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PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

Data centers are large-scale facilities that house computer servers and related infrastructure to store, process, and distribute digital information. With the boom in demand for AI, the demand for these data centers is also increasing, and their footprints are expanding rapidly in major metropolitan areas, including the City of Los Angeles. While these facilities support critical digital infrastructure, they can also generate substantial impacts, including high electricity demand, intensive water usage for cooling, noise from mechanical equipment and backup generators, hazardous materials storage (such as battery systems), and greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy consumption.

The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) does not currently include a clear, stand-alone definition for “data centers” within the Zoning Code. As a result, such facilities may be reviewed under a range of industrial, utility, or other use categories, leading to ambiguity in permitting, inconsistent treatment across zoning classifications, and limited clarity regarding operational standards designed to protect nearby communities.

Given the increasing scale and intensity of data center development, it is important that the City establish a clear definition and regulatory framework to ensure that these uses are appropriately sited and operated in a manner that safeguards public health, neighborhood livability, environmental quality, and the reliability of the City’s infrastructure systems.

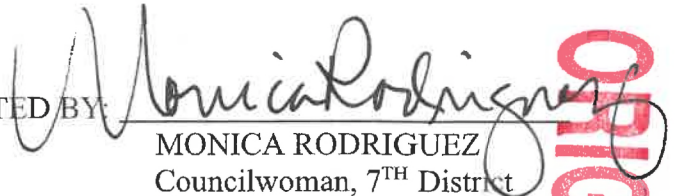
I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of City Planning, to report back with recommended amendments to Chapter 1 and Chapter 1A, and any other relevant sections, to:

1. Create a clear and comprehensive definition of “Data Center” and any related or accessory uses (including but not limited to server farms, cloud computing facilities, cryptocurrency mining operations, and large-scale digital storage facilities); and
2. Establish appropriate use classifications and zoning permissions for Data Centers, including identification of the zones in which such uses are permitted by right, permitted conditionally, or prohibited.

I FURTHER MOVE that the report back also includes recommendations for additional measures to better regulate Data Centers in a manner that protects the health and safety of residents and the environment, based on an analysis of best practices from other major jurisdictions.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council request the Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to prepare a standalone assessment of potential impacts Data Centers may have on the City’s power grid, water resources, and climate goals, and policy recommendations to address those impacts.

PRESENTED BY:


MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilwoman, 7TH District

SECONDED BY:



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