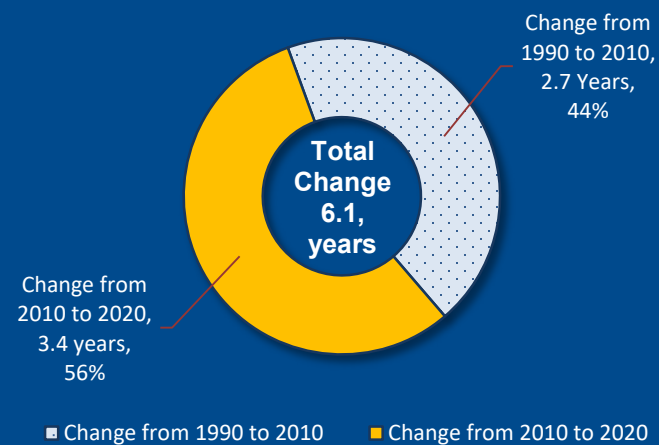


Figure 2I. Racial and Ethnicity Change

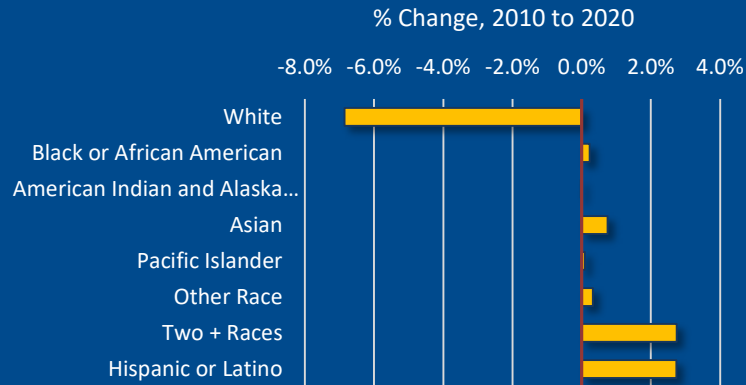


Figure 2J. Racial and Ethnicity Composite

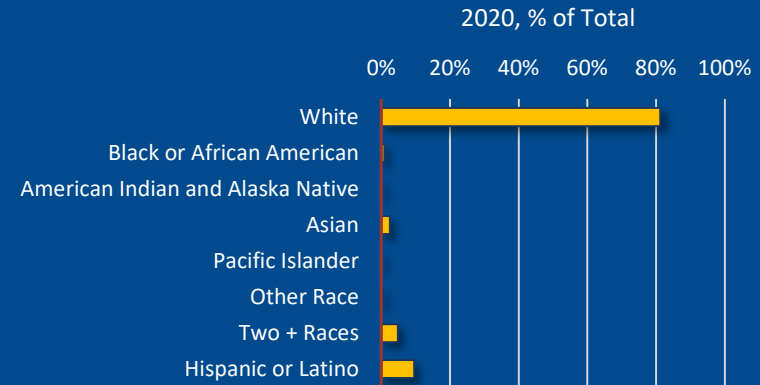


Table 2E. Racial and Ethnic Composition by Jurisdiction

Race & Ethnicity	Meridian			Ada			Idaho			U.S.		
	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change
Population of one race:	91.1%	85.6%	- 5.5%	90.8%	85.9%	- 4.8%	87.1%	82.8%	- 4.3%	81.7%	77.2%	- 4.5%
• White alone	88.1%	81.2%	- 6.9%	86.5%	80.4%	- 6.1%	84.0%	78.9%	- 5.1%	63.7%	57.8%	- 5.9%
• Black or African American alone	0.7%	0.9%	+ 0.2%	1.1%	1.6%	+ 0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	+ 0.2%	12.2%	12.1%	- 0.2%
• American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.4%	0.3%	- 0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	- 0.1%	1.1%	1.0%	- 0.1%	0.7%	0.7%	- 0.0%
• Asian alone	1.7%	2.5%	+ 0.8%	2.4%	2.8%	+ 0.4%	1.2%	1.4%	+ 0.2%	4.7%	5.9%	+ 1.2%
• Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	0.2%	+ 0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	+ 0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	+ 0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	+ 0.0%
• Some Other Race alone	0.1%	0.4%	+ 0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	+ 0.4%	0.1%	0.4%	+ 0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	+ 0.3%
Population of two or more races:	2.1%	4.8%	+ 2.7%	2.1%	4.9%	+ 2.8%	1.7%	4.2%	+ 2.5%	1.9%	4.1%	+ 2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	6.8%	9.5%	+ 2.7%	7.1%	9.1%	+ 2.0%	11.2%	13.0%	+ 1.8%	16.3%	18.7%	+ 2.4%
Not Hispanic or Latino:	93.2%	90.5%	- 2.7%	92.9%	90.9%	- 2.0%	88.8%	87.0%	- 1.8%	83.7%	81.3%	- 2.4%

Note: Rounding results in values that do not always total to 100%. Table is the perspective of Hispanic Or Latino, regardless of race. Population of one race, two or more races, and hispanic or latino total 100%. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census, Redistricting Data (Table P2 and P8); generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov; <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (15 February 2022).

Race and Ethnicity

Table 2E shows the racial and ethnic composition of select subgroups for Meridian, Ada County, the State of Idaho, and the entire United States.

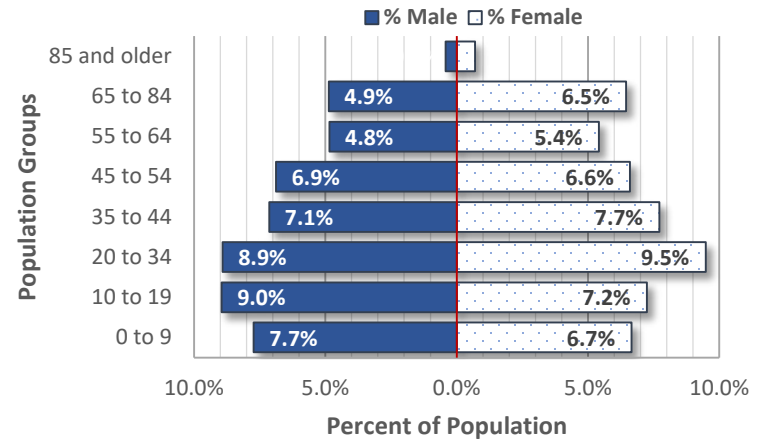
Meridian, Ada County and the State of Idaho are less racially and ethnically diverse than the nation as a whole. The majority of residents in Meridian are white (85.6%) and not Hispanic or Latino (90.5%). This composition is changing though, both locally and nationally. Since 2010, those that are of one race alone, and also white alone, have decreased while most other non-white races or those of multiple races, have seen increases.

Table 2F. Gender by Age Groups

Age Group	Male % Group	Female % Group	Male % Overall	Female % Overall	Overall %
0 to 9	53.7%	46.3%	7.7%	6.7%	14.4%
10 to 19	55.3%	44.7%	9.0%	7.2%	16.2%
20 to 34	48.5%	51.5%	8.9%	9.5%	18.4%
35 to 44	48.1%	51.9%	7.1%	7.7%	14.9%
45 to 54	51.0%	49.0%	6.9%	6.6%	13.5%
55 to 64	47.2%	52.8%	4.8%	5.4%	10.3%
65 to 84	43.0%	57.0%	4.9%	6.5%	11.3%
85 and older	37.4%	62.6%	0.4%	0.7%	1.1%
Overall	49.7%	50.3%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501; generated by City of Meridian; using [data.census.gov <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/) (22 March 2022).

Figure 2K. Comparison of Ages by Gender



Note: See table 2F for data/source.

Gender

Based on the 2016-2020 American Community Survey data², 49.7% of the population are male and 50.3% female. This gender split is not equal among all age groups however, as shown in Table 2F.

Educational Attainment

Compared to many other communities in the Nation, Meridian has maintained a relatively high level of educational attainment. The percentage of Meridian residents 25 and older with a high school diploma increased from 94.9% in 2014 to 95.8% in 2020. The percentage of Meridian residents from the same age group with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 33.3% to 37.2%. As shown in Table 2G, there are other changes for various education attainment benchmarks, and between genders.

² U.S. Census Bureau / American FactFinder. "DP05: Demographics and Housing Estimates" 2011-2015 American Community Survey. Web. May 18, 2017 <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>.

□ Educational Attainment

The following charts reference information in Table 2G. High School+ and Bachelor's+ include all attainment levels beyond.

Figure 2L. Change in Attainment

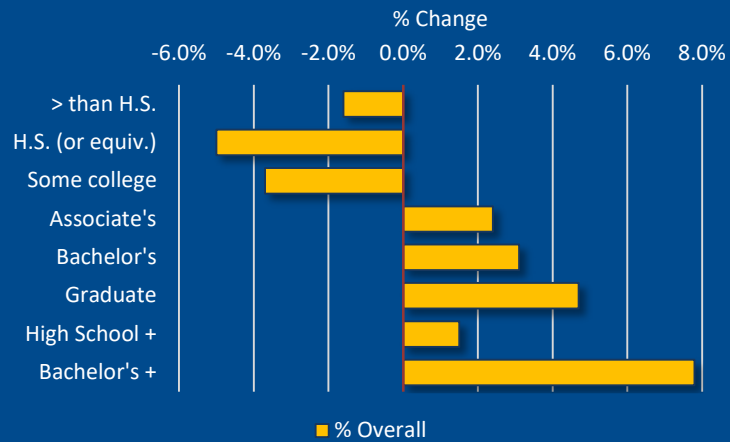


Figure 2M. Change in Attainment by Gender

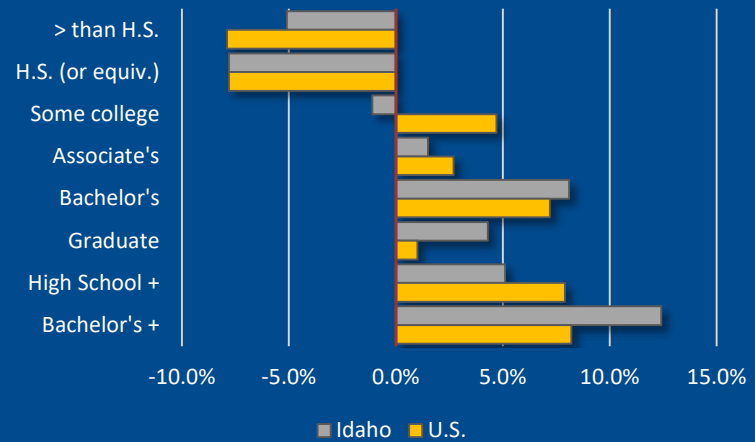


Figure 2N. Comparison of Attainment by Area

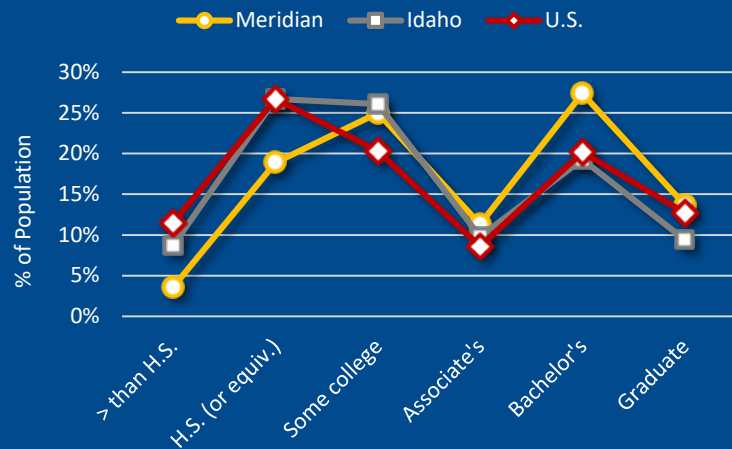


Figure 2O. Attainment by Gender Comparison

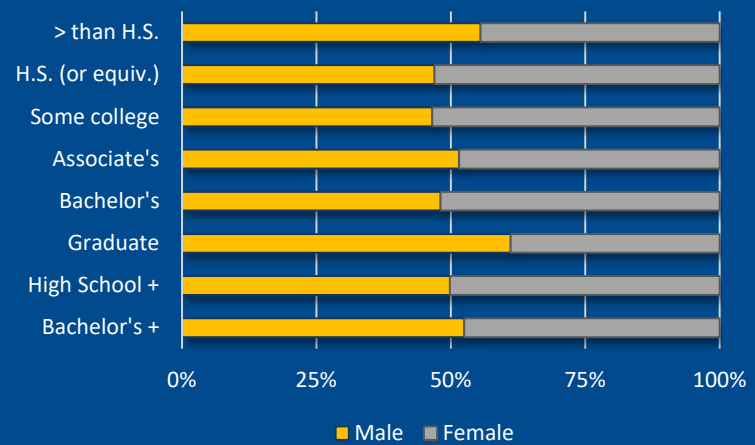


Table 2G. Educational Attainment by Jurisdiction and Gender (25 and older)

Level of Education	Meridian			Ada			Idaho			U.S.		
	% Overall	% Male	% Female	% Overall	% Male	% Female	% Overall	% Male	% Female	% Overall	% Male	% Female
2014												
Less than High School graduate	5.2%	5.6%	4.7%	6.2%	6.3%	6.1%	10.8%	11.7%	10.1%	13.6%	14.4%	13.1%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	23.9%	22.3%	25.3%	21.6%	21.2%	21.9%	27.7%	27.6%	27.8%	28.0%	28.5%	27.5%
Some college, no degree	28.7%	25.6%	31.6%	27.3%	25.8%	28.7%	27.0%	25.9%	28.2%	21.2%	20.8%	21.5%
Associate's degree	8.9%	10.1%	7.9%	8.6%	8.4%	8.8%	9.0%	8.3%	9.6%	7.9%	7.0%	8.8%
Bachelor's degree	24.3%	24.5%	24.2%	24.4%	24.4%	24.4%	17.4%	17.2%	17.6%	18.3%	18.1%	18.4%
Graduate or professional degree	9.0%	11.9%	6.3%	12.0%	13.8%	10.1%	8.0%	9.3%	6.7%	11.0%	11.2%	10.8%
High school graduate or higher	94.9%	94.4%	95.3%	93.8%	93.7%	93.9%	89.1%	88.3%	89.9%	86.3%	85.6%	87.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	33.3%	36.4%	30.4%	36.4%	38.3%	34.6%	25.4%	26.5%	24.3%	29.3%	29.3%	29.2%
2020												
Less than High School graduate	4.2%	4.6%	3.8%	4.8%	5.3%	4.4%	9.2%	10.0%	8.4%	12.0%	12.7%	11.4%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	21.9%	20.0%	23.5%	22.4%	22.4%	22.4%	27.4%	28.5%	26.3%	27.0%	27.9%	26.0%
Some college, no degree	25.4%	24.7%	26.1%	24.3%	23.4%	25.3%	26.0%	24.6%	27.4%	20.4%	20.2%	20.6%
Associate's degree	11.3%	10.5%	11.9%	9.9%	9.4%	10.5%	9.8%	9.1%	10.6%	8.5%	7.6%	9.3%
Bachelor's degree	25.3%	24.5%	26.0%	25.5%	25.7%	25.4%	18.6%	17.9%	19.2%	19.8%	19.4%	20.1%
Graduate or professional degree	11.9%	15.7%	8.7%	13.0%	13.9%	12.1%	9.0%	9.9%	8.1%	12.4%	12.1%	12.6%
High school graduate or higher	95.8%	95.3%	96.2%	95.2%	94.7%	95.6%	90.8%	90.0%	91.6%	88.0%	87.3%	88.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	37.2%	40.2%	34.7%	38.5%	39.6%	37.5%	27.6%	27.8%	27.3%	32.1%	31.6%	32.7%
Change												
Less than High School graduate	-1.0%	-1.0%	-0.9%	-1.4%	-1.0%	-1.7%	-1.6%	-1.7%	-1.7%	-1.6%	-1.7%	-1.7%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	-2.0%	-2.3%	-1.8%	0.8%	1.2%	0.5%	-0.3%	0.9%	-1.5%	-1.0%	-0.6%	-1.5%
Some college, no degree	-3.3%	-0.9%	-5.5%	-3.0%	-2.4%	-3.4%	-1.0%	-1.3%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-0.6%	-0.9%
Associate's degree	2.4%	0.4%	4.0%	1.3%	1.0%	1.7%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Bachelor's degree	1.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	1.2%	0.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.7%
Graduate or professional degree	2.9%	3.8%	2.4%	1.0%	0.1%	2.0%	1.0%	0.6%	1.4%	1.4%	0.9%	1.8%
High school graduate and higher	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	1.0%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%
Bachelor's degree and higher	3.9%	3.8%	4.3%	2.1%	1.3%	2.9%	2.2%	1.3%	3.0%	2.8%	2.3%	3.5%

Note: Change greater equal or greater than 3.0% highlighted. Margin of error results in values slightly greater or less than 100%. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (22 March 2022).

Cost of Living

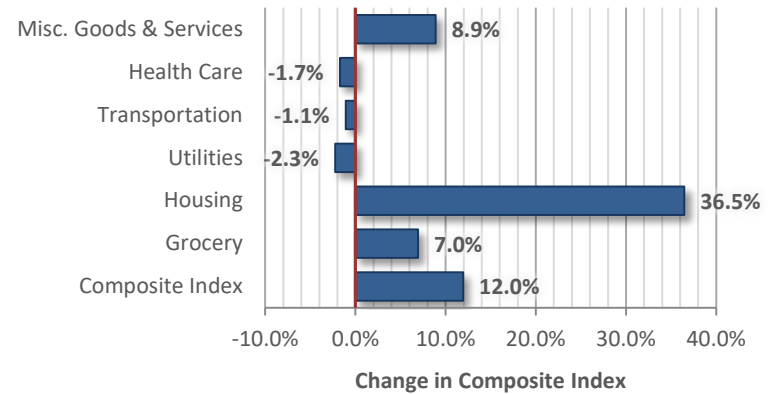
The Council for Community and Economic Research annually prepares comparative cost of living data for urban areas across the U.S. The results comprise a relative cost of living (index) for each participating metropolitan area based on expenditure pattern for professional and executive households. The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

.....
Below: Home construction at Eagle and Lake Hazel, looking north-west.



Figure 2P. Change in Cost of Living for Boise, ID (Metro)



Note: See table 2H for data/source.

differences between sub-metropolitan area jurisdictions (a single value for housing, for example, is assigned to the entire Boise City-Nampa metro area). Related work by the Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP) shows there can be great variations in some commodities and services across the region. 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.

Within the Boise metro area, the changes between 2016 and 2021 were significant. The composite index increased by more than 12%, and now surpasses the overall national average for cost of living. Housing especially increased by a staggering 36.5%. Grocery and Miscellaneous Goods and

Table 2H. Comparative Cost of Living Index, Council for Community and Economic Research

Metro Area	Composite Index		Grocery		Housing		Utilities		Transportation		Health Care		Misc. Goods & Services	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Boise, ID	91.2	102.1	87.7	93.8	80.9	110.4	84.2	82.3	112.9	111.7	104.6	102.8	94.3	102.7
Anchorage, AK	130.6	126.0	130.3	124.3	153.5	137.0	100.9	129.7	115.7	111.2	140.9	147.2	124.3	114.8
Colorado Springs, CO	94.4	108.2	95.8	101.0	97.7	115.8	75.2	99.0	99.3	103.1	101.6	100.2	94.3	110.2
Reno-Sparks, NV	104.6	108.2	101.1	105.4	97.5	126.4	92.9	82.5	118.6	118.9	104.9	104.1	111.0	97.7
Spokane, WA	98.1	104.9	94.2	102.7	90.7	104.2	87.9	101.3	116.8	110.3	115.4	117.8	100.6	105.0
Provo-Orem, UT	91.1	100.0	99.5	97.7	84.1	103.2	84.5	86.6	97.5	105.3	90.3	90.3	93.8	102.7
National Average	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: C2ER, 2021 and 2016. "Comparative Data for Urban Areas: 2021 Annual Average Data, Cost of Living Index, 2021". Received on February 17, 2022 via Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP). "Cost of Living Index, Comparative Data for Urban Areas, 2016." Accessed on May 12, 2017. <http://c2c.coli.org/>.

Services also saw notable increases. Several areas reduced slightly, including Utilities, Transportation, and Health Care, however Transportation and Health Care are both still above the national average.

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 2016-2020 American Community Survey, Meridian has a higher mean household income than Boise and Nampa, and saw a higher change in mean income for all comparison areas listed in Table 2I, between the 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS periods.

The State of Idaho is roughly 15.5% below the national mean for household income. Table 2I provides mean household incomes for select peer Treasure Valley cities, both Ada and Canyon County, the State of Idaho, and the United States. Table 2I also reports the percent change in mean household

income, and the breakdown of income ranges by percent of the whole.

Poverty

Poverty is determined by using income thresholds for a household of a given size. According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 6.5% of the population in Meridian is considered to be living in poverty (down from 8.6% in the 2010-2014 ACS). This is considerably lower than the national rate of 12.8%.

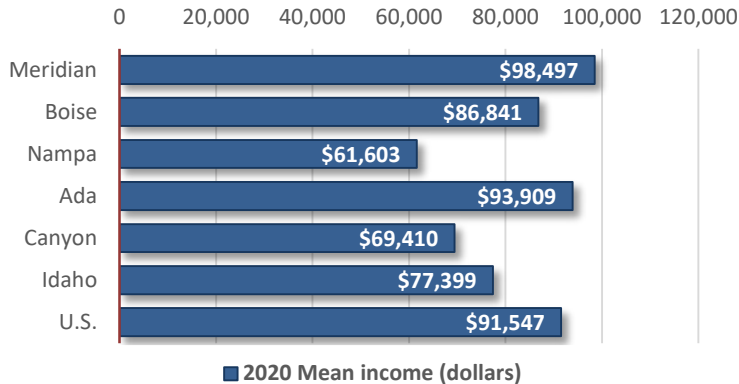
As shown in Table 2J, there is a strong correlation between education and poverty. Those without a High School equivalent education are significantly more likely to be living in poverty. Furthermore, this same information shows that at the local, state and national level, the more education one receives,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

Table 21. Household Income by Jurisdiction

Income Range	Meridian	Boise	Nampa	Ada	Canyon	Idaho	U.S.
Less than \$10,000	5.4%	6.8%	6.1%	6.0%	5.6%	5.7%	6.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.1%	3.4%	4.4%	2.9%	4.7%	4.4%	4.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6.0%	9.7%	9.5%	8.1%	9.0%	9.8%	8.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.1%	9.3%	13.2%	8.3%	11.6%	10.3%	8.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.1%	13.2%	18.1%	12.0%	16.3%	14.3%	12.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.7%	18.2%	22.8%	18.5%	22.5%	20.2%	17.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	17.1%	12.3%	13.0%	14.2%	12.8%	12.9%	12.7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.0%	14.8%	10.0%	16.7%	12.2%	13.8%	15.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.3%	5.9%	2.2%	6.4%	3.2%	4.6%	6.8%
\$200,000 or more	6.3%	6.4%	0.8%	6.8%	2.1%	4.0%	7.7%
2020 Mean income (dollars)	\$98,497	\$86,841	\$61,603	\$93,909	\$69,410	\$77,399	\$91,547
2014 Mean income (dollars)	\$75,177	\$69,076	\$47,289	\$73,523	\$52,293	\$61,544	\$74,596
Change in Mean Income	\$23,320	\$17,765	\$14,314	\$20,386	\$17,117	\$15,855	\$16,951
% Change in Mean Income	31.0%	25.7%	30.3%	27.7%	32.7%	25.8%	22.7%

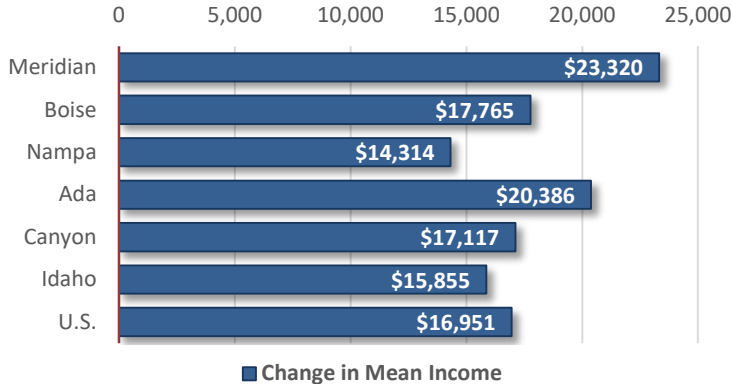
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> (17 March 2022).

Figure 2Q. Mean Income by Area



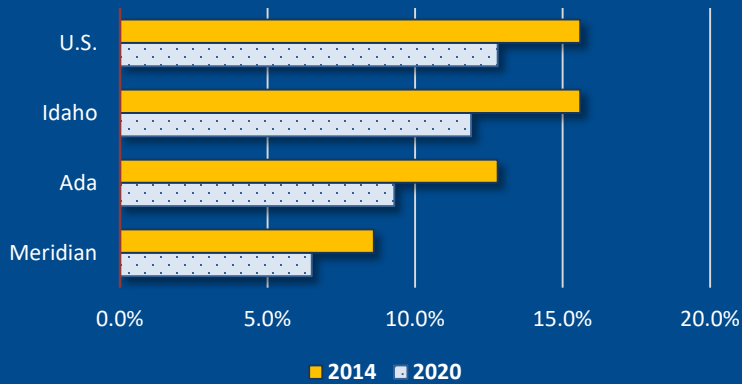
Note: See table 21 for data/source.

Figure 2R. Change in Mean Income, 2014 to 2020



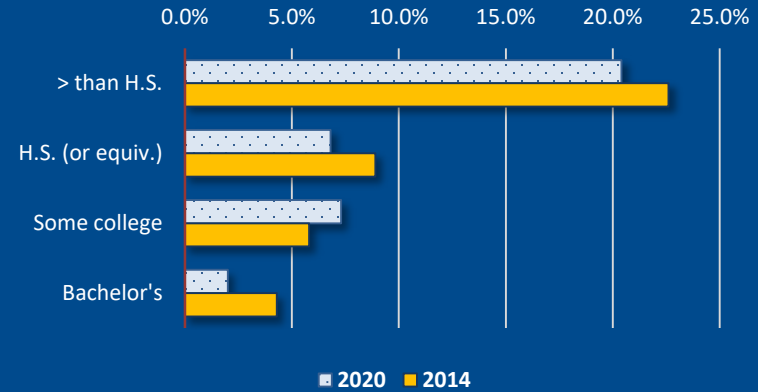
Note: See table 21 for data/source.

Figure 2S. Poverty Rate by Year and Area



Note: See Table 2J for data/source.

Figure 2T. Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment



Note: See Table 2J for data/source.

