

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**  
**Regular Agenda – Action Item**

PC Staff Report  
11/14/16

**ITEM NO. 2A: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TO HORIZON 2020 CHAPTER 14 (JSC)**

**CPA-16-00443:** Consider a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to *Horizon 2020: Chapter 14: Specific Plans (Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan)* to the Future Land Use Map and general plan updates, located at 2200 Street FF. Submitted by Bartlett & West, Inc.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to *Horizon 2020: Chapter 14: Specific Plans*, revising the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* to include Commercial as a Future Land Use designation, to revise a portion of the Future Land Use map from Industrial to Commercial, and to incorporate general revisions and updates to the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* and recommends forwarding this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Lawrence City Commission with a recommendation for approval.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** If appropriate, approve and sign Planning Commission Resolution PCR-16- 00466.

**KEY POINTS**

1. *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* has not been reevaluated since adoption in 2008.
2. Location is currently designated for Industrial land use. Proposed amendment would change designation to Commercial land use to accommodate redevelopment of the site for a hotel/restaurant use.
3. Creation of a Commercial land use designation is consistent with the plan's intent, while providing better linkages with the existing development pattern.
4. The current plan document does not account for completed action steps or those underway since adoption. Annexation, platting, and the creation of the IM zoning district have been completed since the plan's adoption.
5. The applicant's request and staff recommended general revisions would strengthen plan's ties to existing conditions and developments that have occurred since 2008.
6. Commercial designation of this intersection quadrant is consistent with existing land use and present zoning prior to the adoption of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*.

## SUMMARY

The applicant has negotiated a purchase of a portion of a VenturePark parcel to accommodate a hotel and restaurant redevelopment. The petition is requested for an amendment to *Horizon 2020: Chapter 14: Specific Plans*, amending the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, to revise the northeast corner of E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Street FF from Industrial land use designation to Commercial designation to accommodate the development of a hotel and restaurant. The reason for this request is to designate approximately 1.45 acres within the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* presently designated for Industrial to Commercial, allowing for the redevelopment of the existing commercially zoned properties along E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The proposed amendment is a request to align the existing *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, which is incorporated into Chapter 14: Specific Plans of *Horizon 2020*, with the existing zoning and development pattern existing at this intersection quadrant.

In reviewing the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, staff also identified numerous pieces of the plan that need revision and updating to match the progression of the VenturePark project, and to align the plan with the surrounding area as it has progressed.



Figure 1: Subject Locations

Items related to this Comprehensive Plan Amendment include:

- **PP-16-00392:** Consider a Preliminary Plat for Gwaltney Addition, located at 2176 E 23rd St, 2200 E 23rd St, & 2200 Street FF. Submitted by Bartlett & West Inc. on behalf of Cave Inn LLC, City of Lawrence, and Gwaltney Properties LLC, property owners of record.

- **Z-16-00396:** Consider a request to rezone approximately 1.45 acres from IM (Medium Industrial) District to CS (Commercial Strip) District, located at 2200 Street FF. Submitted by Bartlett & West Inc. on behalf of City of Lawrence, property owner of record.

## STAFF REVIEW

The applicant is requesting to revise the Future Land Use description to include commercial to account for the existing commercial development, and to revise the Future Land Use map accordingly for this revised description. This would revise this parcel's existing Future Land Use designation from Industrial to Commercial.



Figure 2: Current *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* Future Land Use Designations

Staff reviewed the whole of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* and found other items that appeared to be outdated or that were completed as part of the 2008 initial document adoption. To maximize efficiency with this Comprehensive Plan Amendment, staff recommends revising the plan at this time based on the completed work at VenturePark.

