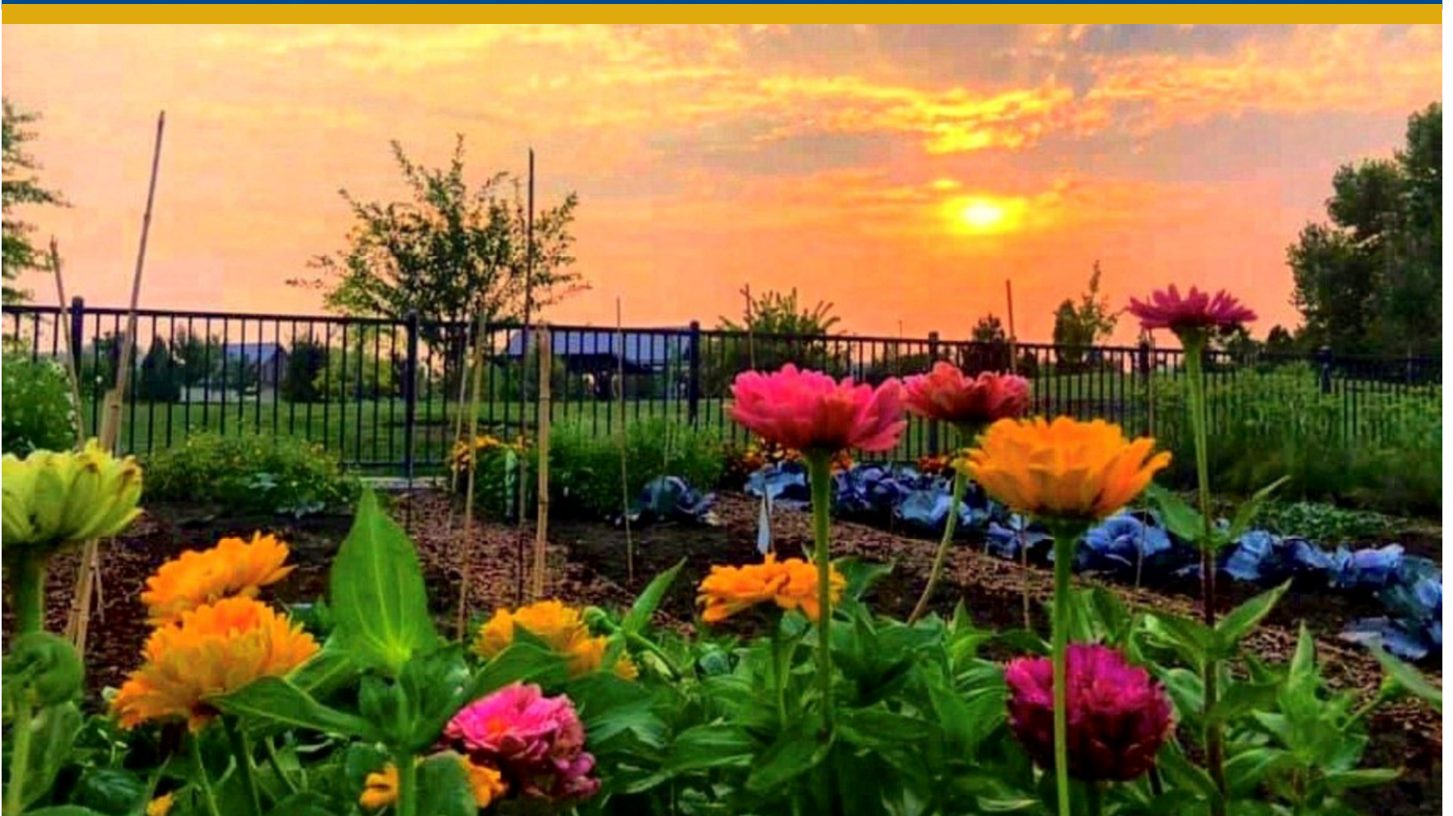




Meridian Parks and Recreation

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to share Meridian Parks and Recreation's *2021 Annual Report* with you. As the highlights suggest, 2021 was truly a remarkable year. I hope that you have taken the time to utilize some of the many



Steve Siddoway
Director of Fun

opportunities we provide to the community to come together with family and friends, get healthy, learn something new, and just have fun!

