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Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2026 9:56 AM
To: planadmin <planadmin@milwaukee.gov>
Subject: Data Center Development

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To the Milwaukee Common Council and City Plan Commission,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed computer data center development at Midtown Center on N. 60th Street near Capitol Drive.

This proposal raises serious concerns about energy consumption, utility costs, water use, noise pollution, neighborhood quality of life, and long-term community benefit. Milwaukee residents deserve a full and transparent evaluation of these impacts before allowing a project of this scale to move forward.

Across the United States, communities are increasingly pushing back against large data center developments because the impacts are far greater than many residents initially realize.

Data centers are among the most energy-intensive building types in existence. Recent research found that data centers already account for more than 4% of total U.S. electricity consumption, and demand is rapidly increasing due to artificial intelligence infrastructure.

This increased demand does not happen in isolation. Utilities frequently build new substations, transmission infrastructure, and power generation facilities to support data centers, and those costs are often passed along to ordinary residents through higher electric bills. Reuters recently reported growing concerns nationwide that utility customers are subsidizing infrastructure expansion for data centers through rate increases and “construction work in progress” charges added directly to customer bills.

States are now beginning to respond to this problem. In Oregon, regulators recently created a new rate structure specifically because residential customers were effectively subsidizing massive data center energy use. Prior to those changes, residential customers were paying more than double the electricity rate paid by some data center customers.

Milwaukee residents are already facing affordability challenges. Adding a highly energy-intensive facility in the middle of a densely populated urban corridor risks placing additional pressure on local electrical infrastructure and future utility costs.

Water consumption is another major concern. Large data centers can consume millions of gallons of water per day for cooling systems. The World Resources Institute reports that some large facilities use as much as 5 million gallons daily — comparable to the water use of a small town.

At a time when cities nationwide are becoming increasingly concerned about infrastructure resilience, climate change, and freshwater stewardship, Milwaukee should be asking whether dedicating enormous quantities of water and electricity to a private data center is truly the best use of community resources.

Noise pollution and neighborhood quality of life must also be taken seriously. Residents living near data centers across the country have reported constant humming from industrial cooling systems, diesel backup generators, and large ventilation equipment. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute notes that nearby residents have experienced sleep disruption, headaches, stress, and declining quality of life.

These facilities are not quiet office buildings. Many operate 24 hours a day and require industrial-scale cooling systems and backup power infrastructure. Communities in Virginia and elsewhere have documented persistent complaints about low-frequency noise and vibration impacts from nearby facilities.

In addition, data centers often provide relatively few permanent jobs compared to the enormous amount of land, infrastructure, tax incentives, electricity, and water they consume. Milwaukee should carefully consider whether this proposal represents the highest and best use of a major commercial corridor that could otherwise support mixed-use development, local businesses, housing, recreation, or employers with stronger long-term community integration.

Finally, there are broader planning and equity concerns. Midtown Center is surrounded by neighborhoods where residents already experience economic pressures and infrastructure inequities. It is deeply concerning to introduce an industrial-scale digital infrastructure project with potentially significant environmental and utility impacts into the heart of Milwaukee neighborhoods without substantial public scrutiny and independent impact analysis.

I respectfully urge the City of Milwaukee to reject this proposal, or at minimum require:

- a comprehensive independent environmental impact study
- a full public accounting of projected electricity and water consumption
- legally enforceable noise protections
- analysis and protections of impacts on residential utility costs
- meaningful community engagement
- binding community benefit agreements before any approvals move forward

Milwaukee residents deserve development that strengthens neighborhoods, protects affordability, and improves quality of life, not projects that externalize massive infrastructure costs onto the public while providing limited direct community benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Cate Daczyk