

**NORTH MERIDIAN AREA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT
APPLICATION CONTENT**

August 2005

(for September 22, 2005 P&Z Commission public hearing)

APPLICATION ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

This Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) application proposes to amend the 2002 City of Meridian Comprehensive Plan (hereafter referred to as “Plan”), adopted on August 6, 2002 and amended by Resolutions 03-401 and 04-454. The proposed changes affect both the text and map components of the Plan (as further defined below). The application contains the following sections:

- A. Application Overview (*provides background, purpose and assumption information*)
- B. CPA Application Questions (*answers the questions required in the City of Meridian application form*)
- C. Idaho Code (*briefly reviews Idaho Code requirements for changes to Area of City Impact boundaries*)
- D. Proposed Area of City Impact Map (*graphically depicts the existing and proposed boundaries for the Meridian Area of City Impact*)
- E. Transportation/Infrastructure Text Changes (*proposed amendments to Chapter VI of the Plan*)
- F. Circulation Plan Map (*a new figure proposed to be inserted into Chapter VI*)
- G. Land Use Text Changes (*proposed amendments to Chapter VII of the Plan*)
- H. Amended Future Land Use Map (*a figure proposed to replace existing Figure VII-2 in Chapter VII*)
- I. North Meridian Area Traffic Update by Washington Group International (*the Executive Summary of a full study completed in August 2005 examining intersection capacities in North Meridian*)

Each element listed above is inter-related with the subsequent element and the application is most effectively read and understood in that manner.

A. Application Overview

1. Background

The genesis of this CPA application was in 2001, preceding even the approval of the current 2002 plan. While Meridian's overall growth rate in the 1990's was unprecedented (approx. 230% increase in population between the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census), only a small fraction of that growth occurred north of Ustick Road. Over 90% of subdivisions created in the 1990's were located south of Ustick Road (mostly west of Meridian Road).

However, when the White Trunk Sewer project began construction in 2001 (extending from Ten Mile Road to Locust Grove Road, between Ustick and McMillan), it would eventually open up over three square miles of largely undeveloped county land to urban scale development. This precipitated the acquisition of large land holdings by developers and subsequent annexation and subdivision applications to the city. With some concern about the provision and readiness of public infrastructure to serve this area, several residential land developers hired Wardle and Associates, a local land planning firm, to facilitate a broad-based planning effort that included mostly public agencies and technical staff. This effort came to be known as the North Meridian Area Plan (NMAP).

After more than 18 months of workshops, interviews, and planning, the NMAP was submitted to the city as a CPA application. A public hearing was held before the Planning & Zoning Commission in May 2003. While there was strong, broad support for the plan's vision and principles, staff believed the administrative challenges associated with the plan as submitted would impede effective and efficient implementation. For example, the plan was written as a stand alone document with no cross-references to the adopted Plan. With the consent of Wardle and Associates, the application was withdrawn. No formal recommendation was made by the Planning & Zoning Commission to the City Council, but they did direct staff to incorporate many of the NMAP goals and policies in any future CPA application.

During her 2004 mayoral campaign, Mayor de Weerd made the NMAP a high priority, calling for that plan to be revived and this time lead and initiated by the City of Meridian. The Planning Department staff began meeting with various stakeholders to formulate a timeline and method to more directly involve private property owners in the area. The mayor and City Council also directed staff to explore an expansion to the Area of City Impact (AOIC) boundary to the north and west. In May 2005, an open house was held at Sawtooth Middle School to present the general purpose of the plan and to receive feedback from the public on land use and transportation concerns and ideas. Below is a simple comparison of the private and public plans:

	NMAP (private)	CPA (public)
Applicant	Wardle & Associates	City of Meridian
Geographic Area	10 square miles	16 square miles (approx.)
Area of City Impact	No change	Proposed expansion
Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment?	Yes	No
Transportation Funding a Part of Application?	Yes	No

Relationship to Communities in Motion and Blueprint for Good Growth: Two regional land use and transportation planning efforts are underway at the time this CPA application is being submitted. Communities in Motion (CIM) is the Regional Long-Term Transportation Plan of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and Blueprint for Good Growth (BGG) is a 2025 land use and public infrastructure plan being co-sponsored by the Ada County Highway District, Ada County and the six cities of Ada County. It is not the intent of the City of Meridian to supercede or compromise either the process or recommendations of these regional plans. In fact, the city has been an active participant in both the CIM and BGG steering teams and has contributed funding to both plans. So, given the long-term nature of those plans and that neither one is intended to provide area-specific detail, Meridian believes this application will compliment and honor the outcome of both the CIM and BGG efforts.

