



Legislation Text

File #: 2025-0972, Version: 1

SUBSTITUTE

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): All Districts

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability to amend Chapter 27 to Establish a Definition, Regulatory Guidelines, and Development Standards for Data Centers in M (Industrial), M-2 (Heavy Industrial), O-I (Office-Institutional), and O-D (Office-Distribution) zoning districts. This text amendment is County-wide.

PETITION NO: D1-2025-0972 TA-25-1247647

PROPOSED USE: Data Centers in M, M-2 & O-I zoning districts.

LOCATION: County-wide.

PARCEL NO.: N/A

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PURPOSE:

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability to amend Chapter 27 to Establish a Definition, Regulatory Guidelines, and Development Standards for Data Centers in M (Industrial), M-2 (Heavy Industrial), O-I (Office-Institutional), and O-D (Office-Distribution) zoning districts.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (October 2025) CC-1: Approval; CC-2: Deferral; CC-3: Full-cycle deferral; CC-4: Full-cycle deferral; CC-5: Full-cycle deferral. (August 2025) CC-1: Full-cycle deferral; CC-2: Deferral; CC-3: Full-cycle deferral; CC-4: Denial; CC-5: Denial.

PLANNING COMMISSION: (Nov. 2025) Approval. Sept. 2025) Full-Cycle Deferral.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS: Planning staff has collaborated with DeKalb County's Watershed Department, Georgia Power, the Atlanta Regional Commission, data center developers, and the public to develop a clear and effective land-use framework for data center development. The proposed ordinance addresses core zoning and development considerations, such as location, compatibility of adjacent uses, noise, water use, and energy consumption, within the County's established land-use authority. The ordinance establishes a necessary regulatory structure to guide where and how data centers may locate and operate within

DeKalb County. In the absence of such standards, these facilities could be developed in locations that are incompatible with surrounding uses or community objectives. This framework ensures that data centers are directed to appropriate areas and evaluated using consistent, predictable criteria. The ordinance includes targeted land-use measures to ensure compatibility with adjacent development, including distance requirements from residential zoning districts, parks, and trails. While the ordinance does not regulate matters within the jurisdiction of other agencies or departments, it is designed to complement those authorities by clearly defining the County's zoning role in data center siting and development. As development patterns evolve and additional data becomes available through future applications and real-world experience, the County may consider refinements to these standards. At this time, staff finds that the proposed ordinance represents sound land-use regulation and recommends the application for "**Approval**".

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (November 6, 2025) Approval 5-0-1. Commissioner Costello moved, Commissioner Patton seconded for approval, per Staff recommendation. Commissioner Cooper abstained. **(September 9, 2025) Full-cycle deferral 9-0-0.** Commissioner West moved, Commissioner Cooper seconded for a full-cycle deferral to the November 2025 zoning agenda.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (October 2025) CC-1: Approval 6-0-0; **CC-2:** Deferral 9-0-0; **CC-3:** Full-cycle deferral (5-3-0) due to the community council not having a final draft to review; **CC-4:** Full-cycle deferral 8-0-0; **CC-5:** Full-cycle deferral 6-0-0 until final report has been completed. **(August 2025) CC-1:** Full-cycle deferral 6-0-0; **CC-2:** Deferral 8-0-0; **CC-3:** Full-cycle deferral 10-0-0. Discussion included but not limited to that the text amendment needed to be tweaked to address potential noise concerns, should not allow near residential areas, consider requiring use of renewable resources such as solar and rainwater catchments, simplify distance calculation; **CC-4:** Denial 6-1-1. Council cited not enough regulation for proposed data centers; **CC-5:** Denial 8-0-0.