

From: Amanda Washkuhn <acwashkuhn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2026 9:59 AM
To: planadmin <planadmin@milwaukee.gov>
Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Data Center Development in Midtown

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To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing to express strong concerns about the proposal to build a new data center in the Milwaukee area. While these projects are often framed as economic opportunities, growing evidence suggests they can place significant strain on local resources and communities.

First, the sheer **energy demand** of modern data centers is staggering. Recent analyses of proposed facilities in Wisconsin indicate that just two projects could require up to **3.9 gigawatts of power—enough to power 4.3 million homes**, nearly double the number of housing units in the state. This level of demand risks overloading local grids and may ultimately drive up electricity costs for residents, as utilities invest in new infrastructure and potentially pass those costs on to ratepayers.

Second, **water consumption is a major and often underreported issue**. Data centers require large quantities of water for cooling, both directly and indirectly through energy generation. In some cases, a single large facility can consume **millions of gallons per day**, comparable to the needs of entire towns. Even with recycling systems, experts warn that total water use—especially from power plants supporting these facilities—can be far higher than companies publicly disclose. This raises concerns for long-term sustainability and the health of Lake Michigan and regional water systems.

Additionally, there are **environmental and public health risks** tied to these developments. Data centers can contribute to increased fossil fuel use if renewable capacity cannot keep pace, leading to higher emissions and air pollution. There are also open questions about chemical use in cooling systems and potential impacts on wastewater systems, with limited transparency provided to local communities.

Finally, the **economic benefits are often overstated**. While these projects bring large upfront investments, they typically create relatively few long-term jobs and may rely on tax incentives that reduce local revenue, shifting the burden onto communities instead. At the same time, the rapid expansion of data centers—over 40 already in the Milwaukee area alone or nearby—suggests diminishing marginal benefits and increasing cumulative impact.

Given these concerns—rising utility costs, heavy water usage, environmental risks, and uncertain local benefits—I **urge you to vote no for the proposed data center at Midtown**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amanda Washkuhn