



## STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION OF SYKESVILLE

---

**TITLE:** Zoning Text Amendment Request - Warfield

**MEETING DATE:** 03/21/2022

Map/Parcel: Several  
Zoning: Planned Employment Center (PEC)  
File Number: N/A

### **SUMMARY:**

The property owner of the Warfield project has requested a change in the text for the Planned Employment Center (PEC) zoning district. In general, the notable changes are the movement of conditional uses to the principal permitted category, changes to the required percentages of land uses, and an increase in the residential density allowed.

### **INFORMATION:**

Since the Planning Commission meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>, the PC members submitted questions to the applicant regarding the text amendments and the impact on the Warfield Development. The Town also composed a letter to the applicant in response to their letter that was delivered to the Planning Commission on February 7.

Both the list of questions and the Town letter were forwarded to the applicant on February 18<sup>th</sup> with responses received on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The applicant will be present at the meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> to present their information and answer any additional questions from the Planning Commission.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

Text amendment requests require the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to Town Council who will make a final determination on the request. Sample motions can be as simple as the following:

The Planning Commission recommends that the Town Council deny the proposed zoning text amendment, or

The Planning Commission recommends that the Town Council approve the proposed zoning text amendment.



Factors to be considered when making this determination include the purpose of the zone being amended (Planned Employment Center) and the goals and objectives outlined in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of the Planned Employment Center is, among other items, *"to create a mixture of office, retail, recreational, hotel, institutional, light industrial and residential uses within a single structure or within multiple structures where all related structures, parking and open spaces are designed to function as a cohesive and integrated site, while protecting the residential character of surrounding neighborhoods."* The proposed amendment does not eliminate the possibility of mixed use occurring in the PEC district, but does significantly reduce the required mixture of uses.

The purpose continues with *"to encourage development that is of excellent design and architecture with a mix of uses that will create a synergy of uses, efficiency of design, and contribute to a reduction of vehicle miles traveled."* The intent of this statement is to create an area in Town that has elements of live, work, and play to avoid residents from having to commute. The proposed amendment, again, does not eliminate the possibility of a mixture of uses occurring, but does significantly reduce the requirement.

The Town's Comprehensive Plan does acknowledge the complex nature of the Warfield development and encourages a more flexible mixed-use approach be developed. Specifically, *"this (Comprehensive) Plan recognizes that the Town should consider flexibility on future land development submissions to ultimately achieve a mixed-use development which can be defined more specifically during the Town's potential zoning rewrite."* This builds on the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation of updating our existing zoning regulations with a hybrid-form based approach. *"The hybrid approach means retaining traditional zoning district designations but incorporating building form and function design standards based on the Town's current urban development patterns and densities, and future land use recommendations for Downtown and Warfield."* Further stating that *"this Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town work collaboratively with the developers of Warfield to engage in an urban design workshop to develop a new vision for the mixed-use development. The outcome of which may be used to inform future zoning."* The text amendment does achieve increased flexibility in the zone, so much so that it creates a zone where almost any combination of uses would satisfy the proposed standard.