Planning and Zoning Data Center Discussion Sessions

Session Five: Continued Review and Next Steps

Monday, November 9, 2026

On November 9, the Memphis City Council's Planning & Zoning Committee held its fifth working session in its Data Center Legislation Discussions series. The session brought together findings and community feedback from earlier meetings and focused on outstanding questions and next steps for proposed data center legislation.

COO Chris Winton presented Community Feedback on Data Centers. COO Winton presented feedback from Boxtown and Whitehaven, including concerns about air quality, noise, construction traffic, road damage, and aging water infrastructure. He also identified priorities raised during the City's listening efforts: clearer information about data center projects, protections for utility customers, and accountability for addressing neighborhood concerns.

How zoning could address large data centers. COO Winton's presentation outlined the City's review of its zoning rules under Executive Order 3-2026. It compared ordinary office server rooms with large data centers that require dedicated power and cooling infrastructure, and showed draft options for classifying facilities by how much electricity they need. The review also considers how far large facilities should be from homes and schools and how their effects on roads, sewer systems, and other local infrastructure should be evaluated.

What draft safeguards could look like. COO Winton's presentation also outlined several options: annual reporting on energy use, water use, and emissions; limits on noise at the property line; and cooling systems that use little or no drinking water. It also described ways to protect utility customers, including having data centers cover their own grid costs and reduce electricity use when the grid is strained.

Looking ahead. Planning & Zoning Committee Chair Councilman Philip Spinosa plans to continue the series with working sessions on the Monday before each Council Tuesday meeting. These sessions would give Councilmembers time to work through remaining questions and consider community feedback as the proposed legislation moves through committee and regular Council meetings.
Upcoming session dates are scheduled for: November 23rd, December 7th, and December 21st.

Please continue to remain engaged and up to date on all sessions by visiting: Planning & Zoning Committee Hearings on Data Center Legislation - The City of Memphis

Questions or feedback can be directed to Jia Robinson at Jia.Robinson@memphistn.gov