We are fortunate to have a professional staff, guided by a strong customer-focused culture, that encourages making

things better, exceeding community expectations, and leading with a servant's heart. Their commitment to delivering the best to our citizens, and serving as excellent stewards of the parks, facilities, programs and activities that the department offers, makes Meridian one of the premier communities in the United States.

In 2021, staff worked purposefully to create opportunities for the entire community to feel involved and connected by planning new parks and implementing new programs. Although much was accomplished, there is still more to do.

In the coming year we will be putting the finishing touches on our *Meridian Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update*, breaking ground on Phase II of Discovery Park, adding pickleball courts to Kleiner Park, and refining our vision for a future community center that will meet the diverse needs of our growing community. These and our many other projects ensure that 2022 will be full of exciting new ventures for our department and community.

Please take a moment to read through this report and reflect on the ways that Meridian Parks and Recreation makes a difference in your life. Thank you for being a partner in making Meridian an outstanding place to live, work and raise a family.



Come
Out
and
Play!

ABOUT MERIDIAN PARKS AND RECREATION

Meridian Parks and Recreation is one of the city's leading providers of affordable, year-round leisure and recreational activities and entertainment for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Beautiful parks and plazas; pathways, ponds and open spaces; recreation, performance and sports facilities — all provide the perfect urban oasis and offer a respite from the fast pace of life for those in our growing community.

Our 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.

Our 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.

Our Focus Areas



QUALITY



COMMUNITY



FUN



CITY OF MERIDIAN MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL



In 2021, Jessica Perreault served as the City Council Liaison to the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department.

Pictured left to right: Jessica Perreault, Luke Cavener, Brad Hoaglund, Mayor Robert Simison, Treg Bernt, Joe Borton, Liz Strader

Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission

President: Jo Greer

Vice President: Keith Bevan

Commissioners:

Jennifer Bobo

Dom Gelsomino

Camden Hyde

John Nesmith

Mandi Roberts

Others Recent

Commissioners:

Albert Kang

Jessica West



WATCH ONLINE!

The Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission generally meets the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm at Meridian City Hall.

These meetings are open to the public and are live streamed via the City of Meridian's website.

Meridian Parks and Recreation Commissioners pictured left to right: Keith Bevan, Jo Greer, Jennifer Bobo, Dom Gelsomino, Camden Hyde, Mandi Roberts. Not pictured: John Nesmith

We Are Parks and Recreation

Director:

Steve Siddoway

Recreation Manager:

Garrett White

Recreation Coordinators:

Skyler Cook (Sports)
Maggie Combs (Sports)
Jenna Fletcher (Classes & Camps)
Renee White (Events)

Parks Superintendent:

Mike Barton

Parks Maintenance Manager:

Roger Norberg

Year-Round Parks Maintenance Staff:

John Aceves, Jeremy Aldrich, Dave Cereghino, James Christensen, Kevin Gallivan, Phil Harris, Frank Keeney, Wade Maisey, John Meuser, Debbie Miller, Dan White, Kyle Yorita

Arborist:

Matt Perkins

Parks and Pathways Project Manager:

Kim Warren

Administrative Assistants:

Rachel Myers
Jeannette Sanchez
Kaela Hopkins

Arts & Culture Coordinator:

Audrey Belnap

Marketing Coordinator:

Shelly Houston

Volunteer Coordinator:

Chelsea Cantrell

Meridian Homecourt Facility Manager:

Jake Garro

Meridian Homecourt Site Supervisor:

Renee McFarland

Sports League Site Supervisors:

Ross Cipriano
Joshua Herker

Accolades



Meridian Mayor Robert Simison honored seven Parks staff members with **Meridian Way Coins** for their role in creating and installing weather-proof AED boxes that make life-saving equipment more accessible at Meridian's parks and playing fields. Honorees included **Jeremy Aldrich, Frank Keeney, John Meuser, Codi Heaton, Dakota Timmons, James Christensen, and Phil Harris.** This Heart Smart AED Access Program was also awarded a **2021 City Achievement Award** by the Association of Idaho Cities.



