

Michael-Paul Hart

Councilor, District 20

Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council



MEMORANDUM

Existing Industrial Proximity and Operational Context

To:	Members of the Metropolitan Development Commission / Hearing Examiner
From:	Councilor Michael-Paul Hart
Re:	2026-CVR-815 / 2026-CPL-815 305 Fintail Drive Warren Township, Council District #20
Date:	June 8, 2026

This memorandum addresses the existing land-use and operational context surrounding the proposed DC BLOX data center at the Thunderbird Commerce Center. The central point is straightforward: this area is already industrial. The proposed data center is not introducing industrial activity into an otherwise residential-only setting.

Residents have a right to raise concerns about dust, noise, air quality, truck traffic, generator operation, and brownfield management. Those concerns should be addressed through enforceable commitments. But they should also be evaluated against the actual existing conditions around English Avenue, South Kitley Avenue, Shortridge Road, and Shadeland Avenue.

The appropriate question for the MDC is not whether the project has any impact. Any large industrial redevelopment project has impacts. The appropriate question is whether this specific proposed use, with enforceable commitments, is more injurious than the industrial conditions already operating around the site.

Bottom line: The objections raised by residents should be evaluated under the actual use-variance findings, not in isolation from the site's existing context. The Thunderbird property is already an industrial redevelopment site, and the surrounding English/Kitley/Shadeland corridor already includes industrial, manufacturing, distribution, truck-service, scrap/recycling, and material-handling operations. A data center is not impact-free, and issues such as construction dust, generator testing, sound, fuel storage, and brownfield management should be controlled through enforceable commitments. But the record should compare this proposed secured facility against the surrounding industrial conditions that already exist. On that comparison, the proposed use appears to have a lower routine daily impact than many nearby operations involving trucks, loading docks, outdoor storage, food production, metal recycling, towing, and industrial service activity.

1. The Thunderbird site is already an industrial redevelopment area

Thunderbird Commerce Center is a redevelopment of the former Ford Visteon manufacturing site. DC BLOX identifies the property as a former industrial/manufacturing property, states that the site housed a major automotive components factory beginning in the 1950s, and identifies the site as zoned I-3 Medium Industrial.

[1]

Lauth Group markets Thunderbird Commerce Center as a 150-acre master-planned industrial park at 6900 English Avenue, zoned for industrial use, with rail access and capacity for substantial additional industrial development. [2]

The area is therefore not being newly converted to industrial use. The site and its surroundings are already part of a working industrial corridor. A substantial portion of the property has already been disturbed, graded, paved, built upon, or prepared for industrial redevelopment before this data center petition. Current commercial marketing materials also identify multiple buildings and phases at Thunderbird Commerce Center. [2], [3]

2. Existing nearby uses already create industrial impacts

The nearby corridor includes metal recycling, scrap handling, food manufacturing, building-material distribution, industrial packaging, truck-oriented service, beverage distribution, and other commercial/industrial operations. Those uses are not being criticized. They simply establish the actual operating context around the site.

Existing use	Documented activity / operational profile	Why it matters to proximity review
Trinity Metals	IDEM public notice for Trinity Metals identified equipment including hoppers, shaker tables, shot blasters, a jaw crusher, magnetic separator, bag-filling equipment, conveyors, and a shredder. IDEM stated the equipment will emit air pollutants. [4] EPA has also warned that scrap-metal shredding can generate particulate matter and organic air emissions from materials such as plastics, paints, rubber, switches, fluids, and residues. [5]	This is the clearest direct air-quality and industrial-processing comparison.
Zore's Recycling / auto and scrap activity	Zore's Recycling describes scrap-metal services that include appliances, outdated electronics, junk vehicles, auto parts, and ferrous and non-ferrous metals. [6]	This supports the point that scrap handling, vehicle movement, containers, and outdoor industrial activity are already part of the corridor.
Harlan Bakeries	Harlan describes itself as a food manufacturer with an increasingly diverse line of food products, and public business listings identify Harlan Bakeries as a wholesale supplier/manufacturer of baked goods. [7]	Food production brings process equipment, refrigeration/freezer needs, deliveries, employee shifts, and distribution activity.
F.P. Supply Co.	F.P. Supply's Indianapolis location is at 310 S. Kitley Avenue, with sales hours from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and receiving hours beginning at 6:30 a.m. [8]	Building-material distribution generally involves freight, receiving, loading, forklifts, and early commercial activity.
BGR Packaging	BGR lists an Indianapolis location at 250 Kitley Avenue and describes itself as a national distributor of industrial packaging supplies and equipment with warehouse and ship-to support. [9]	This reflects the corridor's logistics, packaging, and industrial-support character.
Monarch Distributing / Fintail facility	Monarch Distributing lists 430 Fintail Drive as its Indianapolis distributor address; Reyes Beverage Group describes the Fintail facility as a 500,000+ square foot facility. [10], [11]	This confirms large-scale distribution activity already operating on or beside the Thunderbird redevelopment area.

The presence of these uses reinforces the same conclusion: this is already a working industrial, distribution, manufacturing, recycling, and service corridor.

