



## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)** **CITY OF MERRIAM DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**

### I. Introduction / Purpose

The City of Merriam ("City") is seeking statements of qualifications from professional planning and design firms to assist in the development of a Downtown Master Plan for the City's Historic Downtown District ("District"). The intent of this plan is to create a shared community vision and provide strategic guidance for land use, redevelopment, infrastructure, and placemaking within the District.

The District includes a mix of commercial, civic, and industrial properties, bordered by Turkey Creek to the west, freight rail tracks to the east, and running from Johnson Drive on the south to the Merriam Drive bridge on the north. Merriam Drive bisects the District north to south. The area encompasses approximately eight city blocks and 35 properties.





The City is the largest landowner in the District, having strategically acquired several key parcels over time. While the area includes a few newer businesses, much of the District has remained unchanged due to two primary constraints:

1. Despite its prime location along I-35, a feature that typically drives redevelopment, the area has seen little change in use over the past several decades, remaining largely occupied by industrial and automotive uses and underutilized parcels.
2. The presence of FEMA-designated floodplain (see “Downtown Flooding” section III).

Despite these challenges, Merriam residents have repeatedly voiced support for a vibrant, mixed-use downtown, most recently through planning efforts such as:

- [Merriam Downtown Economic Enhancement Strategy \(1998\)](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan 2020 \(2000\)](#)
- [Irene B. French Community Center Report \(2019\)](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan 2040 \(2020\)](#)
- [Downtown Merriam Corridor Plan \(2022\)](#)
- [Community Satisfaction Survey \(2024\)](#)

The City intends for the final Downtown Master Plan to become an adopted element of the Comprehensive Plan 2040.

### **Public and Stakeholder Participation**

Stakeholder engagement will be a critical component of this process. The consultant will be expected to design and execute a robust outreach strategy that includes regular and meaningful engagement with a diverse group of stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, residents, and institutional partners.

The consultant will develop and implement a robust public and stakeholder engagement strategy. This strategy should include:

- Creative outreach tactics to ensure broad participation
- Targeted stakeholder meetings and public workshops
- A mechanism for engaging a City-appointed steering committee
- A focus on building consensus and supporting implementation, not just visioning
- Conduct a statistically significant survey to determine Merriam residents’ vision of Downtown

The project participation process should be inclusive, transparent, and designed to produce actionable outcomes.



## II. City Background

**Population:** 11,036 (2023)

**Land Area:** 4.32 sq mi

**Median Household Income:** \$71,665 (2023)

**Total Housing Units:** 5,183 (2023)

**Median Age:** 38.2

**Median Home Value:** \$309,822 (2024)

**Parks:** 10

**Form of Government:**

Mayor/Council/Administrator

Merriam is in northeast Johnson County, Kansas, just eight miles southwest of downtown Kansas City. With no room for expansion, the City focuses on infill and redevelopment. Its largest revenue source is sales tax (50%), with automobile sales and services as the dominant sector.

## III. Downtown Flooding

Turkey Creek, which runs through the District, has a long history of flooding. Major flood events occurred in 1951, 1958, 1961, 1968, 1977, 1983, 1986, 1993, 1995, 1996, and 1998. Most of the area lies within a FEMA-designated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), subjecting property owners to costly insurance and design requirements, and discouraging redevelopment.

Following the 1998 flood, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted a feasibility study for flood mitigation, culminating in the federally authorized [USACE Turkey Creek Engineering Study \(2015\)](#) that includes floodwalls and levees through the District. Design plans are expected to reach 65% completion in early 2026, at which time City Council will consider whether to proceed. In parallel, the City has contracted HNTB to explore other floodway removal alternatives.

While flood mitigation is a critical factor, this Downtown Master Plan RFQ is focused on creating a community vision that can be implemented regardless of the technical solution chosen.

## IV. Anticipated Plan Focus Areas

The selected consultant will lead a robust community engagement effort and work closely with City staff and a Steering Committee. While the final scope will be developed with the selected consultant, the plan is expected to address the following topics:

- **Placemaking & Urban Design:** Identity, public art, and streetscape enhancements.
- **Business & Economic Development:** Market conditions, business attraction/retention, and strategic infill.
- **Parking & Access:** Short- and long-term strategies, multimodal connectivity, and wayfinding.
- **Redevelopment & Land Use:** Context-sensitive redevelopment scenarios that respect adjacent residential areas and environmental constraints.
- **Streetscape/Infrastructure:** Design themes, pedestrian safety, public realm improvements, and branding.



#### V. Submission Requirements

Qualified firms are invited to submit a Statement of Qualifications that includes the following:

1. **Firm Profile:** General firm background, ownership, services offered, and office location(s).
2. **Project Team:** Resumes and roles of key personnel, including subconsultants if applicable.
3. **Relevant Experience:** Examples of at least two (2) similar downtown master plans for comparable communities.
4. **Client References:** At least five (5) professional references from prior projects.
5. **Approach to Community Engagement:** Description of philosophy, techniques, and experience.
6. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Identify any work currently being performed for landowners or developers in Merriam.

*Do not include fee proposals at this stage.*

#### VI. Selection Process & Evaluation Criteria

An evaluation committee will review all submitted qualifications and may include City staff, elected officials, and stakeholders. Top-ranked firms may be invited for interviews. Selection will be based on:

- Relevant project experience, particularly in downtowns and small urban communities
- Qualifications and availability of key personnel
- Demonstrated success in community engagement and implementation
- Familiarity with redevelopment constraints such as floodplain or infill challenges
- Overall quality of submission

#### VII. Submission Deadline

Qualifications must be received by **4:00 p.m. CST on Friday, January 9, 2026.**

Submit one (1) digital copy via email to:

**Juliana Pinnick, City Clerk** – [jpinnick@merriam.org](mailto:jpinnick@merriam.org)

Submit one (1) hard copy to:

City of Merriam  
Attn: City Clerk  
9001 W 62nd Street  
Merriam, KS 66202

#### VIII. Preliminary Project Schedule

The dates shown in the timeline below are flexible and are to be used as an understanding of the baseline of the City expectations. Consultant will develop a project schedule, with details describing milestones and activities throughout the duration of the project.



Task	2025	2026										
	Nov/Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Release of RFP												
Review Proposals / Interviews												
Selection of Consultant												
Contract Review and Approvals												
Project Kick Off												
Master Planning Process												
Project Complete												

The City reserves the right to modify any timeline if necessary.

- Deadline for proposal submissions – Friday, January 9, 2026
- Notification of preferred firms – Friday, January 16, 2026
- Proposed Interviews – Week of January 26, 2026
- Consultant Selection - February 2026
- Project Completion – October/November 2026

The contract requires approval by the Merriam City Council, which could be around a 30-day process. The City Council meets on the second and forth Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at Merriam City Hall (9001 W 62<sup>nd</sup> Street).

#### IX. Questions & Contact

All inquiries regarding this RFQ should be directed to:

- **Bryan Dyer**, Community Development Director – [bdyer@merriam.org](mailto:bdyer@merriam.org) | (913) 322-5527
- **Chris Engel**, City Administrator – [cengel@merriam.org](mailto:cengel@merriam.org) | (913) 322-5511

#### X. Additional Information

- The City of Merriam reserves the right to reject any or all submittals, waive informalities, or request additional information.
- Submittals become property of the City and will not be returned.
- This RFQ does not commit the City to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in preparation of a response.