

# Meridian Community Engagement Analysis

## Purpose and Methodology

As part of the process to create a Public Art Master Plan for the City of Meridian, community engagement efforts were conducted to better understand the perspectives of those who live, work, and visit the city. A questionnaire was distributed that asked participants about their awareness of existing public art, the types of art they value most, preferred locations for new installations, and what they believe public art should express or achieve. The results offer important insights into how respondents perceive public art in Meridian and how they hope to see it evolve in the future.

### Tabling

The City of Meridian staff hosted four tabling events featuring four interactive stations designed to gather community input on public art. Participants were invited to engage in several activities to share their input on public art in Meridian. They placed sticker dots on a map to indicate where they would like to see new public art installed and identified their favorite existing artworks by marking the pieces they recognized or appreciated most. They also shared words or short phrases that captured their vision for future public art in the city. Additionally, they reviewed examples of public art from other communities and selected the styles they felt best represented the kind of art they would like to see in Meridian.

### Questionnaire

A public questionnaire was launched on June 23, 2025 and was up through August 18, 2025. It received 201 responses. The questions were designed to better understand the public's view on public art, how public art could have an impact on Meridian, and what locations and types of public art are of most interest.

## Key Themes from Community Engagement Activities

Several themes emerged from the community engagement results that cut across multiple questions and help us understand people's preferences related to public art.

### High Awareness and Appreciation for Existing Public Art

Community engagement through both surveys and in-person events revealed a strong awareness and appreciation for Meridian's current public art. Respondents consistently recognized and celebrated artworks located in central, highly trafficked areas such as Downtown Meridian and Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park. Pieces like *Far and Wide* by Sector Seventeen and *Under the Sun and Dreaming* by CJ Rench stood out for their visibility and accessibility, and they were frequently mentioned as favorites. This trend

extended to the Julius Kleiner statue by Thomas Jay Warren and the *Obelisk 1, 2, 3* installation J. Amber Conger, which also earned high recognition due to their prominent placement in Kleiner Park. Conversely, artworks located in less visible or specialized areas, such as trails or smaller neighborhood parks, received notably lower recognition. *These findings emphasize the importance of location, accessibility, and interaction in shaping public awareness and appreciation of art in Meridian.*

### **Desire for Interactive, Functional, and Family-Friendly Art**

Community members consistently express a preference for public art that *invites physical interaction, particularly installations that engage children and families*. Examples like *Turtle Park* by Bob Cassilly and *Interlacing Patterns* by Re:Site Studio were praised for their whimsical, climbable structures, which offer both aesthetic value and playful functionality. Similarly functional artworks like *Leaf Pavillion* by Frank Schwaiger that offer seating and shade structures that blend artistic design with utility are highly regarded. Residents appreciate public art that is *accessible, tactile, and designed for people of all ages and abilities*, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and usability in public design.

### **Strong Support for Art in Parks and Everyday Spaces**

The preferred locations for public art are those *where people already gather, with parks emerging as the top choice* among both in-person and survey participants. An overwhelming 81.4% of questionnaire respondents selected parks as ideal sites for public art, followed by Downtown Meridian and bike or pedestrian pathways. These spaces offer opportunities for interactive, large-scale installations that feel natural and accessible. Participants also expressed interest in *spreading public art more equitably across the city*, suggesting areas such as Northwest Meridian and commercial corridors as future priorities.

### **Preference for Locally Relevant and Inclusive Art**

Respondents place high value on art that reflects local stories, people, and places. The questionnaire shows there is a strong preference for artwork created by local or regional artists (41.0%) rather than internationally known figures (8.2%), indicating that the community wants art that feels connected to Meridian's identity. Respondents are drawn to art that celebrates inclusivity, nature, and the city's history. *Public art is expected to reflect Meridian as a community, fostering belonging and shared meaning among people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.*

### **Balancing Tradition with Growth**

Meridian is widely described as a clean, safe, and family-oriented community with a strong small-town atmosphere. Many respondents reference the city's agricultural roots, including farms, dairies, and long-standing traditions like Dairy Days, as important components of its identity. However, this heritage now exists alongside rapid growth and

development, generating a mix of optimism and concern. *While some residents welcome new amenities and economic opportunities, others are cautious of suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, and the loss of Meridian's original charm.* There is a shared desire to preserve the city's character as it evolves.

### **Art as a Contributor to Quality of Life and Community Vibrancy**

Public art is viewed as a meaningful part of Meridian's growing cultural ecosystem, alongside festivals, concerts, public libraries, and recreational spaces. Respondents see public art *not only as a beautification tool but also to enhance community vibrancy, strengthen civic identity, and elevate the overall quality of life.* Well-designed and durable artworks are appreciated as long-term investments in shared public spaces. Fiscal responsibility is also a noted concern, with some residents emphasizing the importance of budget-conscious approaches to funding art that is both impactful and sustainable.