Table 2J. Percent of Residents Living in Poverty

Group	Meridian			Ada			Idaho			U.S.		
	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change	2010	2020	Change
Poverty												
Poverty Status (All Ages)	8.6%	6.5%	-2.1%	12.8%	9.3%	-3.5%	15.6%	11.9%	-3.7%	15.6%	12.8%	-2.8%
Under 18 years	9.6%	6.8%	-2.8%	14.9%	9.4%	-5.5%	19.4%	14.4%	-5.0%	21.9%	17.5%	-4.4%
18 to 64 years	8.3%	6.7%	-1.6%	12.8%	9.5%	-3.3%	15.5%	12.0%	-3.5%	14.6%	12.1%	-2.5%
65 years and over	6.9%	4.9%	-2.0%	7.7%	7.9%	0.2%	8.4%	7.9%	-0.5%	9.4%	9.3%	-0.1%
Poverty Status by Education (those 25 and older)												
Population 25 years and over	6.9%	5.5%	-1.4%	9.5%	7.5%	-2.0%	11.7%	9.4%	-2.3%	12.0%	10.4%	-1.6%
Less than high school graduate	22.6%	20.4%	-2.2%	25.0%	21.1%	-3.9%	24.4%	19.4%	-5.0%	27.6%	24.1%	-3.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.9%	6.8%	-2.1%	12.8%	10.3%	-2.5%	13.7%	12.1%	-1.6%	14.2%	13.4%	-0.8%
Some college, associate's degree	5.8%	7.3%	1.5%	9.3%	8.2%	-1.1%	10.7%	9.1%	-1.6%	10.5%	9.4%	-1.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.3%	2.0%	-2.3%	5.4%	4.0%	-1.4%	5.7%	4.3%	-1.4%	4.5%	4.3%	-0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (17 March 2022).



Above: The Historic Tolleth House.

Housing Characteristics

The City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan supports and encourages a variety of housing types ranging from single-family detached homes to multi-family dwellings. Future Land Use designations allow the City to integrate a range of residential unit densities, from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential. Land use, housing, density and other supportive policies are intended to ensure opportunities exist for a variety of incomes, housing preferences, lifestyles, family sizes, and age groups.

Number of Dwelling Units

In Meridian, the growth in housing stock has paralleled the pace of growth in population. As shown in Table 2K, in 2012 there were 29,151 total housing units in Meridian, and by 2022, there were 50,917, an increase of almost 75%.

Housing Unit Type

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. In 10 years the ratio of multi-family homes has increased by 10% from a roughly 90:10 split to 80:20.

As shown in Table 2D, an increasingly larger percent of the population is of the 65-plus population group, and that there is an increased need for senior housing opportunities. There appears to be a growing demand for non-single-family detached dwelling units, that are easier to take care of and closer to activities and services.

Table 2K. Total Meridian Housing Units by Year

Year	Single Family	Multi Family	Total Units	Yr over Yr % Change	% Single	% Multi
2012	26,731	2,420	29,151	-	91.7%	8.3%
2013	27,644	2,810	30,454	4.5%	90.8%	9.2%
2014	28,409	3,414	31,823	4.5%	89.3%	10.7%
2015	29,399	3,864	33,263	4.5%	88.4%	11.6%
2016	30,767	4,052	34,819	4.7%	88.4%	11.6%
2017	32,195	4,806	37,001	6.3%	87.0%	13.0%
2018	34,007	6,038	40,045	8.2%	84.9%	15.1%
2019	36,116	6,878	42,994	7.4%	84.0%	16.0%
2020	37,983	7,815	45,798	6.5%	82.9%	17.1%
2021	39,917	8,427	48,344	5.6%	82.6%	17.4%
2022	40,795	9,227	50,022	3.5%	81.6%	18.4%

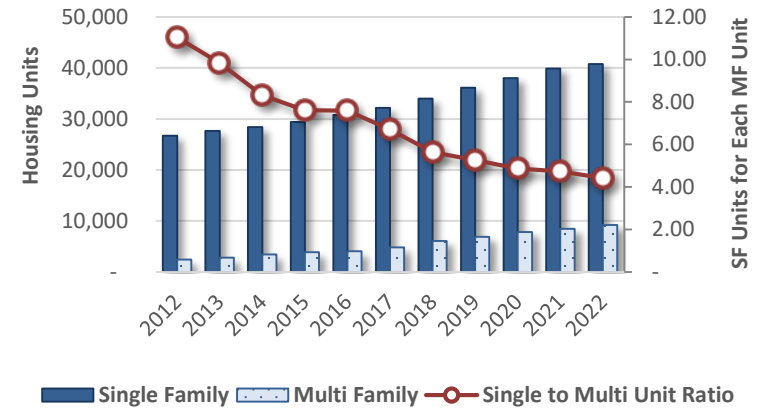
Note: Units are calendar year except 2022, which is current as of May, 2022.
Source: City of Meridian.

Occupancy

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey data, the ratio of housing units occupied by owners to renters in Meridian is 75.2% to 24.8% (with a 2.3% margin of error)³. More currently, and not a direct comparison, in January 2022 there were 31,065 parcels in Meridian with a dwelling unit that received a home owners exemption on their property taxes (meaning the property owner generally lived on site and was not a rental). Compared to the 50,917 total dwelling units, this equates to 61.0% of dwellings that are owner occupied. Not all home owners necessarily apply for the tax exemption.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (17 March 2022).

Figure 2U. Comparison of Housing Unit Types



Note: Housing ratio refers to the number of single-family for each multi-family unit. See table 2L for data/source.

Persons per Housing Unit

The 2016-2020 American Community Survey reports that the overall average of all households in Meridian was 2.82 persons per household. This was down only 0.04 from the 2006-2010 average of 2.86. Average family size has increased slightly to 3.30 from 3.25 over the same period. A family is any two or more people residing together, and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A household may include families and non-families, or even single individuals. See Table 2L.

Table 2L. Persons per Housing Unit

Household Type	2010	2020
Average Household Size (all types)	2.86	2.82
Average Family Size	3.25	3.30

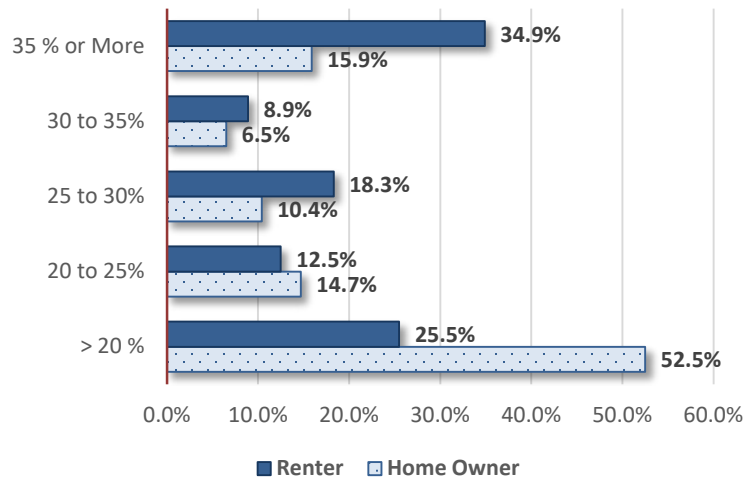
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2006-2010 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (24 March 2022).

Table 2M. Housing Costs as a % of Household Income

Housing Cost Groups	Meridian			Ada			Idaho			U.S.		
	2014	2020	Change	2014	2020	Change	2014	2020	Change	2014	2020	Change
Owner Occupied with Mortgage												
Less than 20.0 percent	46.9%	52.5%	5.6%	49.4%	50.5%	1.1%	47.1%	47.7%	0.6%	45.9%	46.7%	0.8%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	15.4%	14.7%	-0.7%	15.4%	15.6%	0.2%	16.2%	16.1%	-0.1%	15.7%	15.6%	-0.1%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	12.8%	10.4%	-2.4%	11.3%	10.5%	-0.8%	10.8%	10.6%	-0.2%	10.5%	10.3%	-0.2%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	6.7%	6.5%	-0.2%	5.9%	6.2%	0.3%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	6.9%	6.8%	-0.1%
35.0 percent or more	18.2%	15.9%	-2.3%	17.9%	17.1%	-0.8%	18.9%	18.5%	-0.4%	20.9%	20.6%	-0.3%
Renter Occupied												
Less than 20.0 percent	26.5%	25.5%	-1.0%	28.0%	29.0%	1.0%	28.9%	29.4%	0.5%	26.0%	26.4%	0.4%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	11.1%	12.5%	1.4%	13.4%	14.2%	0.8%	13.5%	13.6%	0.1%	12.9%	12.9%	0.0%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	14.6%	18.3%	3.7%	11.8%	12.6%	0.8%	11.4%	11.9%	0.5%	11.6%	11.6%	0.0%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	9.1%	8.9%	-0.2%	7.8%	8.3%	0.5%	8.5%	8.4%	-0.1%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%
35.0 percent or more	38.7%	34.9%	-3.8%	39.0%	35.9%	-3.1%	37.7%	36.6%	-1.1%	40.5%	40.0%	-0.5%

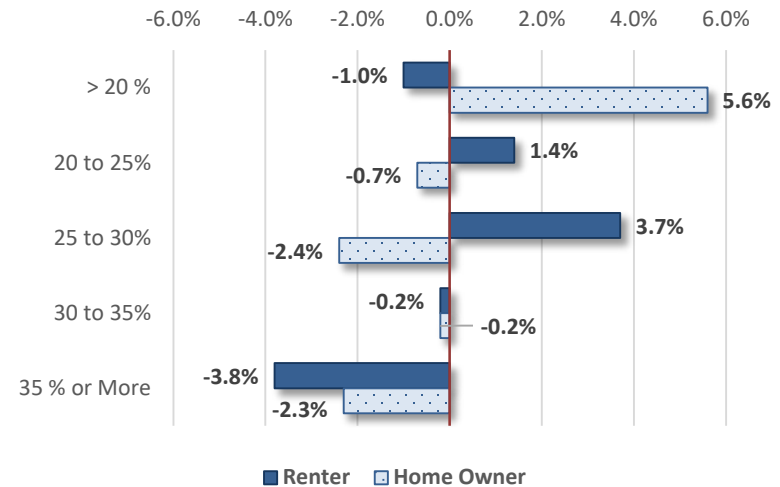
Note: This data does not reflect some of the dramatic changes to home values in 2021, and which may influence the results of the next ACS release of data. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (23 March 2022).

Figure 2V. Housing Costs as a % of Income by Type



Note: Comparison shown for Meridian only. Home Owners with a mortgage only. See table 2K for data/source.

Figure 2W. Change in Housing Cost as a % of Income by Type



Note: Change shown for Meridian only. Home Owners with a mortgage only. See table 2K for data/source.

Table 2N. Median Rental Costs

Type	2012	2022	Change
Rental Costs	\$910	\$1,766	94.1%

Note: Since no recent ACS data is available for a 10-year comparison, average rental costs for 2022 were researched from a variety of multi-family projects with a diversity of configurations (rooms and area). Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2012 ACS 1-Year Estimates, Table DP04; generated by City of Meridian; using data.census.gov <<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>> (24 March 2022). 2022 values researched by the City of Meridian Planning Division.

Housing Value

Due to dramatic increases in home values in the Treasure Valley between 2020 and 2021, and the delay or cancellation in receiving more recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau in 2022, ACS data is not used for more recent data in this section. A more recent local source of housing value 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 historical and current home sale trends. Table 2O presents the annual average of monthly median sale price for homes in the four Meridian MLS sub-areas. Overall median sales prices rose dramatically on average over the 2011 to 2021 period. In southwest Meridian, home sales more than doubled, and in the southeast, northeast, and northwest, home sale prices more than tripled.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has historically indicated that any household paying more than 30% of its income for housing is paying an excessive percentage of their income for housing. For renters that percentage includes all utilities, and for home owners that includes taxes, interest, and utilities. This is not the only rule, with others recommending splits such as 28/36 (maximum 28% with debt and 36% without debt), and other critical factors such as transportation burden also come into play. As of 2016-2020 ACS data, more than

Change in Housing Value

The following charts reference information in Table 2O.

Figure 2X. Median Sales Price, Ada County

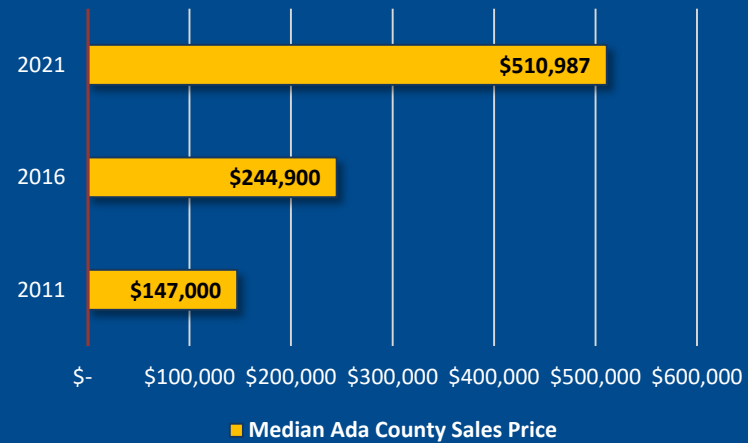


Figure 2Y. Median Sales Price and Total Change by Area

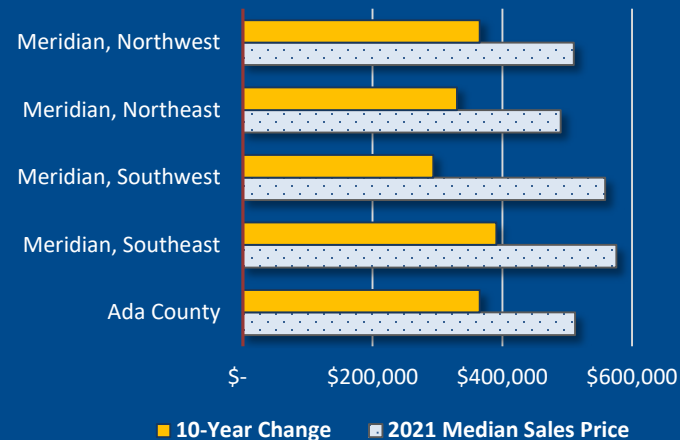


Table 20. Home Sale Values in Ada County and Meridian

Income Range	2011	2016	2021	10-Year Change	10-Year % Change
Median Price	\$147,000	\$244,900	\$510,987	\$363,987	247.6%
Days On Market	84	44	18	-66	-78.6%
Median Single-family Home Value					
Ada County	\$147,000	\$244,900	\$511,900	\$364,900	248.2%
Meridian, Southeast	\$185,000	\$275,000	\$575,725	\$390,725	211.2%
Meridian, Southwest	\$265,000	\$323,346	\$558,521	\$293,521	110.8%
Meridian, Northeast	\$160,000	\$245,000	\$490,000	\$330,000	206.3%
Meridian, Northwest	\$144,900	\$240,000	\$509,990	\$365,090	252.0%

Source: Intermountain MLS, 2011, 2016, and 2021 "Yearly Report". Retrieved on February 8, 2022 from <https://iimlsmembers.com/statsPublic-2>.

Below: Meadow Lake Village, near Eagle and Franklin.



20% of Meridian homeowners spend 30% or more of their household income on their mortgage. More than 43% of renters spend 30% or more of their household income on housing related costs. See Table 2M for a comparison of housing costs. Due to the recent changes in housing value, market rates for rentals, and income, it's likely that housing burden may be very different in 2022 for some populations.

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 CDBG program. The City receives approximately \$500,000 each year for the Program. Mayor's Office Staff administers Meridian's CDBG Program.

The purpose of the CDBG Program is to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable



.....
Above: All accessibility playground at Meridian Elementary school, and which utilized CDBG funding.

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. Rent/mortgage assistance
2. Homeowner repair
3. Boys & Girls Club scholarships
4. Infrastructure design in targeted areas
5. Community amenity improvements such as parks and pathways

The overall direction of Meridian’s CDBG Program is established in the Consolidated Plan, which identifies high-level goals and objectives for the upcoming five (5) years. Activities the City will undertake are detailed in action plans, which the City prepares and submits to HUD annually. Community input is an important component of the CDBG Program with multiple opportunities to provide feedback, including at least two (2) public hearings per year.

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.” A high priority for the city is attracting companies that provide family wage jobs for Meridian’s highly educated workforce.

With a vibrant and diverse economic environment, Meridian is home to major employers such as Blue Cross of Idaho, CITI Bank, Crucial Technology, Engineering Structures Inc., Scentsy, St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center, T-Mobile, and United Heritage. Overall, sense of community combined with a low

.....
Below: New office building at the Silverstone business park.



cost of doing business, strong leadership, and a highly educated and dynamic workforce has led to Meridian’s success. Indeed, the Treasure Valley and Idaho consistently rank among the best areas in business friendliness, cost of living and overall cost of doing business.

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.



An economic development analysis that began in pre-pandemic 2020, identified industry and workforce strengths and provides a focus for City economic development efforts in the following four industries:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Information Technology
- Professional Services

The Business and Economic Vitality focus area, one of six focus areas in the City’s 2021-2025 Five-Year Strategic Plan, directly addresses economic development efforts. The Council-identified Business and Economic Vitality priority goals and strategies center around downtown revitalization, utilization of urban renewal, creating family wage jobs, and fostering the four key industry sectors.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic negatively affected countless Meridian businesses, especially those in the leisure and hospitality industries whose operations were severely limited or shut down entirely. Some retail businesses, and especially those offering nonessential goods, also suffered significant losses.

Overall, and despite pandemic-related challenges, the Meridian job and commercial real estate markets, like much of the Treasure Valley and Idaho, continue to rebound and flourish. While many of the recent negative economic impacts of the can be directly attributed to the pandemic, some believe that the pandemic may have exacerbated and/or accelerated other inevitable demographic and market changes including employment shortages related to aging population, reduced birth rates, and changing preferences related to industry practices.

Business Development and Infrastructure

The City recognizes the need for infrastructure to be in place (or readily available) if it is going to attract 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 often key factors in determining when and where a business chooses to locate or expand. The cost of not having infrastructure in the right place and available at the right time, can harm the housing-jobs balance, create significant transportation related impacts, and lead to unrecoverable missed opportunities when land is converted to other more easily accommodated uses for short-term demand.

Therefore, the City strives to be proactive in ensuring 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

Recent Business Growth

New Businesses

- Amazon
- American Credit Corporation
- Americor
- Bastian Solutions
- Berkley North Pacific Group
- Capital Eleven
- Costco
- Covington Engineering
- Engage Technologies Group
- FedEx
- First American Title
- First Colony Mortgage
- Functional Medicine of Idaho
- Hangar Clinic
- Kiln
- Leyngold Institute for Plastic Surgery
- Lumber 84
- Microbe Formulas
- Peripheral Vascular Partners
- Perspecta/Leidos
- PillPack/Amazon Pharmacy
- Rule Tech
- Saltzer Health
- United Site Services
- University of Dubuque
- US Bank Home Mortgage Center
- Verified First

Expanding Business

- Advanced Sign/Decalcomania
- Albertsons
- AmeriBen
- BBSI
- Blue Cross of Idaho
- Buckner Insurance
- Capitol Distributing
- Citi
- Clarivate Analytics
- CompuNet
- Computrol
- ESI
- Fiberon
- Gymreapers
- Harris CPAs
- Idaho Central Credit Union
- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine
- In Time Tec
- JST Manufacturing
- J-U-B
- Keller Associates
- Kiln
- Paylocity
- POWER Engineers
- Red Aspen
- St. Luke's
- United Heritage
- Walmart
- Western States Equipment

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 water supply, 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.

.....
Below: Gramercy Park, a mixed use development, west of Eagle Road on Overland Road.



Urban Renewal Districts

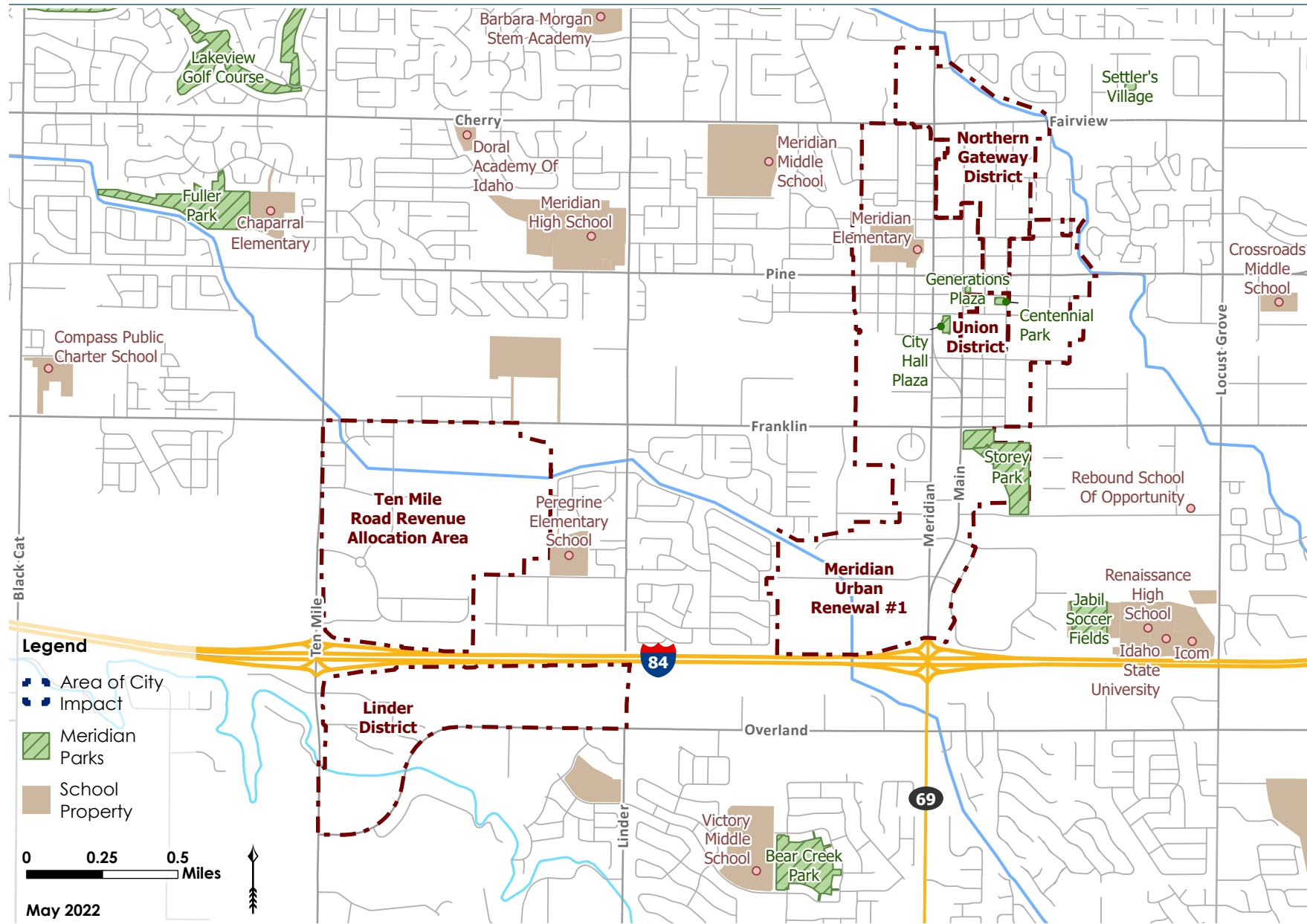
A total of three new urban renewal districts were established in 2020 and 2021, bringing the total number of Meridian districts to five. While urban renewal districts are administered by the Meridian Development Corporation (MDC), a separate legal entity, the City and MDC work closely together to align goals and strategies that spur private investment resulting in funding for public infrastructure and other improvements with district boundaries.

Tax increment financing is a method that provides for new revenue generated by private development within a district to be re-invested in specific public improvements within that district. Improvements must be cited in each district urban renewal plan upon adoption. Of the three new districts including the Northern Gateway, Union District and Linder District, the Linder District is especially job-focused.

In late 2021, the City Council and MDC approved the Linder District in an effort to accelerate and provide additional funding for the future Linder Road Overpass Project, a joint effort of the Idaho Transportation Department and the Ada County Highway District which would connect Overland Road to Franklin Road over I-84. The Linder District encompasses 170 acres along the south side of Interstate 84, north of Overland Road between Linder and Ten Mile Roads.

More than \$3.5 million in sewer improvements are necessary for this area to develop. To-date, no sole property owner or developer has been willing to independently front those costs. The City and MDC are hopeful that the potential to be reimbursed for required public infrastructure improvements will spur private investment within the Linder District.

Figure 2Z. Urban Renewal Districts



Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, 2022.

Meridian Business Sectors

The two most significant factors in site location decisions are talent and operating costs⁴. Anecdotal evidence has shown that Meridian, and the Treasure Valley as a whole, lacks the abundance of highly educated talent sought by some employers, especially those in the health care and technology sectors. This has been compounded by record periods of low unemployment; employers have reported difficulties in recruiting and engaging readily available regional talent.

In addition, recruiting employees from outside the region has become more challenging as housing costs and cost of living overall (see previous section) in the Valley have escalated. Remote work has further impacted recruiting, opening the regional talent pool to employers based anywhere in the world. Recruiters specifically target talent in desirable regions, such as the Treasure Valley, offering higher salaries than local employers, yet still below those in more established metro locations. Local employers are reporting wage increases of 10 to 20 percent have become the norm to retain and recruit professional talent across all market sectors.

Much has been written about the Demographic Drought⁵ (and the Great Resignation) and how those trends, and especially with other cost of living increases mentioned, are impacting labor markets in all industries. It's not just employers in higher-paying industries that are experiencing workforce challenges. In today's post-pandemic market, the leisure and hospitality and retail sectors are finding it difficult to secure entry level workers. While Idaho minimum wage law remains unchanged, market forces appear to have increased that much higher. It is

⁴ <https://siteselectorsguild.com/site-selectors-survey-reveals-latest-trends-in-corporate-location-decisions/>

⁵ The Demographic Drought. <https://www.economicmodeling.com/demographic-drought/>

Change in Business Establishments, 2019 to 2021

The following charts reference information in Table 2P.

