

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT
Regular Agenda – Public Hearing Item

PC Staff Report
04-24-2017

**ITEM NO. 5A: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TO H2020; CHAPTER 7:
INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAND USE (SLD)**

CPA-17-00135: Consider a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to *Horizon 2020*, Chapter 7, amending the boundary of the Oread West Research Park Industrial Node, related to rezonings Z-17-00079 & Z-17-00080 for the undeveloped properties north of Legends Drive and in the 1100 block of Biltmore Drive and Research Park Drive. Submitted by BG Consultants.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Horizon 2020: Chapter 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use revising Map: 7-1 Existing Industrial & Employment-Related Land Use, 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-17-00206.

KEY POINTS

1. Location is currently designated as the “West Oread Research Park” in Chapter 7 Industrial & Employment–Related Land Use, Map 7-1. The proposed amendment would change from industrial land use to residential land uses accommodating the proposed residential development. *[This map label is not consistent with the text and will be revised with this amendment to read “Oread West Research Park”.]*
2. The area included in the request is currently vacant.
3. The request would expand the residential boundary within the neighborhood reducing the amount of industrial zoning west of Wakarusa Drive.
4. The property has not been platted and public improvements have not been extended to serve this property at this time.
5. The property is not located within any area or district plan within Chapter 14: Specific Plans.
6. The property is within the West Lawrence Neighborhood Association.

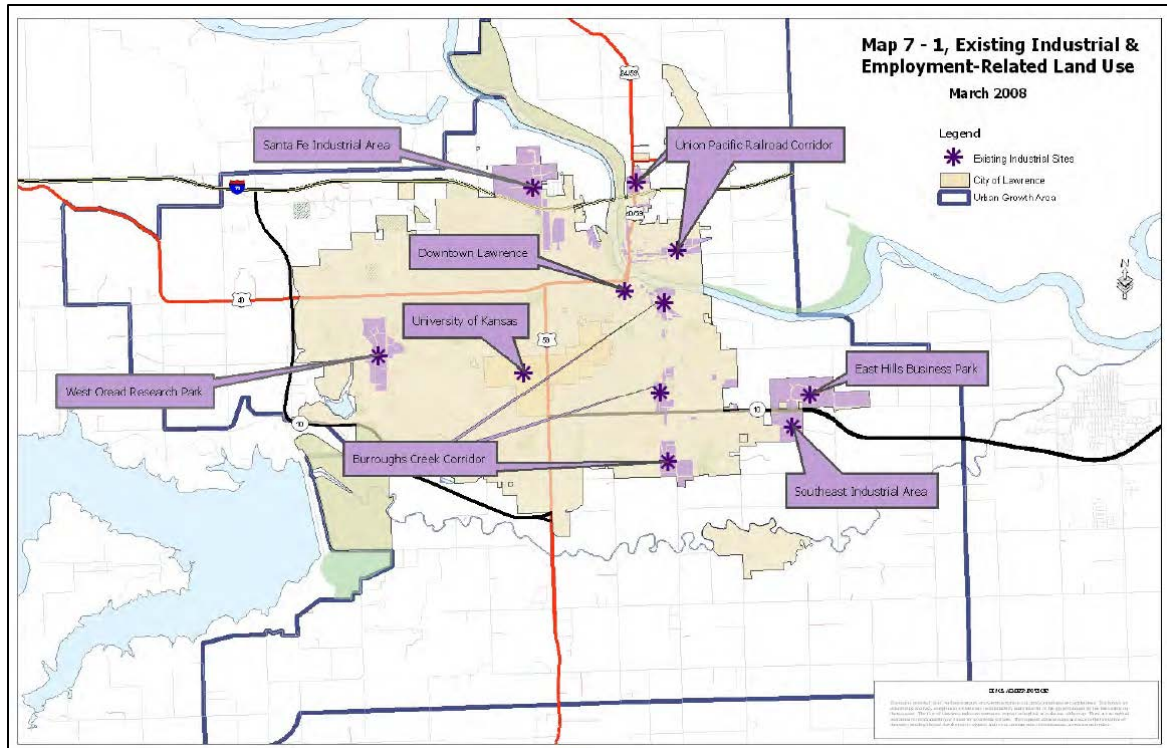


Figure 1: Area Map of Existing Industrial & Employment-Related Land Use (*Horizon 2020*, p: 7-24)

