



Mayor Robert E. Simison

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October 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Meridian Planning & Zoning Commission

CC: Cameron Arial, Community Development Director
Caleb Hood, Planning Division Manager

FROM: Brian McClure, Comprehensive Associate Planner

RE: Response to Comments and Additional Recommended Revisions to the Fields Subarea Plan

During the September 16th Planning & Zoning Commission hearing, the Commission voted to continue the public hearing on the Fields Subarea Plan (H-2021-0047) to October 21st. The continuation was made so Staff could meet with the Mark Bottles team and then provide the Commission a response to their requests for changes to the draft Plan. Staff met with members of the Bottles team on October 1st, twice on October 12th, and on October 14th.

Recommended staff changes to the draft Fields Subarea Plan are shown in ~~strike-through~~ (deleted) and underline (added or graphic modification) below. Nearer the end of this memo are the original requested changes Staff does not concur with, along with additional explanation. This memo is formatted as a response to the written testimony received on September 15, 2021.

If the Commission is supportive of revisions by Staff and the project consultant to the draft Plan then please consider both the Additional Staff Recommended Changes and Previous Staff Report Recommended Changes, outlined in ~~strike-through~~ and underline below, in any motion. Changes outlined in this memo address all recommended changes in the original Staff Report.

Additional Staff Recommended Changes

The section below is vision text that describes wants and needs for the Main Street concept within the Star/McMillan Center. The purpose of this section is to provide vision and describe need, but are not intended to be prescriptive. The only “will” statement included in the text was not brought up as a concern, but has been revised to help with consideration during future review by others. There are many ways to approach these concepts and ideas, and there are many ways to respond to needs and goals.

Never-the-less, Staff believe that the strike-through and underline text below address stakeholder concern, clarify that they aren't explicit or prescriptive standards in all conditions, and does so without undermining the need for a clear vision with context.

Revise Text under heading, Center Components on page 3-15:

Main Street-style ~~two to three story~~ mixed-use buildings fronting ~~an east-west curved street running east-west~~, with on-street parking. Buildings along the main street, nearer Star Road and at intersections, should, and that would blend incorporate innovative and historical design thematic and withhouse include authentic opportunities for retail or office on the ground floor, and ~~with residential and/or some~~ office uses above. This area ~~will~~ should have a pedestrian-oriented streetscape, with generously-sized sidewalks that can accommodate outdoor seating, and ground floor building transparency that enriches the pedestrian experience by allowing people to see activity inside and outside a building. A centrally-located and highly connected park space is provided with southern exposure that makes the area more comfortable and usable year-round.

Original Stakeholder Request

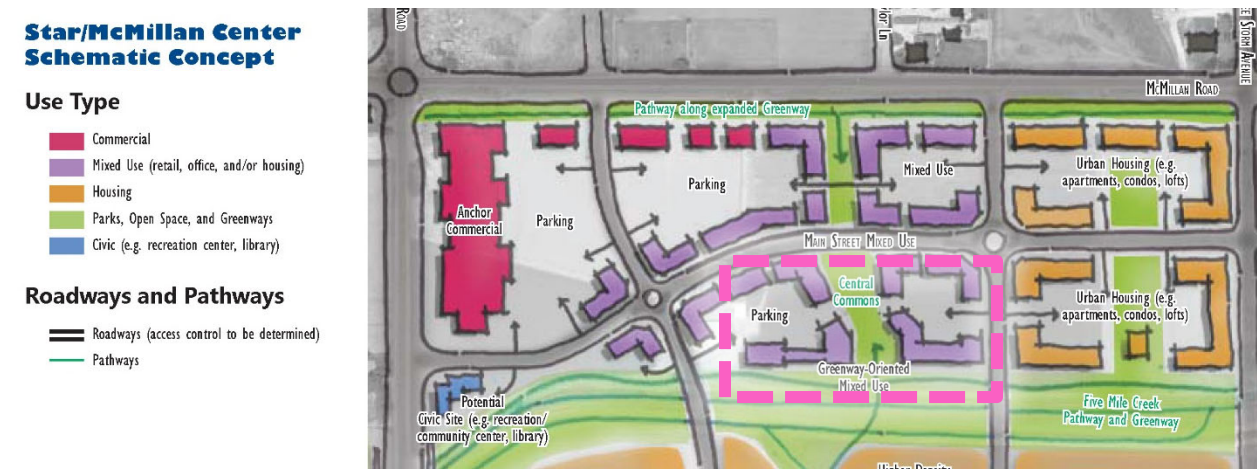
Star/McMillan Center

- c. Reduce limiting or prescriptive language on page 3-15 of the Plan that may foreclose innovative and market-supported mixed-use development. Specifically:
 - i. Delete the clause that the Main Street will specifically be comprised of “two or three-story mixed-use buildings fronting a curved street running east-west” and replace with: “Main Street-style that incorporates innovative design and uses based on market demand, with on-street parking and a pedestrian-oriented streetscape ...”

