Louisville Climate Action Network

24 November 2025

Joe Haberman
Metro Louisville Office of Planning submitted via (joseph.haberman@louisvilleky.gov)

RE: Louisville Metro Council Resolution Number 082, Series 2025
Zoning Code Updates re Hyper-Scale Data Centers

Dear Mr. Haberman,

The Louisville Climate Action Network (LCAN) currently consists of 64 community and faith-based organizations, for-profit businesses and educational institutions and over 1,300 individual subscribers. LCAN offers programming in the following three areas:

1. Technical assistance, energy-efficiency audits and guidance on "going solar" to our nonprofit and faith-based clients so they "spend less on utilities, more on mission"
2. Educational programming on the many solutions to climate change
3. Advocacy for smarter public policies that cut carbon pollution and costs

The subject code changes should be considered within the following contexts:

1. Our planetary home is on fire. Last year was the hottest on record. "Extreme" in weather forecasts has become normal. Storms, floods and tornadoes are increasingly destructive. Insured losses—a fraction of true losses—from climate charged events are setting records, too. We are conscripting our grandchildren to misery.

2. Big Tech is hyper-mobile and generally doesn't build its own facilities or support infrastructure. Instead, it issues Requests for Proposals and chooses the best deals pitched by developers willing to gamble on this unproven industry. Louisville ought not sacrifice its health and welfare to the race to that bottom.

3. When we engineers calculate a project's requirements, they scale up their calculations to ensure the project won't fail or come up short. Beefed-up design costs more, so costs typically limit over-design. But in the case of hyper-scale data centers, Big Tech can pad its power, water and land requirements at others' expense. Proposed power needs are on the order of the power used by Louisville homes. Proposed water needs also are huge. If the data centers don't end up needing that much power or water, LG&E and the Louisville Water Co. must pass the costs of their stranded assets to their other customers. Codes must protect everyone else from over-design.

Louisville Climate Action Network
P.O. Box 4594, Louisville, KY 40204
502-451-COOL (2665) LouisvilleCAN.org

4. Energy efficiency, solar power and battery storage are the cheapest, cleanest and fastest sources of power, yet the incentives to use them at data centers is undermined because the costs of the new power plants they require will be externalized (see #3).

5. In 2020, the Louisville Metro Council adopted a resolution calling for the community at large to operate on 100% renewable power by 2040. New, gas-fired power plants are very expensive and operate for at least 40 years. Louisville cannot underwrite a new gas-fired power plant and meet its climate goal.

6. Thanks to Energy Star and other programs that support better consumer choices, Louisville's demand for electricity has flattened, despite increased electrification from heat pumps and electric vehicles. Because of that flattening demand, Louisville doesn't need a new power plant for our own needs.

7. As nearby as Columbus, OH, the average residential electric-utility customer is paying $27 more per month to cover some of the costs of powering data centers. Similar economic injustice ought not be repeated here.

8. Despite the grandiose claims, data centers create very few local jobs. Worse, site developers are exempt from Kentucky sales taxes. Economic development officials see hyper-scale data centers as bringing marketing cachet to Louisville; LCAN sees any such cachet as failing miserably to offset their numerous burdens.

To ensure that any proposed hyper-scale data center would not have adverse effects on our community's social, economic and physical health, LCAN urges the Office of Planning to propose that the Metro Council adopt the following requirements for a land-use permit to build one in Louisville Metro:

1. **Design Efficiency.** Data centers should be designed to achieve a Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) ratio of no more than 1.1 as calculated per the international standard, ISO/IEC 30134-2:2016. [1] Because it's easy to cook the books on that calculation, it should be reasonably transparent and available for review by an independent third-party with appropriate expertise.

2. **Cooling Water Use.** If a data-center applicant intended to meet their project's cooling water needs with water provided via Louisville Water Company (LWC) infrastructure, it should be required to indemnify all other LWC ratepayers against any related increases in their water bills directly or indirectly stemming from the construction of

[1] What constitutes an optimal PUE has been dropping since the measure was introduced in 2006. Methods for reducing a facility's PUE have varied. LCAN sees this results-oriented standard as allowing for innovation and believes that over time the code could be made closer to 1.0.

new, expanded and/or upgraded treatment and/or conveyance facilities to meet data-center needs for 50 years, including returns on equity, even if the data center were to cease business operations locally. [2]

3. **Wastewater Disposal and Surface Drainage**. If a data center proposed to dispose of its wastewater via Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure, it should be required to earn an Industrial Pretreatment Permit. It also should be required to indemnify other MSD ratepayers against any related increases in their wastewater and/or surface drainage bills directly or indirectly stemming from the construction of new, expanded and/or upgraded wastewater and/or drainage collection and treatment facilities to meet data-center needs for 50 years, even if they cease business operations locally. [3]

4. **Electricity**. Whether a data center proposed to meet its power needs via Louisville Gas & Electric (LG&E) generation and transmission infrastructure or to produce its own power, either party should do so via one or a mixture of both of the following sources to ensure that Louisville can meet its existing sustainability goals: [4]

    a. Build its own solar and/or wind power plus power storage network
    b. Acquire Purchase Power Agreements (PPAs) from sustainable energy sources that feed the grid, sufficient to meet the data center's electricity requirements

5. **Back-Up Power**. All diesel-fueled, back-up generators should be rated to the cleanest Tier available. Back-up generators are very expensive. Owners invest in them because their facilities cannot stop running when the grid goes down. That same fear of being flat-footed leads them to exercise their generators regularly; running generators for an hour/week is common. Diesel emissions were reclassified as carcinogenic, [5] so should be minimized as much as possible.

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[2] If instead the data center proposed to withdraw cooling water from the local aquifer, it also should be required to earn a water-withdrawal permit from the Ky. Division of Water.

