Land Use Analysis

2018-2020

City of Meridian
Unofficial Report

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REZONES

2018-2020

Major Trends

This section will describe and analyze major trends that occurred from 2018-2020 due to decisions to rezone land in Meridian. The goal of this section is to quantify changes in land-use due to rezones and help decision-makers understand the impact of rezones in the City of Meridian.

Loss of Commercial Land:

50% of all land rezoned in 2018-2020 was rezoned from commercial to residential land. This amounts to a 61-acre loss in commercially zoned land (C-G, C-C, I-L, L-O). In total, residential zones (R-8, R-15, R-40) gained 61 acres while commercial zones lost 61 acres. The largest net losses were in the general retail and service commercial district (C-G) zone with a total of 30 acres lost. The light industrial (I-L) zone also lost a high amount of land, with a total of 27 acres lost.

From 2018 – 2020, commercial zones lost 61 acres while residential zones gained 61 acres.

Increase in Residential Density:

As rezones reduced the amount of commercial land in Meridian, there was a simultaneous big increase in residential density. From 2018-2020, 49 acres of medium-low density residential land (R-4) was rezoned to the medium density (R-8) zone. 30 acres of the R-8 zone was rezoned to the medium-high density (R-15) zone. The high density (R-40) zone also gained 15 acres from the C-G zone. This amounts to about 95 acres of land rezoned to higher density residential.

From 2018-2020, about 95 acres of land rezoned was to higher density residential.

The City of Meridian has stated that it seeks to:

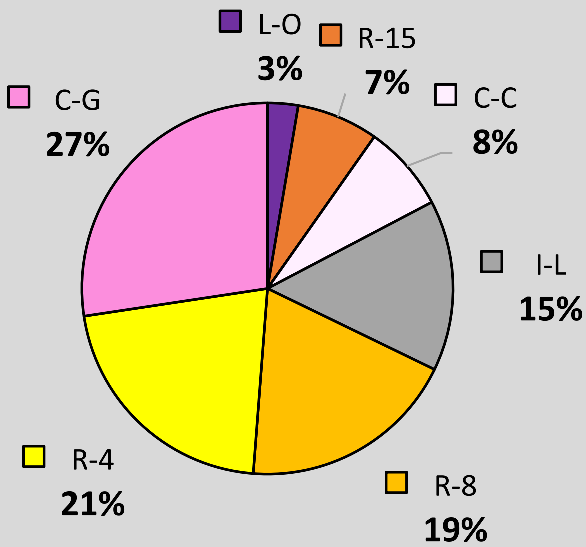
> *"Support business development that increases the number of family wage jobs to allow employees to **live and work in Meridian**."* - City of Meridian Strategic Plan (13)

The current rezones trends that increase residential density while decreasing commercial land may hinder progress toward this goal since there is less commercial land to serve more residents.

Graphic Representation of Rezones

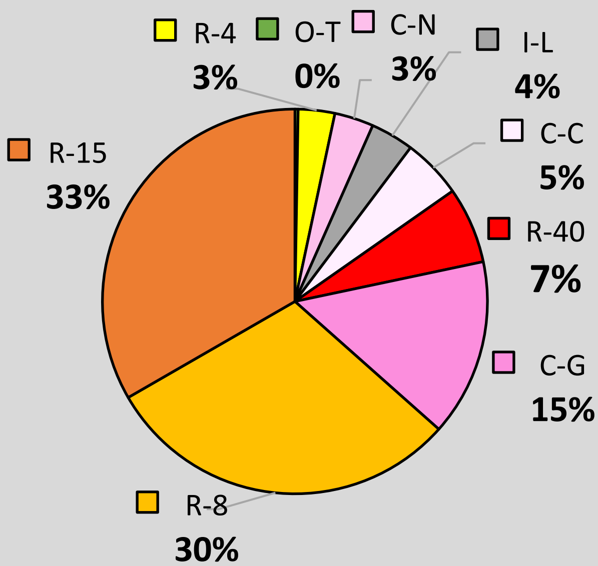
Acreage Loss

Due to Rezones 2018-2020



Acreage Gain

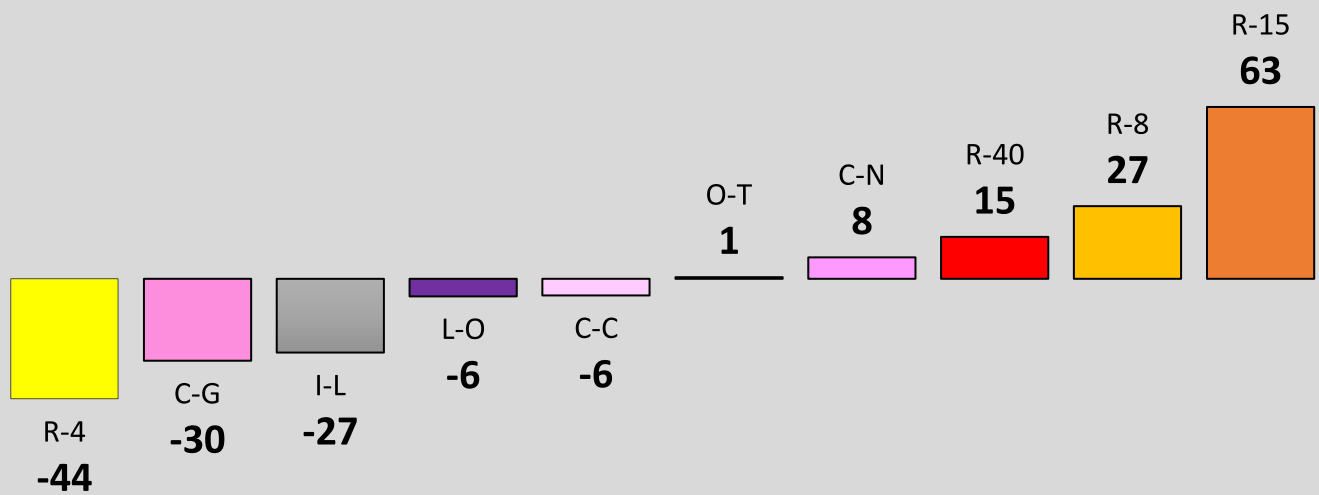
Due to Rezones 2018-2020



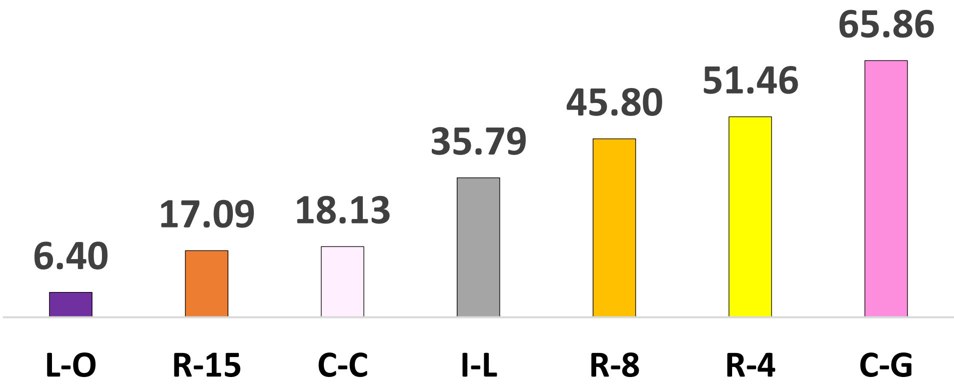
Note: Since O-T only gained 1 acre, which is less than 1% of the grand total, the O-T percentage shows as 0%.

Net Acreage Gain/Loss

Due to Rezones 2018-2020



Which Zones Lost Land?



Note: The acreage counts in the graph above are different than net acreage totals (see pg. 3). This is because net acreage counts both losses and gains while the graph above only counts acreage losses.

Where Did the Land Go?

