



Mayor Robert E. Simison

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October 26, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Robert Simison
Meridian City Council
Meridian Planning & Zoning Commission

CC: David Miles, Chief of Staff
Cameron Arial, Community Development Director
Victoria Cleary, Economic Development Administrator
Caleb Hood, Planning Division Manager

FROM: Brian McClure, Comprehensive Associate Planner

RE: Urban Renewal Plan for the Linder District Urban Renewal Project

This memo is intended to provide Comprehensive Plan related analysis for the proposed Urban Renewal Plan for the Linder District Urban Renewal Project (Linder District). The Linder District operates within the framework provided by State statute related to general Urban Renewal, and is intended to spur private investment and development enabling further implementation of the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan and Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan (Ten Mile SAP).

The implementation strategies and goals of the Linder District, which are well defined, describe projects and activities aimed to "eliminate and prevent the spread of deteriorating conditions and deterioration in the Project Area by employing a strategy to improve and develop public and private lands, to increase connectivity and transit options, and to grow the economy and employment opportunities in the Project Area, while recognizing the importance of high design as set forth in the Ten Mile SAP." The three primary projects described include: support developing the Linder Overpass Project; support developing the Local Road Project; and support developing the Sewer Main Project. The Linder District also includes several other activities, some of which include: support developing other infrastructure, such as stormwater; supporting

public-private-partnerships; site demolition and cleanup including addressing environmental quality; and other financial assistance for business.

All of the described projects are intended to directly implement the Ten Mile SAP. None of the other listed activities are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and all of them may help to achieve the desired vision with future activities and development within the district boundaries.

Recommendation

Based on the outlined activities in the Linder District, Staff believes establishing an Urban Renewal District Plan in this area of town may be an effective tool in implementing the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan and Ten Mile Interchange SAP. **Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Commission move to approve the associated Resolution identifying the proposed Linder District as conforming to the City of Meridian's Comprehensive Plan.**

General Comprehensive Plan Analysis

While the Linder District is limited in scope outside of the three projects, the following text describes general applicable policies that should be considered with future activities and development of the urban renewal district area. This analysis is in consideration of future needs, concerns, and activities, and how the Linder District may fit within this context, but not of the proposed plan itself. Application of the City's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) to the proposed district area (see Attachment A) is very relevant. Most every major theme (chapter) in the Comp Plan ranging from economic development and land use to transportation contain policies that are directly applicable. Additionally, the Comp Plan adopts other documents by reference, for inclusion in consideration of land use decisions and to direct staff activities.

The future land use designations, policies, and Ten Mile SAP adopted by reference in the Comprehensive Plan, should be considered with all future Urban Renewal Agency, City of Meridian, and private development activity whenever applicable. The following analysis describes the associated text, policies, and referenced plans.

Note: The Ten Mile SAP has its own future land use designations; see the General Ten Mile Interchange Analysis section for those descriptions.

Plan Text

General Compliance:

With the Linder District entirely integrated within the existing boundaries of a specific area plan, expectations are clearly described. Aside from being listed as adopted by reference in the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan, the primary text referencing the Ten Mile SAP is in the Evolving section (Chapter 3). This section of text states,

The City developed a specific plan for approximately 2,800 acres bordered (roughly) by Linder Road to the east; McDermott Road to the west; the Union Pacific Railroad line to the north and ½ mile south of Overland Road on the south. The specific area plan is an

addendum to this Comprehensive Plan and places an emphasis on a mix of uses, both residential and commercial; new employment areas; higher density residential; a planned collector road network and design guidelines.

The Linder District indicates a strong correlation to the Ten Mile SAP in the Introduction section, and which states,

In this case, pursuant to the Ten Mile SAP, and the City's Future Land Use Map, development within the Project Area will be focused on a diverse employment center, including office, research facilities and light industrial opportunities, which can include start-ups to regional/national enterprises. A portion of the Project Area contemplates mixed-use commercial, which focuses on increased commercial and employment, and some residential uses. All intended development scenarios will focus on transportation connectivity for all types of users (vehicle traffic, pedestrian and bicycle uses), as well as ensuring open space amenities, such as pathways, plazas, and other urban amenities that will fit into the overall area designs and support a strong employment base.