3. Comparison to the proposed data center operating profile

The proposed data center is not impact-free. Its key issues are power demand, backup generators, generator testing, fuel storage, construction activity, sound, and brownfield management. Those issues require enforceable commitments and agency review.

The submitted DC BLOX Plan of Operation states that, at full buildout, the project would involve approximately 35 vendor deliveries per week, 45 to 50 customer visits per week, and approximately 35 daily commuters. It also states that generators would run only during testing and power outages, that generator testing would not occur between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., and that generators would operate within IDEM air-permit limits. [12]

The submitted commitments include closed-loop cooling, municipal water only, no natural aquifer use, limits on truck parking, no truck maintenance, screened mechanical equipment, an SPCC plan, annual sound testing, generator noise controls, and diesel particulate filters. [13]

That daily operating profile is materially different from nearby uses that involve routine loading, receiving, distribution, food manufacturing, metal processing, scrap handling, vehicle movement, and outdoor material handling.

4. Construction dust should be controlled, not exaggerated

Construction dust is a valid concern. Soil disturbance, grading, stockpiling, truck movement, wind, and exposed surfaces can create fugitive dust. The correct response is to require site controls: dust suppression, track-out controls, stabilized construction entrances, covered loads where appropriate, erosion and sediment controls, truck-route management, and enforceable soil-management procedures.

The dust issue should therefore be treated as a construction-management issue across an already industrial redevelopment site. It should not be presented as if the site had been undisturbed or non-industrial until the data center proposal. Much of the Thunderbird property has already been graded, redeveloped, or otherwise disturbed as part of the broader industrial redevelopment activity.

If the project moves forward, the conditions should require DC BLOX and its contractors to manage construction dust and soil disturbance in a way that protects neighboring properties, the Pennsy Trail, and nearby school and residential areas. That is a reasonable and enforceable response to a legitimate concern.

5. Core land-use conclusion

The Thunderbird Commerce Center and the surrounding English/Kitley/Shortridge/Shadeland corridor are already industrial. The area includes regulated metal-processing activity, scrap recycling, auto and appliance recycling, food manufacturing, building-material distribution, industrial packaging and logistics, truck-oriented service, beverage distribution, outdoor material handling, loading docks, and large-scale warehouse/distribution buildings.

The MDC's review should focus on what this specific data center adds or changes relative to those existing conditions. Based on the submitted operating profile and commitments, the data center appears to have a lower routine daily-impact profile than several nearby uses because it would be a secured facility with limited public access, limited daily traffic, no regular manufacturing process, no scrap processing, no public lodging, and no long-term truck parking.

That does not mean the project should be approved without conditions. It means the conditions should be tailored to the real risks: construction dust, soil and groundwater management, generator operation, fuel storage, noise limits, screening, traffic management, and enforceable compliance reporting.

Proximity alone should not be treated as a basis for denial when the surrounding corridor already contains active industrial uses with more direct daily operational impacts. The more defensible standard is whether this

proposed use, with enforceable commitments, is more injurious than the existing industrial conditions surrounding the site. On the current record, the answer appears to be no.

Source Notes

The citations below are included to make factual assertions traceable. Internet sources were reviewed on June 8, 2026.

- [1] DC BLOX Indianapolis project page, project site history, I-3 zoning, and development description. <https://www.dcblox.com/indianapolisdatacenter/>
- [2] Lauth Group, Thunderbird Commerce Center property page. <https://lauth.net/properties/thunderbird-commerce-center-master-planned-industrial-park/>
- [3] CBRE / Thunderbird Commerce Center property website, site data and building status. <https://thunderbird-commerce-center.cbre-properties.com/>
- [4] Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Trinity Metals public notice letter. https://www.in.gov/idem/files/notice_20260108_air_49628pn-cm.pdf
- [5] U.S. EPA, Enforcement Alert: Air Emissions from Metal Shredding Facilities. <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/metalsredder-enfalert.pdf>
- [6] Zore's Recycling, scrap metal recycling services and accepted materials. <https://www.zoresrecycling.com/>
- [7] Harlan Companies, company history and food manufacturing description. <https://harlancompanies.com/our-history/>
- [8] F.P. Supply Indianapolis location page. <https://www.fp-supply.com/indianapolis-in.html>
- [9] BGR Packaging locations and company description. <https://www.packbgr.com/about/locations>
- [10] Monarch Distributing contact page, Indianapolis distributor address. <https://monarchdistributingllc.com/contact-us>
- [11] Reyes Beverage Group, Monarch Distributing Fintail facility overview. <https://reyesbeveragegroup.com/newsroom/unveiling-the-new-monarch-distributing-fintail-facility>
- [12] DC BLOX Indy Plan of Operation, May 21, 2026. <https://www.dcblox.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/DC-BLOX-Indy-Plan-of-Operation-5.21.26.pdf>
- [13] DC BLOX Indy Commitments Draft, May 21, 2026. <https://www.dcblox.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/DC-BLOX-Indy-Commitments-Draft-5.21.26.pdf>