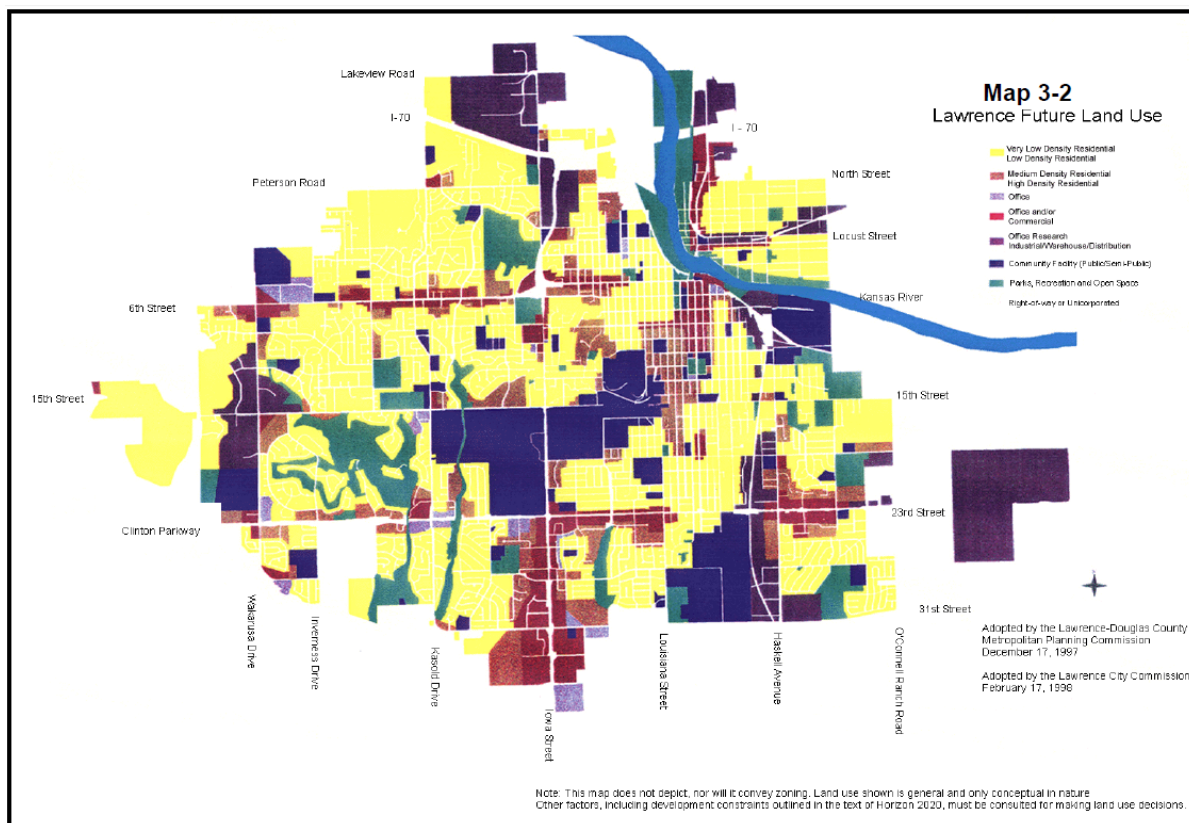


Figure 2: Future Land Use Map (*Horizon 2020*, p: 3-4)

SUMMARY

The applicant has requested an amendment to *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use revising Map: 7-1 which shows the existing West Oread Research Park as an anticipated Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use. The reason for this Comprehensive Plan Amendment is to change the current designation from Industrial Business Park to Low-Density Residential land use to accommodate proposed residential development. The applicant notes that Map 3-2 shows the future land use for the same property as residential.

The proposed amendment is requested to facilitate residential development and extend the neighborhood use and infrastructure into the area that is currently undeveloped.