In February, at the City of Meridian's annual All-Staff Meeting, Meridian Homecourt Manager **Jake Garro** was named **Supervisor of the Year**. The City's Volunteer Coordinator **Chelsea Cantrell** was presented with one of the City's prestigious **CARE Champion** awards.



Parks and Recreation Marketing Coordinator **Shelly Houston** was named **Meridian's Woman of the Year** by the Meridian Chamber of Commerce. Shelly has worked in marketing and communications for the City of Meridian since 2006. She is an avid photographer and the steward of Meridian City Hall's Little Free Library.

2021 Highlights



DELIVERING OUTSTANDING FACILITIES

- A recently completed parking lot expansion project at **Heroes Park** added 160 new **parking stalls** to the park which is a popular location for youth athletics. The project was made possible through a partnership with Meridian PAL, an organization that regularly utilizes the park's playing fields. A new basketball court was added near the playground as part of the project.
- **Adventure Island Playground**, the award-winning universally accessible playground in Settlers Park, was featured in the September/October 2021 issue of AAA's *Via Magazine* in an article highlighting the nation's outstanding inclusive playgrounds called "Play for All."
- Energy-efficient **LED lighting upgrades** were completed this year at **Tully Park** and near the public restroom building located outside the Meridian Chamber of Commerce building in **Storey Park**.
- The City of Meridian received accessibility funding through a federal **Community Development Block Grant** which our department will use to replace the existing play equipment at **Chateau Park** with an all-abilities playground. Funds will also be used to add a pathway to connect the new playground to the adjacent neighborhood.
- New **pollinator-friendly plant and flower beds** intended to attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds were created at **Heroes Park**. The project was a joint effort between Parks and Recreation staff and members of the **Meridian Co-Op Gardeners** who have a special interest in nurturing healthy local pollinator populations.
- In the early fall, the hardwood courts at the **Meridian Homecourt** received a professional re-surfacing and the entire facility received a deep cleaning. The facility is used for basketball, volleyball, pickleball, cornhole and a variety of community education classes.

2021 Highlights

INNOVATING FOR SUCCESS

- Five new pairs of **concrete cornhole boards** will be installed in Settlers Park this coming spring, thanks to a grant from Together Treasure Valley, a group of corporations and business leaders who hand-select a variety of community projects to fund in local communities each year.



- Beginning with its Summer 2021 issue, the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department's seasonal **Activity Guide** has a new look and size and has become an online-only publication. The changes, which also now include in-house production, allow us to be more nimble in communicating our class offerings while realizing significant financial savings due to the elimination of professional printing cost, postage expenses and bulk mail handling fees. New seasonal issues are posted online in April, August and December at meridiancity.org/activityguide.



PARTNERING TO ENHANCE SERVICES

- The **AEDs** located at Meridian's parks and playing fields are now more accessible, thanks to a project undertaken by Meridian Parks and Recreation staff members and the Meridian Fire Department. Rather than being stored inside concession stands which only operate during limited hours, AEDs are now housed in **weather-proof boxes** built by staff. They can be easily accessed by the public any time they are needed.
- This fall we co-hosted the 2021 Meridian **Fall Leaf Recycling Program** with the Meridian Public Works Department and Republic Services. Leaf collection bins were available to the public for a seven-week period at nine city park locations.
- Three Meridian City Parks – Chateau, Storey and Tully – served as meal locations for the **West Ada School District's 2021 Summer Feeding Program**. Free breakfasts and lunches were available to children up to age 18. In all, the program's 11 Meridian locations served 52,981 breakfasts and 63,846 lunches.