Consultants for Plan: While the Planning Department staff is preparing most of the content for this application, we have contracted with two private firms to provide additional, supporting documentation. The first is Thornton Oliver Keller, a real estate brokerage, who is conducting a market analysis of the North Meridian Area to help determine the absorption rate and demand for office, retail and industrial uses. Results of this study are expected to help guide the city in designating areas for new non-residential uses. The second contract is with Washington Group International, an engineering and construction firm located in Boise, Idaho. They are updating the 2001 Traffic Impact Study of the 12-square mile area in North Meridian, focusing particularly on 5-year estimates of intersection improvements needed to accommodate new traffic generated in the area. The Executive Summary of this report is shown in Section I of this application.

2. Application Purpose

In summary, this CPA application includes three general requests:

- a) expand the AOCI boundary north of Chinden Boulevard (to the rim) and west of McDermott Road (to Can Ada Road);
- b) designate new land uses and policies within the proposed expansion areas and amend existing land uses in the current AOCI; and
- c) create a new circulation map and associated transportation policies to address multi-modal forms of travel in North Meridian.

In addition to the obvious intent to amend the Plan, this application is also being prepared as part of the City of Meridian's application to Ada County to expand the AOCI boundary. Ada County requires cities to provide a detailed map with land use designations for any new land being added to the AOCI. If approved by City Council, the Future Land Use Map associated with this application would be sent to Ada County to fulfill that requirement of renegotiating the AOCI boundary.

3. Key Assumptions

Below are some of the key land use and transportation assumptions that staff referenced in developing the CPA application. These assumptions were presented and discussed in special workshops with the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council. The majority of the assumptions are similar to and/or derived from assumptions found in the Foundation Report section of the private NMAP application (withdrawn in 2003).

Land Use

- All existing zoning, preliminary plats and planned developments will remain unchanged.
- The plan will give detail to the work in process for the CIM and BGG plans
- The City of Meridian desires to manage growth and annex new land only when it is clearly demonstrated that all urban services will meet targeted levels.
- A mix of services and job types will be available in North Meridian and policies will encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Overall density of housing will be at least 3 – 3.5 dwelling units/acre.
- Lower density housing (less than 2 dwelling units/acre) is expected north of Chinden Boulevard along the rim.
- Higher density housing is desired close to service centers and along transit corridors.
- The existing mid-mile Neighborhood Centers shown in sections where commercial annexations have been approved at the corners will be removed.
- A majority of residents in the two new areas of expansion (north of Chinden Boulevard and west of McDermott Road) support the AOCI change.

Transportation

- SH20-26/Chinden will be a limited access highway that retains a speed of at least 45 mph.
- Future SH16/Emmett Highway extension will generally align with McDermott Rd. and will dramatically affect land uses.
- ITD won't know the final alignment of SH16 for at least 2 ½ - 3 years. Until the alignment is known, it is in the best interest of the City of Meridian to protect this corridor from urban growth.
- A new limited access highway (SH16) will create an incredible opportunity and a physical barrier for the community.
- A grade separated interchange is anticipated at SH16/SH20-26 and at SH16/Ustick Road (wherever the SH16 alignment ends up being located).
- Multi-modal centers will be encouraged near these interchanges.

- Future bus routes will be focused on the arterial grid and will primarily serve neighborhood centers
- Ultimately, all arterial intersections and many half-mile intersections will be signalized

B. CPA Application Questions (from Meridian's CPA application form)

1. Specific definition of the change requested.

The changes proposed in this application fall into three broad areas:

- a) Expand the AOCI boundary north of Chinden Boulevard (to the rim) and west of McDermott Road (to Can Ada Road).*

The City of Meridian is proposing to expand its AOCI boundary in two different areas – one is north of Chinden Boulevard/SH20-26 (hereafter referred to as SH20-26) and the other is south of SH20-26. The area north of SH20-26 begins at the northwest corner of N. Linder Road and SH20-26 and extends west to McDermott Road. The north boundary is currently proposed to be the centerline of the Phyllis Canal or the nearest logical property boundary to the canal. Initial discussions have taken place with the City of Eagle regarding Almaden Subdivision, approximately ¼ mile north of SH20-26, and an 11-acre parcel abutting the canal. This area is currently not a part of Meridian's AOCI application.

This area is approximately 825 acres in size and includes 135 recorded properties. The land falls within Township 4N, Range 1E and includes portions of Sections 21, 22 and 23. Several large parcel owners have already approached the city requesting to be added to Meridian's AOCI. Noteworthy land uses in this area include the Spurwing Golf Course, Jaker's Wholesale Nursery and other estate-type housing.

