

# City of Meridian, Idaho

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update  
DRAFT



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# 1.0 Executive Summary

## A. Purpose of this Plan

This Parks and Recreation Master is an update of the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Development of this updated plan took place from October 2021 to December 2022, and included a community engagement, leadership interviews, a needs assessment survey, inventory and level of service analysis, operational and maintenance analysis, and financial analysis. The Master Plan Update provides the framework to respond to the evolving needs of this growing community.

## B. Planning Process Summary

This project has been guided by a Meridian Parks and Recreation project team made up of City staff, with input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council. This team provided input to the BerryDunn consulting team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort created a plan that fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

### Community Engagement

- Review of previous planning efforts, City historical information.
- Extensive community involvement effort including focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders, and a community-wide public meeting.
- Interviews with elected officials.
- Statistically valid community interest and opinion survey.

### Facility Inventory

- Update inventory of parks and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the facilities and surrounding areas.

### GRASP® Level of Service Analysis

- Interviews with staff to provide information about City facilities and services, along with insight regarding the current practices and experiences of the City in serving its residents and visitors.
- Identification of homeowner association (HOA) and alternative providers of recreation services to provide insight regarding the market opportunities in the area for potential new facilities and services.
- Analysis addressing recreation, parks, and related services.

### **Assessment and Analysis**

- Review and assessment of relevant plans.
- Measurement of the current delivery of service for City facilities using the GRASP® Level of Service Analysis and allowing for a target level of service to be determined that is both feasible and aligned with the desires of citizens as expressed through the citizen survey. This analysis is also represented graphically in GRASP® Perspectives.
- Exploration of finance and funding mechanisms to support development and sustainability within the system.

### **Needs Assessment**

- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including population growth.
- Research of trends related to Meridian and American lifestyles to help guide the efforts of Parks and Recreation over the next several years.

### **Operational and Marketing Analysis**

- Analyze parks and recreation programming and service delivery.
- Conduct an organizational Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis.
- Develop a broad assessment of the overall parks and recreation operations.

### **Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan**

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes with goals, objectives, and an action plan for implementation.
- Development of an action plan for capital improvements including cost, funding source potentials, and timeframe to support the implementation of the plan.

### **Other Plan Elements:**

- Review of current staffing and development of recommendation for future growth potential.
- Review of the Urban Forestry Management strategy.
- Review current Pathways Plan and develop updated recommendations.
- Conduct a conceptual study and public engagement for a new community center.
- Conduct a cost recovery and financial sustainability study.

## **C. Recommendations**

After analyzing the Findings that resulted from this process, including the Key Issues Matrix, a summary of all research, the qualitative and quantitative data, the GRASP® LOS analyses, and input assembled for this study, a variety of recommendations have emerged to provide guidance in consideration of how to improve parks, recreation, and pathway opportunities in the City of Meridian. This section describes ways to enhance the level of service and the quality of life with improvement through organizational efficiencies, financial opportunities, improved programming and service delivery, and maintenance and improvements to facilities and amenities.

## Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies

### Objective 1.1 – Maintain existing level of service goal

The City of Meridian currently has a Level of Service planning goal that is 4 acres of developed park land per 1,000 persons. In 2022, the City is maintaining 3 acres per 1,000 population to keep up with the rapid growth of the City. Meridian should continue with the planning goal of 4 acres, while continuing to maintain the existing 3 acres. Additionally, the City also has a planning goal of 0.59 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1,000 population. The City should maintain the planning goal for indoor recreation space.

### Objective 1.2 – Enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently has a Marketing Plan (Communication Plan) that guides the Department's efforts in communicating and promoting its activities, services, and facilities. As part of a larger effort, the City of Meridian has an active communication roundtable that the Department should actively participate with. In addition to the roundtable, the Department should take advantage of training opportunities for new communication methods and branding efforts.

The marketing and communication of Parks and Recreation Department activities should be enhanced with a focused effort on adopting open lines of communication and meetings with partners and potential partners within the community.

### Objective 1.3 – Maintain existing quality standards for facilities and amenities.

A top priority from the public response is to continue to maintain and make improvements to existing facilities. The Department should continue to improve and upgrade existing facilities and amenities as well as address low scoring components through the CFP Plan and the Life Cycle Replacement Program. The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Completing a golf course Master Plan \* completed in 2021-2022
- Creating a plan for Tier2 and Tier 3 golf course improvements
- Developing the Urban Forestry Management Plan with existing staff \* completed in 2021-2022

- Taking the Urban Forestry Management Plan to the Planning Commission and City Council for feedback and acceptance \* completed in 2021-2022
- Implementing the park identity and theming plan

#### **Objective 1.4 – Utilize technology to improve customer service and efficiencies**

The Department should continue to use a mixed method approach to communicating with the public about programs, services, and opportunities. Mobile marketing is a trend of the future. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate that chronologically across four major age cohorts, Millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices, such as smart phones. Parks and Recreation should explore adding navigation apps for parks and pathways. Teaming with the public app AllTrails would be a good starting point. The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies adding Wi-Fi in Phase 2 of the Discovery Park development.

#### **Objective 1.5 – Increase appropriate partnerships within the community.**

The City of Meridian Parks and Recreation Department currently partners with a number of agencies to provide programs and activities to the community. The Department should continue to explore additional opportunities, as well as build on their existing partnerships.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan recommends establishing a timeline to transfer pool operations from WARD to the City. \* *Operations were transferred in the summer of 2022.*

#### **Objective 1.6 – Staff appropriately to meet demand and maintain established quality of service.**

As recommended in the Master Plan and based on the Staffing Plan for programs, services, new facilities, pathways, parks, and facility upgrades, it is important to maintain staffing levels to maintain current performance standards. The Department should explore opportunities to increase staffing levels as growth continues. This will require new positions both in parks and recreation.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends promoting and growing the current volunteer program.

### **Goal 2: Maintain and Improve Facilities and Amenities**

#### **Objective 2.1 – Maintain and improve existing facilities.**

The Department should continue to implement existing plans, the CFP, Life Cycle Replacement Programs, and the Master Plan. These plans should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Renovating the existing on-course restrooms for ADA compliance at Lakeview Golf Course
- Replacing old equipment for improved golf course maintenance operations
- Upgrading the golf course irrigation system

### **Objective 2.2 – Expand pathways and connectivity.**

The Department should continue to update and implement the existing Pathways Master Plan as development continues. As new and existing pathways are designed and renovated, the Department should explore ways to improve pathway inspections and approval process. To assist with the implementation and oversight of this process, the City should consider the addition of a Parks Operation Crew Chief.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Construction of the six identified pathway connections
- Implementation of formal pathway standards based on size, route/loop, and incorporate testing and acceptance requirements prior to final approval
- Partnering with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for place-making and amenity design on the Five Mile Creek Pathway
- Creating branding and wayfinding tools for priority pathway segments

### **Objective 2.3 – Add indoor recreation space.**

Based on feedback from focus group participants and the survey results, there is a need for additional indoor recreation space. The Department should continue to explore opportunities to add additional indoor recreation space either through partnerships, purchase of an existing facility, or construction of a new community center. Another option would be to explore opportunities to add community centers to newly planned elementary and middle schools or future regional parks.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan recommended conducting a needs assessment and conceptual planning for a new community center. As part of this planning process, a feasibility study was conducted, and conceptual designs were developed. The feasibility study and conceptual designs were presented to City Council and the final report provided as a staff document.

### **Objective 2.4 – Develop new amenities at existing parks based on level of service analysis.**

Demand for usage of Meridian parks and athletic facilities continue to grow, and the Department should look for opportunities to add new amenities to enhance the experience for users. As Meridian continues to grow, the Department should look for opportunities to add parks and

pathways in those new growth areas. Also, based on the GRASP® analysis, the Department should look for opportunities to add new components at existing parks where the level of service is below threshold.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Design of Phase 2 for Discovery Park and bid for development \* completed in 2021-2022
- Construct Phase 2 of Discovery Park using CMGC and design build methods
- Construct a teen activity area at Discovery Park in Phase 2

### **Objective 2.5 – Acquire new land for parks.**

Based on population growth and a LOS goal of reaching 4 acres of developed park land per 1,000 population, the Department needs to continue to find and purchase additional land for future park development. When considering new parks, priority should be given to areas where LOS is below threshold.

### **Objective 2.6 – Improve parking at parks.**

Parking was an issue that was identified at most of the focus groups and in the survey. The Department should continue to monitor parking during peak usage times and explore the need to improve and manage parking at parks with popular amenities, activities, and events. Another consideration would be to explore alternative transportation options to reduce parking demand for large scale events.

### **Objective 2.7 – Continue to monitor ADA needs in the community.**

Parks and Recreation currently has an ADA Accessibility Transition Plan which identifies needed changes during the self-evaluation process. The Department should continue to monitor new facilities and upgrades for compliance.

### **Objective 2.8 – Upgrade comfort, convenience, and customer service amenities to existing facilities.**

As the Department is making upgrades to and improving existing facilities, it should explore opportunities to add shade, storage, security lighting, and other amenities at existing facilities. Where appropriate, look for opportunities to add public art to new and existing facilities.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Working with the Meridian Arts Commission to finalize a plan for future public art projects
- Completing the addition of the Meridian Speedway to the Historic Register
- Investigating new locations to add to the Historic Register

### **Objective 2.9 – Create park identity in existing and new parks.**

As citizen interest grows, and demand for new and different amenities at parks are identified, the Department should explore opportunities to add unique features, such as destination playgrounds, public art, signage, unique shelters, natural play areas, and/or climbing elements at new and existing parks.

The newly adopted City-Wide Strategic Plan also has a goal to foster development of Phase 2 of Discovery Parks that uniquely blends arts, entertainment, adventure sports, and culture.

### **Objective 2.10 – Address current and future needs for athletic fields.**

As demand warrants, explore opportunities to add rectangle and diamond fields as usage increases. To help increase field time, add sports field lighting to new facilities and improvements to lighting at existing facilities where appropriate.

### **Objective 2.11 – Consider programming needs when adding new components to existing parks or when developing new parks.**

As the Department continues to develop new parks and renovate existing parks, continue to evaluate the programming needs of the community when developing new parks or when adding new components to existing parks.

### **Objective 2.12 – Maintain component-based inventory and level of service standards.**

The Department should review the component-based inventory from the 2022 Master Plan Update when planning new parks and installing new amenities. The inventory and GIS database should be updated for tracking of new components.

### **Objective 2.13 – Continue to maintain life cycle replacement plan.**

The Department should continue to monitor and update its life cycle replacement plan annually.

## **Goal 3: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery**

### **Objective 3.1 – Continue to address recreational programming and activity needs of the community.**

The Department should continue to look for opportunities to expand indoor recreational programs and activities. The community would like to see additional programs for tweens, teens, people with special needs, and seniors. As new programs are developed, continue to monitor recreational trends to stay current with programming and demand. As popularity in program offerings and activities increases, continue to look for opportunities to expand programs around working hours and commuting citizens schedules. Continue to explore opportunities to produce, attract, promote, and maintain events in the City. Exploring opportunities to offer new programs in outdoor adventure recreation to teens and active adults.

Continue to monitor participation and demand for family-centered recreational programs and adjust to meet the needs of the community.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Expanding class and program offerings at the new community center
- Expanding summer camps to 3-4 sites to help meet community demand
- Attracting a national, qualifying sports tournament
- Expanding traditional and non-traditional sports leagues and tournaments
- Adapting and expanding community events to meet community needs
- Adding a City event to enrich Dairy Days
- Providing the Parks Division resources to support Dairy Days

## Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities

### **Objective 4.1 – Increase special event and activities sponsorships.**

The Department should continue to secure sponsorships for existing and future events.

### **Objective 4.2 – Evaluate developer impact fee ordinance.**

The Department should continue to monitor impact fees from new developments as growth continues. The ordinance should be reviewed every 3-5 years to keep current with the LOS. Additionally, the Department should review its impact fee revenue annually to align with CFP requests and existing LOS.

### **Objective 4.3 – Pursue grant and philanthropic opportunities.**

The Department currently takes advantage of grant opportunities available for programming, services, and facility improvements. The Department should continue to pursue any and all grant opportunities at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. Working with the City's CDBG Grant Administrator, explore opportunities to use CDBG funds for parks, pathways, and/or recreation facilities.

### **Objective 4.4 – Implement a Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy.**

The Department currently has a practice of cost recovery, but it varies based on the different service areas. The Department should implement the recommendations from the Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy study completed during this master planning process. The Department should continue to support the current Care Enough to Share Scholarship Program through increased marketing and awareness of the program to attract more families.

Explore feasibility of additional revenue sources for parks and recreation as identified in the “Present and Projected Fiscal Resources” section of the Master Plan.



## 2.0 Introduction to the Planning Context

### A. Purpose of this Plan

This Parks and Recreation Master is an update of the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Development of this updated plan took place from October 2021 to December 2022, and included a community engagement, leadership interviews, a needs assessment survey, inventory and level of service analysis, operational and maintenance analysis, and financial analysis. The Master Plan Update provides the framework to respond to the evolving needs of this growing community.

### B. Parks and Recreation Department Overview

Parks and Recreation is responsible for maintaining public open spaces and for providing a quality system of parks and recreation facilities and positive leisure opportunities available to all persons in the community. The Department is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the pathways system and the urban forest. The Meridian Parks and Recreation system consists of 530 acres of parkland, 334 acres of developed parks. The system is made up of 19 parks, 15.53 miles of City-maintained pathways, and 28.54 miles of pathways maintained by others, Lakeview Golf Course, Meridian Swimming Pool, the Meridian Homecourt, a senior center, and a community center. Additionally, Parks and Recreation offers a variety of recreational programs, adult sports leagues, and special events, and handles shelter/field reservations and temporary use permits.

### C. Mission, Vision, and Values

As part of the 2015 Master Planning process, the Department developed a Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV). The MVV were reviewed as part of the Master Plan Update.

**Mission:** The Meridian Parks and Recreation Department's mission is to enhance our community's quality of life by providing innovatively designed parks, connected pathways, and diverse recreational opportunities for all citizens of Meridian that create lasting memories.

**Vision:** Meridian Parks and Recreation is a premier department that provides family-focused opportunities for the Meridian community and responds to a growing and changing population.

**Focus Areas:** Quality, Community, Fun

**Quality:** We provide quality parks, pathways, and recreational opportunities that are beautifully designed, exceptionally maintained, safe, and create memories for the citizens and visitors to Meridian.

**Community:** We build the sense of community in Meridian by connecting people through parks, pathways, programs, and events that bring enjoyment to individuals and families of all ages and abilities.

**Fun:** We provide places and opportunities that create quality of life experiences, bring balance to working individuals and families, and are fun and enjoyable. *At the end of the day, this is what it's all about!*

## D. Related Planning Efforts and Integration

As part of the master planning process, BerryDunn evaluated and utilized information from recent past and/or current planning work. The consultant team consolidated relevant information from these planning documents, inventory maps, budgets, work plans, and funding plans utilized by the Parks and Recreation Department to facilitate the comprehensive coordination of direction and recommendations. Documents included:

- City of Meridian Strategic Plan (2021-2025)
- 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan (2019)
- ULI Meridian Pathways Briefing Book (2022)
- Pathways Master Plan
- Impact Fees Study
- Ten Mile Specific Area Plan
- Future Land Use Map

## E. Methodology of this Planning Process

This project has been guided by a Meridian Parks and Recreation project team made up of City staff, with input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council. This team provided input to the BerryDunn consulting team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort created a plan that fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

- Strategic Kick-off: - October 10, 2021
- Leadership Interviews – October 13-15, 2021
- Survey – October 2021 – January 2022
- Community Center Feasibility Study – November 2021 – April 2022
- Community Engagement – November 2021
- Focus Groups – November 16-18, 2021
- Public Presentation – November 18, 2021

- Inventory – November 2021
- Level of Service Analysis – December 2021
- Cost Recovery Study – January-May 2022
- Findings Presentation – February 23-24, 2022
- Draft Recommendations Presentation – September 2022
- Draft & Final Plan Presentation – December 2022

## 3.0 What We Want – Our Community, Trends, and Identified Needs

### A. Demographic Profile

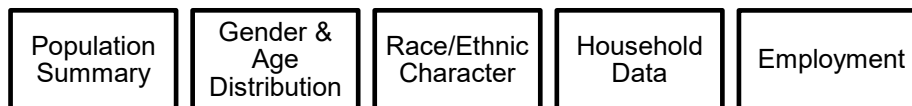
#### Population and Demographic Trends

Gaining a clear understanding of the existing and projected demographic character of the City is an important component of the planning process for the Meridian Parks and Recreation Master Plan. By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision-making and resource allocation.

Key demographic components were analyzed to identify trends that may influence the planning and provision of public parks and recreation services in Hampton over the next five years and beyond. Community characteristics analyzed and discussed below consist of:

- Existing and projected population totals
- Age distribution
- Ethnic/Racial diversity
- Educational Attainment
- Household information
- Employment

By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space management. This demographic profile was compiled in January 2021 from a combination of sources including the Esri Business Analyst, American Community Survey, and U.S. Census. The full demographics report was provided as a staff document. The following topics are covered in detail here:



#### City of Meridian Demographic Profile

The City of Meridian demographic profile was developed to provide an analysis of household and economic data in the area, helping to understand the type of park and recreation components that may best serve the community.

GreenPlay worked with the City of Meridian to identify the best source for population data and estimates. Data referenced throughout this report was primarily sourced from Esri Business Analyst as of January 2021, utilizing the U.S Census data from 2020 to provide estimates for 2021. In addition, when applicable, other sources were referenced such as the American

Community Survey and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings for data related to health outcomes.

Comparisons to the State of Idaho and the United States were referenced to provide additional context and understanding to the demographic make-up of the City of Meridian.

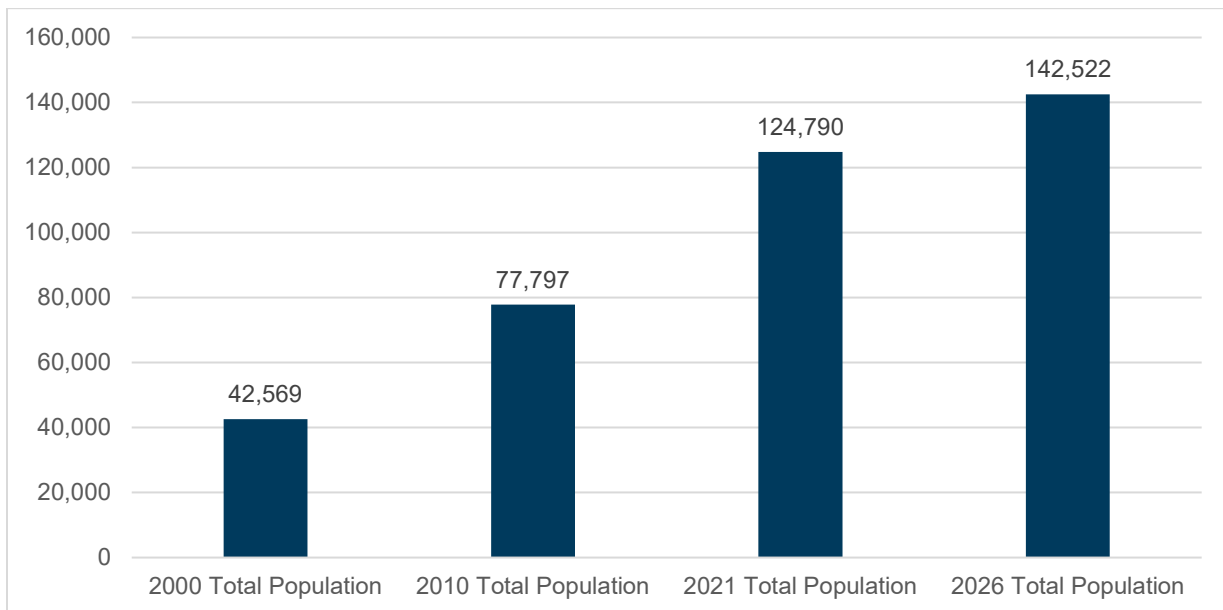
**Population**

**124,790**  
**Population**  
Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

Meridian has experienced significant growth in the past two decades. In 2000, Meridian had a population of 42,569. The City added an estimated 82,221 new residents over the past two decades. From 2010 to 2021, the annual compound growth rate was estimated at 4.29%, compared to 1.68% in Idaho, and 0.70% in the United States. In 2021, the population in the City was estimated at 124,790 – with an anticipated growth rate of 2.69% compound annual growth rate between 2021 and 2026. If this growth rate trend continues, the City could reach more than

142,000 residents in 2026.

**Figure 1: Projected Population Growth in City of Meridian, 2000 - 2030**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

## Age

According to Esri Business Analyst, the median age in the City of Meridian was 34.3 years old in 2021, younger than the State of Idaho (36.3) and the United States (38.8). The median age is projected to stay relatively the same at 34.2 years old in 2026.

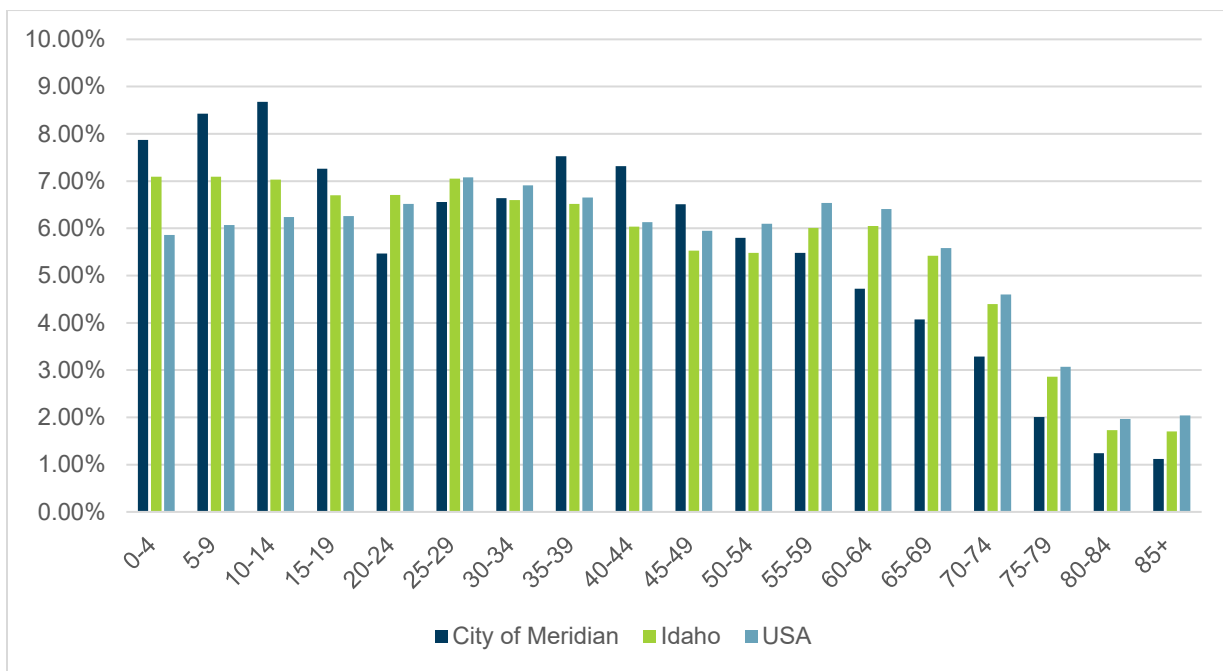
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## Median Age

Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

The age distribution in the City of Meridian in 2021 was generally younger than the State of Idaho and the United States. Over 25% of the population was between the ages of 0 and 14 years old, compared to 21% in Idaho and 18% of the United States.

**Figure 2: Age Distribution in Meridian Compared to State of Idaho**



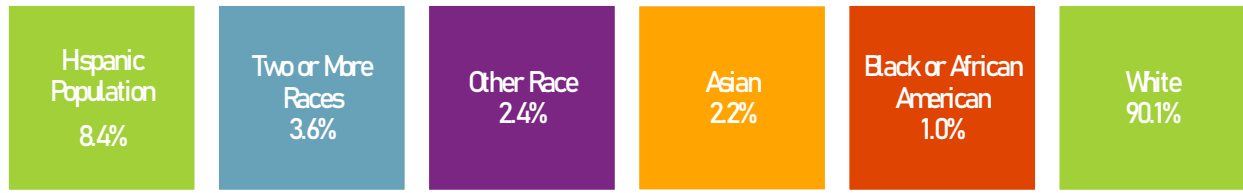
Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

## Diversity in City of Meridian

Understanding the race and ethnic character of Meridian residents is important because it can be reflective of the diverse history, values, and heritage of the community. This type of information can assist the City in creating and offering recreational programs that are relevant and meaningful to residents. In addition, this type of data when combined with the Level of Service analysis can be used in finding gaps and disparities when it comes to equitable access to parks.

In the City of Meridian, the majority (90.1%) of residents identify as white. Only 8.4% of residents are of Hispanic origin.

**Figure 3: Race Comparison for Total Population in City of Meridian**

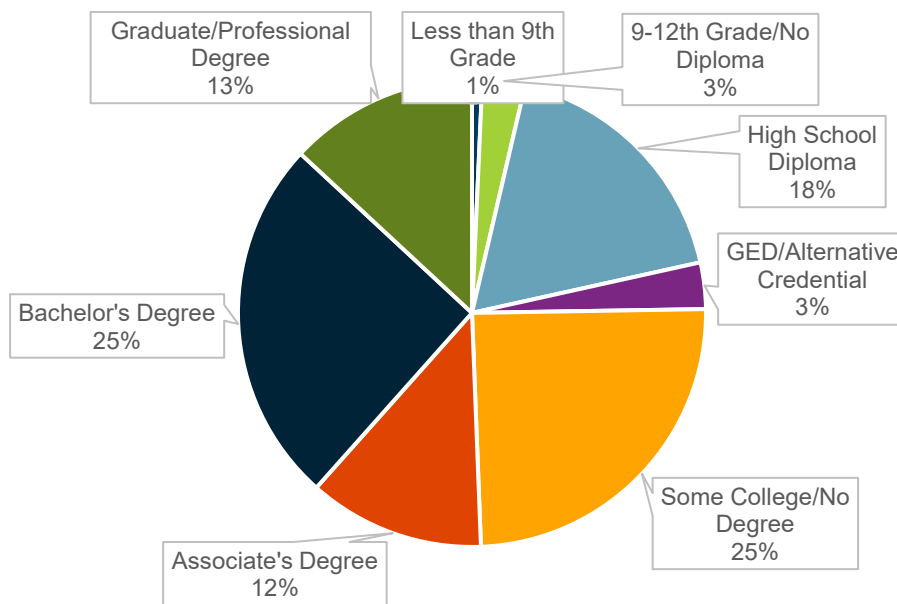


Source: Esri Business Analyst

### Educational Attainment

Figure 4 below shows the percentage of residents (25+) that obtained various levels of education in the City of Meridian. Only four percent of the residents had not received a high school or equivalent diploma, while more than 25% had completed a Bachelor’s Degree, and 13% had obtained a Graduate or Professional Level Degree. This is higher than the State of Idaho overall (10.4%) but on average with the United States overall (13%).

**Figure 4: Educational Attainment in Meridian**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

### Household Overview

According to the American Community Survey, approximately 8.75% of City households were under the poverty level, with a median household income of \$78,960. The household income in the City was higher than the State of Idaho (\$59,510) and the United States (\$64,730), with 18.3% of residents earning between \$100,000 and \$149,999 annually. Only 5.0% of households made less than \$15,000 per year.

**Figure 5: Median Household Income Distribution, 2021 Estimates**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

## Employment

In 2021, an estimated 2.6% of Meridian’s population was unemployed, lower than the State of Idaho (4.2%) and the United States (6.2%). Approximately 74% of the population was employed in white collar positions, which encompass jobs where employees typically perform managerial, technical, administrative, and/or professional capacities. Another 17% of the City’s population were employed in blue collar positions, such as construction, maintenance, etc. Finally, 8% Meridian residents were employed in the service industry. An estimated % of 82.3% working residents drive alone to work, while 19% of residents spent seven plus hours a week commuting to and from work.

**2.6%**  
Unemployment  
Rate

Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst



## People with Disabilities

According to the American Community Survey, 9.3% of Meridian’s population in 2020 experienced living with some sort of disability. This is lower than the state at 13.7% but still reaffirms the importance of inclusive programming and ADA transition plans for parks and facilities.

