



Mayor Robert E. Simison

**City Council Members:**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 22, 2025  
**TO:** Mayor Robert E. Simison  
Meridian City Council  
**FROM:** Emily Kane, Deputy City Attorney  
**RE:** Overview of proposed updates to Title 5, Meridian City Code

This memorandum is provided to update you on the proposed changes to Title 5, Meridian City Code, the Parks and Recreation Code (currently in Title 13).

I prepared this update to Title 5 as part of a greater effort to review and streamline Meridian City Code. The City of Meridian's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan includes this goal: “[U]pdate ordinances and simplify processes in order to improve effectiveness and provide premier services to our citizens.” One of the enumerated strategies supporting this goal is to “perform a complete review of all ordinances, codes and policies in the City of Meridian to assess their value and relevance to the community.” To advance this strategy, the City Attorney's Office is undertaking a comprehensive overhaul and restructuring of the City Code, in order to improve the Code's clarity, consistency, effectiveness, and navigational utility.

The attached proposed updates to Title 5, Meridian City Code are part of this project. Among other things, the changes to Title 2 will:

- Move the Parks & Recreation Code from Title 13 to Title 5. This will close the gap between Title 11 (United Development Code) and Title 13 (current location of the Parks Code), thereby shortening the City Code overall. Title 5 is currently for the Fire Department, but the provisions that were in Title 5 have been moved to Title 4 (Public Health & Safety) and will be moved to Title 1 (City Administration).
- Clarify expectations for commercial uses of parks, including for short-term concessionaires (vendors selling food and drink to the public as part of a privately organized event, e.g. a tournament, game day, company party).
- Shortens the timeframe for processing permit applications (Short-Term Concession Permit – from 21 to 14 days; Amplified Sound Permit – from 21 to 7 days)
- Update the general park regulations; simplify enforcement by making the default penalty an infraction.
- Provide guidelines for pathway use, including prohibiting the use of off-highway vehicles and golf carts on pathways.
- Clarify enforcement tools (1-day ejectment and 14-day exclusion notices), authorized personnel, and penalties.
- Enhance provisions regarding the City Arborist and the Meridian Forestry Program for clarity and for compliance with the National Arbor Day Foundation requirements for the City's designation as a Tree City USA.

I presented the proposed changes to the Meridian Parks & Recreation Commission at their meeting on February 12, 2025. The discussion included the following questions and comments:

- Suggestion to clarify the “hard surfaces” on which glass is prohibited (Changed to say “asphalt, concrete, or other hard surface.”)
- Discussion of use of e-bikes on pathways (E-bikes are allowed because e-bikes are bicycles per Idaho Code.)
- Discussion of use of shared use of pathways – use of motorized products, enforcement mechanisms, etiquette, potential to add lines dividing pathways into lanes, signs explaining pathway rules/etiquette (Infrequent conflicts on pathways make ad hoc public education an appropriate approach at this point; proposed code language is adequate.)
- Discussion of whether the city arborist provisions belong in Title 8 or possibly Title 1 (Moved to Title 5 as a second chapter.)
- Discussion of aerial toys v. remote controlled aerial toys/drones (Use of both motorized and nonmotorized aerial toys are allowed unless other people are around.)
- Question regarding serving alcohol at a private event (A shelter permit is required in order to consume or share alcohol.)
- Question regarding state fishing licenses (IDFG license is required to fish anywhere in Idaho, including in Meridian parks.)
- Question about where smoking is allowed in parks (Smoking is allowed in parking lots only.)
- Question about where the rules apply, specifically, whether they apply at the golf course (“Except as expressly authorized by the director” allows separate rules for each facility; e.g., smoking is not allowed anywhere but parking lots in City parks, but smoking is allowed on the golf course, 100’ from buildings.)

I presented a draft of the proposed Title 5 updates to City Council at the April 8, 2025 workshop. One provision discussed was that which is currently in Meridian City Code section 13-2-6(Z) (and moved to section 5-1-4(H)(2) in the proposed draft): “A person shall not dig in or otherwise disturb grass areas, or climb trees, or in any other way injure or impair the natural beauty or usefulness of any area.” It is the recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Director that this sentence be removed from the Code. For this reason, that sentence has been deleted from the draft that is the subject of the April 22, 2025 hearing.

Another provision discussed at the April 8, 2025 workshop was Meridian City Code section 5-1-4(D), regarding amplified sound in parks. Under that provision, amplified sound is allowed in any park as long as the sound level does not exceed 62 decibels, as measured 20 feet from the source. Louder amplified sound may be allowed by permit, as established by department policy.