

I came to speak about the potential construction of the data center on Saturn Street. What is wonderful about this topic is that it is related to a scientific report I am working on right now. So-

To begin, we are being told the project will be a clean and low-impact project. There is absolutely no way to create a data center that is clean or low impact. Data centers consume an insane amount of electricity – so fast that there is no way to sustain them on green or renewable energy like solar or wind. Many cities implementing data centers are moving back on their green energy initiatives in order to power their data centers. (Youtube, Business Insider, **see bibliography**).

Data centers produce a ton of carbon emissions contributing to climate change and destroying the quality of air – these centers run 24/7, all the time, and most are equipped with diesel generators. This project in particular outlines having around 24 diesel generators. These generators run fairly constantly, keeping the data center running in order to create no down time (STAX, **see bibliography**). The entire time a data center runs and uses energy, emissions are produced.

- Diesel itself contains a compound known as black carbon, which is a carcinogen known for causing chronic respiratory issues, strokes, and heart attacks. As well as having negative effects on babies' developmental progress. Diesel can also emit sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and other particulate matter.

There is another concern of water consumption. Data centers become extremely hot when running, in order to cool the machines, water is run through connecting pipes to keep the machines cool. Only 3% of Earth's water is freshwater, and only 0.5% of all water is accessible and safe for human consumption (EESI, **see bibliography**). Data centers consume an insane amount of FRESH water specifically. An average Google data center consumes approximately 450,000 gallons of water per day.

- Living in an area prone to drought this seems like a horrible idea. It will also increase water bills. The more scarce water becomes, the more expensive it will be for our city to transport it for use.

The data center will also increase electricity bills. This project is estimated to consume 434 million kilowatt-hour per year of electricity, which is effectively double the amount of energy Monterey Park consumes WITHOUT the data center. There have already been multiple examples of data centers polluting air, water, and consuming copious amounts of energy in places like Nebraska, Texas, and other locations in California. There are some locations where residences' utility bills have tripled. All of this doesn't include the sheer amount of noise pollution and habitat loss this will cause.

The claim that the data center will create a sizable amount of jobs is also negligible. Data centers are run by a small group of people at all times, so besides the construction of the building, there would not be a significant number of jobs created.

I found the use of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) instead of a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) quite interesting. Particularly because I have seen this done in several case studies related to my report.

A multitude of companies have done this before, resulting in mass poisoning of surrounding residents.

An example of this is the Exide E-Waste Recycling plant that used to be located in Vernon, California – the company went forward with an MND and it resulted in heavy levels of lead in the soils of surrounding communities. At the time of the MND's official release, it was stated that the project "will have no impact on wildlife and the habitat upon which it depends," the same exact thing that has been said for this project.

- Exide ran the plant for 15 years, pumping copious amounts of heavy metals into the air and soil of the homes, schools, and parks around the plant.
 - In a study analyzing soil samples from surrounding homes, it was found that over 80% of the soil collected and inspected was above 80 parts per million, which is the California limit for lead. A lot of the levels ended up shooting higher than 1,000 parts per million. To highlight – there are no safe

levels for lead, the fact that there was even 80 ppm is exceedingly dangerous. (PBY, **see bibliography**).

- Lead was found in the community's children's blood, it was found replacing the calcium of babies' teeth, and **it is still causing issues with residents' pregnancies, increasing the number of patients with cancer, and causing regression in adult minds.** (PBY)
- Even worse, Exide was able to declare bankruptcy in 2020 and left the cost of the multi-million dollar clean up to taxpayers. (PBY)

There are multiple examples of multi-million dollar companies pursuing an MND resulting in a severe lack of health inspection, toxicity remediation, and general care for residents.

I would also like to mention, we have a lot of residents under the age of 18 and about 44% of the populace of Monterey Park is over 50 years of age (MPK statistics, **see bibliography**), all of which are extreme high risk groups to exposure to toxic emissions.

There is no clear and transparent communication, it makes this development feel shady and untrustworthy,

It does not matter if it is a private development, it does not matter if this development will be of no monetary cost to the city. The health concerns and increase of utility prices is a cost to the residents living in Monterey Park.