Respondents of the American Community Survey who report any one of the six disability types (identified below) are considered to have a disability. Likewise, an individual may identify as experiencing more than one disability. Therefore, the percentages below do not equal the total percentage of individuals who live with a disability in the City.

Types of disabilities within City of Meridian:

- Hearing difficulty – 2.9%
- Vision difficulty – 1.4%
- Cognitive difficulty – 3.2%
- Ambulatory difficulty – 4.5%
- Self-care difficulty – 1.9%
- Independent living difficulty – 4.3%



9.3%  
Live with a  
Disability  
Source: 20210 American  
Community Survey

## Health and Wellness



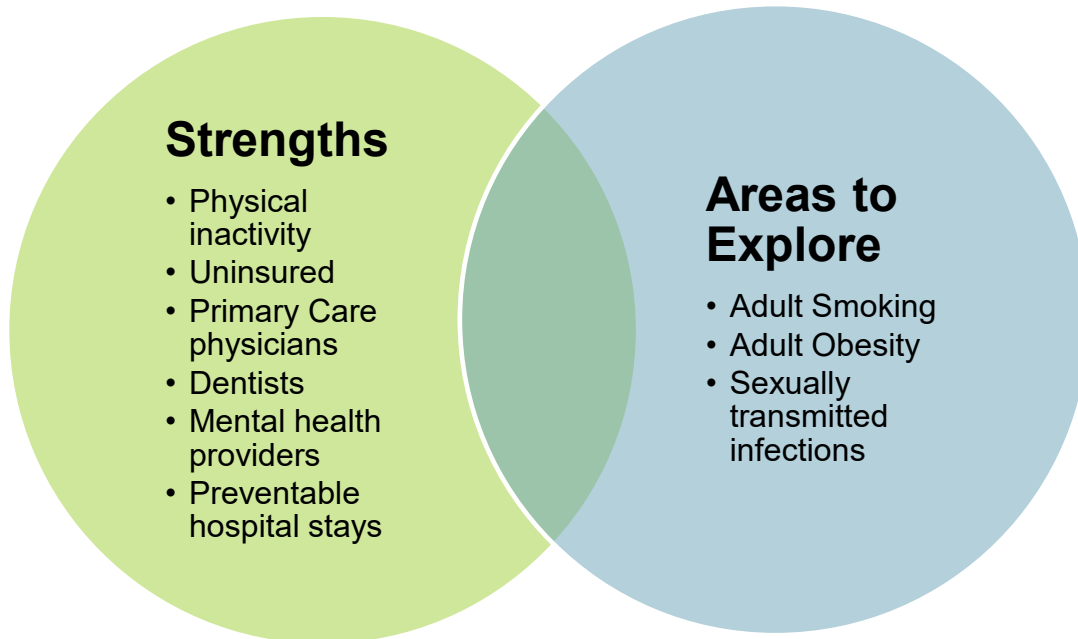
Ada County  
**Ranked**  
**3rd**  
for Health Outcomes  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health  
Rankings

Understanding the status of a community’s health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps provides annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The City of Meridian is located in Ada County which was ranked among the healthiest counties in Idaho; in 2020, it ranked 3rd out of 44 counties in Idaho for Health Outcomes. Figure 6 below provides additional information regarding the County’s health data as it may relate to parks, recreation, and community services.<sup>1</sup> The strengths indicated below are those areas where the City of Meridian ranked higher than top U.S. performers or the State of

<sup>1</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *County Health Rankings 2020*, <http://www.Countyhealthrankings.org>

Idaho. The areas to explore are those where the County ranked lower than the State or top U.S. performers.

**Figure 6: Ada County Health Rankings Overview**



*Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps*

## B. Current Trends

The provision of public parks and recreation services can be influenced by a wide variety of trends, including the desires of different age groups within the population, community values, and popularity of a variety of recreational activities and amenities. Within this section of the Plan, a number of local and national trends are reviewed that should be considered by the City when determining where to allocate resources toward the provision of parks, recreational facilities, and recreational programming for residents and visitors.

### Park and Recreation Influencing Trends

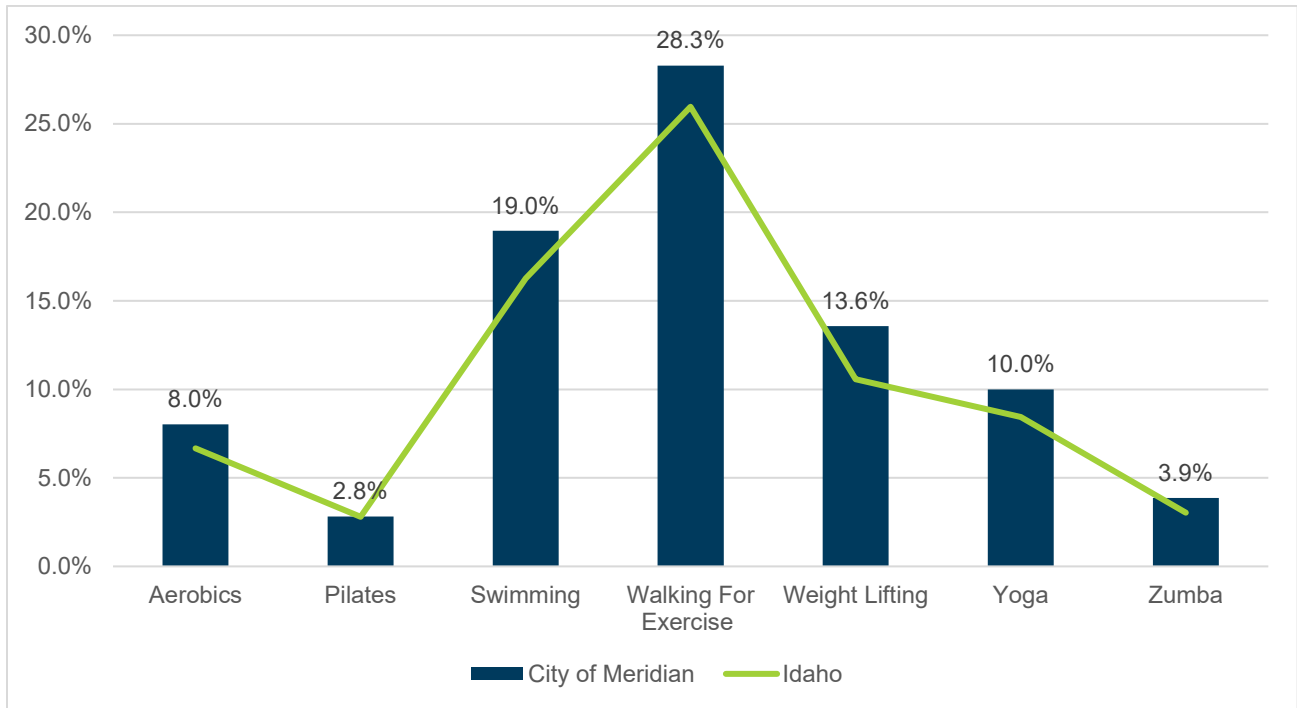
The following pages summarize some of the key trends that could impact the City of Meridian over the next five to ten years.

In addition, Esri Business Analyst provides estimates for activity participation and consumer behavior based on a specific methodology and survey data to make up what Esri terms “Market Potential Index.”

### Estimated Local Participation

The following charts showcase the participation in fitness activities, outdoor recreation, and sports teams for adults 25 and older, compared to the State of Idaho. The activities with the highest participation include walking for exercise, swimming, hiking, jogging/running, and weightlifting.

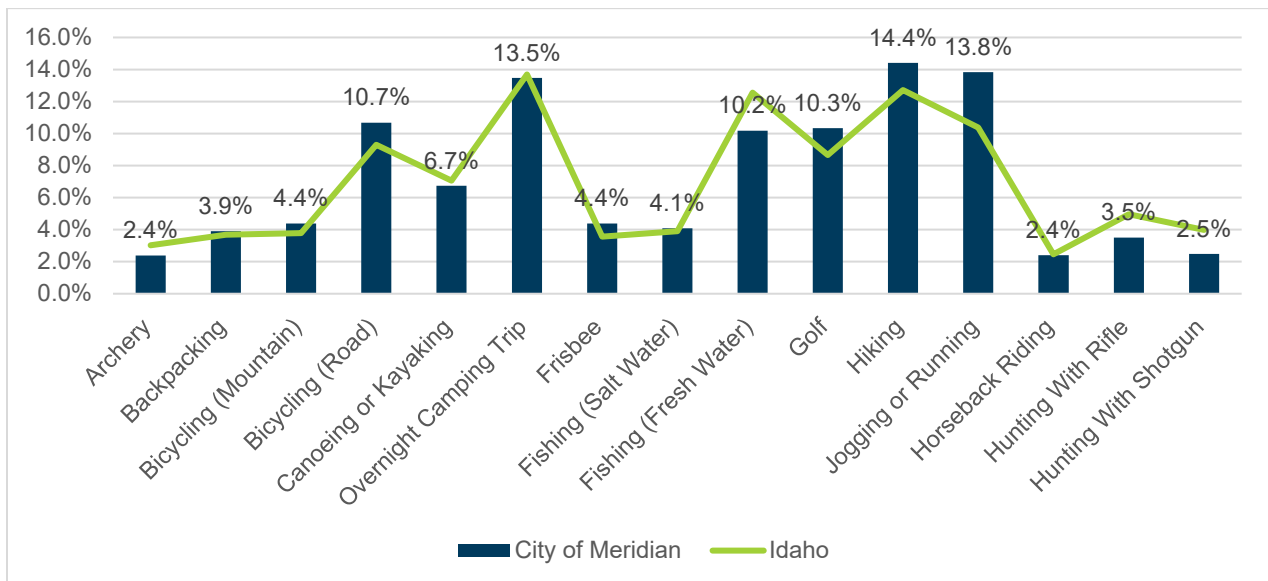
**Figure 7: Adult Participation for Fitness Activities**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

In regard to fitness activities, walking for exercise was the most popular, with almost 30% of adult participation. Swimming followed next, with 19% of adult participation. Finally, weightlifting was another popular activity with 13.6% participation.

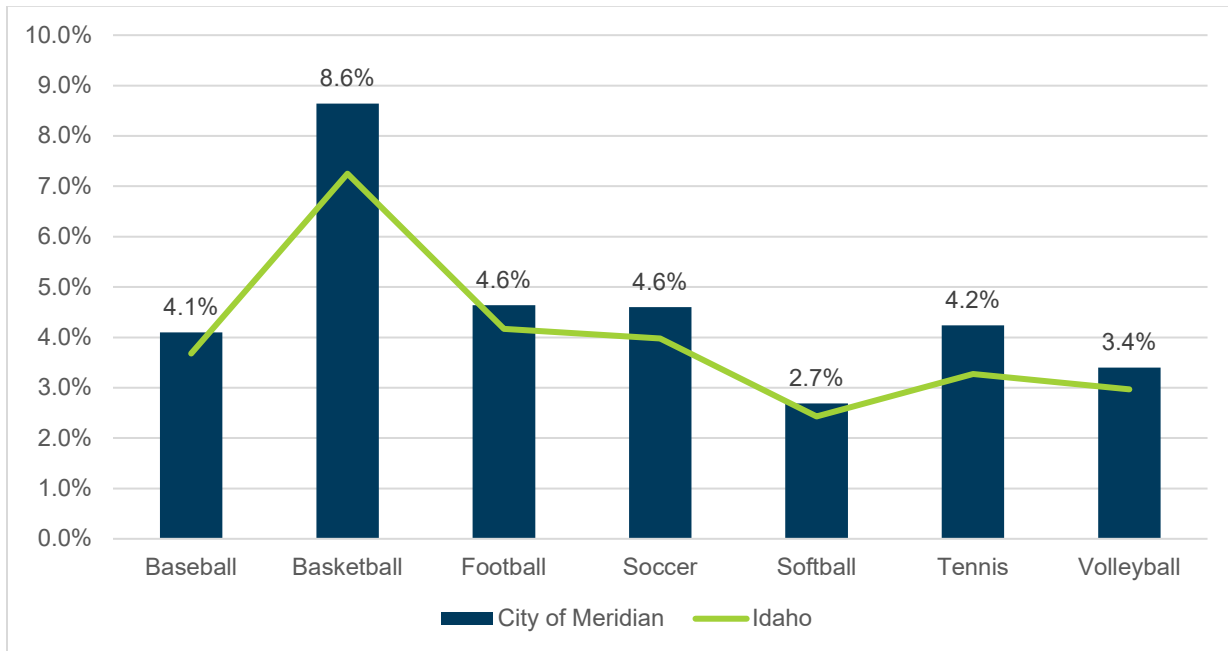
**Figure 8: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

The most popular outdoor recreation activity in 2021 was hiking with almost 15% participation. Jogging or running was second (13.8%) followed by overnight camping trips (13.5%).

**Figure 9: Adult Participation in Team Sports**



Source: Esri Business Analyst

The most popular team sport in Meridian is basketball at 8.6%, followed by football and soccer both at 4.6%, and then tennis (4.2%).

## Regional and National Trends

The following sections summarize regional and national trends that are relevant to Meridian, Idaho. This report details the trends and interests that were identified within the public engagement process.

The information contained in this report can be used by staff when planning new programs, considering additions to parks and new park amenities, and creating the annual budget and capital improvement plan. Understanding trends can also help an organization reach new audiences. Trends could also determine where to direct additional data collection efforts within an organization. The full Trends Report was provided as a staff document:

A wide variety of sources were used in gathering information for this report, including:

- American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- American Council on Exercise (ACE)
- Forbes
- Harris Poll Results/The Stagwell Group
- Impacts Experience
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

- The Aspen Institute
- The Learning Resource Network (LERN)
- The New York Times
- The Outdoor Industry Association
- The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America)
- USA Pickleball website

## Administrative Trends

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include health systems, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness. The traditional relationship with education agencies and the sharing of facilities through joint use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

In addition, the role of parks and recreation management has shifted beyond traditional facility oversight and activity programming. The ability to evaluate and interpret data is a critical component of strategic decision making. In an article titled “The Digital Transformation of Parks and Rec” in the Parks and Recreation Magazine from February 2019, there are several components that allow agencies to keep up with administrative trends and become an agent of change:

1. Develop a digital transformation strategy – how will your agency innovate and adapt to technology?
2. Anticipate needs of the community through data – what information from your facilities, programs, and services can be collected and utilized for decision making?
3. Continuous education - How can you educate yourself and your team to have more knowledge and skills as technology evolves?
4. Focus on efficiency – in what ways can your operations be streamlined?
5. Embrace change as a leader – how can you help your staff to see the value in new systems and processes?
6. Reach out digitally – be sure that the public knows how to find you and ways that they can be involved.

## Conservation

One of the key pillars of parks and recreation is the role that it plays in conservation. Managing and protecting open space, providing opportunities for people to connect with nature, and educating communities about conservation are all incredibly important. One of the key components of conservation is addressing climate change. Local parks and recreation can help by building climate resilient communities through water management, green infrastructure, and sustainability. A report by NRPA in 2017 titled “Park and Recreation Sustainability Practices” surveyed over 400 park and recreation agencies and found the top five ways that local departments are acting on conservation and climate change include:

- Alternative Transportation – 77% reduce carbon footprint through offering transportation alternatives
- Watershed Management – 70% adopt protective measures for watershed management
- Air Quality – 53% plant and manage tree canopy that improves air quality
- Sustainable Education – 52% educate the public about sustainability practices
- Stormwater Management – 51% proactivity reduce stormwater through green infrastructure

## Marketing & Social Media

In today's modern world, there is ample opportunity to promote and market parks and recreation services. The process of assessing marketing efforts begins with a needs assessment that details how the community prefers to receive information. Then, a Marketing Plan should be developed that is catered to the agency's resources, including staff, time, and budget. This should guide the agency for one to three years; at which time the Marketing Plan should be updated.

Technology has made it easier to reach a broad, location-dependent audience who can be segmented by demographics. However, it has also caused a gap in the way parks and recreation agencies are able to communicate. Agencies around the country have previously not dedicated substantial funding to marketing, however it is becoming a critical piece to receiving participants. Without dedicated staff and support, it is difficult to keep up with social media trends which seem to change daily. Furthermore, with an overarching desire to standardize a municipalities' brand, there may be limitations to the access and control that a parks and recreation agency has over their marketing. It is essential that professionals become advocates for additional resources, training, and education. Having a strong presence on social networks, through email marketing, and through traditional marketing will help enhance the perception from the community.

## Partnerships (Public, Private, and Intradepartmental)

Burgeoning populations require access to facilities outside of the current inventory in typical parks and recreation agencies, and the ability to partner with other departments within a municipality is crucial to meeting the programming needs of a community. Forming healthy partnerships with public libraries and school districts to utilize facilities and collaborate on programs is one of the top priorities for agencies that do not currently have agreements in place. Additionally, offering cooperative, consortium-based programs with existing non-profit and private entities allows several organizations to join partnerships to collectively offer programs in specific niche areas. For example, if one organization has the best computer labs, facilities, and instructors, then they offer that program for the consortium. If another organization has the largest aquatic center with trained staff, then they offer aquatics programs for the consortium, potentially eliminating duplication in programming. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for partnerships due to budget and staff cuts.

## Community Centers

Community centers are public gathering places where people of the community may socialize, participate in recreational or educational activities, obtain information, and seek counseling or support services, amongst other things. <sup>2</sup>Several studies have found a correlation between the outdoor leisure involvement that community centers provide and a person's greater environmental concern. The main impact from the addition of these centers is the improvement in community health, social connectivity, and mental well-being.

A national long term study conducted of over 17,000 teens who frequented recreation facilities found that they were 75 percent more likely to engage in the highest category of moderate to strenuous physical exercise. Since these activities that they partake in involve a considerable amount of effort, the benefits have been shown to include "reduced obesity, a diminished risk of disease, an enhanced immune system and most importantly, increased life expectancy".<sup>3</sup>

Clubs and sports offered by community centers also strengthen social connections and reduce social isolation. <sup>4</sup> Along with an increase in social connectivity brought by community centers comes a sense of satisfaction with a person's choice of friends and perceived success in life.

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<sup>2</sup> *Community centers*. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2020, January 21). <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers>.

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc. (2012, August). Powering Healthier Communities: November 2010 Community Health Centers Address the Social Determinants of Health.

<sup>4</sup> *Community centers*. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2020, January 21). <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers>.



The evidence strongly suggests that this satisfaction can rise to much higher levels if participation in outdoor recreation begins in childhood. The following infographic demonstrates the potential for community services in offering non-traditional services.

**Figure 10: Non-Traditional Services Desired in Community Center**



Source: NRPA Park Pulse

## Community & Special Events

Community-wide events and festivals often act as essential place-making activities for residents, economic drivers, and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the *Governing Magazine*: County and municipal officials and entrepreneurs “see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short term tourism while shaping an image of the host City as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”<sup>5</sup> According to the 2020 Event Trends Report by EventBrite, the following trends are expected to impact event planners and community builders in the coming years:<sup>6</sup>

- **Focus on sustainability:** Zero-waste events are quickly becoming an expectation. Some of the primary ways of prioritizing environmental sustainability include e-tickets, reusable, or biodegradable items, offering vegan/vegetarian options, encouraging public transport and carpooling, and working with venues that recycle.

5 Kaydo, Chad. “Cities Create Music, Cultural Festivals to Make Money.” *Governing*, *Governing*, 18 Dec. 2013, [www.governing.com/archive/gov-cities-create-music-festivals.html](http://www.governing.com/archive/gov-cities-create-music-festivals.html). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

6 “The 2020 Event Trends Report- Eventbrite.” *Eventbrite US Blog*, 2020, [www.eventbrite.com/blog/academy/2020-event-trends-report/](http://www.eventbrite.com/blog/academy/2020-event-trends-report/). Accessed 30 Sept. 2021.

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Ensuring that the venue is inclusive to not only all abilities by offering ADA facilities, but also welcoming to all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds through signage, messaging, and the lineup of speakers. Ways to incorporate a focus on inclusivity include planning for diversity through speakers, talent, and subject matter, enacting a code of conduct that promotes equity, and possibly providing scholarships to attendees.
- Engaging Experiences: Being able to customize and cater the facility to create immersive events that bring together culture, art, music, and elements of a company's brand will be critical in creating a more authentic experience.

## Cycling Trends

These activities are attractive as they require little equipment, or financial investment, to get started, and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities is often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity and increasing public health. The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy.

## Golf Courses – Alternative Uses

Agencies may decide to repurpose traditional golf courses into more creative spaces for new opportunities. While modifications may require additional equipment or expenses, some changes offer new programs with minimal costs. Below are some of the primary ways that golf courses are utilizing and reactivating their spaces to draw more attention, participants, and revenue.

- Disc Golf
  - According to the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA), disc golf has increased in participation significantly since its initial start in 1975. Approximately 92% of players are male and 8% female. In 2018, PDGA had 46,457 active members; 2,496 were under 18. In 2010, the number of disc golf courses worldwide was 3,276. In 2018, that number increased more than 150% to 8,364. The majority of play takes place in the United States.<sup>7</sup>
- Footgolf
  - A true mix of soccer and golf, footgolf is a sport played on a golf course where the players goal is to kick a soccer ball into a cup in as few shots as possible. The sport was invented in 2009 and most formal league play is managed through

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<sup>7</sup> "2018 Disc Golf Demographics," Professional Disc Golf Association. Accessed October 2019.

American FootGolf League. Footgolf is an international sport, and it is estimated to be played in over 20 countries.<sup>8</sup> According to the World Golf Foundation study on Alternative Golf Experiences (2015), Footgolf is estimated to be in 445 facilities in worldwide. Approximately 87% of participants are very likely to continue playing, and 81% are satisfied with Footgolf.<sup>9</sup>

- 5k run/walks
  - Perhaps one of the most well-known recreational activities is the road race. The most popular race distance is the 5k. There were approximately 8.84 million registrants for 5ks in the United States in 2017, claiming 49% of all registrants (compared to the half-marathon at number two with 11% of all registrants). Women make up about 59% of participants with 41% being male.<sup>10</sup>
- Fat Biking
  - One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is “fat bike,” multiple speed bikes that are made to ride where other bikes can’t be ridden, with tires that are up to 5 inches wide run at low-pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that wouldn’t be possible otherwise.<sup>11</sup>
- Special Events and Weddings
  - Golf courses can provide an ideal venue for special events. With an often picturesque viewshed and well-maintained landscaping, golf courses are becoming more popular for events such as banquets, conferences, and weddings.

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<sup>8</sup> Linton Weeks, “FootGolf: A New Sport Explored in 19 Questions,” NPR: <https://www.npr.org/sections/theworldjournalist/2014/03/13/288546935/footgolf-a-new-sport-explored-in-19-questions>, March 13, 2014

<sup>9</sup> “Alternative Golf Experiences,” World Golf Foundation: [http://ngcoa.org/ewebeditpro5/upload/AGEReport\\_12.15.pdf](http://ngcoa.org/ewebeditpro5/upload/AGEReport_12.15.pdf), December 2015.

<sup>10</sup> “U.S. Road Race Participation Numbers Hold Steady for 2017,” Running USA, [https://runningusa.org/RUSA/News/2018/U.S.\\_Road\\_Race\\_Participation\\_Numbers\\_Hold\\_Steady\\_for\\_2017.aspx](https://runningusa.org/RUSA/News/2018/U.S._Road_Race_Participation_Numbers_Hold_Steady_for_2017.aspx), Accessed October 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Steven Pease, “Fat Bikes, How to Get the Most Out of Winter Cycling,” Minnesota Cycling Examiner, <http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling>, February 1, 2014.

## Sustainability

Sustainability and eco-friendliness have become a priority in park design. Parks provide ideal opportunities for green infrastructure, as sites are often already highly visible, multifunctional public spaces that typically include green elements. The use of green infrastructure has increased over the last decade as knowledge of its benefits has grown. High-performance landscapes with green infrastructure provide a number of benefits to communities, including:

- Green jobs
- Opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation
- Economic growth
- Improved water and water quality
- Community resilience
- Lower urban heat island effects
- Manage flood risks
- New and improved wildlife habitat

The implementation of green storm water infrastructure duplicates a natural process to prevent, capture, and/or filter storm water runoff. A survey by the Trust for Public Land found that more than 5,000 acres of parkland in 48 major cities have been modified in some way to control storm water. With community parks containing thousands of acres across the country, there is a multitude of opportunities for integrating green infrastructure into park systems nationwide.

Common green storm water infrastructure projects include bio-retention, bio swales, constructed wetlands, impervious surface disconnections, green roofs, permeable pavements, rainwater harvesting, stream restoration, urban tree canopy, land conservation, vegetation management, and vegetated buffers.

## Outdoor & Adventure Recreation Trends

### Adventure Programming

It is common for adventure excursions to be hosted by private outfitters; however, more municipalities have started to offer exciting experiences such as zip lining, challenge/obstacle courses, and other risk-taking elements on a local level. These agencies may form partnerships with specialized companies to provide adventure packages. Private companies may hire and train their own staff, maintain equipment, and develop marketing campaigns. A lease agreement may grant the municipality a certain percentage of gross revenues.

### Outdoor Adventure Impact from Covid-19

Consumers are seeking activities to help them stay occupied and healthy as Covid-19 necessitates social distancing. As a result, a number of outdoor activities have experienced

growth. Many sought out family-based activities in order to keep everyone safe and increase health. A Harris Poll from October 2020 found that 69% of Americans reported a heightened appreciation for outdoor spaces during the pandemic, with 65% sharing that they try to get outside of the house as much as possible.

Outdoor cycling tops the list of popular outdoor activities as bicycle sales increased 63% (as of June 2020) compared to the same time period the year prior. For the first several months of the Covid-19 outbreak, the growth in bicycle sales was from family-friendly bikes. Then the growth in sales shifted to higher-end bicycles (including road bikes and full suspension mountain bikes). This was likely due to a shortage of family-friendly bikes as well as from cyclists more willing to invest in the activity for the future.

Paddle sports (including kayaks, paddleboards, rafts, and canoes) have also increased in popularity as the sale of equipment rose 56% in 2020 over the prior year. Inflatable versions of kayaks and paddleboards have gained in popularity due to their cost and the ability of the consumer to store these bulky pieces of equipment.

Many people will not flock back to fitness centers to exercise following the Covid-19 outbreak. With the desire to keep moving, however, people are walking and running outdoors when the weather is suitable. Outdoor walking and running clubs will continue to be a popular way for people to exercise with others in a safe manner.

## C. Community and Stakeholder Input

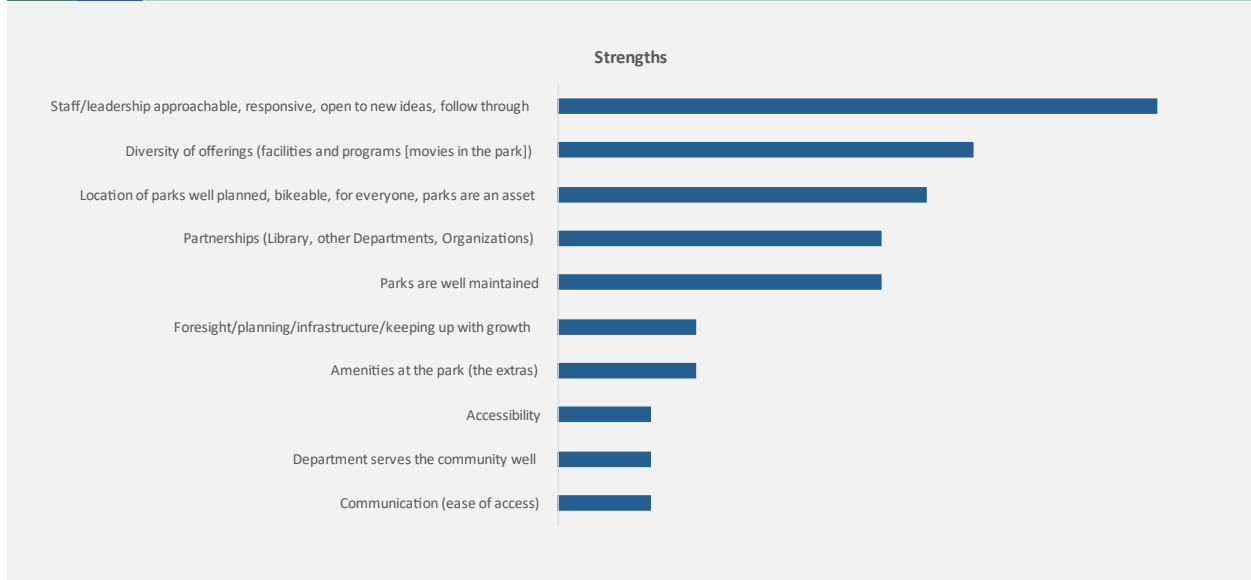
Public input was held in November 16-18, 2021, at various locations within the City. There was a total of eight meetings with focus groups, four meetings with stakeholders, and targeted teen and senior focus groups. In addition, the consultant team conducted interviews with the elected officials and the City leadership.