Revised Graphic on page 3-16:

This was not an original stakeholder request, but the recommendation by Staff came about in discussion with the Mark Bottles team about the types and balances of uses. There is a small area of the yellow “Housing” product shown along the Central Commons, in the draft Plan, and that could just as easily be a purple “Mixed Use”, which also supports housing. The revised graphic below shows all purple “Mixed Use” along the Central Commons now. Not having a few discrete structures of similar size be a specific type, helps to better convey intended flexibility.

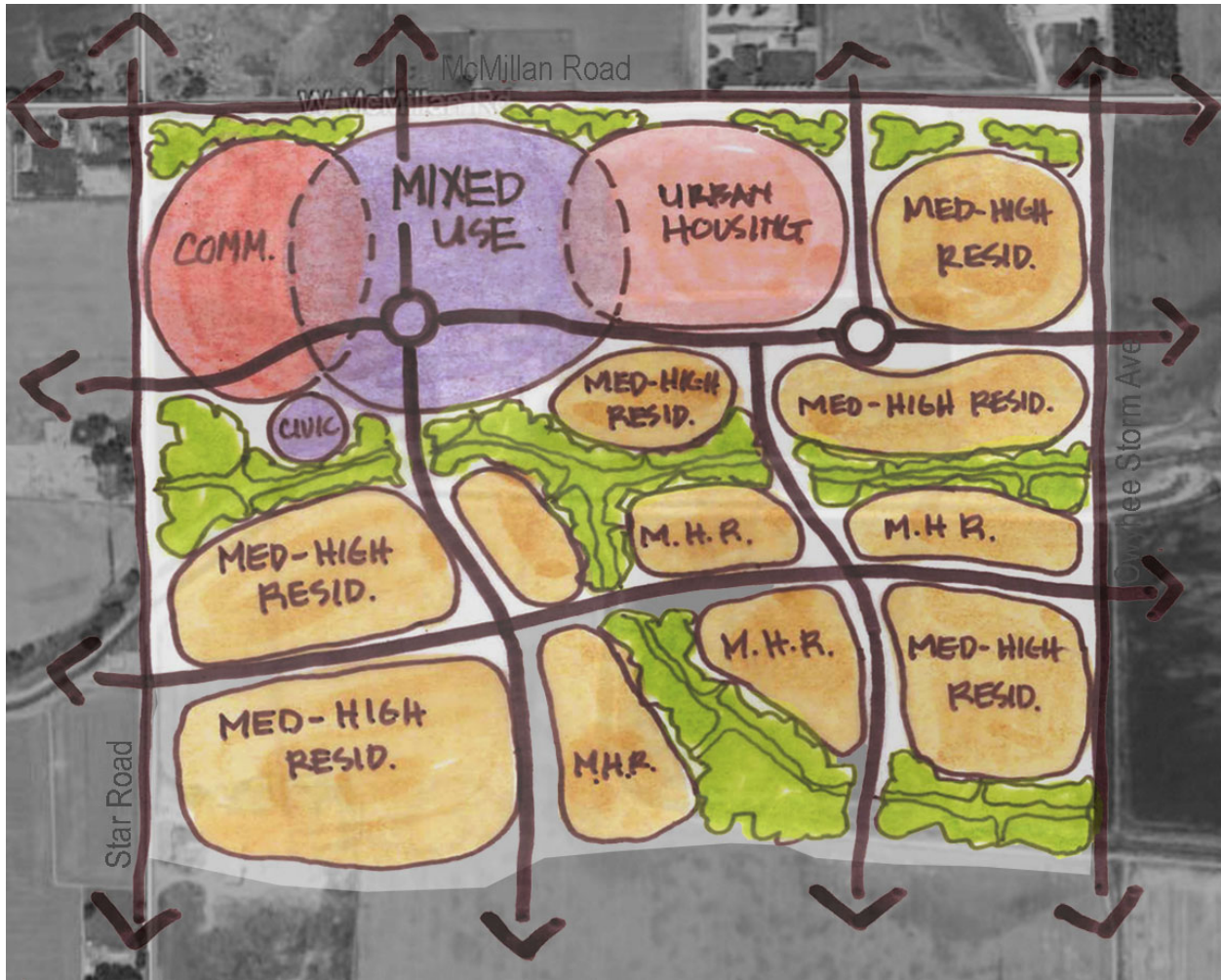
Inset of revised map, highlighting area of Change in dashed pink line. The two southern building were yellow and are now shown as purple.