I have seen no rush to prevent citizens from being taken by ICE, no rush to help families priced out of their homes, and there is no rush to provide third spaces for communities to gather – yet, there is such a rush to get this data center developed. I feel as if, again, the priorities of this council are not reflecting the opinion of the citizens.

With so much space, there are endless possibilities of community gardens, parks, accessible education locations, food banks, etcetera. I have to question why a data center is the first and most advocated for choice in development – other than, of course, personal stakes or gain.

Lex Luthor would want the data center, Superman would not 🙌

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Mayor Yang, honorable council members, and dedicated staff,

I am a resident of Monterey Park, on Taylor Drive, in District 5. I have lived here for 35 years. I grew up in Monterey Park until my family moved across the freeway to Alhambra. I moved back here to raise my own family. I also worked at 1977 Saturn Drive as well as 1980 Saturn Drive. Hopefully, this will convince people that I'm not an outsider.

I also understand some people are concerned about what they call "misinformation" circulating about the data center, so let me be perfectly clear that the numbers I'm going to discuss come directly from the draft of Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration released to the public on behalf of the applicant.

I am here tonight to speak on the proposed 45-day moratorium on new data centers in Monterey Park. A moratorium is good idea but it needs to be **PERMANENT!** Data centers of the type proposed simply do not belong in Monterey Park.

When I reviewed the Initial Study, I found it had **892** references to CO2, **1,071** references to noise, and **1,361** references to hazardous waste, and the completely ludicrous finding that all of this added up to a "Less than Significant" environmental impact. Ludicrous. Completely. Ludicrous.

The study says the data center, when operational, will use enough electricity, over 400 million kilowatt hours per year, to generate 83,000 million metric tons of CO2 per year. EIGHTY-THREE THOUSAND. MILLION. TONS.

That's almost too big to contemplate. 227 million tons per day. 9.5 million tons per hour. NINE AND A HALF MILLION TONS. OF CO2. EVERY. SINGLE. HOUR.

But somehow that isn't significant. Correction, it's "Less than Significant." Because it can be mitigated.

Let's do the math.

One acre of trees can absorb 2.5 tons of CO2 per year. That means we'd need to plant over 4 million acres of trees per hour of CO2, over 100 million acres of trees per day, and 36 BILLION ACRES per year. That's more than 57 million square miles. That's over 349 times the size of California.

It is physically impossible to mitigate the CO2 generated from the electricity used by this data center. There is no way anyone can say in good conscience the environmental impact of this data center is "Less than Significant".

And that's just the air quality.

I'm not going to talk about water because there's a lot of conflicting information about water and data centers, and I haven't had the time to separate the wheat from the chaff. Suffice to say water is a precious resource in Southern California, and any data center will be competing with people, businesses, animals and plants that need it to survive.

So, let's talk about noise. I was in a rock band in my twenties. I'm an expert on noise.

Hundreds of servers operating simultaneously can reach levels up to 96 decibels, or "dB". That's enough to cause permanent hearing damage. Thousands of servers would be even louder. Now, of course, those are inside the data but that will create a baseline vibration that goes through the entire building. Cooling systems, on the other hand, are on the outside, and produce noise levels between 55 to 85dB. That lower limit is already above the maximum sound level limit in residential neighborhoods. Most of us can hear when our neighbors' air conditioning system kick in; now imagine 10, or 20, or more units not kicking in, but being on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That is not healthy.

Then there's the diesel generators, which have to be tested and run every month. The quiet ones generate about 70dB of noise. The loud ones generate 85dB or more. Either way, that exceeds the maximum limit for daytime use in a residential area.

The noise pollution documented in the Initial Study is most definitely NOT "Less than Significant".

Then there's hazardous waste. Every single piece of computer equipment in that data center will contain hazardous materials, and that equipment has to constantly be upgraded and replaced as computing power evolves and demand increases. That is a significant environmental problem. It's bad, not only for the city, but the county, state, and indeed, the country.

These are all facts, gleaned from the Initial Study and publicly available information. Data centers like the one proposed don't belong in Monterey Park. They don't generate lots of jobs. They don't generate new residents. They don't generate new businesses. They do generate pollution. A lot of it.