Focus group participation was by invitation extended via the parks and recreation staff with the idea of mixing area residents and stakeholders with differing points of view to solicit a broad-based perspective. Each meeting was approximately 90 minutes long. A series of questions were facilitated by the consultant team to ensure adequate input was received from all attendees.

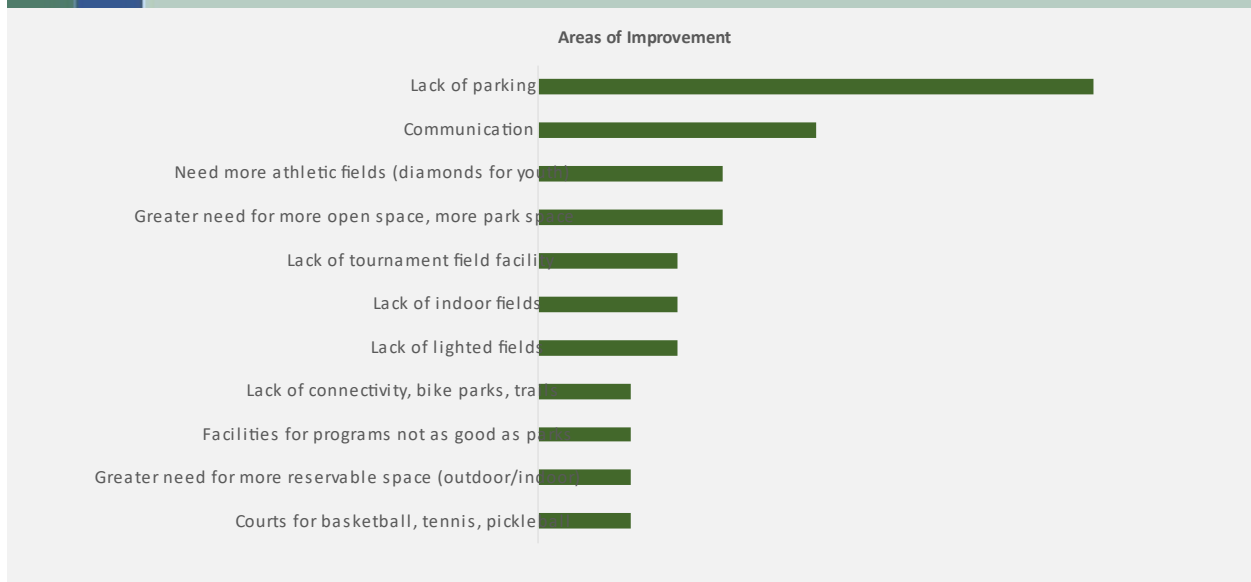
On November 18, 2021, an open, public forum was held at the Meridian City Hall to present the results of the public engagement meetings and to receive feedback and validation from the public. The forum was offered both in person and virtually.

A series of questions were asked of the participants, ranging from strengths and weaknesses, to programs, to amenities. The majority of participants had lived in the community for more than 20 years, with a tie for the second largest group having lived in Meridian between less than 5 years and 10-19 years. Participants were also asked about community values and priorities. A summary of responses follow; however, a full summary can be found in **Appendix X**.

## Focus Group Strengths



## Focus Group Areas of Improvement



## Focus Group Satisfaction Ratings

64% of participants were very satisfied or satisfied with current programs offered by the department

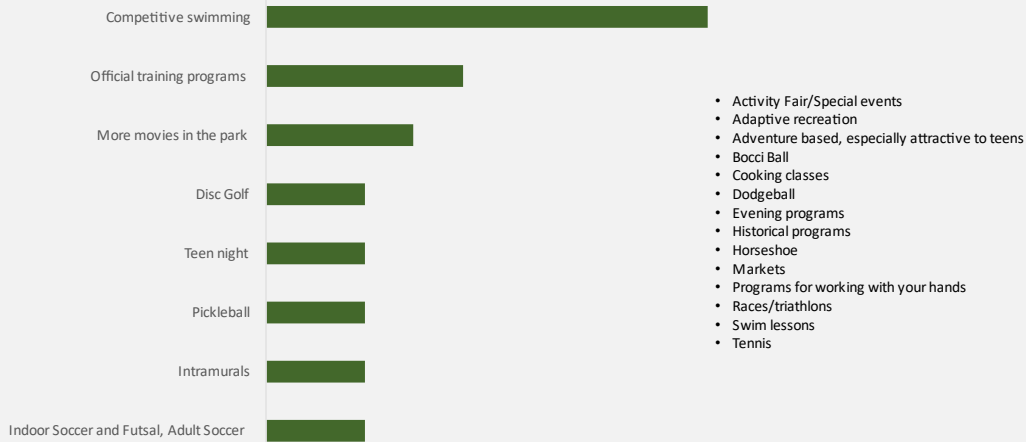
86% of participants were very satisfied or satisfied with current quality of parks and facilities offered by the department

82% of participants rated the level of maintenance for parks and facilities as excellent or very good

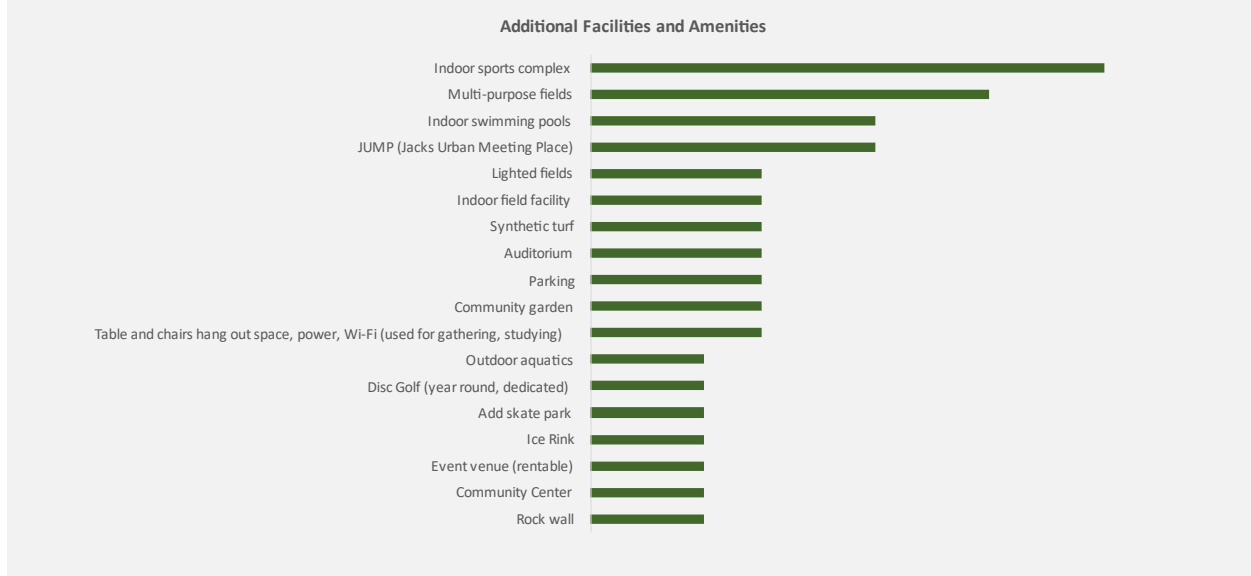
65% of participants rated the quality of customer service as excellent with another 19% rating it as very good

## Focus Group Additional Programs

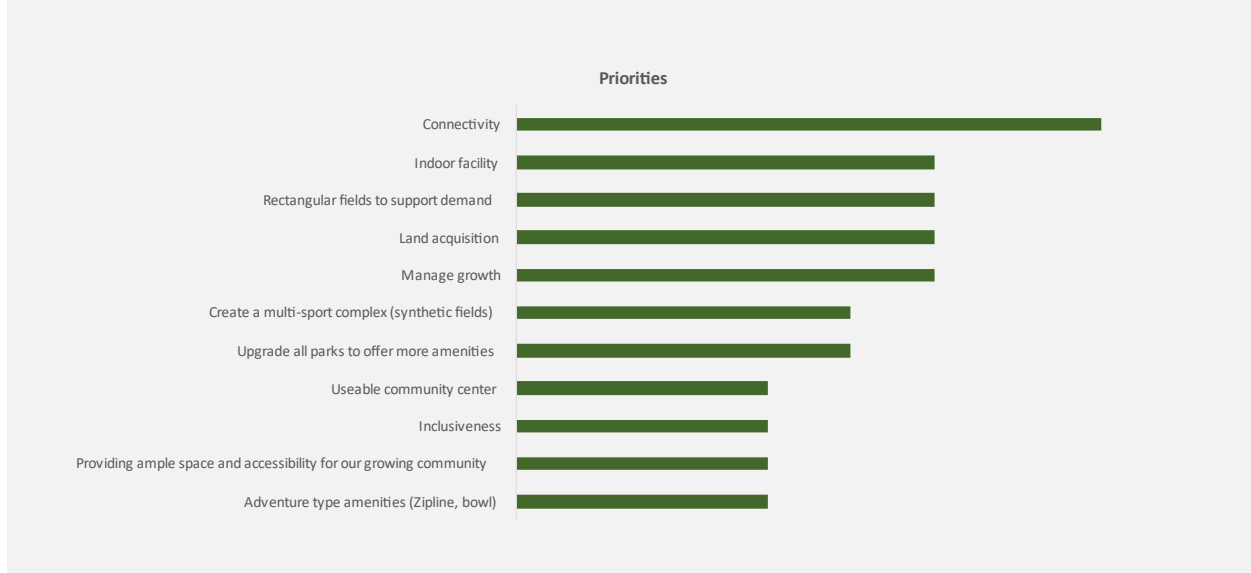
Desired Programs and Activities



## Focus Group New Facilities



## Focus Group Priorities



In summary, focus group participants are very satisfied with the current programs offered (64%) and with the quality of parks and facilities (86%). And the top priorities over the next five years are connectivity, an indoor facility, additional rectangle fields, and land acquisition.



## D. Random Invitation Community Needs Assessment Survey Summary

### Introduction & Methodology

The purpose of this survey was to gather public feedback on City of Meridian parks open space, pathways, and recreation facilities, services, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed and conducted to assist the City of Meridian in updating its Parks and Recreation Master Plan regarding existing and potential future facilities and services.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online, invitation-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample, 3) an open link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation sample. However, open link responses are additionally analyzed and discussed in a separate section of the report, highlighting similarities from the invitation sample.

A total of 3,500 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Meridian residents in October 2021, 312 completed responses were received. The margin of error for the statistically valid responses is approximately +/- 5.5 percentage points calculated for questions at 50 percent response. The open link survey received an additional 378 completed responses for a total of 690 responses.

## Methodology

### Primary methods:

1 = Statistically Valid (Invitation Survey)

Mailed survey with an option to complete online through password protected website.



312 -

Invitation Online and Paper surveys completed  
+/- 5.5% Margin of Error

2 = Open Link Survey

Online survey available to all residents of the City of Meridian.



378 -

Open Link Surveys Completed

3,500 Surveys Mailed (3,444 delivered)

690

Total Surveys



## Summary of Selected Findings

This section provides a brief overview of some of the key findings in the survey. The summary focuses primarily on the statistically valid invitation sample. A full copy of the Final Survey Report can be found in **Appendix X** and Open-ended Responses were provided as a staff document.

Key finding from the survey are shown below:

## Key Findings



### Living in Meridian

Compared to the previous survey in 2015, there are newer residents to Meridian in the 2021 sample. The average length of residency in Meridian in 2015 was 16.5 years and in 2021, it was 11.5 years. Geographically, residents in both surveys were similarly dispersed across the city. Invite respondents are familiar with parks and recreation programs with 46% rating a 4 or 5 with 5 being "very familiar". Open link respondents are more familiar with parks and recreation opportunities.



### Park and Program Usage

The most popular parks for both samples are Settlers Park and Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park. Discovery Park, Tully Park, Fuller Park, and Storey Park are also particularly popular. Majority of the Invite sample had not registered for any classes or programs within the past year (89%), while 11% had registered (vs. 19% in 2015). However, 30% of the Open link sample had previously registered. For household needs, nearly every category showed some interest, with community events topping the list at 57%, followed by fitness and wellness programs (38%) and swim lessons/aquatic programs (35%).

## Key Findings



### Communication

Both samples agree that emails from the city (63%), social media (40%), the Meridian Parks and Recreation Activity Guide (35%), and The City of Meridian website (29%) are the best methods for communication about parks and recreation opportunities. The interest in all the different methods suggests that residents prefer a variety of communication methods.



### Current Conditions

Pathways and trails are considered the most important facilities/amenities to households, with 86% of the invite sample rating trails a 4 or 5, with 5 being "very important". There is also strong interest in picnic shelters, playgrounds, and swimming pools/aquatic facilities. Rodeo grounds were of lesser importance.

The Invite sample indicates that amenities at larger, more athletic-focused facilities are meeting their needs. They are most satisfied with playgrounds, athletic fields, and ball fields. Overall, there is high satisfaction with at least half rating most facilities as a 4 or 5 with 5 being "completely" meeting needs. Swimming pools/aquatic facilities could use a bit more attention, as they are considered relatively important to households but rate lower in terms of meeting needs. Along with aquatics, other top areas of focus for the Invite sample include paths/trails and the community/recreation center.



## Key Findings



### Future Facilities, Amenities and Programs

Invite respondents feel strongly that pathways and trails are the top priority to be added, expanded, or improved in Meridian, mentioned by almost half (48%) within the top 3 most important needs. After trails, invite respondents rank a community/recreation center highest (26%), followed by an indoor aquatics facility (24%), dog parks (22%), shade structures in parks (18%), and improved park amenities (16%). Open link respondents were generally in agreement but pickleball was also a focus for this sample.

The top areas that would increase utilization of parks and facilities are shade (46%) and awareness of programs/communications (44%), followed by additional facilities and amenities (24%) and quality of equipment (23%).



### Community Center Feasibility

The Invite sample and the Open link sample are mostly in agreement of which types of amenities they would like to see at the new community center, with the top priorities being an outdoor plaza/activity space (64%), indoor activity/event space (58%), and fitness/wellness space (57%). Invite respondents would like to see a variety of programs and services offered at the new community center that cater to different ages (children, teens, adults and seniors). Open link respondents are more interested in community education classes.



## Key Findings



### Values and Vision

The top three community issues that the City of Meridian Parks and Recreation should focus on improving are pathway connectivity (47%), land preservation/acquisition (32%), and maintenance of parks and facilities (31%). The Open link sample agrees on pathway connectivity (44%) but is also comparatively more interested in developing new parks in under-served areas (36%).



### Financial Choices

There is a lack of consensus on whether fee increases would affect participation. Invite respondents are more sensitive to fee increases. Overall, there is general satisfaction with the current fees for both facilities and programs. However, more than half of the Invite sample were unsure about the fees for facilities and programs. Very few respondents believe the fees to be too high (4-6%).

If respondents had \$100 to spend on parks and recreation facilities, Invite respondents would allocate about 1/5 of the total (about \$20) to adding more pathways. Other top priorities would be making improvements and maintaining existing park facilities (\$14) and expanding aquatics (\$14). Open link respondents are generally in agreement on the top 3 areas of spend but also allocate comparatively more money to outdoor athletic fields and courts.

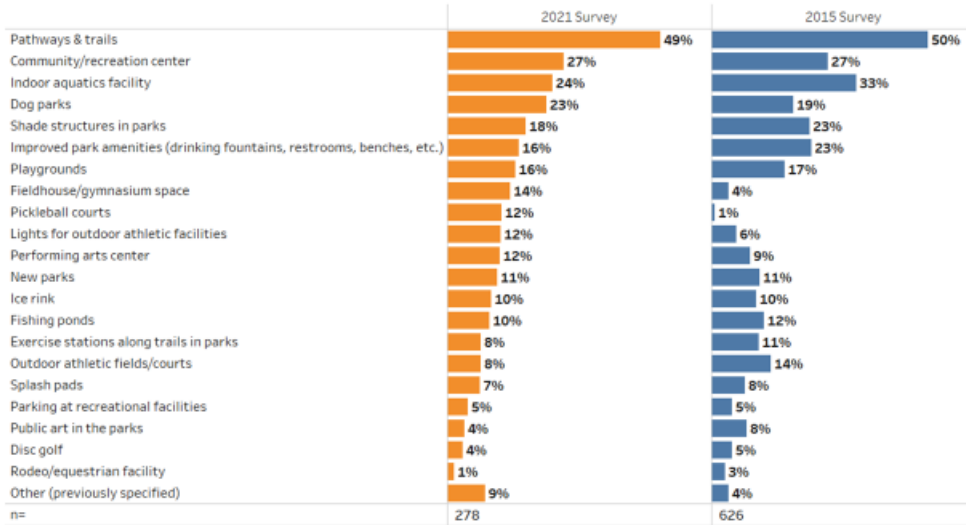


In 2015, GreenPlay completed a Parks and Recreation Master Plan also using RRC as the survey firm. With the merger of GreenPlay and BerryDunn, the project manager from the 2015 study was also the project manager for the 2022 update. This allowed the consultant team to conduct comparisons from the survey responses from 2015 and 2022 to see if the community's needs and desires had changed during the time.

When looking at future needs to add, expand, or improve, in 2015 the top five responses were pathways and trails (50%), indoor aquatic facility (33%), community/recreation center (27%), and shade structures in parks and improved park amenities (23%). The results in 2021 were very similar for the top five responses with pathways and trails repeating as the top need (49%), followed by community/recreation center (27%), indoor aquatic facility (24%), dog parks (23%), and shade structures in parks rounding out the top 5 responses.

## Future Needs

Q 14: Which three future needs would be MOST important to you and your household to be added, expanded, or improved in Meridian?



Another comparison questions asked participants to allocate \$100 in \$5 increments to a list of identified projects and services. In 2015 the top priorities were to expand aquatics (\$19.44), add more pathways (\$17.69), make improvements and/or renovate and maintain existing park facilities (\$12.62), expand programs and activities (\$11.29), and recreation center, including gym space and related activities. In 2021, priorities shifted so because the City purchased the Aquatic Center and the Home Court indoor athletics facility. The top four responses in 2021 were add more pathways (\$19.54), make improvements and/or renovate and maintain existing park facilities (\$14.13), expand aquatics (\$13.91), add new parks ((\$9.46), and recreation center including gym space and related activities.

## Allocation of Funding

Adding more pathways is still a top priority. However, respondents allocated a greater amount to expanding aquatics and expanding programs and services in 2015.

**Q 19: With \$5 increments being the smallest amount you might use, if you had \$100 to spend on parks and recreation facilities, services and/or programs, how would you allocate that \$100 across the following categories?**

Rating Category	2021 Survey		2015 Survey	
Add more pathways	n=274	\$19.54	n=608	\$17.69
Make improvements and/or renovate and maintain existing park facilities	n=274	\$14.13	n=608	\$12.62
Expand aquatics (indoor or outdoor pool, splash pads, etc.)	n=274	\$13.91	n=608	\$19.44
Add new parks	n=274	\$9.46	n=608	\$8.63
Recreation center, including gym space and related activities	n=274	\$8.43	n=608	\$8.75
New or expanded Community Center (community class/meeting rooms, activity spaces, etc.)	n=274	\$8.23	n=608	\$6.16
Expand programs and activities (more teen programs, senior programs, etc.)	n=274	\$7.58	n=608	\$11.29
Add outdoor athletic fields and courts	n=274	\$7.27	n=608	\$7.14
Other enhancements (please specify below)	n=274	\$6.16	n=608	\$3.27
Provide more City-wide special events	n=274	\$5.30	n=608	\$5.02



## 4.0 Who We Are – Organizational and Financial Assessment

### Organizational Analysis

BerryDunn broadly assessed the current organizational and management structure and staffing of the Department with respect to effectiveness and efficiency.

Under the guidance of the Mayor and the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Director autonomously oversees daily operations including the budget, personnel, policy development, parks and pathways, facilities, special events, the Homecourt sports and fitness facility, Golf operations, and recreation programs and facilities. Supporting the Director is a leadership team that includes the Recreation Manager, Parks Superintendent, and the Facilities Manager. Staffing includes 48 full-time and 2 regular part-time positions broken out into six functional categories as shown in the organizational chart (See Figure 1).<sup>12</sup> No employees in the Department are represented under collective bargaining agreements.

- **Administration Division** includes the Director’s office, marketing, and other support services
- **The Parks Division** includes daily operation and upkeep of the parks and outdoor spaces, pathways, and natural areas
- **The Recreation Division** includes recreation, enrichment and leisure programs, special events and program operations, youth programs, senior services, and youth and adult sports programs
- **The Aquatics Division** includes responsibility for the seasonal operation of the Meridian Community Pool
- **The Golf Division** includes the Lakeview Golf Course, the pro-shop, golf instruction, and events
- **The Homecourt Division** includes oversight of the sports and fitness facility

Full-time positions are supplemented by \$1,098,000 in seasonal and casual labor budgets. Like other parks and recreation agencies across the United States, the Department has been challenged to receive adequate applicant pools over the past few years.

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<sup>12</sup> The six divisions represent functional areas and not necessarily reporting relationships.

Full-time department staffing was minimally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and remained fairly consistent between FY 2020 and FY 2022. Addition of the Lakeview Golf Course accounted for an addition of nine full-time positions in FY 2022.

**Comparing Meridian’s staffing to other typical agencies**

In most typical agencies, golf is considered an enterprise activity and as such, is not included when comparing staffing levels for traditional parks and recreation services. As such, the nine full-time positions and the seasonal/casual positions are not included in the comparative analysis.

In the current FY 2022 budget, the City supplemented the 39 full-time and 2 part-time positions with an additional 43 full-time equivalent (FTE) seasonal positions (20 in recreation and 23 in Parks Operations). The largest of the employee groups being lifeguards. In total, the City provides 83 FTE or 6.2 FTE per 10,000 residents.

Comparing the City to other similar agencies in the 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the City is in a broad range of agencies based on population. The category suggests that FTEs for typical agencies are between 4.3 (low) to 11.9 (high) with a median of 8.1 per 10,000 residents. Since Meridian’s population of 133,470 is closer to the lower quartile and not the median, the consultant team suggest that staffing of approximately 6-7 FTE per 10,000 residents appears appropriate.

To improve the current level of service in line with other typical agencies, the Department may want to consider addition of five to six new positions. As well, growth to a population of 142,522 by 2026 suggests an additional need for 5.58 positions to deliver the Department’s current level of service.

By 2050, the City’s population is expected to increase over 33% to 197,463. This dramatic growth will require new parks and facilities necessitating additional operating and maintenance requirements.

Another consideration is the distribution of positions. Most departments distribute positions in a manner that best suits its mission and community and typical agencies may dedicate 45% of available positions to park operations and maintenance, 31% to recreation, 17% to administration, 3% to capital development, and 3% to other positions. The Department distribution of staffing is shown in Table 1. The take-a-way is that the Department could certainly consider additional positions in the administrative area as the City grows.

**Table 1: Distribution of Meridian Budgeted Staffing**

	Typical Staffing Distribution	2022 Meridian Budgeted Position Distribution
Operations/Maintenance	45%	53%
Recreation Programs	31%	43% FTE

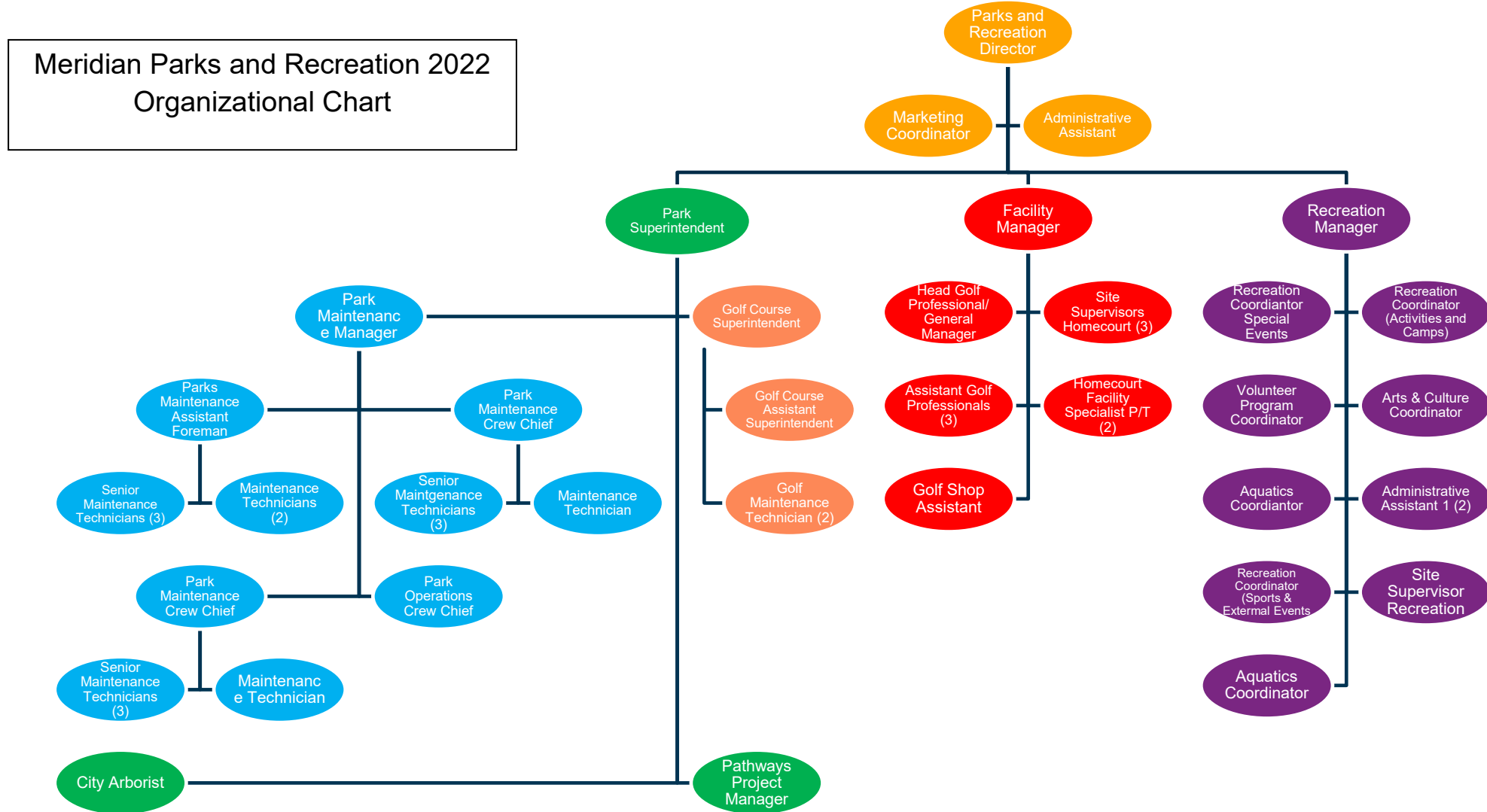


	Typical Staffing Distribution	2022 Meridian Budgeted Position Distribution
Administration	17%	3% FTE
Capital development	3%	0% FTE
Other	3%	0%
Total	100%	100%

### Future Staffing Considerations

After evaluating the observations and assessments, the consultant team has determined that the Department will need between five and six additional positions to operate and its system over the next five years and up to an additional five positions as growth occurs in the City.

Figure 11: Meridian Parks and Recreation 2022 Organizational Chart



## Recreation Program Analysis

### Program Development

Understanding core services in the delivery of parks and recreation services will allow the City of Meridian Parks and Recreation Department to improve upon those areas while developing strategies to assist in the delivery of other services. The basis of determining core services should come from the vision and mission developed by the City and what brings the greatest community benefit in balance with the competencies of the Department, current trends, and the market.

The Department should pursue program development around the priorities identified by customer feedback, program evaluation process, and research. The following criteria should be examined when developing new programs.

