

1-28-26

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dorr Township Board and Planning Committee Members,

Hyperscale data centers are a relatively new development that deserve and require thorough consideration and planning. We respectfully request that you carefully and thoughtfully review the requested ordinance specifically for technology innovation types of businesses which would include data centers. We believe this would be for the benefit of the Dorr Township community.

**Purpose:** To create a new ordinance for the zoning of a Technology Innovation district. Data centers should not be considered in zoning areas designated for light industrial or warehouse as the effects of these types of businesses can have a significant impact on the community where they are built. The establishment of these types of industry go beyond our current established zoning ordinances and deserve their own zoning district.

**Objective:** The requested ordinance will outline the requirements for anyone seeking to establish any business pertaining to technology innovation including data centers in our township. An ordinance would benefit the Dorr Township community and promote the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare of the Dorr Township residents and surrounding communities.

The following document contains a proposed new ordinance with appropriate tools to manage the unique nature of hyperscale data centers or technology innovation type of businesses in general.

The recommendations of this ordinance are based on extensive research of existing data center ordinances around the nation including:

Marana, Arizona  
Mesa, Arizona  
Logan County, Colorado  
DeKalb County, Georgia  
Fountain County, Indiana  
Lake County, Indiana  
Henrietta Twp., Jackson County, Michigan  
Brainerd, Minnesota  
American Twp, Lima, Ohio  
New Albany, Ohio  
East Vincent Twp. Chester County, Pennsylvania  
Monroe County, Pennsylvania



## Appendix

1. Statement “while protecting the health, safety and welfare of the users of the district and residents of the township” This mirrors the New Albany, OH ordinance.
  - a. Ensure environmental protections. These are modeled after the Henrietta Twp. (Jackson County), MI ordinance. Other ordinances contain similar provisions: Tioga County, PA and East Vincent Twp., Chester County, PA.
2. Water and Electricity. This ordinance addresses “hyperscale” data centers that use water and electricity on a level that is arguably greater than most other industrial or mixed-use district properties.
  - a. Even if a large data center agrees to implement a closed-loop cooling system, it would not be a “one time” water draw. According to data, a closed-loop cooling system for a large data center will need to be filled initially with approximately 75,000 – 1.5 million gallons of water (depending on the size of the system), topped off occasionally because of evaporation, and flushed and refilled on a schedule.
  - b. Furthermore, even if the data center itself is paying the costs to serve its electrical needs and these costs are not passes on to customers (according to state law), that doesn’t change its status as an “intensive user” of electricity, and therefore, is not “less intensive than traditional uses.”
3. Generator Emissions Dispersion and Stack Design. Ensure that hyperscale use can be integrated into existing districts and compared to other uses does not disproportionately harm residents. Modeled after Susquehanna County, PA; Monroe County, PA, Generator Air dispersion modeling guidance document from EGLE and Stack design from EPA Good Engineering Practice (GEP) stack height doctrine.
4. Create this ordinance to be a special use permit. Use “by right” would allow massive, hyperscale developments to move too quickly into development. “Special use” would allow the township to conduct public hearings and set conditions that address issues such as noise, vibration, and environmental concerns, etc. Dorr township already lists several special uses, including planned residential developments (which are comparable to hyperscale data center developments because they require large swaths of land and prolonged construction schedules). It is appropriate to treat this as a special use because of the scale of development, storage of hazardous materials, and unique noise patterns that require careful consideration of how to appropriately integrate this development and use into commercial, agricultural, and residential activities.
  - a. For years, Loudoun County, VA – known as Data Center Alley – courted data centers to locate in their county and permitted the use as “by right”. In March 2025, Loudoun County amended their ordinances to make data center development a “special use” after a multitude of repeated citizen complaints about data centers being inappropriately situated next to residential areas, noise issues, strain on the electrical grid, among other concerns. Loudoun County supervisor stated that the amendment to “special use” was necessary because data centers were being developed in places they should not be. The following locations, among others, have data centers listed as a special use/conditional

use: York County, VA; Harrisonburg, VA; Farquier County, VA; Fairfax County, VA; American Twp., Lima, OH; Brainerd, MN; Lebanon, TN; Lake County, IN.

