



CITY OF MERIDIAN'S 2021-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN





MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Being a premier community to live, work and raise a family is more than just a simple statement, it's the vision we have for Meridian. Like any vision, it takes planning and execution to make Meridian *premier*. It takes dedicated employees, an engaged community, collaboration with partners, and committed leaders to transform a string of words into purposeful action so the Meridian of today becomes the Meridian of our future.

I am committed to Meridian's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan which focuses on priorities identified by the community. While our vision remains unchanged, our efforts to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan need to evolve to help Meridian address today's challenges while planning for tomorrow.


This plan builds off of previous efforts but is unique, affording flexibility to our departments and encouraging collaboration amongst stakeholders, the community and staff. It also incorporates elements from our 2019 Comprehensive Plan, which guides our land use and development plans over the next 25 years. We also used key points from our 2020 Citizen Survey to ensure that the plan is responding to the desires of our community.

Our staff is empowered to develop solutions and evaluate results on an active basis and make changes as situations evolve. As a communication tool, the Strategic Plan and its

reporting mechanisms serve as a status update and progress report on City efforts to the community.

The plan also provides insight on services provided by other agencies. It encourages collaboration with and action from community partners throughout the Treasure Valley. I am excited for the new plan, which builds off of our past efforts and provides clear direction to our team and focuses their efforts on those elements which you, our community, have indicated are a priority. The work our team puts into this plan will help achieve goals and initiatives which ensure we maintain the premier service levels Meridian residents have come to expect.

A premier community adapts and responds to the challenges we face. Our team members are accountable to the community and key in maintaining a strong and positive culture through our commitment to Customer Service, Accountability, Respect and Excellence. I encourage you to review the plan and join us in achieving our vision to be the West's premier community in which to live, work and raise a family.


ROBERT SIMISON
Mayor - City of Meridian





STRATEGIC PLAN

A Strategic Approach

Creating a strategic plan is not an effort that is pieced together overnight. It takes time and commitment from leadership, staff, stakeholders and our community.

Over the past year, we asked our Director team, Mayor and City Council to review what worked well with our previous plans to create an improved product today. We learned several key lessons from that plan:

- Flexibility is critical to a plan's success
- Key personnel have to be involved often and early
- Citizens need to be heard and plans need to be accountable to citizen needs
- Collaboration with stakeholders will develop a more effective plan

In development of this plan, our leadership team conducted in-depth analyses of the current state of our city, identifying the challenges we face; opportunities for different approaches; and the aspirations, key ideas and themes that would eventually become our Focus Areas and Goals for the community.

Our leadership, community and elected officials all took part in crafting the plan. Significant time including meetings, collaborations, data analysis and review of information led to a plan that responds to the needs of our community and pushes our organization into the future, while maintaining our premier status.

An Evolving and Vibrant Community

Meridian has officially become a destination community on the national stage and we are consistently topping national charts as one of the best places to live for young and retired residents alike. Meridian's change is undeniable with almost 120,000 residents in 2020, adding almost 50,000 residents in the past decade according to estimates from our regional planning partner, COMPASS.

Our premier parks, shopping and dining; an evolving downtown; and the fact that we are one of the safest communities in Idaho are the many reasons that Meridian has and will continue to draw residents, and the vibrancy shows. According to our 2020 Citizen Survey, 91% of our residents believe Meridian is a good or excellent place to live, and over

92% have an overall feeling of safety here. These are all elements of our city to stay focused on into the future.

We also know that great success and growth bring challenges and opportunities. We need to retain quality developments, maintain open collaboration with our partners, take action on roads and schools with responsible growth. This Strategic Plan articulates the initiatives we will prioritize over the next five years.





WHAT GUIDES US



Our Values

These core principles guide our treatment of one another, our customers and our decisions. Each department has a plaque that shows our commitment. At the City of Meridian, we CARE, which translates to:

Customer Service

Providing the best Customer Service to our community, colleagues, and partners by listening and responding in a timely, friendly, professional, and solution-oriented manner.

Accountability

Exemplifying Accountability by understanding our role in the organization, knowing our jobs, and accepting that each of us is responsible for our own work, choices, and actions. Acting as stewards of the community's resources, our environment, and our relationships.

Respect

Showing Respect by being trustworthy and courteous. We honor, accept, and include people with diverse opinions and backgrounds.

