DEKALB COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

PLANNING • BUILDING • GIS

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AGENDA
DeKalb County Plan Commission
Commissioners Court – 2nd Floor DeKalb County Court House
Wednesday, October 7, 2026
6:00 PM

To view the livestream, click here: https://tinyurl.com/YouTubeDCPC

1. Roll call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Prayer
4. Approval of Minutes: September 16, 2026
5. Consideration of Claims: September 2026

Amazon	$50.25
Lassus	$270.25
Legal Ad – KPC Newspaper	$34.00
Mileage – Cameron Rice	$102.96
Mileage – Charity Wisel	$19.80
Verizon	$83.46
WestWood Car Wash	$10.00
TOTAL:	**$570.72**

6. Old Business: None
7. New Business:

   Petition #26-41 – Text Amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance regarding revisions to Article 2: Zoning Districts & Article 5: Development Standards for Data Centers & Data Center Facilities. This amendment is proposed to add language regarding development standards, performance standards, required submittals and adding definitions. Various minor revisions may be necessary to make these amendments (IE: page numbers, section numbers, etc.)

8. Reports from Officers, Committees, Staff or Town/City Liaisons
   - Appointment to Plat Committee
   - Liaison to St. Joe Plan Commission
9. Comments from Public in Attendance
10. Adjournment

Next Meeting: November 18, 2026

If you cannot attend, please contact Meredith Reith
mreith@co.dekalb.in.us | (260) 925-1923

***PLEASE ENTER THROUGH THE NORTH DOOR OF COURTHOUSE LOCATED ON SEVENTH STREET.**

****No cellphones, tablets, laptops, or weapons are permitted.**

Voting Members:

President - Jason Carnahan – Purdue Ag Extension Representative (Yearly Appointment)

Vice President - William Van Wye – County Council Representative (Yearly Appointment)

Kellen Dooley – County Commissioners Representative (Yearly Appointment)

Sandra Harrison – Township Trustee Representative (Yearly Appointment)

Glenn Crawford/Tyler Lanning (Alternate) – County Surveyor (Member by Elected Office)

Jerry Yoder/Jared Malcolm (Alternate) – Citizen Member (R) - Term: (Jan 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2027)

Suzanne Davis – Citizen Member (D) – Term: (Jan 1, 2025 – Dec 31, 2029)

Angie Holt – Citizen Member (R) – Term: Jan 1, 2023 – Dec 31, 2026)

Frank Pulver – Citizen Member (D) – Term: Jan 1, 2025 – Dec 31, 2028)

Non-Voting Members:

Elysia Rodgers – Purdue Ag Extension Representative (Member by Indiana Code)

Andrew Kruse - Attorney

MINUTES
DEKALB COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday September 16, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the DeKalb County Plan Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the DeKalb County Commissioner's Courtroom by Plan Commission President, Jason Carnahan.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Jason Carnahan, William Van Wye, Kellen Dooley, Suzanne Davis, Angie Holt, Sandra Harrison, Frank Pulver, and Jerry Yoder.
Members Absent: Tyler Lanning and Elysia Rodgers.
Staff Present: Plan Commission Attorney Andrew Kruse, Director/Zoning Administrator Chris Gaumer, and Secretary Meredith Reith
Staff Absent: None
Community Representatives Present: Mike Makarewich
Public in Attendance: Jared Malcolm, Andrew Provines, Terry Yarde, James Miller, and Sarah Delbecq.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Jason Carnahan led The Pledge of Allegiance.

PRAYER:

Jerry Yoder

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motioned by Sandra Harrison to approve the August 19, 2026 meeting minutes. Seconded by Suzanne Davis. None opposed. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS:

Jason Carnahan inquired about any comments, questions, or motions to approve August 2026 claims, totaling $34,631.02.

Kellen Dooley motioned to approve claims seconded by Sandra Harrison. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Chris Gaumer reviewed the data center ordinance developed by the committee. He explained that when the Plan Commission and County Commissioners established a moratorium on data centers for six months, until October 8th to allow the plan commission to create an ordinance for data centers. He noted that the ordinance includes Development Standards, Performance Standards, and Required Submittals, and thanked committee members for their work. The proposed ordinance establishes three tiers of data centers: Tier 1 (Colocation, Enterprise, and Edge Data Centers), Tier 2 (Data Centers), and Tier 3 (Hyperscale Data Centers), each permitted within specific industrial zoning districts. Committee discussions also focused on community benefit agreements, which would allow the County Commissioners to negotiate project-specific benefits and additional standards beyond the baseline ordinance requirements.

Mr. Gaumer explained the proposed development standards, including a maximum campus size of 1,000 acres, applicable setbacks, building height limits, landscaping, fencing, and future expansions. All principal buildings shall meet the underlying zoning district setback standards, except emergency generators shall be located at least one thousand feet from any existing dwelling as measured from the property line or residential zoning district.

Kellen Dooley questioned how the 1,000-acre limit was determined and suggested reducing it to 500 continuous acres due to advances in technology and concerns about preserving farmland.

Angie Holt noted that the committee considered several acreage limits and wanted to ensure adequate setbacks for noise and vibration impacts. Discussion followed regarding the size of other data center campuses, future technological changes, and the potential for facility expansions.