[3] If instead the data center proposed to discharge cooling water somewhere other than an MSD sewer, it should be required to earn a discharge permit from the Ky. Division of Water with the strictest available discharge limits.

[4] The new Facebook data center being built just across the Ohio River from Louisville will be powered via these methods.

[5] The International Agency for Research on Cancer (part of the World Health Organization) reclassified diesel exhaust from Group 2A (probably carcinogenic to humans) to Group 1 (carcinogenic to humans) in 2012.

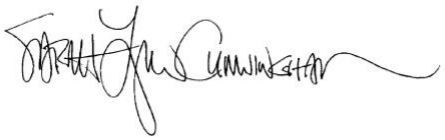
6. **Noise.** Data centers should be designed to limit cumulative on-site noise to no more than OSHA standards and cumulative off-site noise to 70 dBA (A-weighted decibels) when all systems including generators are running. Off-site noise could be buffered by mechanical sound suppression equipment and/or a sufficiently dense mix of deciduous and evergreen non-invasive species of trees and shrubs.

Lastly, LCAN is aware that Louisville already hosts several smaller, data centers or "telecommunication hotels." While they are not the subject of this process, LCAN submits that they, too, should be held to at least some of the above, higher standards.

Please let us know if you would like LCAN to provide you with any support documentation.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to have input to this very important issue affecting our climate, members, clients and communities.

Cooperatively,



Sarah Lynn Cunningham, PE
Executive Director

Ken Shapero
Policy & Research Director

From: David A Dries
To: Haberman, Joseph
Subject: Data Center, additional survey comments
Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 3:17:40 PM

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Joe,

I completed a Data Center survey in late October, and would like to provide the following additional comments:

- A small number of well-designed, larger Data Centers would appear to be much more effective than a large number of smaller Data Centers, which might impact more neighborhoods.

- Data Centers appear to be a way of life for today's economy. Most individuals and businesses use Data Center products, and most comparable cities have Data Centers and are keeping up with current technologies. Essentially all Industrial sites have some negative characteristics, but need to be placed in more appropriate types of locations.

- My observation is that new restrictive regulations for Data Centers could essentially nullify the State Legislature's efforts during the last two years, which implemented economic development incentives in support of new Data Centers for KY:

  - For example, Section 38 of KY HB 8 (2024 RS) states that “the inducement of the location of data center projects within the Commonwealth is of paramount importance to the economic well-being of the Commonwealth.”

  - And KY House Bill 8 from 2024 approved major State economic development incentives for Data Centers for Jefferson County . . . intended to attract Data Center projects exceeding $450 million.

- In other words, if the Planning Commission limits new Data Centers to 100K SF max (or a similar arbitrary maximum square footage), the new regulations could essentially nullify the intent of the State's House Bill 8 for the economic benefit of Jefferson County.

Thanks for your consideration.

David Dries
40245

From: O"Brien, Jeff
To: Davis, Brian; Haberman, Joseph
Cc: Pawl, Trevor
Subject: FW: New Constituent Contact - Sonja Faul
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 2:28:09 PM

Brian and Joe –

Can you please add to comments for data center regs.

Trevor – FYI only.

Jeff

Jeff O'Brien
Executive Director
Cabinet of Economic Development
Louisville Metro Government
502.574.1354

From: Smartsheet Automation <automation@app.smartsheet.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:31 AM
To: O'Brien, Jeff <Jeff.OBrien@louisvilleky.gov>
Subject: New Constituent Contact - Sonja Faul

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New Constituent Contact - Sonja Faul

Hello,

The mayor's constituent relations team has received a message relevant to your department. Please see the details below and follow up with the constituent, Sonja Faul, at your earliest convenience. When responding to the constituent, please use their contact information provided below in a separate email. Do not respond directly to this automated communication.

For reference, this email was sent to the following people:

jeff.obrien@louisvilleky.gov

Contact Details --
Constituent Name: Sonja Faul
Phone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Street Address: 2722 Hollywood Terrace

ZIP: 40206
Area of Concern Address, if Different:
Area of Concern ZIP, if Different:
Message Category: Data Center
Message: Dear Mayor Greenberg,

I'm reaching out as a Louisville resident who cares deeply about the long-term safety, environmental health, and economic resilience of our city. As Louisville evaluates the role of large-scale data center development, I want to share several serious concerns that I believe deserve close attention.

1. Enormous Energy Demand With Limited Local Benefits
Data centers consume extraordinary amounts of electricity—often equivalent to tens of thousands of homes. In a city already facing grid strain during extreme temperatures, this level of demand risks higher utility costs and undermines Louisville's clean-energy goals, while creating only a small number of permanent jobs.

2. Heavy Water Use That Could Stress Louisville's Infrastructure
Cooling systems for these facilities can require millions of gallons of water per day. With aging water infrastructure and rising climate volatility, we must ensure residents and small businesses never compete with private corporations for essential resources.

3. Noise, Air Pollution, and Neighborhood Impact
Backup generators, cooling towers, and 24/7 operations generate continuous noise and emissions. Placing these industrial facilities near residential areas undermines quality of life, depresses property values, and contradicts the vision of a greener, more walkable Louisville.

4. Weak Economic ROI for the Community
Tech companies often request large tax incentives while offering few jobs in return. This shifts the financial burden onto Louisville families and reduces revenue for schools, parks, and public services—without delivering meaningful long-term economic growth.

5. Irreversible Land Use Decisions
Data centers are inflexible structures that lock valuable land into a single industrial use for decades. Louisville deserves development that supports housing, innovation, green space, and mixed-use growth—not windowless concrete blocks that produce minimal local value.