Figure 2AA. Change in Establishments by Total

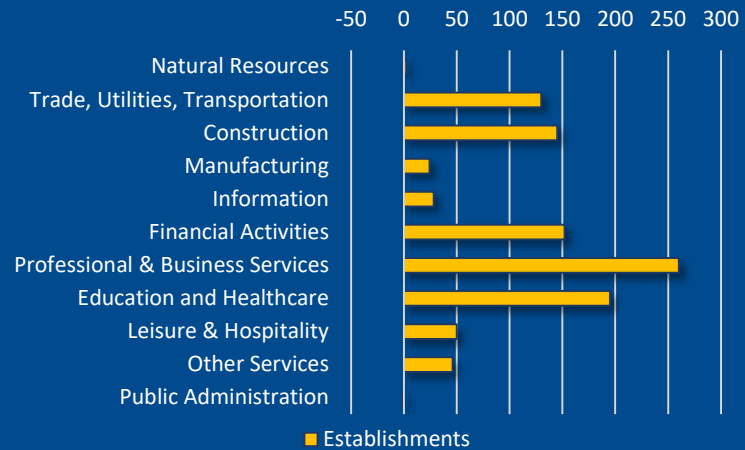


Figure 2AB. Change in Establishments by %

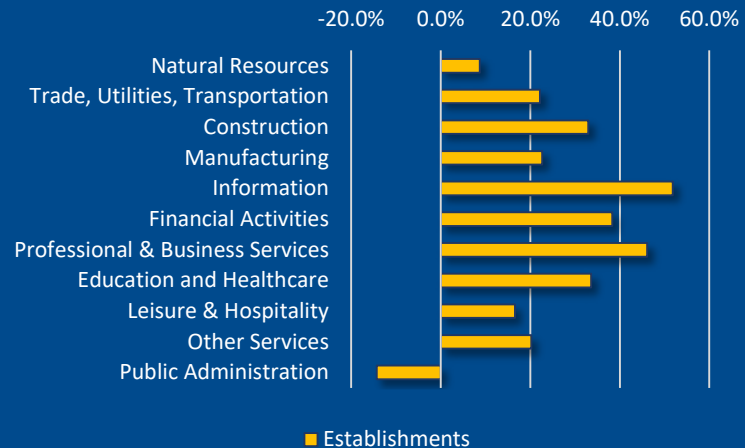


Table 2P. Meridian Establishments by Supersector

Supersector	2019		2021		Change		% Change	
	Establishments	Jobs	Establishments	Jobs	Establishments	Jobs	Establishments	Jobs
Natural Resources	23	120	25	112	2	-8	8.7%	-6.7%
Trade, Utilities, Transportation	586	11,410	716	13,797	130	2,387	22.2%	20.9%
Construction	440	4,974	585	5,529	145	555	33.0%	11.2%
Manufacturing	106	1,470	130	1,885	24	415	22.6%	28.2%
Information	54	736	82	680	28	-56	51.9%	-7.6%
Financial Activities	397	4,140	549	5,227	152	1,087	38.3%	26.3%
Professional & Business Services	564	6,717	824	6,820	260	103	46.1%	1.5%
Education and Healthcare	580	10,732	775	11,492	195	760	33.6%	7.1%
Leisure & Hospitality	301	6,841	351	7,030	50	189	16.6%	2.8%
Other Services	227	1,320	273	1,279	46	-41	20.3%	-3.1%
Public Administration	7	914	6	942	-1	28	-14.3%	3.1%
Total	3,285	49,374	4,316	54,793	1,031	5,419		

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Wages & Employment. "Quarter 3". Received on March 7, 2022 via e-mail.

not unusual to see help wanted signs at fast food franchises advertising a \$15.00 hourly starting wage.

Operating costs, arguably the second most important factor in determining business locations, are significantly affected by real estate costs. The Treasure Valley region has benefited from the pandemic-related corporate exodus from larger, often more established metro regions. This has created new job opportunities – another workforce challenge for existing employers – it has also increased commercial real estate prices in all market sectors. This increase in value is positive for landowners and some developers; but represents yet another challenge for existing companies, and especially those operating on small margins. This challenge is particularly prominent in the industrial sector, and many establishments seeking to grow in the eastern half of the region have been pushed further west to more available, affordable locations.

Business Establishments

The number of businesses establishments in Meridian increased during the previous five and ten years – even in two past two years despite the pandemic. As shown in Table 2P, Meridian Establishments by Supersector, there was a year-over-year net increase of business establishments through Quarter 3 of 2021 despite the pandemic.

Much of the new growth in establishments was in the Information, Professional and Business Services, and Financial Activities supersectors with established companies opening regional offices or expanding their Treasure Valley presence. While Professional and Business Services had the highest area of establishment growth, there were comparatively fewer jobs than in other supersectors. The highest supersectors that also saw the most positive job increase are in Financial Activities, Trade, Utilities, and Transportation, and Manufacturing.

As stated, the City's Retail and Leisure and Hospitality supersectors experienced the greatest pandemic-related setbacks. Despite this, there is still a net increase in both establishments and jobs between 2019 and Quarter 3 of 2021. Approximately one-third of Meridian jobs are within the Leisure, Hospitality, and Retail supersectors. While these establishments provide valuable goods and services within the community, they are more vulnerable to pandemic-related restrictions and the wages paid make it difficult for employees to work and live in Meridian. Worth noting, under the State's current sales tax distribution method, the City does not receive a commensurate share of sales tax revenue collected from Meridian-based businesses, despite often providing increased services and service calls to uses with a regional or larger customer base.

Employment Trends

Employment

Table 2Q overviews detailed employment information in Meridian for the years of 2009, 2014, and 2019. In Meridian, Education Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance constitute about 23% of all jobs. Around 18% of jobs in Meridian are Information, Finance and Insurance, Management of Enterprise, and Professional Services, and an additional 26% are in Retail Trade or Accommodation and Food Services.

In the last ten years the largest increase in Meridian employment sectors by total jobs was Retail Trade with almost 4,000, or a 90% increase. At over 3,000 jobs, Health Care and Social Assistance was the second largest job sector increase. The largest percent change was in the Information sector at approximately 267%, increasing by over 600 jobs from 2009. For overall sector changes, between 2009 and 2019, Construction and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sectors were both up 1.9% and 3.1% respectively.

Change in Employment Groups, 2009 to 2019

The following charts reference information in Table 2Q.

Figure 2AC. Change in Employment Age Groups

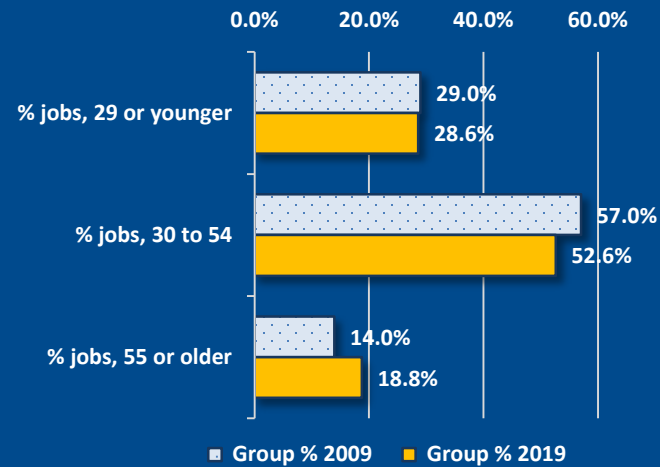


Figure 2AD. Change in Employment Income Groups

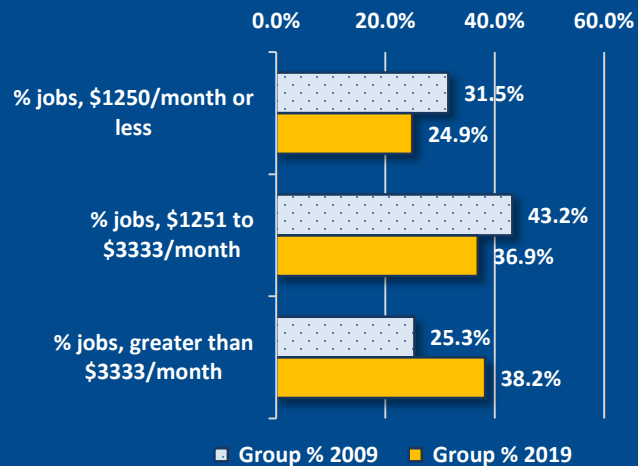
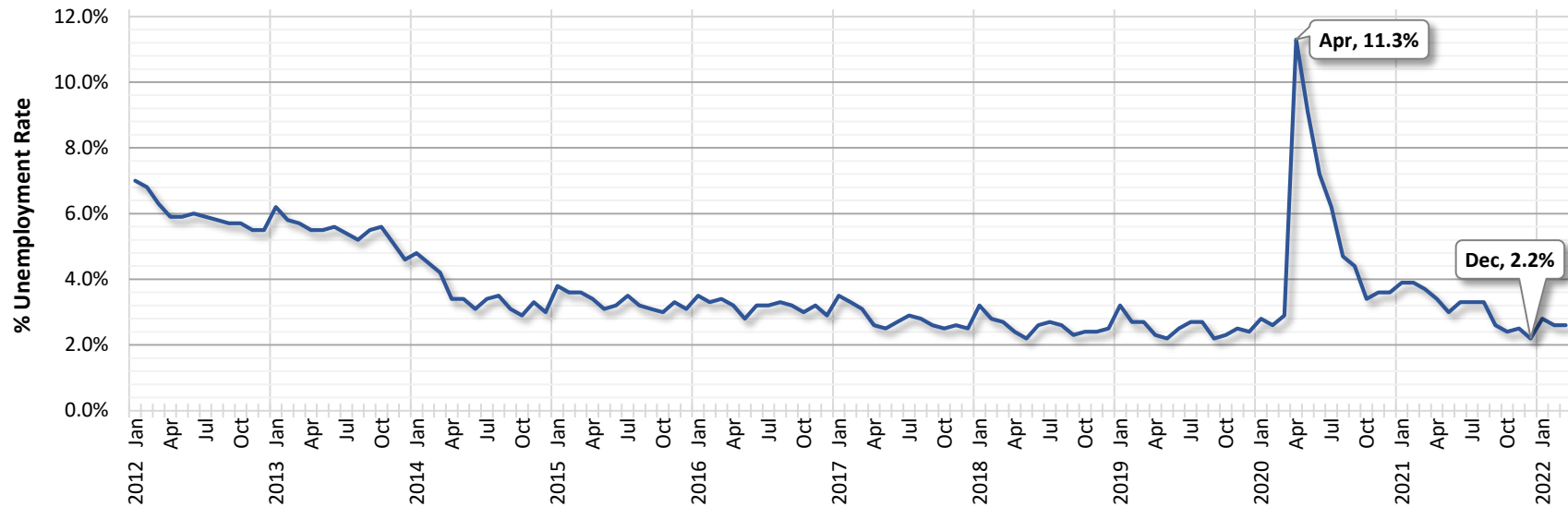


Table 2Q. Employment: Meridian Jobs by Sector, Age, and Income

Sector Description	2009	2014	2019	Change to 2019	% Change 09 to 19	Group % 2009	Group % 2014	Group % 2019	Group Change 09 to 19
# of jobs, age 29 or younger	8,970	10,320	15,350	6,380	71.1%	29.0%	26.7%	28.6%	-0.4%
# of jobs, age 30 to 54	17,650	21,870	28,230	10,580	59.9%	57.0%	56.5%	52.6%	-4.4%
# of jobs, age 55 or older	4,320	6,520	10,070	5,750	133.1%	14.0%	16.8%	18.8%	4.8%
# of jobs, \$1250/month or less	9,740	11,370	13,360	3,620	37.2%	31.5%	29.4%	24.9%	-6.6%
# of jobs, \$1251 to \$3333/month	13,360	15,670	19,790	6,430	48.1%	43.2%	40.5%	36.9%	-6.3%
# of jobs, greater than \$3333/month	7,830	11,680	20,500	12,670	161.8%	25.3%	30.2%	38.2%	12.9%
Jobs by Sector									
Agriculture, Forestry, Game	120	110	90	(30)	-25.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	-0.2%
Mining and Extraction	10	20	-	(10)	-100.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	10	20	10	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	2,310	3,120	5,030	2,720	117.7%	7.5%	8.1%	9.4%	1.9%
Manufacturing	1,160	1,400	1,620	460	39.7%	3.8%	3.6%	3.0%	-0.7%
Wholesale Trade	1,860	1,730	2,290	430	23.1%	6.0%	4.5%	4.3%	-1.8%
Retail Trade	4,280	6,190	8,140	3,860	90.2%	13.9%	16.0%	15.2%	1.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	930	690	1,400	470	50.5%	3.0%	1.8%	2.6%	-0.4%
Information	240	270	880	640	266.7%	0.8%	0.7%	1.6%	0.9%
Finance and Insurance	2,000	2,380	3,780	1,780	89.0%	6.5%	6.2%	7.1%	0.6%
Real Estate	250	390	670	420	168.0%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	0.4%
Professional Services	1,640	2,110	4,520	2,880	175.6%	5.3%	5.5%	8.4%	3.1%
Management of Enterprise	280	330	210	(70)	-25.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.4%	-0.5%
Administrative and Support Services	2,730	2,780	3,710	980	35.9%	8.8%	7.2%	6.9%	-1.9%
Educational Services	3,140	3,660	4,470	1,330	42.4%	10.2%	9.5%	8.3%	-1.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,480	6,970	7,790	3,310	73.9%	14.5%	18.0%	14.5%	0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	570	980	1,080	510	89.5%	1.8%	2.5%	2.0%	0.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,520	4,070	5,570	2,050	58.2%	11.4%	10.5%	10.4%	-1.0%
Other Services	580	650	1,210	630	108.6%	1.9%	1.7%	2.3%	0.4%
Public Administration	750	790	1,100	350	46.7%	2.4%	2.0%	2.1%	-0.4%
Total Number of Jobs	30,900	38,720	53,660	22,760	73.7%				

Note: Values by year are rounded to the nearest ten. This information is a LODES data product constrained to the Meridian Area of City Impact. It is composed of administrative records, census and survey data focused on the labor market, worker, and firm statistics. State unemployment insurance reporting and account information and federal worker earnings records which provide information on employment location for covered jobs and residential information for workers. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics 2019. Retrieved on April 28, 2022 from LODES 7.5 via R Statistical Census API.

Figure 2AE. Change in Meridian Unemployment Rate



Note: See source link for complete table of values. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, "Unemployment Rate: Meridian city, ID (U)". Accessed on May 3, 2022 from <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCT165212000000003>

As shown in Figure 2AC and 2AD, changes in age and wage groups associated with these jobs were diverse. Overall and consistent with general demographic changes, the 55 and older group increased by 4.8% of the overall employment workforce. The largest increase both by total jobs and by percent wage group were those that are \$3,333 or higher (this wage group is now low, but would have once been family-wage).

Table 2P also shows new jobs associated with new establishments for 2019 through Quarter 3 of 2021. As of March 2022, there are an estimated 62,683 jobs in Meridian⁶. This is an increase of 16.8% from the more detailed 2019 data available in Table 2Q.

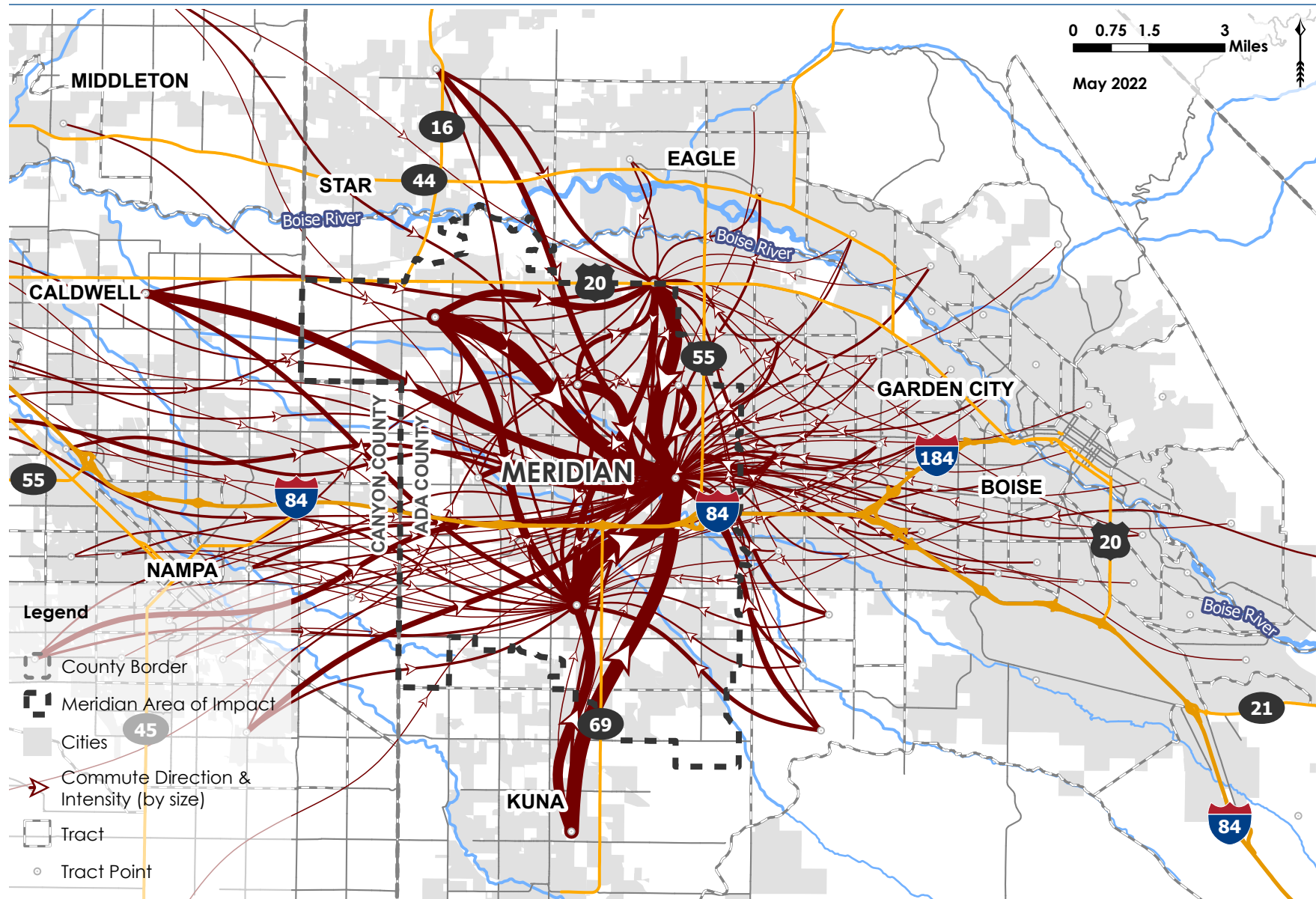
⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, "Employment: Meridian city, ID (U)". Accessed on May 3, 2022 from <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCT165212000000005>.

The data collection between these sources vary, but generally align in direction and change, and are helpful to show detailed historic information aligned with more general recent data. Figure 2AF shows the origin-destination of employees for jobs in Meridian.

Unemployment

Unemployment continues to be low in Meridian since the pandemic spike in April of 2020, with a February and March 2022 rate of 2.6%. Meridian's lowest rate of unemployment in the last 10 years was 2.2% (2.7% for Idaho), and the overall 10-year average rate was just 3.7% (4.4% for Idaho). Figure 2AE shows unemployment changes over the last 10-years in Meridian. This data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is subject to revision.

Figure 2AF. Origin of Meridian Establishment Employees



Note: Data shown is by 2019 Census tracts, for geographies that include 100 workers or more with the same origin-destination geography. Some workers may be remote or do not work centrally. Map does not show specific routes, only general direction. Jobs associated with workers are for covered employment only (generally eligible for unemployment benefits after job loss). Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics 2019. Retrieved on April 28, 2022 from LODES 7.5 via R Statistical Census API.

Table 2R. Labor Force: Meridian Resident Jobs by Sector, Age, and Income

Sector Description	2009	2014	2019	Change to 2019	% Change 09 to 19	Group % 2009	Group % 2014	Group % 2019	Group Change 09 to 19
# of jobs, age 29 or younger	6,110	8,020	11,250	5,140	84.1%	23.6%	20.7%	22.6%	-1.0%
# of jobs, age 30 to 54	15,970	24,180	28,730	12,760	79.9%	61.7%	62.3%	57.7%	-4.0%
# of jobs, age 55 or older	3,810	6,610	9,810	6,000	157.5%	14.7%	17.0%	19.7%	5.0%
# of jobs, \$1250/month or less	6,960	9,310	10,500	3,540	50.9%	26.9%	24.0%	21.1%	-5.8%
# of jobs, \$1251 to \$3333/month	10,080	13,540	15,190	5,110	50.7%	38.9%	34.9%	30.5%	-8.4%
# of jobs, greater than \$3333/month	8,860	15,970	24,090	15,230	171.9%	34.2%	41.1%	48.4%	14.2%
Jobs by Sector									
Agriculture, Forestry, Game	210	260	280	70	33.3%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.2%
Mining and Extraction	30	110	50	20	66.7%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%
Utilities	100	220	210	110	110.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%
Construction	1,440	1,960	3,290	1,850	128.5%	5.6%	5.1%	6.6%	1.0%
Manufacturing	2,360	3,300	3,720	1,360	57.6%	9.1%	8.5%	7.5%	-1.7%
Wholesale Trade	1,270	1,970	2,370	1,100	86.6%	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	-0.1%
Retail Trade	3,090	4,870	5,990	2,900	93.9%	12.0%	12.6%	12.0%	0.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	850	1,020	1,490	640	75.3%	3.3%	2.6%	3.0%	-0.3%
Information	530	680	830	300	56.6%	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%	-0.4%
Finance and Insurance	1,170	1,730	2,390	1,220	104.3%	4.5%	4.5%	4.8%	0.3%
Real Estate	330	460	650	320	97.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	0.0%
Professional Services	1,440	2,230	3,360	1,920	133.3%	5.6%	5.8%	6.8%	1.2%
Management of Enterprise	470	590	810	340	72.3%	1.8%	1.5%	1.6%	-0.2%
Administrative and Support Services	2,210	3,080	3,610	1,400	63.3%	8.6%	7.9%	7.3%	-1.3%
Educational Services	2,170	3,270	3,780	1,610	74.2%	8.4%	8.4%	7.6%	-0.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,570	6,000	7,820	4,250	119.0%	13.8%	15.5%	15.7%	1.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	350	560	820	470	134.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	0.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	2,100	2,900	3,940	1,840	87.6%	8.1%	7.5%	7.9%	-0.2%
Other Services	680	1,010	1,410	730	107.4%	2.6%	2.6%	2.8%	0.2%
Public Administration	1,460	2,540	2,890	1,430	97.9%	5.7%	6.6%	5.8%	0.2%
Total Number of Jobs	25,900	38,820	49,790	23,890	92.2%				

Note: Values by year are rounded to the nearest ten. This information is a LODES data product constrained to the Meridian Area of City Impact. It is composed of administrative records, census and survey data focused on the labor market, worker, and firm statistics. State unemployment insurance reporting and account information and federal worker earnings records which provide information on employment location for covered jobs and residential information for workers. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics 2019. Retrieved on April 28, 2022 from LODES 7.5 via R Statistical Census API.

Change in Labor Force Groups, 2009 to 2019

The following charts reference information in Table 2R.

Figure 2AG. Change in Employment Age Groups

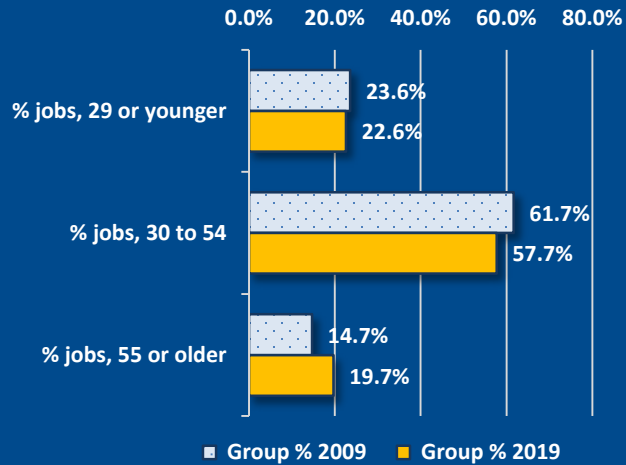
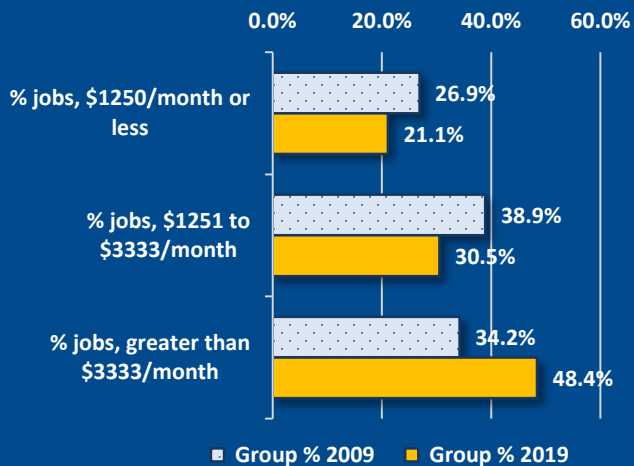


Figure 2AH. Change in Employment Income Groups



Labor Force

As shown in Table 2R, Meridian’s labor force much like its population has grown; the labor force grew substantially from just over 30,000 in 2009 to over 49,000 in 2019. This labor force demands jobs that are very different from those employment opportunities available in Meridian though; Meridian residents take jobs throughout the Treasure Valley. The largest sectors for Meridian residents by a wide margin are those in Health Care and Social Services; approaching 16.0% of the labor force. In the last 10 years the biggest sector change for residents was also Health Care and Social Services, increasing in both the total number of jobs (over 4,000), and as a percent of all jobs.

Similar to the employment age groups, the Meridian labor force has increased in age. There was a 5.0% increase in age for the 55 and older group, between 2009 and 2019. There was also a higher change in jobs providing monthly income of \$3,333 or more, increasing by 14.2% of all jobs since 2009.

As of March of 2022, Meridian’s labor force is estimated at 64,357⁷. This is an increase of 29.0% from the detailed 2019 data available in Table 2R.

Jobs Access

Being located at the population and job center of the metropolitan area, it’s natural for residents and workers to commute. Being able to choose to live in one place and work elsewhere provides greater flexibility in priorities for home location, schools, amenities, access to services, and places to retreat. This is even more true for households with multiple workers. For some, issues with both housing cost

⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, "Labor Force: Meridian city, ID (U)". Accessed on May 3, 2022 from <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LAUCT165212000000006>.

Figure 2AI. Meridian Employment to Meridian Labor Force Comparison

This figure is an overall comparison of the 2019 job sectors that the Meridian labor force (residents) are employed in, to the employment (jobs) available in Meridian. Equilibrium is zero, with larger values, negative or positive, representing extremes. See Tables 2Q and 2R for data and sources, and the Jobs Access section for other narrative.