In 2004, the Public Works Department contracted with JUB Engineers to complete a sanitary sewer study of this area (including the Almaden Subdivision area). That study demonstrated the City of Meridian is capable of providing sewer service to this area, assuming a new lift station is built north of SH20-26. Meridian's domestic water service can also be extended to this area (although no formal study was done). This area is already within the boundaries of the Meridian Rural/City Fire Department and Joint School District No. 2. One new elementary school is anticipated in this area north of SH20-26.

Finally, at the May open house, a property owner located between the Phyllis Canal and the Boise River expressed interest in being added to Meridian's AOCI. Prior to this meeting, the city had not considered expanding north of the rim. The attached Future Land Use Map does not reflect this area. However, staff recommends the Commission and City Council review this request as part of the public hearing process. There is approximately 1,400 acres of land between the rim and the river and between McDermott Road and Linder Road. The subject property is approximately

390 acres, or 28% of the total “below rim” area. Staff prepared a brief analysis of this area and it is available upon request.

The area south of SH20-26 begins at the southwest corner of McDermott Road and SH20-26 and extends south and west to the corner of CanAda Road and Ustick Road. It includes Sections 29 - 32 (four square miles) within Township 4N, Range 1E. Existing agricultural/rural type uses dominate this area and include churches, a tree nursery, dairy operations and a small cemetery.

The Public Works Department is currently under contract with JUB Engineers to complete a sanitary sewer study of this four mile area. The study is expected to be complete by December 2005. Initial findings show that Meridian should be able to serve the area, taking into account treatment plant and potential lift station improvements. Initial findings also show that Meridian should be able to provide domestic water service. New well sites are proposed in each square mile, although the need for these is yet to be determined. This area is currently within the boundaries of the Star Fire District. However, the City of Star is not currently seeking any AOCI expansion south of SH20-26 and, if annexed, it is anticipated the Meridian Fire Department would service the area. One new elementary school and one fire substation are expected for this area.

- b) Designate new land uses and policies within the proposed expansion areas and amend existing land uses in the current AOCI.*

The Amended Future Land Use Map (see attached) shows new land use designations for all properties in both of the areas described above. This map also reflects the new zoning districts and land uses in the North Meridian Area approved by City Council to date since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the new land use policies are taken directly from the Wardle and Associates NMAP application. We’ve also added a new section pertaining to policies specific to the SH16 preservation corridor.

- c) Create a new circulation map and associated transportation policies to address multi-modal forms of travel in North Meridian.*

Figure VI-8 in Chapter VI of the current Plan is a “Future Collector Streets” map which generally shows where the city anticipates new collector roadways. This application proposes to expand the scope and detail of this map. The map in Section F depicts new collectors and backage roads in both the existing and proposed AOCI. Finally, in concert with the Idaho Transportation Department’s anticipated interchange at SH16 and SH20-26, guidelines for a multi-modal center near this interchange are also proposed. (See Section E of this application for more detail.)

2. Specific information on any property involved.

As noted in Section B.1.a. above, there are numerous existing uses in the proposed and existing AOCI. Given the number of properties affected by this application, detailed

information is not being provided on specific properties. Further research on targeted areas can be provided to the Commission or Council upon request.

3. The condition or situation which warrants a change being made in the Plan.

Staff believes there are three primary conditions that warrant a change to the Plan:

- a) *Rate and Type of Growth* : Since August 2002 (adoption of the current Plan), the City of Meridian has witnessed unprecedented growth, much of which has occurred in North Meridian. More than 8,000 new building lots have received preliminary plat approval in the North Meridian Area alone. In 2004, 25% of all new residential building permits within Ada County were issued within a six square mile area of North Meridian. That figure was 14.6% in 2003. The North Slough Sewer Trunk, extending from Ten Mile Road to Locust Grove Road between McMillan Road and SH20-26, began construction in late 2002. This project came on-line ahead of schedule and triggered additional development.

While a majority of the new development conforms with the adopted Future Land Use Map and urban services are being provided per master plans, the pace of growth has brought changes not anticipated in the 2002 Plan. Several large Planned Development applications (300+ acres each) were approved for land use exceptions which allowed non-residential uses at the arterial intersections instead of neighborhood centers at the half mile as anticipated in the Plan (i.e. Bridgetower Crossing, Lochsa Falls, Paramount). Also, now that new school and park sites, housing densities, and street patterns have been approved, the Plan should be updated to reflect these growth patterns.