Additional Graphic, after page 3-16:

The following graphic has been revised since the original was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission as part of September 16th public testimony. After several iterations by the Mark Bottles team, Staff is recommending the concept below as an additional exhibit in the draft Fields Subarea Plan. The balance of uses is generally supportive of the more detailed concept by the project consultant, while also conveying to future decision makers that there is flexibility in the final design. A future development application would still need to be considerate of the Plan text.

Additional Map, between pages 3-16 and 3-17. A legend and title similar to 3-16 would be added.



Original Stakeholder Request

Star/McMillan Center

- a. Add the second/alternate concept plan on page 3-16 of the Plan to provide flexibility and illustrate multiple possibilities for a successful mixed-use center.

Revised Action Item on page 4-20:

Architectural Related Policy

The following policy modification is being recommended after an amended stakeholder request. None of the listed materials described in this section are new or innovative, but most have some place in commercial construction when thoughtfully integrated into a thoughtful architectural design. Some of the referenced materials are even desired when used well, and are featured in character images. Most of the

described materials are however frequently used poorly, are felt to cheapen architecture, and often fail to meet standards aimed at maintaining a consistent level of effort. Further, Staff have repeatedly heard from the public and elected officials that some of these materials contribute less to community character and values, and have been directed or acted directly (City Council) to limit their application in certain commercial areas and projects.

As stated in the text, these materials are not disallowed or prohibited; they are discouraged. This practice is consistent with the purpose and application of the City's existing Architectural Standards Manual (ASM) and Design Review. Materials generally conflicting with community design objectives or those that fall outside of general level of effort principles, are discouraged but still allowed either in limited capacity or with additional discretionary review. The review process is administrative (and free), and referred to as a design standard exception. The purpose of this process is to encourage creativity and innovation while limiting abuse.

Regardless, Staff is comfortable removing composition siding from this list. Composition siding is more common as a field material. More broadly though, this is a policy suggesting next steps that will be open and include stakeholders engagement – it is not currently a prescriptive restriction. It's possible that these guidelines may be a joint or developer lead effort, as has occurred in the Ten Mile interchange area.

- Within commercial structures, discourage or allow only a very limited use of pre-cast concrete, EIFS, PVC or plastic materials, metal siding, plywood, or pressed-board materials, ~~or composition siding into commercial structures.~~

Note: This policy was previously recommended for modification, but did not remove composition siding. The original recommended change is not included in the previous recommended changes section below.

Original Stakeholder Request

Design Standards

- a. Reduce limiting or prescriptive language on page 4-20 of the Plan that may close the door on a creative discussion about future design standards and material selections. Specifically:
 - ii.. Delete the third bullet point (“Discourage or allow ...”) in its entirety.

Revise Action Item on page 4-11:

The following policy is recommended for removal by Staff after stakeholder request. While maintaining rooftops is essential in the Fields Area to ensure the Star/McMillan Center is able to be successful, this is not a concern in the current market, and the Future Land use Map as adopted already meets this need long-term.

- ~~Limit single family developments per planned land use designations to ensure sufficient land for higher density housing as demand matures.~~

Original Stakeholder Request

Housing Limitations

- b. Delete the first two recommended action items from the table on page 4-11 of the Plan.

Previous Staff Report (and continued) Recommended Changes

The following changes were recommended as part of the original Staff Report, and which staff still recommend for approval.

Revise map title on page 1-4:

Existing Site Features and underlying Future Land Use Map (at time of adoption)

Revise Table 4A notes on page 3-9:

Notes: The table above is intended to show approximate ranges of land uses that can be anticipated in the area. The table reflects residential density ranges adopted within the Comprehensive Plan. Assumptions for commercial values are based on typical averages from uses supported within designation types. Because mixed use areas vary, the following assumptions are used within the context of future land use purpose text and descriptions. **Assumptions:** The Star/McMillan Center and Star/Ustick Center assume 40% residential; Chinden centers assume 20% residential. Commercial uses are broken down as follows: MU-C and MU-R assumes 90% commercial and 10% governmental/other; MU-NR assumes 50% office, 40% office/flex, and 10% other; and MU-I assumes 50% office, 30% governmental/other, and 20% flex.