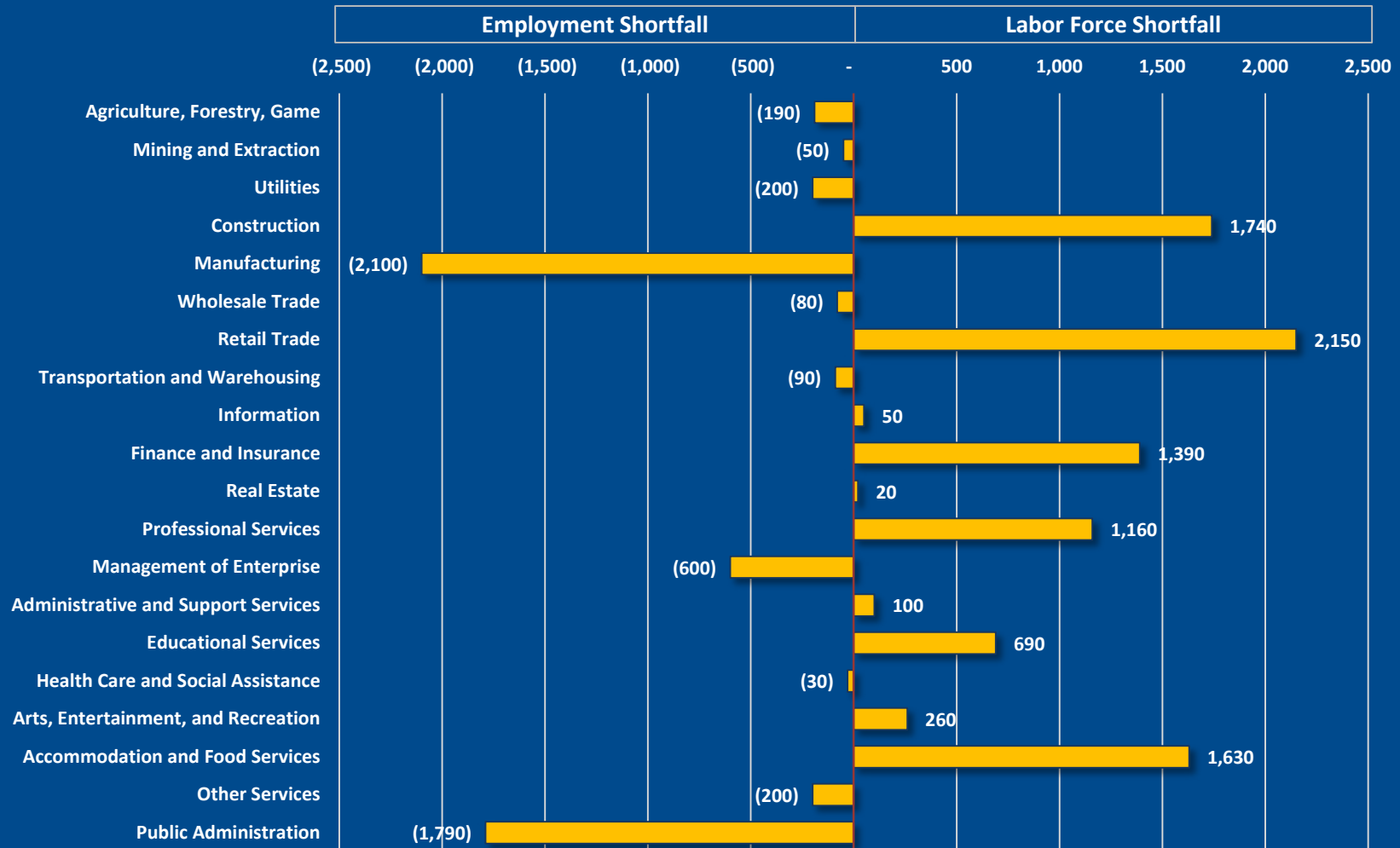


Table 2S. Meridian Commercial Vacancy

Type	Buildings	Total SF	Occupied SF	Vacant SF	Vacancy Rate
Office	446	5,993,153	5,625,407	367,746	6.14%
Industrial	260	6,483,617	6,419,427	64,190	0.99%
Retail	130	5,208,293	499,055	216,238	4.15%
Total SF	836	17,685,063	12,543,889	648,174	3.67%

Source: TOK Commercial Real Estate, Boise Valley Information. "Vacancy Reports". Accessed on May 3, 2022 from <https://www.tokcommercial.com/boise-msa>.

and transportation burden can quickly restrict this freedom, and for others increasing congestion may influence previous priorities for home and job location over time. Finally, evolving opportunities for remote work may increase opportunities for some and further restrict opportunities for others.

Never-the-less, comparing the Meridian labor force to Meridian employment (jobs) by sectors, provides for interesting comparisons. The sector with the largest "surplus", those jobs where the Meridian labor force could not fill the positions, is Retail Trade with over 2,000 jobs. Construction is second with just over 1,700 jobs, and the Accommodation and Food Services sector is third with over 1,600 jobs. The sector with the largest deficit, where the jobs do not exist in Meridian even if the labor force wanted them, is Manufacturing with a deficit of over 2,000 jobs. The second largest sector deficit is Public Administration with almost 1,800 jobs.

Figure 2AJ shows the origin-destination of jobs for Meridian residents. While a large number of Meridian residents do work in the City, most commute outward. Several areas of concentration include Manufacturing in the Census Tract around Micron Technology, and the Public Administration and Healthcare jobs in Downtown Boise and the Central Bench.

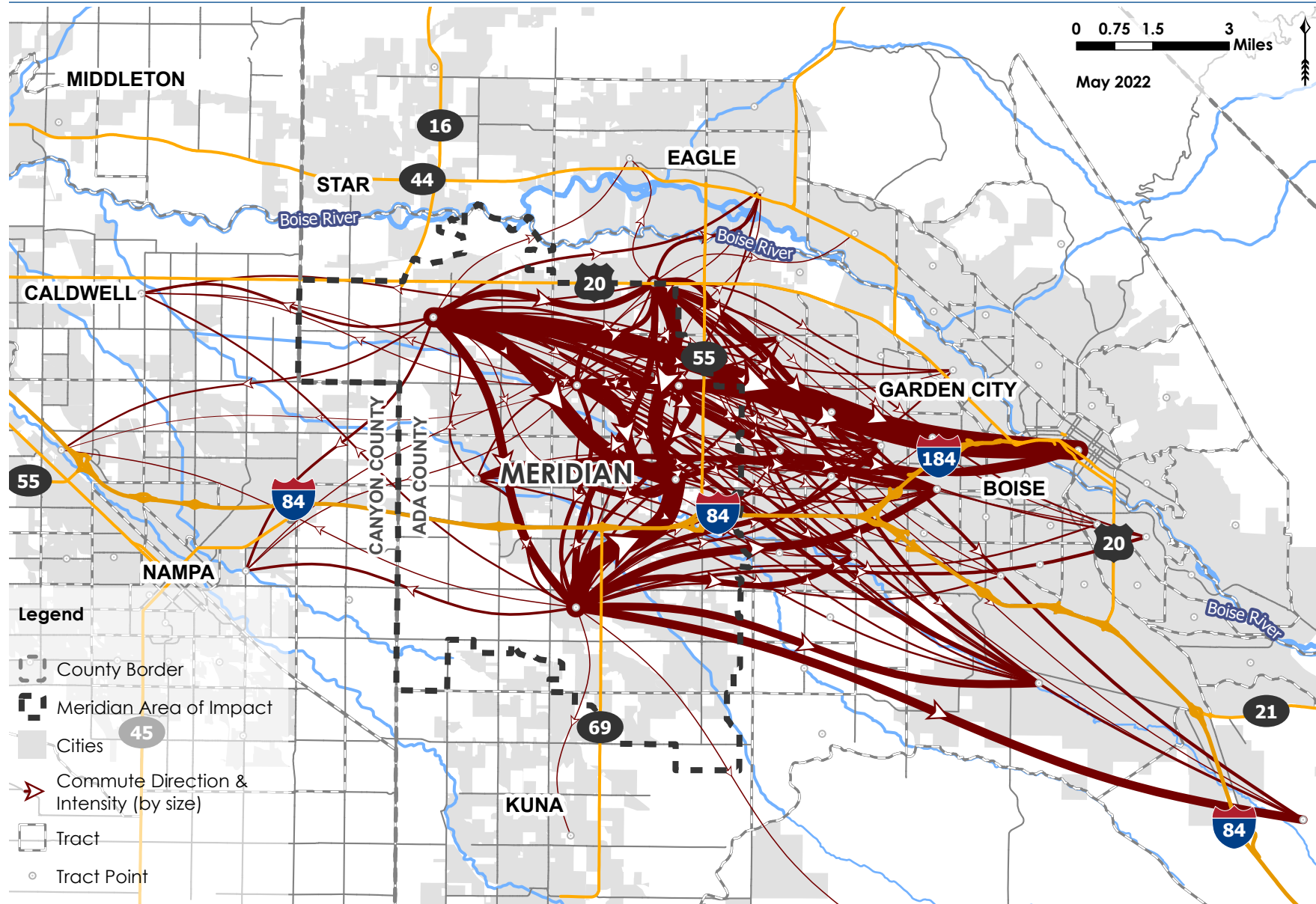
The Commercial Real Estate Market

The commercial real estate market has experienced some of its highest and lowest vacancy rates over the past two years. Of particular note, the Meridian industrial vacancy rate has remained under one percent for nearly two years. One major driver is the increased demand for warehouse and distribution space, the result of pandemic-related increases in e-commerce sales as well as population increases in the region resulting in enough local demand for operators to justify a regional presence in the market.

Warehouse/distribution uses require considerable square footage and the use typically does not generate a significant number of jobs despite the large footprint. Large users and large vehicle distribution often have more significant impacts on transportation networks by reducing intersection efficiency and bottle necks at access points, and may push out family wage jobs and services requiring other users to then also travel further. While these uses are necessary, they generally do not meet the goal of increasing family wage jobs and should be contained to areas where both the land use and transportation network were planned for them.

There are many industrial users that bring family wage jobs at higher jobs/square foot. Conversely, when considering business retention, there are essential supply and service businesses necessary to serve the existing business community, regardless

Figure 2AJ. Destination of Meridian Labor Force



Note: Data shown is by 2019 Census tracts, for geographies that include 100 workers or more with the same origin-destination geography. Some workers may be remote or do not work centrally. Map does not show specific routes, only general direction. Jobs associated with workers are for covered employment only (generally eligible for unemployment benefits after job loss). Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics 2019. Retrieved on April 28, 2022 from LODS 7.5 via R Statistical Census API.

of wages and jobs/square foot. A balanced business and economic base is essential to ensure jobs for residents as well as a community's fiscal health and stability. The residential-to-commercial land use ratio should be monitored as well as the balance of specific uses within commercial zones to maintain this balance if the City is to continue focus on family wage jobs.

Market Statistics

Despite the remaining uncertainties from the Pandemic, the Meridian office market saw the greatest square footage increases across the three commercial real estate segments in both 2020 and 2021. New construction at Ten Mile Crossing, El Dorado, Eagle View Landing, and Silverstone projects accounted for

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Below: Aerial view of the plaza, in The Village at Meridian.



the majority of the growth. Nearly 753,000 square feet was added in 2020 by new projects (60.5% of the total square feet added in 2020); More than 373,500 square feet added in 2021 (46.5% of the total square feet added in 2021).

As of April 11, 2022, the Office vacancy in Meridian is at 6.14%, Industrial vacancy is at 0.99%, and Retail vacancy is at 4.15%⁸. While overall Industrial vacancy is low, there is a very high vacancy of Class A Multi-Tenant industrial buildings. Virtually all new industrial space permitted is the same configuration of large warehouse style configurations.

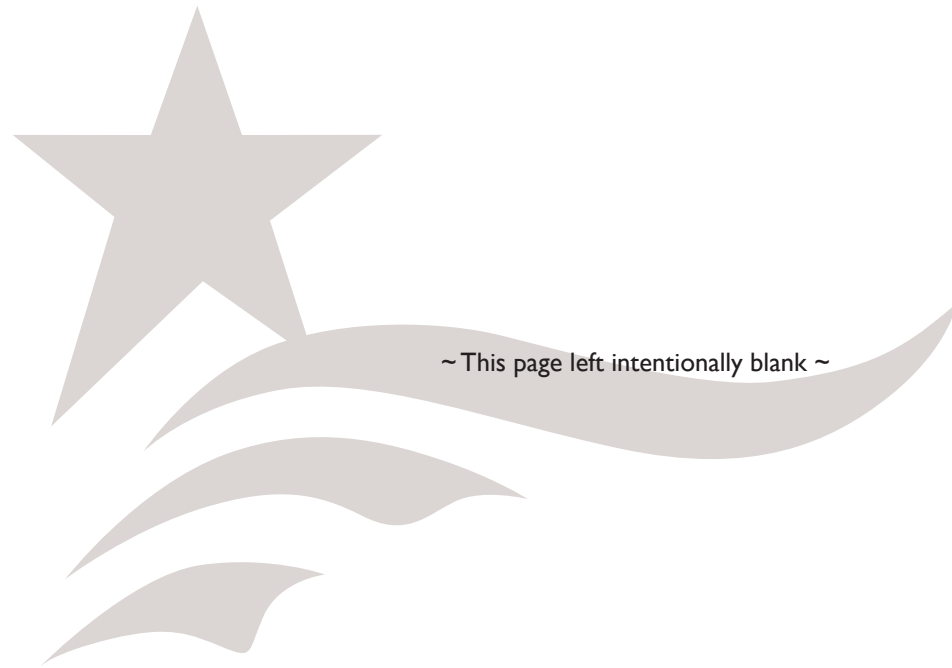
In 2021, the City received 98 inquiries from existing and potential new businesses. The majority of these inquiries came from companies interested in siting manufacturing operations in Meridian. Most of these requests could not be accommodated due to a lack of readily available and appropriate space, or due to undeveloped acreage with existing services.

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 businesses⁹. The Chamber is in the business of building relationships between the business community, government, and the rest of the community to maintain a healthy economy and quality of life in Meridian. The Meridian Chamber of Commerce is a key partner in the City's economic development efforts.

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⁸ TOK Commercial Real Estate, Boise Valley Information. "Vacancy Reports". Accessed on May 3, 2022 from <https://www.tokcommercial.com/boise-msa>.

⁹ Meridian Chamber of Commerce. "About". Access on June 2, 2022 from <https://meridianchamber.org/about/>.



3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Land Use, Transportation, and Community Design

This chapter discusses the framework for land use and development in the City of Meridian and its Area of City Impact (AOI). 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 topics from

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Below: Vacant land near Citibank, in the Silverstone business park.



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: land ownership, land use, transportation, and community design. This portion of the report also includes a brief summary of future land uses, transportation trends, and community design principles.

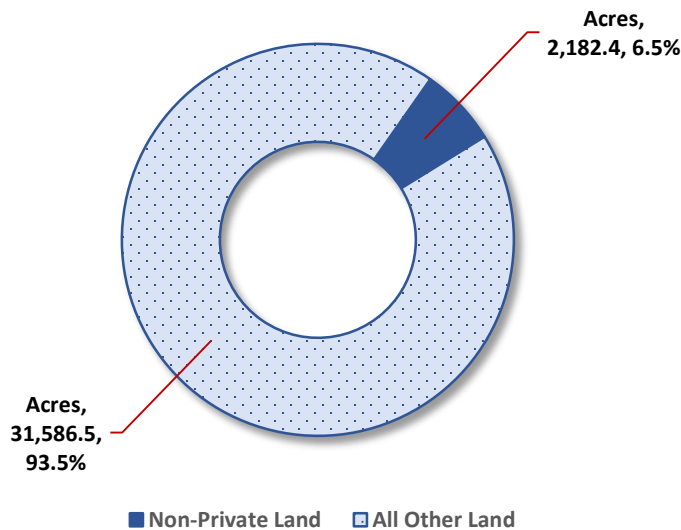
The primary purpose of the Land Use discussion is to broadly frame the topics of zoning and future land uses, to define the area of city impact, and to include a brief summary of special planning areas. The purpose of the Transportation portion of the chapter is to explain how roads are classified and used in the region and how planning for future facilities is done. An explanation on funding for transportation projects is provided as well as how roadways are starting to evolve into complete streets. An overview of pathways, transit and travel lanes is provided. Further, some basic information is included on Public Airport Facilities within the Transportation section.

The purpose of the Community Design discussion is to provide a framework for how Meridian will ensure the City remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family. This section overviews the City's design review process, and efforts to enhance livability and quality of life in the community.

Land Ownership

Land within the corporate City boundaries and the Area of City Impact are controlled by a mix of private and public ownerships, with a large majority of the land (93.5%) being held privately. The remaining 6.5% is owned by West Ada School District, City of Meridian, Federal Government, State Government, other local agencies, and various utilities. 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, and combined with State ownership, is over 50% of total parcel area. Table 3A summarizes non-private land ownership within the Area of City Impact.

Figure 3A. Comparison of Private to Non-private Land Area



Note: See table 3A.

Table 3A. Non-private Parcel Ownership in the AOCI

Name	Acres	% of AOCI
Federal (Subtotal)	66.7	0.20%
Bureau of Reclamation	63.6	0.19%
Postal Service	3.0	0.01%
State (Subtotal)	99.8	0.30%
Board of Education	22.0	0.07%
State Police	50.2	0.15%
Transportation Department	27.6	0.08%
Idaho State University	16.3	0.05%
Department of Lands	2.4	0.01%
Local (Subtotal)	1,872.4	5.54%
Ada County	19.1	0.06%
Ada County Highway District	91.7	0.27%
City of Meridian	800.6	2.37%
Meridian Cemetery District	30.6	0.09%
West Ada School District	886.4	2.62%
Western Ada Recreation District	25.1	0.07%
Meridian Rural Fire District	9.2	0.03%
Other	9.7	0.03%
Utility (Subtotal)	143.5	0.43%
Idaho Power	21.9	0.06%
Intermountain Gas	65.7	0.19%
Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District	43.4	0.13%
Northwest Pipeline	4.1	0.01%
Phyllis Canal Company	4.4	0.01%
Pioneer Irrigation District	4.0	0.01%
Other	0.5	0.00%
Total Non-private Land	2,182.4	6.46%
All Other Land	31,586.5	93.54%
Total Parcel Area in AOCI	33,768.9	100.00%

Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, March 2022

Zoning & Land Use

Zoning and land use are 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 over the past few decades, it is important to more regularly inventory current land uses and then determine how further development should occur. For more information on these inventories, see the annual City of Meridian Land Use and Development Report.¹

As a property requests to annex or rezone within the City, the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Comprehensive Plan directs the appropriate zoning district of that property.

Zoning Districts

The City of Meridian maintains a Zoning Map that depicts zoning districts of the City. There are 16 zoning districts listed in the Unified Development Code (UDC) for use within the incorporated limits of the City. The following is a brief summary of zoning districts by group. Descriptions are taken from the Unified Development Code (UDC). See also the UDC for a complete zoning related information.²

- ▣ Residential. The purpose of the residential districts is to provide for a range of housing opportunities consistent with the Meridian Comprehensive Plan. Residential districts are distinguished by the dimensional standards of each corresponding zone and housing types that can be accommodated. Included zoning districts: R-2; R-4; R-8; R-15; and R:40.

¹ Land Use and Development Report: <https://meridiancity.org/planning>.

² Unified Development Code: <https://meridiancity.org/planning/UDC>.



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Above: Vacant land around Owhyee High School.

Below: Looking west from Kleiner Park, towards The Village power center.



- ❑ Commercial: The purpose of the commercial districts is to provide for the retail and service needs of the community in accordance with the Meridian Comprehensive Plan. These districts differ in the size and scale of commercial structures accommodated in the district, the scale and mix of allowed commercial uses, and the location of the district in proximity to streets and highways. Included zoning districts: C-N; C-C; C-G; L-O; M-E; and H-E.
- ❑ Industrial: The purpose of the industrial districts are to provide for convenient employment centers of light manufacturing, research and development,

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 Below: Looking south-east from the Silverstone business park.



warehousing, and distributing. In accord with the Meridian Comprehensive Plan. Included zoning districts: I-L and I-H. Note: I-H is a heavy industrial district and does not currently zoned anywhere in the City.

- ❑ Traditional Neighborhood: The purpose of the traditional neighborhood districts is to encourage mixed use, compact development that is sensitive to the environmental characteristics of the land and facilitates the efficient use of services. Vertically integrated residential projects are encouraged in all traditional neighborhood districts. A traditional neighborhood district diversifies and integrates land uses within close proximity to each other, and it provides for the daily recreational and shopping needs of the residents. Included zoning districts: O-T; TN-C; and TN-R.

Future Land Uses

In 2022, 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. This build out area is known as the Area of City Impact (AOCI). The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) portrays locations for the various land use types throughout the AOCI. 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 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 eight basic categories:

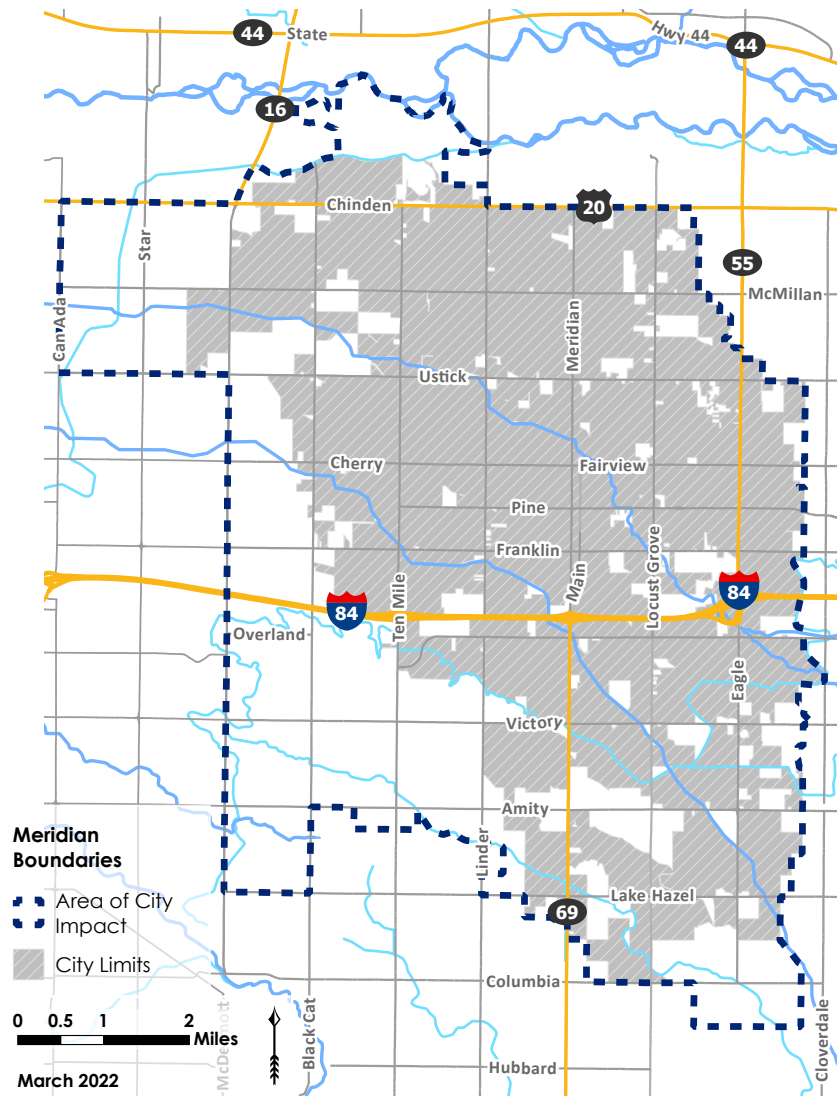
- Residential – These areas are intended to provide a variety of housing types. Uses include a range of densities varying from large estate lots to multi-family homes.

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Below: End of the Main Street and Meridian Road couplet, north of Franklin Road.



- 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 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 quasi-public uses.

Figure 3B. Meridian Area of City Impact (AOCI)



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

For detailed descriptions of each specific land use, as well as associated policies regarding development, see Chapter 3 of the full City of Meridian Comprehensive 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 3B). The City’s AOCI is the future planning area for the City, where annexation and development in Meridian is anticipated. Although all properties are not yet incorporated, planning responsibilities for lands within the AOCI rest with the City of Meridian.

The City’s AOCI is negotiated with Ada County, pursuant to the Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA), Idaho Code section 67-65. Within the City’s AOCI, unincorporated properties are governed by Ada County for 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 AOCI. The RUT zone allows five-acre-lots, single-family residential development, as well as agricultural-related uses and a range of conditional uses. To develop with urban-level intensities, the owner/developer must request 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 AOCI 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



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Above: Interstate 84 and Meridian Road interchange, looking south-west.

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, and in working regional partners such as COMPASS which has developed a fiscal impact tool to consider land use entitlements.³

Special Planning Areas

In addition to the general citywide land use designations described above, more detailed plans have also been developed for special areas of the City. These Specific Area Plans were developed with heavy stakeholder input to provide additional narrative and specific detail into how development should

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³ <https://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/fiscalimpact.htm>

occur within these areas. All of these plans are adopted by reference in the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan.

Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan

A specific plan was developed in 2007 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 1/2-mile south of Overland Road on the south. The Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan includes specific land use designations, a planned transportation network, and design guidelines.

Destination Downtown (Urban Renewal)

The Destination Downtown vision plan was developed in 2009 and 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 district

extending from Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane to Interstate 84. The City's original Urban Renewal #1 district, which aligns with Destination Downtown, will expire in the next few years.

Fields Subarea Plan

The Fields Subarea Plan was adopted in 2021 and covers approximately 4 square miles in the northwest corner of the City. The Fields Subarea Plan is an opportunity to plan for one of the City's last growth areas, in a way that aligns with the Vision described in the full City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan; continues to grow the employment base; and integrates high-quality neighborhoods, parks and pathways, and schools. A central mixed-use activity center will serve as a hub for surrounding neighborhoods, and is a feature element of the Fields Subarea Plan.

Transportation

Meridian is situated in the center of the metropolitan area and bisected by the interstate and several highways. This location is prime for connecting people, goods and services both local and through the Pacific Northwest to Inter-Mountain West. Today, Meridian's transportation network is composed primarily of roadways. Although the local network of pathways, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities is growing. Transit is available via dial-a-ride services for seniors, Veterans, and persons with disabilities, as well as limited stops on inter-county bus routes that run on weekdays between Nampa-Caldwell and Meridian-Boise. The rail corridor through Meridian has a long and rich history, and still moves freight. The City and Valley Regional Transit (VRT) are exploring local transit routes for the near-future, and Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is exploring high-capacity transit in long-range plans. The future holds promise for expanded modes of transport and new types of service.