Items related to this Comprehensive Plan Amendment include:

- **Z-17-00079**: Consider a request to rezone approximately 25.4 acres from IBP (Industrial/Business Park) District to RS7 (Single-Dwelling Residential) District, located in the 1100 Block of Biltmore Dr. and Research Park Dr. Submitted by BG Consultants, for WE1929, LLC, property owner of record.
- **Z-17-00080**: Consider a request to rezone approximately 10.0 acres from IBP (Industrial/Business Park) District to RM12D (Multi-Dwelling Residential) District, 1100 Block of Biltmore Dr. and Research Park Dr. Submitted by BG Consultants, for WE1929, LLC, property owner of record.

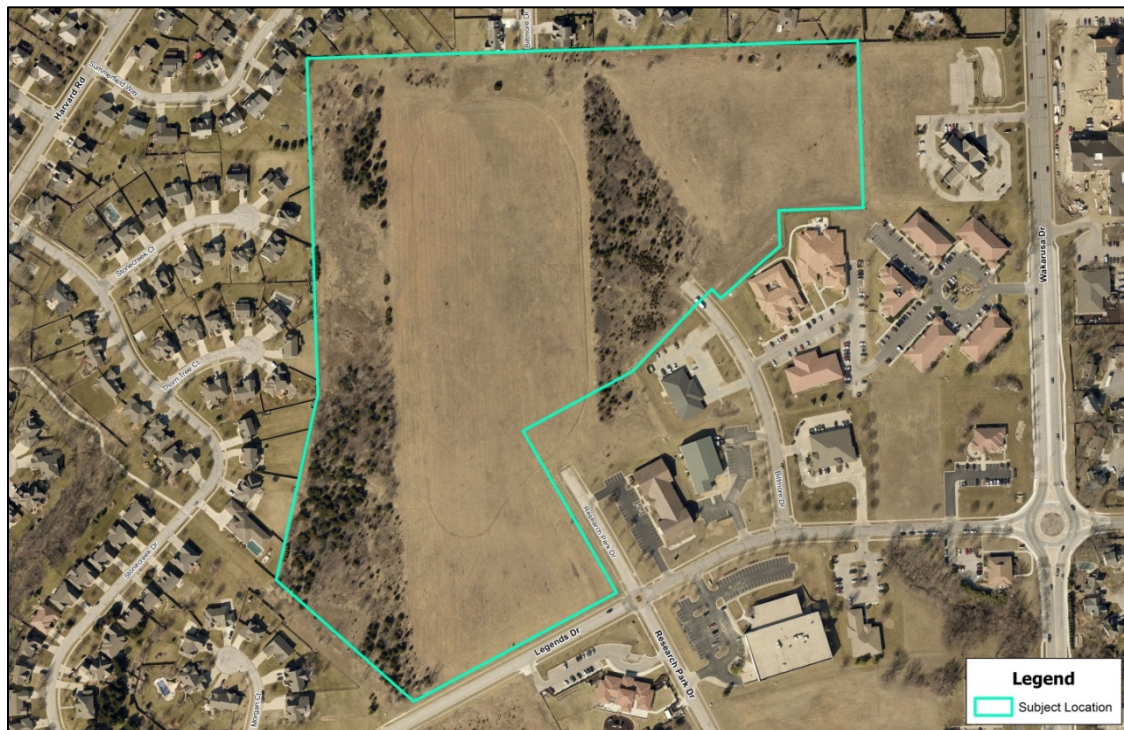


Figure 3: Subject Location

STAFF REVIEW

The applicant is requesting to revise Map 7-1: Future Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use to change the north portion of the area to a Low-Density Residential land use designation.

The proposed residential request would remove land area designated for future industrial development and re-designate it for residential development. Staff has reviewed the development pattern of the district. A supplementary finding is attached to this report regarding the industrial development of the IBP District.

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: *Horizon 2020* provides conflicting land use information on this parcel. *Horizon 2020* indicates that the land set aside for employment-related land use would be in demand. As time has elapsed, there has not been as large a demand as what was anticipated. Much of the Oread West Research Park is still vacant and undeveloped.