Staff reviewed this amendment based upon the Comprehensive Plan Amendment review criteria listed below, as identified in Chapter 17 (Implementation) of *Horizon 2020*. The applicant's responses are also provided below:

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW**

**1. Does the proposed amendment result from changed circumstances or unforeseen conditions not understood or addressed at the time the Plan was adopted?**

*Applicant's response: Yes. At the time the original comprehensive plan was completed this location was envisioned to become industrial in conjunction with adjacent Farmland Industries property. Today, the existing buildings along the frontage road are either vacant or in dis-repair and the former Farmland Industries property has been redeveloped into new industrial lots (Lawrence VenturePark). Approving this request would bring new commercial businesses and redevelopment along the frontage road (E 23<sup>rd</sup> Street) and allow the comprehensive plan to match the proposed zoned and redevelopment use.*

*Staff's response: The Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 2008, and was focused on the land of the former Farmland Industries Nitrogen Plant/present VenturePark site. At the time of the plan's completion, the scope was limited to the Farmland site in unincorporated Douglas County, and did not include existing commercial properties within the City of Lawrence along K-10 Highway/ E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, which includes a portion of the applicant's proposed site under consideration.*

The majority of the proposed redevelopment site was used and zoned for commercial uses prior to the adoption of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, and was within the City of Lawrence at the time of the plan's adoption; therefore, it was not in the plan scope. The smaller size of land these sites currently sit on makes redevelopment difficult for projects that would help meet the plan's goal to support the larger objective of the plan. The existing *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* noted that, "Limited commercial should be allowed to support the needs of the workers in the area. Commercial of a neighborhood, community, or regional nature shall not be allowed. Commercial shall not be permitted along the frontage of K-10 Highway as the Plan discourages strip commercial development along K-10." However, the commercial that is adjacent to VenturePark was already zoned and used for commercial uses prior to the plan's adoption.

As VenturePark has been platted and the surrounding land uses evolved, the plan has not progressed in equal measure since adoption. As staff reviewed the applicant's request, staff also identified other aspects of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* that should also be evaluated, as the plan recommends to ensure it remains relevant and to update its standing based on implementation history. To address both the applicant's request, as well as other updates to the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, staff will provide responses when necessary that are tailored to each component in this staff report.