- **Need:** outgrowth of a current popular program, or enough demonstrated demand to successfully support a minimal start (one class for instance)
- **Budget:** accounting for all costs and anticipated (conservative) revenues should meet cost recovery target established by the Department
- **Location:** appropriate, available, and within budget
- **Instructor:** qualified, available, and within budget
- **Materials and supplies:** available and within budget
- **Marketing effort:** adequate and timely opportunity to reach intended market, within budget (either existing marketing budget or as part of new program budget)

Further research into what types of programming would be successful needs to be done. Successful programs utilize continuous creative assessments, research, and planning. The Department has a process that evaluates the success of current program offerings and criteria to determine if new program ideas should be instituted or if changes should be made to current programs. Maintaining the current dashboards and evaluation process will help to ensure success.

Moreover, new leisure and recreation trends may drive different needs. It is very easy to focus on programs that have worked for a number of years, especially if they are still drawing enough interested participants to justify the program's continuation. Starting new programs, based on community demand and/or trends, can be risky, due to the inability to predict their success. If the program interest seems great, as with those identified in the citizen survey, then the programs should be expanded. Available space may hinder new or expanded opportunities in some cases.

Using historical participation levels to determine program popularity and participant feedback can be helpful in deciding if programs should be continued. In addition, utilizing citizen surveys and participant feedback, and researching trends in park and recreational programming are useful tools in determining future programming needs and desires. Sources for trends information include:

- State Parks and Recreation Associations and Conferences
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- International Health, Racquet, and Sports Association
- Parks and Recreation Trade Publications
- Outdoor Recreation Publications

## Program Evaluation

All current programs should be evaluated annually to determine if they should be continued, changed (market segment focus, time/day offered, etc.), or discontinued. A few simple questions should be asked about each program that includes:

- Is participation increasing or decreasing? If participation is increasing, then it could clearly mean that the program should be continued. If participation is decreasing, are there any steps to take to increase interest through marketing efforts, a change in the time/day of the program is offered, and a change in the format or instructor? If not, it may be time to discontinue the program.
- Is there information contained in the participation feedback that can be used to improve the program?
- Are cost recovery goals being met? If not, can fees be realistically increased?
- Is there another provider of the program that is more suitable to offer it? If yes, the Department could provide referrals for its customers for the program it does not or is not willing or able to offer.
- Is this program taking up facility space that could be used for expansion of more popular programs or new programs in demand by the community?

## Financial Analysis

### Current Circumstances and Trends

The City adopts an annual budget that sets priorities, guides staff, and provides the primary resources to meet the parks and recreation needs of the community. The general fund is the

primary operating fund and is comprised of property tax revenues, sales tax revenues, liquor sales revenue sharing, building permit revenue, and various intergovernmental sources. Other sources contributing to the general fund are grants, fees and charges generated by the Department, and development impact fees. The Department is budgeted to receive 7.2 million in revenues in FY 2023 and anticipates 10.2 million in operating expenses and 18.6 million in capital expenditures. The historical budget data from FY2020 to FY2022, demonstrate higher cost recovery than most typical parks and recreation agencies across the United States (23.6%) and much higher than agencies of similar size to Meridian (19.5%). See Table 2:

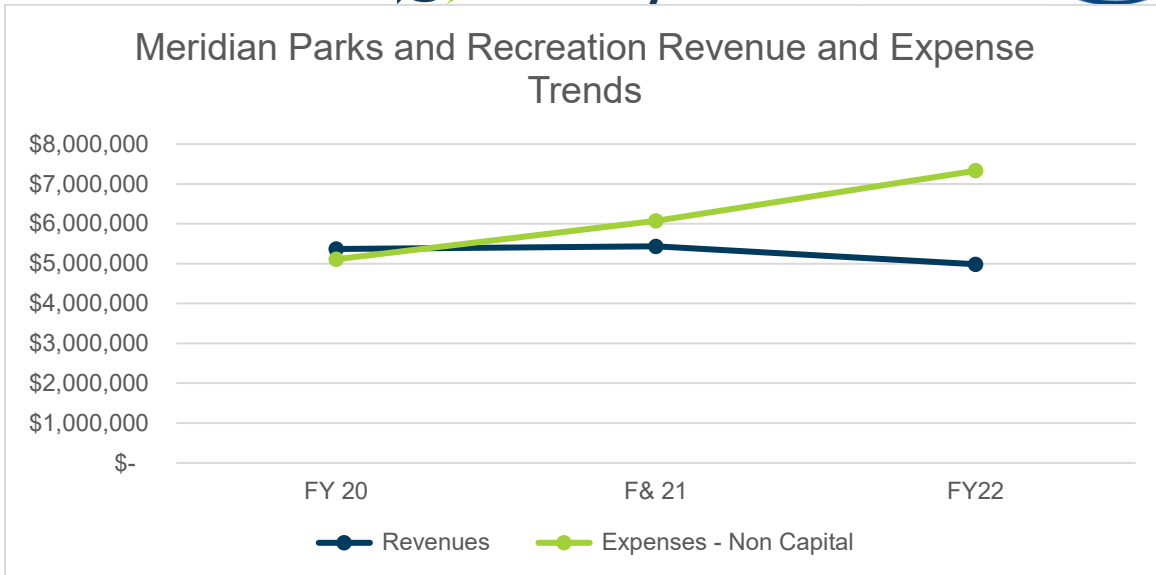
**Table 2: Meridian Parks and Recreation Revenues and Expenses (FY 2020 – FY 2022)**

Meridian Parks and Recreation Budget History			
Revenues	FY20	FY21	FY22
General Fund Revenues/Fees and Charges	\$ 675,186	\$ 2,674,996	\$ 3,276,577
WARD and Golf	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,200,000
Impact Fees	\$ 4,695,399	\$ 4,358,647	\$ 3,892,511
Grants	\$ 122,793	\$ 134,512	\$ 54,063
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 5,493,378</b>	<b>\$ 7,168,155</b>	<b>\$ 8,423,151</b>
Expenditures	FY20	FY21	FY22
Personnel	\$ 3,060,439	\$ 3,890,502	\$ 4,158,825
Operating Expenses	\$ 2,001,133	\$ 3,342,527	\$ 4,325,954
Capital Expenses	\$ 5,905,795	\$ 1,111,937	\$ 12,017,860
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 10,967,367</b>	<b>\$ 8,344,966</b>	<b>\$ 20,502,639</b>
<b>Total Cost Recovery</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Revenue and expense trends for the Department were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 but have rebounded and continue to recover. Trends for non-capital budgets are shown in Figure 12. Expenses also continue to trend upward fueled by both recovery and 30 million in capital expenditures proposed in FY 2022 and FY 2023. The West ADA Recreation District (WARD) and golf were included in the budget only in FY 2022 as part of a transition of the golf course to the City. Golf will be included in annual budgets moving forward.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 12: Revenue and Expense Trends FY20 – FY23**

<sup>13</sup> General fund cost recovery is calculated by dividing revenues and operating subsidy by operating expenditures



**Measuring Department’s Investment in Parks and Recreation**

There are several ways to gauge the Department’s investment. Benchmarking against other similar communities can assist with planning and leadership decisions. However, because each community is different, benchmarking is not intended to be a sole tool for making management decisions.

**TYPICAL  
OPERATING  
EXPENDITURES  
PER CAPITA:  
\$74.22/Year**



Source: 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review

**Operating Expenditures per Capita**

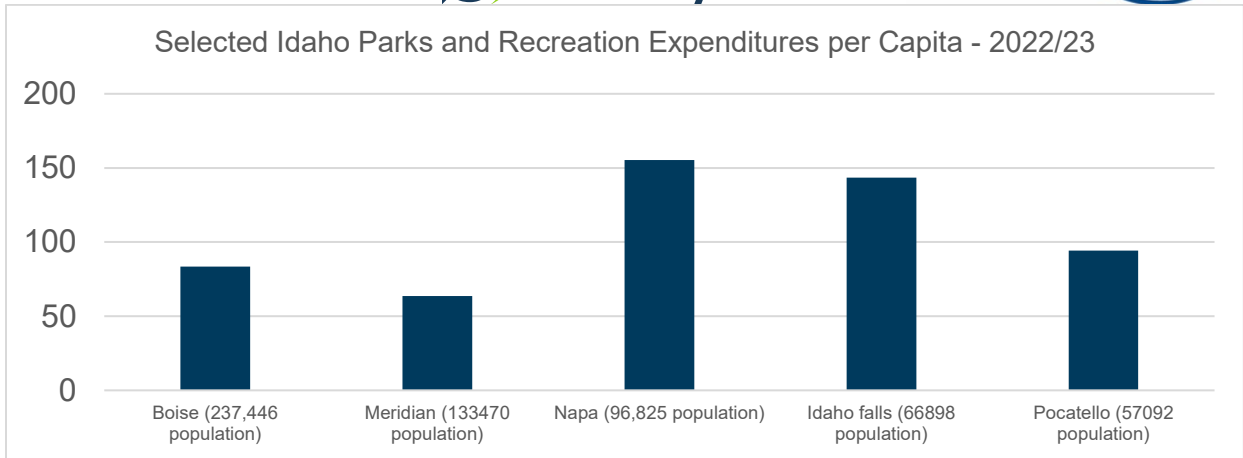
NRPA aggregates and reports annually in its Agency Performance Review on typical agency operating expenditures per capita. In 2021, the typical parks and recreation agency similar in size to Meridian spent between \$43.03 and \$154.92 per capita or a median of \$74.22 for each resident. In 2022, the City spent \$63.57 per resident This was lower than the median but within the typical range.

**Local Comparison**

It may also be helpful to consider the operating (non-capital) investment per capita made by other parks and recreation agencies in Idaho. While benchmarking

analysis provides another perspective, it is important to acknowledge that each agency has different goals, standards and most important, methods of accounting. It may be helpful to compare other agencies in Idaho to best understand Meridian’s investment. See Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Selected Idaho Parks and Recreation Expenditures per Capita – 2022/23**

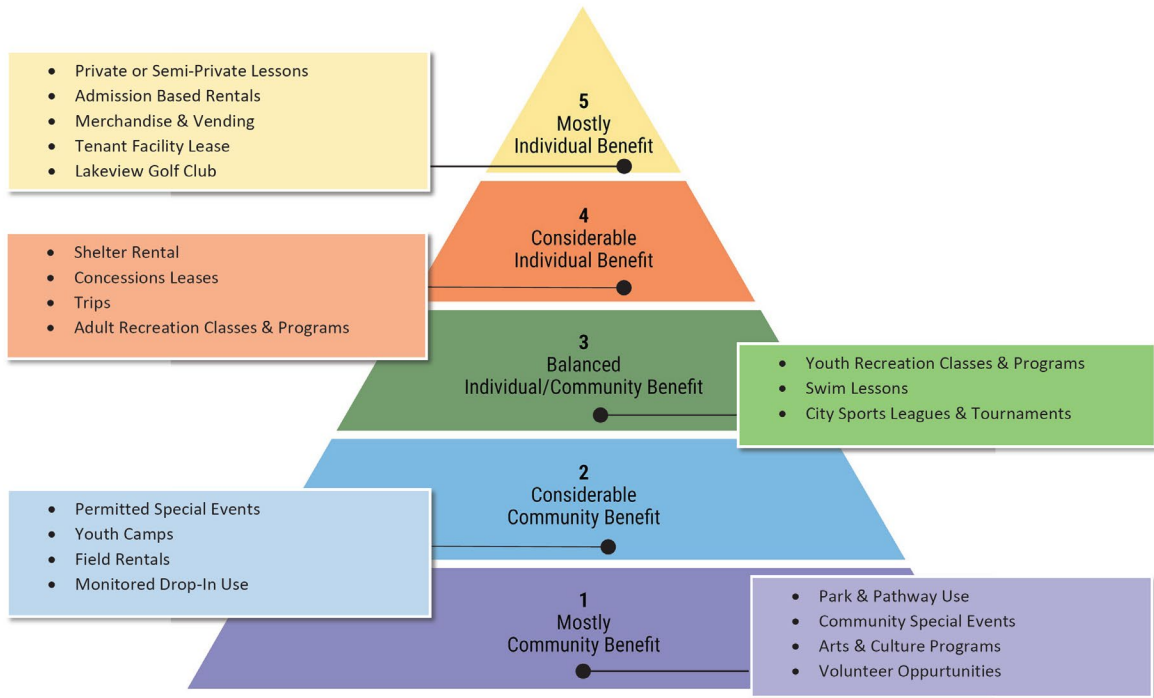


**Allocating Resources and Setting Fees**

While all parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services are intended to improve the lives of community members, not all facilities, programs, and services should necessarily receive the same level of subsidy. In general, the more a facility, program, or service provides a community benefit to its community members, the more that service should be paid for by taxpayers through the use of general fund allocation. The more a facility, program, or service provides individual benefits, the more that service should be paid for through user fees.

BerryDunn has long championed such a philosophy, demonstrated using the “Pyramid Resource Allocation Methodology.” As part of this planning effort, BerryDunn is working to complete a methodology study for the City. The resource allocation/cost recovery pyramid is in Figure 14. This philosophy, when applied appropriately can assist the Department to set consistent fees and charges and best meet the needs of the Meridian community.

**Figure 14: Resource Allocation Methodology**



### Meridian Community Members Opinions about Fees and Charges

The needs assessment survey asked respondents about their satisfaction with current fees for both facilities and programs and the impact on participation. More than half of the invite sample were unsure about fees for facilities and programs. Very few respondents (5%) believe the fees are too high.

Figure 15: Meridian Residents Opinions Regarding Current Program and Facility Fees

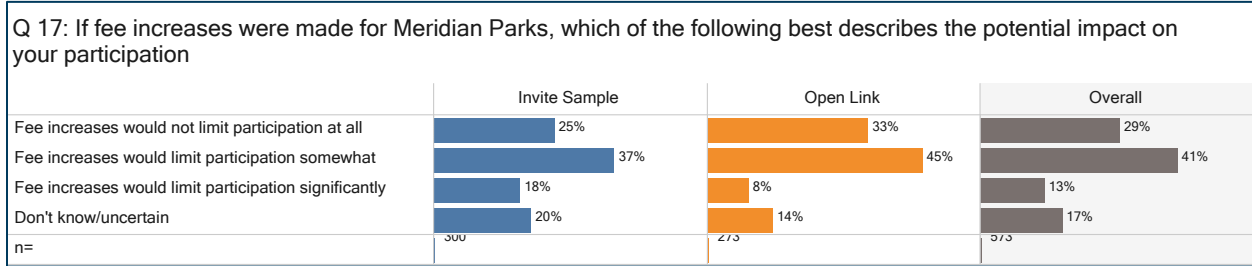
Q 18: How do you feel about the current program and facility fees charged directly to you by Meridian Parks and Recreation?

	Invite Sample	Open Link	Overall
<b>Facilities</b>	Fees are too high for the value received	6%	5%
	Fees are acceptable for the value received	32%	45%
	Fees are underpriced for the value received	2%	5%
	Don't know/unsure	59%	31%
n=	294	268	562
<b>Programs</b>	Fees are too high for the value received	4%	5%
	Fees are acceptable for the value received	35%	56%
	Fees are underpriced for the value received	1%	6%
	Don't know/unsure	59%	32%
n=	283	268	551

When asked about the potential impact of fee increases on participation, there was a lack of consensus on whether fee increases would impact participate, although a majority (54%) believe fee increases may impact their participation.



Figure 16: Potential Impact on Participation from Fee Increases



**Managing growth through impact fees**

There are three basic options to pay for growth. Either (1) existing residents pay for new growth through taxes or fees; (2) provide parks and recreation services at a lower level of service by absorbing growth into existing resources; or (3) developers and home builders pay for the impact of growth so that the growth pays its own way. This applies to both land on which to develop parks, and the actual costs for developing the space.

Option 1 unfairly assigns responsibility for funding of growth. Option 2 creates a slippery slope, where the level of service (often determined as a percentage of developed acreage per 1,000 residents) will decrease over time, as new residential developments are added without contributing to the funding of new parks. This may lead to higher density of use or the need to travel further distances to gain access to parks. Option 3 allows growth to pay its own way in an equitable manner. Home builders typically include park development in the price of the homes, as they would other infrastructure costs.

In line with the City’s 2019 methodology study and 67-8204 (16) of the Idaho Development Impact Fee Act, park impact fees are derived using the cost per service unit multiplied by the average number of service units per dwelling. In Table 2, single family residential dwelling units are considered by square feet and multi-family units are charged the same fee and calculated based on the total square feet of the building/number of units. Although an option, no commercial impact fees are collected (police and fire facilities both collect a commercial impact fee). This fee is intended to provide both park land and development of new park improvements.

**Table 3: 2023 Park Impact Fees**

1000 SQ feet or less	\$781
1001 to 1500 SQ Feet	\$1,361
1501 to 2500 SQ Feet	\$1,770
2501 to 3200 SQ Feet	\$2,098
3201 Sq feet or more	\$2,447

These fees are charged per the City fee schedule and are not escalated resulting from increased cost of construction or land. The 2022 methodology study calculations may be understating the cost to provide new park space in 2022 and in the future without applying an annual escalator. Cash flow from impact fees can be anticipated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Anticipated Funds from impact Fees through 2050**

					Anticipated Funds from Impact Fees		
	Population	Population Growth	Average Household Size	Number of Anticipated New Dwelling Units	Low Fees (Based on \$781 collected per dwelling unit)	Median Fees (Based on \$1,614 per dwelling unit)	High Fees (Based on \$2,447 per dwelling unit)
2021	124,700	N/A	2.97	N/A			
2026	142,522	17,732	2.97	5,970	\$4,662,570	\$9,345,060	\$14,608,590
2060	197,463	54,941	2.97	18,498	\$14,446,938	\$29,855,772	\$45,264,606

### Funding Mechanisms Available to the Department

BerryDunn has compiled a list of potential funding sources and strategies for public parks and recreation identified through over 26 years of consulting with agencies across the United States. Thirty-nine new potential funding opportunities were identified as funding sources the Department could or would consider in the future. The strategies were identified as potential options for new or expanded revenue, and cost savings strategies.

### Traditional Parks and Recreation Operations and Capital Development Funding Sources

There are a variety of mechanisms that local governments can employ to provide services and to make public improvements. Parks and recreation operating, and capital development funding typically comes from conventional sources such as sales, use, and property tax referenda voted upon by the community, along with developer exactions. Operating funds are typically capped by legislation; may fluctuate based on the economy, public spending, or assessed valuation; and may not always keep up with inflationary factors. In the case of capital development, “borrowed funds” sunset with the completion of loan repayment and are not available to carry over or re-invest without voter approval. Explained below are the salient points of traditional funding sources. Many of these strategies may be currently in use to some extent by your agency.

### Alternative Operations and Capital Development Funding Sources

Alternative funding sources include a variety of different or nonconventional public-sector strategies for diversifying the funding base beyond traditional tax-based support. The following is a list of known industry funding practices, potential sources, and strategies, as compiled by BerryDunn. Some of the strategies might currently be used by your agency, but they might not be used to maximum effectiveness or capacity. Those that might not currently be used by your agency should be considered for a projects or the operation's specific relevance.

*NOTE: Not every funding mechanism on this list may be allowable by law, as the laws, regulations, statutes, ordinances, and systems of governance vary from City to City, county to county, and state to state. The authority to put forth referenda or institute exactions must be researched for validity within your City and your state, as this list is comprised of the financial practices from across the nation. Some referenda are passed by simple majority of those who vote, while others require a larger percentage to pass. In certain circumstances, referenda are passed by the majority of eligible voters versus just those who vote.*

## Key Findings

Observations and staff feedback were considered to determine if the current organizational structure and financial investments were satisfactory. The analysis included the observations and assessments from this analysis and resulted in the following observations:

1. The City invests less than the Median number of positions compared to typical agencies the size of Meridian. They need to add 5 to 6 positions in order to come in line with typical staffing.
2. Population growth will require additional positions in addition to those identified to maintain the current level of service.
3. The number of positions dedicated to administration and to parks maintenance and operations are below what would typically be expected. Staffing for recreation program areas is often limited to one employee.
4. The department does an excellent job managing cost recovery
5. The recent resource allocation and cost recovery study will greatly assist the Department to allocate resources and set fees in the future
6. Just under half of the needs assessment survey respondents suggested that fees are acceptable or underpriced for both facilities and programs. A very small percent of survey respondents through fees were too high.
7. 70% of needs assessment survey respondents reported that fee increases may impact participation in Department sponsored activities
8. The City's investment in operating the parks and recreation system was slightly lower than what may be expected for an agency serving a similar population but was within the typical range. This investment was through lowest among other selected Idaho parks and recreation agencies
9. While the City's impact fee methodology is very current, fees established in the 2019 methodology study are not escalated for increases in construction and land costs which

since 2020 have grown significantly. This leaves the Department with potential underfunded park land and development funding.

10. Among many opportunities to fund the Department, 39 options were identified that the Department would consider or possibly consider using in the future.

## Maintenance and Operations Analysis

### Maintenance and Operations Analysis

The consultants assessed parks maintenance and operations practices to assist the Parks and Recreation Department in providing safe, clean, and green parks, trails, and open space. The evaluation, analysis, and recommendations are intended to identify efficiencies and opportunities to help the Department meet its maintenance and operational objectives.

#### 1.0 Investment in Parks Maintenance and Operations

Proper investment in maintenance of parkland can slow the depreciation of parkland, increase public perception of Department operations, and increase property values surrounding parks. Poor parks maintenance can lead to increased crime, vandalism, and increased renovation costs.

#### 1.1 Operating Expenditures Per Acre

One way to measure the City's investment in parks and recreation is to look at the investment per acre of park and non-park space. Currently, the Department manages and maintains 530 acres of developed and undeveloped park land and open space, trails, and other sites. The Department investment for maintenance (annual net cost after revenue) is \$1,952,204 (2021/2022 operating budget) or \$3,683 per acre. Typical agencies may spend from \$3,096 (low) to \$14,793 (high), with a median of \$7,449 per acre of park and non-park space.

#### 1.2 Residents Per Park

Park maintenance costs typically increase with the density of use in public spaces. As such, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) metrics (2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review) suggest that a typical park system serving a population between 100,000 and 250,000 would provide between one park per 2,205 people on the lower quartile to 5,854 on the upper quartile. The City provides one park per 4,992 people compared to a national median of 3,170. While the City provides parks within the typical range for communities its size, serving a denser population than the median creates additional budget pressure for the Department. People per park is calculated based on the 2021 population (124,790) divided by Meridian's 25 parks.

#### 1.3 Managing Growth

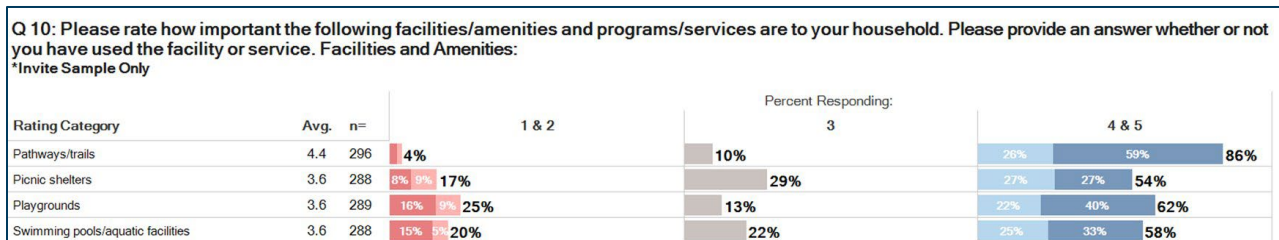
In November 2022, DP Guthrie, LLP completed an update to the City's impact fee methodology that describes the potential residential growth and need for additional park land, park

development, and recreation facilities. The study projected that the population would increase by 38,433 to 171,903 in 2032. Based on this growth, the study concluded that an additional 87 acres of developed parks will be needed to support the increased population at a similar level of service as Meridian residents enjoy today. Applying the current cost to maintain an acre of land, \$3,683 per acre, (current budget/current acres of developed parks), an additional \$320,421 will be needed to continue to maintain the park system. This will require both full-time and seasonal positions (supervisory and non-supervisory), operating and maintenance equipment, and supplies. A majority of the growth is anticipated to occur by 2026. These estimates are based on costs in 2022 without escalation for inflation.

## 2.0 Use of Department Parks and Pathways

The needs assessment survey identified community needs and desires regarding park use and related facilities and amenities. The survey revealed that 96% of survey respondents rated pathways/trails as having the greatest need, followed by picnic shelters at 83% and playgrounds at 75%. See Figure 1. Importance to the community implies a need for an appropriate level of park maintenance.

**Figure 1: Importance of Facilities and Amenities, Recreation Programs, and Services to Meridian**



## 2.1 Satisfaction with Parks and Park Amenities

The survey demonstrated that the community is very satisfied with the quality of the parks, which reflects on park maintenance practices. On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), the results from the combined random and invite sample rated playgrounds (4.0), picnic shelters (3.9), splash pads (3.7), and ballfields (3.7) the highest. When asked to rank their top three opportunities for improvement, only 27% of survey respondents suggested improvements in park maintenance as a priority. See Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Needs Met for Facilities and Amenities in Meridian

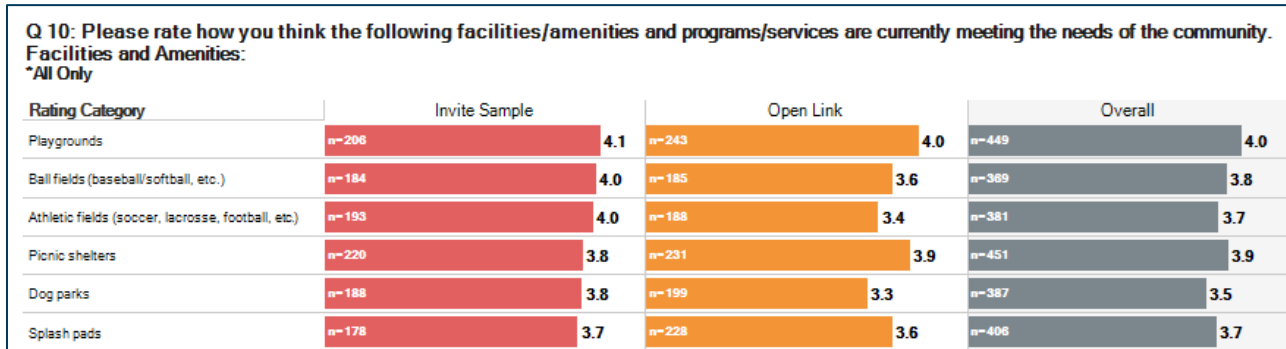
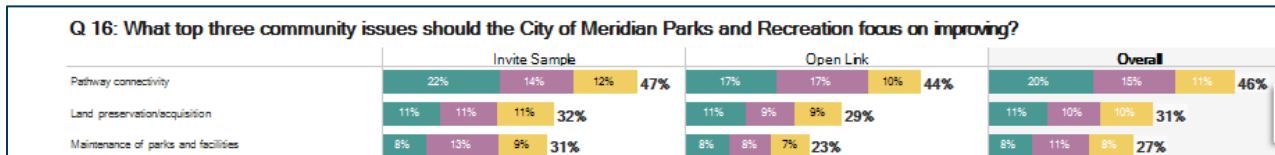


Figure 3: Top Three Community Issues the City of Meridian Parks and Recreation Should Focus on Improving



### 3.0 Park Maintenance Staffing Resources

The Department provides 18 full-time positions to operate and maintain the parks and facilities. The positions are overseen by the Parks Superintendent who is supported in the daily operation of the parks and golf course by the Park Maintenance Manager and Golf Course Superintendent. Three positions are dedicated to maintaining the turf, greens, t-boxes, fairways, and other horticultural practices at the golf course.

In addition, the Parks Maintenance Manager is responsible for 11.5 seasonal/casual Full-Time equivalents (FTE) positions. The seasonal employees are limited to eight consecutive months of work and at times are offered extended positions through local temporary employment agencies. The budget for seasonal/casual maintenance positions is approximately \$400,000 per year.

Staff work five-day-per-week schedules, rotating weekend work shifts. Daily maintenance, trash removal, project work, restroom maintenance, etc. are completed daily. The Department uses some limited contracted services to support some of the smaller operations and tasks.

