

## Chapter Three: Land Use

### Existing Land Use

#### Land Use Determinants

The interaction of a host of factors ultimately determines the use of land in an urban setting. Among these are market dynamics, transportation access, the availability of utility services, physical features of the land, surrounding land uses, and the expression of community values as reflected in City policy. Future land use and goals and objectives are the primary focus of a comprehensive plan. The planning process endeavors to incorporate all of the above factors into a coordinated strategy for guiding future land use decisions.

#### Residential Land Use

The predominant existing land use in the City of Shawnee is single-family residential. However, significant levels of apartment and condominium development have recently been experienced. Such development is consistent with recent regional and national trends. It is anticipated that this level of activity will be short term in nature.

#### Commercial and Industrial

Shawnee's steady population growth and improving arterial transportation network has prompted increased commercial development activity. The recently begun Mill Creek Retail Center and Westbrooke Village shopping centers, the proposed industrial park at 47th and Woodland, and the proposed regional mall indicate the significant development taking place. They point out the intensified effort to provide retail and service businesses to provide for the needs of Shawnee residents within Shawnee.

The locations of Shawnee's existing commercial areas are reflective of a suburban status. Locations which are concentrated in the extreme eastern portions of Shawnee (the 63rd St. corridor, Nieman Road from 57th to 67th, downtown Shawnee, and the 75th and Nieman area) house the vast majority of the City's existing commercial development. These various development areas encompass a wide range of building ages and styles, development types, and site features which are reflective of the evolution of building material preferences, building technologies, and regulatory techniques. These factors have in some instances contributed to conflicts in land use, vehicular movements and visual integrity. Areas in western Shawnee which are presently undeveloped may in the future become the dominant commercial areas; however, the existing commercial developments will remain vital components of the City economically, visually and symbolically. They must not, therefore, be allowed to deteriorate.

Existing industrial uses in Shawnee are quite dispersed and of generally small scale. Locations include the downtown area, 79th and Switzer, 69th and Martindale, scattered sites along Mill Creek in western Shawnee, and small industrial parks in the southwestern part of the City. Large scale proposed industrial park development in the Mill Creek Valley area and at 83rd and K-7 appear to be desirable for Shawnee and warrant aggressive efforts on the part of the City.

### Other Land Uses

Other principal land uses in Shawnee include parks, public and quasi-public uses, and undeveloped land. The most sizable park in the area is the Shawnee Mission Park operated by the County. This regional park spans the Shawnee-Lenexa border, and includes Tomahawk Golf Course and Shawnee Mission Lake. The Laird Park - Old Shawnee Town park area is one of major community significance. In addition to the historical amenities, the area also houses one of the municipal pools, lighted tennis courts and playfields. The City also provides other parks with ball diamonds, playfields, tennis courts and exercise courses, as well as additional small playground type parks. A new Olympic-sized pool is located at the Community Center.

Public and quasi-public uses in Shawnee include the City Hall and Public Safety buildings, several public and parochial schools, and a large number of churches. The area churches represent a wide variety of denominations, and the church buildings reflect great diversity in age and architectural styles. These churches are a matter of great community importance and pride.

Shawnee has many specific physical constraints, such as the Kansas River, Mill Creek, the solid waste disposal area, railroad alignments, existing park areas, and so forth that will prevent development of much of the undeveloped land in the City. Portions of this land are among the most scenic and environmentally sensitive in the region. It is an important quality of life issue to ensure that many of these significant features of the natural environment be preserved.

### Land Use Planning Concerns

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, ideas were solicited regarding land use problems which the plan should address. Below are described three areas which were identified and which appear to have widespread consensus.

#### Growth

As is reflected in City policy, the majority of the Shawnee citizenry appear to regard growth as desirable. Growth represents opportunity: new people, new places to work and shop, and a more diversified tax base. Moreover, Shawnee's capacity for growth and its historical

timing provides the City a tremendous opportunity to guide the nature of this growth in order that a unique, vital, and dynamic city will emerge.

### Quality

While growth is desired, an overriding concern is that the new development be of good quality. Clearly, Shawnee citizens desire only that sort of growth and development which is efficiently located, well designed, and carefully integrated both visually and functionally with the natural and man-made environment.

### Image

A final concern of widespread consensus involves the concept of City image. The timing and anticipated long term magnitude of Shawnee's expected growth affords the opportunity to plan for a City of distinctive form and image. While some of the future growth will simply extend the largely developed areas of eastern Shawnee, the most significant growth may occur in previously remote areas to the west. Thus, the opportunity exists to plan for something which in form and function acts as a city, and not just an indistinguishable suburb. The location of the developable land, the beauty of the natural environment, and the nature of existing development will also contribute positively to the future urban form. By adhering to a creative and well designed land use plan, following sound planning principles, and exercising patience over time, Shawnee has the opportunity to build the city it desires.

### **Assumptions Regarding Future Land Use**

A more city-like status is anticipated in the future. Toward that end, the citizens of Shawnee want regional scale facilities and industries. The reasons for wanting this development are to provide a more balanced tax base, a more dynamic and vital city, and more of the urban goods and services within the City's boundaries. It is a part of the people's desire to mold the City into a livable and living community.

Because of the amount of developable land that will be available for growth, Shawnee's future urban form and land use arrangement will reflect community values and desires. We have the opportunity to review future development in terms of intensity and density of use, and ensure development that is compatible with adjacent land uses. Thus, Shawnee faces the future with almost unbounded opportunity.