

TESTIMONY OF WARREN AVENUE INVESTORS

Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 22-02 – Biohealth Facilities – Development Standards

June 14, 2022

- Good afternoon. I'm Mark Jackson with Warren Avenue Investors.
- Warren Avenue's principals have developed over 20 Million SF of life science uses in premier markets across the country over the last 30 years including Maryland, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, and San Diego. Currently Warren Avenue has more than 100,000 SF of life science space in Montgomery County.
- Warren Avenue is teaming up with DSC Partners to convert an approximately 12.7-acre site located on Standish Place near the intersection of East Gude Drive and Crabbs Branch Way into a burgeoning life sciences campus.
- The property is zoned IM (Moderate Industrial) with a 50' mapped height limit
- Warren's development plan for the Standish site will cater to existing life science tenants and attract established companies to what is currently an underutilized flex park.
- Warren Avenue strongly supports the rationale for the ZTA to foster the development of life science facilities by providing flexible development standards that address the unique mechanical system and building design needs of such facilities.
- As introduced, the ZTA applies to properties in the CR, LSC and EOF Zones that meet certain criteria for compatibility with surrounding uses and proximity to transit. We understand the sponsor of the ZTA will be recommending changes to these criteria, which are supported by the Planning Board.

- Warren believes the Standish site meets all of the proposed criteria for proximity to transit, compatibility with adjacent uses, and the ability to develop the project with adaptive buildings.
- The same rationale for providing flexible development standards for life science uses in the CR, LSC and EOF Zones applies to IM zoned properties that meet the proposed compatibility and locational criteria.
- The IM Zone is well situated for life science companies, especially new and emerging companies that are coming out of an incubator space. The “flex use” building characteristics of the IM Zone are ideal for these initial lab spaces, which include (A) move-in ready office layouts; (B) dedicated loading areas and (C) high ceiling/roof heights. Of these 3 characteristics, the high ceiling/roof height is the most important (often 15’+ to the underside of roof structure for a single-story building).
 1. Heavy MEP Infrastructure: Laboratories require a large amount of MEP systems (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) to keep their lab running. The more space above the “finished” ceiling, the more efficiently and effectively these initial labs can be built.
 2. Flexibility: As life science companies grow and mature, the needs within their built labs also change. The more space above the finished ceiling, the easier and more cost-effective it is to add/modify their existing MEP systems instead of looking to re-design / build their modified labs in a different location.
- However, given these requirements for life science buildings, a 50’ height limit only allows for 3-story, purpose built, lab buildings.
- Therefore, as with similarly situated sites in the CR, LSC and EOF Zones, the flexible heights standards proposed in the ZTA are necessary to allow Warren to develop the Standish site with buildings optimally designed to retain and attract life science companies to the County.
- Accordingly, Warren respectfully requests the County Council to include the IM Zone in the ZTA.
- Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.