Zone (Loss)	%	Acres	Proposed Use	Zone (Gain)
L-O	54%	3.47	Storage	R-15
	23%	1.43	Single Family	R-15
	23%	1.49	Commercial	C-C
R-15	57%	9.71	Single Family	R-8
	43%	7.38	Single Family	R-4
C-C	76%	13.72	Single Family	R-8
	21%	3.77	Multi-Family	R-15
	3%	0.64	Single Family	O-T
I-L	54%	19.48	School	C-G
	35%	12.59	Mixed Commercial	C-G
	5%	1.76	Coroner's Office	C-G
	6%	1.96	Commercial	C-G
R-8	65%	29.77	Single Family	R-15
	18%	8.12	Storage	C-C
	17%	7.91	Commercial	C-N
C-G	63%	41.71	Single Family	R-15
	24%	15.42	Multi-Family	R-40
	13%	8.73	Industrial Flex Space	I-L
R-4	95%	49	Single Family	R-8
	5%	2.45	Commercial	C-C

REZONE HIGHLIGHTS
2018-2020

- Commercial zones lost 61 acres while residential zones gained 61 acres;
- 11.5 acres of land was rezoned for storage use;
- 19 acres of industrial land was rezoned to C-G for the Idaho Fine Arts Academy;
- 95% of the R-4 zone was rezoned to R-8.

CUPs

Conditional Use Permits 2018-2020

Major Trends

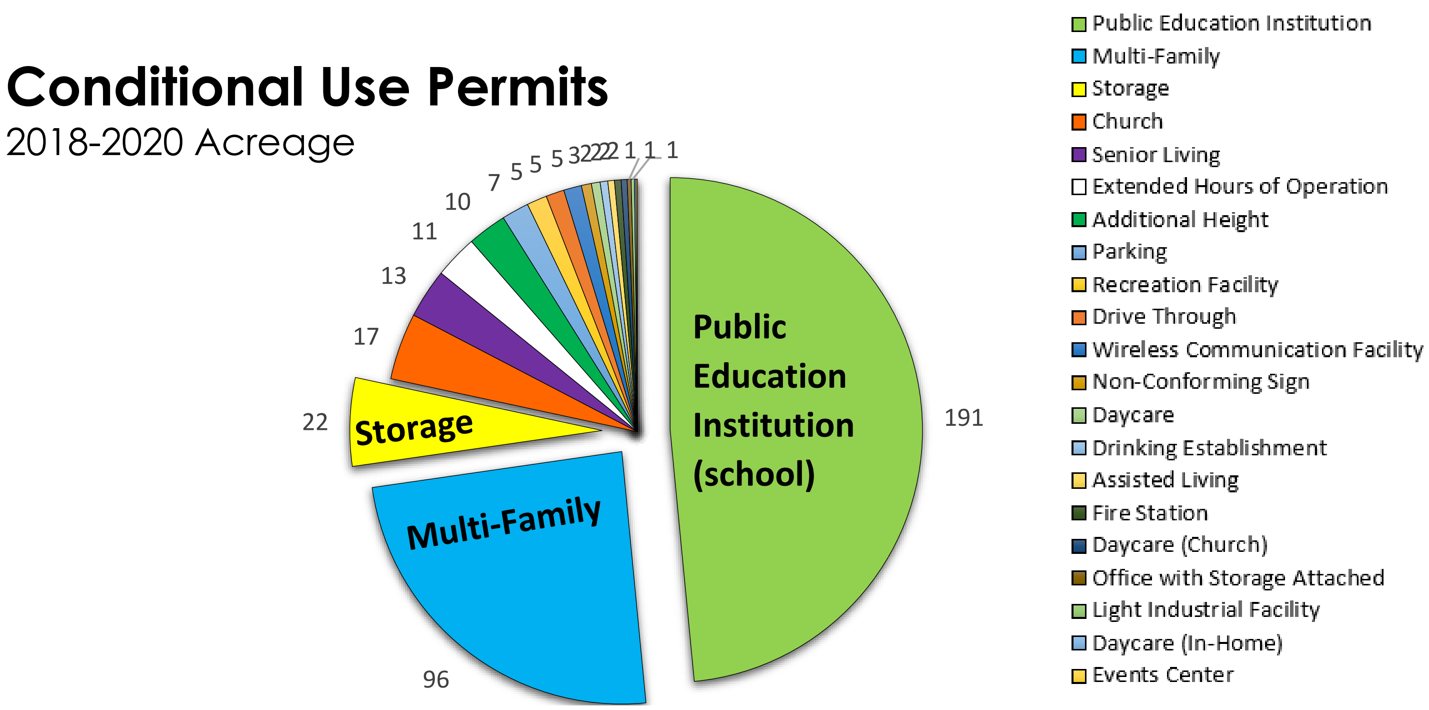
This section will describe and analyze major trends that occurred from 2018-2020 due to conditional use permits (CUPs) in Meridian. The goal of this section is to quantify changes in land-use due to CUPs and help decision-makers understand how CUPs affect land use in the City of Meridian.

Four Public Schools Received CUPs:

Two new schools on 130 acres, Owyhee High School and Pleasant View Elementary, were built with CUP approval. Meridian High and Mountain View High also received CUP approval to add and modify their schools.

Apartment CUPs were (mostly) Approved in Residential Zones:

Given the recent market demand for high density housing, it was expected that multi-family CUPs would cut into commercial zones. However, only two multi-family CUPs (4 acres) were granted in a C-G zone. The remaining seven multi-family CUPs (91.5 acres) occurred in the R-15 or R-40 zone.



A High Number of CUPs in Industrial Zones:

Three recreational facilities and two churches were approved in an industrial zone (I-L). Although they did not receive high amounts of land area, recreational facilities and churches are changing land use in industrial zones from industrial to commercial (see case study below).

Six Daycare CUPs: Six daycare CUPs were approved in Meridian, one of which was approved in an industrial zone (Real Life Church, near the intersection of Eagle and Pine). Two in-home daycare CUPs were approved before January 2019, showing that the growth of in-home daycares is not a COVID-19 related trend.

High Number of Storage Facilities:

Six CUPs were granted that allowed storage facilities to be built on 18.05 acres of commercial land. A seventh storage facility was approved in a residential zone. Thus, out of all conditional use permits granted, storage facilities received the largest amount of land.

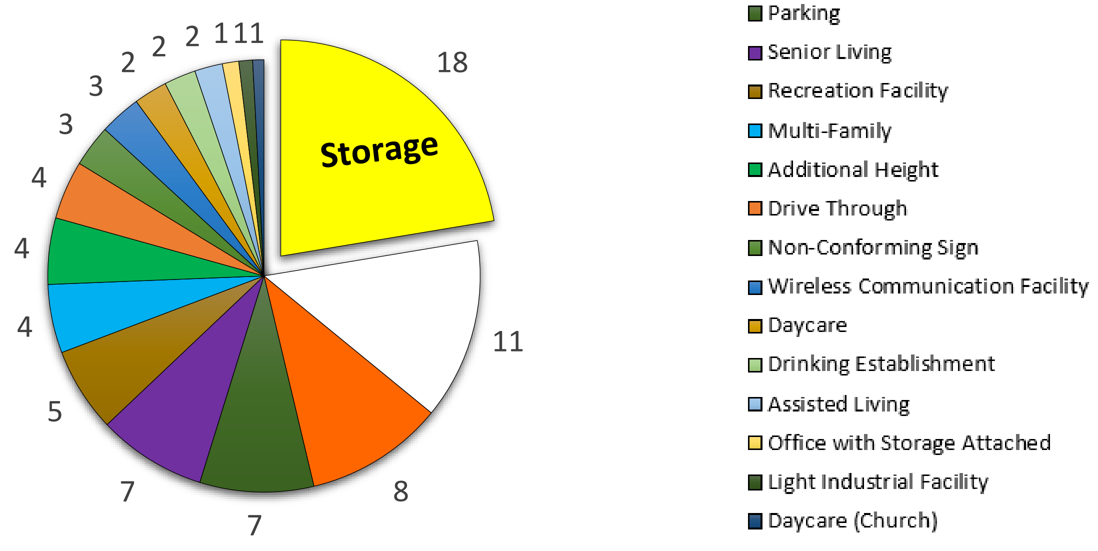
Out of all commercial CUPs granted, **storage facilities received the largest amount of land.**

