



## **City of Meridian Urban Renewal Agency**

**2007-2008 Annual Report**

March 31, 2008

The Meridian Development Corporation is excited to report that 2007 saw a lot of activity generated in Downtown Meridian. With tasks being accomplished, goals continue to move forward with focused and concerted efforts. Downtown projects like the construction of a new City Hall and Cole Valley School gymnasium expansion are beginning to change the downtown skyline. Businesses in the urban renewal area are taking notice. A new Downtown Business Association has been created to help promote downtown, generate events, and provide a forum for businesses to discuss key issues affecting downtown.

Efforts continue to progress on long-term plans for streetscape, transportation, and parking improvements. Design standards were completed for the downtown streetscape and the design and engineering of the landscaping portion of the Phase I Split Corridor was finished. Also, not only was a parking striping plan completed, but property was acquired on 2nd and Broadway by MDC with plans for redevelopment of the site to incorporate a parking element.

With achievements in 2007, 2008 promises to be an exciting year in Downtown Meridian. Streetscape improvements will begin to take shape and the beginning of Phase I of the split corridor will be accompanied by new events hosted by the Downtown Business Association. Also, a more focused effort in marketing downtown and continued redevelopment will continue to move us towards accomplishing our goals and realizing the vision.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaun Wardle  
Administrator  
Meridian Development Corporation

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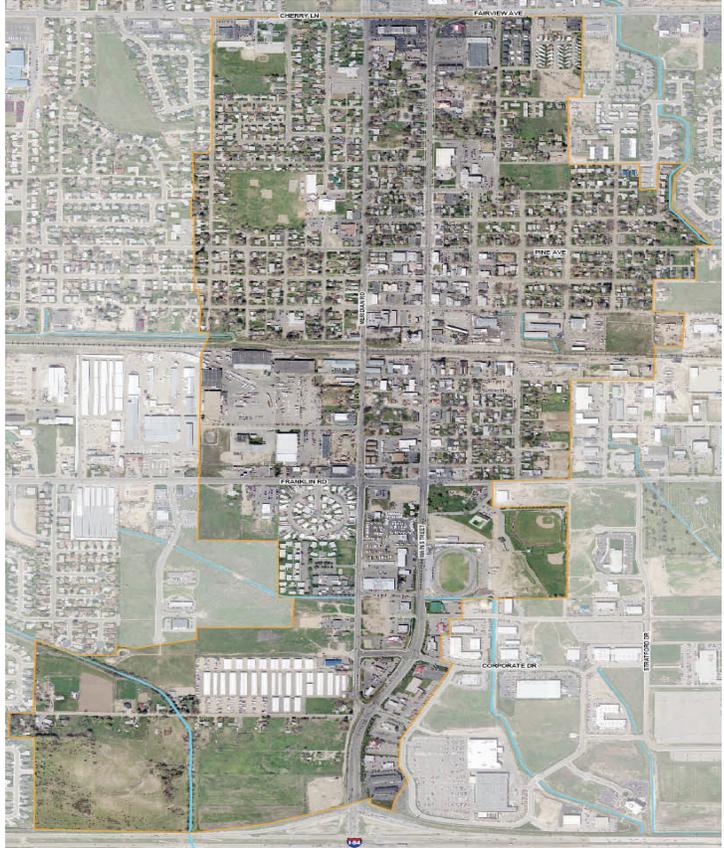
# Section 1

## Legal Requirements & Official Activities

**Legal Requirements:** An urban renewal agency is required under Idaho Urban Renewal Law to file with the local governing body, on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, a report of its activities for the preceding calendar year. The report is to include a complete financial statement, setting forth its revenues and expenses at the end of the calendar year. The fiscal year for the urban renewal agency, the City of Meridian and most other political subdivisions in the State of Idaho runs from October 1 through September 30. Attached is the audit for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007.

**Official Activities:** The MDC Board of Commissioners consisted of members: Keith Bird; Jonathan Cecil; Clarence Jones; Joe Borton; Erik Oaas; Larry Lipschultz; and Craig Slocum. Officer elections were held in February: Craig Slocum, Chair; Joe Borton, Vice-Chair; Jonathan Cecil, Secretary; and Stacy Kilchenmann, Treasurer. Legal counsel was Ryan Armbruster of Elam & Burke. Erik Oaas resigned from the Board in May and Scott Turlington was appointed to serve his term. Jon Cecil fulfilled his term through August, and was appointed to the Meridian Parks and Recreation Commission. Larry Lipschultz was elected Secretary in September.