Mr. Gaumer stated that expansions or modifications increasing building area, campus size, electrical demand, water consumption, emissions, or traffic would require additional review. He encouraged Plan Commission members to review the draft thoroughly and submit questions so the committee could address concerns before forwarding the ordinance to the County Commissioners. He explained that the committee relied on the underlying zoning district standards for setbacks and landscaping buffers, while allowing County Commissioners to impose additional requirements in sensitive areas such as residential neighborhoods or nature preserves.

Mrs. Holt noted that research indicated future data center facilities would likely become more compact, with smaller building footprints.

Mr. Dooley asked if we would have the continuous acreage. What happens if two companies want to have back-to-back use, like having power going between them.

Mr. Gaumer explained that facilities designed for multiple users would be classified as Tier 1 colocation data centers and would be permitted in I2 or I3 zoning districts.

Mr. Dooley emphasized the importance of minimizing loopholes and ensuring the ordinance addresses future development scenarios.

Mr. Gaumer reviewed proposed standards for setbacks, building heights, site design, landscaping, fencing, and future expansions. Emergency generators would be required to maintain a 1,000-foot setback from residential properties. Height limits would generally follow the underlying zoning district standards, with limited allowances for parapets and other necessary structures. We've proposed that any increase that doesn't result in additional building area campus size, electrical demand, water consumption, emissions, and traffic could be approved by the zoning administrator when the modification remains in compliance with the approved plan. We would also like to require additional plans, studies, and other information to be evaluated for its impact. He also discussed noise and vibration standards.

Mr. Dooley requested clearer language requiring review by qualified vibration specialists to ensure impacts are minimized.

Mr. Gaumer and Mr. Kruse noted that the draft ordinance already requires baseline sound and vibration studies, noise and vibration mitigation plans, and third-party engineering review at the developer's expense.

Mr. Dooley emphasized the importance of establishing clear, long-term standards to protect surrounding properties and ensure future projects adequately address noise and vibration concerns. He expressed concerns that the ordinance's noise, vibration, and water-related requirements are dispersed throughout the document, making it difficult for the public to clearly understand the standards and review process. He emphasized the importance of clearly communicating how noise and vibration impacts will be evaluated and enforced.

Mr. Gaumer explained that the ordinance is organized into Development Standards, Performance Standards, and Required Submittals, and encouraged the Plan Commission to review and refine the language for clarity.

Mr. Kruse suggested the use of cross-references.

Andrew Provines approached the podium recommending a summary document to help the public understand the ordinance.

Mrs. Holt noted that the committee intentionally streamlined the ordinance to focus on enforceable standards while maintaining flexibility through site-specific community benefit agreements.

Mr. Gaumer agreed that enforcement could be challenging, while Mr. Dooley stressed that establishing strong upfront design requirements would reduce future enforcement issues.

Mr. Gaumer discussed proposed noise and vibration standards, including daytime and nighttime decibel limits.

Mrs. Holt explained that both dBA and dBC measurements were included to address noise and vibration concerns, noting that vibration can travel farther than sound depending on soil conditions. She acknowledged that the standards were based on practices used by other communities and were intended to address concerns commonly associated with data center developments.

Mr. Gaumer stated that, based on information presented by a Purdue professor during various seminars and webinars, no studies have identified specific health impacts related to vibration concerns raised by residents. He noted that the committee would like to address vibration standards within the ordinance.

Mr. Kruse stated that any violations could likely be enforced under existing UDO provisions and may not require separate fines. Mr. Gaumer agreed.

Mr. Dooley expressed concern that large corporations, such as Google, Facebook, and AWS, may view standard fines as an acceptable cost for doing business. He referenced examples from other communities where data centers continued violations while paying fines and suggested that penalties should be substantial enough to serve as an effective deterrent.

Mr. Gaumer noted that a list of potential provisions has been developed for consideration in a community benefits agreement and suggested that enforcement measures beyond the UDO could be addressed through that agreement.

Jim Miller stated that EPA regulations require generator engine noise levels (decibels) to be labeled on the equipment. He indicated that noise measurements should be relatively straightforward because the decibel rating remains constant regardless of when the generator operates.

Mr. Gaumer clarified that noise standards would be measured at the property line rather than at the generator itself.

Mrs. Holt emphasized the importance of incorporating appropriate design requirements upfront to minimize future enforcement issues.

Mr. Dooley added that the county should learn from challenges experienced in other communities and require developers to address potential issues during project design rather than after construction.

Mr. Gaumer moved on to emergency generators they would be permitted only as accessory equipment. Testing would be limited to a maximum of 50 hours annually and restricted to weekdays, excluding weekends and legal holidays. These limitations would not apply during actual emergency situations.

Mrs. Holt noted that some communities have allowed generators to operate during peak demand periods, and the proposed language is intended to ensure generators are used only for testing and emergency purposes. She stated that the committee has worked to make the regulations as restrictive and clear as possible.

Mr. Dooley raised concerns regarding generator fuel types and suggested that natural gas generators be considered over diesel generators due to cleaner emissions and potential air quality benefits. He noted that natural gas infrastructure already exists within the county and stated that, while natural gas systems may have higher initial costs, they provide long-term environmental advantages.