- Meridian's **Centennial Park** served as the temporary outdoor home of the **Treasure Valley Children's Theater** during the summer and fall of 2021. They held rehearsals and presented performances on a large mobile stage made possible by local sponsors, including the Meridian Arts Commission. They also held performances in Discovery Park, Generations Plaza, and at City Hall.

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Refining Our Vision of the Future

In 2015, the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department developed its first comprehensive *Master Plan* — a detailed document that lays out the vision for and guides the development of our city's parks and pathways system, recreation activities, and special events. This master plan has been an integral part of our ongoing efforts to provide innovatively designed parks, better connected pathways, and diverse recreational opportunities that build lasting memories.

This document has guided us well for the past six years and is now due for an update to ensure we continue to serve the evolving needs of our community.

Since mid-October 2021, we've been working closely with parks and recreation planning experts, as well as city council members, parks commissioners, and members of the public in a planning process that is engaging stakeholders and garnering public input and will result in an updated *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* for Meridian.

Together we've been strategically examining our community's vision; evaluating existing services, facilities, and resources; and assessing future needs and wishes concerning our parks and recreation system.

In-person and virtual focus group meetings, a public forum, and an online survey have all been helping us learn more about how we can best prioritize and fulfill the future needs and expectations of our community.

You can learn more about our current Master Planning efforts at www.meridiancity.org/parks/masterplan. Additional findings, reports and information will be posted as they become available.



2021 Highlights

BUILDING COMMUNITY

- Through its Care Enough to Wear Jeans fundraiser, the Meridian Parks and Recreation staff raised \$240.00 from City Hall employees to benefit its **Care Enough to Share** youth scholarship program. An additional \$630.00 was donated to the fund by the general public. These funds help children from qualifying low-income families attend classes, camps or workshops offered through our seasonal Activity Guides which they might otherwise not be able to afford.



- Rake Up Meridian**, a community-wide service project coordinated by Republic Services and Meridian Parks and Recreation, resulted in the yards of 184 seniors and people with physical limitation being raked by 52 volunteer raking teams. In all, 4,000 bags of leaves were collected during this year's raking window.
- The Meridian Parks and Recreation Department celebrated the annual **Do the Right** kindness campaign in April by providing a variety of thank you and recognition cards to encourage city staff and community members to share messages of appreciation and praise with others.

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER

- Once again our department's annual **Holiday Classic Volleyball and Cornhole Tournaments** raised funds that allowed our department to purchase Christmas gifts for low-income preschoolers who attend Meridian's Head Start Program. Using the \$4,595 raised, staff members and volunteers purchased, wrapped and delivered more than 810 gifts to 51 children. In addition to toys and clothing, each child received underwear, socks, a blanket, a book, soap, and a new toothbrush and toothpaste.
- We brought holiday joy to many more children through our annual **Santa's Mailbox** program. Any child who placed a letter with a legible return address in the colorful Santa's Mailbox outside of Meridian City Hall received a personalized reply from Santa in the mail. In 2021, our staff and volunteer "elves" replied to 1,068 letters to Santa.
- The Parks and Recreation staff also coordinated a **Salvation Army Angel Tree** toy drive at Meridian City Hall. In all, approximately 200 new unwrapped toys were collected for distribution as Christmas gifts to the children of local families in need.



2021 Highlights

PROMOTING ARTS, CULTURE & HISTORY

- Nine art exhibitions took place in Meridian City Hall's **Initial Point Gallery** in 2021, featuring works by 24 individual artists and five large art groups including the Treasure Valley Art Alliance, the West Ada School District, and the Plein Air Painters of Idaho.
- The Meridian Arts Commission continued to expand Meridian's **Traffic Box Community Art Project** this year with the addition of 11 new vinyl wraps designed by local artists. The traffic box art is intended to contribute to the attractiveness of our community, deter graffiti, add to the vibrancy of our cityscape, and highlight local art and artists.
- On November 2, the Meridian Arts Commission and Mayor Simison unveiled the first of three **art murals** to be featured on the walls of Meridian businesses. Artist Ben Konkol created a colorful bike scene on an exterior wall of **Meridian Cycles** located at 1203 N. Main Street in downtown Meridian.