### **Public Art as a Tool for Placemaking and Identity**

Public art is seen as a vital contributor to placemaking and the expression of Meridian's identity. Nearly 60% of questionnaire respondents want public art that creates *iconic, memorable landmarks.* These visual anchors are expected to reflect the city's values, culture, and heritage, serving as symbols of local pride. Respondents spoke about art as a way to tell stories, foster connection, and represent Meridian's character in a way that resonates with both residents and visitors.

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

1. Below is a small sampling of public artwork already existing in Meridian. Which examples are you familiar with? Please click on each image you recognize.

	Percent	Count
"Far and Wide," Sector Seventeen, Zamzows Feed Mill	66.3%	116
"Under the Sun and Dreaming," CJ Rensch, Meridian and Main Streets	65.1%	114
"Julius Kleiner, " Thomas Jay Warren, Kleiner Park	63.4%	111
"Obelisk 1,2,3," J. Amber Conger, Kleiner Park	62.3%	109
"Journey of Heroes," Ken McCall, Heroes Park	44.0%	77
"All In - Another Day at the Office," Daniel Borup, Fire Station #6	40.6%	71
"Fanfare," Steve Parker, Discovery Park	40.0%	70
"Imagining Egger's Farmstead" Claire Remsberg, W Chinden Blvd. & N Ten Mile Rd.	38.3%	67
"A Place to Shine," Sector Seventeen, Meridian Pool	37.7%	66
"Water Metrics," Eileen Gay, Fivemile Creek Trailhub	33.1%	58
"Origin," J. Amber Conger, City Hall	32.0%	56
"Somos Idaho," Miguel Almeida, N Linder Rd. & W Franklin Rd.	25.1%	44
"At the Keys," Rachel Linnquist, E Overland Rd. & SE Fifth Way	24.6%	43
"Hawk Benches," Colin Selig, Discovery Park	19.4%	34
"Perfect Union," Key Detail, unBound Library	18.9%	33
"Bloom Meridian," Blake Coker, S Wayfinder Ave.	18.9%	2

2. Do you have a favorite public artwork in Meridian? Which one? Why?

- Sculptures & Statues (53)
  - Colin Selig Benches & Bike Racks (6)
  - Kleiner Park Sculptures (4)
  - *All in Another Day at the Office*, Daniel Borup (4)
  - *Water Metrics*, Eileen Gay (3)

- *Fanfare*, Steve Parker (2)
- *Girl with Calf* (“Showtime”), Bernie Jestrabek-Hart, Patty Young, Lori Hoagland, Vada Manhire (2)
- *Under the Sun and Dreaming*, C.J. Rench (2)
- *Out on the Town*, Daniel Borup (2)
- Other Individual Sculptures – includes *Origin*, *Journey of Heroes*, *Native Grasses*, *City Hall pieces*, *Champion Flame*, *Perfect Union*, *Flushing Pheasants* (24)
- Utility & Traffic Box Art (26)
- Murals (16)
  - *Far and Wide*, Sector Seventeen (2)
  - *Tully Mural*, Macy Ratzesberger (1)
  - *Perfect Union*, Key Detail (1)
  - *A Place to Shine*, Sector Seventeen (1)
  - General praise for murals (11)
- General Appreciation for All Public Art in Meridian (17)
- Critical or Neutral Feedback (6)

**3. Of these projects, pick up to four that you think are visually interesting and represent the type of art you think would be successful in Meridian.**

	Percent	Count
"Turtle Park," Bob Cassilly	45.9%	83
"Leaf Pavillion," Frank Schwaiger	38.7%	70
"Interlacing Patterns," Re:Site Studio	35.4%	64
"Windmill," Tom Fruin	33.1%	60
"Together," The Urban Conga	32.0%	58
"Old Concord Road," Chandra Cox	32.0%	58
"Homophone," David Hess	31.5%	57
"Yield for Verhaeghe Park, The Arts Dept.	29.3%	53
"Leap of Faith," GiGi Miller	22.1%	40
"Paragon Prairie Tower," David Dahlquist	16.6%	30
"Convergent Focus," Project One Studio	16.6%	30
"Kinloch Courts," William LaChance	14.9%	27

"Nature Intervention Mural," Pete Goldlust and Melanie Germond	9.4%	17
"Stacked Friends," Brad Oldham	8.8%	16
"Indoor/Outdoor Garden," Nancy Blum	8.3%	15