Excellence

Demonstrating continual Excellence through professionalism, going beyond the parameters of our job while being creative, innovative, flexible, and adaptable to multiple needs.

Our Vision

By 2035, Meridian will be the West's premier community in which to live, work and raise a family.

Our Mission

Meridian will deliver superior service through committed, equipped employees, dedicated to the stewardship of the public's resources while being a vibrant, livable and connected community

Evolving Our Mission

The Strategic Plan Leadership Team reviewed our City's current Vision and Mission. We took note of the Vision's core goal as an aspirational target of where we want to be in the future. After review and discussion, our Vision remained the same.

During the Comprehensive Plan development process, the community provided great insight into their priorities for the future of Meridian. We heard from residents on their desire to be a Vibrant, Livable, and Connected community and we were able to revise our Mission to better align with that vision. We also found it important to acknowledge Meridian is a full-service city and no longer a small town. The Mission you see above reflects these changes.





CITY of MERIDIAN

Organization & Structure

The City of Meridian organization is made up of over 500 employees who are dedicated every day to achieving results for our community. Meridian provides many services for the community as staff work daily to ensure those services function every day.

Additionally, we work with several external stakeholders in partnership for those services that are not within our direct control to ensure service quality, effective and efficient service delivery to our citizens.

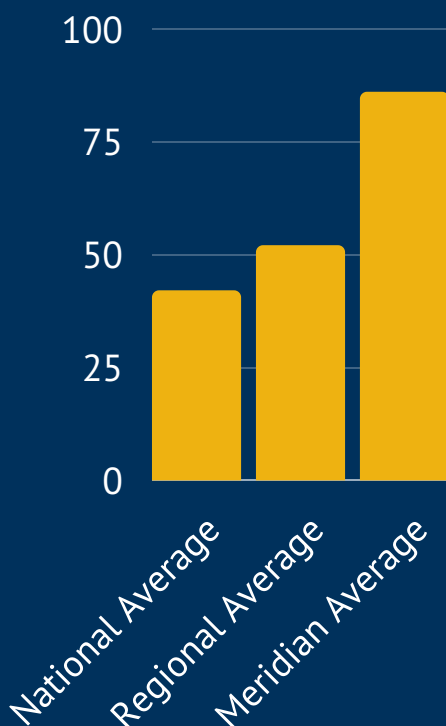
Direct City Services

- Police
- Fire Response
- Planning, Land Use
- Building and Plan Review
- Parks and Recreation Services
- Water and Sewer
- Economic Development
- Utility Billing and Licensing
- Administrative Support Services

Partner Provided Services

- Roads/Sidewalks
- Trash/Recycling
- Library
- Schools
- Healthcare
- Business Associations

Customer Service Satisfaction



A Culture That Cares

A strong and healthy culture in Meridian is important to ensure premier services are delivered to our citizens. Meridian employees take pride in the work that they do and the actions they carry out. In our 2020 Citizen Survey, we ranked significantly higher than other cities across the Mountain region and U.S. across 39 out of 45 survey categories that were surveyed.

Our citizens told us that the satisfaction of Fire and Rescue was 95%, City Parks at 92%, Police and Law Enforcement was at 89%, and Sewer Services at 88%.

Most important, overall satisfaction of City services provided was 30% higher than the U.S. and regional averages. We provide that service to our citizens with pride and it is the Meridian Way!



STRATEGIC PROCESS

A Plan for the Plan

In January of 2020 a plan was outlined to take the Leadership Team through strategic planning efforts. The COVID pandemic also brought unique challenges with large face to face meetings being curtailed for health and safety reasons. In this planning process, the Mayor, City Council and City Leadership were guided through each step of the project timeline, including:

- Evaluating the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan
- Defining key responsibilities for the Mayor, City Council and staff.
- Acknowledging the current environment and limitations of our organization.
- Developing key ideas with the Vision, Mission and Focus Areas.
- Reconciling key differences with elected officials.

- Exploring goals to establish our plan to succeed.
- Examining and integrating citizen feedback into the strategic plan structure.
- Asking for community feedback and input.
- Collaborating with partner stakeholders.
- Seeking concurrence with City Council to ensure approval and adoption of the plan.



Staying Accountable

Our plan design also involved regular communications and updates to the Mayor, Director Team and the City Council highlighting any changes or modifications as plan development progressed, as well as numerous collaborative meetings with key staff.