TOP 10 CUPS
2018-2020

1. Multi-Family - 9
2. Storage - 7
3. Public Education Institution - 4
4. Drive Through - 4
5. Recreation Facility - 3
6. Daycare - 3
7. Daycare (Church) – 2
8. Daycare (In-Home) – 2
9. Church - 2
10. Senior Living - 2

CUPs in Commercial Zones

C-C, C-N, C-G, I-L, L-O
2018-2020 Acreage



Case Study:
The Commercialization of Industrial Zones

Gracie Fighting Academy:

In 2020, Gracie Fighting Academy received a CUP to run a martial arts (jiu-jitsu) gym in an industrial zone at the SW corner of Locust Grove and Franklin. Within 0.05 sq. miles there were already three existing recreational facilities: Idaho Soccer Center, Impact Dance Center, and PowerSeeker Crossfit. Staff recommended approval of the CUP because the building had "already been utilized as a commercial building more than an industrial building due to the existence of another martial arts studio". Thus, the presence of other recreational businesses and gyms attracted and allowed more recreational facilities in this area. Over time, approving commercial uses in an industrial zone will commercialize these areas and push out industrial businesses.

Rock & Armor:

In 2020, the physical therapy clinic/gym called Rock & Armor was approved in an industrial zone. Within 0.05 sq. miles there were already three existing recreational facilities: Meridian Academy of Gymnastics, Team Fit Physique, and Legacy Martial Arts. Like the industrial zone on Locust Grove and Franklin, the presence of a gym attracts more gyms further commercializing the industrial zone.

This commercializing effect is also true if a church is approved in an industrial zone. From 2018-2020, there were two churches approved in industrial zones: Calvary Chapel (2018) and Real Life Church (2019). Commercialization also causes secondary impacts due to conflicting uses. For example, parents picking up their children from practice or overflow parking from a church in an industrial zone may block industrial vehicles and cause unnecessary inefficiencies.

Legend

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Existing Recreational Facility

Gracie Fighting Academy (2020)

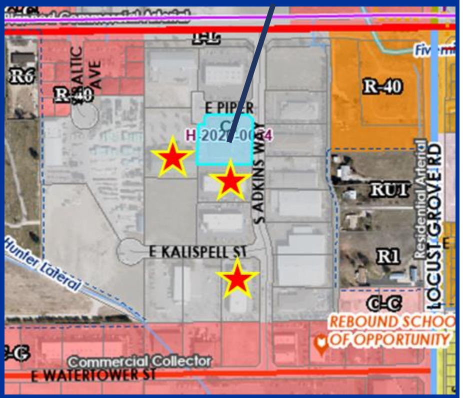


Figure 2: Industrial Zone on the SW Corner of Locust Grove and Franklin.

Rock & Armor (2020)

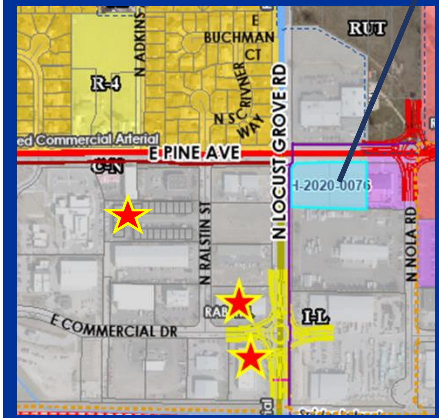


Figure 1: Industrial Zone at the intersection of Locust Grove and Pine Avenue.

Case Study:
The Growth of Storage Units in Commercial Zones

The growth of storage facilities in cities has become a concern for cities across the nation. Major cities like New York, Miami, Charleston, and San Francisco have restricted construction of new storage facilities[1]. When New York enacted their restrictions, they cited “a lack of space, displacement of businesses that produce high-quality jobs and a negative impact on the aesthetics” as the reasons behind placing restrictions on new storage facilities[2]. At the same time demand for storage is growing and investment is also growing. US Census Bureau data on private construction spending shows that spending on new storage facilities across the nation grew from $241 million in 2011 to nearly $5 billion in 2018[3].

Elevate Storage (2019) in Meridian, Idaho

This growth in demand and construction of new storage facilities has affected the City of Meridian. From 2018-2020, seven new storage facilities were built in Meridian with CUP approval. Six new facilities were built on commercial land totaling 18.05 acres. The seventh storage facility was approved in a residential zone. When all CUP acreage approved in commercial areas are aggregated, storage facilities in Meridian received the largest amount of commercial land through conditional use approval at 18.05 acres. As of 2021, Google Maps lists 17 existing storage facilities in Meridian with four more currently in construction (Bach Storage, Franklin Storage, Ustick Marketplace Storage, and Elevate Franklin Storage).

In response to a similar growth in storage facilities, the City of Nampa imposed a 5-month moratorium in 2019 on new storage facilities. The moratorium was enacted to consider amending their city ordinances[4]. The result was a new ordinance that required storage facilities to receive CUP approval from both the Nampa Planning and Zoning Commission and the Nampa City Council. Other cities have also imposed moratoriums to update their ordinances due to growth in storage and warehouses. The impact of storage facilities on commercial land, potential displacement of commercial industry, and tax impacts should be considered as demand for new facilities will likely continue to increase in Meridian.

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[1] Gardener, Colton (November 25, 2019). *Four Predictions About the Self-Storage Industry.* Forbes.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Bamer, Erin (November 9, 2019). *Nampa to lift storage unit moratorium but impose new rules*. Idaho Press Tribune.

Mixed-Use (MU)

2018-2020

What is a Mixed-Use Area?

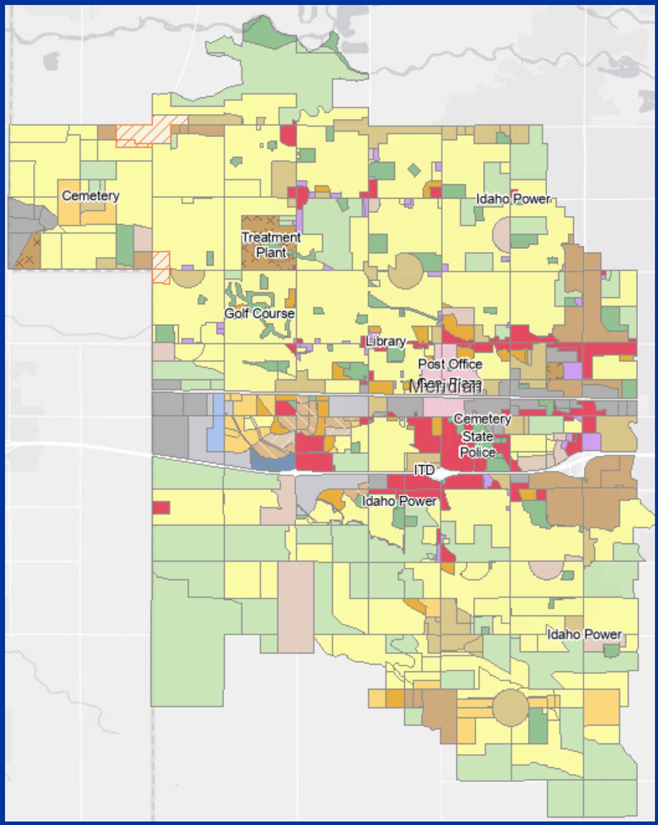
Mixed-use (MU) areas are parts of the city that are designed to allow residents to live, shop, and work in a close geographic area (Comprehensive Plan, 3-11). The goal is to create a **sense of place** and promote **connectivity between different land-uses.** In practice, mixed-use areas allow developers to propose projects with varying amounts of commercial, office, civic, and residential land. Key characteristics of mixed-use areas are as follows:

- Less land area devoted to parking
- Interconnected vehicular and pedestrian networks
- Open space
- Innovative and flexible design

Given the variability within these areas, it is crucial that the City of Meridian understands current development patterns in mixed-use areas to ensure that they continue to help Meridian progress toward their strategic development goals. The information included in this section seeks to inform decision-makers on the impact of 2018-2020 entitlements in mixed-use areas.