I respectfully urge your administration to require full transparency, robust environmental review, and strong community engagement before approving any new data center project. Louisville's development decisions should prioritize residents' well-being, sustainability, and equitable economic outcomes.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the concerns of the people you serve.

Sincerely,
Sonja Faul

Please use the link below to:
1. Make comments,
2. Forward the message to other contacts,
3. Upload any attachments,
4. Mark the matter as resolved.

Link: https://app.smartsheet.com/dynamicview/views/ae60a717-af75-44d9-93fc-036157605622

Unsubscribe from workflow id: 1327422055442308

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2025-12-03T16:31:16Z

Haberman, Joseph

From: Fitz <[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 8:48 PM
To: Haberman, Joseph
Subject: Model Data Center Zoning Ordinance
Attachments: Model Data Center Zoning Ordinance Version 1.2.pdf

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Happy new year!

Attached is a model ordinance that KRC developed for use by local governments in creating the framework for integrating data centers into the built and natural communities.

Fitz

Tom FitzGerald
of counsel
Kentucky Resources Council

From: Davis, Brian
To: Haberman, Joseph; Williams, Julia; Luckett, Jay; Jones, Zachary
Subject: FW: GLI Comments on Data Centers
Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 10:16:10 AM
Attachments: Outlook-cx55szlq.png
image001.png

FYI, for consideration.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian Davis, AICP
Director
Office of Planning
Louisville Metro Government
444 S. Fifth St. #300, Louisville, KY 40202

O: 502-574-5160| **C:** 502-528-8956

OFFICE OF
PLANNING

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From: Helen Hacker <hhacker@greaterlouisville.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 10:15 AM
To: Davis, Brian <Brian.Davis@louisvilleky.gov>
Subject: GLI Comments on Data Centers

CAUTION: This email came from outside of Louisville Metro. Do not click links, open attachments, or give away private information unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe.

Hi Brian!

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk data centers this morning. I wanted to pass along some feedback we've received from our investors so you have them on your end. This list hits at the high level concerns we've gotten from out Land Development Task Force and other

investors that may be implicated by the changes.

Excessive setbacks and separation requirements

- •

  Proposed 500'–1,000' setbacks effectively prohibit larger data centers (>150,000 SF) in Jefferson County.
- Classifying data centers as heavy industrial does not align with their actual land-use impacts.

Regulation driven by fear rather than demonstrated impacts

- •

  The proposal appears responsive to public concern about the "unknown" rather than evidence of real risks.
- Louisville does not currently have built data centers, making preemptive overregulation especially risky.

- **Unnecessary duplication of existing regulatory oversight**
  - Utilities already collect consumption data needed for system planning.
  - Environmental and public health impacts are already governed by EPA-related agencies and state regulators.
- **Consumption modeling requirements create an unnecessary barrier to entry**
  - Requiring investors to submit water and power consumption models to the Office of Planning adds cost and uncertainty without clear benefit.
- **Public health assessment requirements are inconsistent with standard practice**
  - Louisville does not generally require public health impact studies for industrial users that comply with existing environmental regulations.
- **Overly prescriptive technical mandates**
  - Requirements related to cooling technologies, fire suppression systems, and ventilation exceed land-use planning needs.
  - These issues are more appropriately addressed through building codes and fire codes.
- **Redundant code references**
  - Explicit requirements for lighting and landscaping compliance are unnecessary because they are already covered by the LDC.
- **Noise standards are poorly framed**
  - Noise should be regulated through clear, measurable decibel limits at the property line, not through vague or subjective standards.

- **Risk of discouraging investment and signaling market resistance**
  - Overregulation may prevent Louisville from attracting its share of significant data center investment.
  - Sending a signal that Louisville is "hostile" or fearful of data centers could influence perceptions statewide.
- **Lack of transparency around supporting research**
  - It is unclear what empirical data or case studies informed the proposed regulations.
  - Peer cities such as Columbus, OH host numerous large data centers without reported adverse impacts.

Thanks as always for your open line of communication. I'll catch you later this week to discuss more.

Best,

HH

Helen Hacker
Greater Louisville Inc. | Director, Government Affairs and Policy
Mobile: 502.718.9084
101 S. 5th Street, Suite 2300 | Louisville, KY 40202
Greater Louisville Inc.
Greater Louisville Partnership
Live in Lou!

From: Teena Halbig
To: Haberman, Joseph
Subject: Fw: Please provide on 25-LDC-0014
Date: Thursday, January 1, 2026 3:18:59 PM

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----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Teena Halbig <[redacted]>
To: Zachary Jones <zachary.jones@louisvilleky.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 at 02:38:13 PM EST
Subject: Please provide on 25-LDC-0014

Hello Planner Zach Jones,
Please provide this info about UNDERGROUND data centers and capture of heat, etc. Helsinki below states "BENEATH".
Additionally, if underground, the above ground could be SOLAR PANELS with parking of employee vehicles, etc. below the solar panels. This could offset additional expense and perhaps generate long term income.
We have an electric heat pump for decades and know it is a lot cleaner than gas.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Teena Halbig
6505 Echo Trail
Louisville, KY 40299
502 777-5192

AI Overview

Finland is a leader in using data center waste heat to warm cities via district heating networks, capturing server heat to heat homes, offices, and public buildings, reducing fossil fuel reliance, cutting emissions, and lowering energy costs
, with projects in Helsinki and Espoo turning digital energy into a sustainable heating source, even using underground data centers to leverage natural insulation. This circular energy model transforms heat, often wasted, into a valuable resource for city-wide warmth during cold winters, demonstrating a profitable path to decarbonization.

How it works

- **Waste Heat Capture**: Servers in data centers generate massive heat; cooling systems capture this thermal energy.
- **District Heating Integration**: This captured heat (warm water or air) is fed into existing underground district heating networks.
- **City-Wide Distribution**: The network pipes this heat to buildings, providing warmth for

thousands of residents.

