City of Kansas City, Missouri

Docket Memo

Ordinance/Resolution #: 260870
Submitted Department/Preparer: City Planning
Revised 01/30/26

Docket memos are required on all ordinances initiated by a Department Director. More information can be found in Administrative Regulation (AR) 4-1.

Executive Summary

Approving a development plan on about 0.23 acres generally located at the northwest corner of 10th Street and Central Avenue in District DC-15 (Downtown Core) allowing for the creation of a 384 ft structure which will contain ground floor retail and a data center. (CD-CPC-2026-00074)

Discussion

The applicant is seeking approval of a Development Plan in District DC-15 (Downtown Core) on 0.23 acres located at 934 Central Street. This will allow for demolition of the existing Western Newspaper Union Building and construction of a 20-story high-rise with ground floor retail/eating and drinking establishment with the remaining floors consisting of a data center. The Western Newspaper Union Building was built in 1900 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. Data Centers require a Special Use Permit (SUP) within Downtown zoning districts. Because of the size of the proposed building, a Development Plan is also required. Pursuant to Section 88-517-09-D, when a use requiring a SUP is approved through a Development Plan, a separate SUP application is not required. Additionally, the proposal was reviewed for compliance with the use-specific standards of Section 88-339, as established by Ordinance 251031.

The proposed building footprint is approximately 9,480 square feet. Per Section 88-339-04-B, the data cener may not occupy more than 50% of the ground floor, which the applicant is complying with. No parking spaces will be provided with this Development Plan, and no curb cuts will be provided onto the site. The applicant is showing six bicycle parking spaces in conformance with Section 88-420 located on the eastern side of the site within the public right-of-way.

The applicant is proposing a brick building which is consistent with existing building material with the immediate area. The DC-15 allows for a floor area ratio (FAR) of 15 and does not have a height limitation. The applicant is proposing a FAR of 14 and a

height of 384 feet which will be 20 stories. The scale of the building is significantly taller than surrounding buildings. Buildings within a two-block radius are typically 6 stories or less, with the exception of the Broadway Square building at the northeast corner of West 11th Street and Broadway Boulevard, which is 12 stories in height.

The proposed use does not meet the special review criteria for Special Use Permits. The proposed development is not in the interest of the public convenience and would have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood and community. The demolition of the historic Western Newspaper Union Building and construction of a 20-story data center would significantly change the established character and scale of the area. The data center may also create impacts related to noise and heat, and the project has received substantial concern from the community with more than 400 letters submitted in opposition.

The proposed 20-story building is not compatible with the established building scale of the surrounding area. Development within a two-block radius is generally six stories or less, with the Broadway Square building being approximately 12 stories in height. The proposed building would be significantly taller than the surrounding development and would introduce a substantially greater building mass into the area. Additionally, the demolition of the historic Western Newspaper Union Building would remove an existing structure that contributes to the established architectural and historic character of the area. While the proposed brick materials are generally contextual, the overall scale and massing of the proposed building is not compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

The proposed data center represents a significant change in use and intensity from the existing historic building and surrounding development. The scale and operational characteristics of a 20-story data center, including its continuous operation, mechanical equipment, cooling systems, and associated service and maintenance activities, have the potential to introduce impacts that are not characteristic of the surrounding area. The use is not compatible with the surrounding mixed-use neighborhood and community.

The proposed development is not expected to adversely impact pedestrian safety, as no new curb cuts are proposed, which will minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts. However, the potential impacts of noise and heat from the proposed data center on pedestrian comfort are unknown.

Staff received more than 475 letters in opposition to the proposed Development Plan, including letters from the Downtown Neighborhood Association and Historic Kansas City. No letters in support of the proposed data center were received. Primary concerns expressed in the letters included the loss of the historic building, the scale and massing of the proposed data center, potential negative operational impacts associated with data centers, and consistency with the adopted Greater Downtown

Area Plan. At the City Plan Commission hearing, 54 citizens expressed similar concerns. No testimony in support of the data center was provided during the CPC hearing.

Staff Recommendation: Denial
CPC Recommendation: Denial

Fiscal Impact

1. Is this legislation included in the adopted budget? ☐ Yes ☒ No

2. What is the funding source?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

3. How does the legislation affect the current fiscal year?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

4. Does the legislation have a fiscal impact in future fiscal years? Please notate the difference between one-time and recurring costs.
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

5. Does the legislation generate revenue, leverage outside funding, or deliver a return on investment?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

Office of Management and Budget Review
(OMB Staff will complete this section.)

1. This legislation is supported by the general fund. ☐ Yes ☒ No

2. This fund has a structural imbalance. ☐ Yes ☒ No

3. Account string has been verified/confirmed. ☐ Yes ☒ No

Additional Discussion (if needed)
No account string to verify as this ordinance has no fiscal impact.

Citywide Business Plan (CWBP) Impact

1. View the Adopted 2025-2029 Citywide Business Plan

2. Which CWBP goal is most impacted by this legislation?
   Housing and Healthy Communities (Press tab after selecting.)

3. Which objectives are impacted by this legislation (select all that apply):

   ☒ Utilize planning approaches in neighborhoods to reduce blight, ensure sustainable, affordable housing, and improve resident wellbeing and cultural diversity.
   ☐ Maintain and increase housing supply to meet the demands of a diverse population.
   ☐ Address the various needs of the City's most vulnerable population by working to reduce disparities.
   ☐ Promote healthy residents by ensuring basic sanitation and living needs are met.
   ☐ Ensure all residents have safe, accessible, quality housing by reducing barriers.
   ☐ Protect and promote healthy, active amenities such as parks and trails, play spaces, and green spaces.

Prior Legislation

There is no prior legislation for this site.

Service Level Impacts

Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

Staff Recommendation

City Planning and Development

Select One: ☒ Sponsored
☐ Directive: Res/Ord # Click to enter Res/Ord. No.

Select One: ☐ Recommend
☒ Do Not Recommend
☐ Not Applicable

Staff recommendation: Denial
CPC recommendation: Denial

Other Impacts

1. What will be the potential health impacts to any affected groups?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

2. How have those groups been engaged and involved in the development of this ordinance?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

3. How does this legislation contribute to a sustainable Kansas City?
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

4. Does this legislation create or preserve new housing units?
   No (Press tab after selecting)

   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.
   Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Department staff certifies the submission of any application Affirmative Action Plans or Certificates of Compliance, Contractor Utilization Plans (CUPs), and Letters of Intent to Subcontract (LOIs) to CREO prior to, or simultaneously with, the legislation entry request in Legistar.

   No - CREO's review is not applicable (Press tab after selecting)
   Please provide reasoning why not:
   Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

6. Does this legislation seek to approve a contract resulting from an Invitation for Bid?

   No(Press tab after selecting)

Not applicable as this ordinance authorizes the development of private property.

7. Does this legislation seek to approve a contract resulting from a Request for Proposal/Qualification (RFP/Q)?
   No(Press tab after selecting)