The community doesn't want this data center. The community doesn't want absentee landlords from overseas who don't care about the people who live here; who have so little regard for us they think we can be bought off with a simple little pocket park.

Let's have the 45-day moratorium. But let's also make sure the people have their say. And then let's make the moratorium permanent. Because the voice of the people is clear. All you have to do to hear it is listen. It's saying...

No data centers in Monterey Park!

NO DATA CENTERS IN MONTEREY PARK!

January 21, 2026

Mayor Yang and Members of the City Council
City of Monterey Park
320 W. Newmark Avenue
Monterey Park, CA 91754

Re: **Request for the City to Retain an Independent CEQA Consultant for the Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Data Center located at 1977 Saturn Street, Monterey Park**

Dear Mayor Yang and Members of the City Council,

I am writing you in my personal capacity as a Monterey Park resident who lives in close proximity to the proposed data center project (“Project”) and would be directly affected by the Project. By way of background, I am also a licensed California attorney with prior experience in municipal law.

I understand that the applicant for the Project has voluntarily agreed to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). I respectfully request that the City Council direct staff to retain a new, independent CEQA consultant under a City-controlled contract, with reimbursement agreement from the applicant, for preparation of the EIR. The administrative record demonstrates that Kimley-Horn, the consultant who prepared the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), acted as the applicant’s consultant, not the City’s, and that the City did not exercise the level of control required under CEQA for preparation of an EIR.

1. CEQA Requires the City to Prepare the EIR Directly or Under Contract

In a Public Records Act response published on the City’s website, Assistant City Attorney Justin Tamayo stated in a January 16, 2026 letter that:

“[T]he City does not have an agreement with Kimley-Horn for the proposed data center project.”

Under ***CEQA Guidelines §15084(d)***, an EIR must be prepared “**directly by or under contract to the lead agency.**” With respect to the MND that was prepared for the Project, Kimley-Horn was retained by the applicant and the City did not direct Kimley-Horn’s work. There is substantial evidence in the administrative record showing that Kimley-Horn viewed its client as the applicant, rather than the City. Most significantly, Kimley-Horn addressed its Supplemental Technical Analysis for the MND, which was attached as part of the City’s Responses to Comments, to the applicant rather than to the City. While that is an acceptable practice for a MND, once an EIR is required, CEQA imposes a fundamentally different structure:

- The consultant must be under City contract.
- The City must direct the consultant’s work.
- The City must control the analysis.
- The City must exercise independent judgment.

The workflow used for the MND cannot legally carry over into the EIR.

2. CEQA Requires the EIR to Reflect the City’s Independent Judgment

Public Resources Code §21082.1(a) states:

“The lead agency shall independently review and analyze any report or environmental document... and shall not rely on the conclusions of the applicant or the applicant’s consultant.”

California courts have repeatedly emphasized this requirement:

- *Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of Univ. of Cal.*, 47 Cal.3d 376 (1988)(holding that an EIR must reflect the *lead agency's own independent judgment* and cannot simply adopt the applicant's analysis).
- *Friends of La Vina v. County of Los Angeles*, 232 Cal.App.3d 1446 (1991) (holding that a lead agency may not rely on *applicant-prepared environmental analysis* without exercising independent judgment; peer review alone is insufficient).
- *Berkeley Keep Jets Over the Bay Comm. v. Bd. of Port Comm'rs*, 91 Cal.App.4th 1344 (2001) (holding that CEQA is violated when an agency *accepts applicant-directed conclusions* rather than conducting its own independent environmental evaluation).

These authorities make clear that the City cannot make the required independent judgment finding if the same consultant who prepared the MND — under the applicant's direction — prepares the EIR.

3. Kimley-Horn Has a Built-In Conflict of Interest

Kimley-Horn previously concluded that the Project would result in no significant impacts and provided thousands of pages of data to support that claim. Now that an EIR is required, the consultant would be in the position of:

- Reviewing its own prior conclusions,
- Potentially contradicting its own work, and
- Defending the applicant's earlier position.

This is a structural conflict that undermines the credibility of the EIR and exposes the City to litigation risk. Standard CEQA practice recognizes that payment by the applicant does not undermine independence so long as the consultant is under contract to and directed by the City.