- A new piece of **public art** has been designed for the new **Ten Mile Trailhub** by Treasure Valley artist Stephanie Inman. The towering metal piece with a floral motif will be installed in Summer 2022.



- The Meridian Historic Preservation Commission has taken the initial steps to have the **Meridian Speedway** listed on the **National Registry of Historic Places**. The Speedway, which opened in 1951, has been deemed eligible for the designation and now must go through a formal nomination process and review involving both a state and national board.



PATHWAY CONNECTIVITY — A HIGH PRIORITY

Creating Connections

Meridian has continued to make steady progress towards the build-out of its pathway system. In addition to pathways conditioned as part of private development in 2021, we are pleased to share the following highlights.

The Ten Mile Trailhub

Our first-ever trailhead and gateway to the pathway system was completed in 2021. This small park-like site features parking for 20 cars; a central plaza area with seating; landscape and site furnishings; and utility infrastructure for a future restroom facility.



Fairview Avenue Connection

Fall of 2021 saw completion of the Fairview Avenue connection. This stretch of the Five Mile Creek Pathway had previously been 'lost' along Fairview Avenue. The new 10' wide sidewalk with curb and gutter provides a safer, more visible route along Fairview Avenue, guiding users to where the pathway continues to the north at N. Lakes Place.

Pathway Infill Projects

Previously, Meridian Parks staff worked with three consultant teams to complete conceptual design and feasibility evaluations for twelve potential pathway infill projects. These projects targeted short-but-crucial 'missing teeth' segments with the goal of enhancing connectivity across the pathway system. After shortlisting the most feasible and impactful projects from this group, construction plans were completed for four of these connections.

These include: sidewalk widenings on Linder and Locust Grove Roads; one segment of the Five Mile Creek Pathway at Linder/Ustick; and a new stretch of pathway serving existing neighborhoods just north of 8th Street Park. These infill projects are currently awaiting ACHD approval, with plans to bid early in 2022 and construct in the spring. Design for two additional pathway segments – a segment at Meridian and Victory Roads, and a new stretch of Five Mile Creek Pathway between Ten Mile and Black Cat – are in design currently and will move forward in 2022.

Five Miles on the Five Mile Creek Pathway – Yellow Center Stripe

In response to community requests for enhanced wayfinding and to draw attention to this increasingly significant recreational asset, staff commissioned the painting of a dashed yellow line down the center of the Five Mile Creek Pathway beginning at the new trailhub at Ten Mile Road through the heart of town, as far east as Locust Grove Road. Signalled pedestrian crossings exist throughout the entire route. Additional striping is planned for future stretches of the pathway as they are completed.

ULI Panel Set for May 2022

Last year the City of Meridian signed a contract with the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a global network of multi-disciplinary land-use experts, to host a Pathways Panel, planned for May 2022. Staff worked with ULI representatives to define a scope of work for the event that includes recommendations for: access and continuity, identity and visibility, and wayfinding along the system. All professional services are donated by the panel, while the City, in turn, hosts the event and covers nominal travel expenses. Having now achieved greater pathway connectivity, we are eager to draw on the panel's expertise and ideas to fine-tune the pathways experience in Meridian.

2021 Highlights

A DRIVING FORCE IN LOCAL GOLF

- Beginning early in the year, consultants from the National Golf Foundation began gathering information from the **Lakeview Golf Club's** leadership team, evaluating the course's condition, and identifying its short-term and long-term needs in order to create a **Master Plan** for its future success. A survey of homeowners who reside near the club also assisted in this effort and the City hosted a public Town Hall Meeting at the club in April to discuss these efforts. The final 116-page strategic plan was presented to the Meridian City Council in September.