#### 4. Of the projects you chose, what do you like about them?

- Interactivity & Playfulness (51 mentions)
  - Interactive / Tactile / Climbable (22)
  - Engages senses / immersive (8)
  - Encourages selfies / social sharing (5)
  - Large-scale & experiential (4)
  - Whimsical / playful / fun (4)
  - Family-friendly / kid-friendly (4)
  - Invites public participation (4)
- Colorful & Visually Engaging (13 mentions)
  - Colorful / bold / vibrant (11)
  - Visually striking / statement pieces (2)
- Nature-Based Themes (25 mentions)
  - Nature-inspired / earthy (10)
  - Blends with environment (5)
  - Animals / flora / fauna (4)
  - Calm, not industrial (3)
  - Celebrates rural heritage (2)
  - Environmental awareness (1)
- Functional Elements (6 mentions)
  - Benches / shade / shelters (3)
  - Art with purpose / utility (3)
- Photo Ops & Landmark Identity (7 mentions)
  - Creates landmarks (4)
  - Encourages photos / tourism (3)

#### 5. What IMPACT should public art have in Meridian? (Select up to 4 options.) I would like to see public art in Meridian that ...

	Percent	Count
Creates memorable and recognizable landmarks.	59.6%	109

Supports and enhances the identity of Meridian.	47.0%	86
Creates opportunities for Meridian residents and visitors to experience art.	47.0%	86
Anchors focal points or community gathering places throughout the community.	43.7%	80
Supports the development of local artists.	43.2%	79
Supports and encourage pedestrian activity.	37.7%	69
Gives voice to the history of Meridian.	24.0%	44
Creates an outlet for community creativity through hands on involvement.	23.0%	42
Enhances the identity of important areas of the community, such as downtown.	21.9%	40
Other - Write In	14.8%	27

#### Other – Write In

- Community Connection & Inclusivity (7 mentions)
  - Fosters emotional connection / unity (3)
  - Celebrates Meridian's history (2)
  - Represents diverse populations (2)
- Functionality & Practicality (6 mentions)
  - Provides shade / seating (2)
  - Supports gathering / activity (2)
  - Includes water / natural elements (1)
  - Has practical or dual-purpose design (1)
- Inspiration & Education (5 mentions) Inspires children / curiosity (2)
  - Encourages learning / conversation (2)
  - Uplifting / culturally enriching (1)
- Aesthetic & Artistic Quality (4 mentions)
  - Well-designed / beautiful (2)
  - More texture and detail (1)
  - Avoids bright, harsh colors (1)
- Public Access & Visibility (3 mentions)
  - Art in everyday life (1)
  - Use blank walls for murals (1)
  - Creates recognizable landmarks (1)

- Critical / Opposing Views (2 mentions)
  - No taxpayer-funded art (1)
  - Prefer funding fire/police instead (1)

**6.What AREAS of Meridian are the best opportunities for public art? (Select up to 4 options.)**

	Percent	Count
Parks	81.4%	149
Downtown	54.1%	99
Bicycle and pedestrian pathways	41.0%	75
Libraries	41.0%	75
Gateways to the city	28.4%	52
Roundabouts	24.0%	44
Community Centers	23.0%	42
Visible from the freeways / major roadways	19.1%	35
Large development areas	19.1%	35
Schools	17.5%	32
City Hall	11.5%	21
Alleys	7.1%	13
Police and fire stations	6.6%	12
Other - Write In	4.3%	8

**7.What TYPES of public artwork would you like to see in Meridian? (Select up to 4 options.) I would like to see more...**

	Percent	Count
Artist-designed functional elements in the streetscape (benches, bike racks, crosswalks, manhole covers).	61.7%	113
Interactive and playful artworks.	55.7%	102



Murals.	43.2%	79
Artwork by local and regional artists.	41.0%	75
Artwork that is large-scale and iconic.	39.3%	72
Artwork that creates pedestrian-scale visual surprises.	27.9%	51
Illuminated/Light-based projects.	26.8%	49
Street art (independent, sometimes unsanctioned, art in public spaces).	23.0%	42
Socially engaged public art projects that involve the public.	15.3%	28
Temporary or rotating installations that last 6 months to 2 years.	11.5%	21
Artwork by nationally or internationally recognized artists.	8.2%	15
Video projection and media-based artworks.	3.3%	6
Other - Write In	8.2%	15