- **Technology**: Heat pumps and smart controls optimize heat extraction and distribution, making the process highly efficient.

Key examples & benefits

- **Helsinki**: A data center beneath the Uspenski Cathedral heats hundreds of homes; the city's system is a blueprint for cold climates.
- **Google's Hamina Data Center**: Provides up to 80% of a neighborhood's annual heating demand, with the heat offered free to the utility company.
- **Benefits**: Reduces reliance on fossil fuels, lowers carbon footprints, creates a circular economy for energy, and provides cost savings.

Why Finland?

- **Cold Climate Advantage**: The cool Nordic air helps with cooling, and the long winters create high demand for heating.
- **Mature District Heating**: Finland has a well-developed, efficient district heating infrastructure, making integration seamless.
- **Sustainability Focus**: A proactive approach to making digital growth compatible with climate goals.

Haberman, Joseph

From: Teena Halbig <[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 3:19 PM
To: Haberman, Joseph
Subject: Fw: 25-LDC-0014

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----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Teena Halbig <[redacted]>
To: Zachary Jones <zachary.jones@louisvilleky.gov>; Sheron Lear <[redacted]>; Ray Ehlers <[redacted]>; Teena Halbig <[redacted]com>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 at 02:47:42 PM EST
Subject: Re: 25-LDC-0014

Hello Mr. Zach Jones,
While looking at Data Centers for some time, this is a good synopsis of environmental effects.
Kindly provide to the Planning Committee and persons working on a proposal.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
Teena Halbig
Floyds Fork Environmental Association
Co-Founder, 1991
6505 Echo Trail
Louisville, KY 40299
[redacted]

cc: President Sheron Lear
Vice President Ray Ehlers

Thu, Dec 11, 2025 at 3:46 PM

BREATHE PROJECT

The air we share

The Environmental and Health impacts of AI Data Centers on Communities

Residents of Allegheny County have the right to live without the risk of pollution and in a healthy community. Our communities should use their land and air sheds for the best possible uses that enhance the community where they live.

Community voices matter and should be factored into the process of decision-making.

Anyone proposing to build a data center needs to be transparent about its size, scale, location and power source/type so that anyone impacted can weigh in about how the proposed facility will impact them. This level of transparency is still missing and is a major source of skepticism about whether the community needs to have such a facility.

Health and Environmental Impacts Messaging/ Springdale AI Data Center Proposal

1. There are 3-Types of Data Centers: Diesel, Gas and solar.

2. Data Centers are commonly powered by diesel-field generators for operations and for backup energy during times of high or peak power demand. Diesel Generators are noisy, highly polluting and exempt from Clean Air Act regulations during "energy emergencies." (6)

3. Diesel generators emit gases and fine particles (soot), including PM2.5, NOx, VOCs, CO, and hazardous air pollutants. (1,2)

4. Data Centers Are Extremely Water-Intensive. The volume of water needed to cool the servers – at 70-80 degrees – can burden a region's water supply. Cooling these facilities could consume 731–1,125 million cubic meters of water every year by 2030—equal to the annual water use of 6–10 million U.S. households. (1)

NOTE: Many stationary diesel generators (especially older Tier 2 or Tier 3 units) have NO particulate filtration, a higher NOx output and less efficient combustion controls. Newer Tier 4 generators have lower emissions. (More information on EPA's Tier designation may be found here.)

• Allegheny County is a designated non-attainment region (out of compliance with the Clean Air Act) for fine particles (PM 2.5) and needs to meet the 2024 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM 2.5. Adding a new polluting facility to this community, parts of which are designated by the DEP as an Environmental Justice area, will add further health harms to residents. People deserve to breathe healthy air, not pollution from unhealthy emissions. (Breathe Project, 2024)

• The residents of Springdale Borough (3,400 population in 2020) currently have a pollution burden in the 98th percentile according to the Pennsylvania DEP Enviro Screen. This means that the community ranks worse than 98 percent of communities in the state and is one of **most polluted places in the state** for that specific air-quality indicator. *NOTE: The PennEnviroScreenTool is the official mapping/screening tool of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It "combines Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics data" to identify EJ (Environmental Justice) areas. (PennEnviroScreenTool)*

• Data Centers will emit exhaust pollution from gas turbines and diesel generators. It is important to have and understand details on how the AI Data Center will be powered.

The Pollution from Gas-powered Turbines

• **Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)** — (1,2, 5)

• **Carbon monoxide (CO)** — From incomplete combustion. Environmental Protection Agency+1

• **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** — And other hydrocarbons may be emitted, depending on combustion quality. Environmental Protection Agency+1

• **Particulate matter (PM)** — In many cases, natural-gas combustion produces far less PM than diesel or coal combustion, but PM formation can happen indirectly (from NO_x + VOCs forming secondary particles, smog, etc.) under atmospheric chemistry. (Environmental Defense Fund)

• **Greenhouse gases (CO_2 and potentially methane if leaks occur in the supply chain)** — Natural gas is primarily methane; burning it emits CO_2, and some methane can leak from supply pipelines/storage. (1,2)

The Pollution from Diesel-Powered Generators

• Diesel generators create a complex mixture of soot and gases to nearby homes, cities, farms and other places. Health concerns about diesel exhaust relate not only to cancer, but also to other health problems such

as lung and heart diseases. (2)

• Diesel backup generators on site commonly pose serious health risks to communities and people living nearby and may emit high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulates.

