

Community and Stakeholder Input

Public process for the Meridian Parks and Recreation Master Plan was held January 26 – 28, 2015 and consisted of 125 participants in eight focus groups, eight stakeholder interviews, and a public forum.

The community input summary is categorized below with brief details from the many focus group meetings.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

The residents of Meridian benefit from a good geographic distribution of parks throughout the City, with some pockets of underserved areas. Participants embrace the fact that their parks form the heart of the community and feel like the programs offered are well run, diverse, affordable, and operated by dedicated employees, and, as such, indicate that they feel the quality of programs offered currently are very good. Participants also recognized that the parks are well maintained and have unique and innovative features. When asked about areas for improvement, participants identified the disconnected pathway system, the need for a larger indoor recreation facility, and the need to keep up with the city's rapid growth as top priorities. Other general items, such as a perceived lack of parking, shade, field space for non-traditional sports, and off-leash dog areas were all identified as opportunities for improvement. Along with physical improvements, improvement of communication, and availability of information is also important to users.

Satisfaction

Residents are very satisfied with the programs, the quality of existing infrastructure, and maintenance. They also rated customer service and seeking community feedback as very good.

Programming and Activities, and Locations

Meridian residents love their programs and activities. They are very satisfied but do have an apparent demand for more year-round program offerings. Included among the additional programs are more offerings for seniors and teens, special events, performing arts, outdoor recreation and adventure programs, non-sports activities, and adaptive recreation. Two areas of the community were identified as being underserved, and may benefit from future park development. These were South and West Meridian. Certain demographics may also be underserved, including seniors and teens, as well as active adults and Millennials.

New Facilities

When asked for suggestions of new parks and recreation facilities in the City, participants identified:

- Pathway connectivity
- Fieldhouse/gym space
- Parks in South and West Meridian
- Additional athletic fields
- Large community center
- Exercise stations
- Performing Arts Center
- Iconic/Destination Parks

Values

The City of Meridian residents value their parks and recreation system and feel like they get very good service from staff. Participants' number one value was family-oriented programming and activities. They also want good communication about happenings and program offerings. Quality and affordable programming is a priority, while ensuring access to diverse offerings throughout the entire city. Providing a balance between passive and active recreation, as well as organized sports and unstructured activities, is very important to the community.

Focus Group Questions

- 1) How long have you been a resident of Meridian?
 - <5 years: 9
 - 5-9 years: 8
 - 10-19 years: 24
 - 20+ years: 12
 - Not a resident but use programs / facilities: 21

- 2) What are the strengths of the Parks and Recreation Department that should be continued over the next several years?
 - Partnerships*****
 - High Quality Programs (quality over quantity)****
 - High Quality Parks****
 - Park Maintenance*****
 - Parks well run and well maintained*****
 - Innovative Unique Parks*
 - Talented Forward Thinking Cooperative Staff***
 - Flexibility responsive and adapt to change**
 - Safety & Security**
 - Variety/Diversity of Activities*
 - Ability to keep up with growth*
 - Number of Parks
 - Customer Service
 - Friendly Atmosphere
 - Teamwork
 - Technology
 - Family Oriented***
 - Internal Expertise
 - Internal Support
 - Young Park System
 - Good geographic parks distribution
 - Keep developing open space into parks and activities
 - Responsive
 - Soliciting input and feedback from community
 - Community programs
 - Special Events
 - Commitment to Youth
 - Committed Leadership
 - Annual Investment in Infrastructure
 - Wise water use methodologies
 - Recycling Program
 - Availability of Land
 - Planning
 - Lots of open space

- Fishing Options
- Parking
- Playgrounds
- Volunteers
- Use funding well

3) Conversely, what are the major weaknesses that need to be addressed through the Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

