

Team Number 4

Meridian Development Corporation presenting to Meridian City Council

Members:

- Lisa Bachman – read and share background information; interview Planning Director; participate in tour, review and discussion; and write portion of report
- Pat Engel– read and share background information; interview Mayor; participate in tour, review and discussion; write portion of report; and prepare power point
- Darrell Shay– read and share background information; participate in tour, review and discussion; and give final presentation
- Donna Spier– read and share background information; participate in tour, review and discussion; take photos; and write portion of report

Project: Downtown Master Plan and Zamzows Heritage Center Project

NWCDI – Graduate Program
Team #4
Meridian Development Corporation

Introduction:

The Meridian Development Corporation understands that a solid vision is critical to develop meaningful downtown projects. Many opportunities are available to deal with things like traffic flow, public parking, identity, and communication barriers.

Background:

Meridian has previously identified Community Values that drive the future for all redevelopment activities downtown as noted below:

- Manage growth to achieve high quality development
- Enhance quality of life for all residents
- New growth finances public service expansion
- Prevent school overcrowding/enhanced education services
- Expand commercial/industrial development
- Protect Meridian’s self-identity

Stakeholder groups have adopted complementary visions that point to the need for communication with a focus on arts and heritage by...

...embracing heritage... (Vision from 1998 Meridian Comprehensive Plan)

...building relationships to maintain a health economy and excellent quality of life (Meridian Chamber of Commerce)

...partnering with community groups to expand art and cultural offering of Meridian (Meridian Arts Council)

“Enhance Meridian’s historical, cultural, agricultural and community character,” is one of several goals in the Comprehensive Plan. To do this the plan calls for preservation and restoration of historic buildings to enhance the historical quality by the following activities:

- Coordination with existing Cultural and Historic Preservation Committees
- Drafting a Downtown Master Plan
- Exploration of funding opportunities and incentives
- Creating partnerships
- Supporting owners in their efforts to restore historic buildings

To go beyond transforming Meridian into a Destination and into a Lifestyle, our efforts focus on bringing all plans and efforts together as we create a community for residents and businesses as we become...

...the *heart* of the community

...*home* to community-oriented businesses and residents who value a high amenity urban environment

...*hub* to Treasure Valley business, culture and social activities via the impending transit corridor that will establish Meridian as the true center of the region.

Conversations with Mayor DeWeerd and P & Z Director Anna Canning, a tour of downtown, and review of various adopted plans all indicate that a short-range action plan for downtown projects is the next step for the Meridian Development Corporation to undertake. Issues previously identified by various planning efforts were re-emphasized through this review and are summarized below:

- Public Parking
- Land Assembly: Development & Activity Centers
- Traffic through not to
- 21st Century Infrastructure
- Transitional Development
- Broad Stakeholder Involvement
- Communication: Success Roadmap



Downtown Development Strategy:

Renewal and redevelopment will be supported through the strategic use of resources to create successful projects that will attract and serve the people of Meridian. The vision of a beautiful, pedestrian friendly downtown with public art and ample parking provides a base for development. A picture of what this could be is still missing.

We propose to launch a visioning process to create a master plan that will include the following:

- Specific downtown projects
- Identified patrons
- Implementation tools
- Funding mechanisms
- Defined process

This detailed vision can start with the planning of a single project which will begin to paint the picture of Meridian's future downtown.

Proposed Project: Zamzows Heritage Center

In order to add clarity to adopted values and vision, the above review has indicated one project area that addresses issues and embraces identified goals. The proposed Zamzows Heritage Center Project addresses each of the summary issues listed earlier in specific ways, and easily defines the heart, home and hub of Meridian's Down Town. It begins to paint the picture of what could be.

Creating a solid vision takes time, effort, involvement and outreach. We propose to involve community leaders, residents, business and property owners, the youth, senior citizens, and civic groups in a tangible way to bring out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of project alternatives. Extensive outreach will be needed to be successful in achieving the desired involvement.

The Zamzows feed manufacturing plant is uniquely located to provide a highly visible success story for redevelopment. Parking is available north of the building with potential for added parking along the south side and east of Main. Zamzows has a long history of serving the Treasure Valley since 1933. Their strong sense of community and history makes this a realistic public/private partnership.



Project Opportunities, and Potential Benefits:

- **Location:** It defines a gateway to Historic Downtown
- **Economic:** It could tie the dairy and agricultural heritage to future development and activities by maintaining this historic building through such things as:
 - Involving the Senior Center as volunteer historians
 - Creating awareness “spend a day with a real-live dairyman”, etc.
 - Taking a Discovery Center approach to the ag industry then and now
 - Creating an Urban Gardening Research Center (U of I Extension classes)
- **Arts and History:** The arts can be used in various disciplines to enrich the community and tell Meridian's story through such things as:
 - Art Galleries and/or displays within the center
 - Public art outside the building
 - Murals on the exterior as a launch to the Alleys and Arts Program (to share Meridian's rich culture and emphasize pedestrian, commercial and cultural use of the alley system)

- Culture: The Heritage Center could become the Wi-Fi Headquarters of Meridian and include an indoor plaza or gathering place to use for concerts, artisan shows, food shows, and other activities in harmony with current activities and events.
- Youth: It could become a wireless “gaming competition center” and provide a sense of place to all ages.
- Tourism: Chamber of Commerce offices could be located in the building and information about Meridian’s Downtown Redevelopment can be displayed
- Retail: It could house a coffee shop, eatery, gift shop, or other family oriented business
- Education: Involve 4th Grade Idaho History students design the types of activities that could be available, create promotional coloring books, etc.
- Recreation: Various recreational opportunities can be explored through additional public/private partnerships such as a climbing wall from REI.

The Zamzows Heritage Center would be a catalyst for continued redevelopment by demonstrating how a project can be successfully planned through involvement of all stakeholders and successfully implemented through partnerships and creative means. It will create public and private spaces that people want to come to. By creating a master plan and further developing the Civic Plaza area to build on current successes in downtown Meridian, the Center will lead the way for future master planning for the entire historic district.

Examples:

A similar project was very successful in Spokane, Washington turning an old flour mill along the Spokane River into “The Flour Mill” with restaurants, shopping, and offices. The owner maintained much of the historic feel throughout the interior and exterior of the building while creating usable space in this landmark building.



Dothan, Alabama has honored its rich history through the commissioning of murals throughout the downtown area, adding a few each year. Many of these illustrative stories are located on the sides of buildings facing alleys which are visible to auto and pedestrian traffic.

Summary:

Meridian has been waiting for private development to lead the way in implementing the vision to create a new lifestyle that embraces who we are, where we’ve come from and what we’re about to become. The creation of a master plan for downtown and a flagship project through public/private partnership will facilitate private development in creating future projects to continue the redevelopment of downtown.