• Soot particles can penetrate deeply into lungs and bloodstream. (Breathe Project, 2025)

• Short-term health effects may include eye, nose, throat irritation; coughing; shortness of breath; headaches; nausea. A worsening of conditions may lead to asthma attacks, bronchitis, reduced lung function, cardiovascular issues. (3,4,5)

• Longer term risks include increased risk of chronic respiratory disease and lung cancer. (3,4,5)

• Cardiovascular risks including higher risk of heart disease and heart attacks. (3,4,5)

• Elevated ambient diesel pollution near data centers that frequently run generators. (3,4)

• Vulnerable populations (children, elderly, those with asthma or heart disease) face greater risk. (4)

• Pollution will further harm the health of environmental justice communities. (4,5)

• By 2030, AI Data Centers Could Add 24–44 million tons of CO2e (equivalents).At the current rate of growth, AI data centers may make climate change worse by releasing the equivalent emissions of **5–10 million additional cars** on America's roads each year. (1)

Questions Residents Should Ask

The Springdale community has been burdened by pollution for generations. Alternative plans for community land should be decided with feedback from community voices.

• Will this be a gas-powered data center, diesel powered or something else? How many turbines or generators will this project have? What type (EPA Tier Designation) are they? How often will they run?

• What emissions controls will be used?

• Will air-quality monitoring be conducted? Purple Air Monitors around the perimeter of the data center?

• What health or environmental impact assessments will be conducted?

• Municipalities should try to avoid curative amendment/substantive validity challenges that may result in the municipality losing control over the siting of these highly impactful uses. To assist this, PennFuture has created a model data center ordinance to help municipalities start these conversations and create protect ordinances for data center development. (PennFuture)

• Examples of successful ordinances can also be found in Penn Township, Westmoreland County, Pa. and Fayette County Ordinance Fayette County, Pa.

Data Centers and Pollution

Solar or wind with battery backup emits little to no pollution, which is a major benefit for people with asthma, children, elderly and heart/lung conditions.

Natural gas (or fracked gas) generators are dirtier than solar and produce pollution that worsens asthma and contributes to heart disease and smog.

Diesel-powered data centers are highly polluting with the most serious health risks: carcinogenic diesel particulate matter, higher PM2.5, higher NOx.

SOURCES

1. Cornell University Report, "Roadmap' shows the environmental impact of AI data center boom," and Nature Sustainability, (Study is based on a data center emissions in Virginia), November, 2025

Xiao, T., Nerini, F.F., Matthews, H.D. *et al.* Environmental impact and net-zero pathways for sustainable artificial intelligence servers in the USA. *Nat Sustain* (2025). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-025-01681-y

2. Harvard Business Review, "Migrating the Public Health Impacts of Data Centers," November 2025.

3. OSHA – Diesel Exhaust Overview

4. American Cancer Society – Diesel Exhaust and Cancer

5. EPA – Engine Exhaust from Natural Gas-Fired Engines

6. EPA – Health Assessment Document for Diesel Engine Exhaust

7. Union of Concerned Scientists – Diesel Engines and Public Health

8. **Inside Climate News, "Data Centers' Use of Diesel Generators for Backup Power is Commonplace and Problematic," Nov. 12, 2025.**

Reference: 12-11-25 on Halt the Harm

Haberman, Joseph

From: Teena Halbig <[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 3:19 PM
To: Haberman, Joseph
Subject: Fw: 25-LDC-0014

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----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Teena Halbig <[redacted]>
To: Zachary Jones <zachary.jones@louisvilleky.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 1, 2026 at 03:12:23 PM EST
Subject: 25-LDC-0014

Dear Mr. Zach Jones,
This is the last information which the committee should receive re: data centers. Of course, we have more info but these are important considerations.
The information about OHIO is an important consideration for data center companies to pay a percentage.
Regards,
Teena Halbig
6505 Echo Trail
Louisville, KY 40299
[redacted]

https://kentuckylantern.com/2025/10/20/as-power-intensive-data-centers-eye-kentucky-uofl-panel-details-concerns/?emci=9c8c604f-9db1-f011-8e61-6045bded8ba4&emdi=e4e0c2ef-5ab2-f011-8e61-6045bded8ba4&ceid=434041 data centers and KY

https://www.wosu.org/politics-government/2025-07-10/aep-ohio-to-adopt-separate-rates-for-data-centers-end-moratorium-to-bring-new-data-centers-online Ohio – 85%

"The decision requires data center companies to enter long contracts and to pay for at least 85% of the energy they predict they'll use, even if the company doesn't use it....."

From:	Tim Marrett
To:	Haberman, Joseph
Subject:	Requested Findings on Data Center Soundproofing - Met at Public Meeting 11/03/25
Date:	Thursday, November 13, 2025 3:32:43 PM
Attachments:	An Analysis of Options For the Cancellation of Noise From Data Centers.docx

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Hello Joe,

This is Timothy Marrett. We met at last week's town meetings. Last Tuesday, I shared some calculations about sound attenuation, and you suggested I email you my findings. I apologize it has taken me this long to get them to you, but what I presented last week was the result of some rather rushed research. I wanted to give it more time and present something worth your time, focused on quality rather than speed.

So I'm happy to present it to you now in the attached document.

Thank you for your time,
Tim Marrett

P.S. This is coming to you extra late due to mistyping your address. I am under no illusion of you reading it immediately.

An Analysis of Options For the Cancellation of Noise From Data Centers

By Timothy Marrett

Scope

In this document, I aim to analyze potential options for dealing with the industrial noise caused by hyperscale data centers.

