



Strategic Plan for the Arts

City of Meridian, Idaho

FY 2020-2025

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The Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) was established by the City of Meridian in 2006 with a mission to develop, advance and nurture all facets of the arts to enhance the quality of life for Meridian residents and visitors. Core to this mission is the belief that opportunities to experience and participate in the visual, performing and public arts can strengthen cities, increase livability, and contribute to a sense of community. The volunteers appointed by the Mayor to serve on MAC work to further this mission and realize these eight goals:

Goal I: Create opportunities for all Meridian residents and visitors to experience public art.

Goal II: The youth of Meridian will have opportunities to perform, create, and experience the arts.

Goal III: Meridian’s residents and visitors will have an opportunity to experience performing arts.

Goal IV: Meridian residents will grow their appreciation for and participation in the arts.

Goal V: Meridian residents and visitors will have the opportunity to experience the visual arts.

Goal VI: Local artists will have opportunities to grow their skills and showcase their work.

Goal VII: Support experiences in the arts for everyone, regardless of age, race, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other protected class.

Goal VIII: Build the human and financial resources needed to fulfill the vision of the City of Meridian and Meridian Arts Commission with regard to the arts.

This document is intended to guide the Meridian Arts Commission in its efforts to pursue these goals over the next five years (2020-2025) by providing prioritized and implementable objectives, strategies, and actions.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As the Meridian Arts Commission (MAC) begins this five-year period, it recognizes that there are challenges that must be addressed, but that within each challenge is the opportunity to cultivate the arts as a vital part of the community:

- **Community engagement and participation:** Meridian is experiencing rapid population growth, and our expanding metropolitan area is attracting new activities that compete for the attention of individuals and families. MAC must work to make meaningful connections with Meridian’s residents, new and established, and to educate the public on the importance of art and the opportunities available to experience visual, performing, and public art in Meridian. Establishing partnerships with schools and universities creates opportunities to reach the next generation of audience members, provide programs for youth during non-school times, and use alternative venues for performances and traveling exhibitions. Public artworks integrated into parks, gateways, and special districts can help define unique places that attract a broader community.
- **Artist involvement:** Meaningful arts experiences cannot be offered without the creativity and involvement of quality artists. Unless a community of educated and talented local artists can be nurtured and grown, MAC will continue to struggle to attract quality artists to exhibit, educate and perform. Professional artists also can help MAC improve and promote its programs by assisting with marketing, outreach, and access.
- **Funding:** As the ambitions and programs of MAC grow, funding must be secured to provide arts experiences to larger and more diverse audiences. Partnerships with other arts organizations, state and federal arts agencies, businesses, the Meridian Arts Foundation, and City leaders offer an opportunity to jointly identify resources and use available funding to efficiently to reach more community members.
- **Venues for the arts:** Arts experiences can be provided in businesses, schools, parks, City buildings or even on the streets, but having dedicated venues for the arts diversifies the types and quality of the arts that can be presented. Meridian’s location, central to the Treasure Valley urban area, offers an opportunity to become a new regional focal point for the arts.
- **Knowledge and availability of implementers:** None of the exhibits, performances, or public art projects that MAC provides the community can be done without the support of knowledgeable and committed MAC members, City leadership, staff and volunteers. When a MAC member resigns, City leadership changes, or volunteers move on to other

efforts, it can be challenging to keep the momentum necessary to provide programs. Increased volunteer participation with more help from contracted and staff administrators will be needed to grow MAC's programs.

SUCSESSES

MAC has a legacy of bringing together dedicated individuals who work tirelessly to see that those who come to Meridian to live, work, and play can take part in the arts. Thanks to these wonderful volunteers, staff, and partners:

- Unique traffic boxes decorate street corners
- Art Week brings music, children's theater, chalk artworks and more to downtown
- Public artworks help define and celebrate City parks and other spaces
- Concerts gather community members on Broadway
- Partnerships bring artworks to private properties

LOOKING AHEAD

Building upon these successes, MAC envisions Meridian as a vibrant arts community that integrates the arts experience into everyday life and enhances the spirit of our great city. Beyond the five-year scope of this plan, future MAC programs might include:

