City of Asheville Staff Report

Planning Economic Development and Environment Committee
Meeting Date: June 16, 2026

Subject: Potential Development Moratorium on Data Centers

Staff Resources: Steph Monson Dahl, Planning & Urban Design Director; Chris Collins, AICP, Planning & Urban Design Assistant Director; Brad Branham, City Attorney

Action Requested: Recommend that City Council consider a development moratorium for a period of one year on all types and sizes of data centers.

Background:

- Data Centers have been shown to produce intensive impacts on local electric and water utilities.
- Data Centers may pose significant impacts, such as noise and heat generation, on neighboring properties.
- The City's Unified Development Ordinance currently lacks a definition or allowance for this land use.
- The lack of a definition would require the City's Zoning Administrator to classify this use as a use within the code that is most similar or to trigger a zoning text amendment to allow the use.
- The City's Unified Development Ordinance currently lacks concrete policies, strategies, and tools needed to effectively manage this land use.
- This lack of clarity and direction results in uncertainty for developers, staff, and community members.
- The City requires sufficient time to study the impacts of this land use and produce appropriate zoning regulations to protect the community against its impacts.
- City staff have evaluated alternatives to the enactment of a moratorium and found that sufficient time is not available to properly enact regulations for this land use to limit the time window for submission of data center development applications under the current regulatory structure.

Vendor Outreach:

- N/A

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

- Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment
- Well-planned and Livable Community

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- Infrastructure & Environment

Fiscal Impact:

- No direct fiscal impact is anticipated.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to recommend adoption of an ordinance enacting a one-year development moratorium on data centers, as the City currently lacks a definition for or proper land use regulation for data centers, has exhausted other options for regulating data centers and the one-year time period is needed in order for the City to formulate and draft proper land use definitions and regulations for the use.

Attachment(s):

- N/A