

CloudHQ seeks to up building height max to 100 feet for Culpeper data centers.

By Allison Brophy Champion, March 6, 2023.

Washington, D.C.-based data center developer is asking Culpeper to more than double the county's maximum allowable building height for its planned facilities along McDevitt Drive.

CloudHQ COO Keith Harney, in a March 1 letter to County Administrator John Egertson, stated he was writing on behalf of a subsidiary, SAAM VENTURES LLC, owner of two parcels of vacant land at 14521 McDevitt Drive.

The land, zoned light industrial, is in the county technology zone in the vicinity of Frank Turnage Drive. It is close to Germanna Community College Daniel Tech Center, Culpeper Technical Education Center and Equinix data centers overlooked by the Library of Congress Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation, along Route 3, as previously reported.

SAAM VENTURES purchased the McDevitt address in late 2021 for \$12 million, according to Culpeper County e-Assessor. Harney said in the recent letter his company was excited to develop the land into a state-of-the-art data center campus and that it “anticipates strong demand from best-in-class tenants.”

Building height is very important to CloudHQ tenants, the COO said in the letter to Culpeper County, seeking an increase from 45-feet in current building height limit to 100-feet, approximately 10-stories.

In the letter, Harney said power is readily available to serve the data center campus from Dominion via an existing transmission route to a Rappahannock substation adjacent to CloudHQ land. The line upgrade is scheduled for completion this fall, the COO said in the letter.

Harney asked the county to consider that the topography of the CloudHQ campus is below the elevation of McDevitt Drive, “softening the magnitude of the height increase.” The closest home is over 1,200-feet away, he said.

The campus will comply with noise ordinances and is adjacent to U.S. Route 29 and the other data centers, the letter stated.

“The benefit to the county to increasing the allowed density is to concentrate data centers in one location and offer a multitude of benefits,” Harney said.

These would include significant capital investment, jobs, and “a considerable increase” in real estate taxes.

The Board of Supervisors Rules Committee considered the request at a recent meeting, and recommended asking the Culpeper County Planning Commission to consider an increase in building height not to 100-feet—but to 75-feet.

In considering the request, county staff provided max building heights in industrial and light industrial zones in the region. The limit is 45-feet in Fauquier; 60-feet in Greene County; 50-feet in Madison County; 100-feet in Orange County; 75 and 60-feet in Prince William; 60-feet in Rappahannock; 75-feet height limit in Spotsylvania and 65-feet in Stafford, according to the county report.

The full board of supervisors will consider the matter at its regular monthly morning meeting today.

CloudHQ designs, builds and operates mission critical data centers, according to a company profile. Founded in 2016 by Hossein Fateh, former CEO of DuPont Fabros Technology, CloudHQ have delivered over 320MW IT to date.

CloudHQ has campuses in Ashburn & Manassas, London, Frankfurt, Paris, Milan, Chicago, and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

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