

CITY PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

CD-CPC-2025-00078

Text Amendments – Large Format Uses

November 5, 2025

Docket #1

Request

Chapter 88 Text Amendments

Applicant

City Planning and Development
City of Kansas City

Approval Process



Overview

The proposed amendments to Chapter 88, the Zoning and Development Code, amend the 100, 300, and 800 series regarding Large Format Uses.

Public Engagement

Two open houses were held on June 25, 2025 (virtual) and June 26, 2025 (in-person). Additional public engagement included stakeholder interviews, posting on the City's Speak Easy virtual participation platform, and presentations at the Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce, KCI Area Plan Public Workshop, KC Neighborhood Advisory Council, and Platte County EDC.

Controlling + Related Cases

Ordinance 230257 - Adopting the KC Spirit Playbook as the City's Strategic and Comprehensive Plan and repealing and replacing the FOCUS Kansas City Plan that was adopted by the City Council by Committee Substitute for Resolution No. 971268 on October 30, 1997.

Project Timeline

This case was originally heard at CPC on July 16, 2025 for an informational session and was continued to September 3, 2025 and subsequently continued to October 1, 2025. At the October 1 CPC meeting, the CPC heard additional public testimony and then continued this case to November 5, 2025.

Professional Staff Recommendation

Docket #1 Approval

TEXT AMENDMENT REVIEW

The purpose of the proposed amendments is to address the recent increase of development proposals for large-scale industrial projects such as warehouses, distribution centers, and data centers. These large format uses are not currently defined or addressed in Chapter 88.

The proposed amendments include a new definition for Large Format Uses as any large-scale industrial use facility with a continuous building footprint of 500,000 square feet or larger. The amendments also separate Data Centers from the Communications Establishment use category and specifically define Data Centers as any building dedicated to the storage, management, processing, and/or transmission of digital data, including supporting equipment related to digital data operations. Data centers with a continuous gross floor area of more than 500,000 square feet are considered a large format use.

The proposed amendments establish development standards for Large Format Uses that include:

- Entitlement processes distinction depending on the zoning district the property is located in.
 - Large format uses are allowed in business, downtown, and manufacturing districts in accordance with the industrial use group categories of Tables 120-1, 130-1, and 140-1, subject to applicable standards.
 - Data centers under 500,000 square feet will be permitted by-right in Districts B4, DC, and DX with an approved project or development plan.
- Traffic impact study is required and external impacts such as odors, dust, vibration, noise and spillover light are not permitted beyond the property line.
- When abutting residential uses, a flexible combination of building design elements are required that may be reduced or waived with additional green infrastructure features such as solar panels.
- When abutting residential properties or civic/public uses, different buffer types are required such as screening for outdoor mechanical equipment and truck loading bays.
- Alternative compliance is subject to approval of the city planning and development director.

The most recent draft incorporates commissioner feedback and public comments from the October 1, 2025 meeting and clarifies applicability language as well as the intention that data centers within an urban context not occupy the entire ground floor of the building. Please see Attachment 3 for additional public comments received after the October 1 meeting.

SPECIFIC REVIEW CRITERIA

Zoning and Development Code Text Amendments (88-510-07)

In reviewing and making decisions on zoning and development code text amendments, the City Planning and Development Director, City Plan Commission, and City Council must consider at least the following factors:

A. Whether the proposed zoning and development Code text amendment corrects an error or inconsistency in the Zoning and Development Code or meets the challenge of a changing condition.

The proposed standards will provide specific use standards for the emerging large format use type and meet the challenge of a changing condition. Please see Attachment 2, the best practices report, for more information about the changing conditions regarding Large Format Uses.

B. Whether the proposed zoning and development code text amendment is consistent with adopted plans and the stated purpose of this Zoning and Development Code.

The proposed amendments are consistent with the purpose of the Zoning and Development Code. Additionally, the KC Spirit Playbook recommends, as a short-term priority of the city, to “Assess the impacts of large format uses that consume substantial amounts of land and energy with a low density of employment. Identify criteria for appropriate location, development code considerations, and strategies to mitigate environmental impacts” (DP-6).

C. Whether the proposed zoning and development code text amendment is in the best interests of the City as a whole.

The proposed amendments are intended to support the economic viability of large format uses while ensuring adequate infrastructure capacity and improving the quality of life for Kansas City residents.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Text Amendment
2. Best Practices Report (available on CompassKC)
3. Communications Received

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION

City staff recommends APPROVAL.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Reinhardt, AICP

Lead Planner