City of Meridian

Future Land Use Map



- *Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MU-N)*
- *Mixed-Use Community (MU-C)*
- *Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R)*
- *Mixed-Use Non-Residential (MU-NR)*
- *Mixed-Use Interchange (MU-I)*
- *Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-Com)*
- *Commercial*

Mixed-Use Area Comparison Table

There are five sub-categories of mixed-use areas: Community, Regional, Neighborhood, Non-Residential, Interchange, Community, and Residential. Each has a different goal and type of resident it seeks to serve. Therefore, each zone has a unique target ratio of residential, civic, commercial, and mixed-commercial land. The table below compares target ratios to 2018-2019 approved projects. Did 2018-2020 projects match the target land use ratios? Zones with high acreage counts should generally match target ratios. It is also helpful to note the amount of remaining undeveloped land in the zone (column chart on the left). If most of the MU zone is already developed, the total % of non-residential land should closely track the target ratio identified in the pie chart in the second column.

Note: Mixed-Use Residential (MU-Res) is excluded from the analysis because from 2018-2020 no projects occurred in this zone. Also, target land use ratios were identified from the City of Meridian Land Use Report.

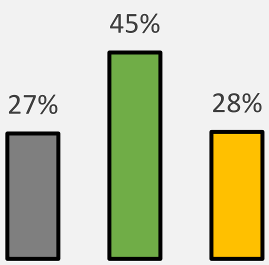
MU Allocation *City-Wide Totals*	Target Land-Use Ratio *2020 Land Use Report*	MU Land-Use Totals *Entitlements 2018-2020*

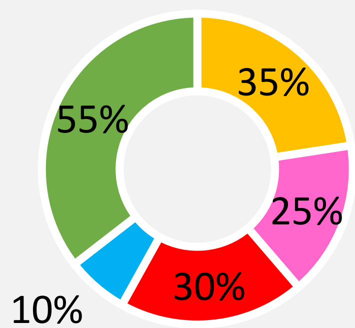
% Remaining Undeveloped Area
% Residential
% Non-Residential
(Mixed Commercial + Commercial)

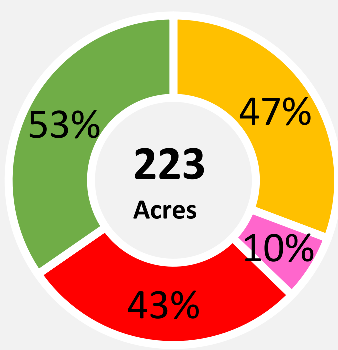
% Civic
% Commercial
% Mixed Commercial
(Commercial including offices)

Community

MU-C

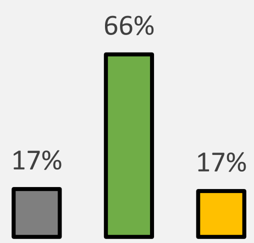


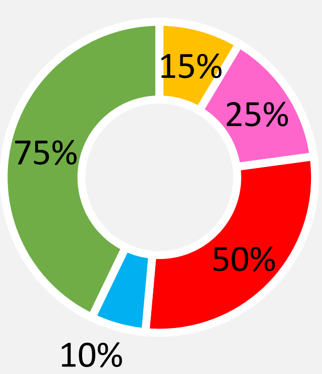


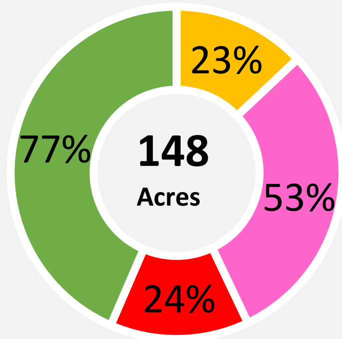


Regional

MU-R

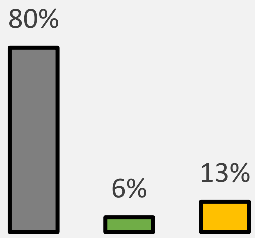


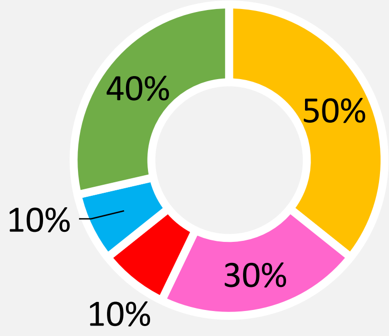


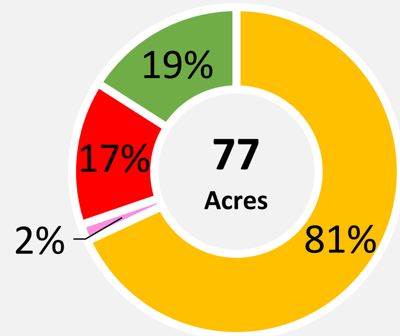


MU Allocation *City-Wide Totals*	**Target Land-Use Ratio** *2020 Land Use Report*	**MU Land-Use Totals** *Entitlements 2018-2020*