Mr. Gaumer explained that discussions have occurred regarding whether fuel source requirements should be established within the ordinance or addressed through a community benefits agreement. He noted that the committee had not reached a consensus on requiring diesel or natural gas generators.

Suzanne Davis requested clarification on the proposed noise standard exemption language regarding sites where existing baseline noise levels already exceed the ordinance requirements.

Mr. Carnahan explained that facilities located near existing industrial operations, such as SDI, would not be required to reduce noise below current ambient levels.

Mr. Gaumer clarified that any new development would still be required to avoid increasing noise levels at the property line.

Mr. Miller commented that requiring natural gas generators could limit development options in certain areas. He also noted that modern diesel engines must comply with EPA Tier 4 emissions standards, which significantly reduce pollutants compared to older diesel engines.

Mr. Dooley suggested that any diesel generators permitted should be required to meet Tier 4 standards.

Mr. Gaumer noted that the draft ordinance already requires compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations for fuel storage tanks and stated that additional language could be considered to ensure generator equipment itself complies with applicable emissions standards. He noted that the draft ordinance already requires fuel storage tanks to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. He stated that if the committee wishes to regulate generator emissions, additional language may be needed to address the generators themselves, not just the associated fuel storage.

Mr. Carnahan commented that generator operation is limited to emergency situations and up to 50 hours of annual testing, and therefore the committee had not placed significant emphasis on fuel type requirements.

Mr. Dooley expressed concerns about enforcement, stating that violations may be difficult to monitor and enforce after a facility is operational. He advocated for establishing clear standards during the design phase rather than relying on regulatory agencies or enforcement actions later. He noted that data center developers are currently willing to meet community requirements and suggested the ordinance should include protection for air quality, water quality, and noise impacts to minimize future compliance issues.

Mr. Gaumer stated that the committee could determine whether additional requirements should be included in the ordinance.

Mr. Van Wye commented that data centers will require reliable backup power systems regardless of the fuel source selected. He noted that natural gas and propane generators generally offer greater efficiency and require less maintenance than diesel-powered generators.

Mr. Dooley referred to a community in Kentucky that experienced issues after a data center installed older diesel generators that did not meet expectations, resulting in ongoing disputes regarding compliance and enforcement.

Mr. Provines suggested that simply requiring Tier 4 generators may not be sufficient and encouraged the committee to establish the specific restrictions it wishes to see. He further suggested that operational restrictions, such as requiring facilities to cease certain activities when violations occur, could be more effective than monetary penalties alone.

Mr. Gaumer responded that more stringent enforcement mechanisms would likely be better addressed through a Community Benefit Agreement rather than through the UDO.

Mr. Carnahan questioned how compliance with generator operating-hour limits would be monitored and enforced.

Mr. Provines proposed requiring data centers to provide operational monitoring and reporting, similar to proposed water-use reporting requirements. He suggested requiring public reporting of generator usage, runtime data, fuel consumption, and noise levels at property lines to improve transparency and accountability.

Mr. Gaumer reviewed proposed standards related to fuel sources, water supply, and cooling systems for data centers. He noted that future reporting requirements, such as annual or monthly reports, could be addressed later. Applicants would be required to submit information on average daily, peak daily, and annual projected water consumption, proposed cooling technology, water conservation measures, and proof of an adequate water supply. Alternative cooling technologies that reduce potable water consumption would be encouraged, and additional hydrogeologic studies or standards could be required by the County Commissioners through a community benefit agreement.

Mr. Dooley expressed support for requiring data centers to connect to municipal water and sewer systems rather than utilizing on-site wells or septic systems. He raised concerns about potential groundwater contamination from cooling chemicals and emphasized that municipal systems would provide better monitoring of water usage and allow treatment facilities to be upgraded if necessary. He stated that establishing these requirements upfront would be easier than relying on enforcement after development occurs.

Mr. Carnahan noted that newer cooling technologies reportedly use very little net water after initial startup, addressing concerns about long-term water consumption.

Mr. Van Wye stated that he would not oppose the use of private wells if adequate on-site water storage were provided, preventing additional burdens on municipal water systems and infrastructure.

Mr. Dooley reiterated that data center operators should be responsible for any necessary municipal utility upgrades and emphasized the importance of designing regulations that protect local water, air, and quality of life. He stated that applicants unwilling to comply with local standards should not be permitted to locate in the county.

Mr. Yoder added that any water discharged from a data center should be properly conditioned or treated before leaving the property and should not become the responsibility of neighboring treatment facilities.

Mrs. Holt asked whether other communities had successfully implemented similar utility and environmental protection requirements during the development approval process.

Mr. Dooley stated that similar standards are increasingly being adopted by communities across the country as concerns related to data center development have emerged. He noted that some communities that aggressively pursued data centers without adequate safeguards have since experienced challenges. Mr. Gaumer added that not all communities have had negative experiences. Mr. Dooley acknowledged that many successful projects have complied with established requirements.

Mr. Gaumer explained that communities without specific zoning regulations have often addressed utility requirements through Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs), including provisions requiring connections to municipal utilities. He then reviewed proposed electrical service standards, which would require applicants to provide written verification from the serving utility confirming adequate capacity for the development. Required information would include peak electrical demand, service voltage, substation locations, and any necessary transmission or infrastructure improvements. Approval by the County would not obligate utility providers to construct infrastructure, and additional requirements could be imposed through a Community Benefit Agreement.

