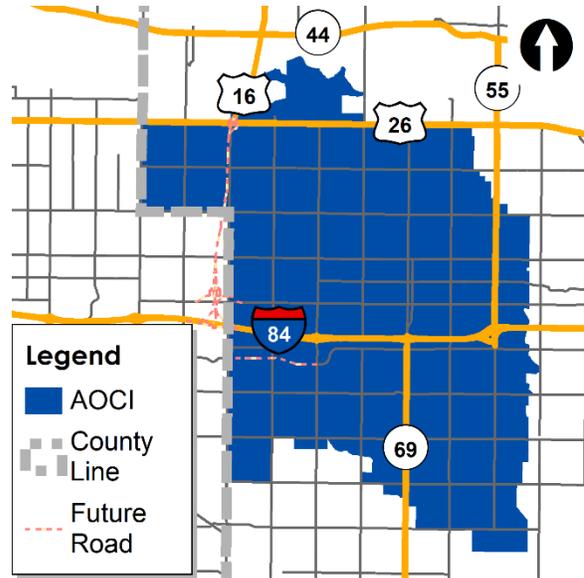


DEPARTMENT REPORT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



HEARING DATE: 2/17/2026
 TO: Mayor & City Council
 FROM: Bill Parsons, Current Planning Supervisor
 208-884-5533
 SUBJECT: ZOA-2025-0003
 Building Height and Drive-through Text Amendment
 LOCATION: City wide



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Meridian Planning Division has applied for a UDC text amendment to define residential building height measurements, clarify building height standards in the Residential and Traditional Neighborhood Districts, and update the approval process for tiered drive-throughs.

II. APPLICANT INFORMATION

A. Applicant:
 City of Meridian Planning Division
 33 E. Broadway Ave, Suite #102
 Meridian, ID 83642

III. NOTICING

	Planning & Zoning Posting Date	City Council Posting Date
Notification published in newspaper	12/30/2025	01/31/2026
Public Service Announcement	12/18/2025	01/29/2026
Nextdoor posting	12/18/2025	01/29/2026

IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS ([Comprehensive Plan](#))

A. Comprehensive Plan Text (<https://www.meridiancity.org/compplan>):

3.01.01B - Update the Comprehensive Plan and **Unified Development Code** as needed to accommodate the community's needs and growth trends.

This is the first amendment of the year and is derived from discussions with City Council on these two topics, based on community feedback and the need to strengthen processes and code to better align with current growth trends.

V. UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE ANALYSIS ([UDC](#))

This amendment focuses on two primary topics: (1) clarification and revisions to the building height standards and (2) implementation of the new tiered review process for drive-through establishments. The proposed amendment includes modifications, additions, and clarifications primarily within Chapters 1, 2, and 5 of the Unified Development Code (UDC). The proposed changes are summarized below:

1. UDC 11-1-5(B): Measurements

Clarifies that residential building heights are measured differently from non-residential and mixed-use structures. Residential building height will now be measured from the average grade at the front property line to the highest point of the roof or structure, while non-residential and mixed-use structure height will continue to be measured in accordance with the adopted Building Code.

2. UDC 11-1A-1: Definitions – Drive-Through Establishment

Updates the definition to include the three (3) tiered categories for drive-through establishments.

3. UDC 11-2A-3(E) and 11-2D-3(B): Maximum Height Limits

Residential structures will be measured as defined in Chapter 1 and are further limited from additional height increases. The amendment also clarifies which non-residential and mixed-use structures' architectural features are exempt from height limits.

4. UDC Tables 11-2B-2 and 11-2D-2: Allowed Uses in Commercial and Traditional Neighborhood Districts

Updates the allowed use tables to incorporate the new tiered drive-through categories recently adopted by City Council.

5. Table 11-5A-2: Duties and Authority

Adds specific review and decision-making procedures for each drive-through tier. This includes authorization for Tier 1 drive-throughs to be approved administratively or by the Commission, Tier 2 drive-throughs to be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Tier 3 drive-throughs to require City Council approval.

These changes have been reviewed with the UDC Focus Group and align with City Council's direction.

VI. DECISION

A. Staff:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment to the UDC based on the analysis provided in Section IV and V and the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in Section VIII.

B. Commission:

The Meridian Planning & Zoning Commission heard this item on January 15, 2026. At the public hearing, the Commission voted to recommend approval of the subject ZOA request.

