

Public Hearing for 2023 Comprehensive Plan Policy Update CPAT (H-2023-0029) by City of Meridian Planning Division, located City Wide

- A. Request: Comprehensive Plan Amendment to update text, priorities and lead/support departments for certain policies text in the Plan.

Seal: All right. We will move on to open File No. H-2023-0029 for the 2023 Comprehensive Plan policy update.

McClure: Good evening. We are here to talk with you about some policy updates, which is a Comprehensive Plan text amendment. Within the Comprehensive Plan the policies together are referred to as the implementation section. These include goals, objectives, action items and each with Council priorities that ideally get tied into shorter strategic plan, budgeting, and other decision making processes. Briefly this is an overview of the presentation. We will cover some background, the review of the process for the Comprehensive Plan policies, our recommendation and the next steps. The city adopted the Comprehensive Plan in 2019 and which includes all of the goals, objectives, and action items or as previously noted the policies. Adoption, however, did not include the priorities for -- for these policies. In September of 2020 a new City Council adopted an update to the plan, which included those priorities and it also included whether departments or leader support and who was responsible. As a refresh, this Commission is charged under Idaho Statute Title 67, Chapter 5, with owning this plan. Tonight's update is -- tonight's update is more of an operational allocation of resources, but I hope you are all interested and I will touch more on that a bit at the end. Since it's been several years since we assigned priorities to the -- to the policies, it seemed appropriate to update Council on those. The review process started by talking with the directors, having the departments review, provide updates and, then, provide an opportunity to ask Council for input and any direction they would like to have. On May 2nd we presented the review in a work status to Council. Most of the discussion revolved around policies related to growth priority areas. Council provided direction on these and support to move forward with other staff recommended changes. The Council workshop -- the Planning and Zoning workshop discussion -- sorry. The Council workshop discussion was helpful, but all those changes to policy that staff discussed with them do require a text amendment, which is why we are here before you tonight. Public hearing process. There are 50 some policy changes, two with text. Minor modifications. Grammar. Sixteen with priority modifications. Fifteen with the lead modifications and 37 with support modifications. Note that some of those do have changes in multiple categories. I'm not going to go through all these with you. Hopefully those were easy to understand in the staff report. But we are happy to discuss any that caught your eye in your review.

Seal: Commission Smith, go ahead.

Smith: Yeah. So, thank you for that presentation. The two that I'm just curious about are -- or I guess it is 3.03.02E and 4.05.03D. Seems like most of the other -- the things that have changed from higher -- very high have tended to be changed to ongoing. Just curious why these two specifically regarding investment in strategic growth areas and

discourage development outside of established growth areas, as well as considering public funding to preserve open space as part of a permanent land trust, why those specifically are -- are lower priority, if there is specific reason or context behind that. I'm just curious. Curiosity.

Hood: Commissioners -- yeah. That -- that's maybe better -- we actually have the slide, because that -- those are kind of the meat, if you will, of some of the conversation that we had with Council in May about these. Something that Council has discussed sort of off and on since 2020 when we had three new Council Members elected -- is quote, unquote -- I'm using air quotes, because it really isn't anywhere in our code as priority growth areas and some of those concepts of directing growth in some of those areas. So, what you see is really some of that direction and discussion we had with Council, again, in May. Some of -- and I will paraphrase some of that conversation from May, but some of them -- the direction we got was it's sort of taking care of itself to some degree. It's maybe not the issue that it was even a couple of years ago when there was the -- the leapfrogging and the pushing out further and further of city limits and they -- they didn't vote, but the general consensus just -- for lack of a motion or any other action, was that the map that they did put together a year and a half ago maybe that did have some growth boundaries that were largely based on sewer sheds and fire response times was adequate enough. Thus we changed some of those priorities and, again, they think they have -- they have basically guided and directed that growth without explicitly having to come up with and define where and where not the city shall grow. I don't know if that fully answered your question, but that's essentially what we heard in May.

Smith: Mr. Chair?

Seal: Go ahead.