- Disconnected Pathway System*****
- Lack of Parking at most parks during events***
- Lack of Communication- Internal and External (Marketing and Public Relations)***
- Lack of Facilities – open space, gymnasiums, ball fields, indoor classrooms, etc.***
- Growing Pains – Demand and Fast Growth**
- Need more Youth Programs and Facilities*
- Lack of Dedicated Funding to develop new facilities*
- Lack of Open Field Ball Field Space for Diversity of Sports**
- Lack of Funding**
- Need a Large Recreation Center***
- No year round disc golf*
- Lack of Off Leash Dog Parks**
- Lack of Shade and Mature Trees in Parks**
- Need indoor Aquatic Center*
- Need more splash pads*
- Need Indoor Performing Arts Center*
- Lack of Security
- Lack of Community Center Multipurpose Space for Community Organizations
- Short on Staff
- Lack of Capacity
- Opportunities for future park land diminishing
- Resting athletic field turf is challenging
- Need Asset Replacement Plan – Life Cycle of Capital Replacement
- Lack of quality of ball field lighting in parks
- Lack of Dedicated use facilities
- Need improved wayfinding signage and to trail connectivity
- Need Developers Impact requirement for trail connectivity
- Need more iconic parks (destination parks)
- Need a larger downtown park
- Need a Shade Policy for parks
- Lack of winter water availability – restrooms, irrigation, drinking fountains, etc.
- Traffic noise and shade around performance area in
- Need to add a vapor policy to the non-smoking policy
- Need better operational partnerships such as sharing school facilities
- Need Comprehensive Plans with all City Departments
- Poor maintenance of ball fields at Gordon Harris Park (school facilities)

- Over dependency on partnerships
 - Website needs ability for online registration and reservations
 - Need more seating in parks (shaded)
 - Need more non-bleacher seating at game fields
 - Rely of Volunteers
- 4) How satisfied are you with the quality of current programs offered? Why?
- 5 Excellent - 8
 - 4 Very Good - 28
 - 3 Good - 13
 - 2 Fair - 0
 - 1 Poor - 0
- 5) What additional programs or activities do you feel the Department should offer that are currently not available?
- Non-sports Activities****
 - Aquatic Programs – Swim Lessons, Water Aerobics, etc.***
 - Teen Programs***
 - Community-wide Special Events*
 - Senior Programs*
 - Pickleball**
 - Indoor Hockey*
 - Lacrosse*
 - Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Programs****
 - Continuing Education Programs for all ages
 - Mobile Rec – Traveling Programs
 - Adaptive Recreation Programs
 - Activities for Millennials
 - Youth Sports
 - More Leagues
 - More Tournaments
 - Drop-in Programs – Gym, walking, workout, etc.
 - Indoor Field House Sports
 - Fishing / Fly Fishing – need more stocking, instruction
 - Expand recreational equipment rental system at concession stands
 - Improved Farmer’s Market
 - Art in the Park
 - Volunteer Maintenance Program – “Love Your Parks”
 - Winter Programs for Youth
 - Flag Football
 - Hunter Education Classes
 - Arts and Crafts Classes
 - Performing Arts Programs*

- Year round walking group
- 6) How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the existing park and recreation facilities provided by the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department? Why?
- 5 Excellent - 19
 - 4 Very Good - 36
 - 3 Good - 6
 - 2 Fair - 1
 - 1 Poor - 0
- 7) How would you rate the overall level of maintenance at the facilities owned or operated by the Department? Please identify the location and specifics of any maintenance concerns.
- 5 Excellent - 35
 - 4 Very Good - 25
 - 3 Good - 4
 - 2 Fair - 0
 - 1 Poor - 0
- 8) What improvements are needed at existing facilities? Where are these improvements needed?
- More Parking*****
 - Shade in parks*****
 - Upgraded and Renovate Community Center***
 - Upgrade lighting technology and modernization – timing, no bleed lights, etc.**
 - Better maintain and/or repurpose Legion Baseball Field into a Softball Field, re-grade, irrigation, lights, etc. – Storey Park**
 - Ballfield lights*
 - Pickleball markings on tennis courts*
 - Frost free drinking fountains, irrigation, restrooms, etc.*
 - Off leash dog areas in all parks*
 - Concession Opportunities - Upgrades
 - Parking at Settlers Park – Develop a Parking Plan
 - Beautify Pathways
 - Band Shell at Kleiner Park - Shade, Sound buffers, etc.
 - Replacement of Adventure Island Playground surfacing
 - Need more swings at parks
 - More Pathway connectivity
 - Air stations for bicycles in parks and on trails
 - Water bottle stations in parks and on trails
 - Healthy food and beverage options at concessions
 - Policy Signage in Parks – smoking, off lease dog areas (Kleiner Park), etc.
 - More dog pick-up bags stations in parks & trails
 - Electricity, Water and Sewer at Rodeo grounds
 - ADA Accessibility