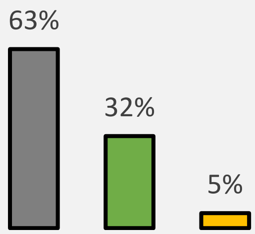
Neighborhood
MU-N

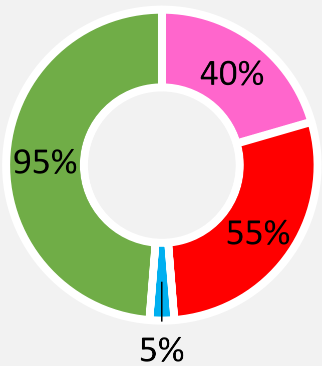


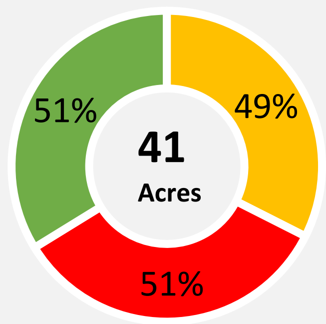




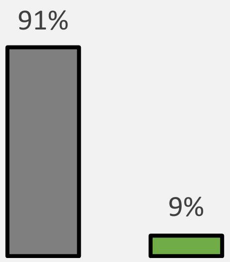
Non-Residential
MU-NR

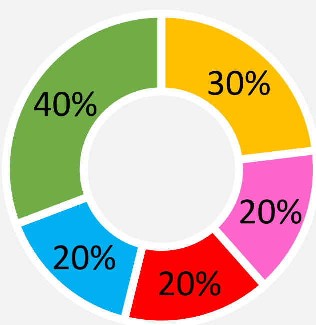


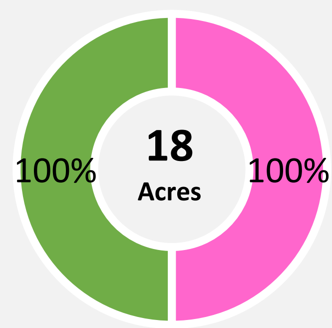




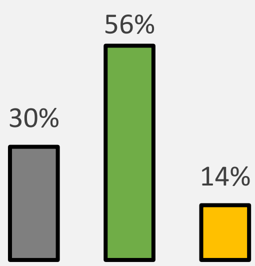
Interchange
MU-I

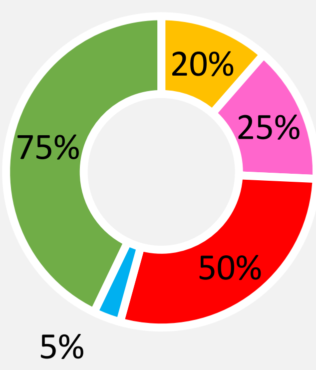


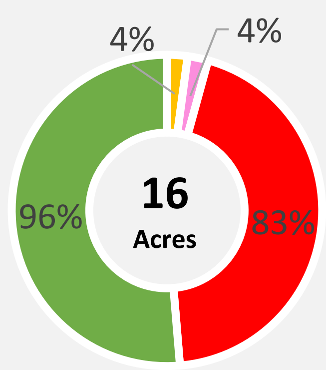




Commercial
MU-Com



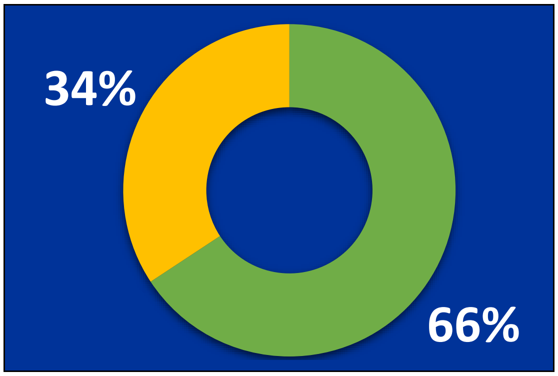




2018-2020 mixed-use projects were

66% NON-RESIDENTIAL
34% RESIDENTIAL

*Based on aggregate mixed-use area totals

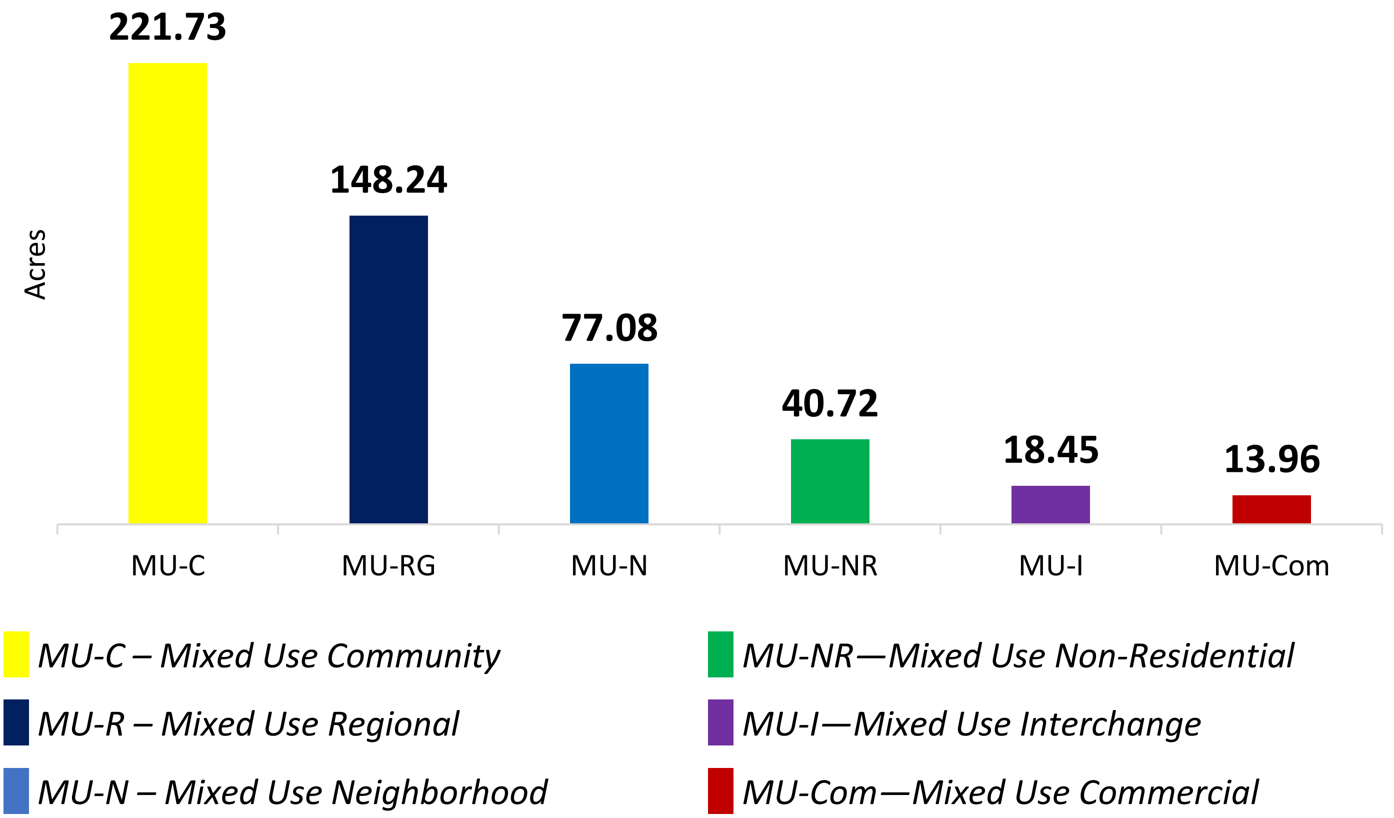


The mixed-use subcategory, mixed-use community (MU-C) saw the most activity in 2018-2020.

Mixed-use community (MU-C) had the most projects and total project acres in 2018-2020. Three large entitlements in MU-C were Linder Village, Pine 43, and Pollard. Other zones that saw significant activity were mixed-use regional (MU-R) and mixed-use neighborhood (MU-R). Major projects in these zones include Hill's Century Farm, Eagle Commons, Rackham, and the Village Apartments.