Due to COVID-19 and other factors, hourly wages for the seasonal/casual workforce have been significantly increased (30%) over the past two years to attract and retain staff. As a result, the budget in 2023 is anticipated to support four less FTEs than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the maintenance team continues to work efficiently “doing more with less”, the increased workloads on existing staff may not be sustainable, leading to additional challenges related to employee retention. Restoration of the seasonal staff budget (~\$120,000) due to the increased wages is encouraged.

### **3.1 The Lakeview Golf Course**

The full-time golf course staff are supplemented by a seasonal budget of \$58,000 per year. Seasonal employees perform mowing and other outdoor maintenance. Employees are offered a golf benefit to maintain and attract college students, retired community members, etc.

### **4.0 Park Maintenance Team Responsibilities**

The Maintenance team is responsible for 92 sites that include neighborhood, community, sports, and regional parks, seven miles of pathways, parking lots, tree wells, public works sites, medians, corridors, slopes, downtown locations, fire stations, drains, and other areas. A majority of time is spent maintaining the Department's parks. Additional responsibilities include:

- Snow and ice control at all City facilities
- Downtown trees, benches
- Downtown holiday decorating/floats
- Security camera systems in parks
- Downtown seasonal banners
- Welcome to Meridian monuments and signs
- Downtown flower program
- Downtown tree program

The Department manages a joint use agreement with West Ada School District that includes maintenance of a very well used 3-acre play area at Hillsdale Elementary that requires significant maintenance.

The Department is assisted through additional partnerships that include Meridian Co-op Gardeners, West Ada School District, Police Activities League, Meridian Youth Baseball, etc.

### **4.1 Support for Recreation Events**

The Maintenance Team's support of special events setup/teardown is generally around 650 to 800 work hours per year.

Permitted events (non-City sponsored) present a significant level of work for the Maintenance Team during the June/July months. Events held and permitted in the parks require the team to prepare and clean the parks and facilities for each event.

### **4.2 Maintaining Restrooms**

Year-round restrooms include 150+ stalls and are locked and unlocked on timers. Restroom maintenance requires a significant proportion of the daily workload.

#### 4.3 Maintaining Athletic Facilities

The maintenance team maintains 25 diamond and 13 rectangle playing fields, some with shared responsibility with a private little league organization that completes day-of game field preparation. The Meridian Youth Baseball (MYB) private organization works closely with the Department to help ensure adequate rest periods for the fields. It appears the Department has adequate resources to maintain the playing fields.

#### 4.4 Nuisance Behavior

In many communities across the United States, issues due to vandalism and homelessness are placing an ever-growing burden on park maintenance team workloads. The impacts from nuisance behavior are relatively minimal in Meridian.

#### 4.5 Park Maintenance Standards and Performance Measures

The Department does not have a published maintenance standard, although the parks all receive a high level of consistent maintenance, regardless of classification. Both written and adopted maintenance standards and performance measures are encouraged to help with appropriate and timely park maintenance.

##### Performance Measures

The Department is encouraged to develop S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound) performance measures in the following and other areas related to core parks maintenance functions. Examples of potential measures are included for reference (in italics).

- Litter control – *All litter should generally be removed from the parks daily within 24 hours. Litter control minimum service may be two to three times per week in very low-use areas.*
- Graffiti – *Should be removed within 48 hours/24 hours if offensive language/graphics. The City should maintain an inventory of replacement signs.*
- Repairs to assets – *Should be made within 48 hours and signs posted closing an amenity needing repair. Repairs to all elements should be done immediately when problems are discovered provided that replacement parts and technicians are available to accomplish the job. When disruptions to the public might be major and the repair is not critical, repairs may be postponed to a time that is least disruptive to the usage patterns.*
- Restroom maintenance and service – *Should be completed daily, each day a restroom is open to the public, and as needed based on permits.*



- Park inspections – *Thorough inspections should be completed weekly; staff should inspect restrooms and playgrounds daily.*
- Irrigation – *Turf should have a green appearance except for dedicated natural areas. Priority areas for irrigation should be reviewed annually.*

### **Park Maintenance Standards for Quality Parks and Facilities**

Some sample maintenance standards are in Appendix 1 of the plan and are meant to be a starting point for the Department to review and consider as a list of basic maintenance standards for all parks and recreational facilities. Examples of park components and amenities to develop maintenance standards for include:

- Drinking Fountains
- Signage
- Ornamental Plants and Trees
- Walkways and Trails
- Trash Receptacles
- Fencing
- Security and Exterior Lights
- General Use Turf Areas
- Athletic Use Turf Areas
- Athletic Facilities and Competitive Play Fields
- Irrigation
- Open Space Areas
- Bleachers
- Lights
- Restrooms
- Portable Toilets
- Playgrounds
- Play Equipment
- Picnic Areas and Shelters
- Grills
- Tennis Courts
- Outdoor Basketball Courts
- Benches
- Pickleball Court

## 5.0 Sustainable Equipment and Efficiencies

The Department has invested in sustainable technology over the past five years in bottle fill drinking fountains, LED lights, etc. The Department may consider a potential future fleet conversion to hybrid, plug-in hybrid, or electric vehicles (EVs). This would require an investment in charging stations.

## 6.0 Key Findings

1. The Parks Management team does an excellent job maintaining parks and grounds. The community is very satisfied with park maintenance.
2. The City's investment in parks maintenance and operation appears reasonable compared to other agencies serving similar sized communities.
3. The Department has sustained a budget reduction to its seasonal and casual budget in the past few years as a result of increased wages. An increase of approximately \$120,000 per year in the seasonal budget is needed to restore the Department's level of maintenance service.
4. Growth will necessitate additional park acres and positions that the Department should consider (frontline and administrative positions) as population increases.
5. Growth will also require supervisory positions to maintain effective spans of control.
6. Written park maintenance standards may assist the Department's effectiveness.

## 5.0 Pathways Assessment & Recommendations

### Introduction

This section is intended as an update to the Meridian Pathways Master Plan (Adopted in 2007 and previously amended in January of 2010) and a tool to further aid in the implementation of that plan. It does not suggest any significant changes to proposed expansion of the pathway system as outlined in the original plan, but rather seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- Quantify the impacts of pathway system expansion in terms of cost for ongoing maintenance, given the significant proposed increase to pathway mileage at plan build-out.
- Establish guidelines for what portion of the pathway system is appropriate and sustainable for the City to maintain.
- Establish City priorities for near-term pathway implementation that will have the greatest impact on connectivity.
- Propose changes to existing policy that will facilitate ongoing expansion and designate maintenance responsibilities so as to meet the needs of the City, the development community, and other stakeholders.

### Pathway System Overview

The current breakdown of Meridian's existing pathways, by type, is as follows:

- 14.8 miles of pathways currently maintained by the City
  - 7.9 miles in parks
  - 6.9 miles along canals and other areas
- 14 miles (approximately) maintained by HOAs and other entities
- **28.8 Miles of Total Developed Pathways**

Provide a breakdown of the various pathway types/surfaces for maintenance purposes. Show what is type of pathway is currently in demand and link this to the need for maintenance.

Per the existing pathways plan, an additional 104.2 miles have been identified for development<sup>14</sup>. This amounts to a total projected mileage at build out of 133 miles.

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<sup>14</sup> Per Dave Peterson, Design Concepts

Numbers per Meridian Pathways Master Plan, current mileage updates per Jay Gibbons.

Provide a graphic that illustrates the 104.2 miles as well as identifies the primary, secondary, and tertiary pathway systems (see Opportunities and Recommendations for more information)

## Importance of Pathways/Need

Pathways make communities more livable by helping to reduce reliance on the automobile, decrease vehicular demand on roadways, and encourage community health and connectivity. A connective pathway system has the potential to improve the environment and mitigate for traffic congestion. Additionally, pathways provide ongoing opportunities to promote physical, social, and mental health. Beyond connecting people to places, pathways also provide ongoing opportunities to educate the community through informative signage, highlight historical events through wayfinding, and allows us to connect interpersonally as a community.

### Need

Throughout the needs assessment and outreach phase of this planning effort, community members consistently rated pathways as a high priority when given opportunity to comment via stakeholder group, survey, and/or public meetings. This reflects a national trend wherein pathways are increasingly important to communities.

While Meridian has identified an extensive pathway system for development, connectivity between existing pathways and proposed pathways continues to be a challenge. Some of the challenges for pathway connectivity are due to existing major roadways that present potential barriers to pedestrian traffic, and existing development that occurred prior to required pedestrian pathway connections.

### Stakeholders

The City of Meridian understands that in order to achieve their pathways master plan goal and create a connective community through the implementation of a pathway network, stakeholder relations are key. Various stakeholders have been identified as follows as potential opportunities for collaboration for supporting the City of Meridian Pathways Master Plan.

- **Irrigation Districts**
  - Nampa-Meridian Irrigation District – Major Stakeholder.
  - Settlers Irrigation District – Fewer land holdings in Meridian.
  - The Boise Project
- **West Ada School District**
  - History of successfully partnering with the school district.
  - Joint use of school facilities plays a key role in filling recreation demand for ball fields and active recreation facilities.

- School properties are important when it comes to making connections, and offer opportunities for safer crossings and connections, further off (or outside of) public rights-of-way.
- **Developers**
  - **Residential Subdivision Developers**
  - **Commercial Developments**
  - **Private Sector Development (religious institutions, etc.)**
- **Landowners adjacent to waterways that have been identified as a pathway opportunity**
- **Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) (residential, commercial, institutional)**
- **City of Meridian – Building Department**
- **ACHD – Right-of-Way Road sections and required sidewalks and their widths**
- **ITD – where applicable**
- **Railroads**
  - Potential for sharing existing rights-of-way that can achieve connection on a more regional level.

## Progress Update/Policies Implemented

Since adoption of the original Meridian Pathways Master Plan, significant progress has been made toward implementation. Much of this has focused on the establishment of policy and planning practices around pathway development that will lay the groundwork for greater connectivity moving forward.

## Policy and Procedural Improvements Achieved Since Approval of Original Plan

- Entitlements process for development now requires dedicated easements for pathways and pedestrian connections that are maintained by the respective HOA's
- Plan review for all new development must be routed through the Pathways Project Manager for design input and approval, in addition to other departments as required.
- Developers are required to provide better documentation of construction standards/as-built for pathways that may later be deeded to the City. Developers must submit the City of Meridian approved pathway pavement section during the design review and preliminary plat submittal.

- Standard specifications, City provided details, and notes for pathway construction have been developed in conjunction with Meridian Public Works—similar to a performance specification.
- Pathway entitlement is no longer a part of the Development Agreement.
- Expectation has been established among developers that working with the City to provide pathway connections will be a standard project requirement. The City has seen improved cooperation and general acknowledgement from the development community that pathways benefit and add value to their final product.
- Larger planter widths adjacent to pathways will allow for mature tree growth and shade for users during the summer months.

## Opportunities/Recommendations

### Maintain a Regional Perspective

- Emphasize the need to look beyond Meridian to neighboring communities and think in terms of regional connections to Boise River Greenbelt, Eagle, Nampa, Caldwell, Star, and Kuna.
- The pending acquisition of Margaret Aldape Park presents an opportunity for Meridian to connect to the Boise River Greenbelt system. This will provide connection to the rest of the Treasure Valley on a regional level to the east
- Connections to adjacent municipalities should be explored and encouraged to develop a seamless transition between the various agencies.
- Develop destination nodes along the pathways that will guide a user from pathway section to pathway section.
- Integrate linear parks and community gathering places along the pathway network. This should be looked at from a hierarchy of uses in coordination with the pathway hierarchy.
- Develop a story and identity for the pathways and relate that to the community. Create community agency and care for the pathways through community art.

### Schools

- Use proximity to schools, when possible, and take advantage of existing signaled crossings in school zones.
- Provide pedestrian connections between all schools and pathway system.
- Safe Routes to Schools have already been mapped.
  - Examine these in greater detail and adjust as necessary.

- Find/create connections between multi-use pathways and schools.

## Equity and Neighborhood Connections

Providing equitable opportunities, spaces, and connections within the City of Meridian through the pathway systems will create a healthier community.

- Identify areas that are more than a 10-minute walk to a City pathways network to create areas of focused pathway development
- Provide development incentives for infill areas that create a 5-minute walk to a City pathway network
- Require wayfinding signage for developments that show distance and direction to another connected pathway.
- Identify community areas that are underserved by the pathway network and link schools with the Saft Routes program.
- Identify ADA accessible routes within the GIS system and make it accessible for the public.
- Establish neighborhood pathway partnerships and community representatives.
- Identify key areas that need pathways for connectivity.
- Identify areas that are more than a 10-minute walk to a pathway system and incentives pathway implementation for equitable use of the pathways.
- Provide wayfinding: educational, distance to next pathway system, and pathway names
- Increase the planter width adjacent to the pathways to encourage health and mature tree grown and canopy cover.

## Subdivision Development

- Continue to work with developers to dedicate pathway easements and make strong pedestrian connections through the use of themed wayfinding signage.
- Pedestrian connections shall be identified, approved, and preserved prior to development.
- Coordinate with developers during the entitlements process to allow alternative routes through developments, regardless of ditch or waterway location (if applicable).
- Require a pathways inspection prior to issuing approval of substantial completion.

## Existing Rights-of-Way

Where pathways must be integrated with public rights-of-way, revise street sections to provide for wider sidewalks and greater separation from major roadways, if possible.

## As-Builts and Documentation

The Building Department shall notify the Parks & Pathways Project Manager of all pathways, once built. Institute mechanisms for better post-construction reporting and documentation.

## Key Stakeholders for Pathway Implementation

In recent years, the City has made significant progress in terms of policy to further development of the pathway system as pertains to involvement by other property owners and stakeholders. This momentum must continue, and relationships further developed, with the following key stakeholders.

### Irrigation Districts

Due to the linear nature of waterways, Irrigation Districts (especially Nampa-Meridian) are key to advancing connectivity of the Meridian pathways plan. It is imperative that the City continues to partner with irrigation districts relative to the following challenges:

- Pathway development along existing canals, irrigation ditches, and laterals needs to be addressed at a more comprehensive level.
- Crossings present a special difficulty in that many waterways do not emerge at intersections where pedestrian crossings exist and are safely articulated. For example, it is not acceptable for pathways to emerge at the edge of a 45 mph collector road with minimal shoulder and no proximity to an intersection for safe crossing.
- In the past, irrigation districts have refused pathway proposals prior to any constructive discussion regarding their development. Both parties now have a history of working together and must continue to fine-tune this partnership as each new pathway segment is implemented.

### Developers

- Residential and commercial developments present challenges when it comes to providing pathway easements. The City must work closely with developers during the planning phases, as it can be prohibitive to accomplish these connections after the fact.
- Allow for development incentives for pathways with added amenities and larger open space dedication

## Implementation and Maintenance Priorities

Because so many miles of pathway have been identified for development per the Pathways Master Plan, it is recommended that City resources focus on implementation and maintenance



of the following major components of the system. Once a strong framework is established, users will enjoy greater connectivity, and secondary pathways can then tie into and expand the reach of the overall system.

The following pathways have been identified as high priorities for Capital Improvement Projects and maintenance funds. This is intended as a general guideline for resource allocation by the City, as timing and location of private development may catalyze construction of lower priority pathways by others.

**Table 5: Capital Improvement Projects**

High Priority Pathways	Existing Miles	Proposed Miles	Total Miles
Five-Mile Creek Pathway	2.37	8.64	11.01
Ten-Mile Creek Pathway	2.03	9.00	11.03
Rail-with-Trail	0	8.08	8.08
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED</b>			<b>30.18 Miles</b>

### Regional Impact of Rail-with-Trail

This proposed pathway will have a significant impact on regional connectivity, as it will encompass a 22- mile right of way, with eight of those miles passing through the City of Meridian. The combination Rail- with-Trail section, as proposed, will run between the historic railroad depots in Boise and Nampa.

#### Pathways Hierarchy (see details for additional information and requirements)

- 12' Wide Major Destination Pathway
- 6' Wide Neighborhood Destination Route
- 3' Wide Recreational Trail

Development of the Meridian Pathways Master Plan and network will provide an added benefit to the neighboring jurisdictions and collaboration with these jurisdictions will be crucial for the overall success of a regional pathway system for the grater Meridian area. Developing pathway connections with adjacent jurisdictions and create a bridge program that will aide in creating a seamless transition between the pathways at the jurisdictional boundaries. Other organizations such as COMPASS, regional partners, and federal grant programs should be considered at the beginning of the planning and implementation process.

### All Other Proposed Pathways

It is anticipated that implementation of this pathway will be driven largely by private developers, with ongoing maintenance provided by Homeowners' Associations. It is recommended that there be a clear hierarchy of pathways that apply for various situations. Determine where to

have a concrete versus asphalt pathway installed based on what the use of each type of pathway will be.

## Implementation Costs for Plan Build-Out

Even with a mandate to focus resources on the development of a few high-priority segments, cost to construct these pathways will be considerable. At the time of this plan, **construction cost for a 10' wide asphalt path was approximately \$70 per lineal foot**, or \$369,600 per mile. For estimating purposes, this figure includes base material and preparation, as well as asphalt paving, but no administrative or design costs associated with construction.

Pathways have been identified as a major priority for the City of Meridian but given the demands on public funds for other recreational facilities, the cost for build-out of the pathway system must necessarily be considered within a greater funding context and borne, in large part, by private sector development. It is recommended that the City seek donor or sponsorship for pathway implementation and funding where possible such as state, federal, public, and private, corporate entities.

## Pathway Maintenance and Operations

### Implications of System Expansion on Maintenance

With growth in recent years, the City has taken advantage of opportunities to develop pathway connections through proposed developments. Verbiage around these development agreements continues to evolve, but in the past, situations have arisen in which the City has been deeded ownership (and associated maintenance) of a pathway not constructed to City standards.

It is essential to establish mechanisms for construction documentation of pathways that will guarantee new segments are built to City standards, not only to ensure public safety, but to also minimize maintenance impacts over time. A City inspection should be required prior to issuing substantial completion to insure that it has been installed per the City of Meridian's approved pathway section details.

### Need for Shared Responsibility

As time goes on, even with high standards for construction, the pathway system will grow beyond the ability of the City to maintain it. Ultimate responsibility for maintenance of the pathway system must be shared between the City and private landowners (often Homeowners' associations). It is recommended that the City transition to requiring that maintenance of future pathways implemented as part of subdivision developments be borne by private stakeholders and adjacent landowners. It is also recommended that the City establish a timeline for maintenance inspections and replacement activities. Asphalt inspected every five years after installation, concrete inspected every 10 years after installation, and recreational trails inspected every three years. This information should be updated in the City's GIS system so that it is explicitly known what needs inspection and when replacement will be required.

Evaluate pathway successes and those that need improvement to keep refining the implementation and development process.

### Linear Rights-of-Way/Canal Pathways

Irrigation district requirements for pathway development:

- City acts as single point of contact
- City must maintain pathway segments or coordinate maintenance with private sector/HOAs
- City must enforce irrigation district requirements with other parties

Individual licensing agreement recommendations:

- Require HOAs to maintain pathways, in perpetuity, to standards for safe public use and established landscape aesthetics
- Incorporate strong wording in these agreements to make clear to private developers that the City will no longer assume long-term maintenance of pathways.
- Shall institute mechanisms for enforcement and oversight.
- Establish neighborhood pathway partnerships and community representatives.

### Replacement Cycle for Paved Pathways

Clear delineation of maintenance responsibility is a necessity, owing to the limited life span of asphalt pavement (30 years on average). In order for pathways to remain safe and well-maintained as the system ages, a portion of paved pathway segments will require periodic re-paving on an ongoing basis.

In other words, similar to the way City trees are pruned on a five-year cycle, so must pathways be resurfaced on a periodic maintenance rotation. It is recommended that there be an updated master plan in GIS that show existing pathways and their surfaces as well as proposed pathways that Meridian will build/maintain. The system will allow for tracking and budgeting for future maintenance activities.

### Life Cycle Repaving Costs

Assuming a total pathway system comprised of 133 miles of pathway that require re-paving every 30 years, estimated minimum cost to repave the entire system is as follows:

133 miles of pathway x \$369,600/mile = \$49.2 million every 30 years

or = \$1,638,560 annually

Additional pathways proposed in the Master Plan are desired by the community and essential to the ultimate success of the plan. **However, because this increased mileage carries**

**significant cost implications, maintenance of the system in its entirety will ultimately lie beyond the resources of the City.**

### Assumptions:

- Unit cost to repave is calculated at \$70 per lineal foot or \$369,600 per mile for a 10-foot wide asphalt pathway.
- Average lifespan of pathway segment is 30 years.
- Priority pathways include:
  - Five Mile Creek Pathway
  - Ten Mile Creek Pathway
  - Rail-With-Trail

## Relevant Studies and Planning Efforts

The following studies, completed since the Pathways Master Plan (adopted 2007; amended 2010, 2012) should be considered relative to the existing plan and recommendations contained in this chapter.

- Arterial Crossing Study
- Union Pacific Railroad/Rail with Trail Study (January 2015)
- Destination Downtown
  - Information gathering and updates to downtown streetscapes
  - Includes detailed pavement sections, also standard notes and specifications

## Summary

Significant progress has been made toward implementation of the current Pathways Master Plan. Because connectivity continues to be a challenge, it is recommended that the City focus implementation efforts on a few priority pathways.

Beyond that, given the extent of the proposed system and an understanding of the projected costs for build-out and ongoing maintenance, it becomes clear that these demands will, over time, exceed the resources of the City. Moving forward, it will be crucial to shift some of the construction burden to private developers, who will typically retain ownership and maintenance responsibilities for these pathways, so they may better contribute to the sustainability and success of the overall system. Pathways staff will need to expand as the pathway network expands. Inspections of new construction and maintenance inspections will take time. Increased staff will be needed to review and approve all plans that include pathways. Staff will need to expand to maintain amenities and trash receptacles, painted striping where applicable, weed

abatement, surface patches and repairs, etc. There is also a need to create an updated master plan that show existing pathways and their surfaces as well as proposed pathways that Meridian will build and maintain.

## 6.0 What We Have – Parks and Facilities Inventory and Assessment

### Step 1: Inventory – What Do We Have?

In November 2021, the consultant team used the Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process (GRASP)®-IT audit tool in each park and facility to count and score the function and quality of:

- **Components** – things you go to a park to use, examples: playground, tennis court, picnic shelter
- **Modifiers** – things that enhance comfort and convenience, examples: shade, drinking fountains, restrooms

Evaluators assigned a quality value (between 0 and 3) to each park site, component, and modifiers, allowing the comparison of sites and analysis of the overall level of service provided by the Meridian park system. (more detail on GRASP® found in appendix x)

### Assessment Summary

Observations based on visits to each park or facility include the following:

- Parks are very consistent across the board.
  - Well-maintained with high standards
- Restrooms are very clean and well-maintained
- Noted: most of the parks have public art
  - Implementation of a previous plan recommendation plan to create an identity for each individual park
- Addition of bike repair stations in many parks
- Many of the parks can benefit aesthetically from increased use of berms and landforms
- Turf conditions are excellent
- There is a high priority to plant trees in many of the parks

**Figure 17: System inventory examples (right) Photos depict various examples and conditions from those visits.**

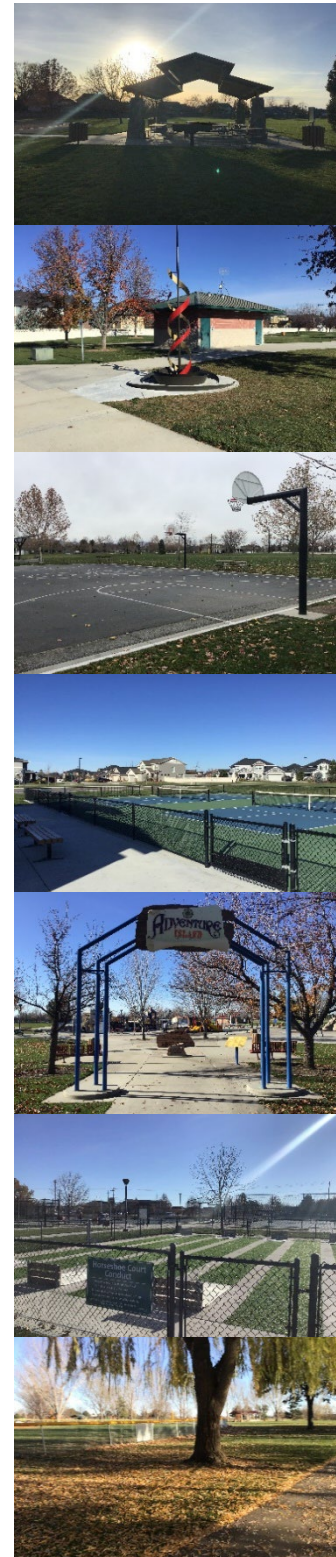


Figure 18: Example of Keith Bird Legacy Park scorecard and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) inventory. See the Inventory Atlas, a supplemental document to the Master Plan.

Keith Bird Legacy Park  
City of Meridian



<b>Keith Bird Legacy Park</b>	
Address: 3737 W Lost Rapids Dr, Meridian, ID 83646	<b>Park Overview:</b> Newer construction. The park is typical for Meridian neighborhood park. Lots of seating, nice amenities
GIS Acres 7.50	<b>Park Cumulative Scores:</b>
Owner City of Meridian	57 52
Classification: Neighborhood	GRASP® Community Score
Inventory Date: 11/17/2021	GRASP® Neighborhood Score

**Comfort and Convenience Scores:**

2 -Design and Ambiance	1 -Trail Connection	2 -Dog Pick-Up Station
2 -Park Access	0 -Seasonal Plantings	2 -Bike Parking
2 -Parking	2 -Picnic Tables	2 -Drinking Fountains
2 -Restrooms	2 -BBQ Grills	2 -Ornamental Plantings
		2 -Security Lighting

Components:	MAP ID	N Score	C Score	Qty	Lights	Observations
Basketball, Practice	C157	2	2	1		Half court
Fitness Area	C146	2	2	1		
Loop Walk	C144	2	2	1		
Open Turf	C192	2	2	1		
Other	C193	2	2	2		Game tables in the plaza with checkers or chess board
PARCEL	L155	2	2	1		
Playground, Local	C145	2	2	1		
Public Art	C191	2	2	1		Sculpture
Rectangular Field, Large	C147	2	2	1		
Shelter, Large	C156	2	2	1		

N Score = Neighborhood Score / C Score = Community Score / Qty = Quantity

Team members created a scorecard and GIS inventory map for each park in Meridian. The Inventory Atlas provided as a supplemental document to the Master Plan includes all parks and facilities.







## Indoor Facilities

Indoor facilities are summarized in the following table.

**Table 7: Indoor Facility summary**

Indoor Facility	Arts and Crafts	Aquatic, Pool	Fitness / Dance	Gallery	Gymnasium	Kitchen	Kitchen - Kitchennette	Multi-purpose	Patio / Outdoor seating	Playground	Retail / Pro-shop	Weight / Cardio Equipment
Boys and Girls Club	1				1	1		6				
City Hall				2				1				
Cole Valley Christian School					2							
Heritage Middle School					1							
Homecourt					4			1				
Meridian Academy					1							
Meridian Community Center								2				
Meridian Middle School					1							
Meridian Senior Center				1			1	5	1		1	
Paramount Elementary School					1							
Tomlinson South Meridian YMCA		1	3		2	1		4		1		1
Victory Middle School					2							
Willow Creek Elementary School					1							

## Pathways Summary

From the 2020 Pathways Plan, "The City of Meridian currently has nearly 12 miles of paved pathways. However, all the pathways within the City of Meridian are discontinuous, making it more difficult for residents to utilize and access the full pathway system. Many existing parks have internal circulation pathways connected to the larger network, providing excellent destinations and resting points along the pathway network."

"The City of Meridian is platted on a square-mile grid distinguished by major collector/minor arterial roads every mile. Many of these roads carry heavy traffic volumes at traffic speeds of 35 mph and above, making non-signalized at-grade crossings difficult. In addition, Interstate 84 bisects the north and south portions of the City, limiting the number of pathway connections that can be made across the freeway."