- Expanded youth arts opportunities
- Targeted arts programs that reach:
 - Military veterans and their families
 - Facility- and home-bound residents
- Implementation of a scholarship or free ticket program
- Mobile arts exhibits that can reach every corner of Meridian
- Artist-in-Residence programs that enhance artist abilities and integrate arts into the community fabric
- A central clearinghouse of Meridian arts information, opportunities, and local artists

I. PUBLIC ARTS

Goal: Create opportunities for all Meridian residents and visitors to experience public art.					
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal	
A. Encourage the integration of public art as a component of community development.	1. Partner with Meridian Development Corporation (MDC) to create public art in the redevelopment area.	a. MAC members attend MDC meetings quarterly to identify opportunities.	Near-term	5.4.1.B	
		b. Coordinate selection of public art pieces when requested.	Long-term		
		c. Request funding from MDC for public art projects.	Near-term		
	2. Incorporate public arts as part of the Meridian parks system.		a. Involve the Meridian Parks and Recreation Dept. in upcoming public art plan development.	Near-term	5.4.1.B 5.1.1.B
			b. Meet with Parks and Rec. staff regularly (at least annually) to assess opportunities and identify future locations for public artworks.	Long-term	
			c. Establish art selection process for public artworks in City parks (i.e., roster vs. RFP).	Mid-term	
			d. Participate in Parks and Rec. Plan process.	Long-term	
			e. Inventory parks and trailheads to identify thematically relevant opportunities for artworks.	Long-term	
	3. Encourage the placement of public artworks within private development.		a. Create a Developer's Guide to public art	Near-term	5.4.1.B 5.1.2.C
b. Work with Planning and Zoning to involve MAC in artwork selection and placement.			Mid-term		

		c. Engage private developers one-on-one.	Long-term	
		d. Engage regional Homeowners' Associations.	Long-term	
	4. Use public art to create and define regional identity, community gateways, and unique places.	a. Identify possible locations and opportunities for regional identity public art projects.	Near-term	5.4.1.C 5.1.2.B
		b. Partner with Meridian Planning Dept. to determine upcoming City projects and public art opportunities.	Near-term	
		c. Review ACHD planning documents and partner with ACHD to install public artworks in conjunction with upcoming road projects.	Mid-term	
B. Strategically and transparently use funds available through the Meridian Art in Public Spaces (MAPS) ordinance.	1. Establish plans and policies to guide the selection, placement, acceptance, maintenance, and removal of public artworks.	a. Contract with arts professional to facilitate public art planning process.	Near-term	5.4.1
		b. Engage community in public art location and theme planning.	Mid-term	
		c. Gain City Council approval of public art policies and priorities.	Long-term	
	2. Install visual artworks in public places in Meridian.	a. Install traffic box wraps annually.	Near-term	5.4.1.A
		b. Coordinate the selection and placement of public artworks in public parks.	Near-term	
		c. Install public artwork in downtown Meridian.	Mid-term	
C. Promote and monitor Meridian Art in Public Spaces (MAPS) ordinance.	1. Identify MAPS as the project funding source.	a. Ensure that project signage includes recognition of MAPS funding source.	Near-term	5.4.2.A
		b. Include MAPS funding source in project press releases and promotions.	Mid-term	

	<p>2. Advocate for and educate elected leaders and community groups about benefits of Percent-for-Arts programs and MAPS.</p>	<p>a. Identify specific benefits of MAPS and other like programs.</p>	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>5.4.2.A</p>
		<p>b. Create presentation format for civic organizations, City officials, and public.</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>	

II. ARTS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Goal: The youth of Meridian will perform, create, and experience the arts.					
Objective	Strategy	Action Items	Priority	Comp Plan Goal	
A. Develop and offer extracurricular arts opportunities to youth.	1. Participate in Meridian Symphony Orchestra young artist award program.	a. Help to identify and recruit appropriate judges.	Near-term	5.5.1.D	
		b. Attend concerts and rehearsals.	Long-term		
		c. Maintain sponsorship program.	Mid-term		
	2. Participate in West Ada School District Art Show.		a. Identify and provide program judges.	Near-term	5.5.1.A
			b. Maintain sponsorship funding.	Mid-term	
			c. Host exhibit at Initial Point Gallery.	Near-term	
			d. Promote show, winners, and pieces selected for traffic boxes.	Long-term	
			e. Engage past winners in promotion of show and contest.	Mid-term	
	3. Support local youth theater providers.		a. Invite Treasure Valley Children’s Theater and other youth arts providers to participate in MAC events.	Near-term	5.5.1.D
			b. Connect youth theater providers with the resources or venues they need.	Mid-term	
			c. Promote youth theater opportunities through MAC outlets.	Near-term	
			d. Maintain sponsorship funding.	Mid-term	