Mr. Yoder asked whether data centers could be encouraged to generate their own power rather than relying on the local electrical grid.

Mr. Gaumer indicated that the committee had not discussed the topic in detail.

Mr. Dooley expressed concern that requiring on-site power generation could create additional issues, including the potential use of technologies such as small nuclear reactors, and stated that he would not support mandating on-site power generation.

Mrs. Holt commented that future technological advancements may naturally lead data centers toward self-generated power and suggested that such practices could be encouraged rather than required.

Mr. Gaumer then reviewed the proposed traffic impact study requirements. Studies would be prepared by a professional engineer and include analysis of existing roadway conditions, construction traffic, employee traffic, oversized equipment deliveries, required roadway improvements, and proposed access points. The County could require roadway improvements as necessary to safely accommodate development.

Mr. Gaumer also reviewed the proposed emergency response plan requirements. Prior to issuance of an Improvement Location Permit, applicants would be required to submit an emergency response plan addressing fire events, utility failures, hazardous material releases, battery storage systems, fuel spills, emergency contacts, and site access procedures. The plan would be reviewed by the local fire department and County Emergency Management Agency before operations commence.

Mr. Gaumer reviewed the proposed required submittals for data center developments, noting that many of the technical requirements extend beyond the County's typical development standards. He explained that the committee recommends utilizing an independent third-party engineering or consulting firm, selected by the Plan Commission and County Commissioners and funded by the developer, to review all plans and reports for compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The consultant would serve as an advisor to DeKalb County throughout the zoning and development review process and would be available at public meetings to answer questions. Mr. Gaumer then reviewed the list of required plans and supporting materials and noted that comments regarding municipal water and sewer requirements would be taken back to the committee for further consideration.

Mrs. Holt suggested revisiting the language related to sensitive receptors and the 2,000-foot separation requirement to ensure consistency with earlier provisions. She also recommended adding the baseline vibration study to the list of items for further review.

Mr. Gaumer noted both items for the committee's consideration.

Mr. Pulver recommended revising the financial assurance requirement to make an irrevocable letter of credit mandatory rather than optional, changing the language from "may require" to "shall require."

Mr. Gaumer agreed to review the proposed wording change.

Mr. Pulver complimented the committee's work, describing the draft as a strong foundation while acknowledging that additional refinements would be necessary. Mr. Gaumer stated that the comments received during the meeting would provide direction for revisions over the coming weeks. Mrs. Holt agreed, emphasizing the importance of identifying and addressing potential loopholes and learning from the experiences of other communities.

Mr. Gaumer then outlined the proposed ordinance review schedule. The committee plans to meet on September 23 to review comments and make revisions. A special Plan Commission meeting will be scheduled on October 7, prior to the expiration of the data center moratorium on October 8. At that meeting, the Plan Commission could consider both an extension of the moratorium and the proposed data center ordinance if additional revisions are needed. The draft ordinance will also be made available for public review and comment. The County Commissioners are expected to conduct a first reading on October 12 and may return the ordinance to the Plan Commission with additional recommendations before taking final action.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, STAFF OR TOWN/CITY LIAINSONS:

Mrs. Davis informed the board that the City of Auburn held their meeting. There was a rezone along State Road 8 and CR 19 next to Jeff's Towing. This was rezoned and approved for 6 commercial lots and apartments next to Watson Estates. The DeKalb High School has begun work on their Athletic Center and Multi Use. Also, Jim Cadoret will be leaving as City Planner on September 25th.

Mrs. Harrison informed the board that the Town of Hamiliton and the City of Butler held their meeting. Hamiliton had a meeting regarding a request for wells along CR 300, because there's no pressure to these homes. The town denied the well request. They reviewed an HOA request for Lot 198. Butler had a meeting for the new DQ. This was approved and moved onto City Council for approval. They discussed two things about the future of tiny homes and subdivision single splits.

No reports for Ashley, Garrett, or Waterloo.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Jason Carnahan adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

_____ _____

President – Jason Carnahan Secretary – Meredith Reith

DEKALB COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION PETITION: 26-41

This staff report is prepared by the DeKalb County Department of Development Services to provide information to the Plan Commission to assist them in making a decision on this Amendment to Ordinance Text to the Unified Development Ordinance – Article 9.05. It may also be useful to members of the public interested in this Amendment to Ordinance Text proposal.

PETITIONER: DeKalb County Plan Commission

ARTICLE SECTIONS: Article 2: Zoning Districts
Article 5: Development Standards
Article 11: Definitions

PROPOSED TEXT CHANGE:

Article 2: Zoning Districts:

Section 2.37: Low-Intensity Industrial (I2) District & Article 2, Section 2.39: High-Intensity Industrial (I3) District:

- Add **Tier 1: Colocation, Enterprise & Edge Data Center** as permitted use.

Article 2, Section 2.41: High Impact (HI) District:

- Add **Tier 2: Data Center & Tier 3: Hyperscale Data Center** as permitted uses.