Add text to Development Program, first paragraph, on page 3-9:

The Development Program is intended to provide an estimate for understanding service needs and general allocation and balance of uses. Because these are for broad land use areas, and generalized, these are not prescriptive standards intended for case by case review. As shown ~~in the development program~~ above, estimated square footage for retail and office uses are expected to take nearly 50 years to fully build out, while industrial and flex space markets could be built out in only 15 years. The City should consider the aggregated commercial impacts ~~this in~~ of development proposals and monitor near-term residential demand and development to preserve opportunities for the lagging, long-term employment demand. Overall balance of residential and non-residential uses is essential.

Revise text on page 4-3.

Critical path items are actions that should be abided by the City prior to and as development occurs. These items include the following:

Revise Action Item on page 4-20.

Elevate a distinct community identity by creating exterior design standards for the Star/McMillan Center, adjacent residential areas, linear park and greenway and regional park, including a contemporary rural thematic throughout commercial structures and public facilities.

- Within commercial structures, incorporate gabled roofs, exposed trusses and rafters, covered porches, oversized architectural hardware, transitional landscape walls, gates, railings, chimneys, dormers, brackets, corbels, belly band board trim, posts, masonry piers, or other thematic elements ~~into commercial structures.~~
- Within commercial structures, incorporate stone, cultured stone, or brick masonry; horizontal lap siding, vertical board and batten siding, beadboard paneling, and taper sawn shingles; corten and/or wrought iron, or other local thematic materials ~~into commercial structures.~~
- Incorporate distinct architectural elements into monuments, signage, building addressing, and structural infrastructure within landscape buffers, parking lots, and open space that enhances primary structure architectural features.

Requested Stakeholder Changes NOT Recommended by Staff

The following sections relate to specific requests by the Mark Bottles team, submitted on September 15th and discussed at the September 16th Planning and Zoning Commission. Staff does not support or recommend changes to these elements of the Plan. Only those stakeholder requested changes with no associated staff recommended revisions are referenced below. All other items are addressed above.

Star/McMillan Center

A request to delete the character concept on page 3-18 of the Plan is not recommended. It is a simple colorful massing model intended to convey a thematic feeling that elicits the desired character. **This character concept is NOT intended for prescriptive application.** Point in order, this render describes fewer specific uses than the schematic concept. This character rendering is prefaced by a diversity of character images, and followed by very loose character sketches and additional images. It is not intended, and likely not possible, for any project to incorporate all of these elements. The relationships between these elements and the focus on the linear open space is the important theme to consider with the graphic, and this is likely more easily understood by the public than the 2D schematic concept.

Original Stakeholder Request

- *b. Delete the Center Character rendering on page 3-18 of the Plan*

Design Standards

As previously described, Staff do not recommend additional changes to the design related action items on page 4-20. The language as proposed works well with the adopted process, and is not prescribed because they are not exclusions, and relate to possible future activity which would be open, and that may even be a joint effort.

Original Stakeholder Request

- *a. Reduce limiting or prescriptive language on page 4-20 of the Plan that may close the door on a creative discussion about future design standards and material selections. Specifically:*
 - *i. Preface bullet points one and two with: “Incorporate materials such as, but not limited to ... ;*

Housing Limitations

The following policy on page 4-11 was requested to be removed. Staff is not supportive of removing any of the bulleted items below. All of these policies are responsive to on-going and very real challenges that the City is facing. Some of them are already supported in the City’s Comprehensive and Strategic plans.

The policy does do not define level of effort, timing, or specific tools. The City must balance national market influences with local needs, short and long-term. Subsequent changes by the City contemplated in response to these policies, if any, would require public hearings and involve genuine stakeholder engagement.

Referenced Policy

- Codify or adopt stronger standards for a maximum percentage of land area dedicated for residential within mixed use areas, to ensure land is preserved for the City’s job base.

Original Stakeholder Request

- *a. Reduce Action Items on page 4-11 of the Plan that do not allow for market shifts and creative new ideas and consequently may limit different job models and future housing options.*
- *b. Delete the first two recommended action items from the table on page 4-11 of the Plan.*