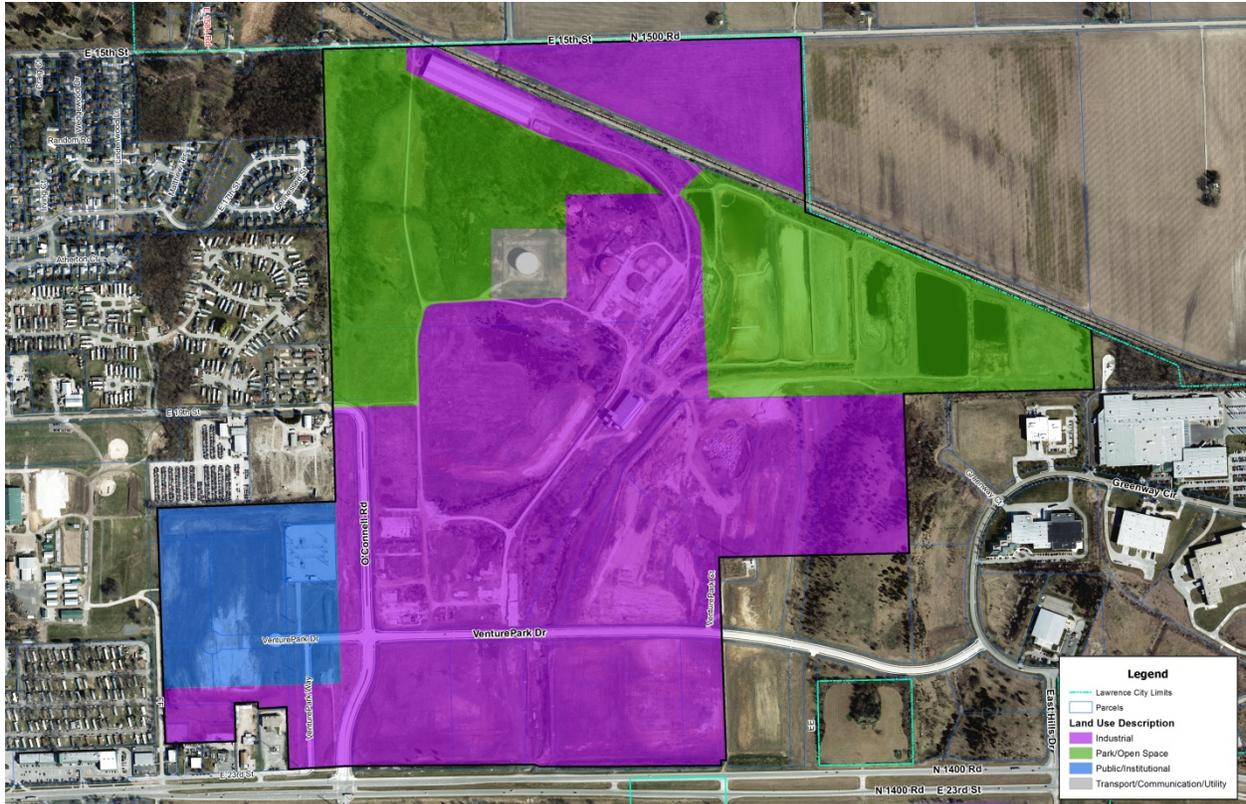


Figure 3: Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan: Existing Future Land Use

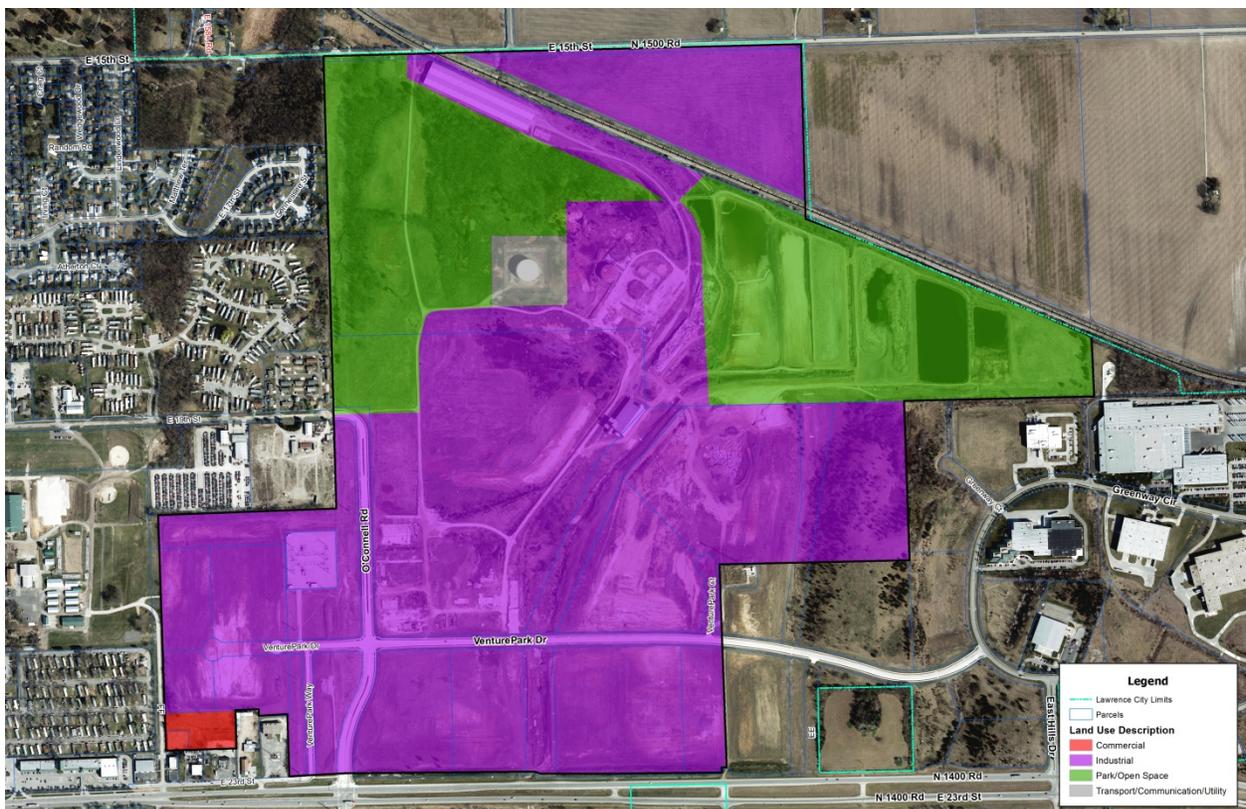


Figure 4: Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan: Proposed Future Land Use

## **2. Does the proposed amendment advance a clear public purpose?**

*Applicant's response:* Yes, it allows a currently vacant property to be redeveloped for new businesses along the frontage road (E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street) as requested.