- b) *SH16 River Crossing and Extension to I-84*: Governor Kempthorne's "Connecting Idaho" plan (the Garvee bond project), signed in Spring 2005, included a proposal for an extension of SH16 from SH44 to I-84. This new roadway has broad implications for the NMA. This project was anticipated in 2002 and the existing Plan includes policies which encourage a Ten Mile Road alignment. Both the private NMAP and Washington Group International's 2001 NMA Traffic Study also anticipated the SH16 extension. However, with the Garvee bonding one step closer to reality and with ITD including SH16 study funds in their 2006 budget, it warrants the City of Meridian updating its Plan to be more proactive in planning for this significant project.

The following reasons support a change from Ten Mile Road to McDermott Road as the preferred alignment (and help to justify a change to the Plan):

- Instead of dividing our community at Ten Mile Road, the state highway would be located at the edge of our Area of Impact--which would separate Meridian from Nampa and Ada County from Canyon County (south of Ustick Road).
- The obstacles to preserving right-of-way and limiting development or existing curb cuts along McDermott are fewer than Ten Mile Road.

- Large existing parcels – there are fewer parcels to negotiate future right-of-way purchase and the roadway impacts fewer property owners in the McDermott corridor.
 - A McDermott alignment fits the logical progression of interchanges at two-mile spacing along I-84 (i.e. Meridian, Ten Mile, McDermott, Garrity)
- c) *Requests for Area of City Impact Expansion:* Since adoption of the existing Plan, the Mayor and City Council have received requests from individual property owners outside the existing AOCI to receive urban services. Meridian City Code requires a property to be within the AOCI and Urban Services Planning Area before annexation and service extensions can occur. So, the AOCI boundary must be adjusted to consider any of these requests. Amending the Comprehensive Plan is the first step to expanding this boundary (prior to negotiating the boundary with Ada County). While properties outside an AOCI have some development rights, sound planning calls for urban and suburban development to utilize sanitary sewer and municipal water where feasible. Since Meridian is the nearest city to the interested properties and probably best suited to extend urban services, staff was directed to include the AOCI expansion in this CPA application.

4. The public need for and benefit from such a change in the Plan.

The answer to this question begs another question – “which ‘public’ is being talked about?” The public consists of a broad array of interests – often competing interests. Agriculture, recreation, business, residential, and other interests have different perspectives on this question. There may also be competing objectives between the present and future needs of the community. Comments for and against the AOCI expansion and Plan amendment were received at the May open house. The most effective planning weighs all interests and the Commission and Council must decide which plans further the interest of Meridian and the region as a whole. Below is a discussion of both potential benefits and drawbacks to amending the Plan as proposed.

Potential Benefits: One of the primary functions of an AOCI is to designate and accommodate urban scale development (e.g. higher populations, higher residential and commercial densities, alternative transportation, etc.). Existing and prospective city residents and developers benefit from a Plan that designates locations for principle land uses and reflects uses already approved but not built. Utilities and other service providers benefit from being able to predict and anticipate densities and future demands for their respective service. Property owners adjacent to the AOCI and city limits benefit by being able to participate in setting the direction and type of growth around their property.

If development is expected north of SH20-26 and west of McDermott Road (which it is, unless permanent, legal tools/easements are put in place to guarantee the open space), it is the responsibility of Ada County and cities to plan for these areas. This is especially true as land speculation and development pressure increases due to nearby services. The benefits to preceding growth with updated comprehensive and facility plans include more efficient use of tax dollars and coordination of sewer, water, fire, police and other services.

Potential Drawbacks: There is, of course, an inherent conflict between some rural and urban uses. If Meridian expands its AOCI and urban development extends into the new areas, the existing agricultural operations (e.g. nurseries, dairies, farms) that intend to conduct business into the future will experience conflicts. Many of these concerns were noted on the summary sheet from the open house. These property owners would prefer to remain outside any AOCI and be buffered and protected from urban/suburban influences. Another potential drawback to expanding the AOCI that could be perceived by residents is the additional stress on the transportation system. Rural type uses and residential densities will have far less demand on the system than the higher intensity activities associated with cities. This same argument could be made for demand on electric, water and other utilities.

5. Documentation that no other solutions to the problem are presented by the current policy of the Plan are possible or reasonable.

The existing Plan notes that the SH16 extension may happen and, if so, would likely be aligned with Ten Mile Road. Since that time, the amount of new development approved on both Ten Mile Road and Black Cat Road has lead the city to believe McDermott is the most appropriate corridor for this facility.

6. Development intentions for any land involved.

It is anticipated the City of Meridian will acquire land for public parks, easements for sewer trunk lines and multi-use pathways and various domestic well sites within the subject area. However, specific locations have not been identified at this point. Otherwise, private development is expected to proceed in accordance with the adopted Plan and ordinances.