Staff's response: Staff concurs that *Horizon 2020* includes maps that do not align with regard to future land use for the area west of Wakarusa Drive and north of Legends Drive. A key feature of the plan is to support infill development and redevelopment providing for a range of residential, commercial, industrial and civic uses. The plan further encourages the development of neighborhoods with a range of densities and a progression of land uses to achieve a transition in land use and intensity levels.

Map 3-2 in *Horizon 2020* has not been updated to reflect changes in the City's urban boundary, nor does it reflect other more detailed area plans. This map was amended in 1998. The Industrial Chapter was last amended in 2009.

A review of the land uses in the IBP District concluded that this node contains 16% of all industrial address points within Lawrence. Within this node, 40% of the property is labeled vacant land. This designated node currently constitutes 98.6% of all IBP zoned land within Lawrence. Given this balance, Staff is recommending that a portion of this area maintain the Industrial Land Use designation to allow for some continued industrial capacity for future developments.

In general, such a decrease in the amount of industrially designated land is not within the interest or stated policy of *Horizon 2020*. One of the key strategies for this chapter includes, "Protect, enhance, and retain existing industrial-related land use areas serving the community." (p. 7-2) This is further strengthened through the policies in this chapter which seek to maintain an appropriate supply of industrially zoned land ensuring adequate site choice and expansion options. (p. 7-11)

However, the placing low-density residential development at this location is consistent with the policies stated in Chapter 5: Residential Land Use, and with policies in Chapter 7: Industrial & Employment-Related Land Use, both encouraging compatible land uses and transitions to each other.

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

Applicant's response: The goals of *Horizon 2020* encourage development of the property, given the location of the property within the City boundaries and its access to public infrastructure. If approved, the project will increase the tax base, as well as help increase the City's and County's budget.

Staff's response: On the balance, the overall amendment request does advance a clear public purpose of *Horizon 2020*. The land was initially mapped for residential use as illustrated in Map: 3.2. With the updating of Chapter 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, this proposed future land use has evolved over the years, and continues to evolve with the development at VenturePark.

One of the fundamental shifts that has occurred since the last revision of these maps and this chapter was VenturePark becoming available on the overall industrial land market. The availability of this location adjacent to East Hill Business Park has not been accounted for in the most recent update to Chapter 7. This land generally north of Legends Drive has been vacant since annexation into the City of Lawrence, and been planned for industrial uses for a considerable length of time. Given this history, Staff finds that the change could be appropriate