Total Project Acres by Mixed-Use Area

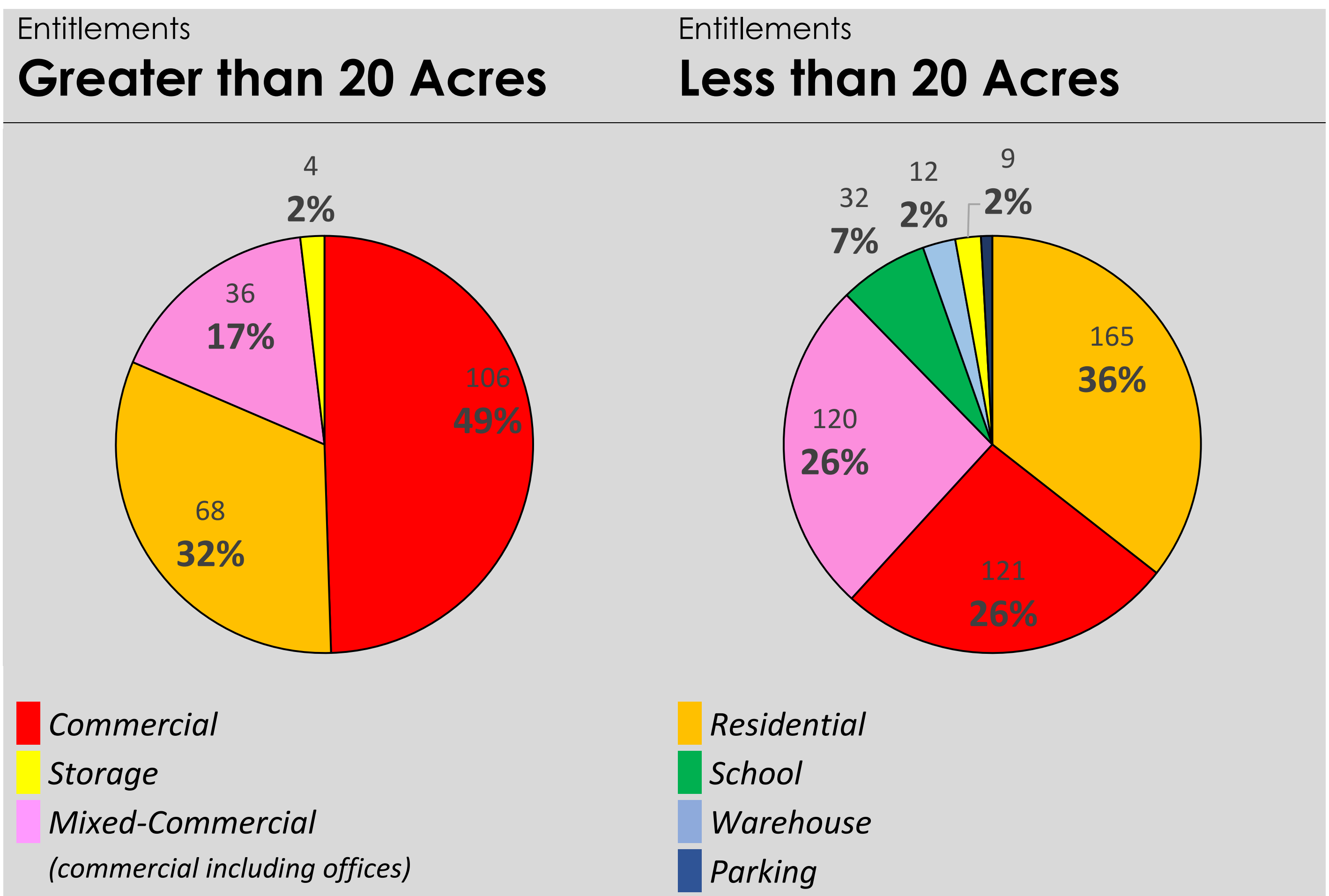
Mixed-Use Entitlements 2018-2020



Did small projects (in mixed-use areas) create more residential than commercial land?

The hypothesis is that small projects, defined as less than 20-acre entitlements, may create more residential than commercial land. The data does not support this hypothesis. The percentage of residential land in large and small entitlements is relatively similar at 32% and 35% (pie charts below). However, the type of commercial land created in large and small projects differs.

Commercial land, which has no office space, is assumed to create less family-wage jobs. Mixed-commercial land, because it includes office space, is assumed to create more family-wage jobs. Large projects were 49% commercial and 17% mixed-commercial. Small projects were 26% commercial and 26% mixed-commercial. Large projects like Hill's Century, Linder Village (Winco), Pine 43, Pollard, and Quartet provided more commercial and less mixed-commercial land compared to small projects. Therefore, data from 2018-2020 suggests that smaller projects are more closely aligned with the goal of mixed-use areas to provide job opportunities in a close geographic area for Meridian residents.



Mixed-Use Area
Case Study Introduction

Looking at proposed land use allows one to evaluate whether the mixed-use area provides sufficient job opportunities and commercial services to residents so that they can "live, shop, and work in a close geographic area" (Comprehensive Plan, 3-11). The information introduced in the above sections show broad trends across mixed-use areas. However, each mixed-use area is unique. This variability makes broad-scale analysis of limited value. The following case studies are designed to show successes and shortcomings of existing mixed-use areas in Meridian. The elements of focus are connectivity between land uses and whether the area provides residents a sense of place.

Connectivity is an important aspect of mixed-use areas for two reasons. First, it promotes a sense of place by creating vibrant neighborhood commercial and community centers. These gathering places can truly enhance a resident's experience. Second, connectivity through multi-modal pathways and alternate roadways can reduce the number of trips necessary on major roads. As traffic throughout Meridian increases, trip reduction is an increasingly important aspect of mixed-use areas.

These two case studies should help decision-makers identify the challenges within developing a mixed-use area, as well as identify key aspects of a successful mixed-use project.

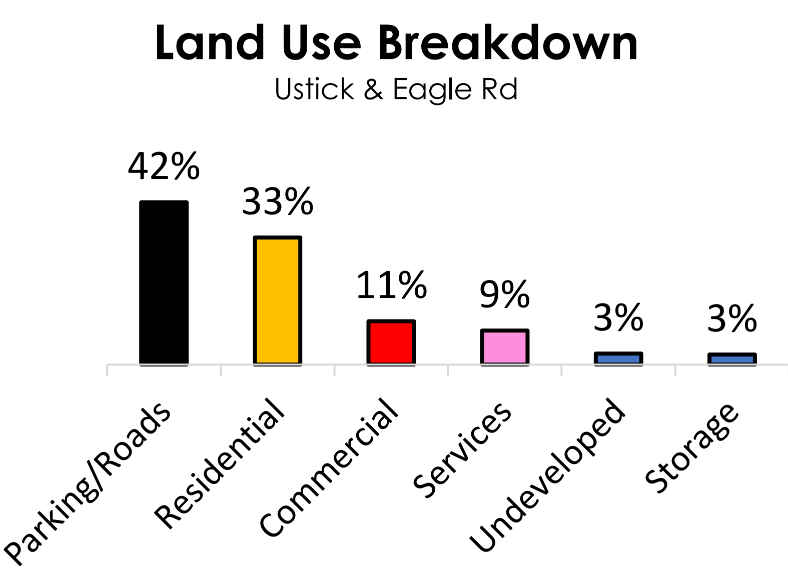
Mixed-Use Case Study 1:

Mixed-Use Area at Eagle and Ustick

Overview

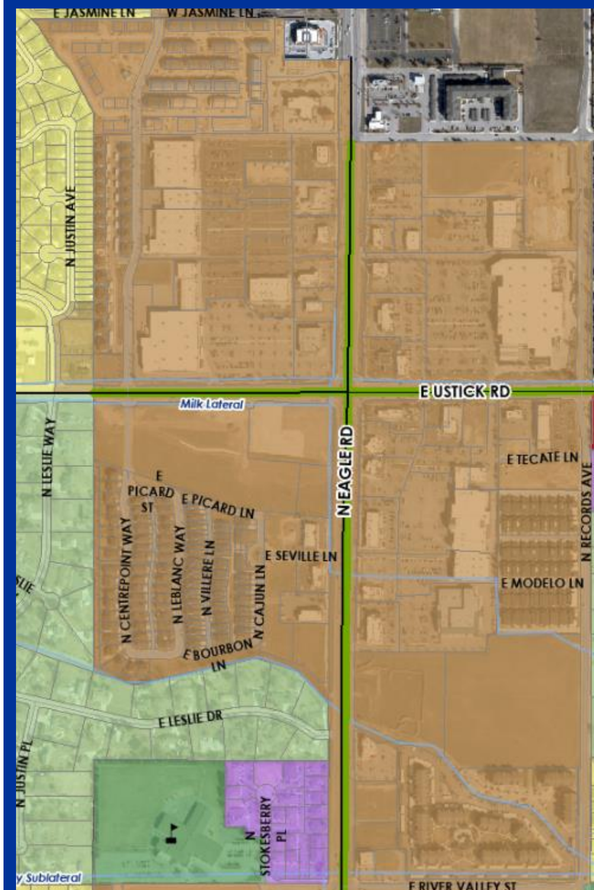
The mixed-use area at the corner of Ustick and Eagle Road is designated mixed-use regional (MU-R). An image of the area and a pie chart of the target land use ratio in an MU-R area are included on the right.

Visually there is a lot of commercial land; however, when land use was calculated using aerial imagery it was found that parking takes up 42% of the zone, residential 32%, commercial 11%, and storage 3% (see column chart below). Parking acreage from the Wadsworth and VillaSport projects on the SW corner could not be estimated because the projects have not yet been built. When Wadsworth and VillaSport's parking is factored in, it is likely that **parking will occupy about half of the entire MU zone.** Parking lots limit the connectivity of uses and character of a mixed-use area because most people do not want to walk or bike across busy parking lots to reach commercial properties.