7. Any other data and information needed by the Planning and Zoning Commission in evaluating the proposal, such as who does it help, who does it hurt, how much is it going to cost and who's going to pay for it.

To date, no other information has been requested by the Commission. Regarding the question of who benefits and who is hurt, see Question #4 above. Several property owners voiced opposition to the AOCI boundary being expanded.

If approved, the main costs of implementing the AOCI expansion and making the amendments to the plan will be administrative expenses that are largely built into the Planning & Zoning Department's budget. The Public Works Department has not currently budgeted for the extension of the Black Cat Trunk to the north side of SH20-26. Any costs associated with this project would be borne by private developers.

C. Idaho Code Overview (AOCI)

Requirements for Renegotiation: Idaho Code Section 67-6526 sets out the requirements for setting, negotiating and renegotiating AOI boundaries. In particular:

1. Boundaries remain fixed until renegotiated. [Section 67-6526(d).]
2. Renegotiation must follow the same provisions for adopting an AOI originally. [Section 67-6526(d).]
3. Where a county does not approved the city's desired AOI, the city has resort to either a committee of nine [Section 67-6526((b))] or the district court [Section 67-6526(b).]
4. If there is an overlapping AOI boundary with another city, the cities are required to negotiate a recommendation to the county. In the event either city disagrees with the AOI finally adopted by the county pertaining to the overlapping area, it may request an election be held, funded by the county, for persons owning property in the disputed area. [Section 67-6526(c)]
5. In setting an AOI, the county or district court is required to consider three (3) factors [Section 67-6526(b)]:
 - a. trade area;
 - b. geographic factors; and,
 - c. areas that can reasonably be expected to be annexed to the city in the future.

Trade Area: Trade area can be defined as the area needed to provide a city an economic base in which to support its self. This base is not only the area of the city and the AOI but also involves the areas surrounding a city that brings people into the city for services. Historically, Meridian has been associated with a large trade area extending north to SH20-26, west into eastern Canyon County, south past Lake Hazel, and east to the Boise City limits.

An informal survey of residents north of SH20-26 revealed that this area identifies with Meridian more than any other jurisdiction. There is no river crossing between Linder and Star, so residents in this area are forced to travel south for services. Also, the 2001 WGI Traffic Study projected a vast majority of new trips to SH20-26 being generated from south of SH20-26 and it could be expected that any commercial uses on the north side of the highway would benefit from Meridian customers for this reason. It is logical that both the north and south sides of SH20-26 are planned under one jurisdiction and use one set of development ordinances, especially for the four miles between the two river crossing streets.

Public comments were received at the May open house that Star Road functions as a natural boundary between Meridian and Nampa, with properties west of Star Road associating with and "feeling" more like Nampa. This boundary is especially emphasized south of Ustick Road where McDermott becomes the county line and Star/Robinson Road is entirely within Canyon County. However, for this area north of Ustick, the trade area question becomes less clear. Staff expects that a survey of property owners in this area may be necessary prior to submitting an application to Ada County if the Commission and Council approve the expansion.

Geographic Factors: Among the geographic factors supporting Meridian's proposed AOI are: current capacity and capability to provide essential public services as well as planned improvements; transportation system corridor and services; and annexation trends and requests. A detailed analysis of the following essential public services is being developed for any potential negotiation with Ada County for the AOI expansion:

- Sewer
- Water
- Police
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Library
- Schools
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Irrigation Systems
- Solid Waste
- Electric Utility
- Public Transportation

Annexation in the Reasonable Future: Meridian's existing city limits extend to SH20-26 at four different points within Sections 25 – 27 (T.4N, R.1W), between Black Cat and Meridian Road. Several parcels on the north side of the highway are currently contiguous at these points and are eligible for annexation today.

Regarding the annexation potential for the area west of McDermott Road, the city limits extend as far as ¼ mile west of Black Cat Road on Ustick Road and a ½ mile west of Ten Mile Road on SH20-26. A path of annexation west of McDermott Road is dependent upon several intervening property owners between the existing city limits and McDermott. The main obstacle in determining this path is the unknown alignment of SH16. In either case, Meridian city limits are closer to these parcels than either Nampa or Star. The draft Future Land Use Map designates a preservation corridor for this highway and the draft policies propose no urban scale development for a ½ mile west of Black Cat Road until the alignment is identified and the federal government has approved the location. So, if this policy is adopted, it may present a delay in property owners being able to secure a path of annexation. (See Section E for further discussion of this issue.)