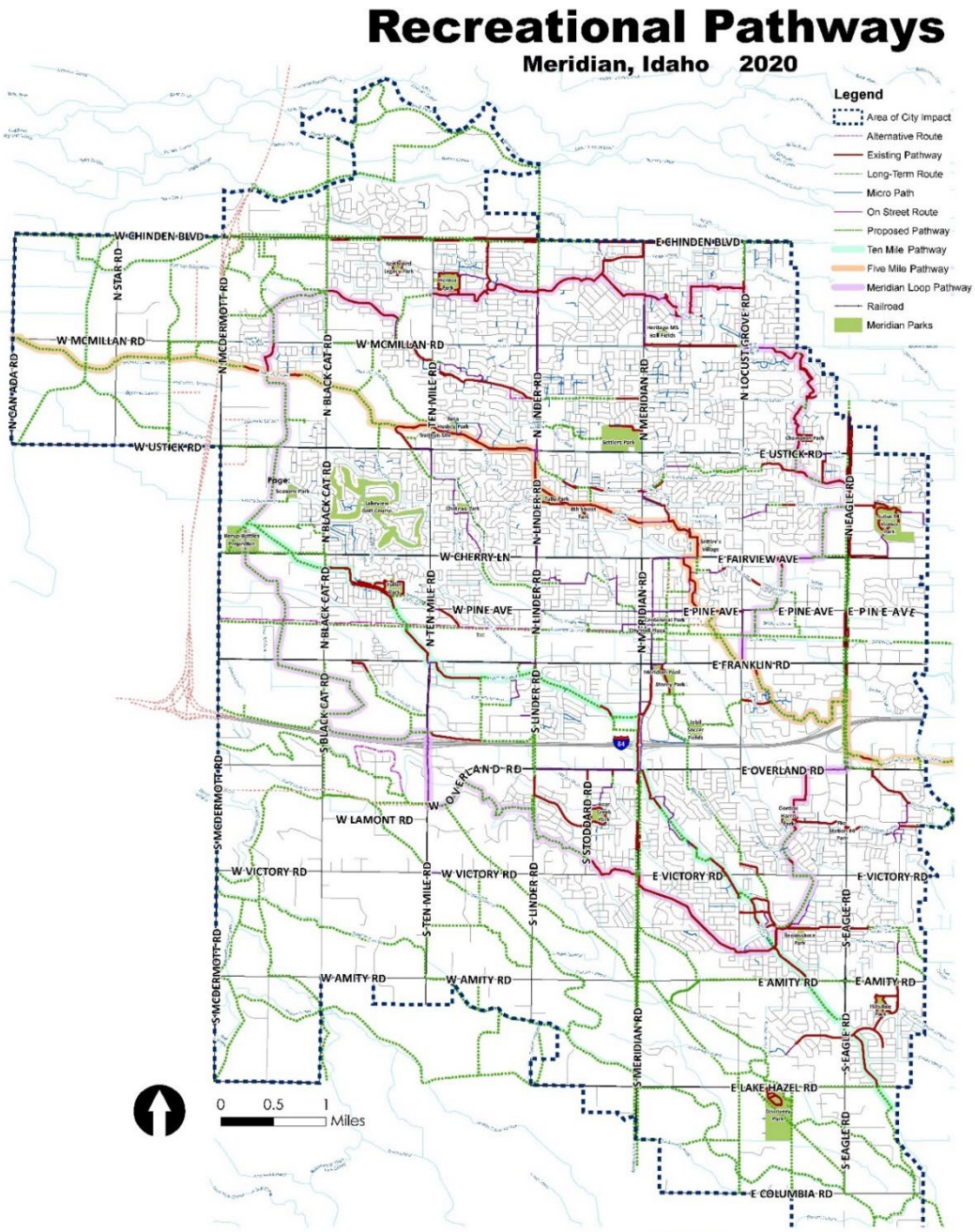
"The existing City of Meridian pathway system is a tremendous resource. The City needs to focus on filling in the existing gaps within the built out portion of the City in the future. At the same time, residential development implements the pathways plan in the undeveloped portions of Meridian."

"The Meridian Pathways Master Plan is a guide for pathway development over the next 20 to 50 years. The Plan proposes an extensive pathway network stemming from the existing canal system within and around the City. The Plan includes an inventory of existing pathways and micro-paths and a comprehensive network of future pathways. These pathways will connect

residents to schools, parks, businesses, neighborhoods, and various recreational and entertainment destinations."

GIS Data from this map was incorporated into the level of service analysis

**Figure 19: Pathways Map**



## Park Classifications

See [appendix x](#) for more information on park classifications.

### Component-Based Level of Service Classification

In general, the Meridian Park Classification System appears to work well with the current inventory. Each class of parks or facilities fall within reasonable ranges for acres and quantity of GRASP® components. The following table summarizes the classification system by park, component diversity, total components, and acres.

Based on existing conditions, parks fall into the following classifications.

**Table 8: Park Classification Summary**

Classification	Location	Diverse Components	Total Components	Acres
Regional Parks	Discovery Park	11	13	77
	Julius M. Kleiner Park	25	39	56
	Settlers Park	15	33	56
Community Parks	Bear Creek Park	11	13	19
	Fuller Park	11	16	17
	Heroes Park	10	11	30
	Hillsdale Park	7	8	10
	Storey Park	8	10	18
	Tully Park	12	13	18
Neighborhood Parks	8th Street Park	5	5	3
	Centennial Park	6	6	0.5
	Champion Park	7	8	6
	Chateau Park	8	9	7
	Gordon Harris Park	5	5	11
	Keith Bird Legacy Park	8	8	7
	Renaissance Park	8	9	7
	Reta Huskey Park	8	10	9
	Seasons Park	7	8	7

Classification	Location	Diverse Components	Total Components	Acres
	Settlers Village Park	1	1	0.6
<b>Special Use (Sports Park, Golf, Trailhead)</b>	City Hall Plaza	6	6	1
	Fire Station No.4 Park	2	2	1
	Generations Plaza	4	4	0.2
	Meridian Swimming Pool	3	3	1
	Lakeview Golf Course	2	2	120
	Ten Mile Trailhead	1	1	1

### Alternative Providers

The following alternative providers are located within or near the Meridian boundary and may provide various services.

Park or Facility	Acres	Ownership	Classification	Basketball Court	Concessions	Diamond Field	Diamond Field, Complex	Diamond Field, Practice	Loop Walk	Open Turf	Playground, Local	Rectangular Field, Large	Rectangular Field, Small	Shelter, Large	Shelter, Small	Skate Park	Tennis Court	Water Access, General	Water, Open	
Heritage Middle School Ball Fields	6	West Ada School District	Special Use			4	1													
Jabil Fields	8	West Ada School District	Special Use									2								
USBR Undeveloped	31	Bureau of Reclamation	Undeveloped																	
C.F. McDevitt Park	39	Boise	Neighborhood Park		1	7	1	4	1	1	1	1				1		1	1	
Cameron Park	1	Boise	Neighborhood Park								1	1								
Cottonwood Park	8	Boise	Neighborhood Park	2					1	1	1									
Peppermint Park	7	Boise	Neighborhood Park	1					1	1	1				1		1			
Sycamore Park	7	Boise	Neighborhood Park							1	1			1						

Many Home Owners' Association (HOA) and private providers also provide service throughout Meridian. They account for over 260 acres of additional parkland. These properties often have restricted access to the general public but serve adjacent residents or members. The following table summarizes the total number of each component identified at these facilities based on aerial photography and limited site visits.

Aquatics, Lap Pool	6
Aquatics, Leisure Pool	30
Aquatics, Therapy Pool	1
Basketball Court	9
Basketball, Practice	15
Disc Golf	1
Game Court	1
Horseshoe Court	1
Loop Walk	5
Open Turf	109
Passive Node	6
Playground, Destination	4
Playground, Local	89
Rectangular Field, Multiple	1
Shelter, Large	2
Shelter, Small	49
Tennis Court	5
Volleyball Court	4
Water Feature	1
Water, Open	4

Find additional alternative provider details in [appendix x](#).

## Schools

The analysis recognizes that schools offer some recreation opportunities to the general community but often have limited public access. Some schools also provide valued indoor facilities for programming by the department. Find additional schools data in appendix x.

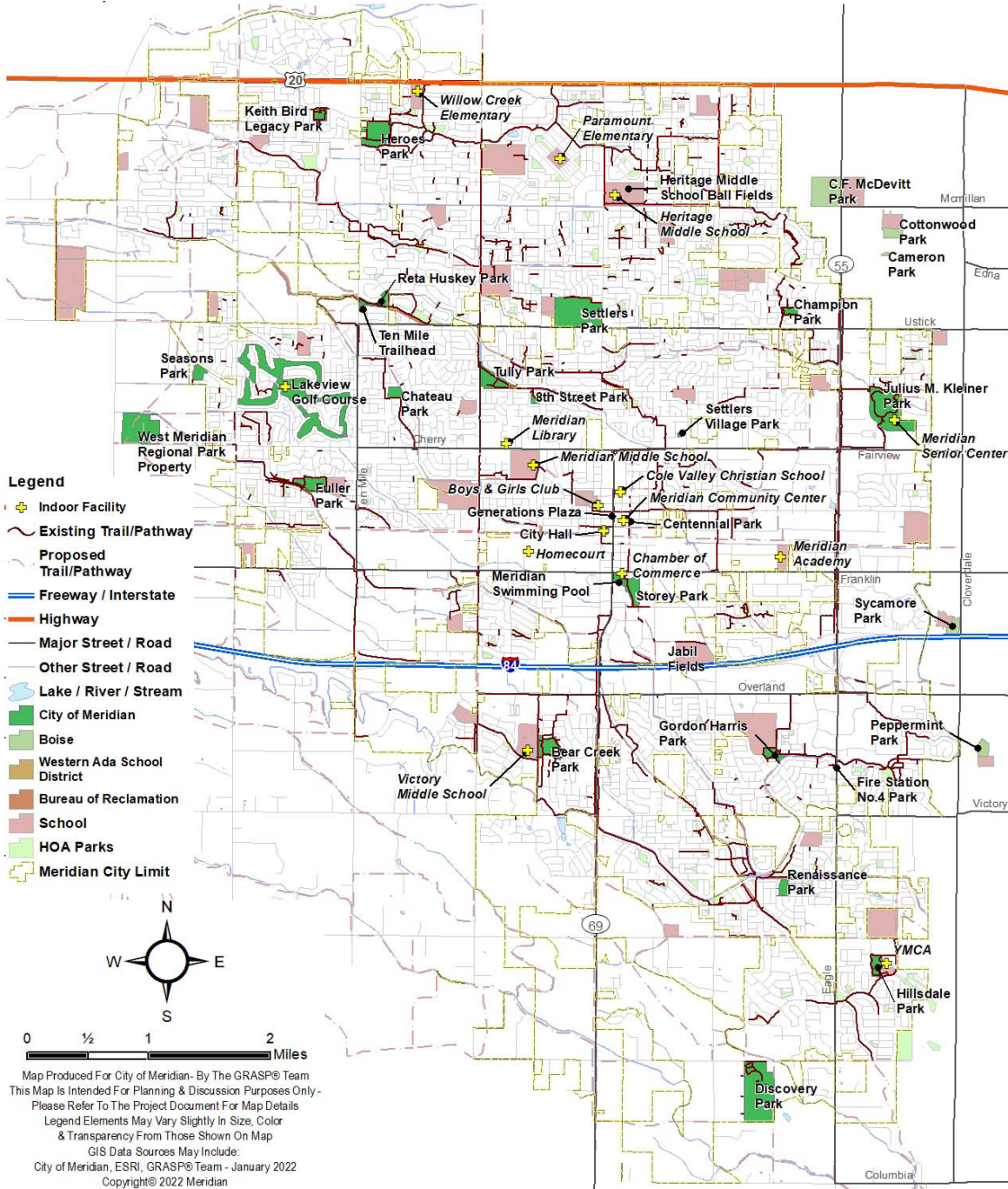
**Table 9: School inventory summary**

Map ID	LOCATION	Playground	Open Turf	Multi-use Court	Basketball	Rectangular Fields, All Sizes	Diamond, Practice	Diamond Ballfield	Shelter, All Sizes	Loop Walk	Volleyball	Tennis	Athletic Track
S13	Barbara Morgan Stem Academy	1	1	1	1	1		1	1				
S35	Central Academy		1										
S15	Chaparral Elementary School	1	1	1	1	1				1			
S12	Chief Joseph Elementary School	1	1	1		1				1			
S39	Compass Public Charter School												
S18	Crossroads Middle School				1	1					1		
S07	Discovery Elementary School	1	1	1						1			
S32	Heritage Middle School				1	1	1			1		1	
S38	Hillsdale Elementary School	1	1	1									
S04	Hunter Elementary School	1	1	1		1							
S17	Lewis & Clark Middle School		1		1	1	1	1		1		1	
S05	Lowell Scott Middle School		1			1	1	1		1		1	
S22	Mary McPherson Elementary School	1	1	1	1	1				1			
S37	Meridian Academy		1					1					
S16	Meridian Elementary School	1	1	1		1	1						
S40	Meridian High School					3		3				6	1
S14	Meridian Middle School		1			1		1		1		1	
S34	Mountain View High School					3		4			2	6	1
S31	Paramount Elementary School	1	1	1	1								
S06	Pathways Middle School		1	1	1								
S21	Pepper Ridge Elementary School	1	1	1	1								
S20	Peregrine Elementary School	1	1	1		1				1			
S01	Pioneer School of the Arts	1	1	1		1	1			1			
S10	Ponderosa Elementary School	1	1	1	1	1			1	1			
S29	Prospect Elementary School	1	1	1		1				1			
S33	Renaissance High School												
S11	River Valley Elementary School	1	1	1	1	1				1			
S36	Rocky Mountain High School					3		4				6	1
S08	Sawtooth Middle School		1		1	1	1			1		1	
S28	Siena Elementary School	1	1	1	1	1				1			
S19	Spalding STEM Academy	1	1	1	1				1				
S09	Ustick Elementary School	1	1	1		1				1			
S02	Victory Middle School				2	2	2					6	1
S27	Willow Creek Elementary	1	1	1	1	1				1			

## System Map

The system inventory map shows Meridian's relative size and distribution of existing parks and recreation facilities.

**Figure 20: System Map. Larger scale maps are located in the appendix.**





## Step 2: Assessment and Analysis - How Are We Doing?

### Park Scoring

Park scoring illustrates how the parks and components serve residents and users. There is no ultimate or perfect score. These scores often make the most sense when compared within the same classification, i.e., when comparing one Community Park to another Community Park. It may be reasonable that there is a wide range of scores within a category. Still, it may also be an opportunity to re-evaluate a park's particular classification based on the level of service it provides to the community or neighborhood it serves. In the case of Discovery Park, it is in Phase I development would mean adding Community and Neighborhood value as further development occurs.

In addition to locating components, the assessment includes quality, function, condition, and modifiers. Cumulative scores reflect the number and quality of these components and the availability of modifiers such as restrooms, drinking fountains, seating, parking, and shade. Higher scores reflect more and better recreation opportunities than lower scores.

**Table 10: Park Scores by Classifications**

#### Regional Parks

Park or Facility	Community Score	Neighborhood Score
Settlers Park	382	166
Julius M. Kleiner Park	339	257
Discovery Park	86	68

#### Community Parks

Park or Facility	Community Score	Neighborhood Score
Fuller Park	91	70
Tully Park	73	62
Bear Creek Park	67	53
Heroes Park	62	52
Storey Park	60	51
Hillsdale Park	43	38

## Neighborhood and Mini Parks

Park or Facility	Community Score	Neighborhood Score
Keith Bird Legacy Park	57	52
Reta Huskey Park	55	44
Renaissance Park	52	47
Chateau Park	48	43
Champion Park	43	38
Seasons Park	43	38
Centennial Park	36	36
Gordon Harris Park	31	31
8th Street Park	29	29
Settlers Village Park	4	4

## Special Uses

Park or Facility	Community Score	Neighborhood Score
City Hall Plaza	34	34
Generations Plaza	24	24
Meridian Swimming Pool	19	14
Lakeview Golf Course	14	14
Fire Station No.4 Park	13	13
Ten Mile Trailhead	10	10
Heritage Middle School Ball Fields	7	2
Jabil Fields	7	4

## Level of Service Analysis

### What is the Level of Service, and why do we use it?

Level of Service (LOS) measures how a system provides residents access to parks, open spaces, pathways, and other facilities. It indicates the ability of people to connect with the outdoors and nature and pursue active lifestyles with implications for health and wellness, the local economy, and quality of life. LOS for a park and recreation system tends to mirror community values, reflective of peoples' connection to their communities. It is also useful in benchmarking current conditions and directing future planning efforts. The service offered by a park or a component is a function of two main variables:

- What is available at a specific location
- How easy it is for a user to get to it.

### What Is GRASP®?

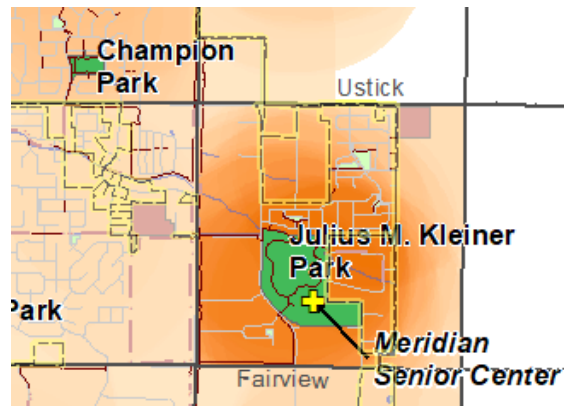
GRASP has been applied in many communities across the country to measure LOS. With GRASP®, information from the inventory combined with GIS software produces analytic maps and data, called perspectives, that show the distribution and quality of these services.

### What Do Perspectives Do for Us?

Perspectives can take the form of maps, statistics, diagrams, tables, and charts. These analyses provide benchmarks or insights useful in determining community success in delivering services. The inventory performed with the GRASP®-IT tool provides details of what is available at any given location, and GIS analysis measures user access. People use various ways of reaching a recreation destination: on foot, on a bike, in a car, via public transportation, or some combination. In GRASP® perspectives, there are two distinct types of service areas for examining the park system to account for this variability:

- Walkable Access - uses a distance of ½ mile, a suitable distance for a ten-minute walk.
- Neighborhood Access - uses a travel distance of one-mile to each component. It is intended to account for users traveling from home or elsewhere to a park or facility, most likely by bike, bus, or automobile.

Combining the service area for each component and the assigned GRASP® score into one overlay creates a "heat" map representing the cumulative value of all components. This allows the LOS to be measured for any resident/user or location within the study area. In the mapping, the darker orange shading, the higher the LOS. Further discussion on perspectives and GRASP® terminology is found in the [appendix](#).



**Figure 21: Example of a GRASP® LOS Perspectives Heat Map**

**Notes:**

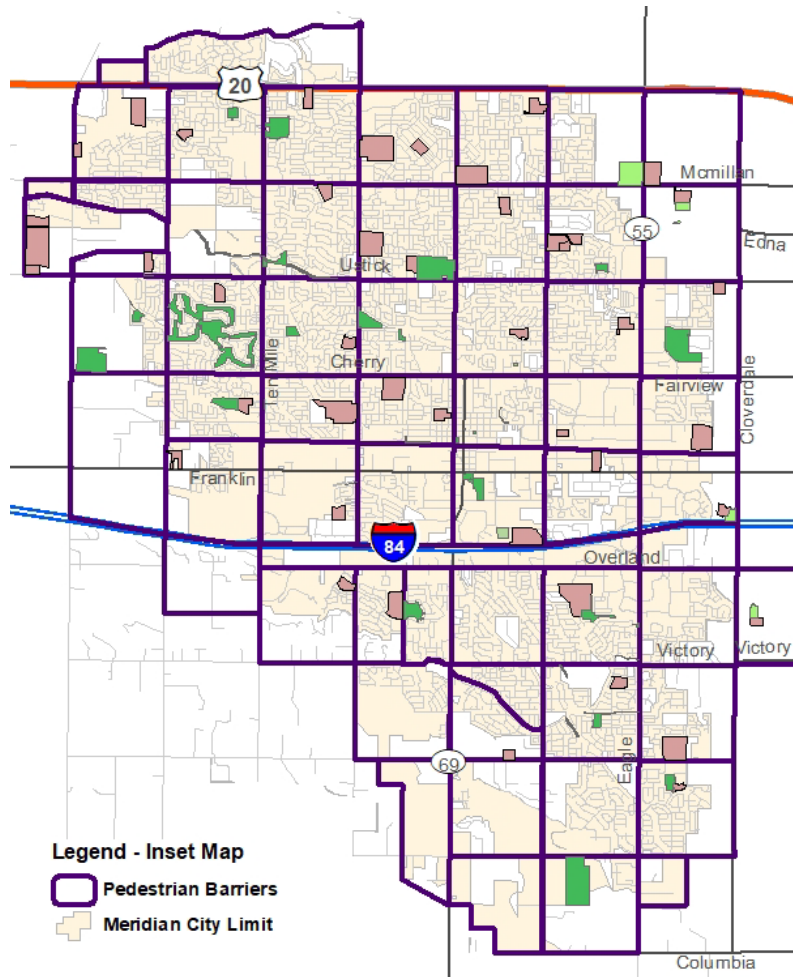
- Proximity relates to access. A component within a specified distance of a location is considered "accessible." "Access" in this analysis does not refer to access as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Walkable access is affected by barriers, obstacles to free and comfortable foot travel. GRASP® analysis accounts for these barriers.
- The LOS value at a particular location is the cumulative value of all the accessible components within a given service area.

## Walkable Access To Recreation

### Pedestrian Barriers

Pedestrian barriers such as major streets, highways, railroads, and rivers significantly impact walkable access in Meridian. Zones created by identified barriers, displayed as dark purple lines, serve as discrete areas accessible without crossing a major street or another obstacle. Various green parcels represent parks and properties, and brown parcels are schools.

**Figure 22: Walkability barriers "cut-off" service areas where applicable. The dark purple boundaries represent pedestrian barriers**



Walkability measures how user-friendly an area is to people traveling on foot and benefits a community in many ways related to public health, social equity, and the local economy. Many factors influence walkability, including the quality of pathways, sidewalks, or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, and public safety considerations.

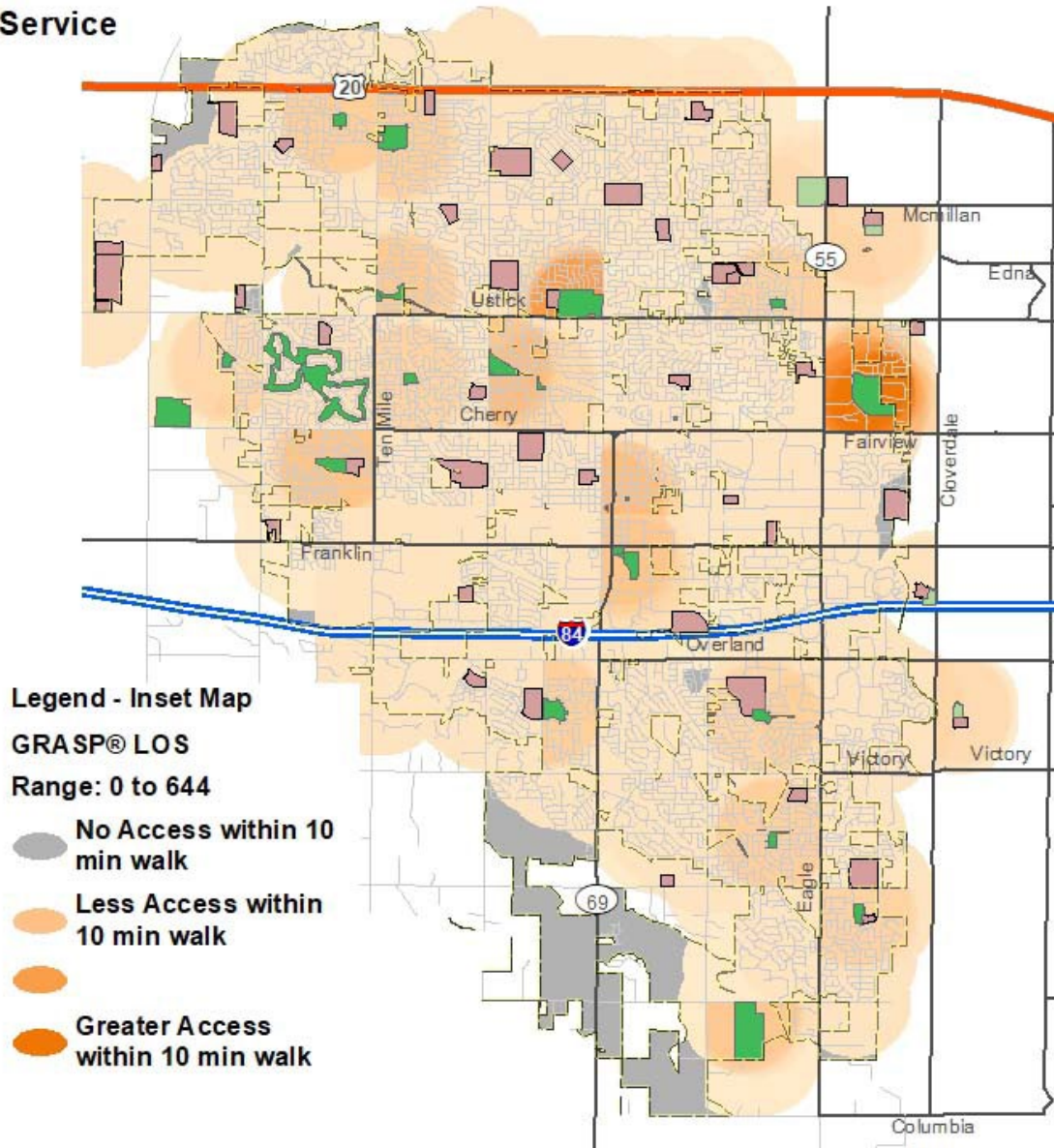
Walkability analysis measures access to recreation by walking. One-half mile catchment radii have been placed around each component and shaded according to the GRASP® score. Scores are doubled within this catchment to reflect the added value of walkable proximity, allowing direct comparisons between neighborhood access and walkable access.

Environmental barriers can limit walkability. The LOS in the walkability analysis has been "cut-off" by identified barriers where applicable.

The following analyses shows the LOS available, based on a ten-minute walk. Gray areas fall outside of a ten-minute walk to recreation opportunities. The images' darker gradient areas indicate higher quality recreation assets based on the ten-minute walk. The first analysis shows only service provided by Meridian parks and the second analysis included Meridian parks and other providers.

