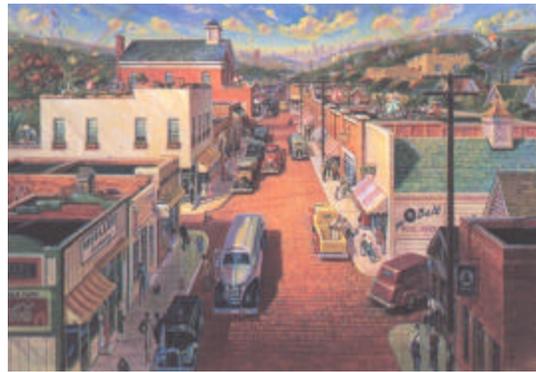


# SECTION 6

## Existing Land Use



**Communities evaluate where businesses, homes and facilities are located currently to identify opportunities and constraints regarding the future.**

### 6.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing land use pattern for the City of Merriam. Since Merriam is almost completely developed, it is important to look at the existing development patterns in order to make decisions about the future land use. A breakdown or inventory of the existing land uses is presented in this section. The inventory will show the amount of land currently developed for specific uses. In addition, the inventory will describe the distribution of the different uses.

### 6.2 Land Use Categories and Definitions

The Johnson County Appraiser’s Office has developed a method of categorizing land uses. The County has given each type of land use a different code. The land use codes are as follows:

1. Residential
2. Industrial
3. Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
4. Commercial
5. Institutional
6. Cultural, Entertainment, Recreational
7. Farm or Ranch land

**In this section:**

- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Land Use Categories and Definitions**
- 6.3 Land Use Inventory**
- 6.4 Conclusions**

These categories are generally defined as follows:

1. **Residential:** Land which is primarily used for dwelling units, accessory buildings to the dwelling units, and common pedestrian areas around the dwelling units. The primary use of the buildings is to provide shelter for people.
2. **Industrial:** Land used to support manufacturing of goods. Examples: bakery products manufacturing,

paper manufacturing, commercial printing, cement manufacturing, and pharmaceutical manufacturing.

3. **Transportation, Communication, and Utilities:** Transportation uses can include land used for railroad transportation, automobile transportation, right-of-way (private and public), and parking. Communication land uses support services such as telephone communication, radio broadcasting, and television broadcasting. Utility land uses include electric, gas, water, sewage disposal, and solid waste disposal.
4. **Commercial:** Land used to support the sale of services or merchandise. Also land used to support professional activities such as medical and dental practices, attorney practices and financial institutions. Examples: distribution centers, storage facilities, shopping center, automobile dealership, restaurant, bank, medical office building, and hotel.
5. **Institutional:** Land occupied by governmental facilities, hospitals or other health centers, educational facilities, places of worship, and buildings used by community organizations and social services.
6. **Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreational:** Land used for cultural facilities such as museums and libraries; recreational facilities, both passive and active; and entertainment facilities including theaters and game centers.
7. **Farm or Ranch land:** Land used primarily for agricultural purposes. Merriam has no land categorized as farm or ranch land so this category will not be included in Merriam's land use inventory.

### 6.3 Land Use Inventory

The Johnson County AIMS (Automated Information Mapping System) Department has included the Appraiser's land use codes in a very comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS). This system allows the cities of Johnson County to have ready access to a whole range of digitized maps and data at a parcel level.

An inventory of Merriam's land uses was created from the AIMS databases (see Table 6-1). An existing land use map was also created to visually portray the land use distribution (see Map 6-1). The benefit of creating an inventory is that it can serve as a benchmark for future planning and community development activities. The City can assess its progress by creating similar maps and summary tables in the future.