Frequency of Communication

Director Team	Monthly
Mayor	Monthly
City Council	Quarterly



STRATEGIC PROCESS

Letting the Plan SOAR

Our Strategic Plan Leadership Team conducted several idea building sessions to determine our organization's core principles.

The SOAR analysis process (to the right) allowed the leadership team to take a step back and acknowledge the highest-level items that impact the choices we face as an organization. The team highlighted several areas of opportunity that we reinforced as we progressed through the yearlong strategic planning process.

Revisiting the Focus Areas

Our previous strategic plan had five focus areas: Strategic Growth; Economic Vibrancy; Responsive Government; Safe, Healthy and Secure; and Arts, Culture and Recreation. We examined and compared the Focus Areas to data collected in the Comprehensive Plan, previous Citizen Surveys and other community feedback heard from elected officials. In review, it was clear to our group that our highest-level Focus Areas should have some modifications for the next five years. Our group met, discussed and deliberated for a month on this topic. This step was crucial to get right because it represents the highest level of what our priorities will be for the city for the next five years! Several areas were highlighted and the Focus Areas were revised, now consisting of the following:

- RESPONSIBLE GROWTH
- TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
- BUSINESS & ECONOMIC VITALITY
- PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
- VIBRANT & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
- GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE

S TRENGTHS

What can we build on?

Meridian City Staff
Public Trust
Openness and Transparency

O PPORTUNITY

What is our community asking for?

Transportation Solutions
Downtown Identity
Relationships with Agency Partners

A SPIRATIONS

What do we care deeply about?

Being a Premier Community
Focusing on our Families
Delivering Value for Tax Dollars

R ESULTS

How do we know we are succeeding?

Citizen Survey Feedback
Using Data and Measuring Outcomes
Engaging and Empowering Citizens



STRATEGIC PROCESS



Building the Goals

With the Focus Areas identified, our leadership team spent several months brainstorming.

Building on the SOAR analysis and the ideas from the Focus Area discussions, we created goals that are action oriented and focus on creating better outcomes for our community and our citizens.

Developing actionable goals is key in strategic plans, as they clearly define what is intended to be achieved. The group developed several key themes that were further refined into the strategic goals.

These goals were reviewed and approved by our Strategic Leadership Team before we discussed them with our partners and community for feedback.

Strategic Themes

- Public safety
- Growing responsibly
- Addressing transportation concerns
- Sense of community and place
- Investing in our employees
- Downtown revitalization
- Economic growth and jobs
- Engaging our key partners
- Clean and reliable water and wastewater
- World class parks and amenities
- Efficient and effective use of tax dollars

Listening to the Community

Our Strategic Plan outreach effort did not stop internally. We also sought important feedback from our external stakeholders and partners on the plan, focusing on outcomes for our citizens and engagement.

Meridian regularly surveys citizens to take community feedback. In our survey, we ask the community to recommend what our city leadership should focus on as priorities during the next few years. They told us loud and clear that we should put our leadership's emphasis on the following key categories: ROADS, SCHOOLS and GROWTH.

In addition to what we heard from our citizen survey, we also wanted to receive comments from the community on our draft strategic plan. We accomplished this through a Virtual Town Hall in October 2020. This gave our community the chance to hear about our strategic priorities for the next five years. Additionally, we launched a survey via our Nextdoor application that allowed our residents to weigh in on how the focus areas and goals resonated with them. Overall, the community told us that the Focus Areas and our Goals match their desires for Meridian.



STRATEGIC PROCESS

Partnerships

As mentioned previously, some of the important City services Meridian residents require are provided by multiple agencies throughout the community. Therefore, for any plan to have success it requires collaboration with our partner agencies.

Our community partners and personnel have to be aware of our priorities at a high level. Each agency or group has their own strategic priorities, so interactions with one another help us all to identify opportunities for collaboration. Keeping the communication channels open allows us to achieve mutually beneficial actions for the citizens of Meridian.

Each partner is essential to ensure that our priorities move forward through future initiatives. This is especially important with community concerns regarding transportation and education in Meridian. While we do not directly control the results or outcomes, we know that our citizens want results in these key areas.

In large part, the feedback we received from our partner agencies on our Strategic Plan was positive and many look forward to working together to help improve the community.