Article 5: Development Standards:

Section 5.XX: DC-01: Data Center; General

This Data Center Standards section applies to the following permitted uses and zoning districts:

- Tier 1 (Colocation, Enterprise & Edge Data Centers): Permitted in I2 – Low Intensity Industrial & I3 – High Intensity Industrial
- Tier 2 (Data Center) & Tier 3 (Hyperscale Data Center): Permitted in HI – High Impact

The following Data Center standards apply:

A. Development Standards: In addition to the standards in the I2, Low Intensity Industrial; I3, High Intensity Industrial; and HI, High Impact Industrial Zoning District, the following standards apply. If any standard in Article 2 or Article 5 contradicts these standards, the more restrictive standard applies.
    1. Maximum campus size shall not exceed one square mile, 640 contiguous acres. Property separated only by a public roadway, railroad right-of-way, drainage easement, or utility easement shall be considered contiguous.
    2. Minimum Building Setbacks:
        a. Tier 1, Tier 2 & Tier 3:
            i. All principal buildings shall meet the underlying zoning district setback standards.
            ii. Emergency generators shall be sited to ensure continuous compliance with the noise, baseline sound, and vibration limits established in this Ordinance at all neighboring property lines.
    3. Building Height:

a. Tier 1 & Tier 2: Subject to the standard maximum height in underlying zoning district. An additional 15 feet allowed above the base height solely where a parapet functions as an acoustical or visual screening for rooftop equipment.

b. Tier 3: Notwithstanding the zoning district limit or any conflict clause favoring more restrictive standards, the maximum base height may be increased to 80 feet, inclusive of rooftop equipment, with additional 20 feet allowed above the base height solely where a parapet functions as an acoustical or visual screening for rooftop equipment.

c. Exceptions to maximum Building Height:

   i. Architectural features, antennas, lightning protection devices, mechanical screening, and utility structures may exceed the maximum height where required by applicable building codes.

4. Design & Development:

   a. Orientation of substations, generators, HVAC equipment, and other noise-generating equipment shall be oriented and sited on the portion of the parcel facing away from abutting non-industrial district wherever physically practicable, using the principal building as an acoustic and visual barrier.

   b. Rooftop equipment screening. Rooftop-mounted mechanical equipment shall be set back from the building façade such that the top of the equipment or its screen falls below a 45-degree sightline drawn from the top of the parapet, so as not to be visible — or directly exposed acoustically — from ground level at the property line.

   c. Vibration isolation. All mechanical equipment generating vibration (chillers, generators, pumps) shall be mounted on vibration-isolating equipment pads or spring isolators sized to the manufacturer's specification for the installed load, such that vibration is not perceptible at or beyond the property line.

5. Landscaping and Buffer Yards:

   a. Landscape buffers shall meet the underlying zoning district landscape standards. The County Commissioner may require an increased buffer and landscape standards in the Community Benefit Agreement.

6. Fencing:

   a. Security fencing shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height.

   b. Fencing shall consist of decorative metal fencing or other materials approved by the Plan Commission.

   c. Barbed wire may be installed only above eight (8) feet.

   d. Electrified fencing shall be prohibited.

7. Lighting:

   a. In addition to the Lighting Standards in Article 5: LT-01, all data centers shall utilize dark-sky, full-cutoff and motion-sensor lighting to reduce light extending onto neighboring properties.

8. Expansion and/or modification:

   a. If a data center facility is approved, the approved site plan & studies shall constitute the entirety of that approved facility. Expansions or modifications occurring in phases or

through multiple applications shall be evaluated based upon the cumulative development of the Data Center Campus.

b. Expansions or modifications that do not result in any increase in building area, campus acreage, operational capacity, utility demand, noise, vibration, emissions, or other potential impacts may be approved by the Zoning Administrator when the modification remains in compliance with all applicable provisions of this Unified Development Ordinance and the approved site plan.

c. Expansions or modifications that do result in any increase in the building area, campus acreage, operational capacity, utility demand, noise, vibration, emissions, or other potential impacts of the Data Center Facility shall require review and approval in accordance with the applicable zoning and development review procedures of this Unified Development Ordinance.

d. Whether the expansions or modifications are approved by the Zoning Administrator or the Plan Commission, the County may require updated studies, plans, or other information reasonably necessary to evaluate the impacts of a proposed expansion or modification, including, as applicable, electrical demand, water supply and consumption, traffic, noise and vibration, emergency response, stormwater, landscaping and buffering, and emissions.

B. Performance Standards:

1. Noise & Vibration:

a. The operation of a Data Center shall not create noise or vibrations in excess of the following sound levels when measured at any property line:

i. Daytime (7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.): 50 dBA / 60 dBC

ii. Nighttime (9:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.): 45 dBA / 55 dBC

b. Sound and vibration measurements shall be obtained utilizing both the A-weighted scale (dBA) or C-weighted scale, as applicable, and shall be performed in accordance with the most current ANSI standards.

c. Following commencement of operations, the Plan Commission may require additional sound and vibration testing upon receipt of a documented complaint alleging non-compliance.

d. If testing demonstrates non-compliance, corrective measures shall be completed within ninety (90) days or such additional time approved by the County.

e. May be exempt if baseline study is shown to already be more than the standards, but shall also have no net-increase in existing levels.

