
Amend Zoning Code for Data Centers

From Lorin <lorinchelle@gmail.com>

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To Melissa Patterson Hazley <Melissa.Patterson-Hazley@kcmo.org>; Willett, Nathan <Nathan.Willett@kcmo.org>; Bunch, Eric <Eric.Bunch@kcmo.org>; Parks-Shaw, Ryana <Ryana.Parks-Shaw@kcmo.org>

Cc Yearwood, DJ <Darius.Yearwood@kcmo.org>; Williamson, Annie <Annie.Williamson@kcmo.org>; Iden, Marissa <Marissa.Iden@kcmo.org>; McCoy, Keema <Keema.McCoy@kcmo.org>; Clerk <Clerk@KCMO.org>

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Dear Neighborhoods Planning and Development Committee,

I urge you to ask for amendments to the currently proposed zoning code being brought to the Neighborhoods Planning and Development committee on Dec. 9th. The zoning code proposed for data centers, as currently drafted, is insufficient in protecting the interests and health of everyday Kansas Citians.

I am deeply concerned about the proliferation of data centers and the associated changes to the zoning code primarily due to their significant, negative impact on environmental sustainability and public resources. Data centers are notorious for their massive energy demands, often reliant on fossil fuels, which contribute substantially to air and thermal pollution in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the immense amount of water required for cooling these facilities places an unsustainable burden on local infrastructure and finite natural supplies, directly threatening water access and security for residents and local agriculture, especially during periods of drought or increased population growth. This strain on resources and increase in pollution is a critical issue that must be addressed through restrictive zoning.

I urge you to be proactive about minimizing these harms by creating a zoning code that allows for more oversight in the following ways. The data center zoning code should:

1. Be its own zoning code rather than lumped in with Large Format Uses.
2. Require special-use permits for data centers that are voted on and approved by the city council.
3. Include environmental impact studies.
4. Include environmental protections such as limiting water usage/cooling requirements and limiting fossil-fuel generators (including back-ups).
5. Require utility demand disclosure.
6. Require ample distance from residential neighborhoods.

If data center development is allowed to continue as is, Kansas Citians will be forced to bear the brunt of the cost of utility rate increases, resource extraction, and pollution. Do right by Kansas Citians and demand a more thorough zoning code for data centers.

Thank you,
Lorin McKnight
Kansas City resident