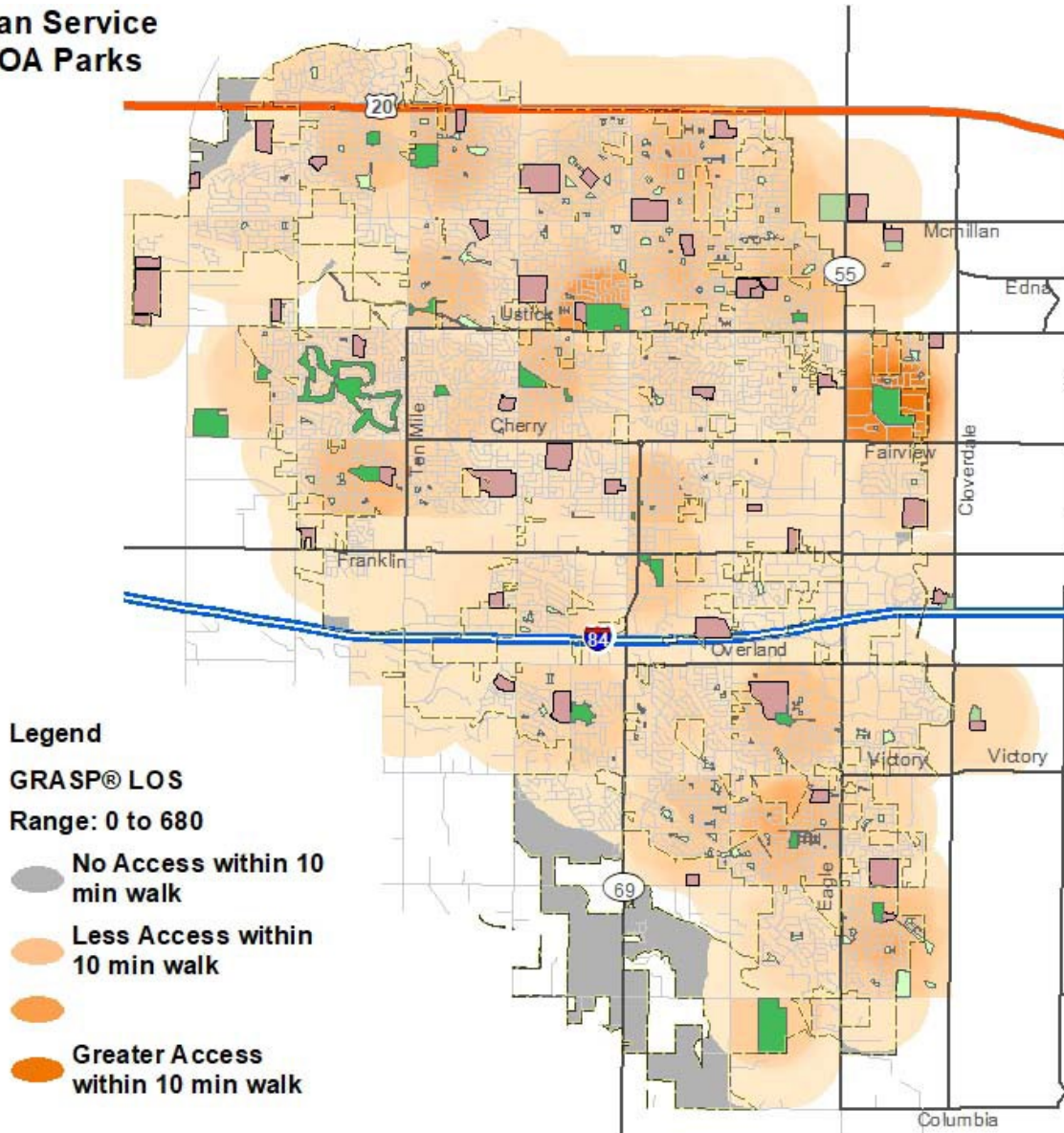
**Figure 23: Walkable access to outdoor recreation opportunities provided by Meridian parks (only)**

**Meridian Service**



**Figure 24: Walkable access to outdoor recreation opportunities by all providers**

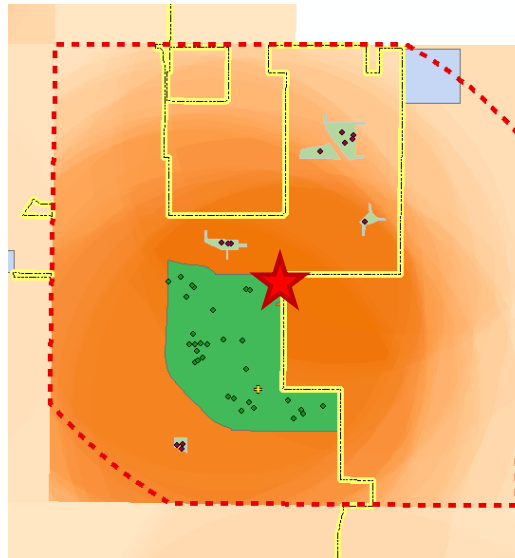
**Meridian Service  
with HOA Parks**



In general, these images show that Meridian has an excellent distribution of parks and facilities. The orange shading in the maps allows for an understanding of LOS distribution across the City. Areas of higher concentration are at several locations throughout the City, but most predominant is around Kleiner Park.

The following figure shows the high-value area near The red star indicates the maximum GRASP® value area. From this location near Kleiner Park, users can access all 39 components at Kleiner Park. In addition, the senior center, five HOA parks (12 components), and an elementary school are all accessible within a ten-minute walk.

**Figure 25: Walk High-Value Area**



While the heat maps are an important tool in looking at equity and distribution of services, they are limited in some areas. For example, they do not indicate what LOS is appropriate. Therefore, additional analysis is performed.

The ability to show where LOS is adequate or inadequate is an advantage of using GIS analysis. First, an appropriate or target LOS for Meridian residents is determined. The target value would be comparable to a typical or average Neighborhood Park in Meridian (see following table). The diversity within these parks represents the critical finding that parks vary greatly yet score similarly in the GRASP® system. Based on the previous plan and analysis a target of a park with at least eight different components or a park with five components and a nearby trail/pathway. Examples of these parks in Meridian are Chateau, Keith Bird Legacy, Renaissance, and Rita Huskey Parks.

**Table 11: Target Park Calculation**

Park or Facility	Acres	Classification	Basketball, Practice	Diamond Field, Practice	Fitness Area	Loop Walk	Open Turf	Pickleball Court	Playground, Local	Public Art	Rectangular Field, Large	Shelter, Large	Shelter, Small	Trail Access Point	Component Diversity	Total Components
Chateau Park	7	Neighborhood	2	1		1	1		1		1		1	1	8	9
Keith Bird Legacy Park	7	Neighborhood	1		1	1	1		1	1	1				8	8
Renaissance Park	7	Neighborhood	2			1	1		1	1	1	1		1	8	9
Reta Huskey Park	9	Neighborhood	1		1	1	1	3	1				1	1	8	10

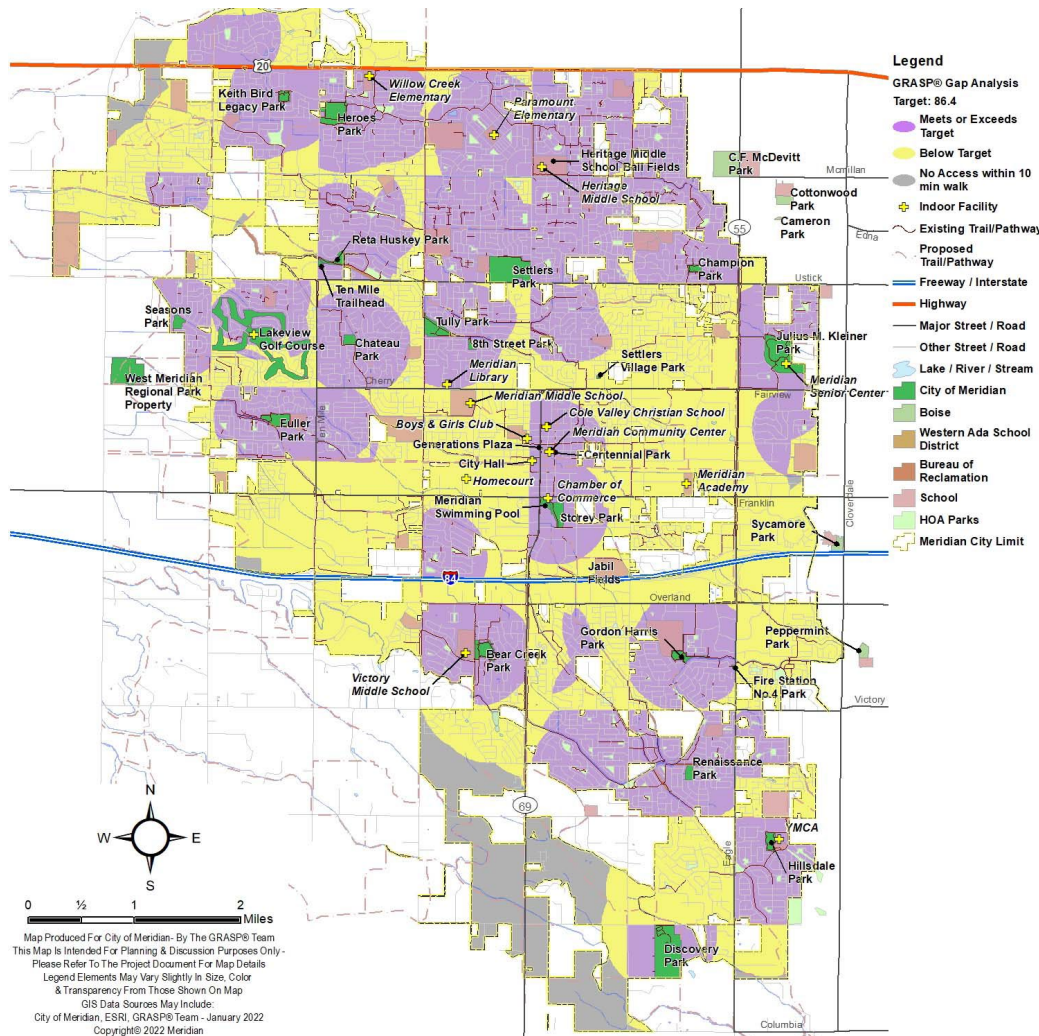


## Walkability Gap Analysis

These “target value” parks and their components will likely attract users from a walkable distance. The following map brackets GRASP® values to areas that meet this target score, fall below the target, or offer no service within walking distance. Purple areas indicate where walkable LOS values meet or exceed the target in the following figure. Areas shown in yellow can be considered areas of opportunity. Currently parks and assets in these areas do not meet the target value. Improving the LOS value in such areas may be possible by enhancing the component quantity and quality in existing parks without acquiring new lands or developing new parks. Another option might be to address pedestrian barriers in the immediate area.

In this analysis, 48% of the City's land area has LOS that exceeds the target value or, in other words, is purple. 6% percent (gray) is without access to recreation opportunities within a 10-minute walk. Yellow regions (46%) have access to some recreation but not at the target level.

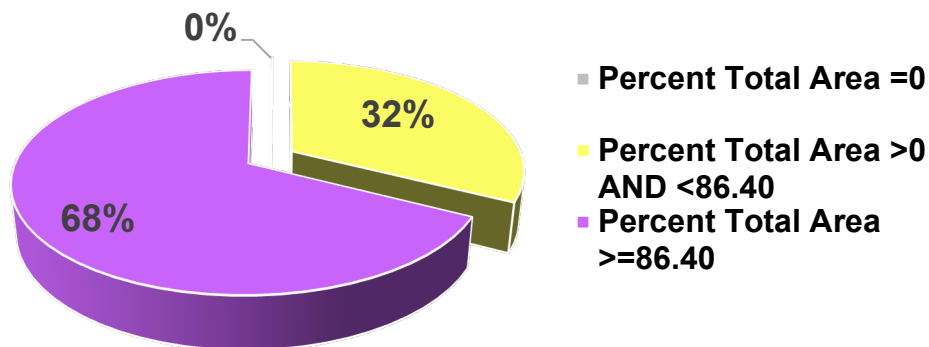
**Figure 26: GRASP® Walkable Gap analysis**



The results are more favorable when comparing this analysis to census data as Meridian is well positioned, with virtually all residents within walking distance to some outdoor recreation opportunities, including 68% within a target score (purple) area. These are positive results and offer opportunities for improvement in yellow or lower-scoring areas. This chart illustrates the population by service level. It indicates that parks are generally well placed and capture a higher population than land area.

**Figure 27: Percentage of Population by service level**

### **% of Population with Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation**

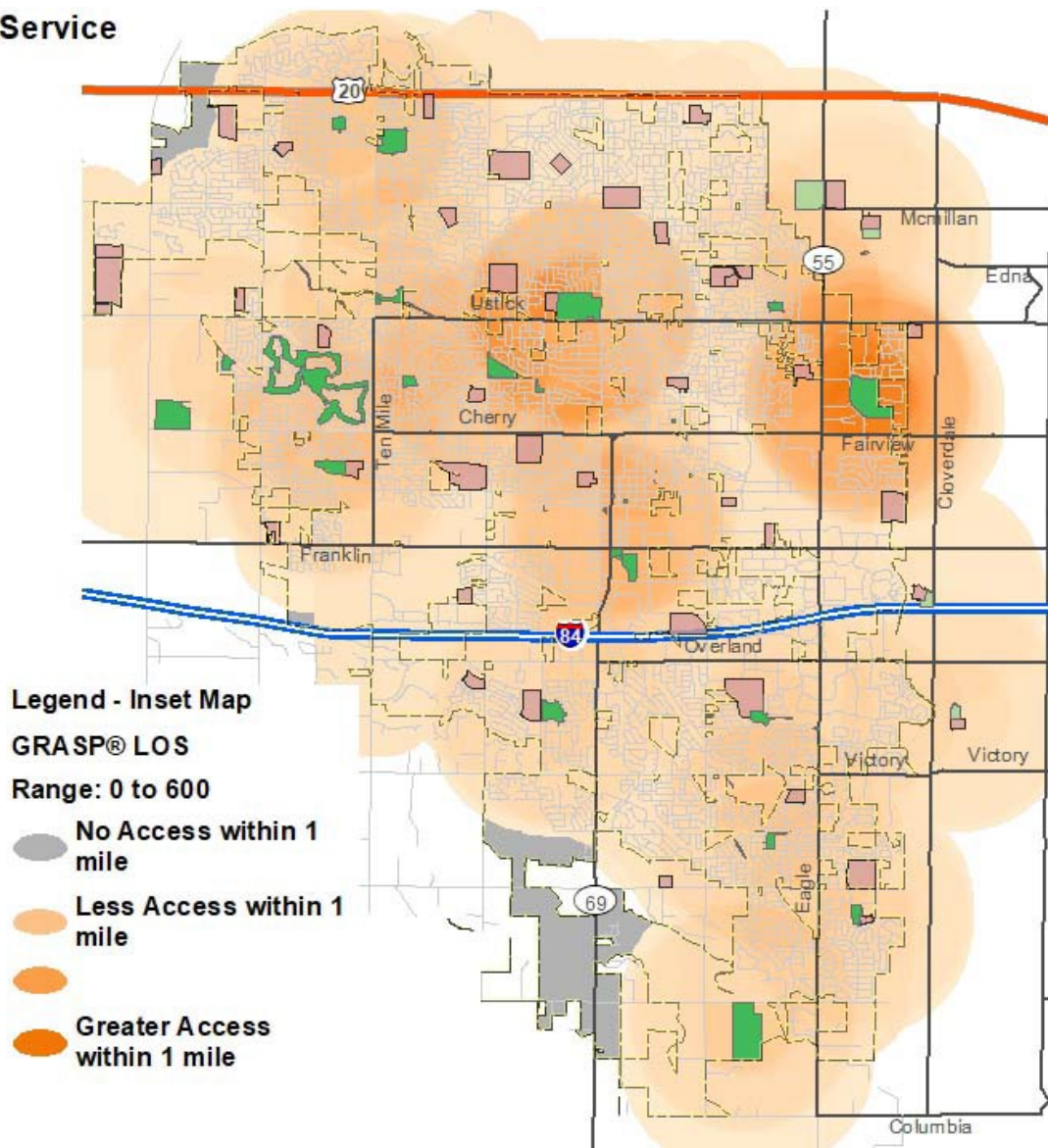


### **Neighborhood Access To Recreation**

Analyses also examine neighborhood or one-mile access to recreation opportunities. Again, looking at service provided by Meridian parks only and then services by all providers. Darker gradient areas on the following images indicate higher quality recreation assets based on a one-mile service area.

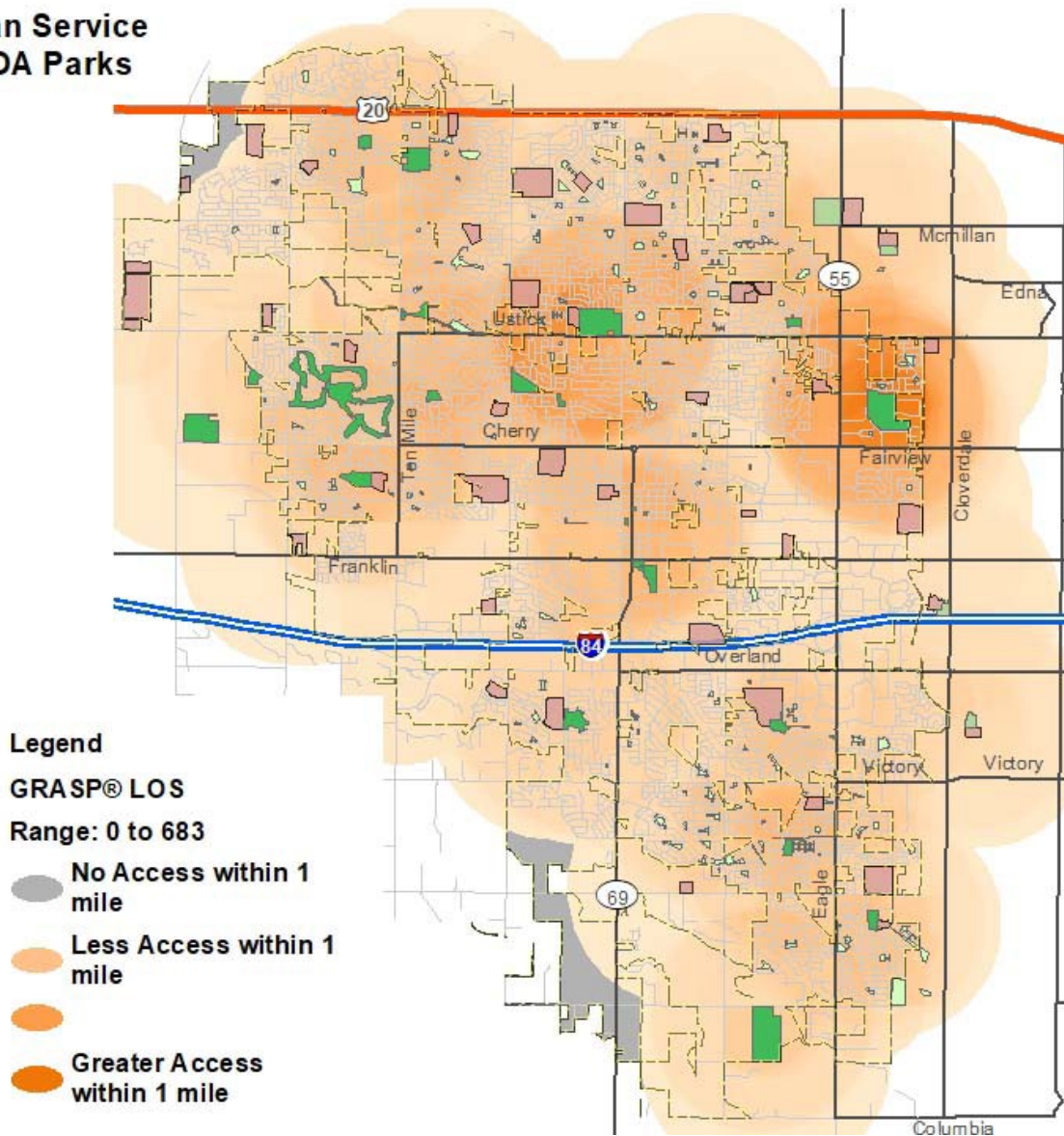
**Figure 28: Neighborhood access to outdoor recreation opportunities provided by Meridian parks (only)**

**Meridian Service**



**Figure 29: Walkable access to outdoor recreation opportunities by all providers**

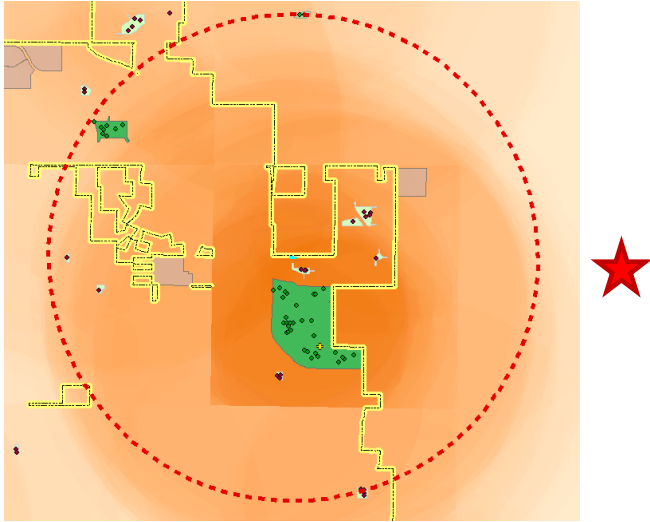
**Meridian Service  
with HOA Parks**



These maps show that Meridian has an excellent distribution of parks and facilities. Areas of higher concentration are distributed throughout the City, but most predominant is around Kleiner Park. The orange shading in the maps allows for an understanding of LOS distribution.

For example, the red star indicates the most significant GRASP® value area (683) in the following figure. The dashed line is a one-mile service area. From here, residents can access three Meridian parks with 50 components, four HOA parks with 16 components, and two schools.

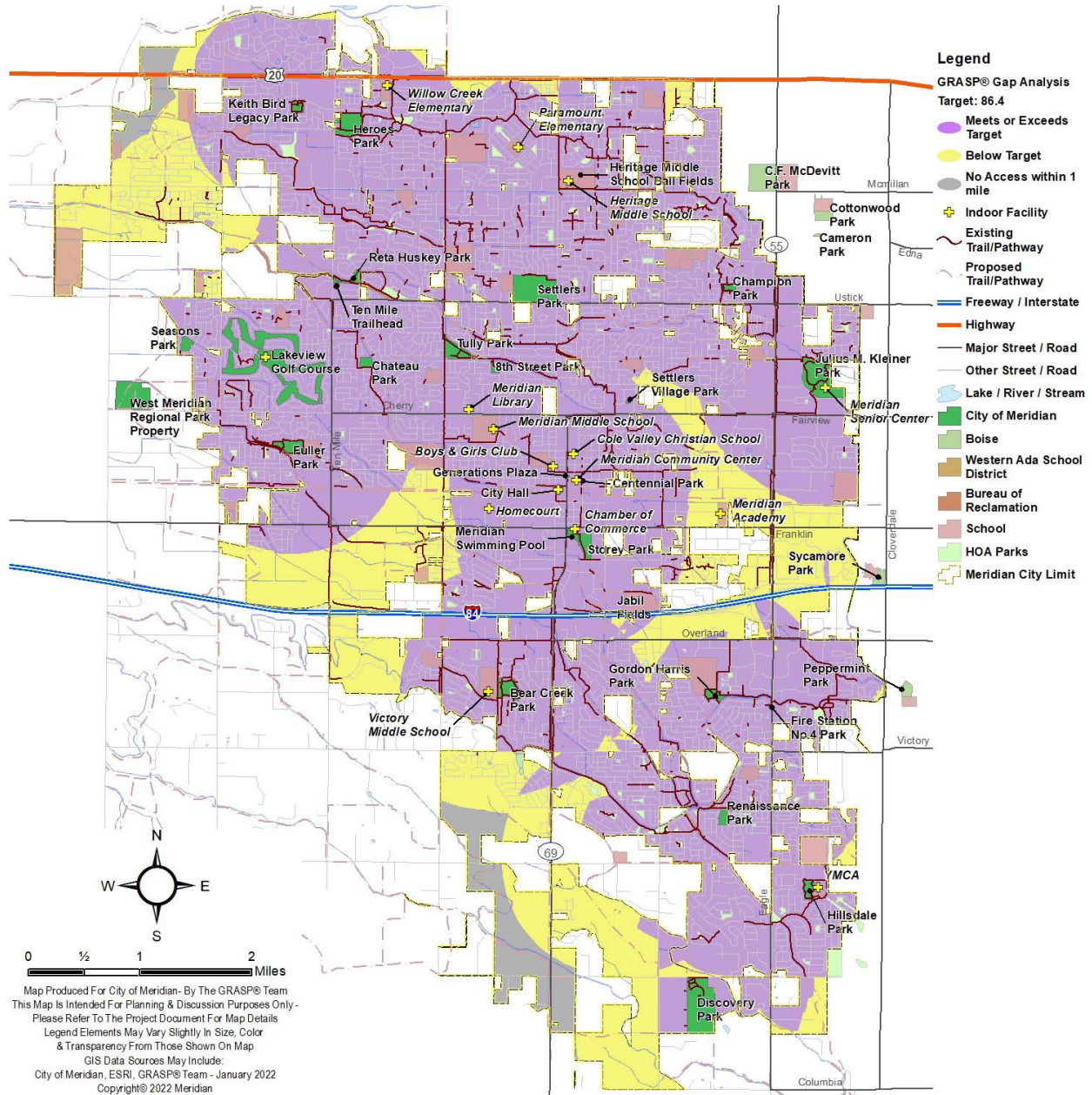
Figure 30: Neighborhood Access High-Value Area



**Neighborhood Gap Analysis**

In this gap analysis, 77% of Meridian is in a purple area (target score), 20% yellow and just 3% gray.

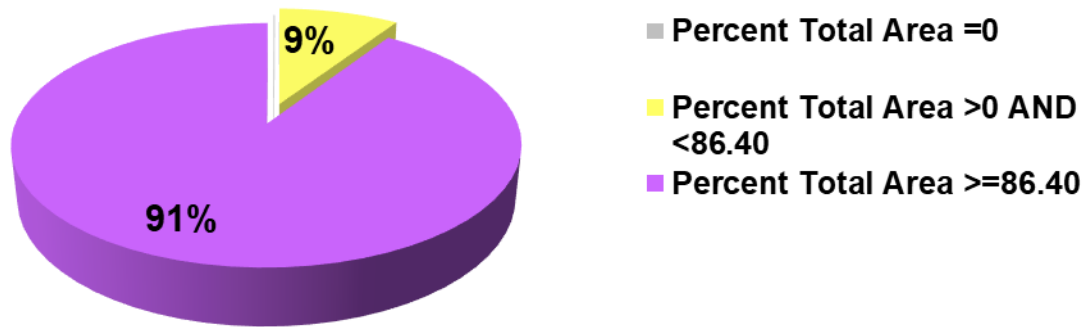
**Figure 31: Neighborhood Gap Analysis**



A comparison to census data shows all residents live within a one-mile service area. Percentages are shown in the following pie chart.

**Figure 32: Percentage of Population by service level**

### **% of Population with Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation**



GRASP® Comparative Data

Meridian parks are comparable to other agencies across the country by using these scores. The GRASP® National Dataset currently consists of 83 agencies, 5,488 parks, and nearly 30,800 components.



When comparing Meridian to other agencies and parks in the dataset, six parks score in the top ten percent of all parks in the overall GRASP® score. Two of those two parks are in the top 35 parks overall.

Additional findings in these comparisons reveal that Meridian is above the average of other similar-sized agencies in components per location, the average score per location, and components per capita.



However, Meridian scores lower total park and in parks per capita.



The table (right) provides additional comparative data from other communities of similar populations to Meridian across the United States. Because every community is unique, there are no standards or "correct" numbers.

Table 12: GRASP® Comparative Data (right)

City / Agency	Hampton, VA	Victorville, CA	Meridian, ID	Greater Vallejo Recreation District, CA	Pearland, TX	Average
Year	2019	2020	2022	2020	2015	2015-2022
Population	136,728	127,027	124,790	119,217	101,900	121,932
Population Density (per acre)	4.7	2.7	5.4	2.1	2.9	4
Study Area Size (Acres)	28,792	47,341	23,191	57,884	30,468	37,535
# of Sites (Parks, Facilities, etc.)	79	21	25	36	21	36
Total Number of Components	542	169	256	216	164	269
Average # of Components per Site	7	8	10	6	8	8
Total GRASP® Value (Entire System)	2064	775	1694	875	1556	1,393
GRASP® Index	15	6	14	7	15	11
Average Score/Site	26	37	68	24	74	46
% of Total Area w/LOS >0	96%	57%	97%	52%	85%	77%
Average LOS per Acre Served	127	58	179	59	162	117
Components per Capita	4	1	2	2	2	2
Average LOS / Population Density per Acre	27	22	33	29	55.4	33
% of Population with Walkable Target Access	20%	34%	68%	27%	50%	40%
People per Park	1731	6049	4992	3312	4852	4,187
Park per 1k People	0.58	0.17	0.20	0.30	0.21	0.3
Better than the average						
Below the average						



## 2022 to 2015 Overall Comparison

One advantage to a plan update is comparing the LOS results from 2015 to the most recent analysis. The following table shows many different comparisons and generally indicates that the LOS for residents has been maintained despite significant growth. While the population has increased, the number of parks, components, and overall LOS has increased to keep pace overall. Perhaps the most significant increase is in the percentage of residents with walkable access. Part of this increase reflects the appropriate locating of new parks and a more thorough inventory of existing HOA parks.

**Table 13: Master Plan Comparison**

Year	2022	2015
Population	124,790	94,289
City Limit (Acres)	23,191	18,159
# of Sites (Parks, Facilities, etc.)	25	21
Total # of Components	256	207
Total GRASP® Value (Entire System)	1694	1317
GRASP® Index	14	14
Ave. Score per Site	67.8	62.7
% of Total Area w/LOS >0	97%	98%
Average LOS per Acres Served	179	196
Components Per Capita	2	2
Average LOS/Population Density	33	38
Population Density (per acre)	5.4	5.2
% of Population with Walkable Target Access	68%	50%
People per Park	4992	4490
Park per 1k People	0.20	0.22

## Capacities Analysis

A traditional tool for evaluating service is capacity analysis, which compares the number of assets to the population. It projects future needs based on a ratio of components per population (i.e., as the population grows over time, components may need to be added to maintain the same proportion). The following table shows the current capacities for selected elements in Meridian. While there are no correct ratios, use this table in conjunction with input from focus groups, staff, and the general public to determine if the current ratios are adequate.