Smith: Yeah. Thanks. That answers my question for that. As for the public support for a permanent land trust, is that -- was that part of it kind of a similar discussion or was that just like the support was found to not necessarily be there, so it's kind of on the back burner or just some --

Hood: Yeah. Mr. Chair, Commissioner, so that -- that one is another one that has a little bit of a back story to the -- the previous community development director was kind of leading the charge on that, sort of as a -- a pet project under previous administration and he is gone and -- and the last mayor and even just through some of the city surveying that didn't rise as a top priority to our community and so that has really been back burnered at this point.

Smith: Thank you. That makes sense.

Seal: Commissioners, any other questions, comments, concerns? And we have nobody left in the audience.

Hall: There is no one online, Mr. Chair.

Seal: Okay. Is there anything specifically that was more troublesome than others as far as reprioritization? I mean had more input, more robust conversations that -- that were part of it?

Mr. McClure: Mr. Chair, no, the -- the process really was -- planning -- I don't view myself as a gatekeeper, so we just sort of said, departments, what do you want to talk to Council about, what -- what -- what are your updates on these high, very high and high priorities and we will take them to Council for you. Herding cats was at times problematic, but changes to the policies themselves seem to be a non-issue, minus the few that we wanted to talk to Council about.

Seal: Okay.

McClure: Now that said, you know, we will have a slide here in a minute, but we are going to be working potentially next year on some changes to the -- the text themselves. Are these policies still right? Do we need to add or remove, make -- make other changes. So, not just the priorities of these policies, but the policies themselves may -- may be a little bit more interesting.

Seal: Interesting.

Hood: Mr. Chair, I will, maybe, if -- if you don't mind, just another little peek behind the curtain to some degree. The other thing through this process that I think was interesting for a lot of the staff members that we were trying to get to review and respond on those high and very high, is -- is the city also has a strategic plan and there is a lot of overlap and there is some confusion even with the operational. Brian kind of mentioned that at the beginning, I mean this is very operational and in-house about what department is supposed to be doing what. The strategic plan is -- is very much the same and, again, there is some overlap and there is some confusion, too, with the plan as in both names. So, like, well, didn't we already do this through the Mayor's office and it's like, no, that's a citywide strategic plan versus a citywide Comprehensive Plan, which when you think about it makes some sense that there is some overlap, but I think even going into next year and, then, once we are through with this five year strategic plan at the city -- I have talked to Vincent Koontz up in the Mayor's office, we will do a better job of coordinating those plans. So, the ongoing ones that really are operational maybe aren't so much in the Comprehensive Plan and we are very more tactic driven and the Comprehensive Plan isn't so grandiose and visionary, still pretty specific about what we are trying to accomplish, but maybe we back off some of those things that are more day-to-day and really differentiate what is strategic and operational and kind of making those lines a little bit clearer. Again, this is -- this is -- the Comprehensive Plan is -- is focused on many readers; right? The public, development, staff, commissions, where the strategic plan is -- is more inwardly focused -- for the community benefit still, but most community doesn't even know we have a strategic plan. So, anyway, I just thought that was interesting as we were talking with the fire departments and some of these others are like, well, we just -- we just told the Mayor's office what we are doing with that and it's like, well, this is for a

different project for a different purpose, but related. So, anyways, I will stop.

Seal: So, did you say that the priorities -- even though they may be adjusted, the adjustment is more to help the different departments within the city to help them know where the prioritization needs to be within their active duty set, not necessarily a reflection of the -- kind of the overall arching Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the public?

Hood: Yeah. It's a good -- it's a good question and I don't -- I -- I don't think I'm under any pretense that this is driving their work plans necessarily, but it is a checkpoint and, again, this document as -- as you will recall, Chairman, you know was vetted through our community. So, it should reflect those stakeholders that are our residents, that our business community and what they said is important to them for us to do as the city. So, there is a lot of overlap and should all be intertwined and ingrained in -- in people's day-to-day activities and, again, more of a check in. Hey, we said this was hot -- the community said this should be a high priority three years ago. How are we doing on that? Okay. We are going to make that lower again for ones that I just mentioned, like looking at -- like a foothills type of levy to preserve ag land. That was -- that was a big topic three, four years ago when we went out to the public. Again now that opportunity and how we do that gets more convoluted and -- and it's just -- and we didn't just make it a lower priority, because it's hard, but there really just didn't seem to be any real momentum to do that currently in -- in the community. So, again, it's a -- it's an opportunity to check in -- in theory some of this does drive, again, work plans, but there is other factors, too.

