

Bryan Mills
Sarah Mills
1280 Wynridge Drive
Arden Hills, MN 55112
February 17, 2021

Arden Hills City Council
1245 W Highway 96
Arden Hills, MN 55112

Re: Expansion of Building 14 on Boston Scientific Campus

Mr. Mayor: David Grant

City Council Members: Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung, and Steve Scott

Planning Commission Members: Paul Vijums (Chair), Steven Jones, James Lambeth, Jonathan Wicklund, Subbaya Subramanian, Clayton Zimmerman, Marcie Jefferys, Kurtis Weber

We are writing you today to raise concerns regarding the proposed Boston Scientific expansion of Building 14. As longtime residents and community members of Arden Hills, we and you appreciate the relatively small, quiet, and safe community we all call home. We are concerned that this proposed expansion is inconsistent with that standard.

Boston Scientific operates on a large 93-acre campus. Tall, noisy, 24/7 operations must be located within the central portion of campus NOT adjacent to residential family homes.

After attendance and careful evaluation of the proposal brought forward during the community meeting on December 15th, 2020 we feel it is imperative to highlight our current and future concerns regarding the Building 14 proposal.

1. **Noise:** The proposed expansion is immediately adjacent to single-family residential homes and its direct negative impact on their lives needs to be understood. This is different than other campus expansions due to its present and future impact on residential homeowners. As presented, Boston Scientific plans to expand upon an already out-of-compliance 24-hour-a-day 7-day-a-week operation. Summarized below are the activities out of compliance with City of Arden Hills code:
 - a. **Garbage:** Emptying the oversized compactor occurs daily between the hours of 5:20 – 6:00 a.m. on the north western most position of the property, a site not currently screened by any physical structure. This is not only unsettling but an unwanted daily alarm for the closest residents. This continues to be out of compliance for the City of Arden Hills Code: 660.04 Collection and Licensing Subd 4.
 - i. Subd. 4. No person, company, or corporation shall collect or remove garbage, refuse, recyclable materials, or other mixed municipal solid waste in any residential district or from any property sharing a property line with a residential district in which the collection can cause a negative impact to the adjacent residential district

(i.e., noise, odors), except between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

We brought this to Mike Mrosła's attention in December 2020 and he stated it would be immediately addressed but even after 60+ days this remains a persistent issue.

- b. **Commercial HVAC Equipment:** Current operations entail the air handling units running 24/7. Varying degrees of noise are emitted from these pieces of equipment and that needs to be studied in their current, future, and max-output operation for noise emission. Adding to the current noise levels will be two and likely three additional pieces of equipment mounted to the roof structure. The increase in noise of these running simultaneously is yet to be understood. The new height would be unobstructed by trees and noise will surely increase the noise level in surrounding neighborhoods.
- c. **Argon Gas Storage:** Refills occur on a regular basis but are not uncommonly completed prior to 6:00 AM on weekdays. The hissing sound is clearly audible during these events and is also out of compliance of City of Arden Hills Code: 1325.06 Subd. 2
 - I. **Off-Street Loading.** Off-street loading space shall be provided in connection with any use which requires the receipt or distribution of materials by truck. Where noise from such loading space is audible in a residential district, the activity shall terminate between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- d. **Previous Noise Studies:** Noise studies were conducted by a contracted third party due to a previous Building 14 expansion and the data findings were conclusive; Boston Scientific was NOT in compliance of state noise laws at time of study. Mitigation steps occurred via plantings but some of those plantings have since died and been removed. No additional plantings were completed to replace those trees nor have follow up noise studies been shared with the community.

Independently contracted noise studies of a statistically significant data set should be conducted, reviewed, and shared with the community prior to voting on any current or future proposals. The data collection needs to occur where the noise is impacting the adjacent residents (on decks, outside 2nd or 3rd floor bedroom windows or in back yards NOT buried in the woods as proposed along the BSCI property lines). When the study occurs, you will capture the above activities. Time stamped audio recordings have already been captured to validate the concerns.

- 2. **Building height/visual pollution:** Building 14's existing structure sits at a height of 21 feet. The proposed expansion will almost double in height to a proposed height of 40 feet and sit exposed as a visual monstrosity. It should be noted that a significant number of mature trees were removed from the southwestern portion in the summer of 2019. These stumps can be observed from the community trail and would have considerably obstructed the view of this proposed expansion. **A revision to the proposed building height should be made to remain consistent with the existing Building 14 structure; the City of Arden Hills should not grant a variance to the current zoning maximum height restriction of 35 feet.**
 - a. City of Arden Hills Code: 1320.06 District Requirements Chart:

1320.06 District Requirements Chart

(revised 9/25/17)

Note: To view this chart in PDF, please click [HERE](#). You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed.

| | R-1 | R-2 | R-3 | R-4 | NB | B-1 | B-2 | *B-3 | *B-4 | CC | *G-B | I-1 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|-----|-----|------|------|----|------|-----|
| Single Family | 80/130 | 80/120 | 80/120 | 80/120 | == | == | == | == | == | == | == | == |
| Two Family | 95/130 | 85/120 | 85/120 | 85/120 | == | == | == | == | == | == | == | == |
| 4. Height (ft.) | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 50 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 |

As described by City of Arden Hills Planning Manager, Mike Mroska, we see this height variance as a “give and take” option where we will “give” the 40’ variance. We don’t see any way “taking” additional plantings can ever screen or obstruct a 40’ building from the residentially exposed side of the property. Additionally, these plantings will take decades to make any considerable impact on the proposed expansion.

3. **Expanded Lithium Battery Manufacturing:** An environmental and safety specialist was present during the community presentation and spoke vaguely about the current and future impact of BSCI’s battery manufacturing operations. The vagueness of comments is concerning. Many questions remain.
 - What are the emissions from current and future operations, and do/could they impact adjacent neighbors?
 - What are the risks?
 - Have environmental spills occurred in the past?
 - Has the land and water been tested recently?
 - What measures are taken and by whom to ensure everyone remains safe?

As City Council Members and advocates for all residents of Arden Hills, we respectfully ask that you act on an evaluation of impact regarding the listed concerns for the community of Arden Hills. Per City of Arden Hills Code: 1325.05 Design Standards Subd. 6 Aesthetics.

- A. Evaluation of Impact. The proposed design, scale, massing, materials, height, and other aspects of the subject matter of any permit requested hereunder shall be evaluated by the Planning Commission and the Council with respect to structures and properties in the surrounding area. To this end, the Planning Commission and the Council shall consider, prior to the issuance of any permit hereunder, whether the appearance of the subject matter is so at variance with the structures and properties in the surrounding area as to cause a substantial depreciation in the property values in the surrounding area or to unreasonable detract from the appearance of the area or the city.

Boston Scientific was informed of these concerns during the public hearing, indicated it would be resolved, however, they have not been addressed. We are all advocates for adding new jobs and foreseeable expansion of the BSCI campus, however, it needs to proceed responsibly without negatively impacting the residential neighbors or the community. For most in this community, our homes are the single largest investment and this expansion as proposed is a direct threat to our property values and quality of life we have come to enjoy. We encourage all of you to take a walk along the community trail and review the concerns.

Sincerely,

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