Meridian's transportation challenge is planning for and accommodating regional growth, by working with the transportation agencies to meet the existing and future transportation service demand. Collaborative land use and transportation planning can relieve Meridian's unique traffic congestion burden.

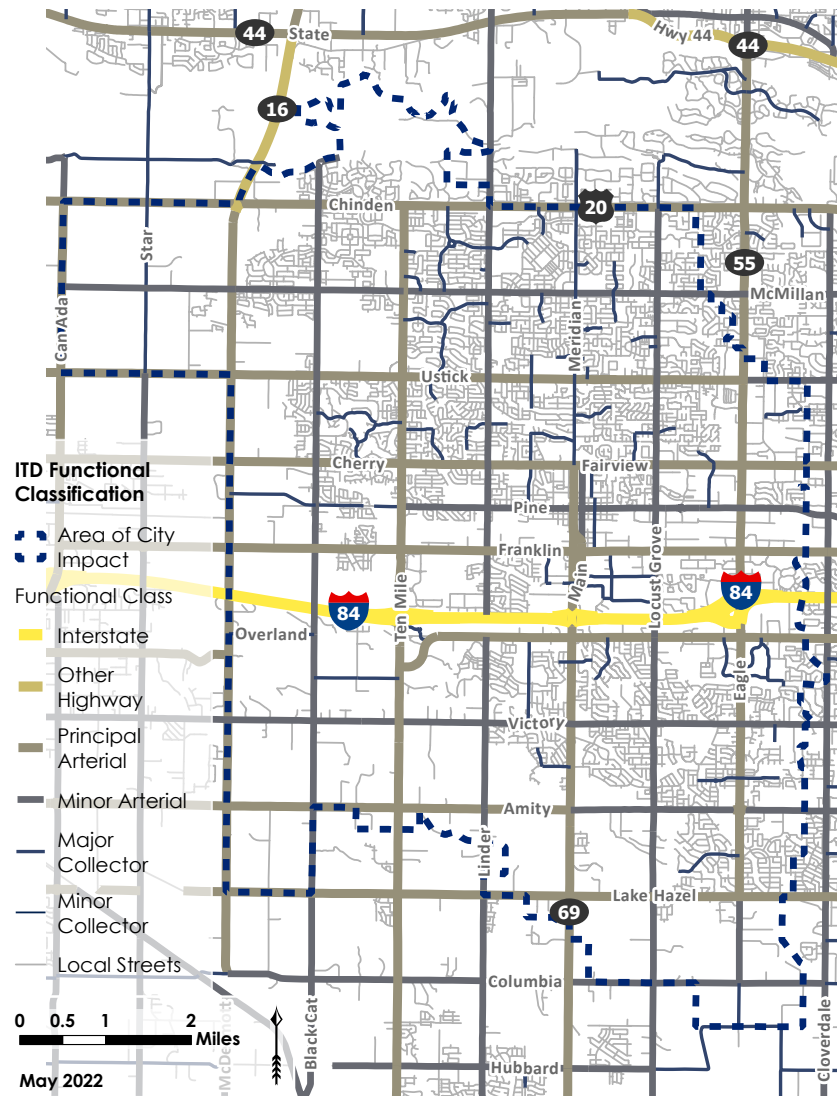
Roadway Authority

The City does not have any authority to 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, SH-16 and US 20-26. The Ada County Highway 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 Transportation Commission that meets monthly. 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

Figure 3C. Functional Classification



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

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 reviewing traffic safety and transportation matters such as: speed limits, meeting the needs of the traveling public, safe routes to schools, etc. that are brought before them either by City Staff, a transportation agency or a member of the public, and in making recommendations to the City Council as warranted.

Roadway Network

As shown in Table 3B, Meridian has almost 650 centerline miles of roadway today, including state highways and the interstate. Local roadways make up the largest share of this area, and have increased by over 50 lane miles in just five years. The southern portion of Meridian is bisected from the northern part of town by Interstate 84 (I-84).

Meridian’s roadways are described in terms of a hierarchy of streets, known as a functional classification system which involves grouping roadways into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. This system, which is used in some variation by the ACHD, Ada County, COMPASS, ITD, and the City, classifies roads and highways into three classifications: arterials (further divided into principal and minor), collectors, and local streets (which includes private streets).

- ▣ 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.

Table 3B. Roadway Miles by Classification

Year	2017		2022		2017 to 2022	
	Miles	% of All	Miles	% of All	Change (Miles)	Change (%)
Interstate	13.5	2.3%	13.5	2.1%	0.0	0.0%
Interstate Ramps	8.2	1.4%	8.2	1.3%	+ 0.0	+ 0.0%
Principal Arterial	66.9	11.2%	64.1	9.9%	- 2.8	- 4.1%
Minor Arterial	61.9	10.4%	61.7	9.6%	- 0.2	- 0.3%
Collector	18.8	3.1%	18.8	2.9%	+ 0.0	+ 0.0%
Local	427.7	71.6%	479.7	74.3%	+ 52.0	+ 12.2%
Total	597.0	100.0%	646.0	100.0%	+ 49.0	+ 8.2%

Note: Arterial reductions are due to a reduced Area of City Impact since 2017.
Source: City of Meridian Planning Division, March 2022.

- ❑ Minor arterials provide long-distance access, mainly within the state and region. These include medium traffic volume streets to and from other arterials and the freeway.
- ❑ Collectors serve to link local roads with other collectors/arterials or connect one arterial to another through a given mile. Typically, they provide direct service to residential areas.
- ❑ Local streets serve to provide direct access to abutting residential and commercial areas and should be for local traffic movement. Through traffic is discouraged.

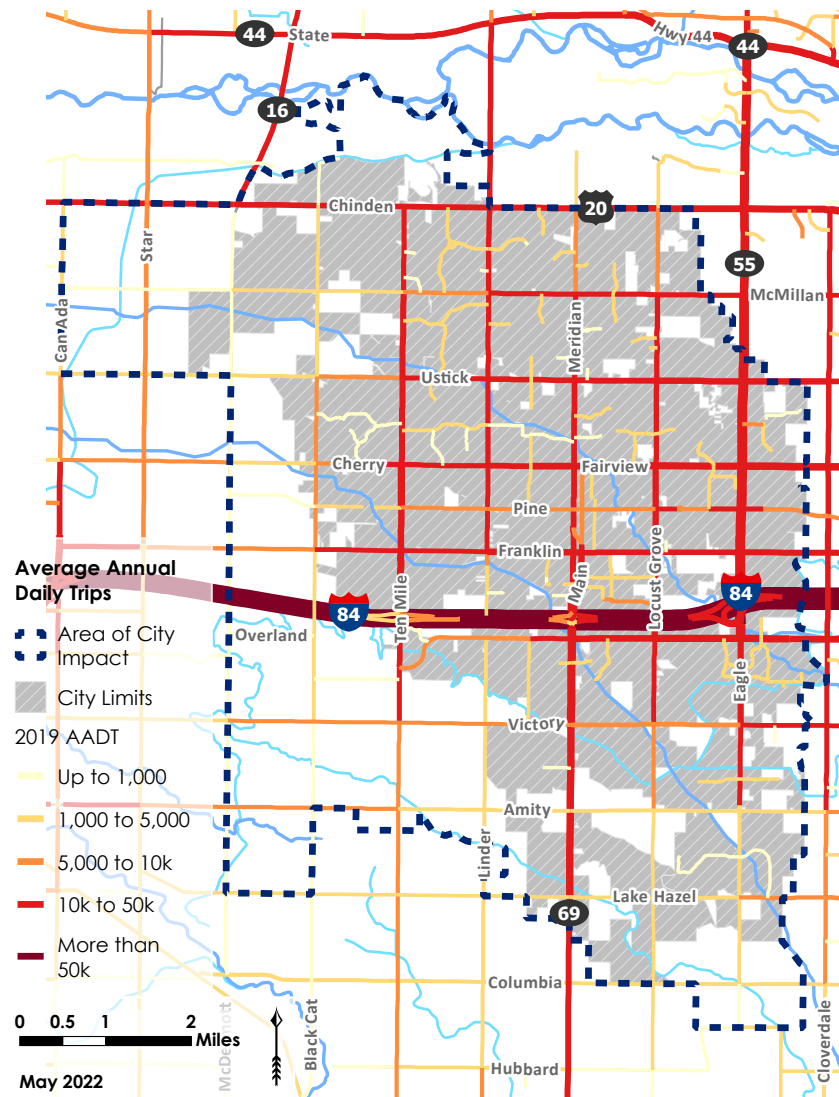
The ACHD Livable Street Design Guide and Master Street Map are integral tools for reviewing development application alignment with functional classification transportation network needs.

Interstate and State Highways

There are four state highways that traverse Meridian and have a significant influence on the transportation system:

- ❑ US 20-26/Chinden Boulevard: US 20-26 serves as the northern boundary of Meridian’s Area of City Impact east of Linder Road and west of McDermott and bisects the Area of City Impact between the aforementioned. Widening to four lanes is currently underway, and the improvements are being constructed to accommodate future widening to six lanes. 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 of the extension will traverse further through the north-west region of the City from US 20-26 to I-84. Construction of Phase II is anticipated to begin in 2022. This 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. Phase III will be a future project and further enhance elements of Phase II.
- ❑ State Highway 55/Eagle Road: State Highway 55 (SH 55) connects Meridian with the cities of Boise to the

Figure 3D. Roadway Traffic Activity



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

east, Eagle to the north, and Kuna to the south. South of Overland Road it is designated as an arterial and owned and maintained by ACHD. North of Overland Eagle Road becomes State Highway 55 and is a State of Idaho-maintained facility. Eagle Road is the most heavily traveled non-interstate roadway in the State of Idaho. Recent improvements to Eagle Road include widening, safety medians, intersection improvements and landscaping. 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) connects Meridian with Kuna to the south. North of I-84 it is owned and maintained by ACHD. Meridian Road is designated as a minor arterial from Chinden Boulevard, south to Cherry Lane. The designation changes to a principal arterial between Cherry Lane and I-84, where it traverses downtown. 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.

Travel Times and Commuting

As shown in Table 3C, the average commute time in 2021 for those living in Meridian is 20 minutes. This is equal with the average commute time for all Ada County residents and less than the surrounding communities of Eagle, Nampa, Kuna and Star.

Table 3C. Average Commute Time

Community	Average commute time (minutes)
Meridian	20
Boise	19
Eagle	29
Garden City	18
Kuna	23
Star	29
Nampa	22
Ada	20
Canyon	28

Note: Data is from the COMPASS 2021 Treasure Valley Travel Survey. Home-based work trips include any trip with one trip end at home and one trip end that is at work. Summaries are for car trips only and do not include other modes. Source: Mary Ann Waldinger and Mitch Skiles, COMPASS. "RE: Travel Time Data." April 26, 2022. E-mail.

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. Spreading out the distribution of trips would make more efficient use of the transportation infrastructure already in place. Policies for remote work, staggered work hours, or non-traditional work schedules, could be designed by businesses to encourage travel outside of the normal rush hour.

Change in Meridian Traffic

Overall, Citywide

 Traffic **increased by 22%** between 2010 and 2015 and by **13%** between 2015 and 2021

North Meridian (North of I-84)

 Traffic **increased by 12%** between 2010 and 2015 and by **10%** between 2015 and 2021

South Meridian (South of I-84)

 Traffic **increased by 31%** between 2010 and 2015 and by **15%** between 2015 and 2021

On the State System (20/26, 55, 69, 16)

 Traffic **increased by 22%** between 2010 and 2015 and by **14%** between 2015 and 2021

On Local Arterials (e.g. Locust Grove or Ustick)

 Traffic **increased by 20%** between 2010 and 2015 and by **10%** between 2015 and 2021

Source: See table 3C for source information.

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 primarily in Ada and Canyon 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 a gamut of indicators such as safety, congestion, accessibility, air quality, and other metrics.

The COMPASS Board, which is largely 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 plan which is updated at least every four years, addresses anticipated transportation issues over the next 20 years, evaluates how projected populations, economic growth, and development patterns will impact existing transportation facilities, and considers funding and expenditures for future transportation needs. The Ada County Highway District (ACHD) also has a long-range transportation plan, called the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), for all of 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 ITIP

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.

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 and bicycle projects.

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. 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.

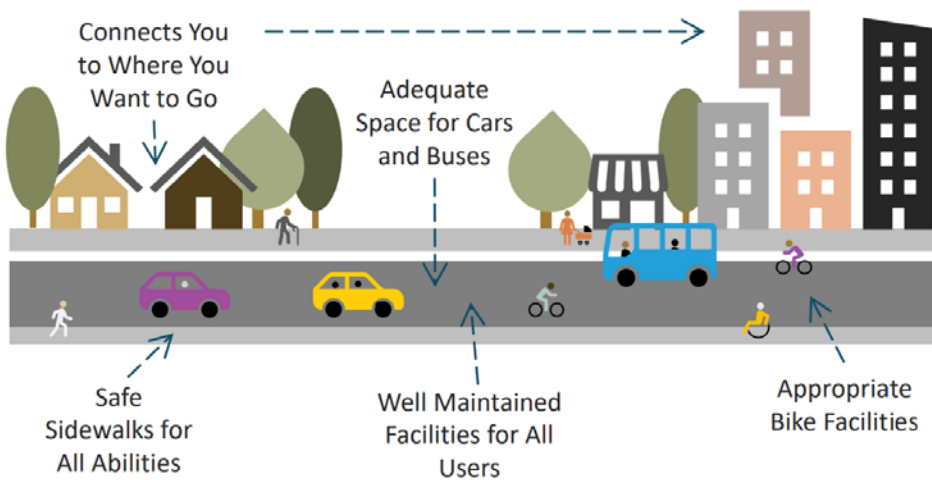
Linking Transportation and Land Use

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.

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

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Below: From the ACHD, Livable Streets Performance Measures Plan.

ANATOMY OF A LIVABLE STREET



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 several tools that ACHD and the City use to implement TLIP: the Complete Streets Policy, the Livable Streets Design Guide, the Livable Streets Performance Measures, a Cost Share Policy, and a Master Street Map.

Transportation Choice

Pathway System and Sidewalks

The Meridian Pathways Master Plan is a guide for pathway development. 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(which now runs for nearly five contiguous miles), 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



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 Above: Five Mile Creek Trail Hub on Ten Mile Road.

Below: A Harvest Transit vehicle.



paralleling the tracks from McDermott Road to Eagle Road, and proposes strategies for implementation of the future facility. 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 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



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Above: Construction along the Boise Cutoff spur rail corridor, looking towards the north-east.

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.

VRT has an approved plan to develop a regional public transportation system in the Treasure Valley. The plan, called ValleyConnect 2.0, calls for bus services in all cities in Ada and Canyon counties. The Meridian City Council appoints two persons to serve on the VRT Board which establishes policy and guides the strategic priorities and planning for public transportation.

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

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Below: Looking across the pond at Settler’s Park.



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. 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 UPRR 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, and healthy initiatives. 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.

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. As such, the City has a design review 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.



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Above: Office Building in Silverstone business park, looking north-west.

Below: Scentsy office building, looking west.



Administrative Design Review

In 2007, the City Council determined it was in the best interest of the City to discuss implementing citywide design review. This was further refined in 2016 with implementation of the Architectural Standards Manual.

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, and is heavily influenced by visibility from larger roadways, public or quasi-public open space, and residential areas

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 both by the designer and the application reviewer. The City of Meridian's ASM 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.

Entryway Corridors

Meridian has designated several arterial roadways as entryway corridors or gateways into the City. Generally, entryway corridors require wider landscape buffers with increased design interest 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,



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Above: The Meridian Senior Center in Kleiner Park, looking south-east over the pond.

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 strived to ensure there is balance between safety, advertising, communication, architectural elements, aesthetics, and free speech.

Livability and Quality of Life

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 and visit, often where retail, services, and opportunities for leisure seamlessly exist together. 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, transportation choice, 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, pathways, 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.

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. A report by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) states, “that physical features, social relationships, and available services and opportunities within neighborhoods influence health in important ways, including by shaping choices and behaviors. Community wellness and safety are influenced by neighborhood factors, such as access to transportation, the condition of buildings, the presence and quality of sidewalks and places to play or exercise, and the density of convenience stores, liquor stores, and fast-food restaurants relative to grocery stores that sell fresh foods.”⁴ The City realizes that it is at the local level where it is imperative to take a proactive approach in addressing the link between the built environment and health.

As communities across the U.S. age, and especially in Meridian where more than 40% of the population is already either under the age of 20 or over the age of 65, 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

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⁴ Urban Land Institute. Intersections: Health and the Built Environment. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2013

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. The City has also joined the AARP Age-Friendly Network, and partnered on an Action Plan. 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.

The 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 relatively 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 website⁵.

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⁵ <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.

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Below: Sparklight Movie Night, in Settlers Park. View looking north-west.



Day Cares

Essential to a livable community is access to affordable child care and early development programs. 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 2020 71.2% of mothers with children under the age of 18 held jobs, and 63.3% of mothers with children under 2 year old held jobs⁶. 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 communities⁷. As such, APA advocates for including child care policies within local planning. 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.

Youth Programs

Meridian prides itself on being a unique city with an abundance of choices that support a commitment to maintaining a safe and caring community and strive to be a place young people feel accepted, respected, and connected. To keep youth active and engaged in the community, the City has developed and maintains several initiatives and organizations focused specifically on youth.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) is a teen organization provides teens with opportunities to shape the City's future.

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⁶ Department of Labor. "Mothers and Families." U.S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau, 2020. Retrieved on April 19, 2022 from https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/mother_families.

⁷ American Planning Association. "APA Policy Guide on the Provision of Child Care." APA Policy Guides. APA, July 1997. Retrieved on April 19, 2022 from <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/childcare>.

Youth Council members, in grades 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 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 (see Chapter 4 for more information).

Meridian's Parks and Recreation Department maintains parks across the City with a huge diversity of child-friendly amenities. The department also offers a variety of enrichment programs, classes, and day camps for children and teens, and their families. The Parks and Recreation Department also partners with other agencies and service providers, such as the West Ada School

District, to promote the well-being of youth during lapses in school year programs.

Apart from programs and organizations offered through the City of Meridian, local children and teens have access to the Meridian Boys and Girls Club. The Meridian Boys and Girls Club offers several programs, including after school and summer sessions for school-aged children. The Boys and Girls Club operates their center in downtown Meridian at Meridian Road and Pine Avenue. In South Meridian, the Treasure Valley YMCA operates a facility with youth program near Eagle Road and Amity Road.

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 the mobility of some. 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 Boomer Generation adapts to retirement.

The Mayor's Senior Advisory Board, established in April 2015, helps to enhance the lives of Meridian's senior community (aged 50 and older) by meeting regularly with the Mayor and providing advice and recommendations on various topics concerning Meridian's senior population, including community service, health, education, employment, housing, transportation, recreation, and safety.



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Above: Pickleball tournament at Settler's Park.

The Meridian Senior Center is a non-profit organization that operates a 13,800 square-foot facility known as “The Center at the Park” in Meridian at Julius M. Kleiner Park. The Center was made possible by a generous land and building donation from the Julius M. Kleiner Family Trust. The facility offers a wide array of programming and activities, from games to health and wellness. 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, a health screening room, an indoor walking track, office space, and other specialized activities.

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 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.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Public Services

This chapter discusses the characteristics of public services, utilities, and facilities 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.

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Below: Meridian City Hall, 2022



The City itself has several departments, each responsible for providing specific services. This chapter not only characterizes general services, but also summarizes which services each City Department provides and some of those provided by other 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:

City Clerk’s Department

The City Clerk’s Department maintains official records of the City, including City Code. Staff in the department respond to public records requests received from citizens, as well as interested parties across the United States. Staff maintain the City’s Records Repository – a public facing records portal that houses many public records of general interest and historic documents.

The City Clerk's Department documents proceedings of many of the city's commissions and the Meridian City Council, as well as provides legal noticing as required by law.

Many Licenses and Permits are issued by the City Clerk's Department – including licenses for door to door sales persons, special event and temporary use permits, alcohol licenses and alcohol catering permits, fireworks permits, and dog licenses, vehicle immobilization, pawnbroker and precious metal dealer licenses.

Municipal City Elections are managed by the City Clerk's Department in conjunction with Ada County Elections. They receive campaign filings and provide information to candidates, elected officials, and the general public.

As all official documents begin, end, or pass through the office, the City Clerk's Department provides the formal link between the citizens of Meridian, and their government. Staff take pride in the transparency and accuracy of the City's records and their strong customer-service focus. When a citizen doesn't know where to find assistance, the City Clerk's Department is the place to start.

Community Development Department

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 water, sewer, and streetlights, and in conformance with the flood damage prevention chapter of city code. The Planning

Division is divided into two sections: 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 coordination with City agency partners.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department consists of a number of divisions including: 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.

Finance Department

The Finance Department, including Purchasing and Billing, 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.



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Above: Construction around Meridian City Hall.
Below: Generations Plaza, on Main Street.



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.

Fire Department

The Fire Departments 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.

Human Resources Department

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.

City Attorney’s Office

The City Attorney’s Office provides in-house legal services to the City of Meridian. The City Attorney also serves as the City’s Risk Manager and has leadership responsibility for the Risk Management program. Attorneys in the City Attorney’s Office work on a wide range of topics, such as code enforcement issues, contracts, land use regulation, personnel issues, procurement, public records, public works issues, real estate transactions, and matters related to economic development. The City Attorney serves as legal advisor to the Mayor, City Council, City commissions and committees, and City departments. The City Attorney’s Office pursues or defends civil litigation;

prepares and reviews City Council agenda items, contracts, and interagency agreements; assesses compliance with statutes, regulations, and rules; recommends and drafts changes to the Meridian City Code; and advises staff on a variety of City issues.

There is a strong correlation between the City's legal needs and City growth. The City Attorney's Office reviews most planning applications, for example, and provides legal guidance to the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Community Development Department concerning land use issues. In addition, the City Attorney's Office provides legal guidance relative to large-scale public works projects needed to facilitate growth, such as water and wastewater projects.

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.

Information Technology Department

The Information Technology Department team is responsible for developing city-wide strategies that align the Mayor and City Council's strategic focus areas with appropriate technology to reduce the cost of government, create efficiencies for employees, enhance services to our citizens, and make government services more accessible in today's connected world. This is done by ensuring our investment in technology and resources is collaborative, reflects the City's CARE values, and is operationally sustainable today and into the future.

The rapid rate of change in technology requires the department to continually adapt and change services offered and equipment utilized. Drastic shifts such as increased remote work and Software as a Service (SAAS) demand staff to go above and beyond the "business as usual" approach. Because of this, a great deal of what the department now offers is recommendations on the right technology that meets needs currently but incorporates potential trends and changes – with the understanding that the technology that will be utilized 10 years from now doesn't exist yet. On top of rapidly changing technology, the Department has been tasked with providing software tools and hardware sufficient to transition Meridian from a town to a City with a population of over 130,000, the second largest in the State of Idaho. This increased size and publicity makes the City an increasing target of cyber criminals – requiring a major increase in security checks and practices. It also has required a shift from obsolete processes and workflows to paperless processes that are more efficient and consistent for customers.

City Council and Mayor

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.

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Below: Mayor and City Council as of June 2022. Left to right, Jessica Perreault, Luke Cavener, Brad Hoaglund, Robert Simison (Mayor), Treg Bernt, Joe Borton, and Liz Strader.



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. Many commissions also include a youth member, typically a high school student. Some of the volunteer boards and commission in Meridian are:

- **Parks & Recreation Commission:** This 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.
- **Planning & Zoning Commission:** This 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.
- **Meridian Arts Commission:** This 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 Arts Commission currently consists of nine members. Each commissioner serves a term of three years, except for the youth member that serves a one-year term.

- **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 seven volunteer members on the HPC, appointed by the Mayor with confirmation from the City Council. Terms of office for the HPC are 3-years.
- **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 the: 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.

- **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 and administered by the City's Chief Financial Officer.
- **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 Senior Advisory Board, 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.



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Above: Looking over the primary clarifier at the Meridian WRRF.

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 all traffic control. This also minimizes inconvenience to the travelling public. Public Works does not have jurisdiction over pressurized irrigation systems or irrigation canals.

Water Division

Supply and Distribution

The Meridian water system consists of a network of wells, booster pump stations, reservoirs and over 650 miles of water main ranging in size from six-inch to 16-inch. Twenty-five wells, ranging in capacity from 500 to 2,500 gallons per minute (gpm), are located throughout the City with a combined capacity of about 53 million gallons per day (mgd). Water storage consists of two two-million gallon reservoirs- one near Meridian and Ustick Roads, and one near Locust Grove and Victory Roads. 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. The supply system meets or exceeds all state regulatory requirements found in the Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems including backup power. Based on 2021 water use records, Meridian used 4.1 billion gallons of drinking water for approximately 40,000 residential and commercial service connections (estimated 118,000 service area population), which is approximately 11.2 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

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 Below: Inside the well pumphouse on Locust Grove.



Table 4A. Meridian Water Consumption - Potable Water Irrigation Impacts

Description	Impact
Winter Average	223 million gal/month
Summer Average	530 million gal/month
Summer Irrigation Activity (ground water):	
Increased Demand (over winter)	307 million gal/month
Potential Conservation	1.5 billion gal/year

Source: Meridian Public Works Department, May 2022

shown in Table 4A, winter water demand in the City is about 223 million gallons/month while summertime demand is 530 million gallons/month. Summer irrigation activity increases demand by 307 million gallons/month. In order to keep up with water demand, the City includes new well construction in capital improvement plans. 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. 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 do not meet regulatory requirements for supply. Capital improvements can then be prioritized to correct any deficient areas.

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 or tracking maintenance and repairs. The Water Division and Public Works staff work cooperatively to identify areas in need of improvement and replacement. Capital funds are utilized to design and construct water infrastructure replacements identified throughout the City.



Above: RV Dumping Station, and Admin Building, at the WRRF.
Below: Aeration basin at the WRRF.



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 540 miles of gravity sewer mains and 9 miles of force mains. This infrastructure currently serves a service area population of approximately 118,000 people and includes about 40,000 residential and commercial service connections (Fiscal Year 2021). The collection system includes nine lift stations.

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 2026. An update to the wastewater resource recovery facility plan was completed in 2018. The results of the facility plan were 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 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. Virtually all dwellings in Meridian are connected to the City's sewer system.

Table 4B. Historical Sewer Service Accounts

Year	Total Accounts	Annual Increase (%)
2006	23,245	14.55%
2007	24,287	4.48%
2008	24,857	2.35%
2009	25,364	2.04%
2010	26,054	2.72%
2011	26,620	2.17%
2012	27,361	2.78%
2013	28,357	3.64%
2014	29,279	3.25%
2015	30,628	4.61%
2016	31,922	4.22%
2017	33,124	3.77%
2018	34,925	5.44%
2019	37,052	6.09%
2020	39,123	5.59%
2021	41,066	4.97%

Source: City of Meridian Public Works, April 2022

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

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 facilities, 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, Solid Waste, 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, solid waste program management, sustainability initiatives and other special projects as assigned by the Mayor and City Council.