**TABLE 6-1 Existing Land Use  
February 2000**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Developed Land</b>	<b>% of Total Land</b>
Vacant Residential	78.7		2.8
Single Family	1,135.7	42.7	40.2
Duplexes	42.8	1.6	1.5
Fourplex, Condominium, Townhouse	26.7	1.0	0.9
Apartments	98.6	3.7	3.5
Other Residential Uses	6.5	0.2	0.2
<b>Total for Residential</b>	1,388.9	49.3	46.4
Vacant Industrial	0.6		0.0
Industrial	63.8	2.4	2.3
<b>Total for Industrial</b>	64.5	2.4	2.3
Transportation Related Uses	690.4	26.0	24.4
Communications	0.1	0.0	0.0
Utilities	18.0	0.7	0.6
<b>Total for Transportation, Communication, Utilities</b>	708.5	26.7	25.1
Vacant Commercial	56.3		2.0
Warehouse, Storage	103.9	3.9	3.7
Building Supply/Garden Centers	9.7	0.4	0.3
Retail Stores, Shopping Centers	103.6	3.9	3.7
Dealerships, Automotive Services	57.2	2.2	2.0
Restaurants, Bars, Night Clubs, Dinner Theaters	19.1	0.7	0.7
Banks, Financial Institutions, Offices, Personal Services	94.3	3.5	3.3
Hotels Motels	13.2	0.5	0.5
Other Commercials Services	5.9	0.2	0.2
<b>Total for Commercial</b>	463.0	15.3	16.4
Vacant Institutional	30.3		1.1
Governmental Offices and Facilities	1.4	0.1	0.0
Hospitals, Clinics, Nursing Homes	23.2	0.9	0.8
Cemetery	2.0	0.1	0.1
Day Care Centers, Schools, Higher Education Facilities	31.7	1.2	1.1
Churches, Community Organizations, Social Services	12.2	0.5	0.4
Other Institutional	1.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total for Institutional</b>	101.8	2.7	3.6
Vacant Cultural, Entertainment, Recreational	0.0		0.0
Recreational Facilities, Parks	94.5	3.6	3.3
Cultural Facilities, Museums, Libraries	2.2	0.1	0.1
Entertainment Facilities Theaters, etc.	0.7	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Cultural, Entertainment, Recreational</b>	97.5	3.7	3.5
<b>Total Land</b>	2,824.0		100.0
<b>Total Developed Land</b>	2,658.2	100.0	
<b>Total Undeveloped Land</b>	165.8		

As Table 6-1 shows the total land area of Merriam is 2,824 acres or 4.41 sq miles. About 2,658 acres of the total land area is developed (94%). Like most suburbs, the land use which is most prevalent in Merriam is residential totaling 46.4% of all the land uses. The second largest land use category is Transportation, Communication, and Utilities at 25.1%. Roadways and right-of-way account for the majority of that percentage, especially since Merriam has portions of I-35, Shawnee Mission Parkway and Johnson Drive running through it. The next prominent land use is Commercial which adds up to 15.3% of the total land area. The four commercial types that have the greatest concentration are: Warehouse, Storage (3.9%); Retail Stores, Shopping Centers (3.9%); Banks, Financial Institutions, Offices, Personal Services (3.5%); and Automotive Dealerships and Services (2.2%). Interestingly 16.8% of the Warehouse, Storage development and 57.7% of the Retail Stores, Shopping Centers development were built in the 1990s, which reflects the addition of Merriam Town Center.

Merriam’s Land Use Map (Map 6-1) shows a fairly typical modern pattern for a suburban city that is divided by a major highway. The predominant use is obviously residential. However, there is also a good mix of commercial due to good access and visibility along I-35. In addition, Merriam is fortunate that its original downtown area is relatively close to the interstate. The new development and redevelopment that has occurred in the past decade or so may spur continued redevelopment or reinvestment in and around the downtown area.

The following is a more detailed look at the distribution of each of the land use categories:

**Residential**

As shown on the map, the residential is split by Interstate 35 and a buffer of mainly commercial uses on either side of the highway. There are only a few places on the east side of the highway where residential use abuts the highway or frontage road. As Table 6-2 shows, almost 61% of the residential use in Merriam is single-family housing.

