

RESOLUTION NO. R-1213-113

ITEM NO. 12a

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**STAFF REPORT**

**ITEM:** Breckenridge Land Acquisition, L.P. requests amendment of the NORMAN 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan (LUP-1213-9) from Industrial Designation to Medium Density Residential Designation for property generally located on the south side of Imhoff Road approximately 900 feet east of Classen Boulevard.

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:** The applicant has submitted a request to amend the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan from Industrial designation to Residential designation to allow the construction of a 158 unit, 552 bed student housing development. The land under review was set aside on the 2020 Plan and the 2025 Plan as industrial due to its close proximity to Hitachi, a large industrial development to the east. The accompanying zoning request would rezone the tract from Agricultural zoning to a Planned Unit Development.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** When the 2020 Land Use Plan was adopted, a detailed land use analysis was completed that revealed Norman had 925 acres of land that was being used for industrial purposes, and the Plan reserved additional land for future industrial usage. The 2025 Plan called for additional land to also be designated industrial, and recommended that 1,200 additional acres be added and preserved for future industrial use. This deliberate decision of the Council, at that time, was to create multiple opportunities to accommodate all types of industrial activities in a wide variety of locations. The actual demand for industrial land was estimated at 198 acres over the entire time frame of the Plan, up until the year 2025, which would be absorbed at the rate of approximately ten acres per year. A specific goal with companion policies was enacted, which states:

**Goal 4**

**Policy 2**

*Direct environmentally responsible industrial growth onto land that is highly suited for industrial development.*

**Policy 3**

*Protect suitable industrial land from residential conversion or encroachment by:*

- *Identifying and rezoning it to an industrial zoning classification;*
- *Critically reviewing rezoning requests for conversion of industrial land to non-industrial uses; and*
- *Assessing the impact of incompatible land uses adjacent to industrial lands.*

Policy does not prohibit such conversions from industrial designations, but does recommend that such requests be "critically evaluated." In this case, this land is not currently zoned for industrial use, but has been reserved on the 2025 Plan for future use as industrial.

One of the purposes for designating land for industrial use is to allow tracts of various sizes throughout the community to be reserved for a wide range of industrial opportunities, which are a major economic driver for any community. Conversely, from the landowner's perspective, industrial land is one of the slowest to be absorbed, and usually sells for less value than uses which have more immediate needs, such as housing or the needed shopping areas that may serve them. This location lies immediately to the west of the Hitachi plant.

Land was designated that was convenient to major roads, such as Interstate 35 or Highway 9, or could be provided with access to rail. Industrial locations that were originally located in central Norman, around the existing rail, have slowly been redeveloped into other uses over the last thirty years, with most industrial land now located at the northern and southern ends of the community, such as this parcel.

**ANALYSIS:** The 2025 Plan identifies two criteria that must be examined before land use designation change is approved.

1. ***There has been a change in circumstances resulting from development of properties in the general vicinity, which suggest that the proposed changes will not be contrary to the public interest.*** In the last eight years there have been two new multi-family complexes built along Imhoff Road/Classen Boulevard and another approved by Council but not yet built. While there has definitely been a *"change in circumstances resulting from development of properties in the general vicinity,"* it needs to be noted that, according to the guidelines and population projections in the 2025 Plan and the multi-family housing needs through 2025, the city has already met its projected quota for apartments. The policies state the city should accommodate a projected population of 137,000 in a "fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner." The residential land use demand analysis included in the 2025 Plan stated that there would be a need for 1,742 multi-family units. Since the time of the adoption of the 2025 Plan the city has permitted 2,121 apartment units.
2. ***There is a determination that the proposed change would not result in adverse land use or adverse traffic impacts to surrounding properties or the vicinity.*** The proposed change to residential use adjacent to an industrial use would result in adverse, incompatible land use. Hitachi has been in Norman since 1986. Since that time there have been two expansion projects bringing the facility to approximately 365,000 square feet. When residential development is adjacent to an industrial zone, associated industrial impacts (noise, dirt, truck traffic) often affect the residents' quality of life, creating a vocal constituency opposed to the continued industrial uses in the area. An additional issue for the location of this development is that the loading docks for the Hitachi plant are along the west side of the development, directly adjacent to the proposed multi-family development.

**2010 INDUSTRIAL LAND USE STUDY:** In March of 2010, City staff completed an Industrial Land Use Study. This study was done in response to applications staff had received for rezoning and land use amendments of industrially designated land to commercial, residential and mixed uses. The study highlighted the need for preserving readily buildable areas of adequate size and location for industrial uses. The 2010 Industrial Land Use Study revealed that, of the area designated for industrial use on the 2020 Plan, almost eight hundred forty-nine acres have been rezoned and designated for uses other than industrial. Of that total, five hundred eighty-six acres were included in the University North Park area, of which approximately one hundred seventy-five acres are still available for industrial purposes, although no definitive plans have been presented. One hindrance of developing the UNP area as industrial is the

high cost of land, which makes it better suited for office development. Of the remaining two hundred sixty-three acres, commercial requests comprise almost sixty-eight percent of the area that has been changed. In some cases, changes to the update of the 2020 Plan were discussed as part of the adoption process, and resulted in the removal of substantial amounts of industrial land. Almost three-hundred acres of industrially designated land was eliminated in the area south of Tecumseh Road, east of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW to allow two large residential developments to occur (Trailwoods and Greenleaf Additions). In the same area, at the northwest corner of Tecumseh Road and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, approximately one hundred thirty-six acres was changed from industrial designation to commercial, high density residential, medium density residential, office and low density residential. An additional sixty acres of land located at the southern boundary of the community was changed from industrial to mixed use.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The question is not whether the development itself has been correctly designed, but whether this is the appropriate location for a multi-family development. The impact a multi-family development can have on an existing industrial development and vice-versa can be problematic. The Hitachi plant is a 24-hour facility. The noise and traffic impacts on a multi-family development can be challenging. The residential component added adjacent to industrial could register noise complaints causing industry to relocate to new locations due to constraints placed on them for noise violations. Typically, once a residential use is established adjacent to an industrial use the noise and traffic become issues to the residents.

In keeping with the goals of the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan to preserve industrially designated properties for future development, staff does not support the request to amend the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan with R-1213-113.