BERKS COUNTY
Planning Commission

County of Berks South Campus | 400 E. Wyomissing Ave., Suite D, Box 2 | Mohnton, PA 19540
**Phone: 610.478.6300 | Email: planning@berkspa.gov**

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June 3, 2026

Perry Township Board of Supervisors
680 Moselem Springs Road
Shoemakersville, PA 19555-9415

**Subject:** Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment
**Project ID #:** 47 20260506 99
**Text Section(s):** Section 601; 209.3(h); 410.5

Dear Perry Township Supervisors:

In accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Berks County Planning Commission has reviewed the proposal to establish rules and regulations governing data center uses. The following comments are offered for consideration:

## A. General Comments:

1. Staff recommends that the municipality review the Berks County Planning Commission's Data Center Advice Document (https://www.berkspa.gov/getmedia/f502bf8f-06f6-42a3-ba66-4a932b213ad5/Planning-Advice-Data-Center.pdf) prior to the adoption of this amendment, so that recommendations can be incorporated.
2. Section 601: Staff notes that the definition of Data Center states that "…Data Center shall include Data Center Equipment…", and that "Data Center Equipment" does not appear to be a specific use proposed to be allowed by right, special exception, or conditional use. Therefore, staff recommends consideration be given to incorporating the definition of "Data Center Equipment" into the definition of "Data Center."
3. Section 410.5 (A)(3): Staff recommends clarification be provided on what constitutes a "designated residential zoning district" or list the specific zoning districts that are to be considered as part of this regulation.
4. Section 410.5 (B)(2): Staff questions whether "equipment and/or supplies" could be the equipment listed in the description for "Data Center" or "Data Center Equipment?" If so, could this mean that all "equipment" as described in the above definitions be required to be housed within a building or structure? It is recommended that this be clarified, and that further consideration be given to the viability of all "equipment" being required within a building or structure.
5. Section 410.5 (B)(7)(b) & (c): Staff recommends consideration be given to clarifying whether the requirements of this section are to be prepared and submitted at the same time as a variance request, or if they can be submitted once a variance has been granted.
6. Section 410.5 (B)(7)(d): "…and all existing wells within 2000 feet of the site shall be monitored during the required preliminary testing…"

    i. Staff questions how the applicant could monitor these wells if they don't have access to the well because of private property concerns?
7. Section 410.5 (B)(7)(f)(4): Staff recommends that this be added to the definitions section of the ordinance for clarity.
8. Section 410.5 (B)(8): While staff applauds the consideration of energy conservation provisions, it is unclear what the electric charging stations are for? Are these for electric vehicles? It is recommended this be further explained and clarified.
9. Section 410.5 (B)(9): Staff recommends consideration be given to how the municipality will implement this regulation. The LEED-certification process may have a long duration, and it is recommended that the municipality consider how this will be enforced.
10. Section 410.5 (B)(12)(c) &(d): Staff believes these regulations are unclear. It is recommended that consideration be given to clarifying at which point in the construction phase the interim sound study would occur.
11. Section 410.5 (B)(12)(i): "…The costs for the interim and as-built noise studies shall be posted as a security prior to recordation of the final plan…"
    i. Staff questions if "security" was intended to say "security bond" or "surety bond?"
12. Section 410.5 (B)(15)-(22): Staff notes that, besides the construction phase, in general, data centers may not have a large amount of tractor trailer traffic or use. While staff concurs with having regulations in place for tractor trailer traffic and use, it is recommended that consideration be given to using language that factors in the scale of use for tractor trailers for each project (such as number of tractor trailer trips anticipated to and from the data center per day, anticipated number of tractor trailers on site per day, etc).
13. Section 410.5 (B)(23)(b): While staff concurs with the protection of existing natural resources, a preservation easement in perpetuity within a Commercial/Industrial zone may create a conflict for future uses (including setback requirement conflicts, impervious coverage limits, etc.). Commercial/Industrial zones are typically designated for higher impact development. It is recommended that consideration be given to limiting the protection of a natural buffer to the duration of the data center's existence and use, or other similar language that would ensure flexibility for future development/uses within a Commercial/Industrial zone.
14. Section 410.5 (B)(23)(d): Staff recommends that native species be required to the extent possible.
15. Section 410.5 (B)(26): Staff notes the following [*emphasis* added]:
    i. "…shall be so constructed, installed, etc., as to be an integral part of the architectural features *of the plant* or,…"
        1. Staff questions what the "plant" is that is referenced in this section?
    ii. Staff questions if there are regulations for a data center applicant who wishes to provide their own onsite/offsite power? Furthermore, staff questions whether the existing ordinance permits more than one use on a parcel? If an applicant would use their own onsite/offsite energy source, and the municipality regulates the energy source (coal plant, solar energy system, etc.) as a separate use, this may create a conflict (such as only one use per site allowed, energy sources not allowed as a use within the same zoning district, etc.).
16. Section 410.5 (B)(27): "…Notwithstanding the foregoing, the maximum decibel levels specified above do not apply during a power outage…"
    i. Staff recommends consideration be given to including noise requirements for times of power outages.
17. Section 410.5 (B)(28)(g): Staff questions if the Municipal Improvements Agreement or similar document is referenced anywhere in this amendment or the existing ordinance? If not, it is recommended this be incorporated and clearly explained/defined.
18. Staff recommends consideration be given to providing regulations for emergency response plans – see item #15 on pg.1 of the BCPC Data Center Planning Advice document.

19. The Berks County Planning Commission has relocated to the County of Berks South Campus as of April 2025. Our new address is: 400 E Wyomissing Ave, Suite D, Box 2 Mohnton, PA 19540. Our general email address and phone number remain the same.
20. The Berks County Planning Commission requests that all municipalities submit proposed and adopted ordinance amendments with tracked changes. Tracked changes are a way of organizing and writing text that shows changes that have been made to the text. For more information, including text examples, please visit the Berks County Planning Commission website at (https://www.berkspa.gov/getmedia/fc7fa1a6-dd0c-4177-94be-de738ef33d81/Zoning-Ordinance-Tracked-Changes-Definition_FINAL.pdf). The Planning Commission thanks you in advance for your support of this new standardized practice.

**Please Note:** *Any resources shared here within, other than official County of Berks documents, are for informational purposes only. The inclusion of these resources with this review letter do not represent an official endorsement of their contents or views by the County of Berks.*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding this review, please do not hesitate to contact me at 610-478-6300 ext. 6301. Please note that Section 608 & 609(g) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that a copy of a full ordinance enactment, or an amendment enactment be forwarded to our office within thirty days of enactment.

Sincerely,

Taylor Lawrence

Taylor Lawrence
Planner III
Berks County Planning Commission

Cc: Perry Township Planning Commission
Perry Township Solicitor (mgombar@masanobradley.com)
Perry Township Engineer (ryan.rhode@kraftmunicipalgroup.com)
Perry Township (perrytwshpmunbld@comcast.net)

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