



City of Phoenix

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

To: City of Phoenix Planning Commission

Date: June 5, 2025

From: Tricia Gomes
Planning and Development Deputy Director

Subject: BACK UP TO ITEM NO. 2 – GPA-2-25-Y – DATA CENTERS GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

General Plan Amendment No. GPA-2-25-Y is a request to amend the General Plan to incorporate design and location criteria for data centers.

The Village Planning Committees considered the request throughout May and beginning of June. Seven VPCs recommended approval, per the staff recommendation; three VPCs recommended approval, per the staff recommendation, with direction; two VPCs recommended denial; two VPCs recommended denial, with direction; and one VPC did not have quorum.

Three stakeholder meetings were held with individuals representing a wide range of interests in data center development such as land use attorneys, real estate and construction professionals, data center operators, and utility companies.

The language in this proposed general plan amendment has been modified to address some of the primary concerns as recommended by the Village Planning Committees and shared at the stakeholder meetings including the following concerns: obtaining a will-service letter and removing the Phoenix Green Construction Code reference. These modifications will also ensure the General Plan policies align with the modifications in Z-TA-2-25-Y.

Staff recommends approval, per the modified language in **bold** font below:

DATA CENTERS

WITH CONTINUAL ADVANCEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, SUCH AS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND THE DIGITAL “CLOUD”, THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING DEMAND TO CONSTRUCT DATA CENTERS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE DIGITAL WORLD. DATA CENTERS HOUSE A LARGE COLLECTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT DESIGNED TO STORE, PROCESS, AND MANAGE VAST AMOUNTS OF DIGITAL INFORMATION. ALTHOUGH DATA CENTERS ARE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY THAT MANY COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS NOW RELY ON, THEY ALSO COME WITH POTENTIAL CHALLENGES, INCLUDING A LOSS OF LAND FOR JOBS AND HOUSING, NOISE POLLUTION, SIGNIFICANT ENERGY DEMAND, INACTIVE FRONTAGES ALONG PUBLIC STREETS, AND CONFLICTS WITH THE CITY’S APPROACH OF MAXIMIZING TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS WITH WALKABLE COMMUNITIES. MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IDENTIFY AREAS THAT ARE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND TO ADDRESS THE NOISE, ENERGY, AND DESIGN ISSUES THAT THEY COME WITH.

LOCATION CRITERIA POLICY

1. LOCATE AWAY FROM IDENTIFIED CORES, CENTERS, AND CORRIDORS WHERE HIGHER-INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT IS ENCOURAGED FOR MIXED-USE, WALKABLE COMMUNITIES.
2. LOCATE IN IDENTIFIED REDEVELOPMENT AREAS WHERE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS ARE NEEDED.

DESIGN POLICY

1. PROVIDE ENHANCED LANDSCAPE SETBACKS WITH A GREATER DENSITY OF TREES AND SHRUBS.
2. PROVIDE DETACHED SIDEWALKS WITH PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES AND SHADE.
3. PROVIDE ART IN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT.
4. UTILIZE DARK SKY LIGHTING.
5. MINIMIZE NOISE POLLUTION TO NEARBY RESIDENTIAL THROUGH USE OF LARGE SETBACKS, STRUCTURAL SCREENING ELEMENTS, ARCHITECTURALLY INTEGRATED STRUCTURES, AND/OR LANDSCAPING.
6. PROVIDE VISUAL INTEREST TO ADJACENT PROPERTIES AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY WITH ENHANCED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THAT INCLUDES A VARIATION IN COLORS, MATERIALS, ARTICULATION, FENESTRATION, AND BREAKING OF MASSING, RATHER THAN A CONCRETE BOX THAT HAS A NEGATIVE VISUAL APPEARANCE TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1. PROVIDE ~~AN WILL-SERVE LETTER~~ **AGREEMENT** FROM THE LOCAL UTILITY COMPANY TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT CAPACITY IN THE POWER GRID TO SUPPLY THE DATA CENTER WITH ITS REQUIRED ENERGY DEMAND.
2. ENCOURAGE ~~USE OF THE PHOENIX GREEN CONSTRUCTION CODE TO~~ **MAXIMIZE** ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF DATA CENTER BUILDINGS.