Seal: Okay. Thank you.

Grace: Mr. Chair. Some -- sometimes I ask questions just for my own education, but I'm guessing that there is a requirement somewhere that you have to run these UDC and these comp plan revisions through the -- through the P&Z. I'm just wondering what that is. Why are we hearing it? Why do we have to approve?

McClure: Mr. Chair, Commissioner Grace, so the Comprehensive Plan has to be adopted by -- as part of a public hearing process and your -- your -- your -- your Commission is a recommending body to Council for any of those types of applications. So, we -- we do have to present those to you. I would say, well, this one -- I have -- I have said it several times is more an operational thing. The -- the Comprehensive Plan is your document, though. State code makes that pretty clear over and over again, so -- -- you know. And I have got a couple of bullets down here, but, you know, maybe not so much tonight, because this is more of an operational -- just priority things. But if you have any general comments, if you have any questions, other areas of improvement, those are all things that, you know, we would like to talk to you more. I -- I don't hear that often. I'm also not before you all that often. But you are always welcome to share those things with -- with Bill Parsons' team or request that we have a conversation with you as well.

Hood: Mr. Chair, can I follow up and -- and just provide -- a similar answer to what Brian said, but maybe phrase it a little bit different way. There are two changes tonight that would require the Planning and Zoning Commission to recommend something to the City

Council anyways, because those are substantive, if you will, text changes. We have chosen to adopt in our Comprehensive Plan the lead agencies and the priorities. So, by making that choice -- state code doesn't require us to do that, but for transparency purposes we did that. We told the public here is what we said -- you know, here is what you said was important for us to do and who is going to be doing it. So, there is some accountability factor. A lot of comprehensive plans don't have that. It's more ambiguous and we can point fingers -- well, I thought fire was doing it. No, I thought planning was doing it. So, if we didn't have that we could just make these changes and -- and work it out between fire and planning about who is doing what. But because we have adopted that as part of our plan, we can't just go and change it, we have to vet that, then, back through that same process that we adopt it and thus you are involved in that, as Brian stated in the Local Land Use Planning Act. So, you have a lot of authority and we rely heavily on you. Now, we do a lot of the work, but we are there to feed us any changes and comments and -- and coordination. So, to your question I think, really, on this one you really don't have a huge role, although we do want you to be comfortable with it and vet it through you. We could have done this administratively if we wouldn't have included some of these things in 2020 in the actual text of the plan.

Grace: No, I like the -- I like the fact that you get that additional accountability piece to it. That's great. And, no, thank you. I'm glad I asked. I learned something, so --

Smith: Mr. Chair?

Seal: Commissioner Smith.

Smith: Yes. For staff just looking over these -- so, I guess betrays my need to read through the comp plan some more. Are there any lines in looking at the -- you know, Attachment Two. I don't see any here. But if there is additional -- are there any policies or any -- any additions in the comp plan focused on for specifically pedestrian safety, walkability, you know, relative to arterials and collector streets, as well as like ADA, in ensuring, you know, the area is maneuverable for those with physical disabilities or limitations?

McClure: If you will bear with me for one second I will show you the website.

Hood: I will -- I will do a little filler as Brian is pulling up the website, which has all -- I think there is 522 policies. So, the quick answer is, yes, there are policies that address pathways, connectivity, pedestrian safety, ADA, those types of things. We will give you an example and it's sorted and I have already maybe bought enough time for Brian, but I believe it's Chapter 3 in -- in the Comprehensive Plan. There are -- it's cool -- and, Brian, if you don't mind sharing your screen now, this is, again, kind of a good tutorial. But you can sort -- and there is a pretty good search toolbox in -- in -- on the Comprehensive Plan. So, if you go to the city's website, again, and look at Comp Plan -- yep. There you go. You can filter and sort and search by different words. So, I will stop and let Brian take it from here.