Plan Policies

The following text relates to the policies found throughout the major themes in the Comprehensive Plan (Chapters 2 through 6). Additional context for these policies can be found in the Related Policies section (see Attachment B), which includes parent Goals and Objectives, for the referenced policies. The first number of a policy ID references the Chapter.

- 2.06.02B, Pursue public-private partnerships and economic development grants that bring additional job opportunities to the community.

The Linder District will provide an additional funding mechanism which may be used in public-private partnerships, and for the specific purpose of furthering the Ten Mile SAP vision. Not just development that increases the tax levy, but local jobs paying family-wages that further the local economy long-after entitlements are gained and a new building is constructed.

- 2.09.03B, Promote Ten Mile, Downtown, and The Village as centers of activity and growth.

The Linder District seeks to encourage development of the Ten Mile area by addressing infrastructure deficiencies in support of employment opportunities needed for the local and citywide job base.

- 3.03.03G, Require urban infrastructure be provided for all new developments, including curb and gutter, sidewalks, water and sewer utilities.

The City has land use authority over the project area and urban infrastructure will be required with all redevelopment. Further, the Linder District calls out specific implementation projects to support new development with local and regional improvements that are needed to support community benefit. An overpass will enhance life-safety through improved emergency response efficiencies, and greatly improve stakeholder access to

services and jobs. Local roadway and utility infrastructure improvements will increase opportunities for new jobs and services.

- 4.05.01E, Assess environmental impact of potential new development, infill, and redevelopment.

The Linder District includes addressing environmental quality and remediation as participating activities. Outside of floodplain impacts however, which do not exist in the project area, the City does not have much in the way of requirements towards this end.

- 6.01.02D, Consider needed sidewalk, pathway, landscaping, and lighting improvements with all land use decisions.

The City has land use authority over the project area and redevelopment will be required to provide infrastructure. The Linder District specifically references all of these elements as projects for implementation.

Referenced Plans

The following plans are adopted by reference in the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan, and are relevant material to the proposed Gateway Plan.

- Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan

This was the City's first and only specific area plan. Where Destination Downtown and other subarea plans have stayed within the realm of vision, or worked exclusively within the realm of existing land uses and other citywide standards, the Ten Mile SAP addresses local context both through land use and transportation. The plan has a number of vision and goal statements, but what perhaps describes the reason for the plan, is its statement on The Use of a Limited Resource. This states,

*...the Ten Mile Interchange Area has a number of unique and highly desirable attributes that make the land in the area a key resource for the City of Meridian's future. **Meridian has one area left within its Area of Impact with the access and visibility this area offers. The area is a key to Meridian's long term prosperity.** Meridian is the next community in the Treasure Valley to run out of land for future development. Hemmed in by Boise and Garden City to the east and northeast, Eagle to the north, Nampa to the west, and Kuna to the south, Meridian has a limited land base with which to secure its future.*

Another guiding element of the Ten Mile SAP, the mission, provides the following context,

In the Ten Mile Interchange Area, the mission is to create a place that will add to the long-term economic stability of the City of Meridian, not just respond to immediate market forces and trends. To achieve the economic development vision for Meridian as a place that is "Built for Business and Designed for Living," the Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan promotes a complete and integrated mix of uses that will create a place where people can live, work and raise a family.

The Ten Mile SAP represents the integration of transportation and land use through a framework defined by location. Freeway visibility creates new opportunities for long-term economic resiliency through a diversity of employment opportunities, and that is purposefully

considerate of jobs-housing, accessibility, and the intentional buildout of commensurate land uses.