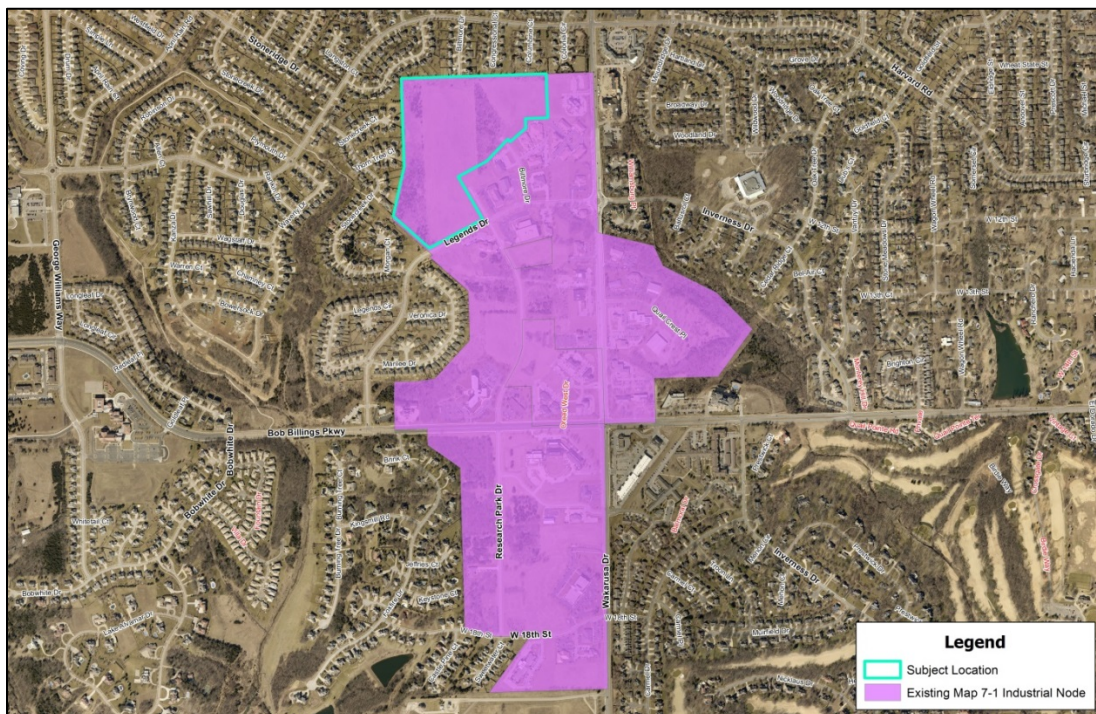


Figure 4: Existing Industrial Node in Ch. 7, *Horizon 2020*

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

Applicant's response: The goals of *Horizon 2020* encourage development of the property, given the location of the property within the City boundaries and its access to public infrastructure.

Staff's response: This proposal is aligned with the currently adopted residential policies in Chapter 5 of *Horizon 2020*. While the reduction of industrially designated land is not consistent with the stated policies in Chapter 7 of *Horizon 2020*, Staff's recommendation to maintain some research/industrial designation at the corner of Legends Drive and Research Park Drive helps mitigate some of the potential conflicts and transitional issues that might otherwise arise. With the availability of VenturePark also being a recent addition to the industrially designated land available, Staff believes this reduction would maintain an adequate supply of industrial land that is consistent for this designated industrial node, and within the community as a whole.

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

Applicant's response: No.

Staff's response: There has not been change in public policy. However, since the plan was adopted VenturePark has launched and the long range plan for the University of Kansas has been completed. That plan seeks to encourage shared public/private development in uses similar to those anticipated for the IBP District along Wakarusa Drive within this Industrial node.

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. The existing infrastructure in place will adequately serve the proposed amendment.

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 development applications and specifically the subdivision application.

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

Applicant's response: The proposed change will be no different than what exists today.

Staff's response: The portion of land that the proposed amendment would revise is presently undeveloped. Throughout Lawrence residential and non-residential uses share common boundaries. How the transition of land use is managed includes back-to-back relationships of building orientation, setbacks, and green spaces with dense landscape material plantings. This request does not alter that pattern. It simply shifts the location of the land use transition to the south and east. In Staff's opinion, it is important to retain the industrial location along both the Legends Drive and Research Park Drive frontages as illustrated in Figure 6 to maintain a cohesive business park appearance and provide ample room for bufferyards and back-to-back relationships.