1. Summary of Commission public hearing:

- a. In favor: Planning Division
- b. In opposition: None
- c. Commenting: None
- d. Written testimony: None
- e. Staff presenting application: Bill Parsons
- f. Other Staff commenting on application: None

2. Key issue(s) of public testimony:

- a. None

3. Key issue(s) of discussion by Commission:

- a. Process for making recommendations to Council on Tier 3 drive-throughs and other development applications.

4. Commission change(s) to Staff recommendation:

- a. The Commission modified the recommending body on Tier 3 drive-throughs from the Director to the Commission.

5. Outstanding issue(s) for City Council:

- a. None

C. City Council:

Enter Summary of City Council Decision.

VII. EXHIBIT

A. Proposed Code Changes

Proposed UDC Text Amendments			
UDC Section	Topic	Reason for Changes	Proposed Change
11-1-5(B)	Measurements	Clarify this section to state residential building heights are measured differently than non-residential structures.	<p>B. Measurements.</p> <p>1. <u>The height of a residential structure shall be measured from the average grade at the front property line to the highest point of the roof or structure. Non-residential and mixed-use structures height shall be measured in accord with the Meridian City Building Code as set forth in title 10, chapter 1 of this Code.</u></p>
11-1A-1	Definitions of terms	Pairing the definitions in the Specific Use Standards with the Definition Section of the UDC.	<p>Drive-through establishment. The use of a portion of a structure where business is transacted, or is capable of being transacted, directly with customers located in a motor vehicle, including associated stacking lanes, speaker and/or ordering area, pick up windows, and exit lanes. The term drive-through establishment shall include, but not be limited to, providing food or beverage service, bank service, and/or film processing. The term drive-through establishment shall not include "fuel sales facility", or "vehicle washing facility", or "vehicle repair, minor" as herein defined.</p> <p><u>A. Tier 1. A drive-through associated with a financial institution, automated teller machine (ATM), pharmacy, laundry and dry cleaning, restaurant limited to online and mobile ordering only, or other comparable uses, as determined by the Director.</u></p> <p><u>B. Tier 2. A drive-through associated with a restaurant limited to a designated order area, one (1) stacking lane, and a pick-up window.</u></p> <p><u>C. Tier 3. A drive-through associated with a restaurant providing either two (2) or more designated order areas, two (2) or more stacking lanes, or two (2) or more pick-up windows.</u></p>
11-2A-3(E)	Maximum height limit	Planning staff <u>was</u> directed to update our current residential height standards.	<p>E. Maximum height limit.</p> <p>1. <u>Residential structures shall not exceed the maximum height of the district as defined in Chapter 1 of this title.</u></p> <p>2. The maximum height limitations shall not apply to the following architectural features of non-residential and mixed-use structures that are not intended for human occupation, such as steeple, belfry, cupola, and chimney. Such architectural features shall have a maximum height limit of twenty (20) feet as measured from the roofline.</p> <p>3. The maximum height limitations shall not apply to the following: spire; amateur radio antenna; bridge tower; fire and hose tower; observation tower; power line tower; smokestack; water tank or tower; ventilator; windmill; wireless communication facility, or other commercial or personal tower and/or antenna structure; or other appurtenances usually required to be placed above the level of the ground and not intended for human occupancy.</p> <p>4. Notwithstanding other height limitations as set forth in this chapter, the maximum height for education facilities shall be fifty (50) feet.</p> <p>5. No exception shall be allowed to the height limit where the height of any structures will constitute a hazard to the safe landing and takeoff of aircraft in an established airport.</p>
11-2D-3(B)	Maximum height limit	Planning staff <u>was</u> directed to update our current residential height standards.	<p>B. Maximum height limit.</p> <p>1. <u>Residential structures shall not exceed the maximum height of the district as defined in Chapter 1 of this title.</u></p> <p>2. The maximum height limitations shall not apply to the following architectural features of non-residential and mixed-use structures that are not intended for human occupation, such as steeple, belfry, cupola, and chimney. Such architectural features shall have a maximum height limit of twenty (20) feet as measured from the roofline.</p> <p>3. The maximum height limitations shall not apply to the following: spire; amateur radio antenna; bridge tower; fire and hose tower; observation tower; power line tower; smokestack; water tank or tower; ventilator; windmill; wireless communication facility, or other commercial or personal tower and/or antenna structure; or other appurtenances usually required to be placed above the level of the ground and not intended for human occupancy.</p>