- **Ada County Highway District Master Street Map**

The ACHD Master Street Map (MSM) is a key element of implementing the Ten Mile SAP. This MSM is part of a broader Transportation and Land Use Integration Plan, and which succinctly summarizes a core tenant of the Ten Mile SAP. Jobs and housing balance, mix, transition, and access are critical in preserving quality of life and ensuring opportunities for economic development. The wrong use or the right use in the wrong location could undermine this effort. The MSM has been updated to include all arterial and collector roadways shown in the Ten Mile SAP, including references and support for identified cross-section and intersection treatments.

All of these plans are available on the City's Comprehensive Plan website at:
<https://meridiancity.org/planning/compplan/resources>.

General Ten Mile Interchange SAP Analysis

Future Land Use

Mixed Employment, which states:

The purpose of the Mixed Employment areas is to encourage a diversity of compatible land uses that may include a mixture of office, research and specialized employment areas, light industrial including manufacturing and assembly, and other miscellaneous uses. These areas generally do not include retail and consumer service uses serving the wider community. However, a small amount of retail and service establishments, primarily serving employees and users of the Mixed Employment areas or nearby industrial areas, are allowed. Such retail would be the exception and not the rule.

Mixed Employment areas should provide a variety of flexible sites for small, local or start-up businesses, as well as sites for large national or regional enterprises. Mixed Employment areas should be designed to encourage multimodal travel and convenient circulation to supporting uses located within the area. This would include multiple access points to help disperse traffic, and a complete system of streets, sidewalks and pedestrian and bicycle paths

to provide circulation within the area and connections to the surrounding roadway, pedestrian and trail systems.

Mixed Employment areas should be designed as lower density suburban-style developments. Design and development standards are recommended that would help to make developments more attractive, engaging and accessible places.

While there are no fixed limits on size of establishment or development intensity in Mixed Employment areas, it is anticipated that buildings will range in height from 1-4 stories, have total floor areas of 10,000-1,000,000 square feet, and that FAR will exceed .75.

Land Use Types in Mixed Employment Areas

- *Corporate and business offices*
- *Research facilities and laboratories*
- *Light Industrial uses including manufacturing and assembly*
- *Occasional, complementary uses which focus on serving area employees and users, such as business services, child care, and convenience retail*

The bulk of the future land use designation for the Linder District is Mixed Employment. This is a hybrid designation intended primarily to support the local job base. The designation usually functions as a transitional land use nearer to residential, and separating other more intense employment areas that are incompatible with local residential uses. The local roadway network is essential in distributing traffic away from arterial roadways.

In the context of the Linder District, uses should seek to maximize freeway visibility by realizing increased FAR and higher job to acre ratios. The purpose is in providing for employment opportunities near to significant residential developments, and to limit trip generation and distance. The employment focus is on the creation of goods and ideas, and those jobs that pay a higher wage to more people.

Mixed Use Commercial, which states:

The purpose of the Mixed Use Commercial designation is to encourage the development of a mixture of office, retail, recreational, employment, and other miscellaneous uses, with supporting multifamily or single family attached residential uses. While the focus of these areas is on commercial and employment uses, the horizontal and vertical integration of residential uses is essential to securing entitlements. As with all mixed use areas, this designation requires developments to integrate the three major use categories—residential, commercial, and employment. In Mixed Use Commercial areas three or more significant uses also tend to be larger scale projects. This designation is intended to provide flexibility and encourage developers to build innovative projects.

Traditional neighborhood design concepts with a strong pedestrian-oriented focus are essential. The goal in these areas is to achieve a FAR of 1.00- 1.25 or more. Development within these areas exhibit quality building and site design and an attractive pedestrian environment with a strong street character. The mix of residential uses may be achieved vertically within buildings; however, some horizontal mixes may be allowed. Where existing parcel sizes are small, development plans should be prepared in collaboration with the adjacent property owners in order to establish an integrated mixed use project across

several parcels. This land use designation calls for an overall target density of 8-12 dwelling units per acre, with higher densities allowed on individual projects. No more than 30 percent of the ground level development within the Mixed Use Commercial designation should be used for residences.

There is very little mixed use commercial within the project area. Most of this designation within the Ten Mile SAP falls to the south, or north across I-84 and Ten Mile Road. As stated, the focus of Mixed Use Commercial is commercial and employment uses, but some supporting residential is allowed. The previously entitled land (application H-2021-0014) within the Linder District, on the north-west corner of Linder and Overland, includes an employment area with supporting commercial uses. This project incorporates a north-south public street connection across Overland at Spanish Sun Way, and then heading west which will eventually connect into Tasa Drive.

Transportation

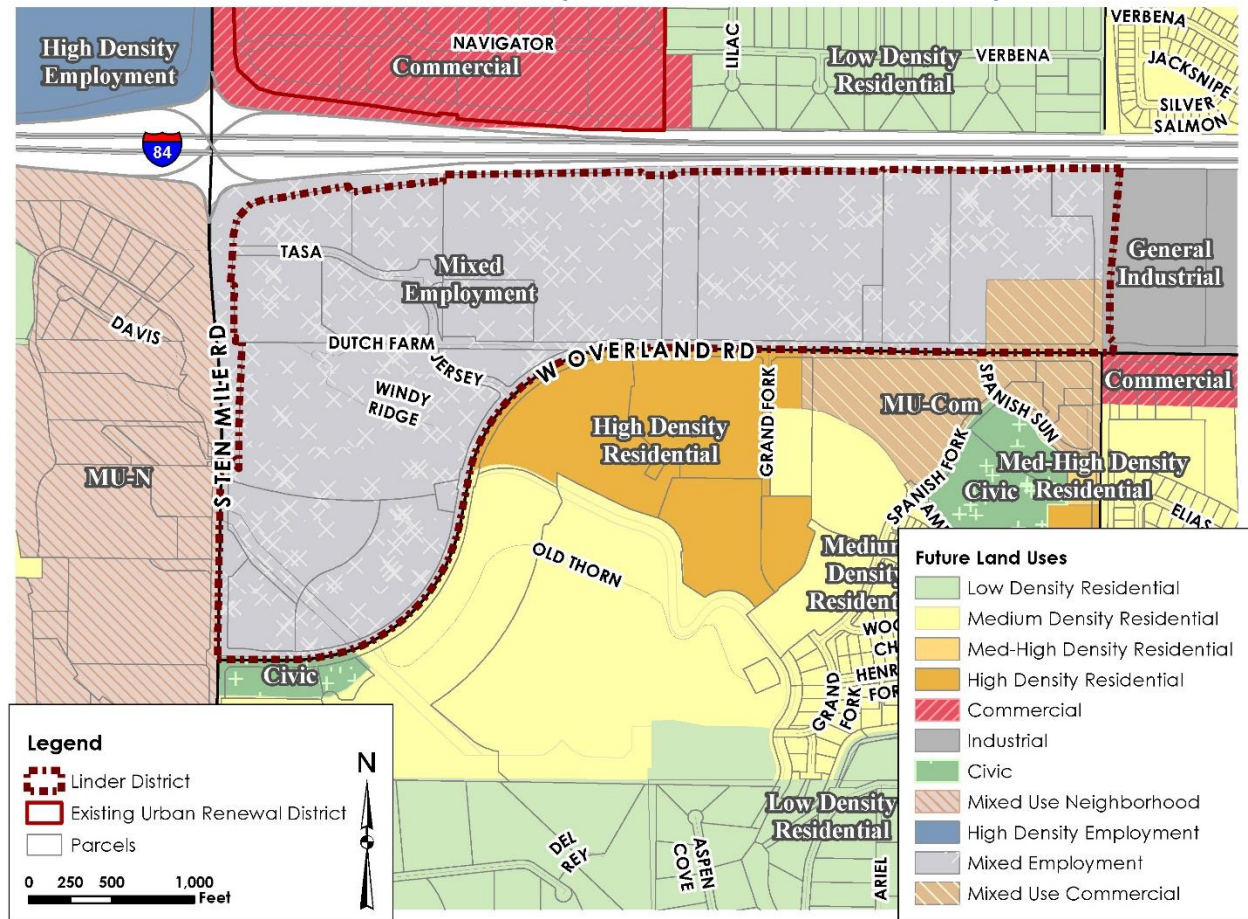
The transportation element of the Ten Mile SAP is essential. The interconnectivity and balance of residential and employment uses is critical to the proposed street network presented. Within the Linder District, Tasa Drive is expected to be connected on the west near the roundabout at Jersey Way, and east towards a planned northward extension of Spanish Sun Way (see Attachment C). This will limit impacts to Overland Road, by providing safe and consistent access to future development in the area. The exact alignment of this road may vary, but the beginning and ending points have already been set. The Linder District identifies this local roadway as a project that tax increment financing could support.

Complete streets are also important to the Ten Mile SAP, with sidewalk, bike lanes (or equivalent), refuge medians, and other landscape and street furnishings being required.

Building Form and Character

The Ten Mile SAP identifies what is the equivalent of a blend between traditional zoning and form based code, as the basis for development and building development. The City's Architectural Standards Manual is the presiding document for design review, but entitlements should consider and set the stage for future design review activities within development agreements. Consideration for floor area ratio (FAR), building form, and described design principles such as "Base, Body, and Top" should not be forgotten.

Attachment A: Linder District (Urban Renewal District)



Attachment B: Related Policies

The policies below are from the City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan. For policy type: G = Goal; O = Objective, and A = Action. Goals and Objectives are shown with referenced actions for additional context, along with a referenced section.

ID	Policy Type	Policy	Section
2.06.00	G	Enhance Meridian's economic vitality and position in the local and regional economy.	Economic Excellence
2.06.02	O	Support economic opportunities for a community with diverse income levels.	Economic Excellence
2.06.02B	A	Pursue public-private partnerships and economic development grants that bring additional job opportunities to the community.	Economic Excellence
2.09.00	G	Create positive, vibrant, and accessible commercial activity centers within the community.	Economic Excellence
2.09.03	O	<i>Cultivate unique and diverse destination-type activities within Meridian's centers.</i>	<i>Economic Excellence</i>
2.09.03B	A	<i>Promote Ten Mile, Downtown, and The Village as centers of activity and growth.</i>	<i>Economic Excellence</i>
3.03.00	G	<i>Direct and prioritize development in strategic areas and in accordance with corridor and special area plans.</i>	<i>Growth and Population</i>
3.03.01	O	<i>Plan for an appropriate land use mix, recreational and civic facilities, and phased service extension within specific area plans and urban renewal districts.</i>	<i>Growth and Population</i>
3.03.03G	A	<i>Require urban infrastructure be provided for all new developments, including curb and gutter, sidewalks, water and sewer utilities.</i>	<i>Growth and Population</i>
4.05.00	G	Preserve, protect, enhance, and wisely use natural resources.	Stewardship
4.05.01	O	Protect and enhance existing waterways, groundwater, wetlands, wildlife habitat, air, soils, and other natural resources.	Stewardship
4.05.01E	A	<i>Assess environmental impact of potential new development, infill, and redevelopment.</i>	<i>Stewardship</i>
6.01.00	G	Facilitate the efficient movement of people and products to and from the City.	Transportation and Streets
6.01.02	O	Enhance existing transportation systems.	Transportation and Streets
6.01.02D	A	<i>Consider needed sidewalk, pathway, landscaping, and lighting improvements with all land use decisions.</i>	<i>Transportation and Streets</i>

Attachment C: Urban Renewal District Projects