III. PERFORMING ARTS

Goal: Meridian’s residents and visitors will have an opportunity to experience performing arts.				
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal
A. Present a variety of performing arts shows locally.	1. Produce free concerts at City Hall amphitheater.	a. Contract with production company to produce series.	Near-term	5.5.1.C
		b. Place concerts on community calendars and social media outlets.	Mid-term	
		c. Provide emcee for each concert.	Near-term	
		d. Review and approve performers as recommended by production company.	Near-term	
	2. Develop additional performing arts opportunities to offer to the public for free.	e. Provide MAC and City staff representatives at concerts.	Mid-term	
		f. Contact and work with Parks and Rec to coordinate performance opportunities in parks and plazas.	Near-term	
		g. Work with local organizations and offer them public platforms or sponsorships to present their work.	Near-term	
		h. Incorporate performances into existing events.	Near-term	
B. Sponsor performing arts in partnership with community and cultural organizations.	1. Promote and endorse area performing arts opportunities.	a. Promote events in Meridian presented by other groups on community calendars, social media outlets, publications, and playbills.	Near-term	5.5.1.D 5.3.2.J
		b. Engage with local arts groups to encourage cross-promotion.	Mid-term	
C. Advocate for the development of performing arts venues.	1. Be a resource to Meridian Planning Dept. and developers.	a. Work with performing arts partners to gather information about audience size, production needs, and frequency of use.	Mid-term	5.5.1.E 5.3.2.E 5.4.1.E

		b. Appoint MAC member as liaison to Meridian Planning Dept.	Near-term	
		c. Meet regularly with Meridian Planning Dept. staff to identify opportunities.	Mid-term	

IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Meridian residents will grow their appreciation and participation in the arts.					
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal	
A. Cultivate base of arts support and patrons in the community.	1. Develop a cohesive message about MAC and value of the arts to Meridian.	a. With consultant help, define a branding, messaging, and marketing plan.	Near-term	5.4.2	
		b. Create marketing materials, such as functional, reusable and/or recyclable gifts, to provide to new residents and to hand out at events	Long-term		
		c. Update MAC's web and social media presence.	Mid-term		
		d. Regularly evaluate effectiveness of marketing approaches.	Long-term		
	2. Promote MAC programs and public artworks to the community.		a. Make presentations to civic organizations regularly.	Mid-term	5.4.2
			b. Designate a MAC representative to attend concerts and events.	Near-term	
			c. Use existing MAC programs such as Art Week to provide arts information by having a booth and using an emcee for announcements.	Near-term	
			d. Maintain good relationship with local media by welcoming and inviting them to meetings and programs.	Mid-term	
			e. Work with City Communications manager to issue press releases about MAC activities and update online information outlets.	Near-term	
			f. Create a for-credit social media internship opportunity to gain	Long-term	

		assistance in promoting MAC activities via social media.		
		g. Partner with other organizations to cross-promote arts events and opportunities.	Near-term	
		h. Encourage digital engagement with public artworks.	Long-term	
B. Pursue public input into MAC's programs and goals.	1. Provide opportunity for attendees and public to give input at MAC programs.	a. Provide an easy and quick evaluation tool at appropriate events to gather audience feedback.	Near-term	5.4.1.E
		b. Set up MAC info booth at appropriate events with a tool to gather public input.	Mid-term	
	2. Provide remote opportunities for the community to give input into MAC programs.	a. Work with City Information Technology Dept. to create online public input opportunity.	Near-term	5.4.1.E
		b. Promote link to online public input opportunities at MAC events and programs.	Near-term	
	3. Welcome and invite members of the public to participate in MAC meetings and programs.	a. Invite community members to participate in the selection of public artworks.	Mid-term	5.4.1.E
		b. Promote MAC meeting schedule to public.	Long-term	
		c. Invite community members to speak or present to MAC.	Long-term	

V. VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITIONS

Goal: Meridian residents and visitors will have the opportunity to experience the visual arts.				
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal
A. Present visual arts exhibits for the community to enjoy.	1. Provide exhibits in the Initial Point Gallery at City Hall.	a. Coordinate rotating exhibits in the gallery annually.	Near-term	5.4.1.A
		b. Issue call to artists, vet applying artists, and work with selected artists before, during, and at the end of each exhibit.	Near-term	
		c. Establish volunteer group to assist with exhibit installation and removal responsibilities.	Mid-term	
	2. Provide opportunities for the presentation of temporary artworks.	a. Develop guidelines and policies for temporary artworks.	Mid-term	5.4.1.A 5.4.1.D
		b. Identify potential spaces and venues for temporary artworks.	Long-term	
		c. Engage in partnerships with artists and arts groups to provide temporary artworks.	Long-term	
B. Encourage presentation of visual arts by partnering with organizations and business.	1. Foster and encourage the presentation of impromptu artworks.	a. Gather examples of impromptu artworks from other communities to share.	Mid-term	5.4.1.D
		b. Create incentive for presentation of impromptu works during Art Week.	Long-term	
	2. Provide encouragement and advice to businesses to exhibit artworks.	a. Outline benefits to businesses that install art exhibits.	Long-term	5.5.1.E
		b. Offer and provide guidance to businesses on best practices and techniques for exhibits.	Long-term	
C. Encourage accessibility and		a. Install signage in City Hall Plaza and/or along Main Street.	Near-term	

awareness for Initial Point Gallery	1. Develop mechanisms to increase public awareness of the gallery.	b. Consider internal signage options that would increase public awareness of the gallery.	Mid-term	
	2. Strengthen marketing efforts to promote the gallery.	a. Work closely with Communications Manager to increase publicity for gallery.	Mid-term	
		b. Consider increasing funding devoted to gallery promotions via radio, print, or social media.	Mid-term	

VI. SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS

Goal: Provide local artists opportunities to grow their skills and showcase their work.				
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal
A. Visual artists will be provided exhibition opportunities.	1. Coordinate rotating exhibits in the Initial Point Gallery.	a. Assist artists with exhibit installation and removal.	Near-term	5.4.1.A
		b. Provide display space for artists' information.	Near-term	
		c. Promote the artist at the opening-night event and through other MAC marketing efforts.	Near-term	
B. Provide professional development trainings and opportunities for artists.	1. Incorporate professional development opportunities for artists into the Art Week program.	a. Reach out to local artists to identify types of programs they need.	Near-term	5.4.1.E
		b. Partner with organizations, such as the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Meridian Library District, and the Small Business Development Center and others, to facilitate, host, and lead the workshops.	Near-term	
		c. Identify local venues that may benefit from hosting a workshop for artists.	Mid-term	
C. Recognize and celebrate outstanding local artists.	1. Present Mayor Tammy deWeerd Award in the Arts.	a. Assist with nomination and selection process.	Near-term	5.4.1.D
		b. Promote selected artists via MAC media outlets and at MAC programs.	Mid-term	

VII. ARTS ACCESS

Goal: Support experiences in the arts for everyone, regardless of age, race, ability or other protected class.				
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal
A. Broaden experiences and showcase all facets of arts from diverse cultural backgrounds.	1. Develop partnerships with local and regional cultural arts organizations and artists.	a. Identify local and regional cultural organizations.	Near-term	5.4.1.D 5.5.1.C 5.3.2.J
		b. MAC representatives meet with cultural organizations to discuss partnership opportunities.	Mid-term	
	2. Incorporate cultural arts into existing MAC programs.	a. Consider cultural representation when selecting artists for MAC performances and exhibits.	Near-term	
B. Ensure that arts programs, projects, and exhibits are accessible to differently abled persons.	1. Make exhibitions at Initial Point Gallery as accessible to all as possible.	a. Conduct an audit of the Initial Point Gallery exhibit practices to identify any needed accessibility improvements (e.g., Braille title cards).	Near-term	5.5.1
	2. Encourage access in calls to artists.	b. Revise calls to artists to invite proposals from artists on how their work is or can be made accessible.	Mid-term	
C. Ensure arts opportunities can be enjoyed regardless of economic status.	1. Continue to provide free arts experiences.	a. Clearly promote free arts exhibits, public artworks, and performances as being no-cost or free.	Near-term	5.5.1
	2. Explore establishment of an arts participation scholarship or free ticket program.	a. Research how other arts commissions provide scholarships or free ticket programs.	Long-term	

