

NOTICE OF MOTION

Ensuring due diligence on data centres in Scarborough Southwest

Moved by: Councillor

Kandavel

Seconded by: Councillor

Saxe

SUMMARY:

Over recent weeks I have been listening closely to residents of Scarborough Southwest, including the more than 100 neighbours who attended our community meeting on the proposed STACK Infrastructure data centre expansion at 3650 Danforth Avenue. Residents have raised serious and thoughtful concerns about the project's scale, its electricity and water demands, noise and backup generators, the level of local employment and community benefit, and the fact that a facility of this magnitude is proceeding through delegated Site Plan Approval without a public meeting or a vote of City Council.

These concerns deserve to be represented clearly and answered before any decision is finalized.

In March, Council directed the Chief Planner and other City officials to develop a Toronto-specific approach to artificial intelligence data centres — addressing land-use compatibility, electricity-grid capacity, water use, environmental impact, and the cumulative effects of this kind of development, with staff expected to report to the Planning and Housing Committee in 2027 (see MM39.47). This application is now moving forward while that policy work remains underway.

This motion seeks to ensure the data centre application for 3650 Danforth Avenue is assessed in alignment with the City's forthcoming data centre guidance, that community interests are considered throughout the review, and that Council consider whether and how the application can be appropriately paced so that outstanding questions on environment, grid connection, public consultation, and community benefit are properly addressed.

Finally, STACK is a U.S.-based company owned by an American asset manager, and it has not been disclosed who would lease or use the proposed new capacity. The federal government, through the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, has made clear that Canadians should retain a meaningful degree of sovereign control over critical AI infrastructure and that sensitive data should remain subject to Canadian jurisdiction. To help demonstrate these questions are being considered as part of the review of this application, this motion seeks clarity on who would own and control the computing equipment, where data and management systems would be located, whether Canadian institutions and businesses would have guaranteed access, and what concrete benefits would be secured for Scarborough, Toronto and Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Request the Executive Director, Development Review in the future review of development applications related to large-scale data centres to advise the local city councillor of the application upon receipt.
2. Request the Executive Director, Development Review, together with other applicable divisions, to align the timing of the current review of the site plan application for a data centre expansion at 3650 Danforth Avenue with the City's ongoing work on data centres pursuant to MM39.47 for City Council consideration in 2027.
3. Request that the Interim Executive Director, Development Review and NoiseTO conduct a peer review of the noise study submitted for the data centre expansion at 3650 Danforth Avenue, to evaluate whether both regular business and emergency power-cut scenarios are properly assessed and modelled, and whether required mitigation measures have been implemented and secured.
4. Request the Chief Planner, City Planning, to facilitate opportunities for public engagement across Toronto as part of the City's ongoing work on data centres pursuant to MM39.47.
5. Request the Executive Director, Development Review, to report back at the earliest opportunity on the following community questions regarding the data centre expansion application at 3650 Danforth Avenue:
 - a) What are key environment impacts identified by staff in the course of their review for approval of the expanded site, and any conditions or measures required to address them?
 - b) What are the expected electricity and water requirements of the expanded site, and can local infrastructure handle them without affecting residents or other businesses?
 - c) Who pays for any required upgrades to the power grid, water system, roads, or emergency services — the company, ratepayers, or taxpayers?
 - d) What local jobs, tax revenue, or other community benefits are guaranteed, and are they proportionate to the scale of the project?
 - e) Data centres require additional systems to ensure proper cooling and continuation of their infrastructure, including during power shortages. What measures and processes will be required to monitor noise levels once the expansion is operational, both for compliance with noise studies submitted with the application, and to ensure noise impacts are acceptable on local residents.

- f) Canada's National AI Strategy emphasizes the importance of Canadians having a meaningful degree of sovereign control over critical AI infrastructure. What due diligence has been completed to verify controls and measure by the applicant to ensure sufficient safeguarding of Canadian user data, and that the protocols proposed are consistent with the emerging direction by Canada's federal government with respect to artificial intelligence data centres?

Date: 07/22/2026