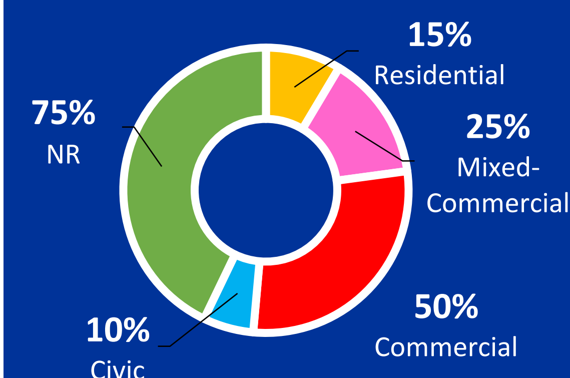
Area of Interest

Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R) Area on Ustick & Eagle Rd.



Mixed-Use Regional

Target Land Use Ratio



Mixed-Use Case Study 1:
Mixed-Use Area at Eagle and Ustick Cont'd...

What job opportunities exist?

Commercial

- 19 Restaurants
- 1 Gas Station
- 1 Storage Facility
- Numerous shops including Lowes, Hobby Lobby, Dicks, Budget Blinds etc.

Commercial Services

- 2 Banks
- 3 Beauty Services (Salon, Spa, Nails)
- 2 Gyms
- 2 Auto shops

The job opportunities in the MU-R area of interest generally do not provide the family-wage employment opportunities that keep Meridian residents working in Meridian. While the commercial service portion does provide some family-wage jobs, ultimately the lack of office space severely limits its economic potential. In the future, this could be rectified by building offices on top of coffee shops or restaurants.

Is there a sense of place?

A sense of place can be built by connecting commercial areas to residential neighborhoods. Residents in areas that have integrated commercial and residential areas feel more at home in their nearby restaurant or local grocery store. The large number of commercial businesses and lack of integration between residential and commercial areas detract from this area's sense of place. The large parking lots that create distance between commercial and residential buildings also add to the sense of detachment.

The layout of this mixed-use area also makes trip reduction difficult. Even residents that live within walking or biking distance of these commercial buildings are unlikely to walk or bike to this commercial area given the lack of shade and large asphalt parking lots to traverse. Thus, the placement and design of early projects can affect future connectivity in mixed-use areas.

As infill development is considered, the key mixed-use components of connectivity, a sense of place, and family-wage job opportunities are very important. Conversion of underutilized parking space for commercial use could also improve the balance of parking to commercial land use in the area.

Mixed-Use Case Study 2:

Mixed-Use Area at Eagle and Overland Road

Overview

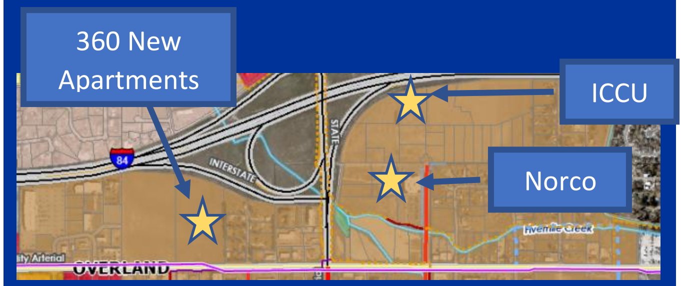
The intersection of Eagle and Overland Road is zoned mixed-use regional (MU-R). On the western portion of this area of interest, there is Majestic Cinemas, Harley Davidson, and an animal hospital. From 2018-2020, new commercial developments on the eastern side were proposed and approved. In 2019, a Norco (medical supplies) facility was built as part of the Eagle Commons entitlement. In 2020, an Idaho Central Credit Union (ICCU) administrative building was built as part of the Rackham entitlement. Several flex-office buildings are proposed to be built around these anchor tenants.

Since the area of interest does not have a residential component there was an opportunity for a residential development to occur close to this growing job center. In 2021, a 360-unit apartment project called Seasons at Meridian was introduced. The project is proposed to be built directly east of a potentially new Winco Foods store.

When aerial imagery is used to calculate land use, it is found that residential land occupies 46% of the total area of interest. A large portion of this residential land is made up of older farmhouses. While property owners maintain the right to their private property, it is possible that developers could make a deal with the property owners to redevelop the area. Therefore, the high

Area of Interest

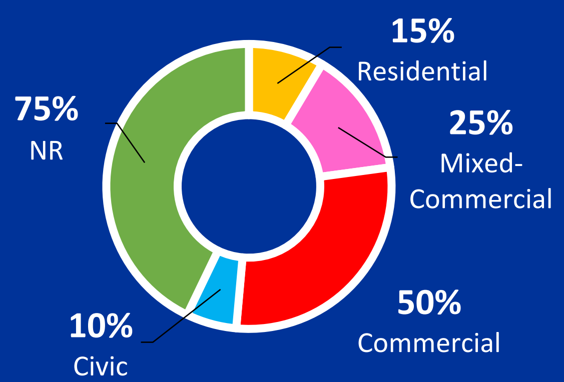
Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R) Area on the Eagle Rd. and Overland Intersection



Note: The southern portion of this mixed-use area, also MU-R, is not included in this case study.

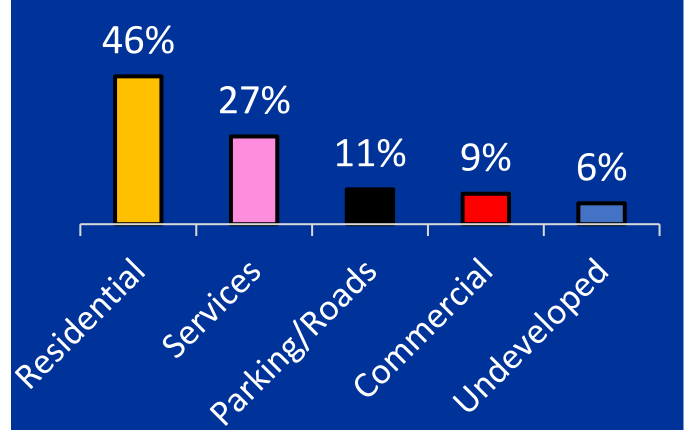
Mixed-Use Regional

Target Land Use Ratio



Land Use Breakdown

Overland & Eagle Rd



residential acreage count is more flexible than in newly developed residential areas.

It was also found that commercial services (27%) were triple the acreage of general commercial (9%) which suggests that a high number of family-wage jobs will exist in this area. Since the goal of mixed-use areas is to work, shop, and live, in a close geographic area, this is a promising development.

Finally, compared to the first case study, the percentage of parking in this area is low (11%). There are two reasons for this. First, since most of the proposed commercial developments have not been built, land area that would have been considered parking/roads is categorized under services; temporarily keeping parking/road percentage low. Second, the high number of commercial services in the area allow for smaller parking lots.

What job opportunities exist?

Commercial

- 13 Restaurants
- Majestic Cinemas
- 2 Hotels
- Zamzows

Commercial Services

- Animal Hospital
- Dog Training Center
- Harley Davidson
- Auto Repair Shop
- Bank
- ICCU Administration
- CPA firm
- Realty firm

There is a strong mix of commercial and commercial services in this area that provide many family-wage jobs. This is partially because Silverstone, Norco, and ICCU have brought commercial service development to the area. While family-wage job growth is good, a secondary impact of these developments is increased peak traffic on Overland and Eagle. There are only two entry/exit points in the new Eagle Commons/Rackham development and both feed into Overland. The impacts to the I-84 Eagle entrance/exit are also significant.

Is there a sense of place?

The design elements of the commercial and residential projects in this area create a strong sense of identity and place. The symmetrical design of the Rackham commercial development and proposed mix of services like the outdoor entertainment area, retail development, ICCU, and proposed multi-family apartments add to its character.

Other developments in the area are less intentional about their design, but also have strong sense of place. For example, the developments around Majestic cinemas are iconic due to their proximity to I-84. The area is missing a common area for people to enjoy, but still provides a good mix of services, entertainment, and retail. The proposed Seasons at Meridian apartment complex has strong design elements to create a sense of place. Overall, the entire zone has character and a varied mix of services to let residents enjoy their experience. However, the potential of this area is dependent on improved accessibility and connectivity. If residents have too much difficulty getting to around or getting to these different complexes, they will not go. Unfortunately, the Eagle/Overland intersection is a roadblock to accessibility and connectivity in the area.

