

CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** June 9, 2025
SUBJECT: TR25-02, Ordinance No. 3907, Public hearing to consider amendments to Chapter 118 (Zoning), Sections 118-1, 118-632, 118-633, and 118-833 regarding data center facilities, parking requirements, and additional regulations.
PRESENTER: Cori Reaume, Director of Planning

SUMMARY:

The City Council is asked to consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow for the inclusion of new definitions, parking requirements, and other regulations related to data center uses, and identifying districts in which these uses may be permitted.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

In anticipation of increased interest in data center development and in keeping with the goal of proactive planning, staff is proposing the addition of two new use categories to the Table of Permitted Uses: **“Data Center, General”** and **“Data Center, Small-Scale.”** This dual-category approach will allow the City to differentiate between larger, utility-scale facilities and smaller, lower-impact operations, and to tailor zoning permissions accordingly based on the scale of the project and possible impacts to nearby properties.

The proposed amendment is the result of a comprehensive review of how other communities – some nearby, and others who have been recognized for a forward-thinking approach to data centers – are addressing the rise in data center development. It also considers feedback from prospective data center developers to better understand their operational needs and siting considerations.

Special consideration was also given to the Urban Land Institute’s Local Guidelines for Data Center Development, including much of the model code definition and regulations, which are included in this draft.

By establishing distance requirements between cooling equipment and residential properties—particularly for the **“Data Center, Small-Scale”** category—we are enabling these facilities to be permitted *by right* in select commercial zoning districts where impacts can be effectively managed. This not only upholds the City’s commitment to neighborhood protection but also supports the Council’s goals of regulatory efficiency and a business-friendly environment. Larger-scale data centers, classified under **“Data Center, General,”** would remain subject to a Special Use Permit in more sensitive or transitional areas, allowing for more thorough review and public input when appropriate.



This approach attempts to strike the right balance between encouraging innovation and economic development, while ensuring our zoning regulations protect community character and livability.

Proposed Definitions:

The definitions for the two categories of data center are listed below, with the sole difference being the size of the building or buildings.

*A building or group of buildings **in excess of 10,000 total square feet** primarily used to house computers and/or related equipment for the purpose of collection, storage, management, processing, or retrieval and distribution of digital data, which houses computer and/or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components related to computing and digital data operations.*

*Data Center, Small-scale. A building or group of buildings **not to exceed 10,000 total square feet** primarily used to house computers and/or related equipment for the purpose of collection, storage, management, processing, or retrieval and distribution of digital data, which houses computer and/or network equipment, systems, servers, appliances, and other associated components related to computing and digital data operations.*

Proposed Inclusion in Table of Permitted Uses:

The table below outlines the addition of the two uses, specifying that either would be allowed by right in the I-1 and I-2 districts. In the C-2 district, a small-scale data center would be permitted by right, whereas a large-scale data center would need special use permit approval. In the C-1 district, only a small-scale center could be approved by special use permit. The special condition (30) below provides additional regulations for all data centers.

	Conditions	SECTION 118-631: TABLE OF PERMITTED USES													
		NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS										TOWN CENTER			
		R-1-S	O-1	LR	C-1	C-2	OC	I-1	I-2	U	AG	Edge	General	Center	Core
[#] = Conditions. Reference Section 118-633 for specific conditions to listed uses. P = Permitted by Right S = Special Use Permit Required [Blank] = Not Permitted NP = Not Permitted B = Defers to Base Zoning District A = Ancillary															
Data Center, General	30					S		P	P						
Data Center, Small-scale	30				S	P		P	P						

(30) Data Centers, both general and small-scale, must comply with the following standards:

- a. General criteria. All equipment for cooling, ventilation, or otherwise operating the facility – including generators or other power supply equipment – must be fully enclosed, except when determined by the City Manager or designee not to be mechanically feasible. If determined that full enclosure is not mechanically feasible, all equipment for cooling, ventilation, or power generation must be screened by a wall or similar barrier and be located no closer than 100’ from the nearest residential property.
- b. Generators.
 1. If generators are installed onsite, any regular testing must be conducted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, or 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday through Sunday.
 2. If fuel is stored onsite for generator usage, compliance with all fire and/or building codes, as amended, shall be required.

Parking Requirements: Because this use is typically equipment-heavy, but results in a low level of staff/visitors parking at the facility, new proposed parking requirements were developed as shown below:

	Use	Number of Spaces	Required for Each	Additional Requirements
10.	STORAGE			
	e. Data Center, general or small-scale	1	350 square feet of gross floor area devoted to office uses	Plus one additional parking space for each 5,000 square feet of gross floor area devoted to other uses.

Action taken by the Planning & Zoning Commission: The Commission is set to consider this item on June 5, 2025. An updated recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission will be provided to the City Council at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve ordinance 3907