Stormwater

The storm drain system (MS4) in the City of Meridian is owned and operated by the Ada County Highway District (ACHD), who own and maintain the roads and associated drainage system. ACHD has been issued a Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 Permit (No. IDS-028185) for the cities of Eagle, Meridian, and urbanized Ada County. ACHD’s Phase II MS4 permit stormwater management program consists of control measures in six areas: public education, public

involvement, illicit discharge, post construction runoff control, construction site runoff control, and pollution prevention.

City-owned and operated properties keep stormwater runoff onsite through retention and infiltration facilities — thus preventing stormwater discharges to our local waterways. Because of this, Meridian currently does not currently qualify for coverage under an MS4 NPDES Permit.

Meridian’s Design Standards Grading and Drainage section contains requirements for the design of grading, drainage and stormwater retention for a development project. In general, all stormwater generated on development projects must be retained and infiltrated within the development.

The storm drain system (MS4) in the City of Meridian is owned and operated by the Ada County Highway District (ACHD), who own and maintain the roads and associated drainage system

Under the IDEQ IPDES Construction General Permit (CGP), Meridian has the regulatory responsibility to ensure that all City owned projects which disturb one (1) acre or more of land satisfy CGP coverage requirements. Further, Meridian requires that all City owned projects, regardless of size, meet minimum erosion and sediment control provisions including utilization of Best Management Practices (BMPs), monitoring dewatering operations, and construction site management in order to ensure that pollution prevention is effectively occurring on all City job sites.



Above: Meridian Police Department vehicles in front of the Police Station on Watertower Street.

Public Safety

Police Department

With the large influx of people and businesses moving to the Treasure Valley and Meridian in particular, Meridian has remained focused on addressing the small things, which can affect a city's quality of life. Because of this focus the City of Meridian has both maintained a low violent crime rate and has remained a destination for those wanting to relocate and a destination for those within the Treasure Valley to recreate.

The rate of criminal offenses has remained lower than the national and state averages for several years. The Estimated Crimes Table and Crime in Idaho Reports provide a breakdown of crime rates at the local, state, and national level by crime type in 2020. The rate of violent and property crimes in Meridian is remaining low despite the increasing population of the City.

In 2021, the Meridian Police Department received 62,192 calls for service. This is an increase of 17.0% from 2020, when calls for service were 53,134. The calls for service and the city's population continue to have large increases. The Meridian Police Department wants to continue to ensure we have enough sworn officers to ensure a safe, secure, vibrant, livable and connected community.

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 (SROs), community service officers, and professional staff. These new

Table 4C. Meridian Police Department Calls for Service

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change 20 to 21
Calls for Service	53,935	57,632	53,134	62,192	17.0%

Source: City of Meridian Police Department, CAD, ITS/RMS, ECR.

officers assist the Meridian Police Department in maintaining respectable crime rates as well as impressive clearance rates despite the growth of the City.

Hiring new officers also requires training and with the Nampa/Meridian Joint Patrol Academy, Public Safety Training Center and recent addition of the Scenario Village 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 ongoing internal department training, Rescue Task Force Training (ASHER – Active Shooter Hostile Event Response), and Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement training. These courses provided low cost trainings for the department members and are attended by those from various Public Safety Agencies throughout the Treasure Valley.

Table 4D. Crime Estimation in Idaho Report: Year 2020

Area	Population	Violent Crime		Property Crime	
		Incidents	Rate per 100K	Incidents	Rate per 100K
United States*	329,484,123	1,313,105	398.53	6,452,038	1,958.22
State of Idaho*	1,826,913	4,432	242.6	20,313	1,111.88
City of Meridian**	119,203	178	149.33	1,029	863.23

Source: *FBI, Crime Data Explorer (CDE) and **ISP Crime in Idaho Report. Provided by City of Meridian Police Department, April 2022.

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:

- MADC – Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition is overseen by the Meridian Police Department’s Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator. Established in 2004, the MADC works in partnership with a wide variety of community partners and dedicated volunteers to prevent substance abuse using a comprehensive set of data driven prevention strategies. The coalition meets the 3rd Thursday of the month and everyone is welcome.
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) - The Meridian Police Department’s Crisis Intervention Team is comprised of two police officers and a licensed mental health clinician who co-respond to calls for service involving individuals who may be suffering from mental health crises. When CIT responds to these calls, the focus is placed on coordinating with available mental health resources in the community to assist the individual rather than placing them in the justice system. In addition, the CIT Team regularly collaborates with other local law enforcement agencies and community mental health providers to ensure community members receive available resources.
- 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.

- Public Safety Academy – The City of Meridian’s Public Safety Academy provides community members with a behind the scenes, in-depth look at Meridian public safety. During the academy, attendees learn about police and fire procedures, communications, and specialty units 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.
- Youth Safety Academy – Designed to give Meridian youth the opportunity to learn about the Meridian Police Department, its operations, functions and the responsibilities of providing law enforcement services in Meridian. During the academy, students learn about policies and procedures, communications, the Ada County correctional system, specialty and investigative units, and careers in law enforcement. Academy classes are taught by Meridian Police sworn officers and support staff. They are encouraged to ask questions and be actively involved in each presentation.
- Alive at 25 – This program is a defensive driving course taught by Law enforcement officers and targets young drivers ages 15 to 24. This helps curb the problem of young people dying or being seriously injured because of car crashes. Statistics show that young drivers are over represented in car crashes. Since the program started in 2012, the Meridian Police Department has taught over 300 classes reaching over 7,000 young drivers.
- Bike Patrol – This four (4) to six (6) officer team covers many areas throughout the City to include city parks,

Table 4E. Prescription Drugs Recovered: 2018 to 2021

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change 20 to 21
Pounds of Prescription Drugs Recovered	3,137	3,707	3,158	3,669	16.2%
Total Pounds of Prescription Drugs Collected, since October 2009				31,511	

Source: City of Meridian Police Department, CAD, ITS/RMS, ECR.

pathways, special events and subdivisions The team responds to calls occurring throughout the summer months to enhance the image and resources of the police department through increased accessibility of the officer to the public, and to reduce crime by enforcing laws through proactive policing.

- Neighborhood Watch – This program is a cooperative effort between the police department and the community. An organized program is an invaluable tool and is designed to increase neighborhood livability by reducing crime through active citizen participation and diligence. Programs provide a vessel for communication between the police department and neighborhoods.
- Prescription Drug Drop Off – This program has provided Meridian residents a safe and responsible method for proper disposal of unused and/or expired medications (including over-the-counter), since 2009. The Police Department collected 3,669 pounds in 2021 and 31,511 pounds since October 2009. Safe disposal drop boxes are located in the Police Department lobby.



Above: Meridian's newest ladder truck, 2022.

Fire Department

The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) 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, to a combination department, and finally to a career department with 93 employees in 2022.

The mission statement of the MFD is: To protect and enhance our community through professionalism and compassion. The department's vision statement is: A premier organization

recognized for providing a safe community through professionalism, innovative actions, and community involvement.

The MFD 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, Division Chief of EMS, three Battalion Chiefs, two Training Captains, three Fire Inspectors, two specialists in Public Safety & Education, a Public Safety PIO, and four Administrative Support Staff.

The MFD currently services the citizens in the City of Meridian and the Meridian Rural Fire Protection District from six fire stations (two additional stations, number 7 and 8, are being constructed), a training tower, a Fire Safety Education Center, the Public Safety Training Center, and Scenario Village. Each apparatus is fully staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Table 4F. Meridian Fire Department Apparatus Response

Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change 20 to 21	% Change 17 to 21
Apparatus Response	8,405	8,418	9,010	9,224	10,717	16.2%	27.5%

Note: Apparatus response varies from service calls. Approximately 15% of our calls for service are multiple apparatus responses - between 2 to 6 apparatus responding to the same call. Source: Apparatus response from the Meridian Fire Department, May 2022.

The complement of Meridian Fire Department fire apparatus includes five first response engines, two ladder trucks, one command vehicle, one water tender, two wildland fire brush engines and three reserve fire engines.

The MFD responded to 9,148 calls for service in 2021. This constituted a 2% increase over the call volume in of 2019. 59% of the calls were for emergency medical incidents including vehicle collisions. The remaining 41% of the calls comprised of calls to fires, fire alarms, services calls, gas leaks and other emergencies.

The Meridian Fire Department provides the delivery of day-to-day emergency and non-emergency services to the citizens we serve. Services provided by the Meridian Fire Department include: Fire Suppression, Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Service, Bike Patrol, Technical Rescue, Hazardous Materials Response, Fire Prevention Education, Fire and Life Safety Inspections, and Plans Review for new developments and construction.

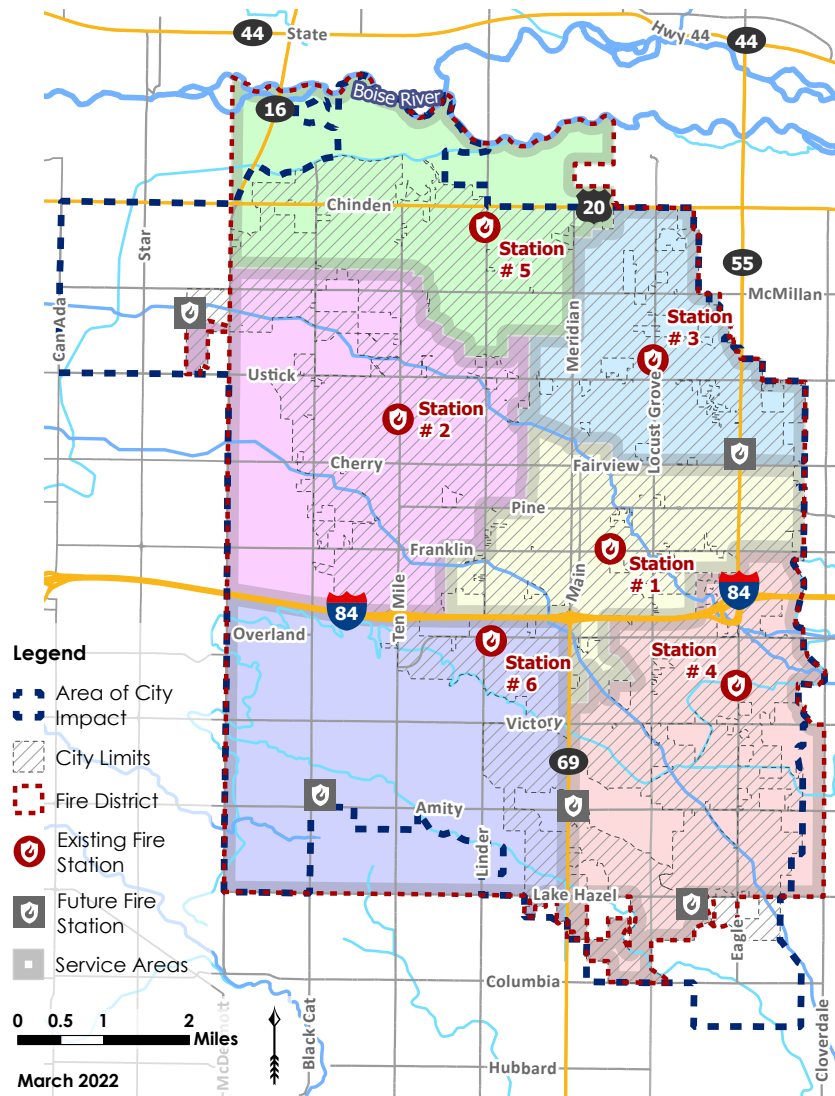
The Meridian Fire Department also administers and provides the following special services:

- Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program – The primary objective and focus of the Youth Fire Setting program is to eradicate fires started by children by educating children and parents about the dangers of fire play activity. The

Program is designed to not only provide advanced education to these children but also give them the tools to make better choices in difficult situations. The program is confidential and attempts to build a strong bond with the child, family and community. Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialists receive specialized training to work with children who are between 2 and 17 years of age with a specific incident of fire setting. The educational screenings help identify any potential crisis firesetters and provide them with the necessary resources to have a positive outcome and get the assistance needed.

- HeartSAFE Meridian – Community CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) is an emergency lifesaving procedure performed when the heart stops beating. CPR, especially if administered immediately after cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person’s chance of survival. The Meridian Fire Department provides hands-only CPR instruction to the community in a program called HeartSAFE Meridian. This program is an important step in our goal to becoming a HeartSAFE community. Through education, system design, and compassion the department’s goal is to make Meridian a safer community in which to live, work, and play.
- Smoke Alarm Program – It is a known fact that early alerting of a fire saves lives. Project SAFE (Smoke Alarms for Everyone) is an on-going program of the

Figure 4A. Meridian Fire District and Service Areas



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

department. The goal of the program is to ensure that every home has working smoke alarms, and it has grown to become a staple of customer service within the community. This program allows for continued maintenance of smoke alarms throughout the community, and reduces the risk of falls from ladders for older adults who, due to many factors, should not be climbing ladders.

- Older Adult Safety – Older adults are important in our educational efforts. We seek to ensure that our older adults have access to essential services and resources that will assist them in meeting their individual needs and enhance their safety and quality of life. Throughout the year we provide speakers to present information designed for our older residents. These specialized programs provided awareness and information about fire and injury prevention in and around the home. Additionally, we provided free smoke alarms, batteries, and minor maintenance for smoke alarms to our older residents by request free of charge. The department performs monthly blood-pressure screenings at the Meridian Senior Center and in our fire stations on a walk-in basis.
- Fire Prevention Month – The shining star and most recognizable program is National Fire Prevention Week. In Meridian, we take this annual event to a higher level. With the size of our school district and day care system we schedule events for the entire month of October. Our firefighters and public educators reach out to all of our elementary schools and the majority of our day care centers with annual fire safety messages and classes. This educational opportunity has been played out with the assistance of the West Ada School District for decades and the results, although noticeable, are sometimes not

quantifiable, however, the National Fire Protection Agency states it has resulted in a dramatic change in residential fire loss of life and property throughout the nation.

- Public Safety Academy and Public Safety Day – The Academy is a collaborative program that gives participants an in-depth hands-on experience of both the Meridian Fire and Meridian Police Departments. Participants receive certification in CPR, learn hose handling, extinguisher use, ladder, engine companies, protective equipment use, search and rescue techniques, live fire, vehicle extrication and much more. Upon graduation, participants serve

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Below: Meridian Fire Station #6 on Overland Road.



as community advocates for Meridian public safety entities. Meridian Fire Department also holds an annual open house. The event is designed to educate the community on many safety aspects such as home escape planning, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, calling 9-1-1, get low under smoke, close your door before you doze, emergency planning and much more. The event also includes many demonstrations such as a vehicle extrication, live fire and ladder truck demonstration. This is a much-anticipated event each year.

- Sparky The Fire Dog and Smokey Bear – Two important safety mascots for structural and wildland fire prevention promote safe practices in the community. The mascots can be seen in parades, at local parks, schools or libraries celebrating all things safety.
- Child Passenger Seats – The Meridian Fire Department is a leader in the state for their commitment to child passenger seat safety. Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of injury and death for our nation’s children and MFD staff are on the front lines preventing such tragedies. The department hosts car seat check-up events at city fire stations and all firefighters maintain Child Passenger Safety certification to conduct the checks. With the help of grants the department is able to provide free car seats for families in need. We also serve as a year-round resource for educating families who have questions regarding child passenger safety.



Above: Pond at Kleiner Park.

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 334 acres of developed parks, and 132 acres of undeveloped land. The system is made up of 21 parks (not including Lakeview Golf Course): two undeveloped sites, over 50 miles of pathways, the Homecourt facility, and a community center. Additionally, Parks and Recreation offers a variety of recreational, arts, and history programs, adult sports leagues, special events, and handles shelter/field reservations and temporary use permits.

The City of Meridian is in the process of completing an update to the current (2015) Parks and Recreation Master Plan with completion expected this year. The 2015 Master Plan provides a guideline for development of new facilities and recreation programming to meet changing community needs. 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, cost recovery, improved programming and service delivery, and maintenance and improvements to facilities and amenities.

The 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan included a one-chapter update to the Meridian Pathways Master Plan (Adopted in 2007, later amended in January of 2010) and serves as a tool to further aid in the implementation of that plan. This update established guidelines for what portion of the pathway system it is sustainable and appropriate for the City to maintain, given that ultimate buildout involved more pathway miles than the City had capacity to adequately maintain. Currently the City maintains 15.5 miles of pathway within City Parks and throughout the city, along waterways and roadways. New pathways added to the system, when required as a condition of development, are maintained by homeowners associations.

Below: Discovery Park, Dog Park, on Lake Hazel Road.



Table 4G. City of Meridian, Public Park Acreage

Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Existing Park Acres	257.9	274.3	283.9	334.0	334.0
Added Park Acres	16.4	9.5	50.1	0.0	0.0
Total Park Acres	274.3	283.9	334.0	334.0	334.0
Meridian Population	98,300	106,410	114,680	117,635	127,890
Acres/1k People	2.79	2.67	2.91	2.84	2.61

Source: City of Meridian Parks and Recreation Department, May 2022.

To achieve a more contiguous system, the plan focused implementation efforts on three priority pathways: the Five Mile Pathway, the Ten Mile Pathway, and a regional Rail with Trail pathway effort. Most staff-led pathway infill projects have served to connect segments of the Five Mile Pathway, which now runs almost five miles through the City, with signaled pedestrian crossings provided at major roadways. The City also constructed a trailhead, the Ten Mile Trail hub at Five Mile Creek, which is intended as a gateway to Meridian’s pathway system. It is the first facility of this type in Meridian.

Having established a framework for pathway development, routes for future pathways within the City Area of Impact are depicted on a pathways GIS layer which is updated by staff on an ongoing basis. These updates note any pathways constructed since the last update and also propose needed new routes in areas of high growth. Changes are presented to Council every 18 months or so, for formal adoption.

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.

Arts, Culture, and Historic Preservation

The Parks and Recreation Department also works to further public accessibility to the arts, as well as historic preservation in Meridian by providing staff dedicated to supporting the Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) and Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) and the various cultural and historic programming activities they sponsor.

The City's Arts and Culture Coordinator administers and provides the following cultural and historic programming:

- Initial Point Gallery – On the third floor of City Hall is a dedicated area for art exhibitions. The Meridian Arts Commission juries monthly rotating art exhibits in Initial Point Gallery, featuring the work of local, regional, and national artists, as well as an annual exhibit of work by West Ada School District students. The gallery hosts an opening reception for each show, many of which include performances by local musicians.
- Public Art Projects – Public art pieces continue to be installed downtown and in City Parks, giving the



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Above: Pickleball at Reta Huskey Park.

Below: Initial Point Gallery at Meridian City Hall, Third Floor.



parks identity and a sense of place. Public-private partnerships for murals have been installed at various locations in the downtown area. One of the most beloved programs is the traffic box wrap program, many of which are sponsored by the Meridian Development Corporation. The traffic box program is an opportunity for a number of both profession artist and West Ada School District students to have their 2D work featured on vinyl wraps throughout the city. The City’s public art collection can be found through the virtual tour on the website.

- Performing Arts – In the summer, the City presents Concerts on Broadway, a popular free outdoor

Below: 140 E Idaho, on the Meridian Historical Walking Tour.



concert series on the steps of City Hall. MAC also encourages the performing arts, and coordinates with other organizations such as the Treasure Valley Children’s Theater, a Meridian company.

- Art Week – In September, Meridian coordinates a week of various small-scale activities showcasing the arts with free visual, literary, and performing arts classes, chalk art competitions, and a Community Art Party, and partnerships with various local businesses and organizations.
- Supporting Historic Preservation activities in the City is also important – While many historic sites and structures have been lost to time, the City has been actively trying to raise awareness through research and additions to the National Historic Registry, a Virtual Sites Tour, and its Historical Walking Tour. This tour includes information on existing and past sites in the downtown area. HPC also raises awareness through activities during Preservation Month each year. See also Chapter 4, Commissions, Committees and Boards, and Chapter 5, Historic Resources, for other preservation entitles and activities.

Western Ada Recreation District

There is a public park in Meridian that is not owned by the City. At 22 acres, Fuller Park, which is maintained and operated by the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department, 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 is owned by the Western Ada Recreation District but operated by the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department.

Solid Waste

The City of Meridian's solid waste program¹ encompasses managing the franchise agreement with Republic Services for the hauling of solid waste, overseeing the types of residential and commercial disposal services, and developing new avenues to divert materials from the Ada County Landfill.

Per City ordinance, all residents and commercial entities must have trash and recycling service. The City of Meridian contracts all trash and recycling hauling services through an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services. This means that all residential and commercial customers receive service through

¹ For more information about the City of Meridian's solid waste program, visit the City's Trash & Recycling webpage at: <https://meridiacity.org/solidwaste>.

Below: Republic Services glass, recycle, and trash carts (left to right).



Republic Services. This agreement outlines the specific services provided, the individual service rates, and a listing of donated services from Republic Services.

Single Family Residential Collection Services

Within the City of Meridian, single family residential households must have curbside trash service; which is automatically paired with commingle recycling. Residents are able to place in their commingle recycling cart: cardboard, mix paper, metal containers, and plastic containers with resin numbers 1 & 2. Glass jars and bottles are collected separately. For an additional fee, residents can add a glass cart service.

As the City's residential population has increased, so has the amount of trash and recycling produced. Since 2017, the City's trash has increased 13% and the recycling diversion rate, the rate of material that has been diverted from the landfill, has been between 8% to 10%.

At the end of year 2021, there were 39,318 trash accounts with 38,402 of those participating in the commingle recycling program. This translates into a 98% recycling participation rate. Over the next five years, the City's Solid Waste Coordinator will be working on increasing this participation rate. Collectively, Meridian residents threw away 48,985 tons of trash in 2021, with the average household disposing of 208 pounds of trash per month. The recycling program captured 5,685 tons, with the average Meridian household recycling 25 pounds of materials per month. The 2021 curbside recycling diversion rate was 10%.

In addition to trash and commingle recycling services, residents have the option for an additional fee to sign up for subscription based curbside glass recycling and grass composting collection services. In September of 2018, the City partnered with Republic Services to offer the glass collection option. In the first year,

Table 4H. Solid Waste Collection (Tons)

Program	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Residential: Curbside					
Trash	43,500	47,338	54,050	59,222	48,985
Commingle Recycling	4,830	4,674	4,594	5,115	5,685
Commingle Recycling Diversion Rate	10%	9%	8%	8%	10%
Glass Bottles and Jars	Not Offered	15	19	16	39
Grass Clippings	596	644	661	269	300
Household Hazardous Waste Site					
Household Hazardous Waste	119	123	110	99	125
Commercial & Industrial					
Trash	53,593	61,971	69,863	76,064	44,839
Commingle Recycling	3,260	3,069	3,337	3,504	4,101
Commingle Recycling Diversion Rate	6%	5%	5%	5%	8%

Note: Table outlines different types of material collected in tonnage from years 2017 to 2021. The recycling diversion rate is calculated by: total tons recycled / (total tons landfilled + total tons recycled). Source: City of Meridian Public Works Department, 2022.

there were 148 households who signed up and 15 tons of glass was collected. For grass collection, this service allows the resident to fill their cart with grass from April through October and then October through December cart can be filled with leaves and then from December through March utilized as an additional trash cart. From 2018 to 2021, curbside glass accounts have decreased by 6%. However, from 2017 to 2021, curbside grass accounts have increased by 94%.

Commercial and Industrial Collection Services

Similar to the residential collection program, commercial and industrial companies must have trash and recycling service; however, commingle recycling is not automatically paired. Commingle recycling is charged separately. Items that can be recycled in the commercial and industrial recycling program are identical to the materials residents recycle. Of the 1,439

Meridian businesses registered in 2021, 690 have active recycle containers on site. This is a 48% recycling participation rate. Over the next five years, the City’s Solid Waste Coordinator will be working with businesses who do not have recycling to help them start service.

From 2017 to 2020, there has been a steady increase in disposal of trash; however, the 2021 year saw a sharp decline in trash tonnage. Conversely, business recycling through the 2017 to 2021 years saw a steady increase in tonnage. The recycling tonnage increased by 26% from year 2017 to 2021. Focusing on the year 2021, businesses landfilled 44,839 tons of trash and recycled 4,101 tons. This translates into a recycling diversion rate of 8%.

Special Event Collection Services

Republic Services offers special collection events for residents throughout the year. These comprise curbside collection and drop-off services. The curbside services include a spring and winter clean up where residents for free can place extra trash and bulky items out to be collected, fall leaf collection, Rake-Up Meridian where Republic connects residents in need of help raking their leaves with residential volunteers, and Christmas tree pickup. During the fall leaf collection event, Republic offers residents the opportunity to drop-off leaves at several City Park locations and at the Meridian Transfer Stations.

Meridian Transfer Station Collection

Located at 2130 W. Franklin Road, Republic Services' Meridian transfer station (MTS) accepts waste from both commercial and residential customers. The waste collected at the transfer station is consolidated and taken to the Ada County Landfill for disposal.

In addition to accepting trash, the MTS has a permanent residential recycling drop-off area. At the MTS recycling area, residents can drop-off: scrap metal; metal containers; mix paper; larger pieces of cardboard; and glass containers. What's more, in fiscal year 2021, the City's Solid Waste Advisory Commission, a commission comprised of Meridian residential volunteers, partnered with Republic Services to introduce a pilot project at the MTS to collect for recycling squishy water bottles.

In addition to the MTS being a hub to collect trash and recyclables, the station also hosts the City's mobile residential household hazardous waste (HHW) collection site. In 2021, the site saw 5,910 vehicles drop-off 125 tons of HHW. The cost of this program is included in the monthly residential trash rates. Items that are collected include: electronic waste (e-waste), such as TVs and rechargeable batteries; mercury containing

items; Freon appliances; cooking oil; and caustic cleaners, paints, and pesticides.

At the MTS recycling area, residents can drop-off: scrap metal, metal containers, mix paper, large pieces of cardboard, glass containers, and squishy water bottles.



Donated Services

Donated services and contributions from Republic Services is part of the City's franchise agreement. During 2021, Republic Services gave the equivalent \$203,556 in a variety of donated services. These services entailed providing containers, collection, hauling of material, outreach support, and cash contributions. Donated service values are based on contracted Meridian commercial rates plus any additional temporary services. Commercial rates include; cost of removal, disposal, and container rental. In addition to services, the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department has free access to the MTS and Meridian Code Enforcement is authorized to call in to have removed abandoned items on public land, such as appliances, furniture, and other bulky waste.



Above: Idaho State University Meridian Health Science Center (left) and Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (right).