*Staff's response:* Amending the designation from the current Industrial to the proposed Commercial designation creates a natural linkage with the existing land use and zoning at this corner of the intersection. When the plan was initially adopted, the Farmland property was not annexed into the City of Lawrence at that time. However, there were other properties at this intersection that were zoned for commercial uses at that time. Since the adoption and annexation of this property, the City of Lawrence has completed platting the property to define lots of adequate industrial sizes. The part directly adjacent to the commercially zoned portion is effectively a smaller remainder of land after the platting process and is accessed from Street FF. This lot is not incorporated into the overall principal development area for the VenturePark project.

The general revisions staff proposes separately also advance a clear public purpose. Updating the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* follows the recommended update cycle included within the document, while also refreshing the document for the conditions and development patterns since 2008. Revising the Future Land Use map to remove Civic land uses, and thereby incorporating them into the Industrial land use provides a greater range of flexibility for users and development thus lessening the need for future plan amendments. It also aligns stronger with the surrounding developed properties along its southeastern edges given the changes in commercial development patterns and the Douglas County Fairgrounds master plan.

This also accounts for the creation of the IM Zoning (Medium Industrial) District in April 2012 ([Ordinance No. 8718](#)), which did not exist at the time of the plan's adoption. Staff has also removed the possible redevelopment options since the remediation, rezoning, and final platting of the property has been completed.

## **3. Is the proposed amendment consistent with the long-range goals and policies of the plan?**

*Applicant's response:* Yes, this request is in compliance with the long range goals and plans for the City of Lawrence.

*Staff's response:* The requested amendment is consistent with the spirit of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* and *Horizon 2020*. The applicant's request provides the integration of the existing land uses on the periphery of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*, and acknowledges the changing preferences of commercial/retail development. The inclusion of a commercial land use designation at this intersection strengthens the integration of the existing land uses with the sector plan's future land uses, while also accounting for the changing market conditions within southeast Lawrence. The proposed land use description for "Commercial" provides a clear distinction for the purpose of commercial at this location, and a clear intent restricting commercial expansion beyond the area that is identified by this amendment.

The additional staff amendments proposed revise the plan to bolster its flexibility, while also removing portions that have been completed or are no longer relevant given the work completed at VenturePark. One of the sections that have been completed is "Section 5: Redevelopment Strategy." This section provided possible scenarios for the site's transition. Most, if not all, have been substantially completed at this time. This also includes removing the future roadways, bicycle facilities, and stormwater features as they have been installed or are planned for as part of the property's platting. Staff has incorporated an updated map showing the platted alignment of the street network and connections for VenturePark, and also identified the portions of the network that have not been completed at this time.

With the more tangible foundations established for VenturePark via the platting and rezoning process, staff also recommends reviewing the separate standalone designation of Civic land use by incorporating it into the Industrial land use designation. This adds 36.5 acres of potential industrial space to the overall plan, but retains the option for civic uses to also be established in a location that may be more fitting than what was previously mapped and anticipated. At the time of the plan's adoption, there was a concern that the expansion of the Douglas County Fairgrounds might require some additional land, which would have been part of this sector plan. As the Fairgrounds master plan has been completed and is currently undertaking its redevelopment, this land was not required. Staff believes that the recommended changes to Civic land use matches this evolution of the Farmland site and the adjacent Fairgrounds, but did not want to remove civic uses from the entire plan as they may be a complimentary or accessory land use for the principal industrial uses envisioned by the plan. By removing the stand-alone designation in both the text and the map, this frees up both Industrial and Civic land uses to consider locations that were previously unavailable under the strict separation of the plan's framework. This also reflects adjustments to both the VenturePark property, as well as the surrounding and adjacent properties since the initial planning and adoption.