#### **8.What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Meridian?**

- Family-Focused & Community Values (22)
- Farming, Dairy & Local Heritage (19)
- Growth & Change (14)
- Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces (14)
- Home, Community & Belonging (13)
- Suburban Identity (10)
- Safe & Clean Environment (10)
- Water Tower as Symbol (7)
- Welcoming & Friendly (4)
- Downtown Meridian (4)
- Other Unique or Individual Comments (39)

#### **9.What are the things you love the most about Meridian?**

- Parks, Trails, Open Spaces (20)
- Safety & Cleanliness (17)
- Small Town Feel / Historic Character (17)
- Family-Focused (15)
- Community & Friendliness (14)
- Convenience & Accessibility (14)

- Arts, Events & Culture (11)
- Downtown Identity & History (9)
- Growth (6)

**10. What places in Meridian do you take visitors to show them what Meridian is all about?**

- Parks, Trails & Nature (144)
- Downtown Meridian / Old Town / Main Street (91)
- The Village at Meridian (86)
- City Hall / Galleries / Libraries (33)
- Restaurants & Local Businesses (27)
- Farms, Agriculture & Rural Identity (10)
- Entertainment, Agriculture & Rural Identity (10)
- Places Outside of Meridian (16)
- Neighborhoods / Residential Areas (12)
- Historical Sites / Old Buildings (11)
- Public Events / Seasonal Activities (10)
- Religious / Spiritual Landmarks (2)

**11. Approximately how many art activities or events (museum or gallery visits; concerts, plays, musicals or other live performances, etc.) have you attended in the past 12 months?**

	Percent	Count
1-3	37.0%	64
4-7	26.0%	45
8-11	15.6%	27
More than 12	12.7%	22
None	8.7%	15
	Totals	173

**12. What is your awareness of Initial Point Gallery located on the third floor of Meridian City Hall? (select all that apply)**

	Percent	Count
I have never heard of Initial Point Galley	33.7%	60

I have heard of Initial Point Gallery, but have never visited.	23.6%	42
I have visited Initial Point Gallery.	34.3%	61
I have attended an event at Initial Point Gallery.	20.8%	37

**13.Do you live in Meridian? If so, how long have you lived here?**

	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	5.1%	9
1 to 3 years	9.6%	17
4 to 6 years	16.9%	30
7 to 9 years	15.7%	28
10 to 20 years	21.3%	38
More than 20 years	20.8%	37
I do not live in Meridian	10.7%	19
	Totals	178

**14.Do you work in Meridian? If so, how long have you worked here?**

	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	3.4%	6
1 to 3 years	8.6%	15
4 to 6 years	9.8%	17
7 to 9 years	7.5%	13
10 to 20 years	10.9%	19
More than 20 years	6.3%	11
I do not work in Meridian	53.4%	93
	Totals	174

**15.What is your age range?**

	Percent	Count
Younger than 18.	2.9%	5
18-24	2.9%	5
25-34	12.1%	21
35-44	23.0%	40
45-54	21.3%	37
55-64	16.7%	29
65 or older	19.0%	33
Prefer not to answer	2.3%	4
	Totals	174

## **APPENDIX B: TABLING RESULTS**

### **Station 1: Most Popular Locations Indicated on Map:**

- Settlers Park (7)
- Bear Creek Park (4)
- Gordon Harris Park (4)
- Discovery Park (4)
- Heroes Park (4)
- Julius M. Kleiner Park (3)
- Fuller Park (3)
- Downtown Meridian (3)
- W. Chinden Blvd & N. Linder Rd. (3)
- Black Cat Rd. between W. Cherry Lane and W. Ustick Rd. - West of Lakeview Golf Club (3)
- Renaissance Park (3)
- W. Ustick Rd. and N. Linder Rd. (2)
- Tully Park (2)
- Storey Park (2)

### **Station 2: Favorite Works in Meridian:**

- Sculpture: Under the Sun and Dreaming, CJ Ranch, Meridian and Main Streets (25)
- Mural: Far and Wide, Sector Seventeen, Zamzows Feed Mill (25)
- Sculpture: Fanfare, Steve Parker, Discovery Park (25)
- Bus Stop Mural: Bloom Meridian, Blake Coker (24)
- Sculpture: All In – Another Day at the Office, Daniel Borup, Fire Station #6 (23)
- Sculpture: Water Metrics, Eileen Gay, Fivemile Creek Trailhub (21)
- Traffic Box Mural: At the Keys, Rachel Linquist, E. Overland Rd. & SE Fifth Way (19)
- Traffic Box Mural: Somos Idaho, Miguel Almeida, N. Linder Rd. & W. Franklin Rd. (19)
- Mural: A Place to Shine, Sector Seventeen, Meridian Pool (18)
- Functional: Hawk Benches, Colin Selig, Discovery Park (17)
- Sculpture: Obelisk, 1, 2, 3, J. Amber Conger, Kleiner Park (15)
- Sculpture: Julian Kleiner, Thomas Jay Warren, Kleiner Park (14)
- Sculpture: Journey of Heroes, Ken McCall, Heroes Park (14)
- Mural: Perfect Union, Key Detail, unbound Library (14)
- Sculpture: Origin, J. Amber Conger, City Hall (8)