Introduction

The advent of new generative ai technology of recent years requires the use of data centers on a larger scale than any previous technology. This has brought with it equally new infrastructure issues. The first wave of these “hyperscale” data center campuses have had minimal regulatory oversight, leading to complaints from neighboring residents. Communities, like the one in Data Center Alley in Loudoun County, VA report cases of air pollution, noise pollution, and increased energy costs. In fact, an audit by Virginia’s JARLC found these campuses to be “... largely incompatible with residential uses.” [1]

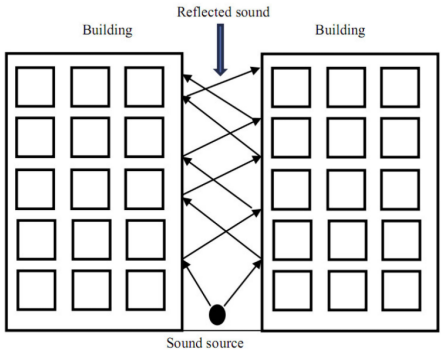
Let’s look into some potential ways to address the noise issue.

The Issue

Data centers are loud. They produce sounds in the range of 92-96dB.[2] To give you an idea of what that means, 96dB is the level of a motorcycle engine, and 100dB is the pain threshold of the human ear. While a motorcycle driving by is a momentary disruption, data centers have to run continuously in order to provide their services. They are potentially even louder when using backup generators, which they have to run at least once a month for testing and maintenance. This means exposing nearby residential neighborhoods to dangerously high noise levels 24-7.

The most commonly used material for industrial soundproofing is concrete barriers. These barriers made of acoustic insulation concrete (AIC) are both dense and stiff, leading it to reflect 99% of the sound that hits it. It is also more durable than other sound proofing options, such as vinyl.[3]

However, reflecting is not the same thing as absorbing (technically called “damping”). This difference means that the reflected sound has to go somewhere, and it often reflects off multiple surfaces before reaching human ears, as seen in the image below.[3]


Reflected sound
Building
Building
Sound source

In addition to being a poor absorber of sound, concrete is surprisingly effective at transmitting vibration from physical contact. This means that machines running in a concrete building will create vibrations that travel from the machine to the concrete floor, from the floor to the concrete walls, and finally exit the walls in the form of sound. This effectively makes any building with 100% concrete floors and walls function as a speaker, with the exterior walls taking the role of the speaker's driver.[4]

Potential Solutions

In light of the aforementioned facts, it makes sense that the unprecedented scale of new data centers has resulted in unprecedented noise pollution. But what do we do about it? I will now present three different methods of soundproofing that can be considered in combination when designing soundproofing requirements.

First, let's establish our goal. The EPA states 55dB to be the upper threshold of acceptable residential noise. So we need to find a way to reduce 96dB down to 55dB.[5]

A Note about Decibels:

As we look into solutions, it's important to remember a few things about the decibel scale. Up to this point, we have been referring to dB in absolute terms, but decibels do not measure absolutes. They are for measuring the difference between two levels of loudness. +6dB means twice as loud, and -6dB means half as loud. We got away with ignoring this fact up until now, because it was taken for granted that we were referring to the most common application of dB scales, the limits of human hearing, where 0 represents the quietest sound humans can hear, and 100 is the loudest we can hear without physical pain. As we continue, it will be necessary to do some calculations that require other applications of the dB scale.

Potential Solution 1: Distance

Sound naturally gets quieter the further it has to travel through air. This physical property of sound follows the Inverse Square Law. We can use a transformed version of that formula to determine how far it needs to travel to be attenuated by a certain amount of loudness. Let's do some math:

Defining:

d as distance travelled in meters.
S as initial loudness at sound source (96dB).
D as loudness at destination (55dB)

Formula:

$d = 10^{(S-D)/10/2}$

$= 10^{(96-55)/10/2}$

□ 112. 20184543

The Takeaway: Without any other sound proofing, sound coming from a data center should reach a loudness level appropriate for residential zones after travelling only 113 meters, which is about 369 feet.

Potential Solution 2:
Concrete Architecture

Since concrete is so reflective of sound, one could take advantage of that property through architecture. In theory, if a campus was designed to contain sound reflections, the sound could be diminished to acceptable levels before it leaves the property. Since concrete (specifically AIC) reflects 99% of sound, let's find out how many reflections it takes to reduce 96dB to 55dB.

Since dB is a logarithmic scale and percentage is linear, it is helpful to think in terms of a linear equivalency such as sound intensity to determine the change in the sound's loudness. Here's the math:

Defining:
ΔL as change in loudness.
I_1 as intensity at 96dB.
I_2 as intensity after one reflection. (99% the intensity of I_1)

Formula:
$\Delta L = 10 \log_{10} (I_2 / I_1)$

$I_2 = (I_1)(0.99)$

$\Delta L = 10 \log_{10} ((I_1)(0.99) / I_1)$
$= 10 \log_{10} 0.99$
≈ -0.0436

So, now we know that eliminating 1% of sound results in a change of $10 \log_{10} 0.99$ in dB, which is about -0.0436 dB. From here, it's as simple as dividing the difference between 96 and 55 by this new difference.

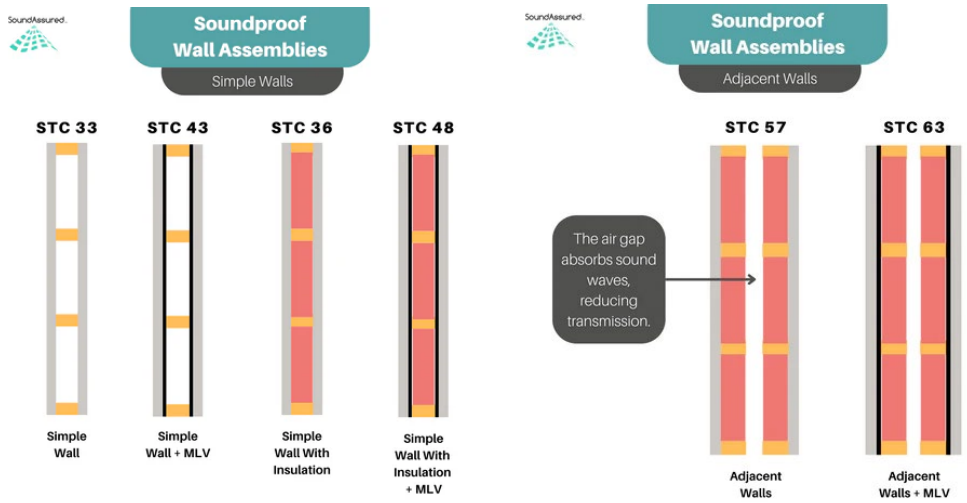
Defining:
n as number of reflections needed to diminish 96dB to 55dB.