Community Partners

- Ada County
- West Ada School District
- Meridian Library District
- Meridian Development Corporation
- Meridian Downtown Business Association
- Ada County Highway District
- Meridian Chamber of Commerce





PLAN ADOPTION

Adopting the Strategic Plan

After almost a year of collaboration, synthesis of information and asking for feedback, the plan was finalized and adopted by our City Council. In December of 2020, we closed out the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and presented an overview of the Focus Areas and Goals that make up the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. City Council members had an opportunity to voice any concerns, ask questions and see how they would be involved in the plan over the next five years.



On December 22, 2020 our City Council adopted the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, providing guidance to staff that will allow them to develop the tactics and actual work that will achieve the formalized goals. The approved plan can be found at the end of this document.

Next Steps

Our Strategic Plan 's adoption by City Council sets the stage for our departments to create the actionable strategies and tactics that will bring our goals to life. The two essential pieces of this phase of the plan are creating Strategies and the Tactics that support those strategies.

Strategies are the specific directional statements that describe the activities designed to attain the adopted strategic goals. Tactics are the actions with timeframes that will allow us to achieve the goals.

During early 2021, the Strategic Analyst will work with departments to craft relevant work under each Strategic Goal. Each department will assign

key personnel to work on these activities, and they will be reviewed by the Director team and the Mayor. Once finalized they will be placed into an internal database for management and City Council will be updated. The goal is to begin execution of our Strategic Plan in the spring of 2021.

Creating Key Performance Indicators

As our departments develop their strategic initiatives and actions, it will be essential to measure how the actions we are taking are meeting the goals of our strategic plan. Our departments are the owners of their initiatives and will collect data and report on the progress made, showing our staff, our leaders and our citizens how their actions are improving outcomes.

In order to highlight how our actions are improving outcomes, we will look to our Citizen Survey for key metrics. In order to show accountability to our community, we will build a public facing dashboard and webpage to regularly update our key performance data, illustrating the progress for our community.

meridiancity.org/strategicplan



PLAN EXECUTION

Roles and Responsibilities

A plan that is not managed well will not succeed. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensure that all parties involved can contribute effectively. In order for our plan to become actionable and improve outcomes for our citizens, key staff must know their role, be accountable and drive results! Through oversight and management of our city's Strategic Plan, we will ensure that the plan is executed, flexible and straightforward so that together, we can deliver results for our community.

Like all plans, the actual work to achieve the plan will require resourcing. The specifics of necessary resources will be evaluated as tactics and strategies are developed. Allocation and funding requests of resources for efforts will pass through the Mayor and City Council during normal departmental update, budgeting and amendment processes. This approach will ensure that tactics and strategies are identified, vetted and implemented with open communication and transparency.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

CITY STAFF

Mayor

Accountable to our Citizens and ensures the plan is shepherded through execution.

City Council

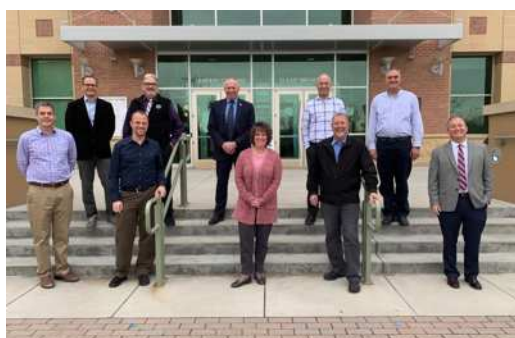
Accountable to adopt the Strategic Plan, develop needed policy, allocate resources and help create strategies and tactics to support the plan.

Departmental Teams

Responsible for development and execution of strategies. Report to Council and Mayor on strategies and tactics.

Strategic Performance Analyst

Development, management and implementation of the Strategic Plan and reporting results of the goals and outcomes of the plan.





FOCUS AREAS

RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

Meridian will responsibly promote growth that enhances its long term comprehensive vision and prioritizes infill development. We will encourage affordable, diverse housing options and high quality communities.