Education

West Ada School District

Public school facilities in the City of Meridian are operated by the West Ada School District (formally Joint School District No. 2). 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 34 elementary schools, 12 middle schools (2 of which are alternative middle schools and one a magnet middle school), 6 comprehensive high schools, 4 alternative high schools, 2 charter high schools, and 2 magnet high schools throughout the district. 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.

Enrollment

At midterm of the 2021-2022 school year, there were 16,481 elementary-age children, 9,356 middle school children, and 13,236 high school students enrolled in West Ada School District. Virtual School House is also available through West Ada School District for online schooling grades K-12. Student enrollment increased on average about 1.1% per year between 2012 and 2021.

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

- Elementary Schools 8-10 acres;
- Middle Schools 28-30 acres; and
- High Schools 55-60 acres.

Enrollment Highlights

The following charts reference enrollment in Table 4I.

Figure 4B. Change in Enrollment Groups as a % of Whole

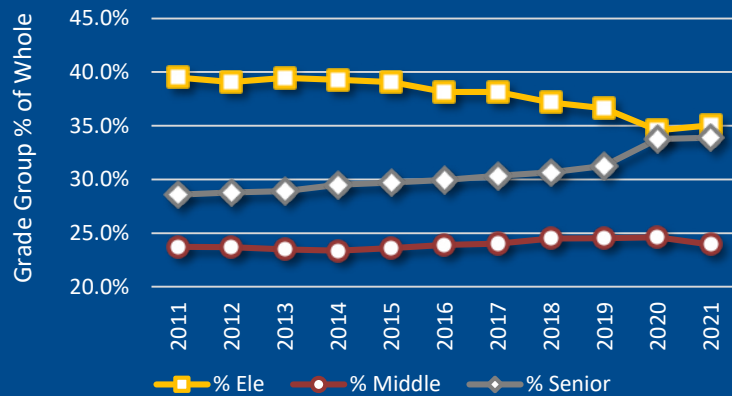
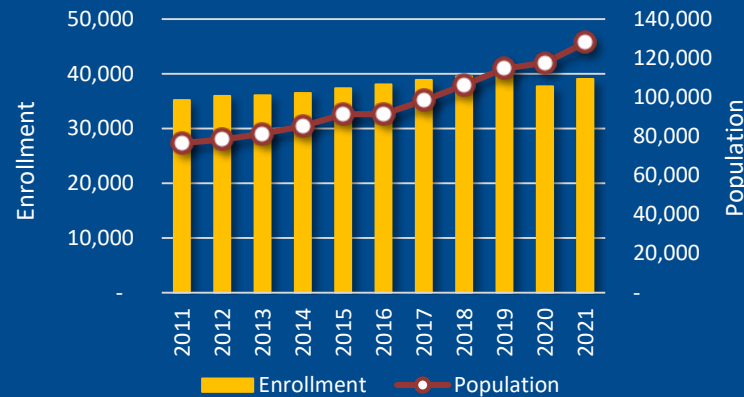


Figure 4C. Enrollment Compared to City Population



Note: The West Ada School District enrollment area is larger than the City of Meridian (which further emphasizes shifts of demographic groups).

Bus Transportation²

School bus transportation in West Ada School District is a cooperative effort involving transportation staff, schools, parents, and students. The West Ada School District contracts with Cascade Transportation Company to operate and shuttle students. The District bus facility is located 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. The district operates 34 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 2020.

Middle Schools

Middle schools include 6th through 8th graders. The district's 12 middle schools serve as a bridge for pre-adolescents as they move from elementary 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.

² For more information on busing, see the West Ada School District's FAQ at <https://www.westada.org/Page/13866>.

Table 41. Historical Fall Enrollment, West Ada School District

Year	Total	Spec Ed	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
2011-2012	35,188	235	2,661	2,746	2,778	2,834	2,765	2,769	2,809	2,816	2,718	2,743	2,603	2,404	2,307
2012-2013	35,939	244	2,787	2,787	2,798	2,851	2,836	2,775	2,819	2,858	2,842	2,889	2,510	2,610	2,333
2013-2014	36,111	221	2,730	2,893	2,794	2,857	2,848	2,854	2,801	2,805	2,869	3,014	2,616	2,406	2,403
2014-2015	36,471	248	2,616	2,796	2,949	2,836	2,881	2,862	2,858	2,812	2,855	3,104	2,741	2,559	2,354
2015-2016	37,366	280	2,565	2,779	2,917	3,032	2,920	2,949	2,922	2,995	2,900	3,010	2,875	2,720	2,502
2016-2017	38,097	290	2,752	2,672	2,852	2,951	3,073	2,989	2,986	3,033	3,090	2,914	2,837	2,882	2,776
2017-2018	38,907	335	2,583	2,884	2,744	2,969	3,036	3,208	3,110	3,108	3,130	3,184	2,981	2,766	2,869
2018-2019	39,507	390	2,641	2,726	2,937	2,834	3,055	3,135	3,255	3,234	3,187	3,186	3,222	2,936	2,769
2019-2020	40,326	439	2,626	2,792	2,848	3,072	2,928	3,130	3,251	3,362	3,274	3,265	3,233	3,182	2,924
2020-2021	37,729	383	2,271	2,441	2,497	2,591	2,812	2,705	2,910	3,153	3,224	3,238	3,211	3,099	3,194
2021-2022	39,073	373	2,417	2,559	2,669	2,686	2,789	2,988	2,932	3,115	3,309	3,462	3,367	3,248	3,159

Notes: For the purpose of analysis in the Existing Conditions Report, Elementary School is defined as grades 1 through 5, Middle School is grades 6 through 8, and High School is grades 9 through 12. This is not a hard and fast standard, and some schools have changed over time. Source: Public School Finance. "Attendance & Enrollment." Idaho State Department of Education. Public School Finance Department, n.d. <<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/finance/#attendance>> (2 February 2022).

High Schools

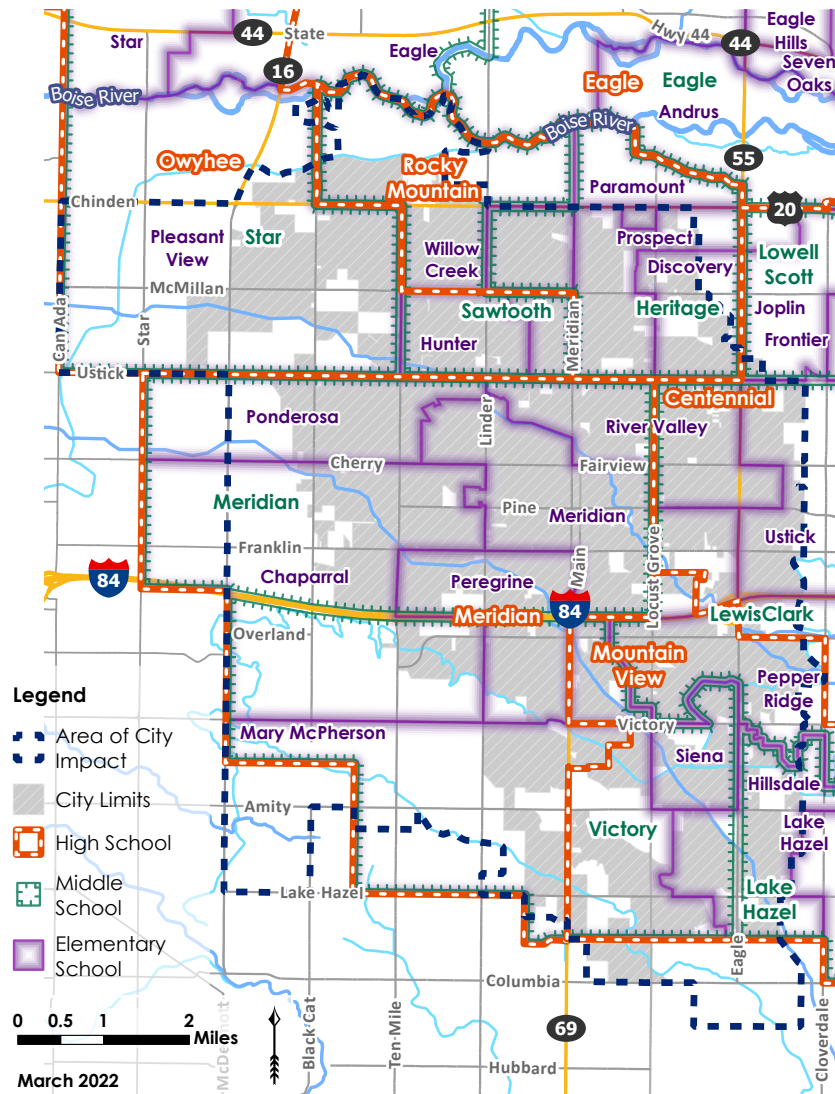
All of the district’s 14 high schools offer a full academic program with courses in basic skills and college-preparatory skills. Meridian, Centennial, Eagle, Mountain View, Owyhee and Rocky Mountain High Schools are all 5-A classification for athletic competition and other competitive programs such as music, drama, and debate. Renaissance High School and Idaho Fine Arts Academy are both Schools of Choice. Central Academy, Meridian Academy and Eagle Academy, the district’s alternative high schools, provide opportunities for at-risk students. Rebound School of Opportunity offers students an opportunity to earn credits and a high school diploma through an online curriculum with on campus support.

Charter and School of Choice Programs

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

- The Arts – Chief Joseph School of the Arts, Christine Donnell School of the Arts, and Pioneer School of the Arts.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education – Galileo, Summerwind STEM Academy, Eliza Hart Spalding STEM Academy, and Barbara Morgan STEM Academy. STEM programs have also been expanded at all middle and high schools.

Figure 4D. West Ada School Enrollment Boundaries, 2021-2022



Note: Map shows overlapping school boundaries to illustrate, generally, feeder schools from elementary to middle, and middle to high school. Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

- Other Schools of Choice – Renaissance High School utilizes a lottery application system, and Renaissance has a fully recognized International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Students are provided the opportunity to 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. The Idaho Fine Arts Academy is a School of Choice for grades 6 through 12 with acceptance based on an audition application. Virtual School House is a Kindergarten through grade 12 online school with both synchronous and asynchronous learning offered by the district.
- Meridian Medical Arts and Meridian Technical Charter schools are both high schools run by independent boards with shared service partnerships with the West Ada School District.

Public Charter Schools

In addition to the West Ada School District there are also several public charter schools. Charter schools function as both public schools and independent not-for profit organizations. In Idaho, a public charter school is organized and managed under the Idaho Nonprofit Corporation Act. All charter schools must comply with federal and state laws, as well as local ordinances. Some of the charter school options in 2022 included: Compass Public Charter School, Doral Academy of Idaho, Gem Prep: Meridian, Gem Prep: Meridian North, and North Star Charter School. There are also several smaller and/or online charter school options.

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. In addition to ISU, the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (ICOM) is also located in Meridian. ICOM partners with ISU, and other schools and medical providers in the area.

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).

Libraries³

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

³ For more information, see the Meridian Library District's website at <http://www.mld.org/>.

main library branch on Cherry Lane. A third branch is under construction at Orchard Park, in North meridian along Chinden Boulevard and Linder Road. The library also operates unBound, a technology lab in Downtown Meridian. 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

Electricity⁴

Idaho Power 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 regulated by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC), the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (OPUC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The largest power source is the company's system of 17 hydropower projects on the Snake River and its tributaries. Power is also supplied through company-owned resources and energy purchased through long-term contracts with wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and small-scale hydro generators. Additionally, power is supplied through shared ownership of two coal-fired generation plants in Wyoming and Nevada, along with Idaho Power's three natural gas-fired generation plants. Idaho Power was one of the first investor-owned utilities to establish a clean energy goal without a government requirement to do so and is making significant progress toward providing 100% clean energy by 2045. Idaho Power's corporate headquarters are in Boise, Idaho. They have an employee base of approximately 2,000.

⁴ Paris G. Dickerson, Idaho Power. "RE: Idaho Power information for the Existing Conditions Report 2022 | Idaho Power." April 29, 2022. E-mail.

Table 4J. Idaho Power Substations in Meridian

Substation Name	Substation Location
Black Cat	West Franklin Road and North Black Cat Road
Columbia	West Columbia Road and South Meridian Road
Hillsdale	East Amity Road and South Eagle Road
Locust	East McMillan Road and North Locust Grove Road
Meridian	East Franklin Road and North Main Street
Stoddard	West Overland Road and South Stoddard Road
Ten Mile	West Ustick Road and North Ten Mile Road

Source: Paris G. Dickerson, Idaho Power. "RE: Idaho Power information for the Existing Conditions Report 2022 | Idaho Power." April 29, 2022. E-mail.

Today, Idaho Power serves a 24,000 square-mile service area and roughly 1.3 million people in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. As of 2021, Idaho Power serviced approximately 57,000 residential and business customers within the city of Meridian boundaries. With the company's low-cost hydroelectric power plants as the core of its generation portfolio, Idaho Power's provides more than 600,000 residential, business and agricultural customers for some of the nation's lowest electricity prices.

Idaho Power facilities located in Meridian city limits include overhead transmission lines, along public streets and road rights-of-way (ROW), and substations. The transmission lines connect and bring bulk electricity into the substations. From the substations, Idaho Power serves customers with both overhead or underground distribution lines to their residences and businesses. The seven substations which serve Meridian are listed in Table 4J.

Figure 4E depicts the general location of electric transmission lines, with a voltage of 69,000 volts (V) or greater along public streets and utility corridors. Additional transmission lines and

substations may be necessary in the future to service Meridian's growing needs.

The company develops a system-wide 20-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) every two years to identify sufficient resources to reliably serve the growing demand for energy and flexible capacity within Idaho Power's service area. This process also involves the public in the planning process in a meaningful way. The company employs a three-part strategy: 1) responsible planning, 2) responsible development and 3) protection of resources and responsible energy use, which ensures a thoughtful approach to current and future demand. Wise use of energy helps ensure fair-priced and reliably electricity today and tomorrow.

Communications

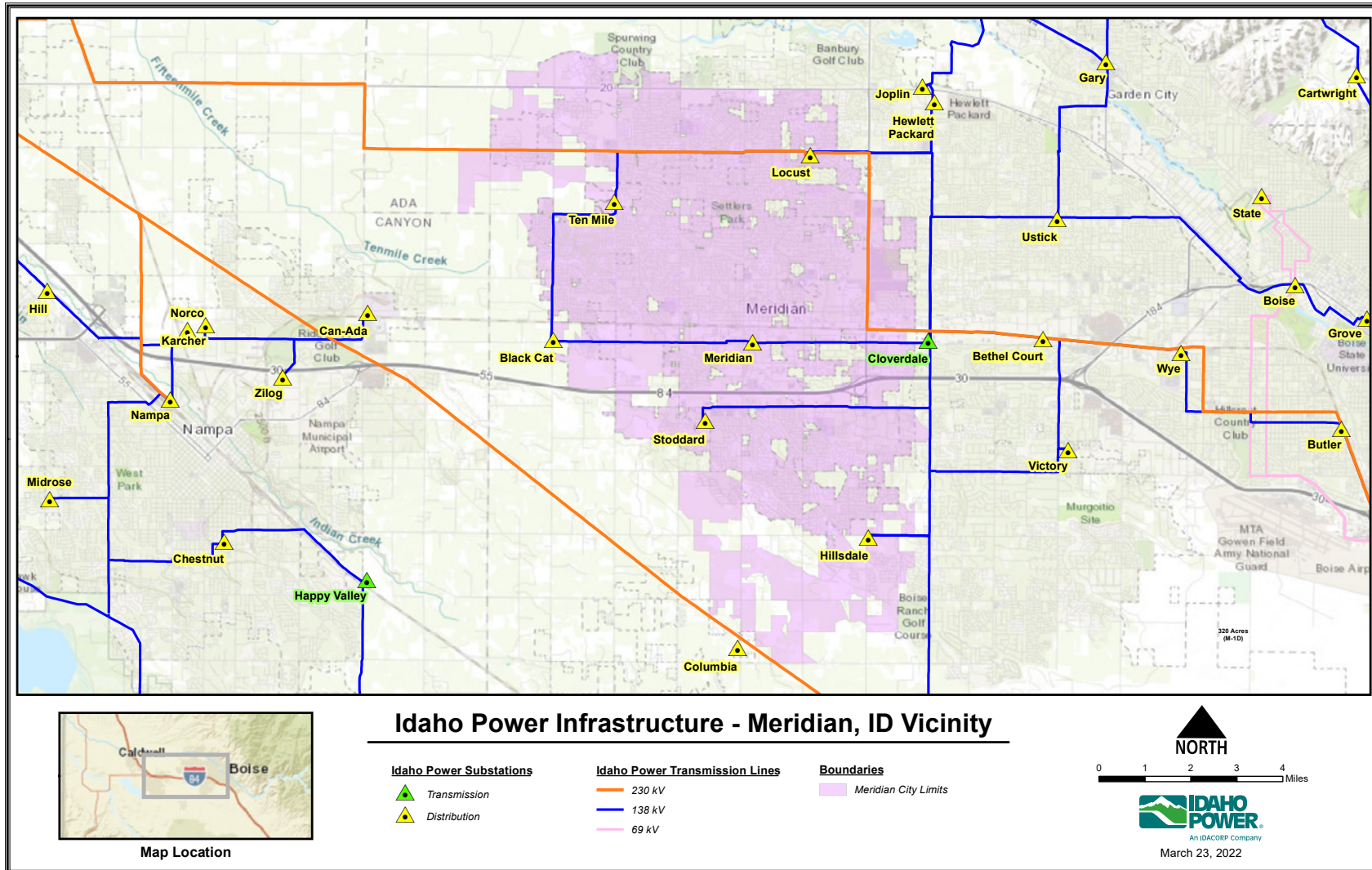
Centurylink provides basic telephone service and Sparklight provides cable T.V. service, within the City of Meridian and its Area of City Impact. Both companies provide internet and expanded phone services. Several telecommunications companies offer wireless and cellular phone service and other providers offer internet and T.V. service through other wireless means. Much of the City has 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 in Chapter 5, Hazardous Areas.

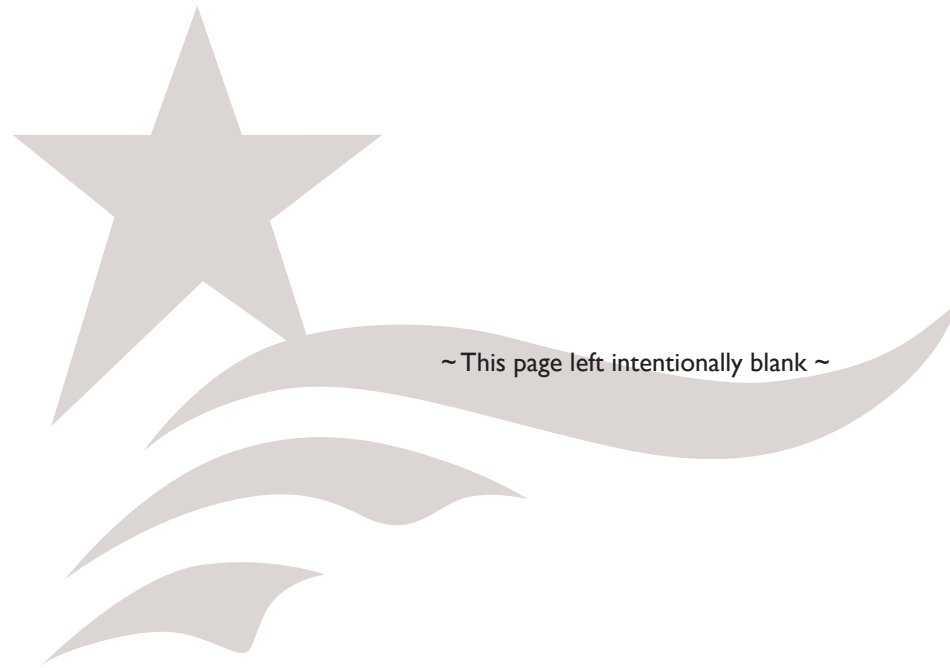
Figure 4E. Existing Idaho Power Infrastructure



Source: Paris G. Dickerson, Idaho Power. "RE: Idaho Power information for the Existing Conditions Report 2022 | Idaho Power." April 29, 2022. E-mail.

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.



PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

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. Interrelated with most of these topics are sustainability and preservation.

Above: Hoar frost at Meridian City Hall.



This section includes information on the City's 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. Agriculture has both natural/physical and social/cultural impacts on the community and is addressed next, followed by Historic resources representing Meridian's heritage. Critical to our environment and heritage is the relationship with sustainability. Finally, the section concludes with information on hazardous areas, those elements that could pose a threat or danger to the community if not properly administered.

Natural, Special, Historic, & Agricultural Resources

Community Values

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 have continually been areas of expressed interest by the community.

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*¹

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 77.1° 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 January winter average of 1.45 inches of precipitation and a very pronounced summer low of about 0.35 inches in July. The average yearly rainfall is 12.13 inches. Meridian has a United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zone designation of 7a, with some areas of 6b². 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

¹ US Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Weather Service. n.d. "Boise Climatology and Unique Local Data. " Accessed March 15, 2022. <https://www.weather.gov/boi/climate>.

² US Department of Agriculture. n.d. "USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map", Accessed March 15, 2022. <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>.

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 in 1990³. Ada County, however, has not experienced any violations of the national standards for CO since 1986. In 1999, the EPA removed Ada County’s designation of nonattainment for PM10. In 2011 IDEQ submitted Maintenance Plans for PM10 and in 2011 a Maintenance Plan for CO. In 2022 and thanks to improvements in air quality, the Idaho Legislature moved to repeal Idaho code requiring emission testing in the Treasure Valley starting in July 2023.

Automobile and area source emissions are the two major sources of CO. The main sources of PM10 are fugitive dust and agriculture. As wildfires continue to increase in frequency and magnitude, smoke from fires within Idaho and across the Western U.S. travel to our region leaving us with unhealthy air quality during summer months. Wildfire smoke contains tiny particles or PM2.5 that are harmful to health when inhaled. In winter months, inversions can be a cause of poor air quality when a layer of warm air traps cooler more dense air below. Because inversions cause air stagnation, pollutants such as wood smoke and vehicle exhaust become trapped near the surface leading to potential unhealthy air quality days. The City has enacted a Clean Air Ordinance prohibiting open burning and wood burning fireplaces when DEQ forecasts air stagnation conditions and air quality index reaches certain unhealthy levels described in Meridian City Code 5-3-5.

For more information on Air Quality, see the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality website⁴.

³ Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. n.d. "Priority Areas." Accessed March 16, 2022, <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/air-quality/improving-air-quality/priority-areas/>.

⁴ Idaho Department of Environmental Air Quality: <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/air-quality/>

Figure 5A. Soils in the Meridian Area

Geology⁵

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.

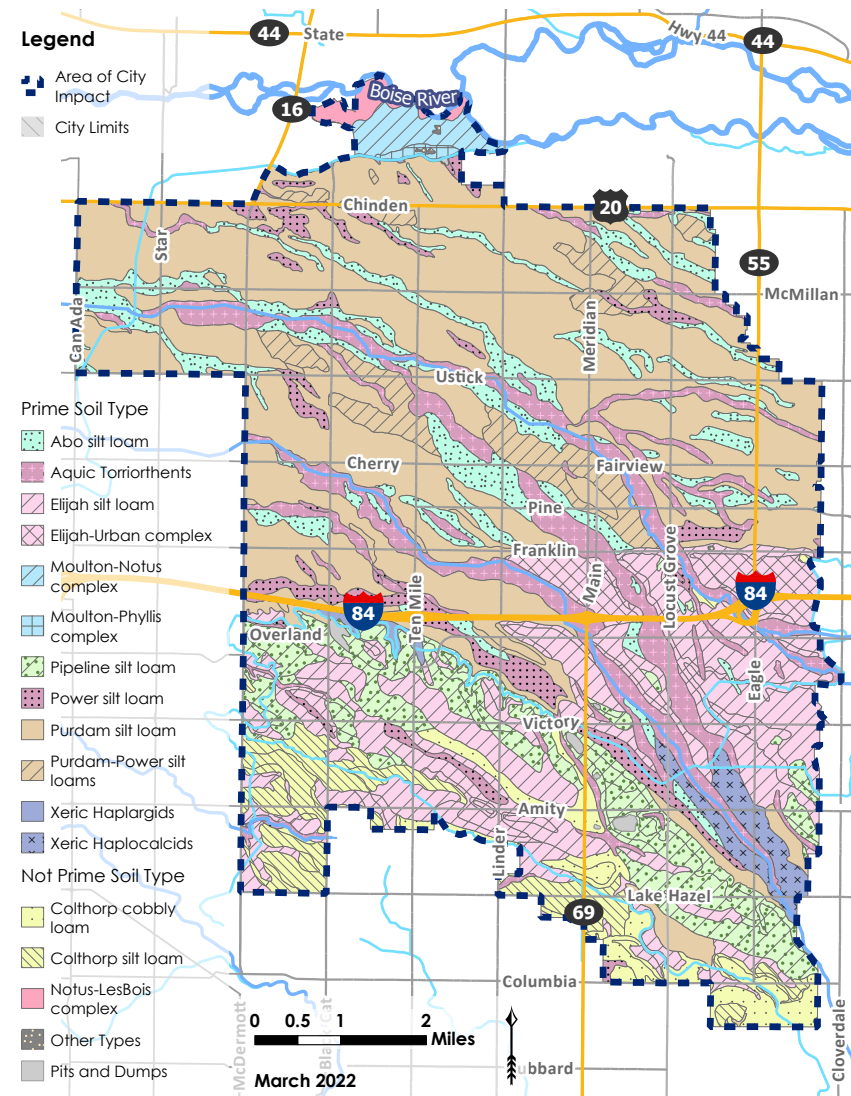
Generally, geology-related issues in the region involve the basalts of the Snake River Plain or the windblown silt and sand that covers the basalt. The windblown material on the plain in the Meridian area supports some of the best farmland in southwest Idaho, but its properties can create problems for 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.

The nearest active fault zone are the Squaw Creek, Big Flat and Jake Creek faults near Emmett, about 25 miles north of Meridian. With a relatively low probability, a 7.0 earthquake from the Squaw Creek fault was analyzed as part of the 2022 Ada County Hazard Mitigation Planning process yielding a medium risk. Various earthquake scenario shake maps are included in the Meridian annex of Ada County Hazard Mitigation plan. Recent earthquakes felt in Meridian have been centered in the much more active Central Idaho fault zones.

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

⁵ 2002 City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan.



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

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 primary strategy for dealing with this contaminant is to avoid it by drilling test wells and completing production wells at other depths.