2. Emergency Generators:

a. Emergency generators shall be permitted only as accessory equipment.

b. Emergency generators shall be factory-new, unused, of current manufacture, and in the original factory packaging/enclosure where applicable. The unit shall not have been previously operated, tested, or run other than standard factory quality-assurance testing performed by the original equipment manufacturer. Refurbished, reconditioned, previously owned, or demonstrator units will not be accepted.

c. Routine generator testing shall be limited to:
    i. Monday through Friday: 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
    ii. Generator testing shall not occur on Saturdays or Sundays or legal holidays except during emergency conditions or when required by federal or state regulations.
    iii. Maximum 50 hours per year and only for routine testing with any demand-response use.
    iv. Disclosure to the County Zoning Administrator shall be required prior to any scheduled testing.
d. Emergency generators shall utilize sound attenuation measures sufficient to comply with Section B1, Noise.
e. Emergency generators shall meet EPA Tier 4 standards.
f. Fuel storage tanks shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

3. Water Supply and Cooling:
    a. A Water Supply Report shall be submitted identifying:
        i. Average daily demand.
        ii. Peak daily demand.
        iii. Annual projected consumption.
        iv. Proposed cooling technology.
        v. Water conservation measures.
    b. The applicant shall demonstrate that sufficient water supply is available without adversely affecting existing users.
    c. Alternative cooling technologies that reduce potable water consumption are encouraged where practical.
    d. The County may require additional hydrogeologic information if groundwater is proposed as the primary source.
    e. The County Commissioners may require additional standards in the Community Benefit Agreement.
4. Electrical Service:
    a. Type of Energy, Power Demand and Grid Protection:
        i. Tier A – Firm Self-Supply: A Data Center that demonstrates firm electrical capacity sufficient to serve 100% of its maximum planned load through on-site generation or dedicated generation with contractual delivery rights may be approved under Tier A.
        ii. Tier B – Grid-Dependent: A Data Center relying on the public grid shall:
            1. Fund all utility infrastructure and system upgrades attributable to the project;
            2. Provide additional mitigation as determined by the Board;
            3. Enter binding demand-response and curtailment commitments.

iii. Power Demand Response: All Tier B Data Centers shall demonstrate the ability to reduce load upon request by the utility or during declared grid emergencies. Testing and annual reporting may be required.

b. Prior to approval, the applicant shall submit written verification from the electric utility confirming the ability to serve the proposed development.

c. The applicant shall identify:

i. Estimated peak electrical demand.

ii. Proposed electrical service voltage.

iii. Location of substations.

iv. Transmission improvements required to serve the development.

d. Approval by the County shall not obligate any utility provider to construct infrastructure.

e. The County Commissioners may require additional standards in the Community Benefit Agreement.

5. Traffic Impact Study:

a. A Traffic Impact Study prepared by a Professional Engineer licensed in the State of Indiana shall accompany the application.

b. The study shall evaluate:

i. Existing roadway conditions.

ii. Construction traffic.

iii. Employee traffic.

iv. Oversized equipment deliveries.

v. Required roadway improvements.

vi. Proposed access points.

c. The County may require roadway improvements necessary to safely accommodate the proposed development and The County Commissioners may require additional standards in the Community Benefit Agreement.

6. Emergency Response Plan:

a. Prior to issuance of an Improvement Location Permit, the owner shall submit an Emergency Response Plan addressing:

i. Fire events.

ii. Utility failures.

iii. Hazardous material releases.

iv. Battery Storage Systems.

v. Fuel spills.

vi. Emergency contacts.

vii. Site access procedures.

viii. The Emergency Response Plan shall be reviewed by the local Sheriff, Police & Fire Departments & DeKalb County Homeland Security prior to commencement of operations. The County Commissioners may require additional standards in the Community Benefit Agreement.

C. Required Submittals:

An application for a Data Center shall include, in addition to all materials required above and under Section 9.08, the following:

All materials, plans & reports shall be reviewed by a 3rd party engineering and/or consulting firm chosen by the DeKalb County Plan Commission and/or DeKalb County Commissioners & paid for by the developer to review all plans for compliance with local, state and federal regulations and act as consultant for DeKalb County Government to take project through the Zoning & Development Plan processes.

1. Power Infrastructure & Ratepayer Protection Plan, including:
    a. Projected average and peak electrical demand;
    b. Identification of all required utility upgrades attributable to the project;
    c. A statement describing how the applicant will ensure that infrastructure costs attributable to the project are not shifted to local ratepayers.
2. Utility Certification Letter from the serving electric utility certifying that:
    a. Adequate capacity exists to serve the proposed facility;
    b. Required upgrades attributable to the project are identified; and
    c. The proposed facility will not cause electrical interference, voltage fluctuation, or service degradation to surrounding users.
3. Water Resource & Conservation Plan showing compliance with B(3) above and including:
    a. Source(s) of water;
    b. Average and peak daily demand;
    c. Cooling system type;
    d. Water recycling and reuse measures;
    e. Drought contingency plan;
    f. Identification of any water withdrawals.
4. Grid Flexibility / Curtailment Plan, demonstrating the facility's capability to reduce electrical load during grid stress events.
5. Emissions & On-Site Generation Plan (if any combustion-based generation is proposed).
6. Emergency Services Coordination Plan, prepared in consultation with local fire, sheriff, police and emergency agencies.
7. Construction & Access Logistics Plan, identifying:
    a. Haul routes for heavy equipment and materials;
    b. Emergency access routes;
    c. Any required roadway improvements;

d. A letter of acknowledgment from the County Highway Department.