McClure: So, if you go to meridiancity.org/compplan and, then, click on implementation and -- and so our entire Comprehensive Plan is word for word in a -- in a -- in our website. You don't have to download a PDF. The table itself is also searchable. So, you -- whatever hot buzzword you are looking for -- use transportation, for example, and anything with transportation either in policy section, priority, whatever, will show up. Not priority. I don't believe we have anything specifically saying at ADA. I believe we do have a lot of -- that not going to -- transportation, pedestrian, safety elements. Yeah. ADA is not in there. But if you look at pedestrian, connectivity, safety, those things are sprinkled throughout, particularly in the transportation section. Off the top of my head I -- I couldn't tell you which ones are -- are relevant. I do also have a spreadsheet. Happy to send it to anyone. It's even easier to use, because you can modify as appropriate. I sort of dodged that, but I also sort of hope I answered the question.

Smith: Thank you. That's helpful.

Seal: Any other questions? Comments? All right. Thank you very much. Appreciate the information and running this through the Planning and Zoning. It -- it's helpful to have some of this information in front of us for certain and some of the prioritization that comes from it, because I do remember everybody -- for a while everybody wanted to buy a bunch of dairy farms and make them into kind of museums, you know, kind of thing and that just seemed to be this big talk around a lot of city government projects, so -- and I haven't heard anything about it for quite a while. So, I mean the reality is that, you know, a lot of mom and pops want to sell their land and take their money and do something else -- or - - or the kids or whatever that -- that looks like, so, you know, as the city kind of changes, its -- its personality a little bit, it's just become less of a priority. So, that's one of the things, obviously, that's reflected in there, so other things begin to take shape as far as the priority of what we want the city to look like in the future. Like pathways. Sorry. I had to throw that in there, so -- you can do that when you are in the catbird seat. So, appreciate that. With that, if we have no more questions, comments -- there is nobody in the public to comment. I will take a motion to close the public hearing for File No. H-2023-0029.

Wheeler: So moved.

Rivera: Second.

Seal: It's been moved and seconded to close the public hearing for File No. H-2023-0029 for the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Policy update. All in favor, please, say aye. Opposed nay?

MOTION CARRIED: SIX AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Wheeler: Mr. Chair?

Seal: Commissioner Wheeler, go ahead.

Wheeler: I move we adjourn.

Seal: Oh, we have to -- no, not --

Wheeler: Not a thing? Am I wrong.

Seal: We just -- we just closed the public hearing, so --

Wheeler: Oh.

Seal: That's all -- that's all we have done so far.

Lorcher: Make a motion.

Seal: You can make a motion --

Wheeler: Oh.

Seal: -- to approve or deny.

Wheeler: I'm sorry, I was already thinking that it got --

Seal: You were home already. I know.

Wheeler: You know, I was one step ahead then. I apologize. So, I will -- I will refrain and let discussion happen if need be. Sorry about that.

Rivera: Oh, I will make the motion.

Seal: Go -- go right ahead. Please do. And unless there is any other discussion points, which are called for, please, go right ahead and --

Rivera: See if I can help my neighbor here. All right. After considering all staff, applicant and public testimony, I move to recommend approval of File No. H-2023-0029 as presented in the staff report for the hearing date of July 6, 2020, with -- with no modifications.

Lorcher: Second.

Seal: It's been moved and seconded to approve File No. H-2023-0029. All in favor, please, say aye. Opposed nay? Motion passes.

MOTION CARRIED: SIX AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Wheeler: Is this where I do it now? Am I -- Mr. Chair, I make a motion we adjourn.

Smith: Second.

Seal: It's been moved and seconded we adjourn. All in favor say aye. Opposed nay?
We are adjourned. Thanks, everyone.

MOTION CARRIED: SIX AYES. ONE ABSENT.
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:10 P.M.
(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS.)
APPROVED

ANDREW SEAL - CHAIR MAN
ATTEST:

____|____|____
DATE APPROVED

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK