

Livability

DOWNTOWN MERIDIAN will be a destination, where there is a wide variety of entertainment and social options to serve the downtown and area residents. It will have a strong character, a welcoming and beautiful atmosphere, and a variety of housing options that can be easily accessible by car as well as other transit options. The downtown will also be connected to the rest of the City by greenbelt or pathway system.



Destination: *Downtown*



Livability Focus Areas

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FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC ART AND BEAUTIFICATION

A well-coordinated collection of public art throughout downtown Meridian will provide a personality to downtown and excitement for people of all ages. Programs to encourage and promote the work of local artists are encouraged. City zoning and design standards may also be revised, as needed, to allow for artists, sidewalk displays, street performers, etc.

Celebration and promotion of Meridian's heritage and history will take center stage, and become a theme for downtown interpretation and public art. Possible nomination of a national historic district and expansion of local festivals and events, such as Dairy Days, will honor the community's history while looking forward to the future.

Street improvements and beautification will include increasing the number of street trees, introducing landscaping including planters, community gardens and green spaces. Lighting is also critical and will contribute to making downtown secure and usable for most of the day. A well-lit downtown will attract people and activity, and decorative street lamps on major streets will contribute to a lively environment.

FOCUS AREA: ENTERTAINMENT AND GATHERING PLACES

People are attracted to downtowns because of the quality of the experience. Entertainment and gathering places in downtown Meridian will make it a destination for residents and visitors. Gathering places can take many forms, from formal event venues, to informal park or plaza spaces, to popular restaurants or retail spaces, and downtown Meridian must include a combination these.

Downtown Meridian will be a destination for entertainment. Entertainment venues will include theaters, meeting or convention spaces and sports complexes. Indoor and

outdoor gathering places like amphitheaters, parks, farmer's markets and sports fields will be developed and expanded as space and needs are identified to create opportunities for informal gathering and programmed activities.

Downtown Meridian will attract several people and businesses as these venues become local and regional attractions, and will increase opportunities for supporting retail and dining. Downtown will be a living room for the community, and one that provides activity throughout the year. This level of activity and density will help support a dependable and convenient transit system, job growth, and stimulate additional investment in downtown.

FOCUS AREA: DOWNTOWN HOUSING

Providing attractive, comfortable housing for a range of income levels and life cycle stages helps the downtown to thrive. Expanding housing options in the Downtown will make it a more walkable and less automobile-dependent district, and a place even more attractive to new businesses.



Destination: *Downtown*

Nation-wide demographic trends in the last few years have shown increased demand for housing in well-planned and pedestrian-oriented downtowns and Meridian is well positioned to create this kind of vibrant downtown experience.

Downtown housing will take many forms, including single-family residential neighborhood on the edges of downtown, mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail or office, condominiums and apartments, and moderate-income housing as well as higher-end professional flats.

Encouraging affordable housing in downtown may take a variety of strategies and will require public-private partnerships and joint investment. Many federal housing grants and programs are available to assist in increasing affordable housing and home ownership in a variety of settings.



Destination: *Downtown*

Priority Actions

- Create more places for community gathering and entertainment
- Negotiate a long-term lease for use of the Union Pacific property in the core of downtown
- Locate a sports facility or stadium in downtown Meridian
- Locate a multi-purpose performing arts center in downtown Meridian
- Celebrate and promote local history and heritage