General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

September 8, 2026

Summary and Motions

Committee members Liz Sheehan (Chair), Shayla Lynch, J.D. (Vice Chair), Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Emma Curtis, Whitney Baxter, Dave Sevigny, Jennifer Reynolds, and Hil Boone were present. Council members Tyler Morton, Tom Eblen, Joseph Hale, and Amy Beasley were present as non-voting members.

Chair Sheehan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF JULY 1, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY (Sheehan)

A motion by Ellinger to approve the July 1, 2026 Committee Summary was seconded by Curtis and approved unanimously.

II. DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES & DRIVE-UP WINDOWS (Baxter/Wade)

Traci Wade, Planning Services Manager, presented proposed amendments to Section 16-9 of the Zoning Ordinance to modernize regulations for drive-through facilities and drive-up windows. The proposed changes replace the existing uniform vehicle-stacking standard with requirements tailored to different uses, including drive-up windows, banks and pharmacies, quick-service restaurants, and car washes. The regulations also address stacking dimensions, lane widths, turning radii, circulation, parking access, pedestrian crossings, operational plans, and waivers of stacking requirements.

Committee discussion focused on how the regulations would apply to existing and redeveloped properties. Staff clarified that existing facilities generally would be exempt, while substantial redevelopment or additional drive-through lanes could trigger the new requirements. Members also discussed the limitations of zoning regulations in addressing businesses where customer queues extend beyond the available stacking area.

Pedestrian safety was a key discussion point, particularly proposed Item C2, which would have required a five-foot-wide direct pedestrian connection from the public right-of-way to the building without crossing a drive-through lane. Concerns were raised that the requirement could create challenges for constrained or infill sites. The language presented to the committee instead retained requirements for pedestrian crossings to be clearly visible and emphasized with enhanced paving or pavement markings.

A motion by Baxter to approve the proposed Section 16-9 language as presented. Seconded by Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

> A motion by Sheehan to amend by reinstating the pedestrian-access provision (2-C). Seconded by Sevigny. That motion failed with a 5 – 5 tie vote (Yay: Sheehan, Wu, Sevigny, Lynch, Curtis; Nay: Boone, Baxter, Reynolds, Brown, Ellinger).

III. WINCHESTER ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY (Sheehan/Dooling)

Iris Dooling, Senior Planner with Long Range Planning, presented an update on the 5.8-mile Winchester Road Corridor Study, which examines transportation, land use, redevelopment, safety, and future growth along the corridor. Phase I engagement identified transportation safety as a primary concern, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, with community priorities including safer roadways, improved pedestrian and bicycle connections, and additional community spaces. Committee discussion focused on multimodal connectivity, the potential Hamburg Connector, pedestrian safety near Frederick Douglass High School, trail connections, and the need for Complete Streets improvements throughout the corridor. Phase II will use the community feedback to develop and evaluate potential recommendations.

IV. DATA CENTER REGULATIONS (Sheehan/Crum)

Daniel Crum, Principal Planner with Planning Services, presented the Planning Commission's recommendations for proposed Data Center Regulations. Staff explained that Lexington's existing regulations for computer and data processing centers predate today's large-scale data center industry and do not fully address modern facilities' potential land, energy, water, cooling, noise, backup power, and infrastructure demands. The proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment is intended to establish a clearer regulatory framework while distinguishing dedicated data centers from server rooms that are accessory to businesses such as hospitals, financial institutions, and offices.

Committee discussion focused on how best to regulate the intensity and impacts of data centers, including whether electrical demand may be a more effective threshold than building square footage. Members also discussed noise standards, setbacks and buffering, water consumption, backup generators, utility capacity, renewable energy, environmental impacts, and the information applicants should be required to provide. Staff noted that LFUCG does not currently have a comprehensive inventory of existing data centers and may have limited access to information regarding utility agreements and energy capacity.

Members raised concerns about equity and the geographic distribution of potential data center sites, particularly the concentration of eligible B-4 and I-1 zoning in areas already affected by industrial uses. Discussion included whether the regulations should consider cumulative environmental and infrastructure impacts, historic land-use patterns, socioeconomic conditions, and employment benefits. Members also questioned whether a separate zoning classification would provide greater oversight, whether the accessory server-room provisions should be more narrowly defined, and whether renewable-energy or ongoing energy-reporting requirements should be considered.

The committee also discussed using the Board of Adjustment to review data centers as conditional uses, including whether decisions with potentially significant community impacts should receive additional review by elected officials. The Committee took no action on the proposed regulations. A special Committee of the Whole was scheduled for October 6 to receive public input before further legislative consideration.

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (Sheehan)

Chair Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m.