Strategic Goals

- Prioritize investment of city infrastructure and encourage road and school facilities in identified areas to grow responsibly and maximize the delivery of city services.
- Implement the goals in the community's Comprehensive Plan to ensure orderly development.
- Utilize impact fees, cooperative agreements, urban renewal districts and other tools to ensure that development pays its proportionate share of services impacts.
- Establish enhanced housing affordability options in new subdivisions to create additional opportunities for all.
- Apply design standards and ordinances to commercial and residential development to ensure quality communities with a diversity of amenities.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Meridian will prioritize citizen desires for a more connected and safe community infrastructure. We will engage our partners and utilize resources to advance priority projects. We will develop a safe and connected system that includes pathways, sidewalks and a multi-modal approach to solve congestion challenges and roadway deficiencies.

Strategic Goals

- Advance construction of transportation projects on priority arterial roadways to reduce commute times and improve efficient movement within and about Meridian.
- Prioritize, plan and advocate for road and sidewalk improvements making connections to increase accessibility and safety while traveling to schools, parks and areas of community interest.
- Enhance our pathway network through property investment, agreements and construction to create continuous pathways with additional connection points.
- Invest and provide street lighting to increase overall safety and walkability in neighborhoods.





FOCUS AREAS

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC VITALITY

Meridian will revitalize its downtown and grow its targeted commercial areas to ensure a balanced economic base that supports family wage jobs creation. We will retain and recruit businesses and services that support our targeted industries and community needs.

Strategic Goals

- Retain and recruit business in the professional service, technology, light manufacturing and health care industries to provide a balanced economic base.
- Support business development that increases the number of family wage jobs to allow employees to live and work in Meridian.
- Utilize urban renewal areas and specific area plans to promote business investment in targeted areas to meet community needs.
- Pursue multi-story residential and mixed-use projects in downtown that provide an increased quality of live and value to our citizens.
- Collaborate with impacted parties and agencies in our downtown area to effectively plan economic vitality in alignment with the sun setting of the urban renewal district.



PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Meridian will maintain its status as one of the safest communities in the West by investing in services and infrastructure that are essential to public health and safety. We will provide timely services, safe drinking water, and regulatory compliant wastewater services. We will evaluate the environmental impacts and our decisions, using data to inform our decision making. We will partner with our health community to ensure access to quality care for our citizens.

Strategic Goals

- Invest in innovative technologies and processes to enhance drinking water quality, improve clean water discharge qualities and reduce the impact on the external environment to protect public health and compliance with regulations.
- Deploy public safety resources to neighborhoods, to facilitate positive engagement, dialogue and build community trust.
- Invest in needed Police facilities while implementing strategies to reduce property crime, improve traffic safety, enhance public education and prevention efforts and meet service level expectations.
- Invest in needed Fire facilities while implementing strategies to reduce loss of life and property, improve outcomes of response, enhance public education and risk reduction efforts to improve resident safety and meet service level expectations.
- Develop and support plans with community health providers to ensure health care services are available in all parts of the community.



FOCUS AREAS

VIBRANT & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Meridian will create vibrant places for our citizens, embrace sustainable practices, and preserve natural spaces. We will provide innovatively designed parks and recreational offerings. We will respond to citizen desires to be stewards of our natural environment. We will partner with our community and developers to create beautiful open spaces, and cultivate art and cultural opportunities.

Strategic Goals

- Develop premier open spaces, indoor facilities, amenities and public art projects to enhance the overall quality of life.
- Execute financially responsible, sustainable and environmentally conscious projects to promote energy efficiency, waste stream reduction, and water conservation.
- Identify, improve, and support public spaces, events and program offerings that contribute to a premier and vibrant community.
- Preserve Meridian's historic buildings, events, heritage and identity through active efforts with community stakeholders.

GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE

Meridian will encourage open, transparent and approachable government. We will embody our CARE values utilizing proactive, high quality communication with our citizens and stakeholders enhancing community engagement. We will invest in our employees in order to deliver our citizens the most innovative, efficient, and value added services, while providing financially sound, resilient and effective government.

Strategic Goals

- Provide increased accessibility and transparency to government information at all levels which empowers residents to utilize their voice in governance and make informed decisions.
- Pursue solutions to ensure growth pays for itself in areas of education, transportation and other government provided services to achieve community priorities.
- Empower employees to innovate operations, update ordinances and simplify processes in order to improve effectiveness and provide premier services to our citizens.
- Utilize data informed decision making to meet the premier standard for customer service and service delivery.
- Exemplify and prioritize premier service through investment in our employees with skill based training and career path advancement opportunities.