- Conflict between neighborhood parks and sports events (parking, driving through neighborhoods, field designs, etc.)
 - Better Quality Water Fountains in Parks
 - Artificial / Synthetic Turf
 - Website – Online registration and reservations
 - Add restrooms at Settlers Park
 - More shaded seating in parks
 - More flowers and landscaping in parks
 - Add security systems
 - Flooding in Heroes Park
 - Heavy grass clippings in some parks
 - Renovate or repurpose the Community Center
- 9) Are there any portions of the community that are underserved? Please explain (i.e., where and what type of amenities are needed, what market segment needs more attention, etc.).
- South Meridian*****
 - Dog Owners***
 - Teens***
 - Adventure Sports: Skateboarders, BMX
 - Adaptive – Special Needs**
 - Seniors / Active Adults**
 - Biking Community**
 - Youth Activities*
 - Aquatics – Swimmers*
 - Running Community
 - Cat Owners
 - Young Adults
 - Homeless
 - Competitive Club Soccer
 - Equestrian Community
 - New residents
 - Lacrosse Community
 - 10 mile and West
 - East of Eagle (Industrial)
- 10) What additional park and recreation facilities would you like to see the community provide?
- Bike Pathway Connectivity*****
 - Athletic Fields*****
 - Fieldhouse including hard surface courts and indoor turf*****
 - Indoor Aquatic Center (competitive and family leisure)*****
 - Multipurpose Open Space to use for Athletic Fields****
 - Dog Parks with water facilities to swim in & dog agility facility****
 - Destination Softball Tournament Complex – 6 to 8 fields***
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- Destination Baseball Tournament Complex – 6 to 8 fields***
- Destination Multipurpose Rectangular Field Tournament Complex***
- Large Community Center***
- Botanical Gardens**
- Splash pads***
- Indoor Tennis / Pickleball**
- Ice Rink**
- Pocket Parks, HOA parks*
- Lacrosse Fields*
- Exercise Fitness Trail*
- Year Round Disc Golf Course*
- Off leash dog areas**
- Multipurpose Parks (Active and Passive)
- Dedicated use facilities*
- Performing Arts Center*
- Natural Landscape Parks*
- Multipurpose Artificial / Synthetic Turf with Lights*
- Indoor Lacrosse (Box Lacrosse)
- Farmer’s Market
- Concessions
- Art themed parks
- Need more iconic parks (destination parks)*
- Need a larger downtown park
- Need a park on the West side
- Nature Reserve*
- Additional Community Gardening
- Arboretum
- Special Event Space with Large Outdoor Performance Space
- Shade Structures
- Historical and Cultural Park
- Skate park**
- Convention Center
- Picnic Shelters
- Picnic Areas
- Outdoor Shooting Range
- Sledding Hill on Southside
- Children’s Working Farm
- BMX
- Fishing pond south of the highway
- Climbing Wall, boulder area
- Wi-Fi access at parks

11) Are there any facilities and/or programs currently available that should be eliminated? If so, which ones and why?

- Adult Baseball at Story Park*
- Horseshoe Pits at Story Park
- Community Center
- Belly Dancing

12) How would you rate the quality of customer service provided by the Parks and Recreation staff?
Please elaborate.

5 Excellent - 42
4 Very Good - 14
3 Good - 0
2 Fair - 0
1 Poor - 0

13) How effective is the Department in seeking feedback from the community and users on improving its performance?

5 Excellent - 23
4 Very Good - 23
3 Good -
2 Fair - 2
1 Poor - 0

14) The Parks and Recreation Department's programs and facilities are currently funded through a combination of revenue sources, including General Fund, User Fees, Impact Fees, and Partnerships. Do you think this is an appropriate way to fund the department?

Yes: 38
No: 2
Do Not Know: 14

15) Who are the key partners and stakeholders in the community with regards to assisting with the implementation of this plan?