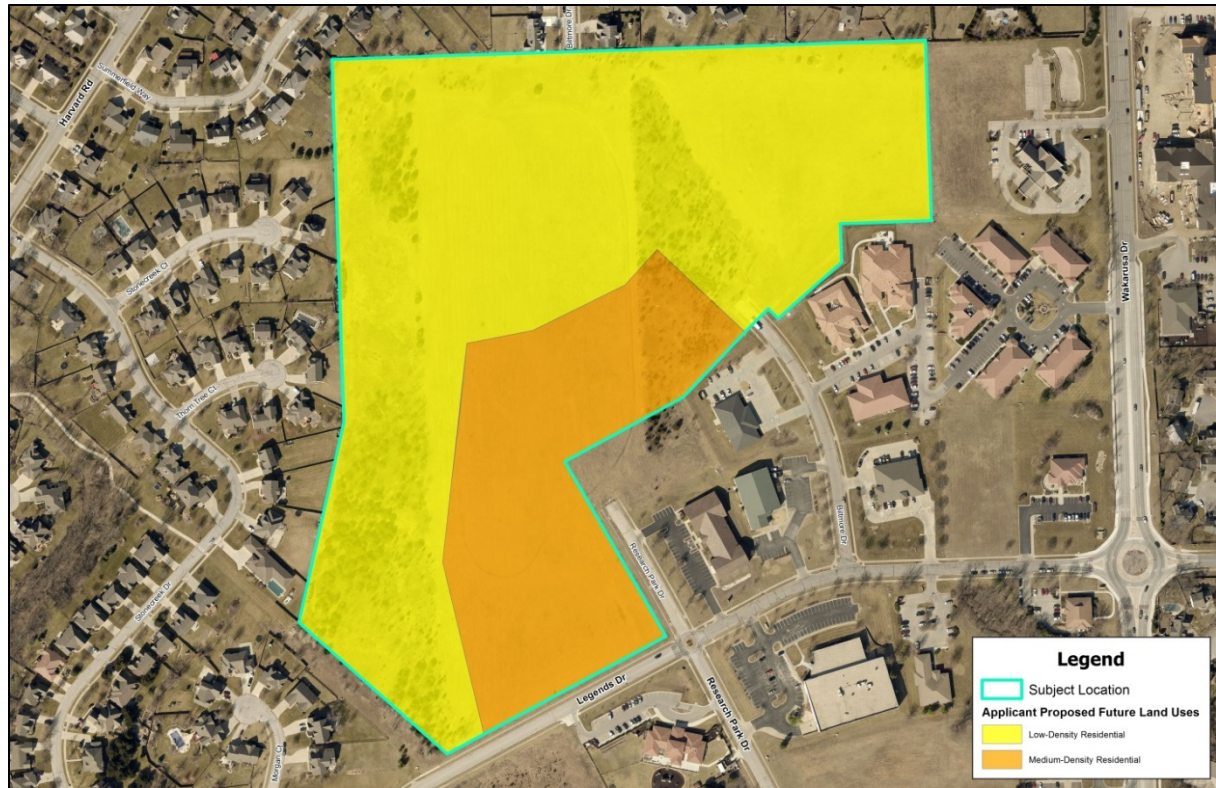


Figure 5: Applicant Proposed Future Land Use

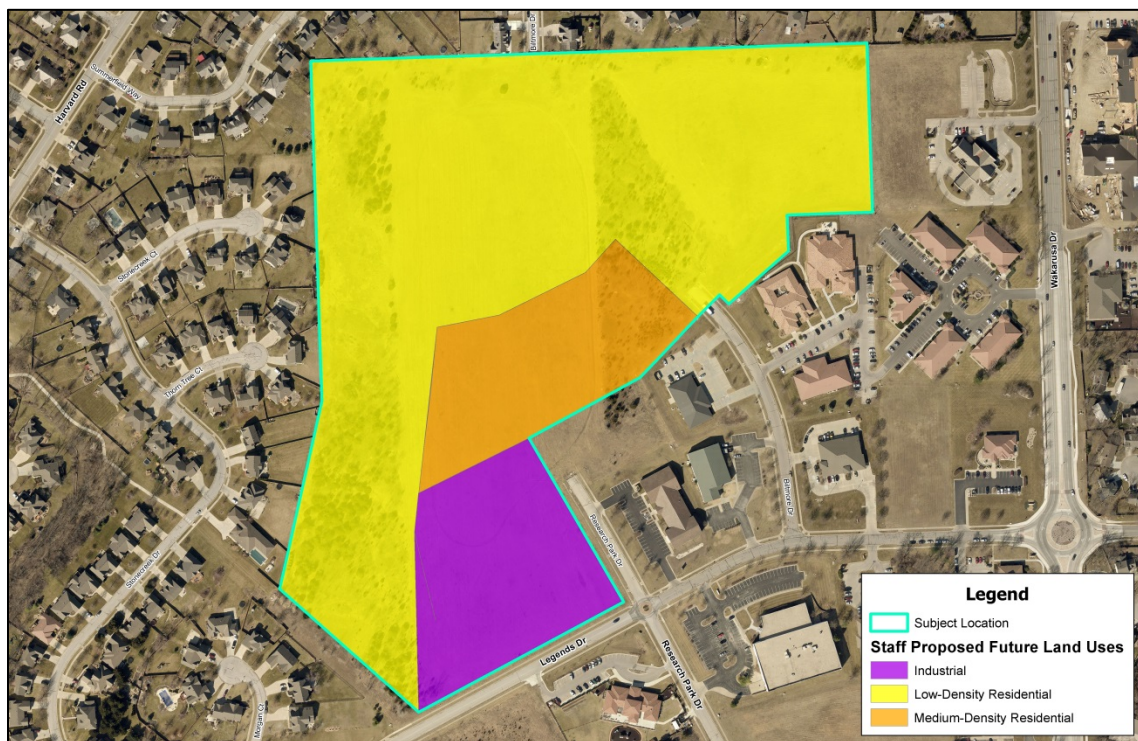


Figure 6: Staff Recommended Future Land Use Designations

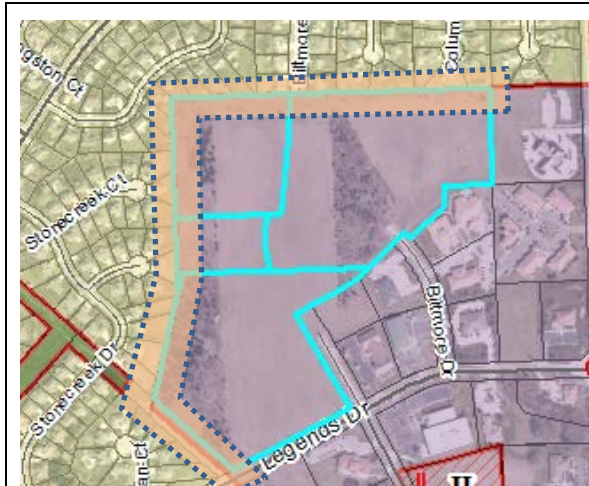


Figure 7: Existing Transition Area

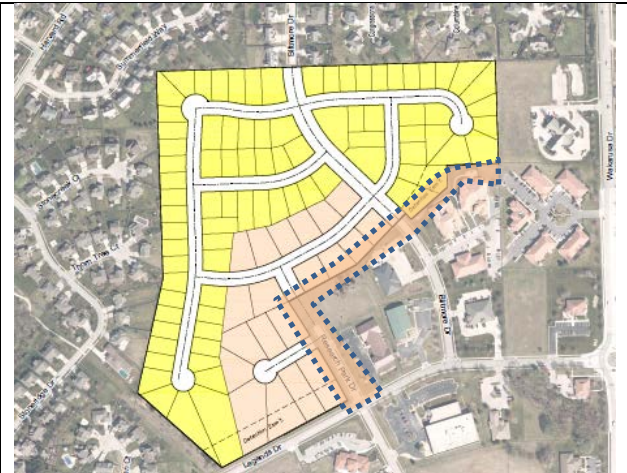


Figure 8: Proposed Transition Area

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: If approved, the project will increase the tax base, as well as help increase the City's and County's budget. The adjacent neighbors are generally in favor of the change to residential instead of the Industrial Business Park use.

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. The property is located within an established Neighborhood. The property is evidently used by area residents as an unofficial park/open space. Residential development abuts the north and west sides of the property.

Platted subdivisions, both residential and non-residential include street stubs to the area in anticipation of development of the property. How land uses interface when residential and non-residential uses abut is a design consideration that is affected through the subdivision layout and other land development application processes.

Approval of the changes, including the related rezoning applications, extends the opportunity for residential development within the city's urban boundaries with available infrastructure that can be readily extended. Approval of the changes also reduces the amount of IBP zoning west of Wakarusa Drive. This reduction is offset by other industrial and employment areas that have more recently been established including VenturePark and plans for land use within the University of Kansas campus.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The changes, both those prompted by the applicant's request as well as those identified by Staff as being inconsistent within *Horizon 2020*, given the lack of an Area or Sector Plan for this location, Staff believes that the proposed designation and retention of some reasonable Industrial land use help strengthen its role and its alignment with the surrounding area. The

revisions maintain the overall intent of the comprehensive plan, and ensure integration with the community as it has progressed since *Horizon 2020's* initial adoption.

Staff recommends approval of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to *Horizon 2020*: Chapter 7: Industrial and Employment-Related Land Use, Map 7-1, to maintain industrial land uses at the corner of Legends Drive and Research Park Drive, while designating the balance of the subject area to low-density residential uses, and recommends forwarding this Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Lawrence City Commission with a recommendation for approval.