			<p>34. No exception shall be allowed to the height limit where the height of any structures will constitute a hazard <u>to</u> the safe landing and takeoff of aircraft in an established airport.</p> <p>45. In the O-T and TN-C districts, the additional height allowed is limited as follows:</p> <p>a. In the area defined as the city core in chapter 1 of this title, additional building height may deviate up to twenty (20) percent of the minimum or maximum height in the O-T district subject to the alternative compliance procedures set forth in chapter 5, "administration", of this title. Proposed building height exceeding twenty (20) percent of the maximum or minimum height for the district requires approval through a conditional use permit. In no case shall the building height exceed fifty (50) percent of the maximum height allowed in the district.</p> <p>b. Additional building height not to exceed twenty (20) percent of the maximum height allowed for the TN-C district may be approved by the Director through the alternative compliance procedures set forth in chapter 5, "administration", of this title. Additional height shall be allowed when the development provides ten (10) percent of the building square feet in open space, courtyards, patios, or other usable outdoor space available for the employees and/or patrons of the structure, excluding required setbacks and landscape buffers.</p> <p>c. Additional building height exceeding twenty (20) percent of the maximum height allowed for the TN-C district or when additional height is requested without providing the required open space in accord with subsection (B)(4)b of this section requires approval through a conditional use permit.</p>
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Table 11-2B-2	Allowed uses in the commercial districts	Updating the allowed use table to add the new tiered drive-throughs adopted by City Council	<p style="text-align: center;">TABLE 11-2B-2 ALLOWED USES IN THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Use</th> <th>C-N</th> <th>C-C</th> <th>C-G</th> <th>L-O</th> <th>M-E</th> <th>H-E</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Drinking Establishment¹</td> <td>C</td> <td>C</td> <td>C</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drive-Through Establishment¹</td> <td>A/C</td> <td>A/C</td> <td>A/G</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 1¹</u></td> <td><u>A/C</u></td> <td><u>A/C</u></td> <td><u>A/C</u></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 2¹</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 3¹</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td><u>C</u></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Institution, private¹</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Use	C-N	C-C	C-G	L-O	M-E	H-E	Drinking Establishment ¹	C	C	C	-	-	C	Drive-Through Establishment¹	A/C	A/C	A/G	-	-	-	<u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 1¹</u>	<u>A/C</u>	<u>A/C</u>	<u>A/C</u>	-	-	-	<u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 2¹</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	-	-	-	<u>Drive-Through Establishment, Tier 3¹</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>C</u>	-	-	-	Education Institution, private ¹	P	P	P	P	P	P
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Table 11-5A-2	Duties and Authority	Updating the duties and authority table to specify the decision-making bodies for Tier 1, Tier 2, and 3 Drive-throughs. Tier 1 drive-throughs will be approved either by the Director or Commission based on the specific use standards, Tier 2 drive-throughs will go to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Tier 3 drive-throughs will go to the City Council.	TABLE 11-5A-2 DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY AND PROCESS BY APPLICATION			
			Application	Recommending Body	Decision Making Body	Process
			Conditional use	D	PZ	PH
			Conditional use, Tier 1 drive-through	None or D	D or PZ	A or PH
			Conditional use, Tier 2 Drive-through	D	PZ	PH
			Conditional use, Tier 3 Drive-through	DPZ	CC	PH
			Conditional use (concurrent with annexation, rezone, preliminary plat, alternative compliance, development agreement modification, and/or combination plat)	PZ	CC	PH

VIII. FINDINGS

1. UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE TEXT AMENDMENTS: (UDC 11-5B-3E)

Upon recommendation from the Commission, the Council shall make a full investigation and shall, at the public hearing, review the application. In order to grant a text amendment to the Unified Development Code, the Council shall make the following findings:

A. The text amendment complies with the applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan;

The Commission finds that the proposed UDC text amendment complies with the applicable provisions of the Comprehensive Plan. Please see Comprehensive Plan Policies and Goals, Section IV, of the Staff Report for more information.

B. The text amendment shall not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare; and

The Commission finds that the proposed zoning ordinance amendment will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare if the changes to the text of the UDC are approved. It is the intent of the text amendment to further the health, safety and welfare of the public.

C. The text amendment shall not result in an adverse impact upon the delivery of services by any political subdivision providing public services within the City including, but not limited to, school districts.

The Commission finds that the proposed zoning ordinance amendment does not propose any significant changes to how public utilities and services are provided to developments. All City departments, public agencies and service providers that currently review applications will continue to do so. Please refer to any written or oral testimony provided by any public service provider(s) when making this finding.