Agency administrator was Clair Bowman of Avalon Ventures Consulting until December when Shaun Wardle of Virtus Enterprises assumed responsibilities. The administrative services contract was officially assigned to V&G Ventures LLC in June with Shaun Wardle remaining as the project manager.



## Section 2 MDC Overview



The Meridian Development Corporation is committed to the economic stimulation and expansion of Downtown Meridian into a thriving area that provides opportunities in which to live, work, and play. Renewal and redevelopment will be supported through strategic use of resources to create successful projects that will attract and serve the people of Meridian.

### Focus Areas:

- Pedestrian Friendly
- Transit Support
- Sustainable Job Creation
- Public Art and Beautification
- Affordable Workforce Housing
- Public Parking
- Balanced Retail Environment

### **A Strategic Planning Session was held in February 2007**

During the planning session the following were identified:

#### Funding Initiatives:

- Property Acquisition
- Parking
- Streetscape Improvements
- Initial focus on streetscape from Idaho to Broadway on Main Street
- Transportation Improvements
- Phase 1 of the split corridor (inclusive of landscaping along Phase 1)
- Infrastructure Improvements

#### Redevelopment Initiatives:

- Project Development & Business Recruitment
- Downtown Business Association
- Events

#### Target Markets

- Office - Focusing on professional office space with 3 – 5k square feet
  - Potential Satellite offices for larger Treasure Valley firms
  - Emerging Firms (start-ups or spin-offs of established firms)
- Retail - Focusing on boutique and specialty stores
- Residential – Vertically integrated projects encouraged



# Section 3 2007 Activities

## MDC 2007 ACTIVITIES

- Property Acquisition for redevelopment: In the fall of 2007, the Meridian Development Corporation purchased the H&H Building at the corner of 2nd & Broadway along with parcels adjacent to this building. MDC will be seeking a results-oriented and experienced developer interested in a public-private partnership to redevelop this site. It is also expected that plans will involve a parking element to address a perceived lack of parking in the downtown area.



- Downtown Wi-Fi: MDC implemented a pilot program which makes Meridian the first City in Idaho to have FREE wireless internet access. The committee worked diligently to outline this initiative and the board approved funding of 3 broadcast stations. A well publicized kickoff event was held in September.

- Brownfields Grant Application: MDC applied for a community-wide grant through the Environmental Protection Agency. The grant was not awarded to MDC in this round of participation.
- Urban Renewal Legislative Affairs: Efforts were made to ensure that urban renewal agencies in Idaho remain relevant and strides were made through a consortium lead by the Association of Idaho Cities. MDC was represented by staff and board members in these important discussions.
- Downtown Streetscape Design Standards: In Spring of 2007 downtown streetscape design standards were finalized and published. Well designed streets and sidewalks add value and act as a catalyst to the development of private property. They provide the setting for land use. Sidewalk width, materials and site furnishings affect pedestrian activity and aesthetic quality and help determine how the adjacent businesses are developed and used.



While resources are not available to complete all streetscape improvements today, efforts are planned for 2008 to begin installing some of the site furnishings. These efforts will be phased in with additional improvements in the coming years as redevelopment occurs and additional resources become available.



- **Downtown Business Association:** In the summer of 2007, the Meridian Development Corporation engaged downtown businesses in an effort to reestablish a Downtown Business Association. The idea was met with optimism and enthusiasm. With assistance from the MDC, by-laws were drafted and officers elected. Participation in established events like the Chili Cook-off and Christmas Tree Lighting as well as creating new events and identifying methods to promote and market the downtown area is increasing awareness and energy. MDC continues to provide assistance and support to the DBA as membership and involvement continues to grow.

- **Parking Striping Plan:** MDC engaged the services of Keller Associates (on-call engineers) to design a parking striping plan for the downtown core area. Community input resulted in discussion of important merchant and resident issues. Enforcement through partnership with the City of Meridian remains an item of collaboration.

- **Split Corridor Transportation Improvement:** MDC engaged CSHQA to design and engineer the landscaping portion of Phase 1. The focus led to a low water usage design, pathway connections, and decorative street lighting. Funds were committed to complete the construction of this important project.



- **Community Block Grant – Entitlement City designation:** The City of Meridian has applied for CDBG grants and is working closely with MDC to achieve goals of affordable workforce housing and economic development in the urban renewal area.

- **Downtown Banners:** In partnership with the City of Meridian, the Meridian Development Corporation worked with the Parks & Recreation Department and Arts Commission to select and purchase new banners for the Holiday Season that lined Main Street from Fairview to Franklin.



