FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP, ADAMS COUNTY

Data Center Resident Resource Package

For the Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. This package is long, so start below with the pages that fit your time.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

IF YOU HAVE TEN MINUTES

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IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND ON NOVEMBER 18

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IF YOU WANT THE BACKGROUND

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How Zoning Applies — page 11
Myths and Facts series — page 27
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THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO THIS WEEK

1

Come on November 18

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Speak for about two minutes, or simply attend.

2

Email a comment

Send one or two requests to info@franklintwp.us before the meeting.

3

Tell a neighbor

Share this package. Members remember views they hear from many residents.

What is the tracker?

The Pennsylvania Data Center Ordinance Tracker (padatacenterordinances.org) is a free public website that shows how every Pennsylvania municipality regulates data centers. It rates each ordinance on 52 standards in eight categories, such as noise, environment and land use, for a total of 104 points. The ratings in this package come from the tracker.

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Myths and Facts — pages 27 to 33
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Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road, Orrtanna.

padatacenterordinances.org

Page numbers refer to this printed package. Every page also stands on its own.

What We Are Asking For

Seven changes neighbors are asking the Planning Commission to recommend. The same requests, in the same words, are easier to act on.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

1	**Make data centers a conditional use decided by the Supervisors.** Elected officials hold a public hearing and can attach conditions to an approval.	**§ 175-26** Adopted: Dallas Township, Luzerne County
2	**Keep data center buildings and outdoor equipment at least 1,000 feet from homes.** Distance is the most reliable protection from noise, light and heavy equipment.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: South Strabane Township, Washington County (1,500 feet); Foster Township, Luzerne County (2,000 feet)
3	**Set noise limits in both dB(A) and dB(C), lower at night.** 45 dB(A) and 60 dB(C) by day; 40 dB(A) and 50 dB(C) at night. The dB(C) limit captures the low-frequency hum.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: Franconia Township, Montgomery County
4	**Require closed-loop cooling and protect neighbors' wells.** No evaporative cooling, and the operator restores water to any neighbor whose well fails because of the facility.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: Throop Borough (closed-loop cooling)
5	**Make the applicant pay for every grid upgrade it needs.** A certified analysis shows the applicant pays for transformers, lines and substations, not households.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: East Whiteland and Sewickley Townships
6	**Post cleanup security of 110 percent before any building permit.** Protects taxpayers if a facility closes or construction stops. Sewickley Township requires 110 percent security; residents also ask that a site idle six months be removed within six more.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County
7	**Name the operator and hold a public meeting before review.** Residents should know the operator, parent company and intended users before the Commission reviews a plan.	**§ 175-64** Adopted: Ransom and Uwchlan Townships

Also ask: call these rules "standards" rather than "design guidelines," so they are clearly mandatory.

Name what you support, too. The draft already limits sound to 10 dB(A) above background, requires facade design elements, and requires applicant-paid responder training. Thank the Commission for these.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road, Orrtanna.

padatacenterordinances.org

Section numbers refer to the proposed zoning ordinance. "Adopted" names Pennsylvania municipalities with a similar standard, as rated on the tracker.

Resident Requests

For the Franklin Township Planning Commission, November 18, 2026. Submitted by residents for the meeting record.

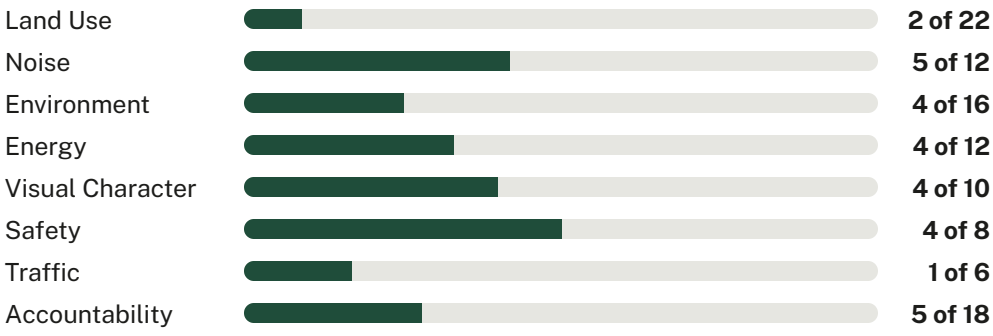
PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

THE DRAFT TODAY

29 of 104

Points the proposed ordinance earns on the tracker's 52 standards. Mt. Joy Township, Adams County, scores 41.

HOW THE DRAFT SCORES IN EACH CATEGORY



Bar length shows points earned out of points possible in each category.

OUR REQUESTS

1. **Make data centers a conditional use decided by the Supervisors.** (§ 175-26; adopted in Dallas Township, Luzerne County)
2. **Keep data center buildings and outdoor equipment at least 1,000 feet from homes.** (§ 175-64; adopted in South Strabane Township, Washington County (1,500 feet); Foster Township, Luzerne County (2,000 feet))
3. **Set noise limits in both dB(A) and dB(C), lower at night.** (§ 175-64; adopted in Franconia Township, Montgomery County)
4. **Require closed-loop cooling and protect neighbors' wells.** (§ 175-64; adopted in Throop Borough (closed-loop cooling))
5. **Make the applicant pay for every grid upgrade it needs.** (§ 175-64; adopted in East Whiteland and Sewickley Townships)
6. **Post cleanup security of 110 percent before any building permit.** (§ 175-64; adopted in Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County)
7. **Name the operator and hold a public meeting before review.** (§ 175-64; adopted in Ransom and Uwchlan Townships)

Also: call the data center rules "standards" rather than "design guidelines," so that they are clearly mandatory.

PARTS OF THE DRAFT WE SUPPORT

- Sound may not rise more than 10 dB(A) above the existing background level.
- At least two facade design elements, so buildings do not present blank walls.
- Applicant-paid training for emergency responders and annual fire safety inspections.

Full standards, sources and ratings for every Pennsylvania municipality are at padatacenterordinances.org. Residents ask that this summary be included in the meeting record.

Thank you for your service to Franklin Township. padatacenterordinances.org

Ratings are from the Pennsylvania Data Center Ordinance Tracker (padatacenterordinances.org), a free public website that rates each Pennsylvania municipality's data center rules on 52 standards worth 104 points. Section numbers refer to the proposed zoning ordinance.

Two-Minute Scripts

Pick one topic so that speakers build on each other instead of repeating. Fill in the brackets, then read it aloud and time it.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

1. DISTANCE AND SETBACKS

“Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. I live about [distance] from the Industrial Zone. Distance is the most reliable protection from noise and light. South Strabane Township requires 1,500 feet. I ask the Commission to recommend that data center buildings stand at least 1,000 feet from any home. Thank you.”

2. NOISE

“Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. Neighbors near data centers describe a constant low hum. Franconia Township limits sound to 45 dB(A) and 60 dB(C) by day, and 40 and 50 at night. I support the draft’s 10-decibel rule, too. I ask the Commission to recommend limits in both dB(A) and dB(C), lower at night. Thank you.”

3. WATER AND WELLS

“Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. My household depends on [a well / public water]. Evaporative cooling can use millions of gallons a day. Throop Borough requires closed-loop cooling. I ask the Commission to require closed-loop cooling and to make the operator restore any well its facility harms. Thank you.”

4. ELECTRIC BILLS AND THE GRID

“Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. Regional capacity prices rose sharply, largely because of data center demand. East Whiteland Township requires a certified analysis that the applicant pays. I ask the Commission to require proof that the applicant pays for every grid upgrade it needs. Thank you.”

5. CLEANUP AND OPENNESS

“Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. If a facility closes, taxpayers should not pay to remove it. Sewickley Township requires cleanup security, and Ransom Township requires the operator to be named. I ask the Commission to require 110 percent cleanup security and to have applicants name the operator before review. Thank you.”

Make it yours. Add one sentence about your own home, farm or family. A personal reason is what members remember.

What to Expect

A first meeting can feel unfamiliar. Here is how a township Planning Commission meeting usually works.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

Before you go

- Check the agenda at franklintwp.us a day or two before.
- Arrive about 15 minutes early and sign in.
- Bring two printed copies of your statement.
- Need an accommodation? Call 717-334-4901 ahead.

In the room

- Members sit at the front table, with the public facing them.
- The chair runs the meeting and calls on speakers.
- The Township staff and engineer may also attend.
- Sit near a neighbor who is speaking, for support.

HOW A MEETING USUALLY RUNS

1 **Call to order**
The chair opens the meeting.

2 **Minutes**
Members approve the last meeting's minutes.

3 **Agenda items**
Members discuss the ordinance and other business.

4 **Public comment**
Residents speak, usually with a time limit.

5 **Adjourn**
The meeting ends.

Public comment may come while the zoning ordinance is discussed or at the end of the meeting, as the chair decides; on September 16, residents spoke during the ordinance discussion. Plan to stay for the whole meeting, and listen to the discussion so you can respond to it.

