



Mayor Robert E. Simison

City Council Members:

Treg Bernt
Joe Borton
Luke Cavener

Brad Hoaglund
Jessica Perreault
Liz Strader

July 12, 2021

The Honorable Kent Goldthorpe
Commission President
Ada County Highway District
3775 Adams Street
Garden City, ID 83714

Dear Commissioner Goldthorpe,

The City of Meridian appreciates the partnership between Ada County Highway District ("ACHD") and Meridian, particularly the process involving project design reviews between the agencies. However, recent policy decisions regarding multiuse pathway crossing designs have us concerned and we are asking for ACHD to delay further implementation until a joint meeting can be scheduled to discuss the reasons, validity and our apprehensions.

The Meridian Transportation Commission recently reviewed the pathway crossing in the 95% design for Lake Hazel Road and Eagle Road. After close review, the Transportation Commission brought forth concerns to Meridian City Council on Tuesday, July 6th about the new design placing the multiuse pathway crossing behind and between cars at street intersections, and the visibility conflicts this creates. Meridian City Council discussed the issue and shares these concerns, which are of the same nature regarding the designs of roundabout crossings along Eagle Road in the Victory to Amity project.

While the design treatment may make sense in certain rural conditions, the City of Meridian is not convinced that populated and active residential corridors, with distractions such as landscaping or regular local cross-streets are the appropriate settings for setback crossings. Bike and pedestrian supportive designs are very sensitive to perception, and human behavior can have significant public safety implications on function. Understanding that when a crossing is pulled back from the intersection, the perceived benefit is to allow vehicles to approach without blocking the crossing. However, Meridian staff, Commission members and Council have expressed concern that a vehicle may still just as easily block the crosswalk, and if done, this negates the benefit of the design. Visibility is also reduced with pedestrians and bicyclists meandering between vehicles.

Another concern is human behavior. People take shortcuts and often go to greater lengths to circumvent a process or design. Crossings will likely also take place both where the ramp is and

where a ramp would normally be located. This would lead to multiple points of conflict, upset expectations, and reduce awareness and safety of all travelers.

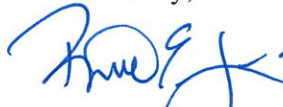
Lastly, landscaping, fencing, utility poles, and conflicting traffic signs in projects create inconsistencies and complicate a driver's ability to perceive pedestrians and bicyclists. This concern is compounded when people are crossing at a location outside of a driver's area of focus and normal expectations.

Since the Transportation Commission concerns were discussed with Council, City staff have also been notified that another project, Locust Grove widening between Overland and Victory, will also be redesigned with a similar treatment. The proposed design change will have additional impacts on private property, and it has been several years since the public participated in what is now intended to be a significantly different treatment for non-motorists.

There may be some well-founded reasons why ACHD is using the proposed design treatments, but these reasons have not been made evident to the Meridian City Council, Transportation Commission, or Planning staff despite repeated inquiries, nor have the concerns expressed been adequately discussed nor addressed. Additionally, there are no similar local urban examples, creating concern with committing to a treatment without testing and experiencing it first. The previously referenced standards for this type of feature are intended for dramatically different environments, such as rural areas, and include elements that are not incorporated in ACHD's proposed designs.

For these reasons, Meridian requests ACHD delay the multiuse pathway design which has pedestrians and bicyclists crossing behind and between cars at street intersections associated with any current and future projects in Meridian. To move forward, we request that the Commission and City Council hold a joint meeting as soon as practical to discuss this element so that the reasoning, logic and safety needs of the proposed features can be resolved for the benefit and safety of Meridian residents.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Simison
Mayor

cc: Ada County Highway District Commissioners
Meridian City Council
Meridian Transportation Commission
Bruce Wong, Ada County Highway District Director
Kristy Inselman, ACHD Senior Transportation Planner
Miranda Carson, Comprehensive Associate Coordination Planner