Formula:
$n = (55-96)/(10 \log_{10} 0.99)$
≈ 939.331681934

The Takeaway: Without factoring for distance travelled, sound coming from a data center would have to reflect off of concrete 940 times before reaching residents. This would require a rather untenable level of architectural complexity, but this can be used in tandem with other soundproofing methods.

Potential Solution 3: Absorptive Materials

So far we've looked at ways to deal with sound with air pressure and reflections, but there are specialized materials specifically designed to absorb sound and turn it into heat, instead of reflecting it back. This is likely the most effective solution (though potentially expensive), as it aims to eliminate sound as early as possible, which could even make the data center campuses safer for employees.



Images from www.soundassured.com [6]

As you can see in the figures above, the most effective soundproofing setups force sound to go through a gauntlet of different materials, such as drywall, air, insulating form, and mass-loaded vinyl. Each layer slows, diffuses, or absorbs sound in ways that the others don't, making the combination of them greater than the sum of its parts.

The Takeaway: Multi-material soundproofing options that focus on diffusing and absorbing sound can make for complex but compact solutions to noise. That compactness of them can present more options in data center design, as the can be used both indoors and outdoors.

Sources

1. The 'AI boom' pits neighbor against neighbor
https://www.yahoo.com/news/sucks-live-next-data-center-081501358.html

2. Data Center Noise Levels | Sensear
https://www.sensear.com/markets/data-centers/noise-levels-infographic

3. Acoustic Properties of Innovative Concretes: A Review - PMC
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7830111/

4. Why Sound Moves Faster in Concrete Than in Air | Commercial Acoustics
https://commercial-acoustics.com/sound-advice/why-sound-moves-faster-in-concrete-than-in-air

5. EPA Identifies Noise Levels Affecting Health and Welfare | About EPA | US EPA
https://www.epa.gov/archive/epa/aboutepa/epa-identifies-noise-levels-affecting-health-and-welfare.html

6. What STC Ratings Mean (Sound Transmission Class Definition) – SoundAssured
https://www.soundassured.com/blogs/blog/what-stc-ratings-mean

Resources for City Planners Considering New Data Center Ordinances

https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/local-guidelines-data-centers A comprehensive list of community concerns. One page

https://www.datacenterknowledge.com/data-center-site-selection/zoning-and-land-use-considerations-for-data-centers A general overview plus examples of successful and unsuccessful municipal regulation. One page

https://www.ycpc.org/DocumentCenter/View/5537/Data-Centers-Model-Ordinance-PDF 15 pages, gives **model ordinance language** and is comprehensive.

https://www.usgbc.org/articles/impact-state-and-local-incentives-sustainable-data-centers Tax incentives can be tied to compliance with environmental and zoning standards. By relying on LEED rather than making a significant investment to develop a tailored standard, governments can streamline compliance, ensure credibility and incentivize best-in-class building practices. Many states and cities now condition tax breaks, grants and fast-track permitting on green building certifications such as LEED. One page

https://future-bridge.us/noise-control-in-data-centers-key-design-strategies/A review of issues and proactive strategies to reduce noise. About 2 pages.

Engage Albemarle·https://engage.albemarle.org A link to **Data Center Draft Ordinance.pdf** (145 KB) (pdf)is found on this website in a text box on the right hand side. 6 pages

https://clearfieldcountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/745/7-Data-Centers-PDF Cumberland County Planning Department Planning for Data Centers Overview and zoning considerations 7 pages

https://www.pennfuture.org/Files/Admin/Model%2DData%2DCenter%2DOrdinance%281%29.pdf **Model language** for Pennsylvania, 7 pages

In 2020, Louisville Metro Government created three green energy resolutions that should be taken into account as codes are developed. These are

By **2030**: 100% renewable electricity for city operations
By **2035**: 100% renewable, all forms of energy for city operations
By **2040**: 100% renewable, all forms of energy, community wide

Some ideas to consider are

- requiring that the data center roof be solar ready so that it can easily accommodate solar panels.
- requiring that at least a certain percentage of energy used to power the data center be from green energy sources.

- and requiring Leed certification for data centers. U of L has several Leed certified buildings and is reaping benefits of lower costs to the University and to the environment.

I received this note from a friend:

Sometimes we just need to see what is possible then use that knowledge to effect local solutions. Louisville could be a leader in the U.S. in effecting this solution.

Europe and particularly Finland are now using the waste heat from data center servers for residential and industrial heating purposes. Finland is heating entire city blocks with underground data storage centers using only servers waste heat through existing district heating networks. Companies like Microsoft, Google and Nokia have partnered with local energy providers to capture the heat from their data centers and channel it into the public heating systems to warm nearby homes and businesses.

https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/06/sustainable-data-centre-heating/
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2025-05-14/finland-s-data-centers-are-heating-cities-too

https://www.facebook.com/share/16LJPLMnoP/
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1572893699951268/permalink/1937995570107744/?app=fbl

From:	Williams, Julia
To:	Haberman, Joseph
Subject:	FW: data center ideas
Date:	Wednesday, October 29, 2025 10:03:45 AM
Attachments:	Resources for City Planners Considering New Data Center Ordinances.docx image001.png

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Julia Williams, AICP
Assistant Director

Office of Planning
Louisville Metro Government
444 S. Fifth St. #300, Louisville, KY 40202

O: 502 574-6942 |C: 502 224-6305

OFFICE OF
PLANNING

From: Roxanne Sturtevant <[redacted]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Williams, Julia <Julia.Williams@louisvilleky.gov>
Subject: data center ideas

CAUTION: This email came from outside of Louisville Metro. Do not click links, open attachments, or give away private information unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe.