#### **4. Does the proposed amendment result from a clear change in public policy?**

*Applicant's response:* No. The associated sector plan was adopted in March 2008 and has not been amended since. The purpose of this plan is to meet the community goals of creating additional employment and to provide a plan to redevelop a brownfield into a major community asset.

*Staff's response:* There has not been a change in public policy. The initial concept and plan for the former Farmland property was for the remediation and redevelopment of the property to create additional employment opportunities and become a major community asset. With the work completed to this site, those goals have been maintained. Staff's recommended amendments stem from changes completed to the VenturePark site that were part of the Goals & Guiding Principles for this plan.

As Goals & Guiding Principles were completed, this manifested into the applicant's request for the inclusion of Commercial land use. With the plat of the VenturePark property completed in 2013, the parcels that are part of the requested designation were excluded from larger lots and are oriented towards Street FF, not the larger VenturePark property. With the creation of the substantially smaller parcels adjacent to the existing commercially zoned developments, utilizing

this residue land helps further the redevelopment potential of these parcels to fit within the overall changing context at this location.

**In addition, the following shall be considered for any map amendments:**

**5. Will the proposed amendment affect the adequacy of existing or planned facilities and services?**

*Applicant's response:* No, this site has been anticipated and planned for development since the adoption of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan*.

*Staff's response:* Infrastructure in this area is adequate to support this type of development. Further analysis regarding the specifics related to traffic impacts and infrastructure capacity will be addressed in the subsequent rezoning (Z-16-00396), preliminary plat proposal (PP-16-00392), and approval of a site plan.

**6. Will the proposed change result in reasonably compatible land use relationships?**

*Applicant's response:* Yes. The proposed change still fits within the overall comprehensive plan goals for this area within the *City of Lawrence*.

*Staff's response:* Given that the commercially zoned properties were present prior to the annexation and redevelopment of the VenturePark property, there is a history of commercial/retail properties operating at this location. The initially approved *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* anticipated some commercial uses in the area for the workers employed at the VenturePark site. The plan specifically notes that, "Limited commercial should be allowed to support the needs of the workers in the area." Introducing commercial land uses into the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* is consistent with the overall planning document as recommended by staff. Providing strict delineation of the commercial space ensures that encroachment into the VenturePark site is not anticipated, which allows adequate space for redevelopment, and stronger buffering to the residential zoning that is westerly adjacent across Street FF. This aligns the plan with the existing zoning and land uses, while providing guidance for both the plan and for applicants to the expectations of commercial uses adjacent to the planning area.

**7. Will the proposed change advance the interests of the citizens of Lawrence and Douglas County as a whole, not solely those having immediate interest in the affected area?**

*Applicant's response:* Yes. Allowing this comprehensive plan amendment will allow redevelopment of a blighted location and bring new business and tax dollars into the *City of Lawrence*.

*Staff's response:* This proposed amendment does not necessarily advance the interests of the citizens of Lawrence and Douglas County as a whole, but neither does it harm them. Redevelopment of the existing vacant sites would be a benefit for the immediate area and the applicant, which may have positive effects for the area. This amendment is necessary to begin the process to move toward this benefit, by providing assistance in helping further this potential redevelopment of the sites.

### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The changes, both those prompted by the applicant's request as well as those identified by staff as being inconsistent or completed at VenturePark, and the refresh of the *Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan* help strengthen its role and its alignment with the surrounding area. The revisions maintain the overall intent, and are more integrated with the community as it has progressed since its initial adoption.

Staff recommends approval of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Horizon 2020: Chapter 14: Specific Plans, revising the Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan to include Commercial as a Future Land Use designation, to revise a portion of the Future Land Use map from Industrial to Commercial, and to incorporate general revisions and updates to the Farmland Industries Redevelopment Plan and recommends forwarding this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Lawrence City Commission with a recommendation for approval.