When you speak

- Address the chair and the members.
- Give your name and your address.
- Keep to the time limit the chair sets.
- Hand a copy of your statement to the secretary.

Best to skip

- Applause, signs or calling out from the audience.
- Arguing with members or other speakers.
- Questions that demand an answer on the spot.
- Side conversations while members are discussing.

Do not expect a final decision that night. The Planning Commission recommends changes. The Board of Supervisors decides what goes into the ordinance, so plan to follow up at their meetings.

Good to know

- Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act lets the public record open meetings, subject to reasonable rules the Commission may set.
- A written statement you hand to the secretary can be added to the meeting record.
- If a question is not answered that night, email the Township office afterward and ask that the answer be shared.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road, Orrtanna.

padatacenterordinances.org

Meeting procedures are set by the Commission and may differ from this general outline. Questions: 717-334-4901 or info@franklintwp.us.

Speaking at the Meeting

Wednesday, November 18, 2026 · 7:00 p.m. · 55 Scott School Road

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Arrive early

Come 15 minutes early, sign in, and introduce yourself to members before the meeting. Public comment may come during the ordinance discussion or at the end, so plan to stay.

Practice with notecards

Rehearse out loud and time yourself. You do not need to memorize it.

Bring a neighbor

Members remember a view they hear from several residents. Invite others who agree.

Bring two copies

Print your statement and offer one to the secretary for the record.

YOUR TWO MINUTES

1

Who you are

Your name, your address, and any role that matters, such as farmer. If you speak for others, say so.

2

Why it matters to you

A short personal reason: your well, your farm, or your distance from the Industrial Zone.

3

One to three requests

For example, 1,000 feet from any home. Name the parts of the draft you support, too.

4

Repeat and thank

Name a township that already does it, repeat your main request, and thank the members.

A sample opening: “Good evening. My name is [name], and I live at [address]. I have lived here for [number] years, and I ask the Commission to recommend …”

HOW TO DELIVER IT

- **Speak slowly and clearly to the end of each sentence**
- **Look at the members, not the audience**
- **Glance at your notes; do not read word for word**
- **Stay calm, polite, and respectful throughout**

Helpful

- Keep to about two minutes, or the limit the chair sets.
- Thank the members. They are neighbors volunteering their evenings.
- If your point was made, say “I agree with the earlier speaker about noise” and move on.

Best to skip

- Applauding, interrupting, or arguing with members or other speakers.
- Speculating about any developer, property, or anyone’s motives.
- Saying you speak for a group unless its members have agreed.

Asked something you cannot answer? Say, “I do not know, but I would be glad to find out and follow up in writing,” then send your answer by email to info@franklintwp.us.

Cannot attend? Email info@franklintwp.us before the meeting on November 18 and ask that your comment go to the Planning Commission.

padatacenterordinances.org

Writing a Public Comment

Send before the meeting on Wednesday, November 18

info@franklintwp.us

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Send it early
A comment that arrives a few days ahead gives members time to read it before the meeting.

Know the section
The data center standards are in Section 175-64 of the proposed zoning ordinance.

Pick one to three points
A few clear requests are easier to act on than a long list.

Use the shared requests
Choose from the seven neighbors are asking for, so many voices ask for the same things.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

1. **Who you are**
Your name and your address in Franklin Township.

2. **What you ask**
A specific change, the section it affects, and a township that has already adopted it.

3. **Why it matters**
One or two sentences about your well, your farm, or your distance from the Industrial Zone.

4. **A request for the record**
Ask that your comment be shared with the Planning Commission and entered in the record.

Short on time? The Fill-In Comment Email page has a ready-made email with the seven requests as checkboxes. Fill in the blanks, add one sentence of your own, and send it.

HOW TO SEND IT

Email it
Send to info@franklintwp.us, addressed to the Planning Commission.

Use a clear subject
For example: “Public comment for the Planning Commission: data center standards.”

Keep a copy
Save your sent email, and ask the office to confirm that it arrived.

Helpful
- Be specific, polite, and brief; one page is plenty.
- Say which parts of the draft you support, too.
- Thank the members for their work on the ordinance.

Best to skip
- Sending a sample word for word without adding your own reason.
- Speculating about any developer, property, or anyone’s motives.
- Claims you cannot support with a source.

Your comment is a public record. Others may be able to read it, including your name and address, so include only what you are comfortable sharing.

Want to speak instead? The Planning Commission meets Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road.

padatacenterordinances.org

Fill-In Comment Email

Cannot attend? Copy this into an email, check your requests, and send it before the meeting on November 18. It takes about ten minutes.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

To: info@franklintwp.us

Subject: Public comment for the Planning Commission: data center standards

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

My name is _____, and I live at _____ in Franklin Township. Please share this comment with the Commission and include it in the public record. I ask the Commission to recommend these changes to the data center standards in the proposed zoning ordinance:

- ☐ Make data centers a conditional use decided by the Supervisors.
- ☐ Keep data center buildings and outdoor equipment at least 1,000 feet from homes.
- ☐ Set noise limits in both dB(A) and dB(C), lower at night.
- ☐ Require closed-loop cooling and protect neighbors' wells.
- ☐ Make the applicant pay for every grid upgrade it needs.
- ☐ Post cleanup security of 110 percent before any building permit.
- ☐ Name the operator and hold a public meeting before review.

This matters to me because:

I also support the draft's 10-decibel limit above background sound and its applicant-paid training for emergency responders. Thank you for your service to the Township.

Sincerely,
[Your name]
[Your address]

Typing it? Copy the text, delete the requests you did not choose, and fill in the blanks. **Writing by hand?** Fill it in and email a clear photo to the same address.

Send it to info@franklintwp.us before the meeting on November 18. padatacenterordinances.org

Ask the office to confirm that it arrived, and keep a copy for your records. Your comment is a public record.

What Is a Data Center?

A building full of computers that store information and run the online services people use every day.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

IN PLAIN TERMS

Every email, streamed movie, online bank balance and artificial intelligence (AI) answer is processed on a computer somewhere. A data center is where thousands of those computers, called servers, sit in rows of cabinets, running all day and night. They need a lot of electricity to run and a lot of cooling to keep from overheating.

THE MAIN PARTS

Servers

Computers stacked in tall cabinets called racks. They store data and do the computing.

Cooling

Fans, chillers and cooling towers carry heat away. Some systems evaporate water; closed-loop systems reuse it.

Power

A connection to the electric grid, often through a new substation and transformers on site.

Backup power

Battery rooms and diesel generators keep servers running during an outage, and are tested regularly.

Network

Fiber-optic lines connect the building to the internet and to other data centers.

Security

Fencing, lighting, cameras and gates. Most buildings have few windows and few staff.

HOW MUCH POWER?

Power use is measured in megawatts (MW). A facility drawing one megawatt around the clock uses about as much electricity in a year as 800 average U.S. homes. Large campuses proposed in Pennsylvania are measured in hundreds of megawatts.

HOW MUCH WATER?

It depends on the cooling system. Large data centers that evaporate water can use up to 5 million gallons a day, as much as a town of 10,000 to 50,000 people. Closed-loop cooling uses far less.

Why Pennsylvania?

Developers look for large parcels, available electric capacity, water, fiber lines and supportive local rules. Pennsylvania has all of these, which is why so many townships are now writing data center ordinances.

Learn how your municipality regulates data centers padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, average household use of 10,791 kWh in 2022; Environmental and Energy Study Institute, "Data Centers and Water Consumption," June 25, 2025.

Types of Data Centers

From a single room to campuses of many buildings, the type shapes how much land, power and water a project needs.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

Edge

Smallest

A small facility, sometimes a single shipping container or even one server cabinet about the size of a tall refrigerator (2 feet wide, 3.5 feet deep, 6.5 feet tall), placed close to users to speed up services such as phone networks.

Neighbors notice: little, beyond cooling units and a small generator.

Typical power: up to ~10 MW, most far smaller

Enterprise

Small to medium

Owned and used by one organization, such as a hospital, bank or university, for its own records and systems.

Neighbors notice: usually a single building, often part of an existing campus.

Typical power: ~ 1 to 10 MW

Colocation

Medium to large

A building that rents space, power and cooling to many different companies, which bring their own servers.

Neighbors notice: the eventual tenants are often not known when the project is proposed.

Typical power: ~ 3 to 50 MW

Hyperscale

Very large

Built for the largest cloud and technology companies. The research firm IDC defines it as at least 5,000 servers and 10,000 square feet; most are far larger.

Neighbors notice: multiple large buildings, substations and steady equipment noise.

Typical power: ~ 100 to 300+ MW · Water: up to ~5 million gallons a day with evaporative cooling

AI campus

Largest

Packs specialized AI chips tightly together, which draws far more power and heat per building. Some campuses propose their own power plants.

Neighbors notice: grid upgrades, high cooling demand, and sometimes on-site gas generation.

Typical power: ~ 100 MW to 1,000+ MW

Cryptocurrency mining

Varies

Rows of specialized computers, often in shipping containers or metal buildings, that run constantly to earn cryptocurrency.