- b. Because data centers operate continuously and generate constant noise, making them unsuitable for proximity to sensitive community locations.
5. Structures and Parcel dimensions.
    - a. Parcel coverage to ensure consistency and protect rural character.
    - b. To maintain the rural character of the area for which this would be suited, the company should be required to make its best efforts to integrate the use with agricultural and other uses that are non-residential. This helps protect the value of adjoining properties and preserve the ability for future residential use.
    - c. A 1,000-foot setback is necessary to protect the surrounding agricultural and residential zones from heavy construction noise that will last 3-10 years (data center campuses are developed in phases). A 1,000-foot setback will help protect from nuisance issues such as noise, dust and debris. The final site plan provided by the data center developer in Howell Twp. Showed the following setbacks for the corners of the buildings on the property: 1,486 ft, 2027 ft, 1195 ft, 400 ft, 1690 ft, 686 ft, 508 ft, 705 ft, 923 ft, and 1099 ft. There was only one corner that had a 100 ft setback. This corner abutted a planned, 120-acre wooded park with a walking/equestrian path. In addition, the setback should apply to all public streets, rights-of-way and property surrounding the proposed development. If the data center developer is allowed to construct principal and accessory structures less than 1,000 feet from a property that is currently zoned "agricultural," the owner of the agricultural property will never be able to sell their land to be rezoned for residential use because the proximity of the data center will be undesirable.
    - d. Screening should be included because it is a requirement that would greatly improve the integration of the development into a rural area.
    - e. Setbacks for all property boundaries. If the development were to abut agricultural land (that could also be in an adjoining township), the owner of the abutting property could want to sell the land for residential purposes in the future. If the data center is constructed too close to the boundary of that parcel, it will destroy the value of the parcel for future residential use.
  6. Environmental protections and Utilities:
    - a. Ensure that materials stored and handled on the property do not seep into soil and water resources. Modeled after the Susquehanna County, PA ordinance. Provide greater protection for private wells in the vicinity of the data center development.
    - b. Noise and environmental protections for the community. Ensure that the developer is using technology that protects community water supplies and ensures less nuisance noise. Modeled after the Susquehanna County, PA data center ordinance. Other municipalities that require closed loop systems: Abermarle County, VA; DeKalb County, GA.
  7. Noise. Pennsylvania State University states that the decibel level of an average quiet

suburban neighborhood is 45 decibels and that the decibel level at night in a quiet rural area is 25 – 30 decibels. Purdue University provides similar numbers and analyses.

- a. Because this new technology district will **have** to be annexed from agricultural land that is contiguous to residential and rural areas (and will not be located in an urban environment), it is only reasonable that the noise level equates with the adjoining areas, the maximum of which would be 45 decibels. It would be incongruous to set the decibel level equal to a noisy, urban area which is about 65 decibels. According to scholarly research, 65 – 70 decibels equate to noisy city traffic. This is to ensure that noise levels remain under nuisance levels. Marana, AZ has a similar requirement.
  - b. In addition, there are several documented cases where the noise level for a data center located near a residential area was set at 65 decibels during the day and 55 decibels at night. It was a nuisance for neighbors and had to be addressed by the municipality.
8. Fire-fighting and emergency management. Hyperscale data centers will have unique firefighting and emergency management needs (compare to other uses and districts in the township. Modeled after Susquehanna County, PA ordinance.
  9. Liability Insurance. This was included in other data center ordinances, including Henrietta Twp. (Jackson County), MI; Fountain County, IN; Susquehanna County, PA.
  10. Decommissioning provisions/protections. This language is modeled after Susquehanna County, PA's data center ordinance. Decommissioning requirements should be included in the ordinance as opposed to a development agreement.
    - a. Many ordinances have a decommissioning provision including Tioga County, PA, Henrietta Twp. (Jackson County), MI; Logan County, CO; DeKalb County, GA.
  11. Annual compliance review, Indemnification and Change of Ownership. These provide the township greater oversight of and regulation of these hyperscale developments. Modeled after Henrietta Twp. (Jackson County), MI.