- **Website Re-Design:** During the Summer of 2007, the Meridian Development Corporation engaged Eagles Consulting to design a new website. Working closely with Eagles Consulting to ensure consistency with the overall City’s vision and story, MDC created new content and unveiled a site that provides easier navigation, current information, and an eye-catching design.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Street Extension alignment:** A partnership with the City of Meridian is moving forward to identify possible alignments for a 3rd street connection from Franklin to Fairview. 6 Mile Engineering has been contracted to present possible alternatives and public outreach efforts are currently underway.

- Fee In Lieu of Parking Policy: MDC created a tool for developers to utilize when facing parking constraints to building in the downtown core. The Board of Directors set the fee at \$10,000 per parking space and allowed for the utilization of the fee for up to 1/2 of a parking requirement without specific board approval. The applicants must apply for alternative compliance through the planning department at the time of Certificate of Zoning Compliance for their projects. The funds collected will be placed in a separate account held by MDC and must be spent on parking specific activities.



- Line of Credit: The Board of Commissioners solicited bids for a line of credit in FY 2005, which was utilized in FY 2006. The total loan amount is \$500,000. Farmer's and Merchants State Bank was awarded the original LOC and their successor, Bank of the Cascades, provided the financing. The funds were used to purchase property along Broadway for the purposes of redevelopment and public parking.
- Bond Counsel Engagement: In order to properly administer the proposed line of Credit, MDC engaged Nick Miller with Hawley, Troxell, Ennis, and Hawley as Bond Counsel. Nick and his team provided all proper legal documents necessary to secure MDC's first instrument of debt service financing.

## Section 4 Other Notable Projects

### Other Notable Projects

- **Meridian City Hall Construction:** Slated to open in early fall of 2008, the new Meridian City Hall will house the majority of the City of Meridian's departments, providing a convenient "one-stop-shop" experience for citizens who need to do business with the City.



The 100,000-square-foot three-story brick building will be fronted by a large public plaza, featuring groves of trees, water features, and an amphitheatre suitable for live musical or theatrical performances. Inside will be an art gallery featuring local artists as well as a history center and community meeting room. The building will also feature a large chamber with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment where city council meetings and other large gatherings can be held.

It is anticipated that the completion of the new City Hall will serve as a catalyst for additional downtown revitalization efforts and set the standard for future high-quality, contemporary mixed-use development in Meridian's downtown core.



- **The Main 5 Building on Main and Bower:** The Main 5 project is an exciting planned mixed-use development at the corner of Main and Bower Street where the Double D structure used to sit. Oaas & Laney are currently marketing the site to obtain tenants and will begin construction in the near future.

- **Cole Valley School Gymnasium Expansion**
- **Boys & Girls Club Relocation:** The Meridian Boys & Girls Club in downtown Meridian has been bursting at the seams since the day it opened in 2003, but relief is in sight. In the fall of 2008, the Meridian Boys & Girls Club will move a few blocks west to a newly-renovated space formerly occupied by the administrative offices of the Joint School District #2. The 10,000-square-foot building, five times the size of the former club building, will include a large game room, an art room, a computer lab, a teen center, a kitchen, a sound-proof study room where kids can read and work on their homework, and plans for a gym. It will also have a large outdoor playground. The building, which will have appropriate security features, is conveniently located near Meridian Elementary School and Meridian Middle School, where many of the Boys & Girls Club members attend school. The Meridian Boys & Girls Club's new address will be 911 N. Meridian Road.



- Meridian Unplugged with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council: In June of 2007, the MDC partnered with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council to organize and put on an event in Generation's Plaza and Centennial Park. This was a youth oriented event that promoted downtown and increased awareness of the free wireless service. With the help of many sponsors, the MDC and Mayor's Youth Advisory Council were successful in creating an event that brought hundreds of people downtown to enjoy live music, free giveaways, free food and non-alcoholic beverages, and a BMX and skate demo.



- New Businesses: FY 07 saw several new businesses open in Downtown Meridian. Two of these new businesses, Rick's Press Room and Kal's Big Breakfast, provide increased dining choices for downtown visitors and offer even more reasons for people to make Downtown Meridian a place to go.



- Waltman Development: Waltman LLC is planning to develop a large piece of land on the far south portion of the urban renewal district next to the interstate. Plans for this project include lodging and retail-commercial uses.

# Appendix Independent Auditor's Report