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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date: February 6, 2012
To: Pete Friedman
Caleb Hood
From: Susan Graham
Subject: Commercial and Mixed Use Considerations
cc:
Project Number: 317-3184-011
Project Name: South Meridian Future Land Use Map Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on considering the total amount of commercial and mixed use acreage for the South Meridian planning area. This information should be incorporated into the *You are the Map* game process, to provide participants with guidelines as to the potential for the area to support mixed and commercial uses. The game will allow participants to place 40-acre squares that represent a variety of uses, including three residential densities (rural, low, and medium), mixed use, and commercial. There are approximately 150 squares, representing 5,700 acres in the nine square mile area. The City does not intend to limit the use of residential areas as part of the game. However, the City does want to provide some additional guidance to the public as they participate in the process of envisioning the future of the area. Therefore, the amount of mixed use and commercial “squares” will be limited for each table.

Factors Influencing Commercial and Mixed Use in South Meridian

There are several factors that will contribute towards maintaining a “maximum” of mixed and commercial uses in the South Meridian planning area. These factors include:

- The recent adoption of the Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan;
- Extension of the Airport/Overland Road corridor, connecting south Meridian to Nampa via a new direct route;
- Current economic conditions and projections, and
- Future Density in the planning area,

Ten Mile Interchange Specific Area Plan

The Ten Mile Plan, adopted in 2007, identified land use recommendations for nearly 2,400 acres to the north and west of the South Meridian planning area. Of this acreage, just over 300 acres are designated for mixed use commercial, residential and lifestyle center, and more than 900 acres of employment, including industrial uses. Rounding out the area is 800 acres of residential with the remaining in parks, open space, and right of way. In order to generate the infill and densities envisioned in the Ten Mile Plan, it will be critical to not create an abundance of other commercial and mixed use lands to the south. The Ten Mile area is well suited to the amount of commercial, industrial, and employment planned, and there is a future network of transportation, water, sewer, and other public services to support the growth there.

Airport Road/Overland Road Corridor Plan

The cities of Nampa and Meridian, in partnership with ACHD, ITD, COMPASS, and the Nampa Highway District, recently approved a new 6-mile corridor starting at the newly relocated Overland/Ten Mile intersection and running west towards the Nampa Airport. The corridor is envisioned to provide a direct east-west corridor connecting the cities south of I-84, similar to the function that Franklin Road provides north of the highway. This corridor will create new intersections at several key locations, creating the opportunity for small commercial and mixed use nodes that could support convenience and gas stations, and other services such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, etc. These nodes will be accessible to residents and commuters in the South Meridian planning area, particularly those in the northwest quadrant.

Current and Projected Economic Conditions

As the last five years have shown, the economy is unpredictable, and the amount of development that could occur once the South Meridian area is fully built out – be it residential, commercial, industrial, or employment – is subject to outside forces that are likely to rise and fall over time. However, it is important to plan now for the anticipated growth in the South Meridian planning area; and the City will want to ensure that residential populations anticipated in the planning area have access to conveniently located commercial services.

Future Density in the Planning Area

The amount of commercial and mixed use acreage that the planning area could support will depend in part on the total population anticipated, as well as the extent of private investment that is made. So, while it is not possible to proscribe a specific amount of commercial or mixed use acreage that “should” be identified, it *is* possible to provide the public with some general guidelines based on the densities they select; in general, the more households per acre, the higher the need for supporting commercial services.

Recommendations for You are the Map Game

With the goal of ensuring the success of both the Ten Mile Specific Area Plan and the South Meridian Planning Area exercise, commercial and mixed use recommendations for the *You are the Map* is as follows:

- Explain that the higher the population (i.e. the more dense the residential uses assigned), the greater the need for commercial services. Therefore, a group with mostly medium-density residential across the 5,700 acres would potentially need a higher proportion of commercial and mixed-use.
- Explain that commercial and mixed use in this area is likely centered in nodes at intersections, and would include neighborhood commercial amenities – day cares, dry cleaners, convenience stores, cafes and restaurants. Those sites tend to be small 2-5 acre parcels, with multiple small businesses and services.
- Ask the participants to denote the amount of commercial acreage they envision within the mixed use squares (for example, hand write on post-it squares “include 2 acres of commercial on frontage”).
- Advise that stand-alone commercial uses may be less than the 40-acre square would indicate. Allow participants to write in desired commercial acreage, and also identify what the balance of the area could be (for example, “commercial area 10 acres only, remaining 30 acres medium density residential”).
- Offer each group 10 squares for mixed use (400 acres total) and 10 for commercial (but suggest smaller quantities, aiming for 100-200 acres commercial, depending on density).

When planning for the long term future of South Meridian, it will be important to keep in context the long term land use plans within the City and in the surrounding communities. Land use densities assigned to the planning area will impact not only commercial and mixed uses, but also has an effect on the types of services, such as transportation, water, sewer, schools, and parks, that the area will also need. Providing this context to participants

will help to illustrate why the planning cannot be done in a vacuum, and how one plan can support implementation of previous and surrounding ones.