8. Pre-Application Baseline Sound Study. The applicant shall, prior to submission of the application, commission a baseline ambient sound survey, conducted over a minimum 48 consecutive hours, by a qualified acoustical engineer, for neighboring properties directly adjacent to the site that can be impacted by the facility.
9. Pre-Application Baseline Vibration Study. The applicant shall, prior to submission of the application, commission a baseline vibration survey, conducted over a minimum 48 consecutive hours, by a qualified engineer with vibration-specific experience, for neighboring properties directly adjacent to the site that can be impacted by the facility.
    a. Site-specific soil/geological documentation: The study shall document actual soil conditions at the site via localized core boring samples rather than relying on generic propagation assumptions.
    b. Predictive modeling: The application shall include modeled vibration levels at neighboring properties demonstrating compliance with Performance Standards, Noise (above) Modeling must reflect:
        i. Full Operational Load: Continuous vibration from all proposed equipment operating simultaneously (including chillers, generators, transformers).
        ii. Testing & Maintenance Load: Peak vibration during scheduled emergency generator testing.
        iii. Construction Phase: Temporary vibration anticipated from pile-driving, heavy construction, or blasting, including a proposed mitigation and monitoring plan.
10. Landscape Buffer/Landscape Plan:
    a. Landscape Plan per Standards above.
11. Noise & Vibration Plan:
    a. Noise & Vibration Mitigation Plan per standards above.
12. Water Protection must be demonstrated and plans submitted must show:
    a. Closed-loop or high-efficiency cooling systems are required unless infeasible.
    b. Use of non-potable or reclaimed water is encouraged.
    c. The Plan Commission may impose water withdrawal limits and mitigation.
    d. Silurian/Devonian Aquifer Use: Where source water is proposed from the Silurian/Devonian aquifer system, the Plan Commission may allow higher use thresholds if the applicant demonstrates:
        i. No impairment of existing users;
        ii. Adequate recharge and long-term yield;
        iii. Monitoring wells and reporting;
        iv. Closed-loop or high-efficiency cooling. Conditions may require adaptive management.
    e. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed cooling system incorporates reasonably available measures to minimize potable water consumption and protect the long-term availability of the proposed water source.

f. Purging Methods, Reporting & Discharge Information:

i. The developer shall identify its cooling technology, water-treatment process, expected blowdown/flush volumes, chemical constituents, treatment method, and ultimate discharge/reuse destination and require all discharges to comply with the applicable regulatory permits.

13. Quarterly Water Quality Reporting: Where cooling water is used and/or discharged, the operator shall submit a quarterly report showing:

a. Source(s) of water intake;

b. Average and peak daily volume withdrawn and discharged;

c. Treatment methods;

d. Effluent metrics as specified in the facility's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit ;

e. IDEM compliance reports. Third-party verification may be required.

14. Emissions and On-Site Generation:

a. Combustion generation shall comply with all state and federal permits.

b. Emissions shall meet PF-01 Performance Standards.

c. Additional mitigation or monitoring may be required.

d. The development shall not be designed or operated in a manner that would unnecessarily preclude compliance with applicable County development standards governing associated utility, energy, emissions, carbon management, or other infrastructure.

15. Financial Assurance – Letter of Credit

a. The County Commissioners may require an irrevocable Letter of Credit (LOC) or Bond in a form acceptable to the County Attorney & County Commissioners.

b. The LOC or Bond may guarantee:

i. Utility infrastructure;

ii. Generation commitments;

iii. Water recycling systems;

iv. Buffering, screening, and noise mitigation;

v. Any other imposed conditions deemed necessary by the Plan Commission or County Commissioners.

c. The LOC, if required, shall:

i. Be payable to DeKalb County, Indiana through the Board of Commissioners;

ii. Remain in effect until all obligations are certified complete;

iii. Be drawable upon default.

17. The County Commissioners may negotiate and enter into a Community Benefit Agreement and/or Economic Development Agreement addressing project-specific infrastructure improvements, mitigation measures, community benefits, economic development commitments, site & performance enforcement, penalties, fines and other matters within the authority of the

County Commissioners. The Plan Commission shall not have the authority to enforce the EDA and/or CBA, unless explicitly addressed in the agreement.

18. Findings and Conditions:

    In addition to Section 9.08, the Plan Commission shall find that:

    a. The required plans & studies demonstrate compliance with the applicable development standards and any Community Benefit Agreement or Economic Development Agreements.

    The Plan Commission may impose any reasonable conditions necessary to ensure compliance.

Article 11: Definitions:

Battery Storage System. One or more devices assembled together capable of storing electrical energy for use at a later time.

Campus. One or more contiguous parcels under common ownership or control developed as a single Data Center Facility, regardless of the number of phases or buildings.

Cooling Water: Water withdrawn from any source and used, whole or in part, for the purpose of heat rejection from Data Center IT equipment, mechanical systems, or associated infrastructure — including but not limited to cooling towers, evaporative coolers, adiabatic systems, and once-through cooling.