Hello again and thanks to everyone on the Commission for holding a public comment session.

In my view, the big mistake was allowing the permitting of the hyperscale data center without public comment and before regulations were in place. That being said, going forward please create a set of regulations that are as "green" and beneficial to residents as possible. Doing this would go a long way toward gaining public confidence and acceptance

I have created a list of links to articles and resources containing model ordinance language on building design, siting, water usage, power usage, noise regulation etcetera. It also contains some innovative ideas from other countries.This is attached.

Thank you for your work and thank you for listening,

Roxanne Sturtevant

3712 Trail Ridge Rd

Louisville 40241

Data Centers in Jefferson County

Background

It has been close to a year since state legislators finalized a 50-year sales tax free incentive for DC developers. A developer's efforts to purchase land for the 400MW, Campground Rd. DC (CG DC) somehow came much earlier in the year. Without any change to zoning regulations, the first CG DC (as a telecommunications hotel) approval came in the summer of 2025. Metro Council requested Office of Planning to develop regulations for DCs, but in the interim Council did not establish a requested DC moratorium.

Even though the Office of Planning went to great efforts to meet with and listen to the public outcry in October and November of 2025, a second approval was granted on March 5, 2026, still without any change in regulations. During this public comment period, the Planners received a copy of a Model Ordinance written by retired KRC founder, attorney Tom Fitzgerald. This 21-page document offered a set of guidelines to minimize the harm from each hazard associated with data centers. It also recommended the use of a Conditional Use Permit to establish site specific requirements.

Concerns

Most DCs are being used for AI, a technology that can be beneficial, but provides great opportunity for manipulation of voice and facial imaging, among other misuses, while eliminating jobs. The CG DC will require a 35% increase in the total electricity generated in Jefferson County and 6% of the state (LGE/KU is building a new natural gas power plant in Jefferson County to provide that electricity). This will increase electricity and potentially water/sewer rates. A recent study out of University of Cambridge, UK, warns of an average 3.6F increase in the urban heat island effect. Fifty acres of mature trees on the CG DC property, that helped lessen Louisville's worst in the nation rating for heat island effect, were clear cut and ground to mulch.

Action

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed its neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. Metro Council needs a DC "study pause" until a responsible ordinance is created by the Office of Planning to address DC impacts on our community. This ordinance should be based on the KRC 1.4 Model Ordinance, presented to the public for comment and only then passed by Metro Council before any more DCs are allowed.

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Mr. Lyninger

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

X Jill Hamer

Address 40207

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

X Mindy Arndt

Address 2604 Meadow Rd. Louis. KY 40205

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X Kyle Ellison

Address 2120 Sycamore Ave 40206

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X Emily Miranda

Address 3626 Windward Way
Louisville KY 40220

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x Marshalla Shelor

Address 835 S. 7th Street Box 3863
Louisville Ky 40201

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x Mary Ballard

Address 511 Oxford Place, Louisville, KY 40207

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X Robert S Ballard

Address 511 Offord Place

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X Jane Martin Buckley

Address 7110 KROMER DR
LOUISVILLE, KY
40218

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X Patricia Allison

Address 2408 Ashwood Dr.
Louisville, KY
40205

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X Theresa Carl Dolinger

Address 729 Heywood Ave. 40208-1221

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x Valerie Schwartz

Address 123 S. Bayly Ave Louisville, KY. 40206

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x Lois D Powell

Address 1479 St James Ct Louisville, Ky 40208

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x Jamie McMorrow

Address 939 Eastern Pkwy, Louisville KY 40217

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

x Joe K (Kremer)

Address 1606 Rosewood Ave 40204

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In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

X _____

Address 2604 Meadow Rd, Louisville, KY 40205

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X Martha Wright

Address 2162 Sherwood Ave #1, 40205

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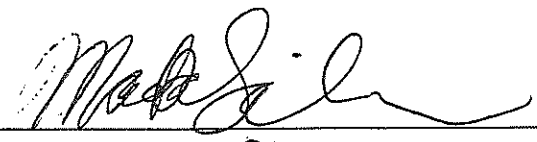
In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

X 

Address 4132 Phantom Creek Rd Unit 102
Louisville KY 40218

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **The Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

X Katherine Burge Johnson

Address 2002 Winston Ave 40205

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Office of Planning,

In the approval of the Campground Rd. data center "tele-hotel" (CG DC) Louisville officials have exposed thousands of our neighbors to an increased heat island effect, and light, high and low frequency noise, air, water, and climate related pollutions. **Th<u>Office of Planning needs to create regulations to address DC impacts on our community.</u>** This ordinance should be based on the KRC (1.4 or above) Model Ordinance and presented to the public for comment before any more DC's are allowed.

x Ryan Ohlman

Address 829 Perennial Dr 40214

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From: Contact the Office of Plannning
To: Dock, Joel
Subject: Contact the Office of Planning [#980]
Date: Thursday, September 18, 2025 2:12:41 PM

Name	Brandon Wesley
Email *	[redacted]
Subject	Data Centers
Comment *	Hello, I just wanted to quickly express my objection to the approval of any data centers in Louisville. They will only serve to inflate our water and electricity prices while adding very little to the local community. Thank you