VIII. SUSTAINABILITY

Goal: Build the human and financial resources needed to fulfill the vision of the City of Meridian and Meridian Arts Commission.				
Objective	Strategy	Action Item	Priority	Comp Plan Goal
A. Secure the professional expertise needed to provide quality programs and operate efficiently.	1. Partner with City departments to fully use existing City staff resources.	a. Meet with City Dept. staff to identify opportunities for collaboration and assistance.	Near-term	5.4 5.5
		b. Use existing City staff expertise as appropriate.	Near-term	
	2. Explore increasing dedicated City staff for arts administration support.	a. Identify needed arts administration duties.	Mid-term	
		b. Work with Finance to prepare cost-benefit analysis of more City staff support vs. contractors vs. volunteers to accomplish maximum public benefit.	Long-term	
		c. Present gathered information to City Council and management.	Long-term	
	3. Contract with consultants or other professionals to accomplish specific tasks.	a. Annually identify the need and scope of work for consultants or contract professional assistance.	Near-term	
		b. Include professional services in MAC budget.	Mid-term	
	4. Identify and promote for-credit internship opportunities.	a. Develop description(s) of internship opportunities based on MAC needs.	Near-term	
		b. Identify schools and/or universities that would be willing partners.	Mid-term	
		c. Open position for intern(s).	Long-term	
		d. Document and evaluate intern roles and projects.	Long-term	
	B. Create and support a core volunteer group to assist with MAC	1. Identify MAC's volunteer needs.	a. Create volunteer job descriptions.	
b. Differentiate between short-term and ongoing/standing volunteer positions.			Near-term	

programs and operations.	2. Develop a volunteer recruitment strategy.	a. Research best practices for volunteer recruitment.	Mid-term	
		b. Identify likely volunteers by matching MAC needs with the expertise and availability of groups and individuals.	Long-term	
	3. Recognize volunteers in a meaningful way.	a. Research examples and develop a list of recognition strategies that can be used.	Near-term	
		b. Get to know each volunteer and tailor recognition to interests.	Long-term	
C. Increase the skills and expertise of the Meridian Arts Commission and its committees.	1. Maintain a well-rounded Meridian Arts Commission that is focused and goal-oriented.	a. Provide a formal and comprehensive orientation for new MAC members.	Near-term	5.4 5.5
		b. Align meeting agendas with Strategic Plan goals/objectives.	Near-term	
		c. Continue to work in committees to streamline programs and operations.	Near-term	
		d. When MAC member openings occur, identify skills needed and recruit members accordingly.	Mid-term	
	2. Provide skills development training opportunities to MAC members.	a. Identify needed skills.	Near-term	
		b. Partner with organizations such as the Idaho Commission on the Arts to provide board training.	Mid-term	
D. Seek and obtain the financial resources needed to fulfill MAC's goals.	1. Pursue grant funding from public agencies and private foundations.	a. Research and document grant opportunities.	Near-term	5.4 5.5
		b. Apply for grants as they fit program needs.	Mid-term	
		c. Obtain professional grant writing or administration services as needed.	Long-term	
		d. Seek partnerships with other organizations to pursue grant opportunities.	Mid-term	
	2. Identify and secure individual contributions	a. Obtain or attend fundraising training for MAC members.	Mid-term	

	and business sponsorships.	b. Annually identify MAC program/project needs for private donations, sponsorships, and in-kind contributions.	Mid-term
		c. Match MAC programs and projects with the interests of individuals and businesses.	Mid-term
		d. Offer businesses meaningful marketing exposure in recognition of sponsorships.	Near-term
	3. Formalize and execute a donor recognition program.	a. Establish levels of giving and corresponding recognition strategies.	Near-term
		b. Invite donors to sponsored events.	Mid-term
		c. Publicly acknowledge granting agencies, donors, and sponsors at MAC events.	Near-term
		d. Promptly thank donors and sponsors.	Near-term