Neighbors notice: loud cooling fans, often sited near power plants or substations.

Typical power: varies widely

RELATIVE SCALE



Typical power grows from under 10 MW for an edge facility to 1,000 MW or more for an AI campus, and land and water needs grow with it. Individual projects vary widely.

Why the definition matters

An ordinance only covers what its definition includes. The September 2026 redline of Franklin Township's proposed definition adds cryptocurrency mining, artificial intelligence processing and high-performance computing.

Learn how your municipality regulates data centers padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: IBM, "What is hyperscale?" (citing IDC thresholds); DC BLOX, "Data Center Size, Scale and Function," 2026 (typical power ranges); Environmental and Energy Study Institute, "Data Centers and Water Consumption," June 25, 2025; Franklin Township proposed zoning ordinance, September 2026 redline of Section 175-6.

How Zoning Applies

In Pennsylvania, townships and boroughs decide where a data center may go and what rules it must meet.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

EVERY USE MUST FIT SOMEWHERE

Under the state Municipalities Planning Code, a municipality may not shut out a lawful use entirely. When its zoning makes no provision for data centers, a developer can challenge the ordinance and may win approval for the site it chose. Clear rules that place data centers in a suitable district are the best protection.

Strong, but workable. Courts also judge the combined effect of all the standards. If together they leave no site that can qualify, the ordinance can be overturned, which is why some have cautioned against over-regulating. The answer is to map the district with every standard applied and confirm that workable sites remain before adoption.

THREE WAYS A USE CAN BE APPROVED

Permitted by right

The zoning officer issues a permit if the plan meets the written standards. No public hearing.

Special exception

The appointed Zoning Hearing Board holds a hearing and must approve if the stated criteria are met.

Conditional use

The elected supervisors or council hold the hearing, decide, and may attach reasonable conditions.

HOW A NEW ORDINANCE IS ADOPTED

1. Draft is written
2. Planning Commission reviews
3. County planners review
4. Advertised public hearing
5. Governing body votes

Residents can comment at every step; early comments carry the most weight.

Timing and the state

An application is generally reviewed under the rules in place when it is filed, and an advertised amendment generally applies to later applications. Under an August 18, 2026 executive order, developers must also show local zoning approval before state permits.

Rules reach beyond data centers

Data center rules often share a section, district or definition with other uses. Franklin's Section 175-64 covers data centers and battery storage together, so a change to one can affect the other. Check each rule against every project it would apply to.

Where Franklin Township stands

The 2015 zoning ordinance has no data center provision. The proposed ordinance would allow them by special exception in the Industrial Zone; it returns to Adams County and reopens for comment before a hearing.

Learn how your municipality regulates data centers padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code; Spotlight PA, "What Shapiro's new data center order does," August 25, 2026; Franklin Township Board of Supervisors workshop minutes, September 17, 2026. Not legal advice.

Common Questions

Short, factual answers to the questions residents ask most often.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

How many jobs?

Construction brings many workers for a year or more, but those jobs are temporary. A Brookings study estimated that a typical county gains roughly 100 to 200 jobs, depending on the type of facility, over a data center's first decade.

What about taxes?

Pennsylvania exempts equipment in certified data centers from sales and use tax. The state does not tax business equipment as property, so local revenue comes from the assessed value of land and buildings.

How much water?

Large data centers that evaporate water for cooling can use up to 5 million gallons a day. Closed-loop systems use far less. The state and river basin commissions permit large water withdrawals, but a township can require the type of cooling and limit water use in its standards.

Will electric bills rise?

Pennsylvania is part of the PJM grid. Its capacity price rose from $28.92 per megawatt-day for 2024 to 2025 to $269.92 for 2025 to 2026, and the independent market monitor attributed 63 percent of that increase to data centers.

Are they noisy?

Cooling equipment runs day and night, and backup generators are tested regularly. The low-frequency hum is the most common complaint, which is why some townships limit noise in both dB(A) and dB(C).

Can a township say no?

Not everywhere. Pennsylvania law requires that every lawful use be allowed somewhere. A township can choose the district, require a public hearing, and set strong standards.

Who would operate it?

Often it is not known at first. Developers may apply under a project name, and the end user may be a tenant. Some townships now require applicants to name the operator and parent company.

What does the state require?

Under an August 18, 2026 executive order, developers must show local zoning approval before state permits. Its voluntary standards include at least 200 prevailing-wage construction jobs.

Have another question?

Look up any Pennsylvania municipality's data center rules, see how they compare, and read the 52-criterion rating standard at padatacenterordinances.org.

Learn how your municipality regulates data centers padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Brookings, "New evidence on data center employment effects," updated August 10, 2026; Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, Computer Data Center Equipment Program; EESI, June 25, 2025; IEEFA, July 30, 2025; Spotlight PA, August 25, 2026.

Glossary

Plain-language meanings of the words you will hear at zoning meetings about data centers.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

ZONING AND PROCESS

Zoning ordinance. The township law that divides land into districts and says what may be built in each.

District (zone). An area on the zoning map, such as Agricultural, Residential or Industrial, with its own rules.

Permitted by right. A use the zoning officer approves when the plan meets the written rules, with no hearing.

Special exception. A use the Zoning Hearing Board must approve after a hearing if the listed criteria are met.

Conditional use. A use the Board of Supervisors decides after a hearing, with the power to attach conditions.

Zoning Hearing Board. Residents appointed by the Supervisors to hear special exceptions, variances and appeals.

Planning Commission. An appointed advisory board that reviews plans and ordinances and makes recommendations.

Board of Supervisors. The elected governing body that adopts ordinances and decides conditional uses.

SALDO. The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which governs site plans, roads and stormwater.

Curative amendment. A challenge claiming the zoning wrongly excludes a use, often with a request to build at a chosen site.

DATA CENTER TERMS

Setback. The minimum distance a building or piece of equipment must stand from a property line or a home.

Buffer. A strip of land, often planted with trees, kept between a facility and its neighbors.

dB(A) and dB(C). Decibel scales. dB(A) follows how the ear hears; dB(C) gives more weight to low-frequency hum.

Megawatt (MW). A measure of electric demand. One megawatt used all year is about the use of 800 average homes.

Closed-loop cooling. Cooling that circulates the same water or fluid instead of evaporating it, using far less water.

Substation. Fenced electrical equipment that steps power down from transmission lines for use on site.

Battery energy storage (BESS). Large banks of batteries that store electricity, including backup power at a data center.

Hyperscale. The largest class of data center, built for major cloud and technology companies.

Decommissioning security. A bond or other money posted so the township can remove a closed facility if the owner does not.

Footcandle. A measure of light falling on a surface; 0.0 at a lot line means no measurable light reaches the neighbor.

MORE TERMS YOU MAY HEAR

Variance. Permission from the Zoning Hearing Board to depart from a rule, such as a setback, when the rule causes an unusual hardship for a particular property.

Ambient (background) sound. The sound level that exists at a place before a new use begins; some ordinances cap how far a facility may raise it.

Overlay district. A zone laid over existing districts that adds rules, for example allowing data centers only in a mapped area within the Industrial Zone.

Land development plan. The detailed site plan for buildings, roads, stormwater and utilities that the Township reviews before construction.

What Happens Next

The proposed zoning ordinance has several steps to go before it can take effect, and residents can take part in every one.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

	WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART
1	**November 18, 2026**	The Planning Commission is scheduled to finish reviewing public comments on the proposed ordinance.	Attend at 7:00 p.m., speak for about two minutes, or email info@franklintwp.us beforehand.
2	**After November 18**	The Commission sends its recommended changes to the Board of Supervisors, which decides what goes into the revised draft.	Watch Supervisors' agendas, attend, and comment when the zoning ordinance is listed.
3	**Date to be announced**	The revised draft goes back to the Adams County Office of Planning and Development for review.	Ask the Township for the revised draft and, once received, the County's comments.
4	**Date to be announced**	The revised draft reopens for public comment.	Read the changes and send a written comment on what improved and what still needs work.
5	**Date to be announced**	The Supervisors hold an advertised public hearing on the final draft. Notice appears in a newspaper beforehand.	Testify at the hearing. Comments made there become part of the official record.
6	**Date to be announced**	The Supervisors vote. If adopted, the new zoning ordinance replaces the 2015 ordinance.	Follow the outcome on the tracker, and keep watching for any data center application.

Stay informed

Sign up for the Township's email list at franklintwp.us to receive every agenda and set of minutes. Agendas usually arrive a day or two before each meeting.

