



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Data Centers

HB HARPER, ANALYST, AND ERIC MCCONAGHY, ANALYST

LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 11, 2026

Agenda

- Defining data centers
- Resolution
- Moratorium process
- Workplan

Defining Data Centers

- No definition currently in use
- Related use categories in land use code:
 - Business support services
 - Office, or accessory to office use
 - Utility service use (no longer in code)
- Related categories in customer classification for electricity rates:
 - High demand service
- Range of types, not all large/standalone
 - Equipment can vary significantly
 - Cloud computing services vs pure data storage
- Likely or possible impacts need consideration
 - Electrical capacity, water use, utility rates
 - Land use, jobs, urban environment

Resolution

- Big picture: recognizing impacts
 - Electricity
 - Water
 - Jobs
 - Pollution
- Joint effort with Mayor
- Guidance for future legislation

Moratorium Process

- Duration: one year
- Can be extended
- Requires public hearing (after action)
- No land use permits will be accepted while the moratorium is in effect

Workplan

- Mayor's statement provides guidance on Executive considerations of related work
- Research and recommendations on regulating data centers in city code
 - Differentiating by size
 - Consideration for existing data centers
 - Alignment with state laws
 - Best practices for monitoring electricity and water usage
 - Zoning and development standards
 - Potential community benefit agreements
 - Pollution standards
 - Workforce protections
 - Environmental standards
 - Other
 - Coordinating with economic impact analysis

Questions?