**TABLE 6-2 Residential Uses in Merriam**

<b>Residential Use</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>% of Total Housing Units</b>
Single-family	3153	50.90
Duplexes	272	5.25
Fourplex, Condominium, Townhouse	190	6.37
Apartments	1561	30.15
Other Residential Uses	1	0.02
Total	5177	100.00

**Industrial**

Merriam has very little industrial development, only 2.3% of the total land area. For the purposes of this plan, industrial development is primarily manufacturing. The biggest concentration of industrial use is on either side of I-35 at 67<sup>th</sup> Street. Lucent Technologies is on the west side of I-35 and Bayer is on the east side. There are also small pockets of industrial development along Merriam Drive with the greatest concentration of them occurring north of 55<sup>th</sup> Street. Note: There may be some areas, particularly along Merriam Drive, which are actually zoned for industrial use but fall into a different category (i.e., commercial, residential) with the County Appraiser's Office. One example of this is a small area east of Merriam Drive on Benson. The area is zoned for industrial use; however, there are some single-family structures in that area. For the most part those structures are being used for an industrial or commercial type of business even though they are categorized by the County as a residential use.

**Transportation, Communication, Utilities**

As mentioned above, transportation uses, namely roadways and right-of-way, are one of the most prevalent land uses making up 24.4% of the total land area. Obviously the roadways run throughout the City. The two main north-south thoroughfares in the City are Interstate 35 and Merriam Drive. East-west major arterials include 67<sup>th</sup> Street, Shawnee Mission Parkway, and Johnson Drive. These three arterials all cross I-35 either as an overpass or underpass.

**Commercial**

Most of Merriam's commercial and industrial development runs along Interstate I-35 or parallel to the interstate on Merriam's main north-south corridor, Merriam Drive. There are also branches of commercial development extending out from the interstate along 75<sup>th</sup> Street, Shawnee Mission Parkway, and some mainly to the east on 67<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Institutional**

Institutional uses represent only 3.6% of the total land area in Merriam. The main uses that fall into this category are the four elementary schools (Crestview, Merriam, South Park, and West Antioch), Shawnee Mission Medical Center, City government facilities, nursing homes, churches and a cemetery. These uses are found throughout the city, although the schools and Shawnee Mission Medical Center are located closer to the peripheral edges of the City.

**Cultural, Entertainment, Recreational**

Cultural, entertainment, and recreational uses represent 3.5% of the total land area in Merriam. Parks and Recreation Facilities (public and private) make up 96.9% of all the cultural, entertainment, and recreational uses. Antioch Park accounts for a large portion of that amount, almost 44 acres out of 94.5 acres.

The parks are scattered throughout the City and many of the City's residents on the periphery probably utilize some of the parks and school facilities in neighboring Overland Park and Shawnee.

### **Vacant Land Uses**

As Table 6-1 shows, none of the land use categories have significant amounts of vacant land for new development. The greatest amount of vacant land is designated for residential use (78.7 acres). However, this acreage is split up among almost 200 different scattered lots around the City. Only about 20 of the lots are greater than half an acre and only a few are greater than 2 acres. The largest parcel (19.05 acres) is located south of 71<sup>st</sup> Street and west of the Burlington Northern railroad tracks. This piece is owned by the City and is designated to be part of the Johnson County Trails System and for open space. Thus, the number of new housing units being built in the future will be very low. The City's Community Development Director estimated that between ten and fifteen single-family houses could still possibly be built. The potential for new development in the other categories is even less, since even smaller amounts of vacant acreage is available in those categories.

## **6.4 Conclusions**

Merriam is nearly fully developed with only a few vacant parcels of land for new development. The community has a good mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Most neighborhoods are segregated from commercial and industrial uses. Public facilities are somewhat central to the community. The Future Land Use plan will probably not include major changes to the existing pattern.