WHERE TO FIND EACH DOCUMENT

Meeting agendas	franklintwp.us, usually a day or two before each meeting
The proposed zoning ordinance	Township office, 717-334-4901 or info@franklintwp.us
Adams County review letter	Adams County Office of Planning and Development, or a Right-to-Know request to the Township
Public hearing notices	Legal notices in the local newspaper and on franklintwp.us

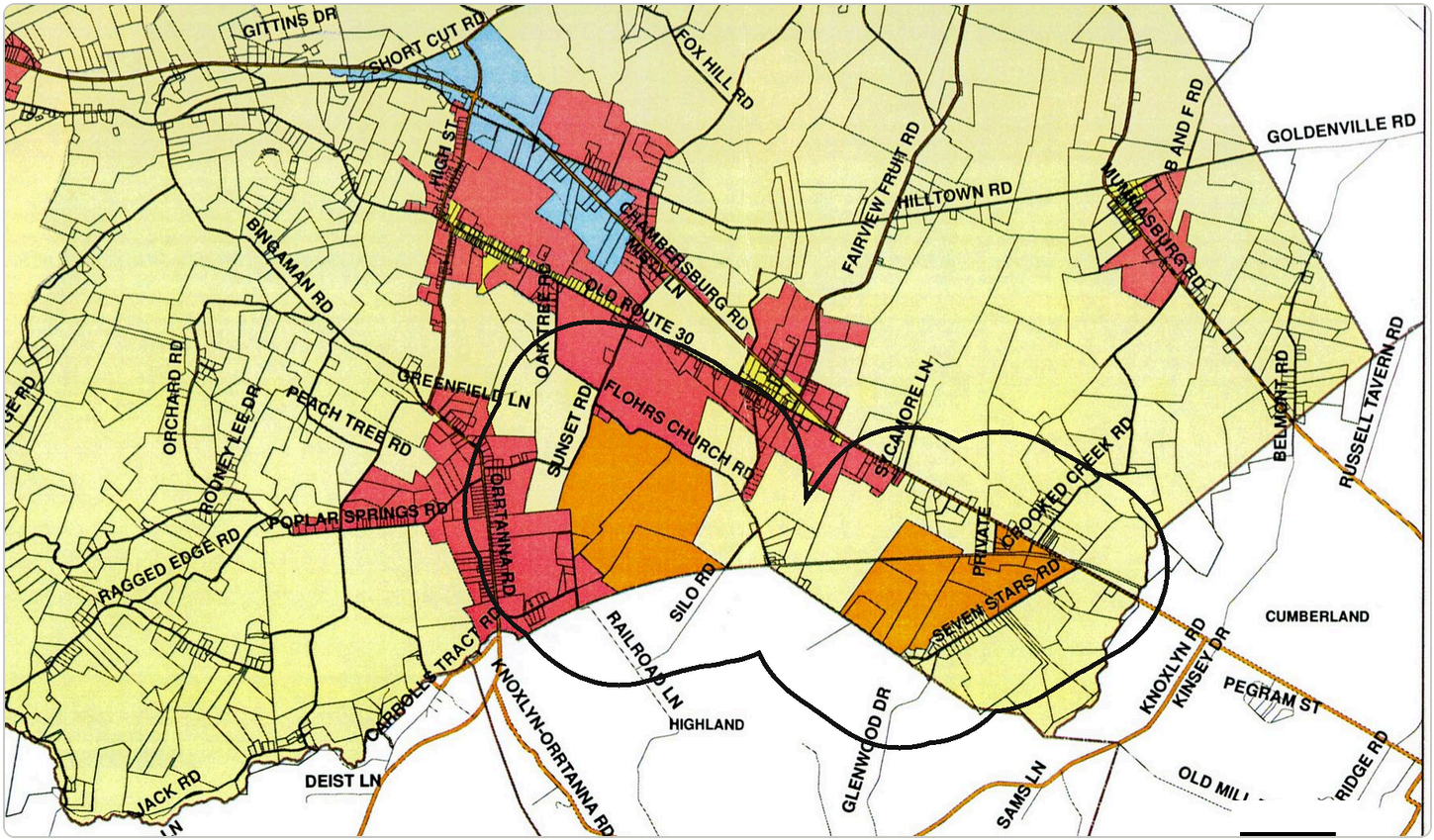
Questions? Contact the Township office at 717-334-4901. padatacenterordinances.org

Steps 3 and 4 follow the Board of Supervisors' September 17, 2026 workshop minutes. Dates will be set by the Township.

The Industrial Zone

Where the Industrial Zone sits on the current zoning map, and how far 1,000 feet reaches.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES



Industrial · Residential · Commercial · Agricultural · 1,000 feet from the Industrial Zone

about 1,000 feet

What the map shows

Two Industrial areas sit in the south of the township, near Flohrs Church Road and Silo Road and along Seven Stars Road. Residential areas along Flohrs Church Road and Orrtanna Road border them.

What 1,000 feet would mean

Homes inside the black line are within 1,000 feet of the zone. Under the requested standard, a data center building would have to stand at least 1,000 feet from any home, so it would sit in the part of a site farthest from neighbors.

Read this map with care

The base is the Township's current zoning map (February 5, 2015). The proposed ordinance's map may differ, so check it before drawing conclusions about any property. The line and scale are approximate and for illustration only.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road.

padatacenterordinances.org

Source: Zoning Map of Franklin Township, Adams County, February 5, 2015 (KPI Technology). The 1,000-foot line and scale bar were added for this guide.

How an Application Works

If a developer applies to build a data center, these are the steps, and the window to take part can be short.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

1	**Sketch plan (sometimes)** A developer may first show the Planning Commission an informal sketch of the project.	Watch agendas for "Sketch Plans." It is often the first public sign of a project.
2	**Zoning application** The developer applies for a special exception or conditional use and files the studies the ordinance requires, such as noise, water and traffic.	Application files are public. Ask the Township to see the application and its studies.
3	**Public notice** The hearing is advertised in a newspaper and posted on the property. Some ordinances also require letters to nearby owners.	Look for a posted sign and legal notices. Tell neighbors as soon as you see one.
4	**Hearing** The Zoning Hearing Board (special exception) or the Supervisors (conditional use) take sworn testimony and evidence. A hearing may run over several nights.	Ask at the start to be recognized as a party. Parties can present evidence, question witnesses and appeal.
5	**Written decision** The board issues a written decision, generally within 45 days after the last hearing, and may attach conditions.	Read the conditions. They are the promises the operator must keep.
6	**Land development plan** The detailed site plan goes to the Planning Commission and Supervisors under the subdivision and land development ordinance.	Comment on stormwater, lighting, buffers and road access at these public meetings.
7	**Permits** Building and state permits follow. Under the August 18, 2026 executive order, state permits require local zoning approval first.	State agencies post permit applications for public comment.

Deadlines are short
An appeal of a zoning decision generally must be filed in the county Court of Common Pleas within 30 days, and generally only by parties to the hearing.

See a sign or notice? Share it with your neighbors right away. padatacenterordinances.org

Based on the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and Spotlight PA, August 25, 2026. A general overview, not legal advice; consult an attorney about a specific case.

Reading an Ordinance

How to find the Township's rules, follow the section numbers, and tell what is required from what is optional.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

Where to find it
Franklin Township's adopted code is online at eCode360 (ecode360.com/FR2051), where the zoning ordinance is Chapter 175. The proposed new ordinance is available from the Township office.

Adopted or proposed?
Always check which version you are reading. The 2015 ordinance is the law today; the proposed ordinance only becomes law if the Supervisors adopt it.

HOW SECTION NUMBERS WORK

§ 175	-64	B	(2)(a)
Chapter 175, the zoning ordinance	Section 64 of that chapter	Subsection B	Paragraph 2, item a

Written together, § 175-64B(2)(a) points to one exact rule. Quote numbers like this in comments so members can find your point.

WHERE DATA CENTERS APPEAR IN THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE

§ 175-6	Definitions, including "data center"	**§ 175-26**	Uses allowed in the Industrial Zone
§ 175-27	Industrial Zone lot size, setbacks and height	**§ 175-64**	Data center and battery storage standards

Section numbers in the 2015 ordinance on eCode360 are different.

WORDS THAT MATTER

"Shall" or "must"
A requirement. The applicant has to do it.

"May"
Permission or a choice. It allows, but does not require.

"Should" or "guidelines"
Advice that may not be enforceable. Ask that it be changed to "shall."

Reading tips
Read the definitions first, since one word can widen or narrow a rule. Follow every cross-reference, such as "see § 175-34." Note exemptions and exceptions, which often matter as much as the rule itself.

FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK OF ANY RULE

1
Who decides?
The zoning officer, the Zoning Hearing Board or the Supervisors.

2
Must or may?
“Shall” is required; “may” and “should” are not.

3
Measured how?
In feet, decibels or acres, and from which point.

4
Any exceptions?
Look for “unless,” “except” and waivers.

5
Enforced how?
Fines, permit revocation or required corrections.

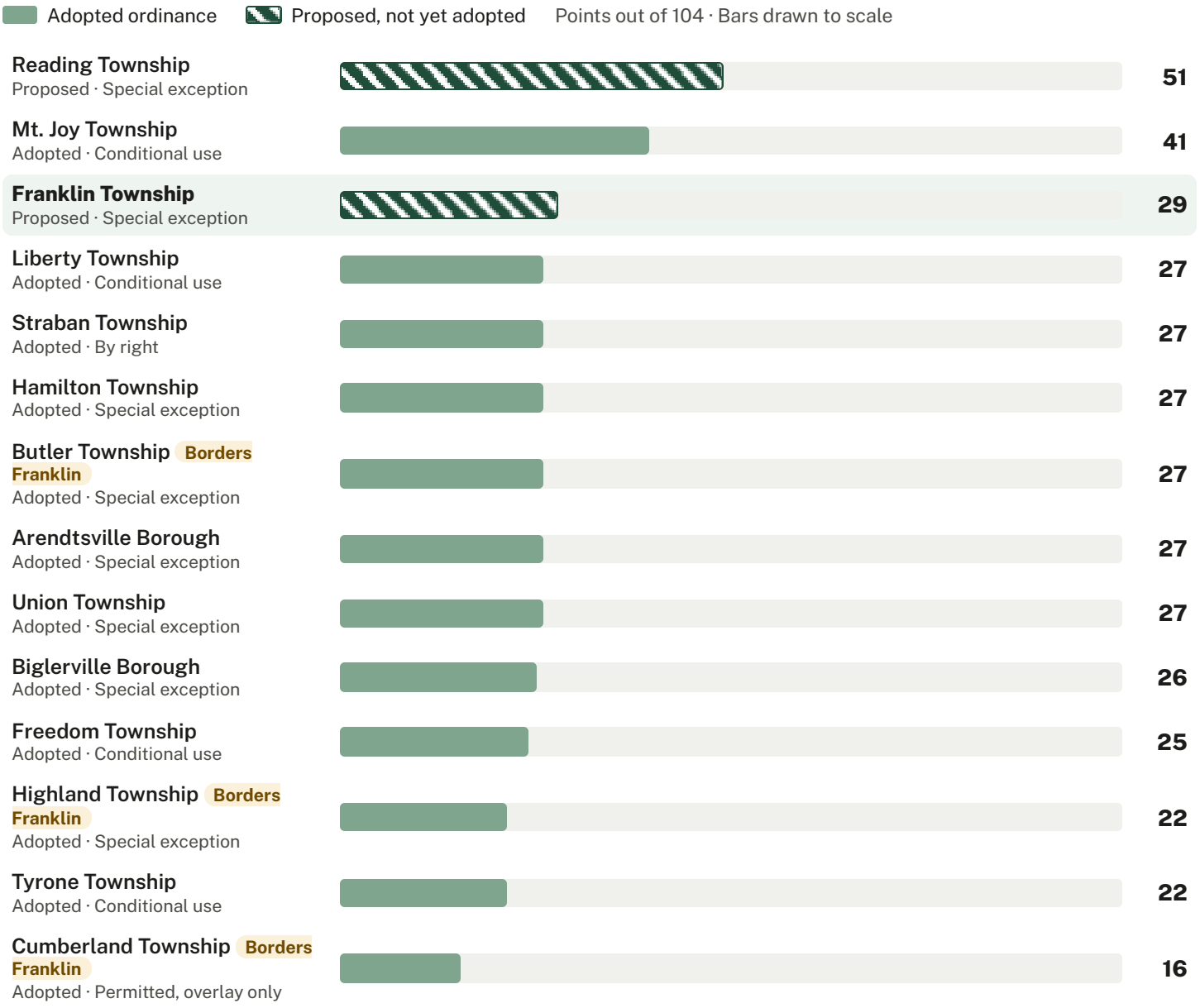
Need the proposed ordinance? Ask the Township office at 717-334-4901 or info@franklintwp.us.

padatacenterordinances.org

Comparing Adams County

Franklin's proposed data center standards beside every rated ordinance in Adams County, on the tracker's 104-point scale.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES



Where Franklin stands

At 29 points, the draft would rank second among Adams County's adopted ordinances, behind Mt. Joy (41), and still leaves 75 of 104 points unearned. Every ordinance shown leaves more than half of the 104 points unearned.

Neighbors to learn from

Mt. Joy Township has the strongest adopted ordinance, with a conditional use process, a 0.0-footcandle lighting limit and a 300-foot tank setback. Reading Township's proposed draft scores 51.

See every Pennsylvania municipality's rating and the 52 criteria padatacenterordinances.org

Source: Pennsylvania Data Center Ordinance Tracker ratings as of November 2026. Municipalities with no data center rules, or whose text could not be rated, are not shown.

Land Use

Where a data center may go, how large it may be, and who approves it.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

These choices decide how close a facility can come to homes and farms. The current zoning map places the Industrial Zone beside the Residential Zone along Flohrs Church Road, and the draft sets no building setback from homes, lot size or height of its own for data centers, only a 200-foot setback for loading areas.

THE DRAFT TODAY

2 of 22 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 1 to 11

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

District limits	Partly	Approval process	Partly
Agricultural land	Missing	Minimum lot size	Missing
Maximum scale	Missing	Residential setback	Missing
Sensitive-use setbacks	Missing	Height	Missing
Natural resources	Missing	Data center separation	Missing
Expansion limits	Missing		

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

Our elected Supervisors decide, through a conditional use hearing, and approval lapses if construction does not begin within one year.

Adopted in Dallas Township, Luzerne County

At least 1,000 feet from homes, residential districts and sensitive receptors such as schools.

Others adopted 1,500 feet (South Strabane Township) and 2,000 feet (Foster Township)

A 30-acre minimum lot and a 40-foot height limit that includes rooftop equipment.

Adopted minimum lots range up to 120 acres

No data center on preserved farmland or in an agricultural security area.

Preserved farmland bar adopted in Dennison Township, Luzerne County

A cap of 500,000 square feet of building footprint per lot.

Upper Bern Township, Berks County, caps each building at 500,000 square feet

A new approval for any expansion, and 1,000 feet between data centers on separate lots.

Adopted in Ransom Township and Ontelaunee Township

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

padatacenterordinances.org

Noise

How loud a data center may be at its property line, day and night, and how that is measured.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Cooling fans and backup generators can run around the clock. Their low-frequency hum carries farther than ordinary sound, and A-weighted readings, the only kind the draft limits, understate it. The draft requires a frequency study but sets no limit in C-weighted decibels, which measure that hum.

THE DRAFT TODAY

5 of 12 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 12 to 17

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Noise limits (55 dB(A) day, 45 night)	Partly	Cap over background sound	Partly
Low-frequency noise	Partly	Sound studies	Partly
Generator testing limits	Missing	Vibration	Partly

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

Limits of 45 dB(A) and 60 dB(C) by day, and 40 dB(A) and 50 dB(C) at night, measured as one-hour averages.

Limits adopted in Franconia Township, Montgomery County; one-hour averaging is a resident request

Keep the draft's rule that sound may not rise more than 10 dB(A) above the existing background level.

Already in the proposed ordinance

Generator testing limited to one hour per generator per month, on weekdays between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., with annual emissions testing.

Testing rule adopted in East Whiteland Township, Chester County

A baseline sound study, follow-up studies at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months after opening, and an acoustical engineer appointed by the Supervisors.

Adopted in Smithfield Township, Monroe County

What the units mean

dB(A) approximates how the human ear hears sound. dB(C) gives more weight to the low-frequency hum of fans, transformers and generators. Each 10-decibel step sounds roughly twice as loud.

Why noise limits matter for health

- Long-term noise is linked to disturbed sleep, annoyance, heart disease and poorer learning in children (*The Lancet*, 2014).
- The World Health Organization recommends night noise below 40 dB(A) outside bedrooms, the night limit residents are requesting.
- Wildlife begin to respond to noise at about 40 dB(A), with changes in behavior, stress and breeding (*Biological Reviews*, 2016).

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

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Health sources: Basner and others, The Lancet, 2014; World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, noise fact sheet; Shannon and others, Biological Reviews, 2016.

Environment

Wells, cooling water, stormwater, air and waste heat.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Many homes and farms in Franklin Township depend on private wells. Some data centers use large amounts of water for cooling, and their fuel, generator and battery areas can send polluted runoff into streams.

THE DRAFT TODAY

4 of 16 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 18 to 25

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Water supply study	Partly	Cooling method	Missing
Water use monitoring	Partly	Wastewater	Met
Stormwater	Missing	Air emissions	Missing
Waste heat	Missing	Electronic waste	Missing

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

Closed-loop cooling that does not evaporate water; no open-loop systems.
Adopted in Throop Borough, Lackawanna County

Public water, not private wells, for cooling wherever public water is available.
Adopted in Granville Township, Mifflin County

A plan to cut water use during declared droughts and emergencies.
Adopted in Carroll Township, Perry County

The operator restores water to any neighbor whose well fails because of the facility.
Requested in a resident's September 26, 2026 public comment

The site is treated as a stormwater hotspot, with treatment of all of its runoff.
Adopted in Chadds Ford Township, Delaware County

A thermal impact plan that evaluates reusing waste heat; residents also ask that heat not be felt past the property line.
Adopted in Windsor Township, Berks County

Why the focus is on cooling systems

The state Water Resources Planning Act bars a township from regulating the amount of a water withdrawal. It still allows land use rules and requirements to connect to public water, which is why these requests address the cooling system itself.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

Energy

Electric capacity, grid upgrades, on-site power and battery systems.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

A large data center can need new substations, transformers and transmission lines. When the developer does not pay for those upgrades, the cost can reach the bills of existing customers.