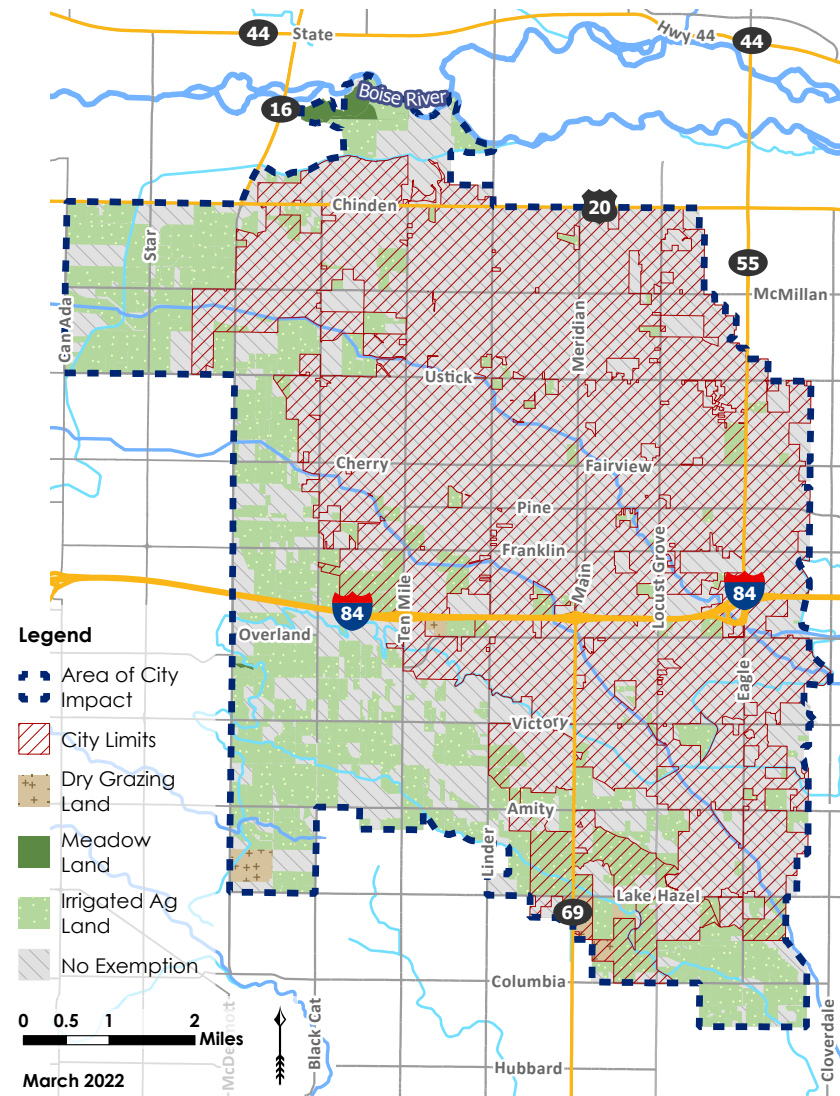
Soils

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

Figure 5B. Agricultural Tax Exempt Land in Meridian



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

Table 5A. Agricultural Land by Exemption

Prime Farmland if Irrigated	Agency	Exemption	Total Acreage
Prime Farmland	County	Exempt	5,008
		Not Exempt	3,958
		Meridian	1,267
Not Prime Farmland	County	Exempt	3,820
		Not Exempt	2,720
		Meridian	1,148
		Not Exempt	4,573
Total			39,082

Note: Data generalized based on soil types, Ada County zoning, and State agricultural tax exemptions. Unburdened properties are those outside of city limits with agricultural exemptions. Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

Table 5B. Agricultural Land by % Overall Area

Prime Farmland if Irrigated	Agency	Total Acreage	% of Overall Area
Prime Farmland	Ada County	8,967	22.9%
	City of Meridian	17,854	45.7%
Not Prime Farmland	Ada County	6,540	16.7%
	City of Meridian	5,721	14.6%
Grand Total		39,082	100.0%

Note: Data generalized based on soil types, Ada County zoning, and State agricultural tax exemptions. Unburdened properties are those outside of city limits with agricultural exemptions. Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

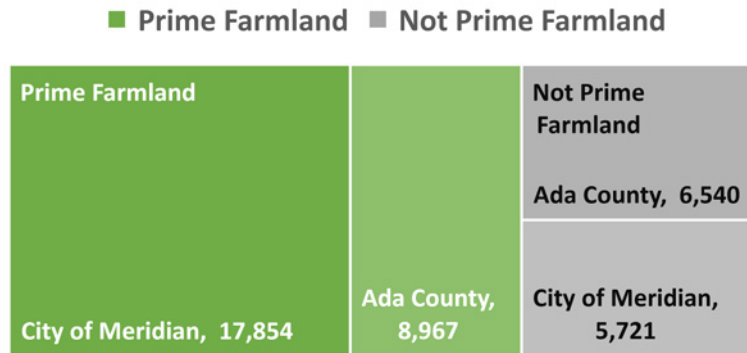
scenery, while preserving a valuable natural resource. There are no forests in Meridian, but outside of the riparian zones previously mentioned, portions of the City are heavily planted with trees and shrubs. Parks and subdivisions contribute to the recreational and aesthetic values of Meridian, and enhance the appearance of urban areas as they are typically densely landscaped.

Agriculture

Meridian has a rich agricultural history and the City would like to preserve some of its agricultural heritage. Much farmland in the Meridian area has, or is being converted into residential, commercial, and civic uses. 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. Most of the remaining agricultural land in Meridian is not prime farmland, but may still be productive agriculture. Figure 5B shows farmland with State tax exemptions. Figure 5A shows soils, organized by whether they are prime farmland (if irrigated) or not.

Today, the City today occupies approximately 23,500 acres of land. Of the remaining 15,000 acres in the Area of City Impact, 8,800 acres receives agricultural tax exemptions, most of which is irrigated; 5,000 of this is prime agricultural (if irrigated, and which may change seasonally), and 3,800 is agricultural but not prime.

Figure 5C. Prime Farmland by Jurisdiction



Note: See table 5A and 5B.

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.

Ada County has identified a number of architectural resources and sites found within Meridian’s Area of City Impact.⁶ 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

⁶ Ada County, Idaho. n.d. "Historic Sites." Accessed March 15, 2022. <https://adacounty.id.gov/historicpreservation/historic-sites/>.

Table 5C. National Register-Listed Historical Resources

Register Number	Resource Name	Address	Status
05001599	Bell, R.H. and Jessie, House	137 E. Pine St.	Exists
05001600	Hill, Clara, House	1123 N. Main St.	Exists
82000210	Hunt, E. F., House	49 E. State St.	Exists
82000223	Meridian Exchange Bank	109 E. 2nd St.	Resource Removed
03000122	Mittleider Farmstead Historic District	575 Rumpel Ln.	Resource Removed
08000905	Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co.	815 N. Main St.	Exists
82000227	Neal, Halbert F. and Grace, House	101 W. Pine St.	Exists
96001506	Tolleth House	134 E. State Ave.	Exists

Note: Registered sites listed are in Meridian. Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, "Database and Research." Retrieved on March 29, 2022 from <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>.

is also reflected in the many private historic residences that have been recorded.

Lastly, the Meridian Library District contains a large volume of historic maps, photos, and other historic resources. 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. See also Chapter 4, Commissions, Committees and Boards, and Arts and Historic Preservation, under the Parks and Recreation Department, for other preservation and activities.

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 the economy, the natural environment and the community’s built environment today and for future generations.

Over the last decade, the City of Meridian has incorporated sustainability concepts in a variety of projects including energy conservation projects; maintaining a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment and reclamation facility; and creating Environmental Programs within the Public Works Department.

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.

Because 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.

Energy

In 2021 the City approved a Clean Energy Resolution supporting Idaho Powers goal of reaching 100% clean energy by 2045. To further this pledge, the City worked with the SolSmart program,

which is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Energy Technologies Office, to recognize cities and counties for removing unnecessary obstacles to solar energy development. Meridian received the SolSmart Bronze designation in April of 2022 for its efforts to streamline green energy permitting activities.

Air Quality

Meridian can’t resolve the huge flows of traffic commuting through the City, but in addition working to address integrated land use and transportation planning for its residents, the City is also working to reduce impacts by its employees and customers. The following are some of the actions the City has been involved in, or is currently implementing:

1. Remote work - The City has adopted a remote work policy that allows city workers to telecommute. This policy allows certain employees to perform their work from home or other locations. Every trip eliminated from the City’s roadways improves its overall air quality by eliminating vehicle emissions.
2. On-line Business - The City of Meridian has expanded the amount of business that can be conducted with the City on its website. As an example, all development applications submitted to the Community Development department is done electronically. Further, a vast majority of utility bills are paid online instead of in person. The City recognizes that every transaction that can be done online is a potential trip off the road and saves paper.
3. 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.

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 water courses 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 and continues to support 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. Meridian code requires development to keep open and improve natural and naturalized corridors through the City, such as the 5-mile and 10-mile creeks.

Hazardous Areas

A natural hazards risk assessment is conducted every 5 years as part of the Ada County Hazard Mitigation Plan. An overall risk assessment in the Meridian annex of the 2022 plan ranks extreme weather, flood and earthquakes as medium risk and drought, dam /canal failure, landslide and wildfire as low risks. Hazardous area maps by risk type are available in the Hazard Mitigation Plan on the Ada County Emergency Management & Community Resilience website⁷. Besides natural hazards listed above, 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, storage and conveyance of hazardous chemicals associated with certain businesses, heavy industrial such as gravel operations or concrete production, and the attractive demand for housing near to these facilities. While federal regulations provide protection to a degree, as development increases, so will the potential for spills, accidents, fires, and conflicts created between disparate uses.

⁷ <https://adacounty.id.gov/emergencymanagement/mitigation/>

Figure 5D. Gas Transmission in Meridian

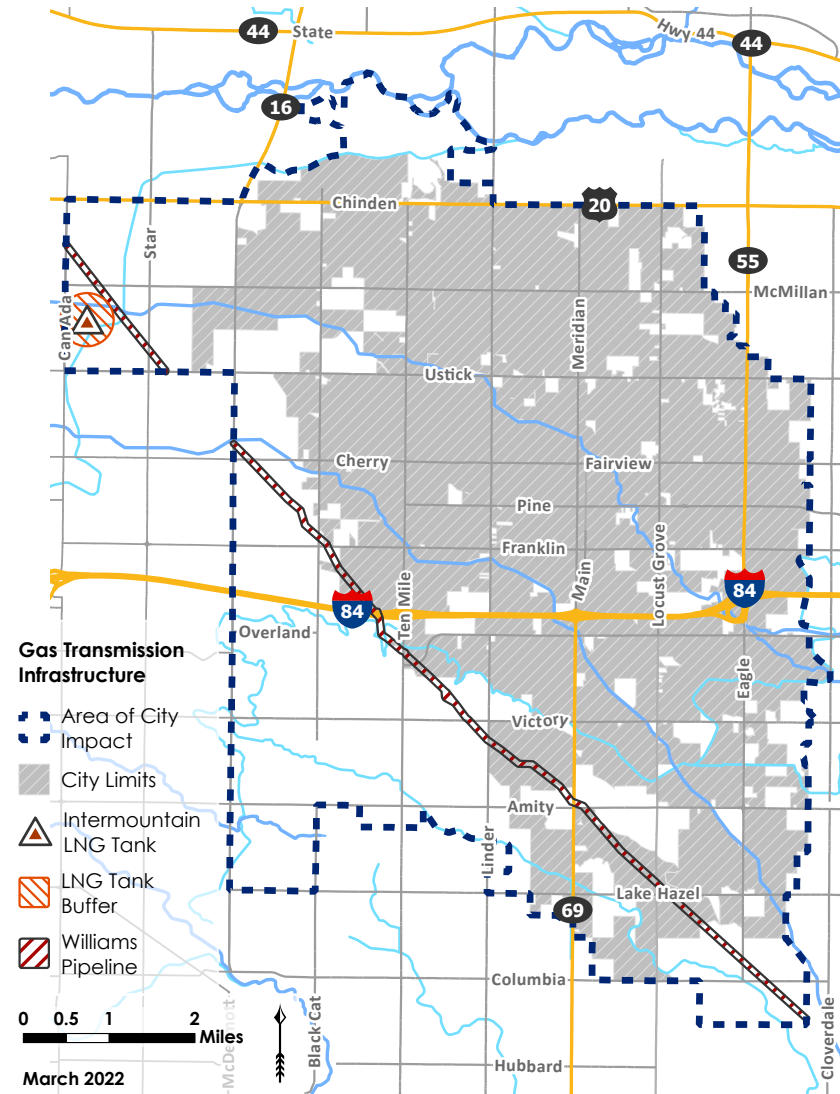
Natural Gas Pipeline and Storage

As shown in Figure 5D, there is a high-pressure natural gas pipeline that runs through the north-west and south-west areas of Meridian. This pipeline which is operated by the Williams Pipeline Company, carries pressurized 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 Intermountain Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Plant located in the northwest part of the Area of City Impact, at 4014 N. Can-Ada Road. The storage tank which was constructed in 1974 and underwent maintenance in 2022 has a capacity of 7.35 million gallons. The facility continues to operate at design capacity.

LNG is primarily methane in liquid form and is considered a cryogenic fluid. LNG is not flammable in liquid form and begins to rapidly return to its natural state as a gas (methane) upon exposure to the atmosphere. As the LNG warms a “vapor cloud” is created and the methane will rise due to it is lighter than air and will begin to mix with the air. Should there be a sudden escape of LNG from the tank, the concern would be the outer edge of the vapor cloud with the right mixture of air/gas that could be ignited by an irrigation water pump, vehicle, power line or other spark or flame. One of the safety features around the LNG tank is a containment dyke that will contain all LNG in the event of a catastrophic failure at the tank.

Federal oversight for the LNG Plant is under the U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The two most relevant standards for the LNG Plant include:

- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 49, Part 193, Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities; Federal Safety Standards; and



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

- National Fire Protection Association 59A (NFPA 59A), Utility LP-Gas Plant Code (this is referenced in CFR 49 Part 193).

Due to the inherent risk of fire and per the referenced CFR Part 193 and NFPA 59A, LNG facilities are equipped with many safety features located throughout the entire LNG Plant and include 1) ultra-violet (UV) detectors to detect fires, 2) fire suppression equipment, 3) combustible gas sensors to detect leaks and 4) local and remote automatic shutdowns of certain operations. Both the UV detectors and gas sensors in all buildings are tied to audible outdoor speaker alarms that are very loud, disruptive and unpleasant to be near. In addition, the UV detectors are very sensitive and can pick up outside welding or agricultural

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Above: Intermountain Liquefied Natural Gas Tank on Star Road, north of Ustick.



burning activities that can inadvertently set off alarms and/or shutdown operations. Lastly and related, another safety feature with offsite impacts is the outdoor lighting.

As part of a site impact study, a Fire Study and Prevention Plan (FSPP) was conducted by SEA Consultants in 2005 to perform and determine fire protection requirements and comply with Federal requirements. In addition, the FSPP was also used to evaluate thermal radiation and vapor dispersion in the event of a catastrophic failure of the LNG tank. The FSPP utilized a computer model to determine a vapor dispersion distance from the LNG tank based on certain weather standards (wind speed, ambient temperature & relative humidity) which resulted in a distance of 1,520 feet to obtain a safe mixture (non-hazardous) of air/methane from the LNG tank. Meaning an LNG tank spill resulting in the tank being completely emptied, the vapor cloud from the warming LNG would travel a distance of 1,520 feet from the LNG tank before becoming a safe mixture in air, which is considered 2.5% methane by volume in air.

Residential dwellings should not be permitted within 1,500 feet of the LNG tank to address the worst-case scenario evaluated in the 2005 Fire Study and Prevention Plan.

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). In the very near future, SH 16 will also traverse through Meridian, near the County Line. 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 additional safety projects



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Above: Meridian Road Interchange, looking north-west.

that the City would like to see along State Highways include: additional pedestrian facilities, intersection improvements, and improved access management.

Air Quality is also worse near highways, with disproportionate amounts of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and oxides of nitrogen discharged into the air from vehicle exhaust systems, evaporative emissions, and debris. Infants, elderly, and those with preexisting cardiopulmonary disease and lower socioeconomic status are at higher risk without mitigation⁸.

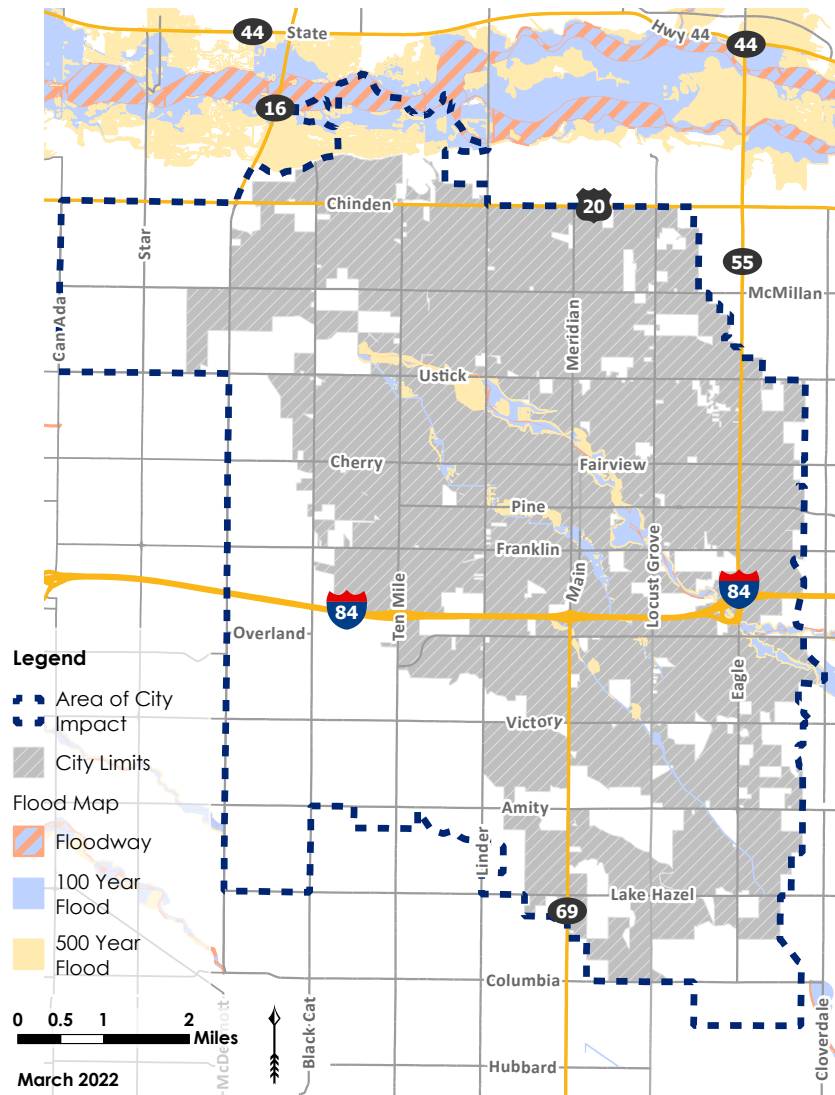
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⁸ EPA, Office of Transportation and Air Quality. n.d. "Near Roadway Air Pollution and Health: Frequently Asked Questions". Accessed March 15, 2022. <https://www.epa.gov/air-research/research-near-roadway-and-other-near-source-air-pollution>.

Weeds

There are vast and far reaching economic and environmental impacts of invasive weeds. A plant is designated noxious in Idaho when it is considered to be injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property⁹. Noxious weeds overwhelm native plant communities and disturbed areas, spreading steadily year by year. Prevention and inspection are the most economical management system for reducing the rate of noxious weed spread. The State of Idaho has laws and administrative rules regarding invasive species and noxious weeds, which can be found in the footnote below.

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⁹ Invasive Species of Idaho. n.d. "Noxious Weeds." Accessed march 16, 2022. <https://invasivespecies.idaho.gov/plants>.

Figure 5E. Floodplains in Meridian



Source: City of Meridian, 2022.

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.

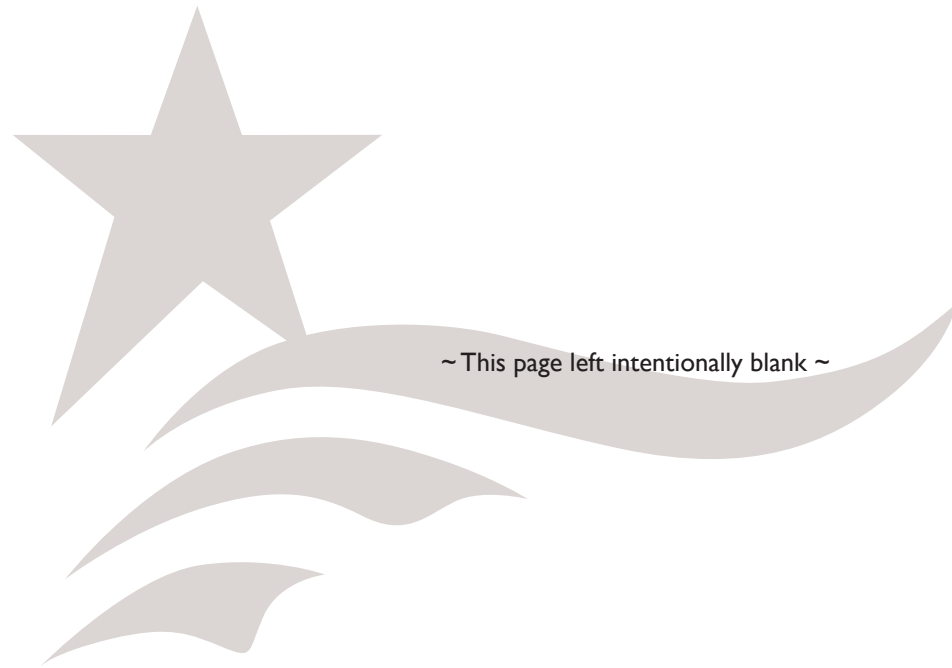
As a participating community in the NFIP, Meridian establishes Floodplain Overlay Districts and regulates all development in the Districts through permits. Development includes activities such as grading, filling, building structures, and even storage of materials. The purpose of floodplain management 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.



SUMMARY

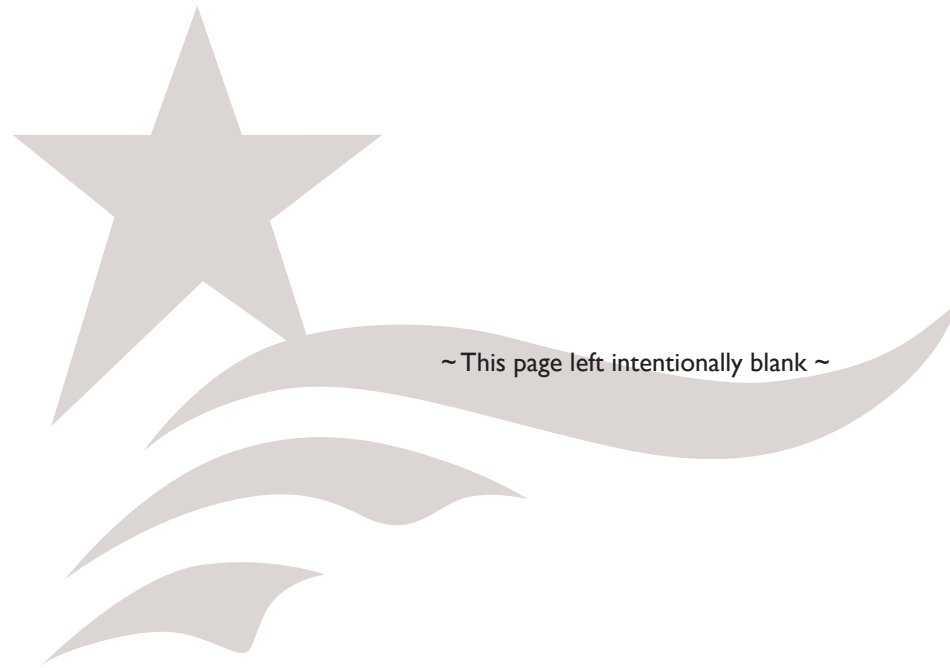
This report is an integral part of the City's Comprehensive Plan, last adopted in December of 2019. By separating relevant information about the City's history, present day conditions, trends, and current strategic plan for its future, the Existing Conditions Report 2022 allows the Comprehensive Plan to be a clear and concise vision document. By understanding what Meridian's resources are, some of 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

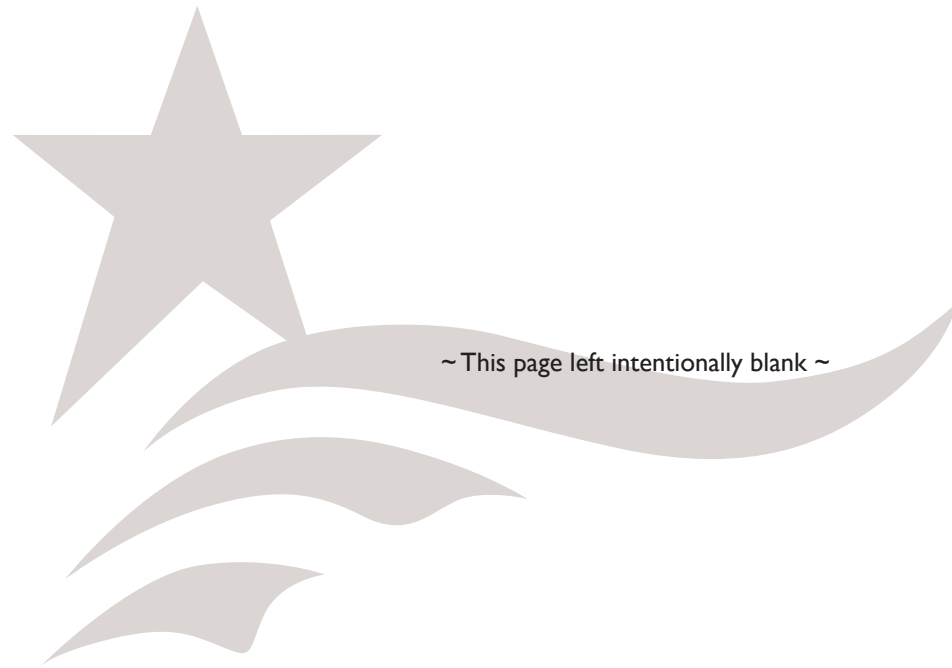
Report is not only a valuable planning and decision-making tool, but a means to measure progress.

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. As data becomes more readily generated and easily accessible, it's possible that future updates and versions of this document may become increasingly interactive.

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Below: Looking north, from Downtown Meridian.







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