- School District*****
- Youth Sports Organizations*****
- YMCA*****
- Boys & Girls Club****
- Senior Center**
- Western Ada Recreation District – WARD**
- Service Clubs – Optimist, Lions Club, etc.***
- Developers (including non-residential property)***
- Local Corporations / Business Community***
- Library*
- Children's Theater*
- Irrigation Districts**
- Transportation Agencies – ITD, MDC, Railroad, ACHD, COMPASS**
- User Groups and Daily Users***

- PAL*
- Faith Based Community*
- Boys/Girl Scouts*
- Tax Paying Residents*
- State and Local Governments (Idaho Fish and Game, adjacent municipalities)**
- Foundations (Albertson's)
- Volunteers
- Community Clubs
- Meridian Arts Commission
- Meridian Downtown Business Society
- Regional Tennis Organizations
- Medical Community – Health Care, St. Luke's Hospital, Central District Health Department, etc.
- Other City Departments*
- City Council
- Non-governmental Organizations
- HOAs
- Land Owners*
- Speedway Owner

16) What are the key issues and values in the Meridian community that need to be considered while developing this Master Plan?

- Family Oriented*****
- Safety***
- Accessibility***
- Sustainability***
- Quality**
- Aesthetics**
- Connectivity**
- Fiscally Responsible*
- Develop in underserved areas*
- Traffic / Drive Time*
- Community
- User Friendly
- Fun
- Affordability
- Identity
- Active Lifestyles**
- Partnerships*
- Suburban Design
- Civic Minded
- Inclusive
- Leadership
- Balance Active and Passive Activities
- Balance organized sports and unorganized sports activities

- Growth
- Land Value
- Air Quality
- Historical & Cultural connection to farming and dairy
- Convenience
- Value of outdoor recreation*
- Economic Impact Value
- Key Identity for each park
- Destination amenities

17) Are there any political sensitivities we should be aware of that could impact the success of the city's planning efforts?

- Conservative - Do not raise taxes*****
- Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability**
- Government cannot fund and/or operate everything
- City of Meridian is not going to build Indoor Aquatic Center, Ice Rink, Performing Arts Center,
- Moore Brooks Legion Baseball Field Renovation
- Rodeo Grounds
- Trying to please all residents
- Sharing the open process to public
- City Council Support for Parks & Recreation
- Open Information Sharing of Future Needs
- Residents want it all but do not want to pay for it
- Educate public on benefits of new facilities
- Parks and Facilities West of 10 Mile
- Changing political landscape – elections
- Impacts to our providers*
- Diversity of the community
- Neighboring factors

18) During the next 5-10 years, what are the top priorities for the Parks and Recreation Department?

1-5 years

- Land Acquisition*****
- Pathway Connectivity****
- Recreation Center***
- Gymnasium Space**
- Field House****
- Outdoor Rectangular Field space**
- Outdoor Diamond Field space**
- Partner better with school facilities*
- Regional Park in South Meridian**
- New Dog Park**

- New Neighborhood Parks in CIP*
- Increase Development Impact Fee Policy In Lieu Of for Land Acquisition Endowment Fund*
- Maximize use of existing facilities****
- Implement Master Plan*
- More public space South of Interstate*
- Staffing Plans
- Outdoor Spaces
- Pickleball Courts*
- Equipment to maintain new park amenities
- Life Cycle Plans*
- Upgrade Ball field Lighting
- Upgrade Story Park
- City Christmas Tree
- Shade Policy
- Funding Sources*
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Endowment for park maintenance (1%) with donation of land
- Sell the Quality of Life message to the public
- Focus on the priorities
- Create a position to solicit grants, sponsorships, private donations, etc.
- Develop West of 10 mile
- Upgrade Landscaping*
- Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Trips

10 Years

- Pathway Connectivity**
- Outdoor Rectangular Field space*
- Outdoor Diamond Field space*
- Indoor Recreational Space
- Implement Master Plan
- Increase in Staff
- Increase Partnerships*
- Additional Parking
- Develop undeveloped parks
- Aldape Park
- Forestry Upgrade
- New Neighborhood Parks in CIP
- Two new dog Parks
- Botanical Gardens
- Indoor Aquatic Center
- Additional park in South Meridian and North West