THE DRAFT TODAY

4 of 12 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 26 to 31

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Utility capacity confirmed	Met	Energy plan	Missing
On-site power plants	Missing	Substations and lines	Partly
Battery storage	Partly	Grid cost disclosure	Missing

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

A certified analysis showing that the applicant pays for every grid upgrade, transformer and transmission line its facility needs.

Adopted in East Whiteland Township and Sewickley Township

An energy plan stating peak demand and annual use, and rooftop solar on at least half of the unused roof area.

Rooftop solar adopted in Sewickley Township; an energy plan is also required in Windsor Township

Fire code protections (NFPA 855) and dedicated battery fire suppression on every battery system, including backup batteries.

Adopted in East Whiteland Township, Chester County

A third-party electrical inspection before the certificate of occupancy issues.

Adopted in North Beaver Township, Lawrence County

Who sets electric rates here: check the name on your bill

If your bill says Met-Ed

The state Public Utility Commission sets Met-Ed's rates. You can comment when Met-Ed asks the Commission to change rates or to set terms for very large customers, and you can file a complaint with the Commission at puc.pa.gov or 1-800-692-7380.

If your bill says Adams Electric

The Commission does not set cooperative rates; a board elected by the members does. At the annual meeting or in writing, ask the board whether a data center would pay minimum demand charges, post collateral and owe exit fees, so other members do not carry its costs.

Either way, a zoning rule cannot set rates, but it can require a letter from the utility confirming it can serve the site, the expected peak demand, and proof that the applicant pays for its own upgrades.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

Visual Character

Buffers, lighting, building design, screening and views.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Large buildings, rooftop equipment, fences and all-night lighting change the rural character of the roads around them. Night lighting in particular can reach well past a property line.

THE DRAFT TODAY

4 of 10 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 32 to 36

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Buffers (50 feet)	Partly	Lighting	Partly
Building design	Partly	Fencing and screening	Partly
Viewshed	Missing		

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

No measurable light at any neighboring lot line: a limit of 0.0 footcandles.

Adopted in Mt. Joy Township, Adams County

Visual and sound screening of all equipment on all sides, and a 40-foot height limit that includes rooftop equipment.

Requested in an October 2026 resident comment

A visual impact assessment, with photo simulations from the public roads, parks and historic sites where the facility would be seen.

Adopted in Emporium Borough and Hanover Township (Washington County)

Keep the draft's requirement for at least two facade design elements, so buildings do not present blank walls.

Already in the proposed ordinance

What a footcandle is

A footcandle measures how much light falls on a surface. A limit of 0.0 at the lot line means that the site's lights add no measurable light to a neighbor's property.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

Safety

Emergency plans, first responders, hazardous materials and inspections.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Battery rooms, diesel fuel tanks and high-voltage equipment need an emergency plan that the local fire company has reviewed and practiced before anything goes wrong.

THE DRAFT TODAY

4 of 8 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 37 to 40

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Emergency plan	Partly	First responder training	Partly
Hazardous materials	Partly	Inspections	Partly

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

An annual review of the emergency plan with the fire company and an annual drill, with the plan updated whenever equipment changes.

Annual review and drill adopted in South Strabane Township, Washington County

Battery fire protections on every battery system: NFPA 855, dedicated suppression, gas detection and explosion venting.

Adopted in East Whiteland Township, Chester County

No tank of flammable or hazardous material within 300 feet of any residential property.

Adopted in Mt. Joy Township, Adams County

Keep the draft's applicant-paid responder training and annual fire safety inspections.

Already in the proposed ordinance

Why batteries need their own rules

The draft's battery standards are written for battery storage sites, and it does not say whether they cover a data center's backup batteries. Failing batteries can release flammable gases, which is why the fire code standard NFPA 855 calls for gas detection, suppression and explosion venting.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

padatacenterordinances.org

Traffic

Traffic studies, road access and construction impacts.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Building a data center brings heavy trucks for months, and many township roads were not built for that load. The draft's traffic study covers daily operations but not construction.

THE DRAFT TODAY

1 of 6 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 41 to 43

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Traffic study	Partly	Road access	Missing	Construction impacts	Missing

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

A traffic study that covers construction, construction limited to 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and haul routes the Township Engineer approves.

Construction hours and haul routes adopted in Greene Township, Beaver County; the construction traffic study is a resident request

A road maintenance agreement, backed by a bond, signed before any building permit issues, so the developer pays to repair damage.

Adopted in Greene Township, Beaver County

Access from an arterial or major collector road, or from a road the Township Engineer finds adequate after a study the applicant pays for.

Arterial or collector access adopted in Lower Saucon and Londonderry Townships; the Engineer road study is a resident request

A second access for emergency vehicles.

Adopted in Lower Saucon Township and Londonderry Township

Who pays for road damage

State rules (67 Pa. Code Chapter 189) let a township post weight limits on its roads and require haulers to sign an excess maintenance agreement with security. Writing that requirement into the data center standards makes it a condition of approval, so repairs do not fall to taxpayers.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

Accountability

Cleanup money, reporting, enforcement, review costs and openness.



PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

WHY IT MATTERS

Rules protect residents only if they are reported on, enforced and paid for, and if residents know who the applicant is. Cleanup money posted up front protects taxpayers if a facility closes or construction stops.

THE DRAFT TODAY

5 of 18 points

Tracker rating of the proposed ordinance, criteria 44 to 52

WHERE THE DRAFT STANDS

Decommissioning	Partly	Cost updates	Missing
Definition scope	Partly	Compliance reporting	Met
Enforcement	Missing	Independent review	Partly
Public engagement	Missing	Confidentiality agreements	Missing
Applicant disclosure	Missing		

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE ASKING

Cleanup security of 110 percent, posted before any building permit; residents also ask that a facility idle six months be presumed abandoned and removed within six more.

Security adopted in Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County, which presumes abandonment after 12 months

Name the operator, parent company and intended users, and hold a public meeting before Planning Commission review.

Adopted in Ransom Township and Uwchlan Township

An annual compliance report on noise, water and power use, with violations enforceable and approval revocable for repeat violations.

Report adopted in Scrubgrass Township, Venango County

The applicant reimburses the Township's consultant review of its studies, where state law allows.

Adopted in Ransom Township, Lackawanna County

If any official has signed a confidentiality agreement with a developer, disclosure and recusal from the decision.

Goes beyond adopted ordinances; rests on the right to a fair hearing

Call the data center rules "standards" rather than "design guidelines," so that they are clearly mandatory.

A wording change to the proposed ordinance

Planning Commission: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m., 55 Scott School Road. Or email info@franklintwp.us.

padatacenterordinances.org

Jobs, Taxes and Bills

What a data center would and would not bring to the Township's economy and to household budgets.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	A data center will bring hundreds of permanent jobs.
FACT:	**Most of the jobs are temporary.** Construction employs many workers for a year or more. A Brookings study estimated that a typical county gains roughly 100 to 200 jobs, depending on the type of facility, over a data center's first decade.
MYTH #2:	A data center pays so much tax that everyone's taxes will go down.
FACT:	**Much of a data center's value is not taxed locally.** Pennsylvania exempts equipment in certified data centers from sales and use tax, and it does not tax business equipment as property. Local revenue comes from the assessed value of land and buildings.
MYTH #3:	Data centers have nothing to do with our electric bills.
FACT:	**They are a large part of rising grid costs.** In the PJM grid, the capacity price rose from $28.92 per megawatt-day for 2024 to 2025 to $269.92 for 2025 to 2026. The independent market monitor attributed 63 percent of that increase to data centers.
MYTH #4:	The state already guarantees benefits for the community.
FACT:	**Most of the state's standards are voluntary.** The August 18, 2026 executive order requires local zoning approval before state permits. Its community standards, such as 200 prevailing-wage construction jobs, are voluntary. Local rules still matter most.

Ask for numbers, and ask where they come from.

padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Brookings, updated August 10, 2026; Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, Computer Data Center Equipment Program; IEEFA, July 30, 2025; Spotlight PA, August 25, 2026.

