Outlook

Data Centers

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To	cc 1 <cc1@kcmo.org>; Clerk <Clerk@KCMO.org>

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Hello Council members,

The Neighborhoods Planning and Development committee will be hearing a presentation about zoning for data centers on Tuesday and I want you to know that, as a Kansas Citian and as someone who has growing environmental and economic concerns about data centers in our city, I find the zoning code woefully insufficient in protecting the interests and health of our citizens. I urge you to ask for updates and amendments to the currently proposed zoning code.

The zoning code proposed for data centers in Kansas City is incomplete and does not adequately address citizen concerns over the huge impact that these data centers have on the communities in which they are built. The zoning code, as currently drafted, does not do enough to protect Kansas Citians from utility rate increases, pollution and environmental concerns. There are major hyperscale data center projects in the works in Kansas City that have gone underway without public input. Our city must quickly act in order to rein in the rampant construction of data centers in our city that are being constructed without sufficient regulation.

The data center zoning code for Kansas City should not be lumped in with Large Format Uses and should instead be its own zoning code. It should also require special-use permits for data centers that are voted on and approved by the city council or other governmental committees instead of being approved by right as they currently are. In addition, data centers should only be zoned in industrial areas and people in the vicinity should be notified when there is a proposed data center nearby — something Smithville residents were not privy to when the Meta and Google data centers went up in their backyards. To address environmental concerns, the zoning code should require environmental impact studies, limit fossil-fuel backup generators, have limits on water usage and also mandate cooling requirements so no potable water is used in their systems. In consideration of economic concerns, we should require utility disclosures from data centers and ask for a renegotiation of permit approval so we can make sure the data centers do not become too burdensome in order to monitor the strain on the energy grid and potential water pollution.

The current zoning code needs more protection for Kansas City residents from the impacts of data centers. It does not protect them from going up in people's backyards, does not do enough to protect our community's environment and local resources like water, and it does not protect Kansas Citians from bearing the brunt of the cost of utility rate increases.

Please consider these concerns when adopting a zoning code for data centers.

Thank you,
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