Data Center or Data Center Facility. A facility consisting primarily of buildings, structures, equipment, and associated infrastructure used for the processing, storage, management, transmission, exchange, or other computational use of digital information, including associated electrical, mechanical, cooling, communications, security, and utility infrastructure, regardless of the specific technology or equipment utilized

Emergency Generator. A stationary internal combustion engine or turbine utilized solely for emergency electrical power or periodic operational testing.

Power Demand: Cumulative power demand of all data center buildings on a single parcel or under common ownership/control.

Tier 1: Colocation, Enterprise & Edge Data Center: A Data Center Facility collocated on industrial zoned site designed to operate at an electrical demand less than five (5) megawatts.

Tier 2: Data Center: A Data Center Facility designed to operate at an electrical demand of five (5) to one hundred (100) megawatts.

Tier 3: Hyperscale Data Center: A Data Center Facility occupying more than designed to operate at an electrical demand exceeding one hundred (100) megawatts.

Water Withdrawal: The removal of water from any source — municipal supply, groundwater well, or surface water — for use at the Data Center site, regardless of whether that water is subsequently treated, recycled, or discharged.

JUSTIFICATION:
The proposed text amendment establishes a comprehensive regulatory framework for Data Center Facilities within the Unified Development Ordinance. The standards are intended to establish clear baseline requirements for the review and development of these facilities while allowing project-specific matters to be addressed through the County Commissioners' authority to negotiate Community Benefit Agreements and/or Economic Development Agreements.

The proposed amendment addresses the potential land-use and infrastructure impacts associated with Data Center Facilities through standards that include:

- Limiting the maximum Data Center Campus size to one square mile, or 640 contiguous acres.
- Requiring compliance with applicable underlying zoning district setbacks and establishing specific siting and screening requirements for generators, substations, HVAC equipment, rooftop equipment, and other potentially noise-generating equipment.
- Establishing building-height standards based upon the applicable Data Center tier, including additional height allowances only for specified screening and building code related purposes.
- Requiring landscape buffers in compliance with the underlying zoning district and allowing additional buffering requirements to be addressed through a Community Benefit Agreement.
- Establishing standards for fencing and exterior lighting, including dark-sky, full-cutoff, and motion-sensor lighting.
- Providing a cumulative review process for expansions and modifications so that phased or multiple applications are evaluated based upon the cumulative development of the Data Center Campus.
- Establishing daytime and nighttime noise standards at property lines, requiring testing in accordance with current ANSI standards, and providing for corrective measures when non-compliance is demonstrated.
- Regulating emergency generator operation, testing, sound attenuation, emissions standards, and fuel storage.
- Requiring water supply information, projected demand and consumption, cooling technology, water conservation measures, and demonstrations that adequate water supply is available without adversely affecting existing users.
- Addressing electrical service and grid impacts through requirements concerning electrical demand, utility capacity, utility infrastructure upgrades, demand response, curtailment, and utility certification.
- Requiring a Traffic Impact Study addressing existing roadway conditions, construction and employee traffic, oversized equipment deliveries, access points, and necessary roadway improvements.
- Requiring an Emergency Response Plan addressing fire events, utility failures, hazardous material releases, battery storage systems, fuel spills, emergency contacts, and site access procedures.
- Requiring detailed application submittals addressing power infrastructure, ratepayer protection, water resources, grid flexibility, emissions, emergency services, construction logistics, baseline sound and vibration conditions, landscaping, water protection, and other potential impacts.
- Requiring baseline sound and vibration studies before application, including site-specific soil/geological documentation and predictive modeling for operational, generator-testing, and construction-phase conditions.
- Establishing water protection provisions addressing cooling systems, water conservation, potential aquifer impacts, monitoring, reporting, and water quality.
- Requiring applicable state and federal compliance for combustion generation and allowing additional mitigation or monitoring where appropriate.

- Allowing the County Commissioners to require financial assurance through a Letter of Credit or Bond for specified infrastructure, mitigation, buffering, water recycling, generation commitments, and other imposed conditions.

These standards establish and require measurable documentation for evaluating the potential impacts of Data Center Facilities while preserving the County's ability to address project-specific infrastructure improvements, mitigation measures, community benefits, economic development commitments, and enforcement matters through agreements authorized by the County Commissioners.

The proposed definition of Data Center Facility is technology-neutral and is not limited to a particular type of equipment or currently existing technology. This provides a regulatory framework that can remain applicable as data processing and related technologies evolve.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
Staff recommends that the proposed text amendment be certified by the Plan Commission with a favorable recommendation to the DeKalb County Commissioners.

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:
When considering a Textual Amendment, the DeKalb County Plan Commission and the County Commissioners are obligated — under Section 9.05 G (2) of the DeKalb County Unified Development Ordinance — to pay reasonable regard to the following:

a. The Comprehensive Plan;

b. Current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district;

c. The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted;

d. The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction; and

e. Responsible development and growth.

JURISDICTIONAL FINDINGS:

1. The petitioner has complied with the rules and regulations of the Plan Commission in filing appropriate forms and reports.
   a. Legal notice published in The Star on **September 25, 2026** and Publishers Affidavit given to staff.