Water, Noise and Light

What living near a data center can be like, and what an ordinance can do about it.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	Any data center will drain our wells.
FACT:	**It depends on how the building is cooled.** Large data centers that evaporate water for cooling can use up to 5 million gallons a day. Closed-loop systems use far less. The state and river basin commissions permit large water withdrawals, but a township can require the type of cooling and limit water use in its standards.
MYTH #2:	A data center is just a quiet warehouse.
FACT:	**Cooling equipment runs day and night.** Fans and chillers run around the clock, and the low-frequency hum is the most common complaint. That is why some townships limit noise in both dB(A) and dB(C) at the property line.
MYTH #3:	Backup generators only run during a blackout.
FACT:	**Generators are also run for routine testing.** Large sites can have dozens of diesel generators that are started on a regular schedule for testing. An ordinance can limit testing to weekday daytime hours and require advance notice.
MYTH #4:	A bright glow all night cannot be avoided.
FACT:	**Lighting can be controlled by ordinance.** Townships can require shielded, downward-facing fixtures, set limits on light at the property line, and require landscaped buffers that screen the site from homes and roads.

Every impact on this page can be addressed in the ordinance. padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: EESI, June 25, 2025; standards adopted by Pennsylvania municipalities, as rated on the tracker; the tracker's 52-criterion rating standard.

Rules and Process

What the law allows a township to do, and how residents can take part.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	The township can simply ban data centers.
FACT:	**Every lawful use must be allowed somewhere.** Pennsylvania law requires that a lawful use be allowed somewhere in the township. A township can choose the district, require a public hearing and set strong standards.
MYTH #2:	The stricter the rules, the better we are protected.
FACT:	**Rules must still leave a workable site.** Courts weigh all of the standards together. Rules that leave no site where a data center could qualify can be overturned, so strong standards must still be achievable.
MYTH #3:	Nothing can happen until the new ordinance is adopted.
FACT:	**An application can come at any time.** An application is generally reviewed under the rules in place when it is filed, unless a new ordinance is already formally pending, and the current 2015 ordinance has no data center provision. Timely adoption matters.
MYTH #4:	Residents have no say once an application is filed.
FACT:	**Residents can take part at every step.** Hearings are public, and residents can ask to be recognized as parties, present evidence and question witnesses. Parties can appeal a decision, generally within 30 days.

Comments made at public meetings become part of the record.

padatacenterordinances.org

Based on the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. A general overview, not legal advice; consult an attorney about a specific case.

Jobs and the Economy

What residents hear about jobs, local business and home values, and what the evidence shows.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	A data center brings a lot of spending to local businesses.
FACT:	**Most of the money goes to equipment made elsewhere.** One analysis found that about 75 percent of a data center's cost goes to servers and networking equipment, while only about 2.5 percent goes to construction that might hire local workers.
MYTH #2:	A large data center employs hundreds of people once it opens.
FACT:	**Most employ a few dozen to about one hundred.** The Ohio River Valley Institute estimates that a major data center employs 27 to 111 people.
MYTH #3:	A data center will draw other businesses that stay for good.
FACT:	**The evidence is mixed.** Supporters say data centers attract cloud, telecom and fiber companies. Critics note that data centers often last 15 to 25 years and lose taxable value as they age. Ask for local examples.
MYTH #4:	A data center always lowers nearby home values.
FACT:	**Studies so far do not show that.** A George Mason University study of 2023 home sales in Northern Virginia found that homes closer to data centers sold for more. The authors note that other factors may explain this. A suburban market also differs from rural Adams County.

Ask developers for local numbers, not national ones.

padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Ohio River Valley Institute, November 11, 2025; Wyandotte Economic Development Council, July 8, 2026; Stop the Data Centers, Livingston County, Michigan; George Mason University Schar School, Data Centers and 2023 Home Sales in Northern Virginia, 2025.

Taxes and Electricity

How Pennsylvania taxes data centers, and who pays for the power lines they need.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	The state's data center tax break costs Pennsylvania very little.
FACT:	**Its cost is large and growing.** The sales and use tax exemption is projected to cost about $2 billion in revenue by mid-2031. The Department of Revenue says the actual cost is unknown, because purchases are not reported when they are made.
MYTH #2:	Data centers in Pennsylvania pay no taxes at all.
FACT:	**They still pay property tax.** The exemption covers state sales tax on certain equipment, not property tax on land and buildings. To qualify, a data center must meet minimum job and investment levels set by state law.
MYTH #3:	Loudoun County, Virginia, proves that data centers pay for everything.
FACT:	**Virginia taxes what Pennsylvania does not.** Much of Loudoun's revenue comes from taxing servers and other equipment as property. Pennsylvania does not tax business equipment as property, so Loudoun's figures do not carry over here.
MYTH #4:	The data center will pay for all of its own grid upgrades.
FACT:	**Pennsylvania's rules are only guidance so far.** In May 2026, the Public Utility Commission issued a model tariff saying large users should pay for the grid upgrades they cause, but it guides utilities rather than binding them. As of May 2026, a House bill to make it law had stalled in the Senate.

Pennsylvania tax rules differ from Virginia's, so compare carefully. padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Spotlight PA, February 19, 2026; Gigafact, June 24, 2026; Wyandotte Economic Development Council, July 8, 2026; Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Final Order, May 13, 2026; Spotlight PA, May 18, 2026.

Water and the Grid

What cooling systems really use, where the water goes, and what growth means for the grid.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	A data center is a steady load that only helps the grid.
FACT:	**Data center growth is raising grid costs.** An Ohio River Valley Institute analysis reports that PJM attributes about $1.7 billion of a projected increase in capacity costs for Pennsylvania ratepayers to data center growth. Steady demand still needs new supply.
MYTH #2:	Closed-loop cooling uses no water at all.
FACT:	**It uses less water, but not none.** Closed-loop systems still need water to replace losses, and generating a data center's electricity also uses water. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory estimated 211 billion gallons used this way in 2023, about 12 times the water used directly for cooling.
MYTH #3:	Data centers already use a large share of a state's water.
FACT:	**Statewide, the share is small but growing.** Virginia's legislative auditors estimated that data centers used about 2.1 billion gallons in 2023, or about 0.5 percent of the state's water use. A later study put the share at 1.4 percent. Local effects can still be large.
MYTH #4:	Cooling water leaving a data center is clean.
FACT:	**Discharged water needs a permit.** Water flushed from cooling systems, called blowdown, contains minerals and treatment chemicals. A discharge to a stream needs a state permit, and an ordinance can require the applicant to explain how wastewater will be handled.

Ask which cooling system is proposed and where the water will go.

padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Ohio River Valley Institute, November 11, 2025; Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report; Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, Report 598, December 2024; Cardinal News, August 24, 2026; Wyandotte Economic Development Council, July 8, 2026.

Noise and Growth

How loud a data center can be, whether one leads to more, and how to tell a rumor from a real project.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

MYTH #1:	Generators are tested only a few hours a year, so they do not matter.
FACT:	**Tests are short, but loud.** Industry groups say testing is brief, but a Kansas guide reports that generators reach 85 to 100 dB(A) during tests, compared with 55 to 75 dB(A) for cooling equipment. An ordinance can limit when tests happen.
MYTH #2:	60 decibels is like a conversation, so it is not a problem.
FACT:	**The difference is that it never stops.** A conversation ends, but cooling equipment runs day and night. Low-frequency hum also travels farther and passes through walls more easily than higher-pitched sound.
MYTH #3:	Once one data center comes, the township cannot stop more.
FACT:	**Each project still needs approval.** Data centers tend to cluster where fiber and power lines already run, but each new one must meet the zoning ordinance. The ordinance decides which districts allow them and what standards apply.
MYTH #4:	Every inquiry means a data center is coming.
FACT:	**Many inquiries never lead to a project.** Developers scout many sites at once, often under code names, and many inquiries never reach construction. A project moves forward only if power, permits and demand all line up.

Rely on public filings and agendas, not rumors.

padatacenterordinances.org

Sources: Wyandotte Economic Development Council, July 8, 2026; Maryland Tech Council, Data Center Alliance of Maryland; Kansas Department of Commerce data center reference guide, as cited by Wyandotte County.

NEIGHBOR VOICES FROM ACROSS THE U.S. · 1 OF 5

What Neighbors Hear

Residents across the country describe the sound of living near a data center, in their own words.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

> *"It's really difficult to live in my house and yard when they're on. … I literally just leave my house."*

Susan Jurges · **West Jordan, Utah**
Lives across the street from a data center campus.

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE
October 21, 2026

> *"I work part-time from home, and so it's just this constant drone. … It's pretty awful."*

Elisabeth Rogers · **West Jordan, Utah**
Her front porch faces the same campus.

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE
October 21, 2026

> *"It's just a constant whir at a frequency that's obnoxious."*

Dale Browne · **Prince William County, Virginia**
President, Great Oak Homeowners Association.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
September 13, 2022

> *"To me, this sounds like someone is down my street, in their car, laying on their horn nonstop."*

Amy Weber · **Chandler, Arizona**
Lives near a data center that neighbors said hummed nonstop.

ABC15 ARIZONA
April 20, 2018

> *"I used to hear the kids at recess. … Now, this is the only junk I hear."*

Mike Phillips · **Prince William County, Virginia**
Describing data center construction near his home.