- A new **golf course superintendent** named Shane Shaffer joined the Lakeview Golf



Club staff in mid-June. He is primarily responsible for all activities related to the care and maintenance of the golf course, grounds and equipment, and will assure that the course's quality standards are achieved or exceeded.

- A new group of City volunteers were trained this summer and fall to serve as **Golf Ambassadors** at Lakeview Golf Club. During their shifts they greet golfers, share rules and information pertaining to course play and conditions, monitor the pace of play, and help ensure that proper etiquette is being demonstrated by golfers and spectators alike. They receive some free golf privileges in exchange for their volunteerism.

- As the warm-weather season drew to a close and use of the golf course lightened, work began on several in-house projects designed to enhance the course's appearance and playability. Crews are **reconstructing several tees**. They have also **replaced the wooden bridge** at hole #4, which had begun to sag with age and heavy use, with a more stable and durable passageway utilizing a culvert with river rock on both sides.
- With assistance from Peter Harcey, a student from the College of Western Idaho, Meridian's city arborist conducted a detailed **tree inventory** of the 700+ trees at Lakeview Golf Club.
- Plans for **irrigation replacements** and improvements at the golf course are being finalized and will be put out to bid. Plans are also being developed for a **new well** and **consolidated water rights**, as well as **new cart paths** to replace the current gravel paths.
- Lakeview Golf Course replaced its fleet of aging golf carts with **new golf carts** which are now available for rental through the clubhouse.



Events Engaged & Entertained

The Meridian Parks and Recreation Department hosted a variety of special programs and events throughout the year. Among those we hosted or co-hosted in 2021 were:

- ◆ Arbor Day Tree Planting &
* Tree Seedling Give-Away
- ◆ Unplug and Be Outside Week
- ◆ * Blind Date with a Book
- ◆ Memorial Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies
- ◆ Take Me Fishing Free Fishing Days
- ◆ Main Street Meridian Market
- ◆ Sparklight Movie Night in Meridian
- ◆ * Teen Nights at the Meridian Homecourt
- ◆ Gene Kleiner Day Concert
- ◆ * Community Art Party
- ◆ Independence Day Festival
- ◆ Concerts on Broadway Live Music Series
- ◆ Meridian Art Week
- ◆ Trunk or Treat
- ◆ Halloween Cornhole Tournament
- ◆ Rake Up Meridian
- ◆ Holiday Classic Volleyball & Cornhole Tournaments
- ◆ Santa's Mailbox
- ◆ Ugly Sweater Fun Run Fun Run
- ◆ Winter Lights Parade & Christmas Tree Lighting
- ◆ Downtown Business Decorating Contest
- ◆ * Shop Meridian Downtown Night
- ◆ Winterland-in-the-Bag Drive-Thru
- ◆ Interactive Christmas Lights Map
- ◆ Meridian Ornament Drop
- ◆ Salvation Army Angel Tree Toy Drive
- ◆ Zoom with Santa

* *New Event in 2021*



Event Photos Top to Bottom:

Arbor Day Tree
Planting

Unplug and Be
Outside

Memorial Day
Ceremony

Blind Date with a
Book



Event Photos Top to Bottom:

Independence Day Celebration

Take Me Fishing Event

Sparklight Movie Night in Meridian

Meridian Art Week Chalk Art Competition



Event Photos Top to Bottom:

Trunk or Treat

Santa's Mailbox

Shop Downtown Meridian Night

Winterland-in-the-Bag Drive-Thru



2021 Highlights

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- The City of Meridian is currently forming its vision for a **new community center** which will one day serve as the primary location for the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department's community education programs. In addition to seeking a suitable location for the facility, planners are considering its size, design, potential uses, parking needs, and potential partnerships to help it come to fruition.