Because the City never established this structure during the MND process, it must do so now for the EIR. The City should:

1. Select a new CEQA consultant,
2. Enter into a City-controlled contract, and
3. Require the applicant to reimburse the City through a standard cost-recovery agreement.

This is the only legally defensible path forward.

Conclusion

Given the City's admission that it had no agreement with Kimley-Horn, and CEQA's strict requirements for independence in the preparation of an EIR, I respectfully request that the City Council direct staff to retain a **new CEQA consultant under a City-controlled contract**. This step is necessary to ensure compliance with CEQA, protect the City from litigation, and maintain public confidence in the integrity of the environmental review process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,


Carrie L.

Monterey Park Data Center

1977 Saturn St

We are committed to building a true, long-term partnership with the City of Monterey Park and working with residents to ensure this project reflects community priorities, addresses concerns, and delivers real local benefits. In the coming weeks, we will be sharing key updates, online resources and inviting residents to attend community meetings to continue these important conversations.



Project has undergone extensive environmental and zoning review over a two-year period

The project has produced 14 expert technical reports, detailed responses to public comments, and a comprehensive analysis concluding the project meets stringent regulatory thresholds required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).



A major, stable source of revenue, this project will transform the current underutilized site into a thoughtful and well-maintained community asset

Designed by Gensler, the project is expected to generate 200-300 jobs during construction, high-quality jobs during operation, as well as \$5-\$7M in recurring annual revenue, close to 10% of the City's annual operating budget.

In addition to a new public park funded entirely by the project, the revenue would be a reliable funding source that can support public safety, parks and recreation, street maintenance, youth programs, and other community priorities without increasing demand on schools, housing, or city services.



No pass-through costs or increases to electricity rates for Monterey Park residents

This project will have a dedicated energy distribution system entirely funded by the applicant. Southern California Edison has concluded that the project would use less than 1% of SCE's projected demand.



Water-efficient system through advanced closed-loop cooling technology

The facility will use a state-of-the-art, closed-loop cooling system. This means that once the cooling pipes are filled at startup, the same water gets recycled through the system in a continuous closed loop. Daily maintenance for operational aspects, such as plumbing fixtures and restrooms, is expected to equal use of a few average households.



Emergency backup generators meet the strictest federal and state emissions standards

Tier 4 diesel generators are one of the most environmentally advanced options available for commercial use, regularly used by hospitals in emergencies. Their use will be strictly regulated and monitored by South Coast Air Quality Management District.



The project will not exceed typical neighborhood noise

Noise monitoring study analyzing the data center found that levels will be less than the existing ambient noise levels in the surrounding community. Projected noise levels are similar to a typical commercial area.

Please submit any questions, concerns, and feedback at: info@montereyparkdatacenter.com

Resolution

mta Montebello Teachers Association

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RESOLUTION REGARDING PROPOSED DATA CENTER IN MONTEREY PARK

WHEREAS the Montebello Teachers Association, a local chapter of the California Teachers Association, exists to protect and promote the health and well-being of its members and of all students enrolled in the schools of the Montebello Unified School District;

WHEREAS the Montebello Teachers Association represents certificated employees working within 3 miles of the proposed Saturn Street Data Center that is requesting a permit to open a data center in Monterey Park, and these staff members serve thousands of students in schools within the Montebello Unified School District that are located in proximity to the proposed data center;


WHEREAS, the proposed Saturn Street Data Center has not submitted an Environmental Impact Report to the City of Monterey Park, and a Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed by the City of Monterey Park in lieu of an Environmental Impact Report;

WHEREAS, the affect of data centers on human health, including increases in cancer rates, is not fully known, and has not been addressed in the Mitigated Negative Declaration;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Montebello Teachers Association encourages the City of Monterey Park to require that the proposed Saturn Street Data Center submit a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report which includes information on the potential harm to humans who spend a significant amount of time in proximity to data centers prior to granting a permit for the data center.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Montebello Teachers Association opposes the development of any data center within close proximity of the schools of the Montebello Unified School District without extensive research that affirms the health and safety of the students and staff of these schools will not be compromised by the proposed data center.

This resolution was passed by the members of the Montebello Teachers Association Executive Committee on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.


Victoria Landeros-Lopez, President