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION
June 25, 2025

Noise was the most common complaint in these reports.

padatacenterordinances.org

Quotes are excerpts from the published news reports named on each card; "…" marks words left out. Read each source for full context.

NEIGHBOR VOICES FROM ACROSS THE U.S. · 2 OF 5

Water, Land and Home

Neighbors describe what changed for their wells, their views and the homes they planned to stay in.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

“I’m scared to drink our own water. … It was supposed to be our forever home.”

Beverly Morris · **Newton County, Georgia**
Retiree whose well water changed after construction next door.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
July 2025

Described his water as “so brown, you’d think it came from a creek.”

Chris Wilson · **Newton County, Georgia**
Lives three doors down from the Morris family.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
July 2025

“Why did you build it so close to residential area?”

Ana Marshall · **Ahwatukee, Phoenix, Arizona**
Homeowner near a data center under construction.

AZFAMILY
October 28, 2026

“And now you can’t see anything. … It breaks my heart.”

Marylin Collard · **West Jordan, Utah**
Lives beside a data center campus that now blocks her mountain view.

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE
October 21, 2026

Neighbors described what changed in the homes they had planned to stay in. padatacenterordinances.org

Quotes are excerpts from the published news reports named on each card; “…” marks words left out. Read each source for full context.

NEIGHBOR VOICES FROM ACROSS THE U.S. · 3 OF 5

Community and Money

Residents disagree about what data centers give back. Here are voices from more than one side.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

"The amount of tax money is not worth our lives."

Justin Pearson · **South Memphis, Tennessee**
State representative for South Memphis, where he lives.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT COALITION
October 1, 2025

"We've become a company town, and we are very much dependent on these data centers."

Julie Bolthouse · **Loudoun County, Virginia**
Speaking about her county's reliance on data centers.

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION
June 25, 2025

"It's generally positive."

David Spahr · **Ashburn, Virginia**
Retiree who has lived in Ashburn for three decades; says the revenue keeps his home taxes from going up.

THE WASHINGTON POST
April 15, 2026

"Data centers are the gift that keep on giving to the community."

Michelle Thomas · **Loudoun County, Virginia**
Pastor and NAACP leader.

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION
June 25, 2025

"If you want to be business partners then come in as business partners. ... Or go away."

John Nicely · **Perry, Ohio**
Perry resident and school bus driver.

VOX
November 5, 2026

Ask what a project would give back, and get it in writing.

padatacenterordinances.org

Quotes are excerpts from the published news reports named on each card; "..." marks words left out. Read each source for full context.

NEIGHBOR VOICES FROM ACROSS THE U.S. · 4 OF 5

Farm Country Speaks Up

Farmers and rural neighbors, including in Pennsylvania, on land, water and having a voice.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

“Don’t lay down and let them roll over you.”

Mark Shultz · **Montour County, Pennsylvania**
Farmer of about 500 acres in the county where a data center was proposed.

CIVIL EATS
March 30, 2026

“If we can’t get water, we can’t survive.”

Mike Leighow · **Montour County, Pennsylvania**
Farmer of 105 acres of corn and soybeans.

CIVIL EATS
March 30, 2026

“Public participation matters, and it has mattered here.”

Rebecca Dressler · **Montour County, Pennsylvania**
County commissioner, after the rezoning for a data center was denied.

CIVIL EATS
March 30, 2026

“You feel kind of helpless. … I hope the Public Service Commission can help us.”

Amanda Green · **Carroll County, Maryland**
Of a farm in the path of a power line planned to meet data center demand.

RENEWABLE ENERGY WORLD
January 7, 2025

In Montour County, Pennsylvania, residents spoke up and the rezoning was denied. padatacenterordinances.org

Quotes are excerpts from the published news reports named on each card; “…” marks words left out. Read each source for full context.

NEIGHBOR VOICES FROM ACROSS THE U.S. · 5 OF 5

Traffic and Change

Near Meta's campus in rural Richland Parish, Louisiana, neighbors describe construction traffic and a town in change.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

"Nobody hadn't come talk to me about nothing."

Dorothy Lively · **Holly Ridge, Louisiana**
Lives at a corner on the construction route.

WWNO, GULF STATES NEWSROOM
November 19, 2025

"They think they run this road."

Tatjana Thompson · **Holly Ridge, Louisiana**
Lives across the highway from the site, speaking of construction trucks.

WWNO, GULF STATES NEWSROOM
November 19, 2025

"Well, it's helping the community, but it's making it rough for us old folks, trying to drive in all that traffic."

Joyce Piercy · **Richland Parish, Louisiana**
Longtime resident, age 81.

WVUE FOX 8
May 12, 2026

"This is the busiest it's ever been."

Jesse Johns · **Rayville, Louisiana**
Rayville restaurant owner for almost 25 years.

WVUE FOX 8
May 12, 2026

"A rental that might've been $600-$700/month is now $2,500/month."

Emmett "Lee" Brown · **Richland Parish, Louisiana**
Parish tax assessor, on local housing costs.

WVUE FOX 8
May 12, 2026

Ask for a traffic plan and road repair commitments before construction starts. padatacenterordinances.org

Quotes are excerpts from the published news reports named on each card; "…" marks words left out. Read each source for full context.

Sources

Every study, record and news report cited in this package, so that anyone can check the facts.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

PENNSYLVANIA LAW AND GOVERNMENT

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- Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, Computer Data Center Equipment Program
- Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Final Order on the large load model tariff, May 13, 2026
- Governor's executive order on data centers, August 18, 2026, as reported by Spotlight PA

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP AND ADAMS COUNTY

- Franklin Township proposed zoning ordinance, July 2026 draft and September 2026 redline (§§ 175-6, 175-26, 175-27 and 175-64)
- Zoning Map of Franklin Township, February 5, 2015 (KPI Technology)
- Franklin Township Board of Supervisors workshop minutes, September 17, 2026
- Adams County Office of Planning and Development, County Review of ORD-26-015, September 14, 2026

RESEARCH AND DATA

- Brookings, "New evidence on data center employment effects," updated August 10, 2026
- Environmental and Energy Study Institute, "Data Centers and Water Consumption," June 25, 2025
- Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, July 30, 2025
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report
- Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, Report 598, December 2024
- U.S. Energy Information Administration, average household electricity use, 2022
- Ohio River Valley Institute, November 11, 2025
- George Mason University Schar School, Data Centers and 2023 Home Sales in Northern Virginia, 2025
- IBM, "What is hyperscale?" (citing IDC)

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- Cardinal News, August 24, 2026
- DC BLOX, "Data Center Size, Scale and Function," 2026
- Wyandotte Economic Development Council, July 8, 2026
- Maryland Tech Council, Data Center Alliance of Maryland
- Stop the Data Centers, Livingston County, Michigan
- Kansas Department of Commerce data center reference guide, as cited by the Wyandotte Economic Development Council

NEIGHBOR VOICES QUOTES

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- The New York Times, July 2025
- The Washington Post, April 15, 2026
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, June 25, 2025
- Associated Press, September 13, 2022
- ABC15 Arizona, April 20, 2018
- AZFamily, October 28, 2026
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition, October 1, 2025
- Vox, November 5, 2026
- Civil Eats, March 30, 2026
- Renewable Energy World, January 7, 2025
- WWNO, Gulf States Newsroom, November 19, 2025 (republished by the Louisiana Illuminator, November 22, 2025)
- WVUE Fox 8, May 12, 2026

RATINGS

- Pennsylvania Data Center Ordinance Tracker, 52-criterion, 104-point rating standard, ratings as of November 2026

Quotes are excerpts; read each source for full context.

padatacenterordinances.org

Most sources are linked from padatacenterordinances.org. This package is a general overview, not legal advice.

Contacts and Key Dates

Keep this page handy. It has everyone to contact and the dates to watch.

PENNSYLVANIA DATA CENTER ORDINANCE TRACKER
LOCAL VOICE, CLEAR RULES

Franklin Township Office

55 Scott School Road, Orrtanna, PA 17353

Phone: 717-334-4901

Email: info@franklintwp.us

Website: franklintwp.us

Township meetings

Planning Commission: usually the third Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Board of Supervisors: see franklintwp.us for dates

Agendas are usually posted a day or two before each meeting.

Adams County Office of Planning and Development

670 Old Harrisburg Road, Suite 100, Gettysburg, PA 17325

Phone: 717-337-9824

Reviews township zoning before adoption

Stay informed

Sign up for the Township email list at franklintwp.us.

Follow Franklin's entry on the tracker for every change.

Send written comments by email. Speakers may also hand in a copy of what they read.

KEY DATES

Wednesday, November 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission is scheduled to finish reviewing public comments.
After November 18	The Board of Supervisors decides what goes into the revised draft.
Date to be announced	The revised draft returns to Adams County for review, then reopens for public comment.
Date to be announced	The Supervisors hold an advertised public hearing, then vote.

Scan for the full tracker

Open padatacenterordinances.org to see every Pennsylvania municipality's data center rules, how each is rated, and the latest changes.