- During 2021, City Arborist Matt Perkins developed a draft **Urban Forest Management Plan** for the City of Meridian. This detailed document provides detailed information, recommendations and resources needed to effectively and proactively manage and grow the city's tree canopy. There are currently more than 6,130 trees under the City's care. Matt has also been developing a self-guided educational **Tree Walk** through the **Kleiner Park Arboretum**. Each year, Matt also helps the City apply for its annual **Tree City USA** designation and **Growth Award**, plans its **Arbor Day Celebration** at a local school, and the delivery of the **City Christmas Tree** for Generations

City of Meridian's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan

For the past several years, the Parks and Recreation Department has been contributing information, ideas and updates to the City of Meridian's *2021-2025 Strategic Plan*, a city-wide guide for the future which focuses on priorities identified by the community.

The Parks and Recreation Department has special expertise and experience in four of the plan's six primary focus areas; specifically:

- Responsible Growth
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Public Health & Safety
- Vibrant & Sustainable Community

Our staff is working hard to identify, develop and implement a variety of specific goals, strategies and tactics which will move the City forward in each of these focus areas.

Anyone who would like to learn more about the City of Meridian's *2021-2025 Strategic Plan* and the specific goals and strategies it contains is encouraged to go online to: meridiancity.org/mayor/strategic-plan.



Coming Soon...

DISCOVERY PARK PHASE II

Construction fences are going up soon out at Discovery Park as preliminary construction work on Phase II of the regional park prepares to begin. The park is located along Lake Hazel Road between Eagle and Locust Grove Roads. An opening date for Phase II has yet to be announced.

New Amenities

Active Area with:

- Tennis & Pickleball
- Bocce Ball Court
- 40-Yard Dash
- Basketball Court

Bike Park & Pump Track

Teen Area with:

- Skate Park
- Hammock Poles
- Sand Volleyball

Illuminated Ball Fields

Restroom /Concession Stand

Community Garden

Picnic Shelters

Paved Walking Paths

Additional Parking



W. Lake Hazel Road

MERIDIAN PARKS AND RECREATION — 2021

BY THE NUMBERS

Acres of
Developed
Land

334



Miles of Pathways

City-Maintained:

15.53

Maintained by Others:

28.54

Activity Guide
Enrollments

3,783

Total Field
Reservations

5,478

Ball Field
Reservations

6,130

Green Space
Reservations

1,820

Event Days

94



Recreation Classes &
Activities Offered

422

Trees in our
Park System

6,130

Meridian
Homecourt
Reservations

2,061



Picnic Shelter
Reservations

1,914

Park Picnic
Shelters

30

2021 Highlights



Work Hard, Play Hard

Our **Adults Sports** Recreation Coordinators work hard year-round so others may play. Our 2021 sports season, was no different! Here are the leagues and tournaments we hosted:

Volleyball

Spring – 87 teams and 582 players
Fall – 116 teams and 843 players

Softball

Spring-Summer – 116 teams and 1597 players
Summer/Fall – 99 teams and 1463 players
Summer Fun Kickoff Tournament – 45 teams

Flag Football

13 teams and 128 players

Cornhole

Dairy Days Tournament – 30 teams
Summer League – 62 players
Holiday Classic Tournament – 46 players

Halloween Disc Golf Tournament

Adult Players – 11
Youth Players – 4



We Appreciate Our Volunteers!

2021 was another stellar year for the **City of Meridian's Volunteer Program** run by Parks and Recreation volunteer coordinator Chelsea Cantrell. Chelsea's leadership helped us leverage this broad source of expertise, talent, and people power to benefit a wide variety of City programs and events.