While this area has a great mix of services, it lacks the type of commercial services that a resident would need such as a grocery store. If the 360-unit apartment complex is approved, residents will need Winco Foods follow through on their proposed plan to build a new grocery store adjacent to the proposed apartment complex. Without those services residents would be forced to use Overland Road for their everyday necessities which would increase trip count and reduce quality of life for residents. It is also important to note that sound and pollution that exist along the busy intersection and freeway may impact the health of residents. In conclusion, traffic impacts could severely affect both the commercial and proposed residential portions of this mixed-use area therefore, connectivity and accessibility should be a high priority as future developments and infill development is considered.

Commercial

2018-2020

What is a Commercial Area?

Commercial areas are the red areas designated in the Future Land Use Map. These areas should provide a full range of commercial uses to serve area residents and visitors (Comprehensive Plan, 2019). Desired uses are:

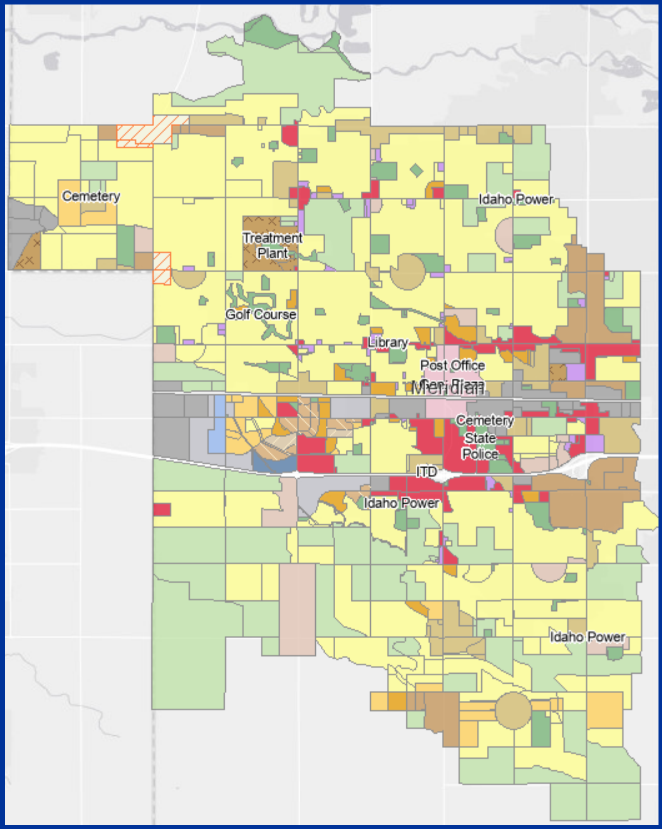
- Retail,
- Restaurants,
- Personal and professional services,
- Office uses,
- Appropriate public and quasi-public uses and,
- Appropriate multi-family residential.

Multi-family residential projects in commercial areas should promote a high quality of life through thoughtful site design, connectivity, and amenities.

Sample zoning include: C-N, C-C, and C-G.

City of Meridian

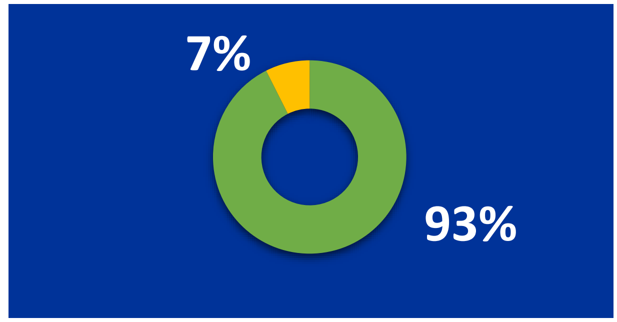
Future Land Use Map



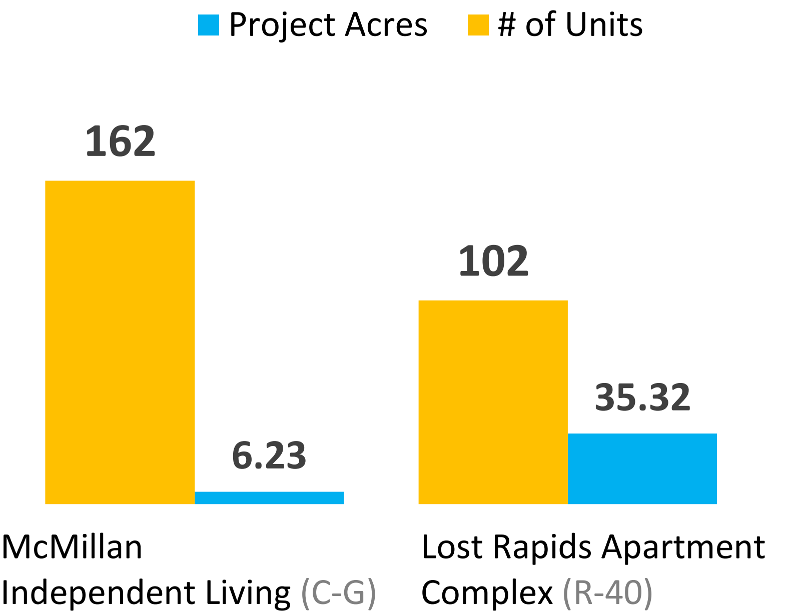
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MU-N)
- Mixed-Use Community (MU-C)
- Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R)
- Mixed-Use Non-Residential (MU-NR)
- Mixed-Use Interchange (MU-I)
- Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-Com)
- Commercial

2018-2020 commercial projects were

93% NON-RESIDENTIAL
7% RESIDENTIAL

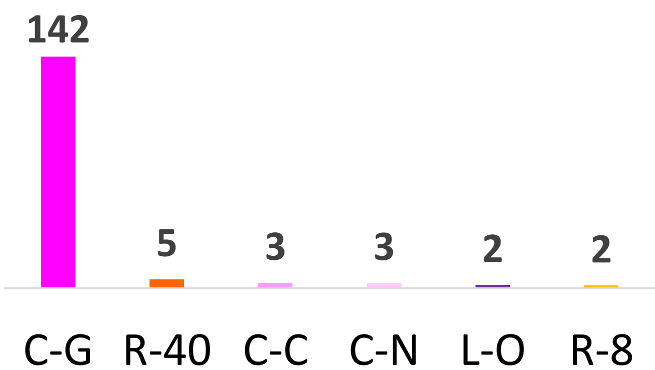


What residential projects occurred in a commercial area?

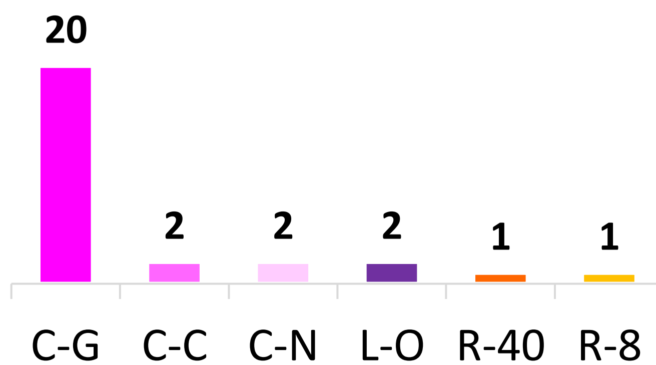


The 2018-2020 residential projects that occurred in a commercial area match the specifications laid out for residential projects in commercial areas. Both projects are located behind commercial buildings and were designed to complement commercial developments. In fact, McMillan Independent Living is a senior living center and is therefore a partially commercial project. **Since both residential projects meet the specifications identified in the Comprehensive Plan, a case study is not included.**

Total Commercial
Project Acres by Zone
2018-2020



Total Commercial
Number of Projects by Zone
2018-2020



City of Meridian
Unofficial 2018-2020 Land Use Analysis

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