### **Station 3: Themes:**

#### **Interactive & Functional Art**

- Musical wings with lights
- Unique, surprising, interactive
- Music instruments to play (see Indian Creek)
- Interactive art
- Interactive arts installation for all ages
- Touchable / texture
- Art with movement
- Functional
- Functional
- Functional
- Functional art is so neat
- Immersive experience
- More benches
- Children playing

#### **Local Identity & Representation**

- Be part of the community
- Representative of Meridian
- Proud of place where I live
- I love the place where I live
- Iconic Meridian sculpture
- Local Heroes
- Local artists
- First Responders and Police

#### **Murals**

- Murals like Freak Alley
- Murals
- Murals
- Murals to enjoy
- Road murals
- Curvy wall each section have murals
- Nature murals (maybe by Jay Rasgorshek?)
- Paint all of the electrical boxes

## **Inclusivity & Diversity**

- Inclusivity of all
- Queer pride
- Mystical gay
- GAY ART
- Multicultural local artists
- Celebrate people of all backgrounds

## **Nature-Inspired Art**

- Nature
- Pollinator garden
- Integrating nature and place
- Things that exemplify goodness, beauty, and nature. Art is the overflow of the heart and mind of society
- Rustic barns

## **Historical Significance**

- Historic figures (Sacajawea)
- Heroes and history
- Honor our heroes
- Abe Lincoln
- America 250 Anniversary
- Historical and place markers

## **Joyful Themes**

- Brings joy
- Puts a smile on your face
- Joy
- Inspiring
- Joy and bring a smile

## **Art Shows & Performances**

- Portrait shows
- Arts shows like this
- Have speakers up playing local musician music along a walking path

## **Arts Education & Community Service**

- Junior art classes

- Rec facilities for youth and disabled adults in the Lake Hazel/Fivemile area
- More homeless shelters. Not just for women and kids. Everyone needs a little help

### **Public Space & Infrastructure**

- Concert venue
- Troll bridge (Seattle)
- Pieces integrated with public works projects
- Manhole covers and tree grates

### **Support for the Arts**

- We need more money for all art endeavors. Not enough money spent on art!
- Grant public art
- Support nice local artists

### **Style Preferences**

- Abstract
- Pop art
- Architectural standards that reflect
- Hyperpop art
- Reckless art
- Abstract
- Pop art

### **Medium Preferences**

- Mosaic!
- Mosaic art
- Mosaic work is beautiful
- Dichroic glass
- Sculpture and lighting
- Sculpture
- Bronze sculpture
- Sculptural
- Pottery studio
- Using repurposed materials

### **Location Specific Recommendations**

- Something along main roads such as Overland and Eagle
- South restroom in Kleiner Park cement wall



- PAL Meridian soccer tribute

## **Miscellaneous**

- Not political
- Introspective
- Collaborative and collection
- Wooden trolls (Seattle)

## **Station 4: Favorite Types of Work People Would Like to See in Meridian**

### **Activating Place:**

- Leaf Pavillion, Frank Schwaiger (13)
- Together, The Urban Conga (11)
- Kinloch Courts, William LaChance (7)
  - *Comment: Functional Spaces in Art!*

### **Creating Focal Points**

- Paragon Prairie Tower, David Dahlquist (22)
- Stacked Friends, Brad Oldham (10)
- Silverton, Project One Studio (5)

**Celebrating Identity** (*The dots weren't very specifically placed, so in some cases it's hard to tell exactly which piece the dot was intended to be put onto.*)

- Yield for Verhaeghe Park, The Arts Dept. (14)
- Windmill, Tom Fruin (14)
- Leap of Faith, GiGi Miller (13)

### **Enhancing Design** (*3 dots on the title*)

- Interlacing Patterns, Re:Site Studio (14)
  - *Comment: Captivating*
- Nature Intervention Mural, Pete Goldlust and Melanie Germond (8)
- Old Concord Road, Chandra Cox (7)

### **Nurturing Creativity**

- Turtle Park, Bob Cassilly (32)
  - *Comment: I'm from STL, RIP, Bob. You've inspired thousands.*
- Homophone, David Hess (12)

- Indoor/Outdoor Garden, Nancy Blum (4)

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