**Table 14: Meridian Capacities**

	Current Quantity	Current Population 2021	Current Ratio	Ratio per component	Projected Population 2026	Total Needed Based on Growth	Add
<b>Population</b>		<b>124,790</b>			<b>142,522</b>		
Aquatics, Spray Pad	5		0.04	24,958		6	1
Basketball Court	3		0.02	41,597		3	0
Basketball, Practice	16		0.13	7,799		18	2
Climbing, Designated	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Concessions	9		0.07	13,866		10	1
Diamond Field	19		0.15	6,568		22	3
Disc Golf	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Dog Park	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Educational Experience	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Event Space	4		0.03	31,198		5	1
Fitness Area/Course	6		0.05	20,798		7	1
Game Court	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Historic Feature	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Horseshoe Court	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Loop Walk	16		0.13	7,799		18	2
Open Turf	16		0.13	7,799		18	2
Passive Node	8		0.06	15,599		9	1
Pickleball Court	10		0.08	12,479		11	1
Playground, Destination	3		0.02	41,597		3	0
Playground, Local	17		0.14	7,341		19	2
Public Art	7		0.06	17,827		8	1
Rectangular Field, Large	7		0.06	17,827		8	1
Rectangular Field, Multiple	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Shelter, Large	24		0.19	5,200		27	3
Shelter, Small	12		0.10	10,399		14	2
Tennis Court	7		0.06	17,827		8	1
Trail Access Point	13		0.10	9,599		15	2
Trailhead	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Volleyball Court	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Water Access, Developed	3		0.02	41,597		3	0
Water Access, General	2		0.02	62,395		2	0
Water, Open	2		0.02	62,395		2	0

*All components with current quantities less than 5 are omitted. Projected population growth will not likely trigger additional need in 5 years*

The table's usefulness depends on future residents' interests and behaviors and the assumption that they are the same today. It also assumes that today's capacities are in line with needs. The capacities table bases analysis on the number of assets without regard to distribution, quality, or functionality. Higher LOS is achieved only by adding assets, regardless of the location, condition, or quality of those assets. In theory, the LOS combines location, quantity, and quality. Based on projected population growth, Meridian needs to add components shown in red and include many of those components currently found in a typical neighborhood park. Other

components may be part of a future Discovery Park expansion and serve the greater community.

Meridian provides approximately 3.9 acres per 1000 people. The City should consider adding 69 acres of developed parks over the next five years based on projected population growth to maintain that service level.

**Table 15: Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents**

		2022 GIS Acres
<b>INVENTORY</b>		
Meridian Parks		484
Current Ratio of Park Acres per 1000 Population		
<b>CURRENT POPULATION 2021</b>	124,790	
Current Ratio of Park Acres per 1000 Population		3.9
<b>PROJECTED POPULATION - 2026</b>		
Total acres needed to maintain current ratio park acres with growth*	142,522	553
Acres to add of developed Parks*		69

*\*Does not include undeveloped park acres at West Meridian Regional Park Property (46)*

Comparing Meridian to national statistics published in the "2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks", Meridian does well in some categories but falls short in others. Based on the calculations, the City falls short in a few components but many of those may be provided by other providers as indicated in the table notes. Meridian meets or exceeds the median in diamond fields and adult soccer fields.

**Table 16: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities – Median Population Served per Facility**

2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks						
Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities						
Outdoor Facility	Agencies Offering this Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Meridian Residents per Facility	Meridian Current Quantity	Need to add to meet current median	Need to add with population growth
Residents Per Park	NA	3,104	4,992	21		
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents	NA	8.9	3.9	530	627	
Basketball courts	87.4%	8,477	41,597	3	12	14
Community gardens	48.3%	72,238	NA	0	2	2
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	51.3%	38,899	6,568	19	-16	-15
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	78.0%	12,914			-9	-8
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	65.5%	28,081			-15	-14
Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	59.3%	26,073			-14	-14
Dog park	64.9%	76,610	62,395	2	0	0
Playgrounds	94.4%	4,804	6,240	20	6	10
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	66.4%	10,792	12,476	10	2	3
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	43.6%	20,000			-4	-3
Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	48.9%	12,646			0	1
Skate park	39.3%	109,798	124,790	1	0	0
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	81.4%	5,818	17,827	8	13	16
<i>Comparison based on median for 100,000 to 250,000 population comparison</i>						
Surplus						
Possible Deficit						

### More on Utilizing GRASP® Perspectives

GRASP® perspectives evaluate the LOS throughout an area. Their purpose is to reveal possible gaps in service. However, it is not necessarily beneficial for all community parts to score equally in the analyses. The desired LOS for a location should depend on the type of service, the site's characteristics, and other factors such as community need, population growth forecasts, and land use issues. For example, commercial, institutional, and industrial areas often have lower service levels than residential areas. GRASP® perspectives focus attention on gap areas for further scrutiny. Analyses can determine if current levels of service are appropriate if used in conjunction with other assessment tools such as needs assessment surveys and a public input process

## 7.0 Where We Go From Here – Recommendations and Action Plan

### A. Recommendations

After analyzing the Findings that resulted from this master planning process, including the Key Issues Matrix, a summary of all research, the qualitative and quantitative data, the GRASP® LOS analyses, and input assembled for this study, a variety of recommendations have emerged to provide guidance in consideration of how to improve parks, recreation, and pathway opportunities in the City of Meridian. This section describes ways to enhance the LOS and the quality of life with improvement through organizational efficiencies, financial opportunities, improved programming and service delivery, maintenance and improvements to facilities and amenities.

#### Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies

##### Objective 1.1 – Maintain existing LOS goal

The City of Meridian currently has a LOS planning goal that is 4 acres of developed park land per 1,000 persons. In 2022, the City is maintaining 3 acres per 1,000 population to keep up with the rapid growth of the City. Meridian should continue with the planning goal of 4 acres, while continuing to maintain the existing 3 acres. Additionally, the City also has a planning goal of 0.59 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1,000 population. The City should maintain the planning goal for indoor recreation space.

##### Objective 1.2 – Enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently has a Marketing Plan (Communication Plan) that guides the Department's efforts in communicating and promoting its activities, services, and facilities. As part of a larger effort, the City of Meridian has an active communication roundtable that the Department should actively participate with. In addition to the roundtable, the Department should take advantage of training opportunities for new communication methods and branding efforts.

The marketing and communication of Parks and Recreation Department activities should be enhanced with a focused effort on adopting open lines of communication and meetings with partners and potential partners within the community.

##### Objective 1.3 – Maintain existing quality standards for facilities and amenities.

A top priority from the public response is to continue to maintain and make improvements to existing facilities. The Department should continue to improve and upgrade existing facilities and amenities as well as address low scoring components through the CFP Plan and the Life Cycle Replacement Program. The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Completing a golf course Master Plan \* *completed in 2021-2022*
- Creating a plan for Tier2 and Tier 3 golf course improvements
- Developing the Urban Forestry Management Plan with existing staff \* *completed in 2021-2022*
- Taking the Urban Forestry Management Plan to the Planning Commission and City Council for feedback and acceptance \* *completed in 2021-2022*
- Implementing the park identity and theming plan

#### **Objective 1.4 – Utilize technology to improve customer service and efficiencies**

The Department should continue to use a mixed method approach to communicating with the public about programs, services, and opportunities. Mobile marketing is a trend of the future. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate that chronologically across four major age cohorts, Millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices, such as smart phones. Parks and Recreation should explore adding navigation apps for parks and pathways. Teaming with the public app AllTrails would be a good starting point. The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies adding Wi-Fi in Phase 2 of the Discovery Park development.

#### **Objective 1.5 – Increase appropriate partnerships within the community.**

The City of Meridian Parks and Recreation Department currently partners with a number of agencies to provide programs and activities to the community. The Department should continue to explore additional opportunities, as well as build on their existing partnerships.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan recommends establishing a timeline to transfer pool operations from WARD to the City. \* *Operations were transferred in the summer of 2022.*

#### **Objective 1.6 – Staff appropriately to meet demand and maintain established quality of service.**

As recommended in the Master Plan and based on the Staffing Plan for programs, services, new facilities, pathways, parks, and facility upgrades, it is important to maintain staffing levels to maintain current performance standards. The Department should explore opportunities to increase staffing levels as growth continues. This will require new positions both in parks and recreation.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends promoting and growing the current volunteer program.

## Goal 2: Maintain and Improve Facilities and Amenities

### Objective 2.1 – Maintain and improve existing facilities.

The Department should continue to implement existing plans, the CFP, Life Cycle Replacement Programs, and the Master Plan. These plans should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Renovating the existing on-course restrooms for ADA compliance at Lakeview Golf Course
- Replacing old equipment for improved golf course maintenance operations
- Upgrading the golf course irrigation system

### Objective 2.2 – Expand pathways and connectivity.

The Department should continue to update and implement the existing Pathways Master Plan as development continues. As new and existing pathways are designed and renovated, the Department should explore ways to improve pathway inspections and approval process. To assist with the implementation and oversight of this process, the City should consider the addition of a Parks Operation Crew Chief.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also identifies:

- Construction of the six identified pathway connections
- Implementation of formal pathway standards based on size, route/loop, and incorporate testing and acceptance requirements prior to final approval
- Partnering with the ULI for place-making and amenity design on the Five Mile Creek Pathway
- Creating branding and wayfinding tools for priority pathway segments

### Objective 2.3 – Add indoor recreation space.

Based on feedback from focus group participants and the survey results, there is a need for additional indoor recreation space. The Department should continue to explore opportunities to add additional indoor recreation space either through partnerships, purchase of an existing facility, or construction of a new community center. Another option would be to explore

opportunities to add community centers to newly planned elementary and middle schools or future regional parks.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan recommended conducting a needs assessment and conceptual planning for a new community center. As part of this planning process, a feasibility study was conducted, and conceptual designs were developed. The feasibility study and conceptual designs were presented to City Council and the final report provided as a staff document.

#### **Objective 2.4 – Develop new amenities at existing parks based on LOS analysis.**

Demand for usage of Meridian parks and athletic facilities continue to grow, and the Department should look for opportunities to add new amenities to enhance the experience for users. As Meridian continues to grow, the Department should look for opportunities to add parks and pathways in those new growth areas. Also, based on the GRASP® analysis, the Department should look for opportunities to add new components at existing parks where the LOS is below threshold.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Design of Phase 2 for Discovery Park and bid for development \* *completed in 2021-2022*
- Construct Phase 2 of Discovery Park using CMGC and design build methods
- Construct a teen activity area at Discovery Park in Phase 2

#### **Objective 2.5 – Acquire new land for parks.**

Based on population growth and a LOS goal of reaching 4 acres of developed park land per 1,000 population, the Department needs to continue to find and purchase additional land for future park development. When considering new parks, priority should be given to areas where LOS is below threshold.

#### **Objective 2.6 – Improve parking at parks.**

Parking was an issue that was identified at most of the focus groups and in the survey. The Department should continue to monitor parking during peak usage times and explore the need to improve and manage parking at parks with popular amenities, activities, and events. Another consideration would be to explore alternative transportation options to reduce parking demand for large scale events.

#### **Objective 2.7 – Continue to monitor ADA needs in the community.**



Parks and Recreation currently has an ADA Accessibility Transition Plan which identifies needed changes during the self-evaluation process. The Department should continue to monitor new facilities and upgrades for compliance.

**Objective 2.8 – Upgrade comfort, convenience, and customer service amenities to existing facilities.**

As the Department is making upgrades to and improving existing facilities, it should explore opportunities to add shade, storage, security lighting, and other amenities at existing facilities. Where appropriate, look for opportunities to add public art to new and existing facilities.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Working with the Meridian Arts Commission to finalize a plan for future public art projects
- Completing the addition of the Meridian Speedway to the Historic Register
- Investigating new locations to add to the Historic Register

**Objective 2.9 – Create park identity in existing and new parks.**

As citizen interest grows, and demand for new and different amenities at parks are identified, the Department should explore opportunities to add unique features, such as destination playgrounds, public art, signage, unique shelters, natural play areas, and/or climbing elements at new and existing parks.

The newly adopted City-Wide Strategic Plan also has a goal to foster development of Phase 2 of Discovery Parks that uniquely blends arts, entertainment, adventure sports, and culture.

**Objective 2.10 – Address current and future needs for athletic fields.**

As demand warrants, explore opportunities to add rectangle and diamond fields as usage increases. To help increase field time, add sports field lighting to new facilities and improvements to lighting at existing facilities where appropriate.

**Objective 2.11 – Consider programming needs when adding new components to existing parks or when developing new parks.**

As the Department continues to develop new parks and renovate existing parks, continue to evaluate the programming needs of the community when developing new parks or when adding new components to existing parks.

**Objective 2.12 – Maintain component-based inventory and LOS standards.**

The Department should review the component-based inventory from the 2022 Master Plan Update when planning new parks and installing new amenities. The inventory and GIS database should be updated for tracking of new components.

#### **Objective 2.13 – Continue to maintain life cycle replacement plan.**

The Department should continue to monitor and update its life cycle replacement plan annually.

### **Goal 3: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery**

#### **Objective 3.1 – Continue to address recreational programming and activity needs of the community.**

The Department should continue to look for opportunities to expand indoor recreational programs and activities. The community would like to see additional programs for tweens, teens, people with special needs, and seniors. As new programs are developed, continue to monitor recreational trends to stay current with programming and demand. As popularity in program offerings and activities increases, continue to look for opportunities to expand programs around working hours and commuting citizens schedules. Continue to explore opportunities to produce, attract, promote, and maintain events in the City. Exploring opportunities to offer new programs in outdoor adventure recreation to teens and active adults.

Continue to monitor participation and demand for family-centered recreational programs and adjust to meet the needs of the community.

The City-Wide Strategic Plan also recommends:

- Expanding class and program offerings at the new community center
- Expanding summer camps to 3-4 sites to help meet community demand
- Attracting a national, qualifying sports tournament
- Expanding traditional and non-traditional sports leagues and tournaments
- Adapting and expanding community events to meet community needs
- Adding a City event to enrich Dairy Days
- Providing the Parks Division resources to support Dairy Days

### **Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities**

#### **Objective 4.1 – Increase special event and activities sponsorships.**

The Department should continue to secure sponsorships for existing and future events.

#### **Objective 4.2 – Evaluate developer impact fee ordinance.**

The Department should continue to monitor impact fees from new developments as growth continues. The ordinance should be reviewed every 3-5 years to keep current with the LOS. Additionally, the Department should review its impact fee revenue annually to align with CFP requests and existing LOS.

**Objective 4.3 – Pursue grant and philanthropic opportunities.**

The Department currently takes advantage of grant opportunities available for programming, services, and facility improvements. The Department should continue to pursue any and all grant opportunities at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. Working with the City’s CDBG Grant Administrator, explore opportunities to use CDBG funds for parks, pathways, and/or recreation facilities.

**Objective 4.4 –Implement a Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy.**

The Department currently has a practice of cost recovery, but it varies based on the different service areas. The Department should implement the recommendations from the Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy study completed during this master planning process. The Department should continue to support the current Care Enough to Share Scholarship Program through increased marketing and awareness of the program to attract more families.

Explore feasibility of additional revenue sources for parks and recreation as identified in the “Present and Projected Fiscal Resources” section of the Master Plan.

**B. Goals, Objectives, and Actions:**

The following Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for the recommendations are drawn from the public input, inventory, LOS analysis, community survey, findings feedback, and all the information gathered during the master planning process with a primary focus on maintaining, sustaining, and improving City of Meridian parks, recreation, and pathways. All cost estimates are in 2022 figures where applicable. Most costs are dependent on the extent of the enhancements and improvements determined.

Timeframe to complete is designated as:

- Short term (up to 3 years)
- Mid-term (4-6 years)
- Long term (7-10 years)

**Goal 1: Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies**

<b>Objective 1.1:</b>			
<i>Maintain existing LOS goal</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete

<b>1.1.a</b> Continue the planning goal of 4 acres of park land per 1,000 population and existing component levels in parks; immediate goal is to maintain the 3 acres per 1,000 population that Meridian historically maintains.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>1.1.b</b> Continue the planning goal of 0.59 square feet of indoor recreation space per 1,000 population.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>Objective 1.2:</b> <i>Enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>1.2.a</b> Participate in communication roundtables and meet regularly to discuss communication and promotional activities and options.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>1.2.b</b> Provide training on new communication methods and branding efforts.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>1.2.c</b> Promote MPR active recreation classes through the Meridian Moves Program, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>Objective 1.3:</b> <i>Maintain existing quality standards for facilities and amenities</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>1.3.a</b> Continue to improve and upgrade existing facilities and amenities through the CFP and the Life Cycle Replacement programs.	See CFP Plan and Life Cycle Replacement Programs	Staff Time	On-going
<b>1.3.b</b> Complete the golf course Master Plan, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term

<b>1.3.c</b> Create a plan for Tier 2 and Tier 3 golf course improvements into the CFP, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	See CFP Plan.	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>1.3.d</b> Develop the Urban Forestry Management Plan with existing staff, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>1.3.e</b> Take the Urban Forestry Management Plan to the MPR Commission and City Council for feedback and acceptance, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>1.3.f</b> Implement the park identity and theming plan, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>Objective 1.4:</b> <i>Utilize technology to improve customer service and efficiencies</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.4.a</b> Continue to employ a mixed method approach to communicating with the public about programs, services, and opportunities.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>1.4.b</b> Add a pathway app for wayfinding and customer service, also team with AllTrails as a starting point.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>1.4.c</b> Add Wi-Fi in Discovery Park, Phase 2, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>Objective 1.5:</b> <i>Increase potential partnerships within the community</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.5.a</b> Build on existing partnerships.	\$0	Staff Time TBD	On-going

		Potential increased revenue or decreased expenses	
<b>1.5.b</b> Continue to explore additional partnerships and build on alternative providers to increase LOS.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>1.5.c</b> Partner with WARD to establish a timeline to transfer pool operations, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>Objective 1.6:</b> <i>Staff appropriately to meet demand and maintain established quality of service</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.6.a</b> Based on the Staffing Plan, explore opportunities to increase staffing to meet current needs and maintain optimal staffing level as new parks, facilities, and programs are acquired, developed, and implemented.	\$0	Will vary based on positions hired	On-going
<b>1.6.b</b> Promote and grow the volunteer program, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going

## Goal 2: Maintain and Improve Facilities and Amenities

<b>Objective 2.1</b> <i>Maintain and improve existing facilities</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.1.a</b> Continue to implement existing plans, CFP, Master Plan, and Life Cycle Replacement programs.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>2.1.b</b>	TBD	Staff Time	On-going

Review existing plans, CFP, Master Plan, and Life Cycle Replacement programs and update as needed.			
<b>2.1.c</b> Renovate the existing on-course restroom for ADA compliance (at Lakeview Golf Club), as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short to Mid Term
<b>2.1.d</b> Replace old equipment for improved golf course maintenance operations, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short to Mid Term
<b>2.1.e</b> Upgrade the golf course irrigation system, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.2:</b> <i>Expand pathways and connectivity</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.2.a</b> Continue to update existing Pathways Master Plan; review annually and make updates as needed.	TBD	\$0	On-going
<b>2.2.b</b> Explore ways to improve the pathway inspection and approval process. Consider adding a Parks Operations Crew Chief position to oversee.	TBD	\$0	On-going
<b>2.2.c</b> Construct the six identified pathway connections, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.2.d</b> Implement formal pathway standards based on size, route/loop, and incorporate testing and acceptance requirements prior to final approval, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	On-going

<b>2.2.e</b> Partner with the ULI for place-making and amenity design on the Five Mile Creek Pathway, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	\$15,000	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.2.f</b> Create branding and wayfinding tools for priority pathway segments, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	On-going
<b>Objective 2.3:</b> <i>Add indoor recreation space</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.3.a</b> Continue to explore opportunities to add additional indoor recreation space either through partnerships, purchase of an existing facility, or construction of a new Community Center.	Cost will vary based on approach	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.3.b</b> Conduct a needs assessment and concept planning for a new community center, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	Conducted as part of the 2022 Master Plan	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.3.c</b> Explore opportunities to add additional community centers to newly planned elementary and middle schools or future regional parks.	TBD	TBD	Mid-Term Long Term
<b>Objective 2.4:</b> <i>Develop new amenities at new and existing parks based on LOS analysis</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.4.a</b> Look for opportunities to add parks and pathways in new growth areas.	TBD	TBD	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term



<b>2.4.b</b> Look for opportunities to add new components at existing parks where LOS is below threshold.	TBD	TBD	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>2.4.c</b> Design and bid Discovery Park, Phase 2, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.4.d</b> Construct Phase 2 (Discovery Park) using CMGC and design build methods, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>2.4.e</b> Construct a teen activity area in Discovery Park, Phase 2, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term
<b>Objective 2.5:</b> <i>Acquire new land for parks</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.5.a</b> Continue to find and purchase additional land for future park development.	TBD	Staff Time	Mid to Long Term
<b>2.5.b</b> When considering new parks, look where LOS is below threshold.	TBD	Staff Time	Mid to Long Term
<b>Objective 2.6:</b> <i>Evaluate parking at parks, events, and scheduled activities</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.6.a</b> Explore opportunities to improve and manage parking at parks with popular amenities, activities, and events.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term

<b>2.6.b</b> Consider alternative transportation options to reduce parking demand for large scale events, especially with large TUP events in parks.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.7:</b> <i>Continue to monitor ADA needs of the community</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.7.a</b> Continue to monitor new facilities and upgrades for ADA compliance.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>Objective 2.8:</b> <i>Upgrade comfort, convenience, and customer service amenities to existing facilities</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.8.a</b> Explore opportunities to add shade, storage, security lighting, etc. appropriately at existing facilities.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>2.8.b</b> Explore opportunities to add public art appropriately at existing facilities.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>2.8.c</b> Work with the Meridian Arts Commission to finalize a plan for future public art projects, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>2.8.d</b> Complete the addition of Meridian Speedway to the Historic Register, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	Short Term to Mid-term

<b>2.8.e</b> Investigate new locations to add to the Historic Register, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	On-going
<b>Objective 2.9:</b> <i>Create park identity in existing and new parks</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.9.a</b> Explore opportunities to add unique features, such as signage, destination playgrounds, public art, unique shelters, theming, entertainment, and cultural features, natural play areas and/or climbing elements.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>2.9.b</b> Foster development of Phase 2 of Discovery Park that uniquely blend arts, entertainment, adventure sports, and culture.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.10:</b> <i>Address current and future needs for athletic fields</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.10.a</b> Explore opportunities to add both rectangle and diamond athletic fields as use and demands warrant.	TBD	TBD	Short to Mid Term
<b>2.10.b</b> Where appropriate, add or improve sports field lighting to new and existing facilities.	TBD	TBD	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.11:</b> <i>Consider programming needs when adding new components to existing parks or when developing new parks</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete

<b>2.11.a</b> Continue to evaluate the programming needs of the community when developing new parks or when adding new components to existing parks.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.12:</b> <i>Maintain component-based inventory and LOS standards</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.12.a</b> Review the updated component-based inventory and LOS standard when planning new parks and amenities.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>2.12.b</b> As new parks and components are built, update GIS database for tracking.	TBD	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term
<b>Objective 2.13:</b> <i>Continue to maintain life cycle replacement plan</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>2.13.a</b> Continue to maintain the life cycle replacement plan and update annually.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going

### Goal 3: Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery

<b>Objective 3.1:</b> <i>Continue to address recreational programming and activity needs of the community</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>3.1.a</b> Continue to look for opportunities to expand indoor recreational programs and activities.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term
<b>3.1.b</b>	\$0	Staff Time	On-going

Expand class and program offerings at the new community center, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.			
<b>3.1.c</b> Expand summer camps to 3-4 sites to help meet community demand, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.d</b> Continue to monitor recreational trends to stay current with programming and demand.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.e</b> Continue to look for opportunities to expand programs around working hours and commuting citizens.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.f</b> Explore opportunities to produce, attract, promote, and maintain events.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.g</b> Attract a national, qualifying sports tournament to Meridian, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	On-going
<b>3.1.h</b> Expand both traditional and non-traditional sports leagues and tournaments, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	TBD	On-going
<b>3.1.i</b> Adapt and expand community events to meet community needs, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.j</b> Add a City Event to enrich Dairy Days, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.k</b> Provide Parks resources to support Dairy Days, as noted in the City-Wide Strategic Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
<b>3.1.l</b> Explore opportunities to offer new programs in outdoor adventure recreation to teens and active adults.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going

<b>3.1.m</b> Continue to monitor participation and demand for family-centered recreational programs and adjust to meet the needs of the community.	TBD	Staff Time	On-going
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## Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities

<b>Objective 4.1</b> <i>Increase special event and activities sponsorships</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>4.1.a</b> Continue to secure sponsorships for events and activities.	\$0	Staff Time TBD Potential increased revenue or decreased expenses	Short Term Mid-Term Long Term
<b>Objective 4.2:</b> <i>Evaluate Impact Fee Ordinance</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>4.2.a</b> Continue to monitor impact fees from new developments.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>4.2.b</b> Review Impact Fee Ordinance every 3-5 years and adjust as needed.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>Objective 4.3:</b> <i>Pursue grant and philanthropic opportunities</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>4.3.a</b> Continue to seek philanthropic donations and grant opportunities.	\$0	Staff Time	Short Term

<b>4.3.b</b> Work with the City's CDBG Grant Administrator to seek opportunities to use CDBG funds for parks, pathways, and/or recreation facilities.	TBD	TBD	On-going
<b>Objective 4.4:</b> <i>Implement a Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
<b>4.4.a</b> Implement the recommendations from the Cost Recovery and Pricing Policy study completed during the master planning update process.	\$0	Staff Time	On-going
<b>4.4.b</b> Continue to support current Care Enough to Share (Scholarship Program) through increased marketing and awareness of the program to attract more families.	\$0	\$0	On-going
<b>4.4.c</b> Explore feasibility of additional revenue sources for parks and recreation as identified in the "Present and Projected Fiscal Resources" section of the Master Plan.	TBD	Staff Time	Short Term

## C: Implementation Guidelines/Strategies

The following is a listing of suggestions for successful implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

These elements represent the commitment and discipline required to integrate the process into daily operations, now and in the future.

- The Parks and Recreation Master Plan becomes the guidepost for the Department. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the plan becomes the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what has been established as existing direction.
- The Parks and Recreation Master Plan information should be included as part of the new employee orientation program.

- Post the Executive Summary of the plan on the website and track results on the site. This will assist in providing the community with information about the Department's strategic direction and its commitment to results. It may also be helpful to print a color brochure of the Executive Summary to distribute to interested partners and community members to provide a quick snapshot of the plan.
- A staff member or team should have responsibility of being the project manager or “champion” of the plan's implementation to help ensure success. This champion is responsible for monitoring the plan's progress and works with other staff, City management, and other departments to effectively integrate the plan within operations.
- A staff member or team should be assigned accountability for each recommendation. The project lead will have responsibility for tracking progress of the plan.
- Regular reporting of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan's progress should occur. divide the plan into separate fiscal years and report one year at a time, as an on-going annual work plan. Each action item for the year should include a list of strategies that support its completion. The strategies are developed prior to each year for the upcoming list of action items and are developed by the staff members involved in completing the action item. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her action items, in a quarterly report. A suggestion is to enter each year's data on a spreadsheet or strategic planning software that lists the goals, objectives, action items, start dates, completion dates, and the name of the staff member responsible for the action items completion.
- At the end of the year, perform an annual review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and document any changes to objectives and action items to reflect changes in priorities. This process can be included at an annual review meeting in which successive years' objectives and action items are discussed as part of the annual budget process. Action items will tie into both the operating and capital budget process.
- Update major stakeholders on the plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Conduct staff meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review the progress on implementation of the plan.
- Post a chart of each year's recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program.
- If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written “parking lot” and review them as part of the annual just-in-time review to determine if they change or replace any existing strategies or action items.
- At the five-year mark of the plan, complete a shortened update, including repeating the statistically valid survey and demographic projections. Adjust existing recommendations as necessary.

## Implementation Guidelines: Strategies for Success