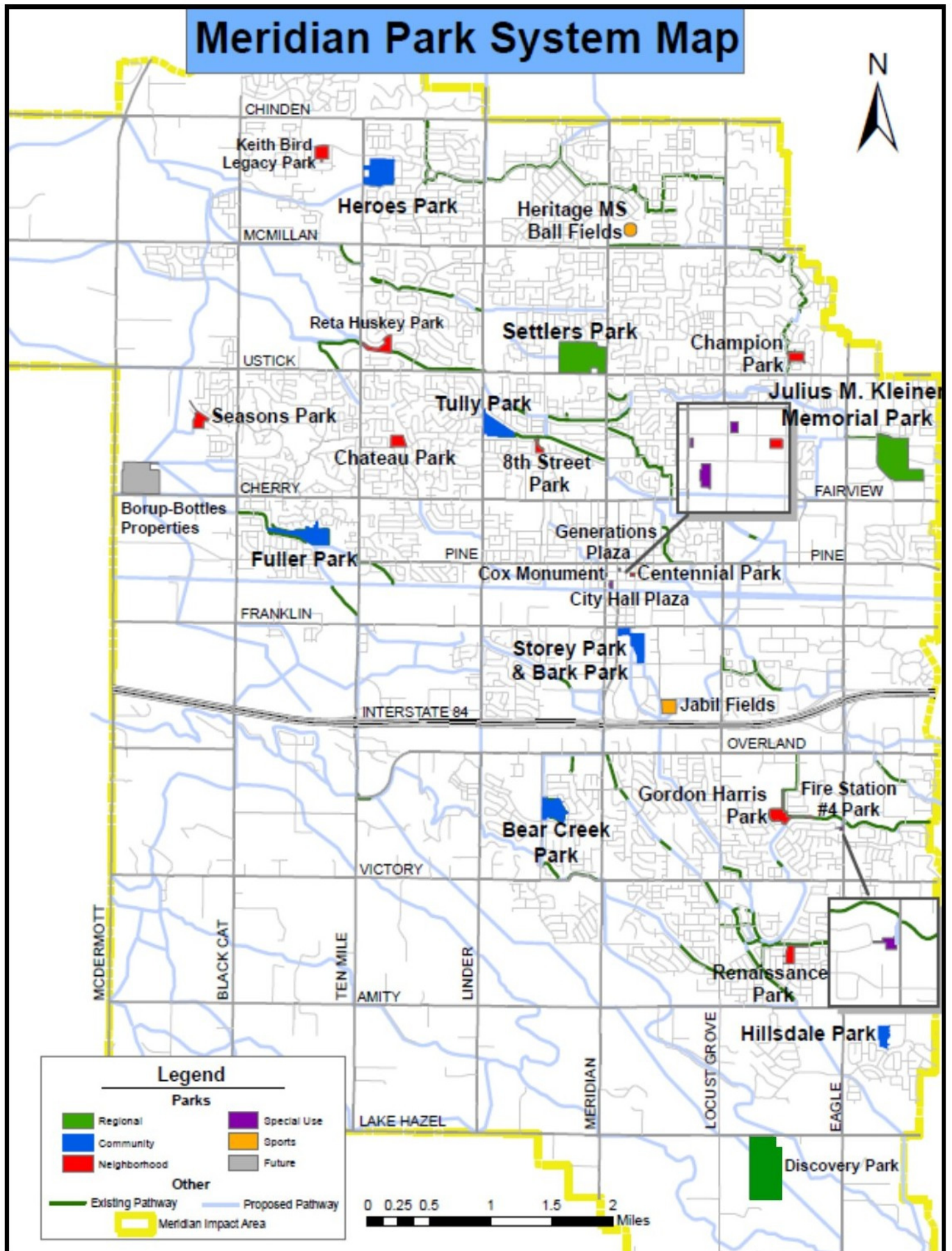
Volunteers staffed Meridian City Hall's main lobby reception desk; served as goodwill ambassadors at several City parks and at Lakeview Golf Club; provided occasional front desk and telephone coverage for City departments when needed; and assisted with a variety of special events and community service projects.

Our volunteer program was on hiatus from January through March as a Covid precaution, but volunteers rallied and donated 5,523 hours of their time from April through December.



In all, we had 39 volunteers who assisted us on a regular basis. An additional 620 people volunteered for various projects throughout the past year. Examples of these projects included prepping and planting flower beds; painting, assisting with Christmas decorating; cleaning playground equipment; and helping with traffic control at Trunk or Treat and the Winter Lights Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting.

Meridian Park System Map





This Annual Report is published by
Meridian Parks and Recreation

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